

**North Branford Board of Education Meeting
October 19, 2006**

The North Branford Board of Education was called to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Conference Room of Totoket Valley Elementary School on Thursday, October 19, 2006
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

MOTION: Moved by Elisabeth Caplan and seconded by Bonnie Symansky 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, security and legal matters.

ALL VOTED AYE

MOTION: Moved by John Bozzuto and seconded by Marcey Onofrio to reconvene to the Library Media Center for Public Session at 7:05 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

I. Visitors

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

Karen Ernst Da Silva
Todd Stoeffler
Joan Czarkonski
Louis Pietrandrea
Kathy McNelis
Linda Humphrey
Laura Petrella
Cliff Potter
Pete Bannon
Andrew Bozzuto

Michele Adinolfi-Lucibello
Margaret McDonald
Lisa Dangelo
Paul Proto
Mary Ann Mimnaugh
Rachel FitzPatrick
Marilyn Modzelewski
Dolina Potter
Chris Manna

Christine Imperato
Karen Austin
Becky Fowler
Christine Flanagan
Anita Pantalena
Janis Vergati
Barbara Gasparine
Susan Sandar
Phil Palma

Cheryl Smith requested that a motion be made to amend tonight's agenda to include security. She stated that security is on everyone's mind and that it is a community effort.

MOTION: Moved by John Bozzuto and seconded by Ron Haskins to amend tonight's agenda to include security discussions.

ALL VOTED AYE

Cheryl Smith asked that all visitors hold their comments about security until the Board was ready to discuss security after the Superintendent's Report.

Cliff Potter mentioned the unsafe bus stop at Northford Center. He stated that at the Town Council meeting there was discussion for the Town to take over that section of road. He questioned if the Board could relax their policy on cul-de-sacs for this one stop. He stated that students stand on public property and who would be responsible if there was an accident. He requested that the Transportation Committee have a discussion about this matter with the Town Council.

II. Student Representative

Melissa Waterbury, student representative NBHS, reported on the following:

Homecoming: All clubs at NBHS are making their own banners for Homecoming and would be selling various items to benefit their clubs on Friday October 27, 2006.

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Next week is School Spirit Week.

Student Council Dance: Saturday October 28, 2006.

Community Round Up: Saturday October 28, 2006

Model UN: November 2, 2006 in New York.

PANGEA: Just completed the Heffer Project and many students wore a white bracelet to support ending poverty. PANGEA is a club that deals with Global Issues and helping the poor.

PSAT-SAT-ACT: Juniors will take the PSAT this weekend and seniors took the SAT last weekend. The ACT will be taken on October 27, 2006

Football: 5-0

Cross-Country: Both boys and girls teams are doing well.

III. Consent Agenda

a. Minutes

Minutes of the September 21, 2006 North Branford Board of Education meeting.

b. Resignations

The Superintendent has received a letter of resignation from Mr. David Prather, health/physical education teacher at North Branford High School effective January 31, 2007.

The Superintendent has received a retirement resignation from Ms. Robin Brown-Criscuolo, Principal of Jerome Harrison School, effective January 31, 2007

c. Appointments

The Superintendent has received a recommendation from Dr. Karen Johnson, Principal of STW, to appoint Mrs. Patricia Darragh to the position of Building Technology Leader.

d. Leave

The Superintendent has received a request for leave under Article 20 of the agreement between the North Branford Board of Education and the North Branford Federation of Teachers. Said leave request is from Ms. Colleen Stankewich speech and language pathologist at Jerome Harrison School and is for the remainder of the 2006/2007 school year. Said leave shall be without pay.

e. Field Trips

The Superintendent has received a field trip request from Mrs. Cindy Genzano, English teacher at NBHS. The Model United Nations Team is scheduled to visit the United Nations in New York City on November 2, 2006. The team has appointments to meet with diplomats from countries they are representing at the Model United Nations in January.

f. Donations

The North Branford Parents of Performing Students (NBPOPS) is requesting permission to donate a used drum set to the North Branford Intermediate School. The estimated value of this gift is \$1,100.

The Jerome Harrison PTO has generously offered to donate \$1,000 towards the brickwork to set the old Jerome Harrison cornerstone. This cornerstone and brick framework will be placed in front of the building in the large garden left of the front entrance.

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by John Bozzuto, to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted.

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

MOTION PASSED 6-0

Bonnie Symansky mentioned the retirement of Mrs. Robin Brown-Criscuolo and thanked Robin for all she has done for North Branford stating that her students and faculty loved her. She remarked that Robin would be greatly missed.

Robin Brown-Criscuolo thanked the wonderful people she has worked with over the years at STW and JHS. She stated that both staffs were outstanding and the parents always gave her their support. She mentioned that her twenty years in North Branford have been wonderful and requested an exit review with Board members.

IV. Superintendent's Report

a. Recognition – None at this time.

b. Communications

The Superintendent received a copy of a letter sent to Mrs. Grace Polivka, grade 8 language arts teacher at NBIS, from Dr. Cristi Alberino, CAPT Language Arts Consultant from the State of Connecticut Department of Education. The letter thanked Mrs. Polivka for her participation as a member of the CAPT Language Arts Advisory Committee.

Memo from Governor M. Jodi Rell regarding \$5 Million to Link Schools, Libraries to the Net.

Memo from Frances M. Rabinowitz, Associate Commissioner of the Division of Teaching, Learning and Assessment regarding Preliminary Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Results for District.

c. Enrollment

Enclosed was a snapshot of enrollment from October 1, 2006. Dr. Wolfe stated these figures of enrollment would be the springboard for the next Board of Education Budget.

d. 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. He mentioned that our goal is to collect over 10,000 food items. The elementary schools are collecting personal items for the food bank and middle school and high school students would collect food items.

e. Proposed 2007/2008 Budget Calendar

The Superintendent provided the Board a copy of the Proposed 2007/2008 Budget Calendar.

MOTION: Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by John Bozzuto to approve the 2007/2008 Budget Calendar as submitted.

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

ALL VOTED AYE

f. Visual Literacy

For the past three years, the North Branford Public Schools has introduced Visual Literacy in grades 1 through 3. Art has been utilized in the support of writing across the curriculum. In order to achieve our objectives in Visual Literacy, the school system has been fortunate to utilize the services of Karen Ernst Da Silva. Ms. Da Silva's work grows out of her many years as a middle level English teacher and later as an art educator in Westport, Connecticut. She has used her background in both language arts and visual arts to develop her teacher training. Ms. Da Silva shared her knowledge and some of her experiences in our schools this evening.

Mrs. Da Silva presented an overview of her program to the Board of Education. Mrs. Da Silva remarked that art doesn't belong just to those who are talented in art and art belongs to everyone. She stated that she teaches kindergarten students to read art. She believes that bringing art into the process of learning to children will teach them to be the best thinkers, writers and readers that they can be.

Joan Follo thanked Mrs. Da Silva for bringing her program to North Branford.

g. High School English Proposal

The 9-12 English curriculum is entering the Development Phase of the Curriculum Management Cycle. Michele Saulis, the Principal of NBHS, and Mark Fabrizi, English Department Chair, in cooperation with the other members of the high school English department have developed a proposal to re-vamp our English offerings. The changes include course offerings at various grade levels, collapsing of academic levels, adding a UCONN Early College Experience course, including an additional A/P course and eventually changing assessment practices. These proposed changes are all part of the new vision for the delivery of language arts instruction at the high school. For the next few years, each core subject at the high school will be under review and each department will make recommendations.

Michele Saulis urged Board members to read and take note of the innovative way NBHS plans to teach English.

h. CAPT Lost Tests

During the last administration of the CAPT tests, nine test forms of North Branford students were lost/misplaced by the scoring company. In addition, we received test data for students who were not ours. This situation has now been successfully resolved in that the scoring company, Harcourt has located our missing booklets. Harcourt is reconfiguring our district data report. Special thanks went to both Joan Follo and Michele Saulis for persevering. A letter from the testing company was attached for Board review.

Joan Follo thanked her secretary, Elizabeth Anastasia, for her wonderful secretarial skills and record keeping that allowed them to find these tests.

Christine Flanagan stated she had many security concerns at TVES and STW. She remarked that on October 2 she was able to enter TVES through the Superintendent's door with no one questioning her as she attended the Book Fair. She remarked that she was surprised that this door was open and saw this as a problem. She also stated that anyone can gain access to STW and changes need to be made. She is not comfortable with the easy access of our schools.

Becky Fowler stated she has students at JHS and she completed research on security as she works for a police department. She remarked that North Branford was no longer a small town but a town surrounded by cities. She presented a list of crimes that have occurred within a radius of two miles of our schools. She stated that North Branford schools do not have a badge system and remarked that parents do not have to be in our schools every single day. She suggested parents could make an appointment if they wanted to see their child. She urged the schools to install a camera system.

Another parent mentioned she worked in the East Haven school system where they have already installed a camera system and a buzzer system. She mentioned that East Haven is very proactive when it comes to security as after the Pennsylvania incident East Haven installed a security gate. She also mentioned that many staff members use walkie-talkies. She stated that our community has the resources to install security devices. She urged the Board that instead of talking about security and appointing committees to get more pro-active.

Paul Proto stated that he read the article in Sunday's New Haven Register on parents' concerns. He remarked that he attended a meeting with the police commissioners and school security was discussed. He urged the Board to investigate to see if they could obtain a Homeland Security Grant, as he knows the budget is tight this year.

Lisa Dangelo stated she was the person responsible for the article in the New Haven Register. She remarked that many parents accused her of putting their children at risk and exposed them to harm but she stated that she only exposed the danger. She mentioned that reporters walked around our schools and no one stopped them. She remarked that this process must be stopped as her children are afraid to go to school. In her opinion North Branford students are not safe in North Branford schools and the doors must be locked. She mentioned that she also worked for a police department.

Dr. Wolfe explained his four - phase plan for security. He spoke on specified training for staff and students, a badge system and an electronic monitoring system. Also the checking of all our doors and windows and the changing of some of them.

Superintendent Wolfe remarked that beginning with NBIS security specifications would be instilled in the plans. He mentioned that all these security measures would come with a price tag.

Cheryl Smith questioned how much a security camera would cost.

Dr. Wolfe stated about twenty-five thousand for all schools and NBIS might require a wireless system.

Cheryl Smith stated that walkie-talkies would be a good idea.

Dr. Wolfe stated that our three elementary schools already have walkie-talkies in place.

Cheryl Smith asked the Board if they wanted to approve one item at a time.

Ron Haskins stated he would prefer to go forward with phase two as a whole package and John Bozzuto agreed with him.

Cheryl Smith asked what phase two included.

Superintendent Wolfe stated training, repair and replacement of some doors, a badge system and electronic surveillance.

Bonnie Symansky stated that all doors should be locked and a surveillance system only monitors people and doesn't stop people from getting in. She remarked that we have to make sure that the wrong person doesn't get into the schools.

John Bozzuto stated that all doors could not be locked without a buzzer system.

John Bozzuto stated that the safety of our students has to be first and foremost and we should get going now.

Cheryl Smith stated that she agreed that safety is everybody's concern and we should do what we can now.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that he has already met with a number of contractors already.

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by John Bozzuto to accept phase two of the phase four plan as submitted by the Superintendent.

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

MOTION PASSED 6-0

V. Committee Reports

a. Negotiations

Ron Haskins stated that the committee met and established ground rules and set dates for the administrators' contract.

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Marcey Onofrio to approve the contract between the Federation of Para-Professionals and the North Branford Board of Education expiring June 30, 2009.

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

MOTION PASSED 6-0

b. Budget

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

Elisabeth Caplan stated there were no major changes and the Worker's Comp line was still in the red.

Donald Winnicki stated that Workers' Comp Insurance came in higher than what was budgeted.

c. Buildings & Grounds

John Bozzuto stated there was no meeting this month.

d. Curriculum

Elisabeth Caplan stated that the committee met this evening before the Board meeting and the English Curriculum for NBHS was discussed. She mentioned she was very impressed with the depth of the proposal. She remarked that Michele Saulis is a very flexible, willing and enthusiastic person and she was very impressed with what she saw

and heard.

Bonnie Symansky remarked that the curriculum offers students more choices and there is more emphasis on writing.

e. Pension

Marcey Onofrio stated there was no meeting this month.

f. Policy

The Superintendent provided the Board a copy of the following policy for first reading:

Policy # P1020 (Revised) Attendance

g. ACES

Cheryl Smith stated they met last week and discussed school improvement plans for CAMS in Northford and health insurance. She mentioned that she would not be able to attend the ECA liaison luncheon and if a Board member was willing to attend to contact her.

h. Strategic Planning

No meeting this month.

i. Building Committee

John Bozzuto remarked that the next meeting would be held in December 2006 or January 2007. Dr. Wolfe mentioned he met with the architects and the administrative team of NBIS and as plans move forward this will trigger the Building Committee meetings.

j. Calendar Committee

Marcey Onofrio stated there was no meeting this week.

k. Transportation /Bus Safety Committee

Ron Haskins stated the committee heard a hearing on a proposed bus stop and the decision would be rendered in ten days.

l. Communication

Bonnie Symansky stated that there is still a problem with the cable transmission.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that he met with R&B today and the matter is being looked into.

VI. New Business

No new business at this time.

VII. Visitors and Press

Becky Fowler stated she would like North Branford to be known as the town who did everything they could for security and not as a town with a Board of Education who stood around thinking. She urged the Board to look for grant money that could be used for securing our schools.

Karen Austin questioned the time-line for what was approved tonight.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that he was already meeting with vendors and the largest part will be the installation of electronic systems. He stated this should be completed after the Christmas break and other parts would move along immediately.

Chris Manna stated that when he used to be a substitute teacher he was never screened and questioned if we screened substitutes.

Dr. Wolfe stated the rules have changed and all new staff and substitutes have a background check and references are checked.

Dolina Potter questioned the use of the computer system that was mentioned last year for winter closings, bus breakdowns, etc. and if Homeland Security Grants could be used.

Dr. Wolfe stated that this is an item high on our priority list and it is in phase-three. He remarked that a Homeland Security Grant could not be used for this item but he feels it is very cost effective to do and it is in the 07-08 budget.

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Christine Flanagan asked about the lock down procedures and if the teachers would be discussing this with their students. She also questioned if parents would receive information before the procedure so they can discuss it with their children.

Dr. Wolfe stated that all schools are coordinating their lock-downs for completion in a few weeks.

Cliff Potter addressed everyone who attended tonight's Board meeting and urged them to attend future Town Council meetings as this is where their voices have to be heard. He stated that all Board members are non-paid and non-thanked and parents should be at Town Council meetings to show their support. He remarked that they must be there to support what you want for your children and to support the Board of Education. He urged them to come and bring their thoughts with them.

Andrew Buzzoto, Town Council member, remarked that it takes everyone's efforts so, please come to Town Council meetings and let your voice be heard.

Victor Pietrandrea remarked that he has a child at JHS and he feels his child's IEP is not being followed. He stated that Dr. Wolfe, Suzanne Wright and Marsha Moses attended a meeting but a State Senator was refused and he questioned why the State Senator, as his advocate, was refused a conference call.

Cheryl Smith stated that this matter was discussed in Executive Session.

Mr. Pietrandrea stated Robin Brown was one of the best advocates of JHS children and questioned who would take her place as principal of JHS.

Cheryl Smith stated there would be a principal search.

**VIII. The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for
November 16, 2006 at Totoket Valley Elementary School.**

IX. Adjournment

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by John Bozzuto to adjourn this meeting of the North Branford Board of Education at 8:33 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Ardine
Account Clerk