

NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
September 21, 2006

The North Branford Board of Education was called to order on Thursday, September 21, 2006 at the Totoket Valley Elementary Library Media Center at 6:04 p.m. The following members attended:

Board Chairperson:	Cheryl Smith
Board Vice-Chairperson:	Bonnie Symansky
Board Secretary:	Marcey Onofrio
Board Members:	John Bozzuto, Jr. Elisabeth Caplan Ron Haskins

Superintendent of Schools:	Dr. Robert K. Wolfe
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MOTION: Moved by Elisabeth Caplan and seconded by John Bozzuto to adjourn to Executive Session as per Section 1-225 of the Connecticut General Statutes as permitted by Section 1-200 (6) (a,b&c) of the Connecticut General Statutes to discuss personnel and negotiations.

ALL VOTED AYE

MOTION: Moved by Elisabeth Caplan and seconded by John Bozzuto to reconvene to Public Session at 7:02 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

I. Visitors

Director of Business/Personnel:	Donald Winnicki
Director of Curriculum/Instruction:	Joan Follo
Principals:	Michele Saulis, NBHS Alan Davis, NBIS Nancy Brittingham, TVES Robin Brown-Criscuolo, JHS Dr. Karen Johnson, STW

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Mark Fabrizi
David McMahon
Marcia Staffa
Andrea Alexander

Christine Imperato
Cliff Potter
Jim Dwyer
Melissa Waterbury

Mark Torrente
Dolina Potter
Phil Palma, NBFT
Deepa Manvani

MOTION: Moved by Elisabeth Caplan and seconded by Marcey Onofrio to make an amendment to add the awarding of an Honorary Diploma to the agenda of the September 21, 2006 Board of Education meeting.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH: AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY: AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO: AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.: AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN: AYE
RON HASKINS: AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by John Bozzuto to make an Amendment to add to the September 21, 2006 Board of Education Consent Agenda a donation and the authority for the Superintendent to enter into an agreement for personal leave under Article 20.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH: AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY: AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO: AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.: AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN: AYE
RON HASKINS: AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

II. Student Representatives

Melissa Waterbury and Deepa Mavani, student representatives NBHS, reported on the following items:

Freshmen Orientation: The orientation included a guest speaker, five mentors for each classroom, a question and answer period, high school tips for success and a program on sexual harassment.

Honor Society: The Honor Society established a tutoring/mentor program for all students. An Honor Society student who excels in a subject will tutor students who are having trouble with a certain subject and help them prepare for tests. The Honor Society will also feature a Haunted House for elementary students in October.

Block Scheduling: Some negative aspects of block scheduling for students are lunches served very early (10:00-10:30 a.m.) and some students have two study halls. The positive aspects of block scheduling for students are more time in class, time to finish homework, gives students the feel of college scheduling and students learn to budget their time for subjects better.

New Clubs: Two new clubs were added at NBHS, a Poetry Club and a Video Production Club.

Student Council: Organized a Hat Day to raise money.

FBLA Club: The Future Business Leaders of America have sixty-members in their club, which is the largest ever. They are donating cans of tuna for various shelters and are also participating in a Veteran's Recognition Program and will present roses to all Veterans in Northford and North Branford on Veteran's Day.

Homecoming: NBHS Clubs are prepping for Homecoming at the end of October.

III. Consent Agenda

a. Minutes

Minutes of the August 17, 2006 North Branford Board of Education meeting.

b. Resignations – None at this time.

c. Appointments

The Superintendent has received recommendations from NBHS for 2006/2007 Department Chairs, Advisors and Coaches. The Superintendent has also received recommendations from NBIS for two stipend positions. Special thanks are extended to administration and the athletic director for their efforts in filling these positions. The Superintendent is pleased with the new personnel that will be guiding these activities. All of the positions are stipends in accordance with the contract between the North Branford Board of Education and the North Branford Federation of Teachers. As such all appointments are renewed annually.

See Superintendent's report for additional appointments.

d. Leaves - None at this time.

e. Field Trips – None at this time.

f. Donation The North Branford Booster Club has generously offered a \$3,000 donation and an additional \$3,000 has been offered by the Touchdown Club in order to purchase a football practice sled. This sled will replace a piece of equipment that is more than 12 years old. The total \$6,000 will cover the full cost of the replacement equipment.

g. Leave Authority for the Superintendent to enter into an agreement for personal leave under Article 20 of the agreement between the North Branford Federation of Teachers and the North Branford Board of Education. Said leave will be with pay and may not exceed January 31, 2007 for health educator at NBHS – David Prather.

MOTION: Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by Elisabeth Caplan to approve the Consent Agenda as amended.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTTO, JR.:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

IV. Superintendent's Report

a. Recognition – None at this time.

b. Communications

A copy of the North Branford Fall Sports Schedule was enclosed for the Board.

c. Authority to Hire

The Superintendent under the authority granted at the June Board Meeting has extended contracts to the following individuals:

Robert Hibson	library media specialist	NBIS	6 th Year	Step 6
Thomas Ermini	.6 elementary physical education	JHS/TVES	Bachelors	Step 1
Sean Boardman	mathematics	NBHS	Masters	Step 6
Michelle DiCarlo	grade 2	JHS	Bachelors	Step 1

d. Enrollment

The Superintendent provided a snapshot of enrollment from September 1. The Superintendent provided up-to-date changes and mentioned that the benchmark date for enrollment is October 1st mandated by the State. Since this day falls on a weekend we will be using September 29th as the benchmark for enrollment for preparing next year's budget.

e. Curriculum & Instruction

Last month, the Board was provided a copy of the K-5 Social Studies Curriculum Guide for review. Joan Follo, Director of Curriculum & Instruction was present and answered any questions the Board had. At this time the Superintendent was requesting the approval of this curriculum guide.

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Bonnie Symansky to approve the K-5 Social Studies Curriculum Guide as submitted.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

Dr. Wolfe extended special thanks to the committee members who contributed to the development of this curriculum guide. He mentioned that the Social Studies Curriculum is the last major area under review and was over twenty years old.

Joan Follo stated that curriculum was an incredible amount of work and the work is still in progress.

The Superintendent also presented to Board Members a copy of the Food Service portion of the Family/Consumer Economics Curriculum Guide. Since Lynn Lanzoni is the only educator in this department, she has been granted extended time to complete the guide in two sections, Food Service and Child Development. Joan Follo was available to answer any questions the Board had regarding this Curriculum Guide.

Cheryl Smith questioned how this curriculum guide was different from the previous curriculum guide.

Joan Follo stated that this curriculum guide ties into the curriculum standards of the State.

Cheryl questioned how many students participate in this course.

Joan Follo stated that there were a couple of classes in child development and food service.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that there was only one faculty member for the food side and the child development side and many students are kept out of the course. He stated that at an earlier discussion with Dr. Perry it was mentioned that fifty to sixty students didn't get into this course and over one hundred students couldn't take art because of a lack of time, staff and room.

Joan Follo remarked that there are only accommodations for fifteen to twenty students per class.

As part of the Curriculum Management Cycle (CMC), the Language Arts 6-12 team has developed the Review Phase Report. The review phase is the first phase of the CMC when the curriculum team members examine the present 6-12 Language Arts program in relation to any internal or external factors that will impact their curriculum as they enter the Development Phase during the present 2006-2007 school year. Recommendations were included in the report to assist those who will develop/revise the new 6-12 LA Curriculum.

Joan Follo thanked Mark Fabrizi and Grace Polivka for the incredible amount of work and dedication they put into this curriculum.

Cheryl Smith questioned the recommendation to replace AP class with UCONN Early College Experience Program.

Mark Fabrizi remarked that this college course is taught at a satellite location (NBHS) by a UCONN professor and students receive college credit for this course. He stated that they are also trying to keep the AP course.

John Bozzuto stated that this is an incredible opportunity for our students.

Cheryl Smith inquired about the cost for North Branford.

Mark Fabrizi stated that each student would have to pay about one hundred dollars to enroll in this college course.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that Dr. Grace Polivka and Mark Fabrizi are two very outstanding staff members.

f. AYP/CAPT & CMT Scores

The Superintendent provided copies of the Final Annual Yearly Progress for North Branford Public Schools. He was pleased to report that all of the schools as a whole made Annual Yearly Progress under the guidelines established by the federal law, No Child Left Behind. As previously reported, one special education sub group in one school did not make annual yearly progress. This sub group was reported because it contained more than 40 students.

In addition, the Superintendent provided information related to the fourth generation of the CMT. This information was derived from the spring administration of this new test. The Superintendent cautioned individuals from making comparisons of this new generation test with previous tests and comparing this year's results with the results of CMT 3. What is extremely useful is the longitudinal study over time, which has also been provided. Based on the preliminary analysis of the CMT, one documented trend is the performance of students in mathematics. This trend had previously been identified and very specific action has been taken as a part of our mathematics action plan to improve student performance in mathematics across the district. This action plan includes the implementation of new texts, instructional materials, and a comprehensive professional development program. It is noted that in writing 81 to 91% of our students are either at or above the proficiency level.

CAPT results for the spring of 2004 were also provided. Included in the data is the percentage of students who scored at the proficiency or above level. On all four subtests 92-95% of our students were proficient or above.

The Superintendent also provided for the Board's information two letters from the Commissioner's office in regards to the CMT results and the CAPT results. These letters contain information on statewide results.

The Superintendent and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Joan Follo, were available to answer any questions the Board had.

Joan Follo stated that this was the year of "the first". The first time we tested three through eight with mastery tests, first year in our new ERG, Sharon, Franklin, Portland, etc. We are the largest district in this ERG. North Branford used to be compared to Madison, North Haven, Guilford, etc. in our old ERG and we were one of the smallest districts.

Marcey Onofrio questioned if the Board could get information on the percentages of students at goal and above to compare the old and new ERG's

Joan Follo explained how to read the different columns of the report and the five goals.

Elisabeth Caplan questioned what the AYP Confidence Interval Column was used for.

Joan Follo stated this column was used for how confident the state was that if a student took the test again they would score again in the same range.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that the tenth grade students had two years of incredible growth.

Joan Follo remarked that we were above state averages in all scores but there is always room for improvement.

f. New Teacher Orientation

On Thursday August 24th and 25th, a two-day New Teacher Orientation was held for our new staff members. The agenda featured an overview of the Strategic Plan and the Fish Philosophy as well as mini-workshops in the BEST program, Special Education Programs, the Professional Growth Educator Evaluation Program, the Curriculum Management Cycle, technology, and information related to Business and Personnel.

Each new staff member was paired with a school 'buddy' who took the new educator on a tour of his or her assigned school. New staff members met with their building principal and began to establish their classrooms.

Special thanks were extended to the entire administrative team and to the many faculty members who gave of their time and energy to be a 'buddy' to our new employees.

In-service activities will be offered to new staff members throughout the school year. Topics will range from classroom management, interpreting standardized test scores, using test results to plan instruction, as well as preparation for the BEST portfolio. New teachers will also be assigned a BEST mentor who will guide and support the new staff member through the beginning phases of teaching and learning.

g. Opening Day Convocation

The 2006/2007 school year began for all returning staff members on August 28th. An Opening Convocation which highlighted remarks by the Chair of the Board of Education, Superintendent, President of the Teachers' Union and Teacher of the Year, was held the morning of August 28th. Service pins were presented to employees who reached milestone years. Deputy Mayor Joanne Wentworth was presented the district's Friends of Education Award and Kate Fleming was presented the district's Above & Beyond Award for her community service. In addition, two montages were viewed, one depicting events of the previous year and one depicting community service. Special thanks go to the technology team and specifically Barbara Girard for her efforts with the slide presentations.

h. NBIS and NBHS New Schedules

Both North Branford Intermediate School and North Branford High School implemented new schedules for the 06/07 school year. Both schedules had a smooth beginning; however, administration in both buildings had to deal with minor adjustments in the implementation of their new schedules.

The intermediate school schedule can best be described as three independent gears that effectively mesh. The schedule allows for better use of time for band and vocal music and includes the introduction of theater arts. Alan Davis, Principal of NBIS, provided additional information on the opening weeks.

Alan Davis stated this new schedule was a dramatic change for NBIS and there were some growing pains and adjustments for both students and staff members.

He spoke about the new computer classes with Dick Terrill, the new theatre arts room with bean- bag chairs and a Shakespearean look to the room, school wide study hall, one open house for the entire school and the school wide advisory period held once a week.

At the high school a modified A/B block schedule was initiated. In addition, an X-block modification was installed within the A/B block. NBHS Principal, Michele Saulis, provided the Board with an update on the implementation of this new schedule.

Michele Saulis stated that there were also many changes at the high school including a new principal. She mentioned that many students have remarked that the new block scheduling allows them to manage their work load, puts less stress on them and allows them to finish assignments on time. She remarked that Mark Fabrizi and Tracey Wootton presented strategies for block scheduling that many teachers have adopted and there is a lot of great teaching going on. She also mentioned that the hallways are quieter as the students have only four passing times and there are less behavior issues. She remarked that there is a more academic feel to NBHS. Mrs. Saulis reported that the X block is between block one and block two and gives students twenty minutes to meet together in clubs and extra curricular activities. They can also investigate various clubs to see if that club is the one they want to join.

Cheryl Smith stated that she is hearing about X Block not allowing time for students to participate in all clubs if they belong to more then one club.

Mrs. Saulis stated that X Block is not the only time these clubs meet for many of them meet after school hours. She mentioned that staff is looking into making adjustments.

Bonnie Symansky questioned how NBHS is monitoring students so one student will not have too many study halls.

Michele Saulis stated that some students might have a full day on day A with no study halls and the next day might be an easier day with music, physical education and study hall. She remarked that students have reiterated that they like this as it would allow time for them to catch up with their work and learn how to manage their time.

Bonnie Symansky questioned if Mrs. Saulis felt comfortable with the balance.

Michele Saulis stated that she did but would like to see less study halls and more subjects added.

Dr. Wolfe stated the staff would collect data over time and include this data in their planning. Staffing will also be researched.

Bonnie Symansky questioned if any seniors were left out of mandatory courses.

Michele Saulis stated she hasn't received any complaints from senior students.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that block scheduling at NBHS allows for the attracting and hiring of very qualified part-time staff members.

Cheryl Smith stated she has been at NBHS for several meetings and notices that Michele Saulis is very visible and complimented Michele.

i. Technology Plan 2006-2009

The Superintendent was pleased to report that the Educational Technology Plan which was developed under the supervision of Technology Director, Tim Hartigan, has been approved by the Connecticut State Department of Education and meets the standards and criteria outlined by the Schools and Libraries Division Universal Service Program. This plan will serve the district from 2006-2009. A copy of the State's acceptance letter was enclosed for Board review.

j. Nutrition

The administrative team has met and discussed the many aspects of the school system's new Nutrition Policy and determined which administrator is responsible for each of the policy's requirements. Many of the requirements are building-based while others will be the responsibility of various personnel in Central Office.

In addition, the Supervisor of Food Service, Ed Slubowski, has made a number of changes to ensure that the school system is in compliance with the State Statute. In the very near future a copy of the policy and a cover letter will be mailed to all parent

organizations and booster groups encouraging them to support the Nutrition Policy after school hours. The district's website will be utilized to help parents link to nutritional sites. The Board will be kept apprised of activities as they unfold during the school year.

k. Community Round Up

The 17th Annual Community Round Up is scheduled for Saturday, October 28th. This day is critical for the stocking of the two food closets in the North Branford Community. The success of this event is in large part due to the number of North Branford students and faculty who contribute their time and energy towards this event. Dr. Wolfe encouraged everyone to check their calendars to see if they can give of their time.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that our goal this year is to stock the two closets with 10,000 food and personal items. He mentioned that K-5 schools collect personal items and will start on October 1, 2006 and grades 6-12 collect food items on October 28th.

l. Honorary Degree

The Superintendent recommends the awarding of an Honorary Diploma to Mary Graham, a life-long resident of North Branford.

MOTION: Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by Marcey Onofrio to award an Honorary Degree to Mary Graham, life-long resident of North Branford.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

Dr. Wolfe stated that Mary Delores Grace Graham, born in Jamestown, New York, moved to North Branford, Connecticut, forty-three years ago. She was unable to complete her own high school education, as the depression required her to help support the family. In her 43 years in North Branford, she has been a life-long learner and an avid reader. For many years she was a professional seamstress. Her hobbies include

the New York Times crossword puzzles and gardening. Her eight children all attended the North Branford Public Schools. Seven of her children graduated from North Branford High School and one graduated from Xavier. All of her children were very active in athletics. One daughter played on the 1976 State championship girl's basketball team and three sons were all-state football players. She has 17 grandchildren some whom attended and graduated from North Branford High School. She currently has one grandson who is a sophomore at North Branford High School.

Dr. Wolfe stated that because of health reasons the diploma would be presented to Mrs. Graham at her home.

V. Committee Reports

a. Negotiations

Ron Haskins stated that the Board has reached a tentative agreement with the paraprofessionals and will start negotiations with the administrative staff in October.

b. Budget

Cheryl Smith mentioned that workers' compensation is costing the Board more than was anticipated. She also mentioned that the cost of energy for the upcoming months has the Board worried and they have asked each administrator to hold back ten percent of their budget for energy costs if it is needed. If the extra monies were not needed for energy costs then administrators would have the money returned to their budget.

A copy of the September 1 financial statement was enclosed for Board review.

A proposed schedule of Board of Education Budget Subcommittee meeting dates was enclosed for Board review and approval.

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by John Bozzuto to approve the Board of Education Budget Subcommittee meeting dates as submitted.

CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:	AYE
SECRETARY ONOFRIO:	AYE
JOHN BOZZUTO, JR.:	AYE
ELISABETH CAPLAN:	AYE
RON HASKINS:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 6-0

d. Buildings & Grounds

Ron Haskins stated the TVES gym floor was completed Labor Day weekend. The fascia work at STW is completed and there is significant change to the outside appearance of STW. The NBHS bleacher project was completed and some fence and paving improvements were done in conjunction with the bleacher project. Mr. Haskins stated that the roles and responsibilities of the Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds were reviewed. This included duties involving supervision of staff, implementation of schedules, development and monitoring of work orders, liaison with contractors, budgeting and purchasing of supplies and equipment, overseeing preventive maintenance activities, coordinating regulatory inspections and record keeping, and interface with other town agencies.

e. Curriculum

Bonnie Symansky stated that they met and reviewed the Language Arts process, reading and writing across the curriculum, CMT objectives and how block scheduling allows for more time to accommodate different learning styles.

Elisabeth Caplan spoke on the development of a Core Literacy Team and the possibility of developing electronic portfolios. Each student would have progressive examples of their writings through grade twelve.

f. Pension

No report at this time.

g. Policy

Elisabeth Caplan stated the committee met and discussed possible changes to the attendance policy and tardiness to classes.

h. ACES

Cheryl Smith stated that the committee met this week and met new administrators and personnel. They discussed the summer school program, maintenance update, day care issues, funding issues for Magnet Schools, Nutrition and Wellness Policy, rules for fundraisers, CMT results and health insurance.

i. Strategic Planning

No report at this time.

j. Building Committee

Dr. Wolfe stated he and NBIS administrators met with the architects and reworked the preliminary designs. He remarked that the NBIS project would start in June 2007.

k. Calendar Committee

No meeting at this time.

l. Transportation/Bus Safety Committee

No meeting at this time.

m. Communication

Bonnie Symansky stated that the committee discussed the R&B equipment to tape the Board meetings. They discussed with the local Cable Company about the equipment at NBHS and stated the possible lending of equipment to NBHS to broadcast meetings.

Superintendent Wolfe thanked Nancy Lappi for taping the Board meetings.

VI. New Business

There was no new business at this time.

The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for October 19, 2006 at Totoket Valley Elementary School.

VII. Adjournment

MOTION: Moved by Elisabeth Caplan and seconded by Ron Haskins to adjourn this North Branford Board of Education meeting at 8:28 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Ardine
Account Clerk