

**NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
November 16, 2006**

The North Branford Board of Education was called to order at 6:05 p.m. in the Board of Education Conference Room at Totoket Valley Elementary School. The following members attended.

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

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| Superintendent of Schools: | Dr. Robert K. Wolfe |
| Director of Business/Personnel: | Donald Winnicki |

MOTION: Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by Elisabeth Caplan to adjourn to executive session at 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 negotiations and personnel.

ALL VOTED AYE

MOTION: Moved by Elisabeth Caplan and seconded by John Bozzuto to reconvene to public session in the Totoket Valley Elementary School Library Media Center at 7:15 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

I. Visitors

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

Mary Ingarra
Margaret Barbaro
Michelle Romanella
Marianne Smith
Dolina Potter
Joanne Wentworth
Patrick Romanella
Lisa Gagliardi
Dianne Vumbeck

Todd Ingarra
Melinda LeMere
Mark Fabrizi
Robert Sullivan
Anthony Diglio
David McMahan
Jenn Tiani
Lisa Albert
Matthew Tiani

Andrew Barbara
Christin Baldwin
Mary Sullivan
Cliff Potter
Jill Diglio
Margaret McDonald
Larry Tiani
Debbie Albino
Michaela Tiani

Board Chair, Cheryl Smith, asked for a moment of silence in honor of a North Branford High School student who recently passed away.

Visitor Comments

Lisa Gagliardi requested that the Board consider amending Policy 1020 prior to approving it so that it includes the Category “S” absences at the high school level. With the possibility of withholding course credit for exceeding the maximum allowable absences, she feels it is imperative that these excused absences be addressed in Board Policy 1020.

Mrs. Gagliardi also questioned if the Board had answers to questions she had pertaining to the English Curriculum proposal.

Have you asked what the impetus is behind this move? It is budget driven and coming to us at the expense of our students. Are we collapsing levels to free up teachers to teach other elective subjects instead of putting students in a study hall.

Is there a qualified instructor in place for the UCONN College course? Are you willing to approve something without an instructor in place who is capable of teaching this course.

What will class sizes be like if you combine A and B level students. More than 28 students she is sure. Will there still be a C course and where will the special education student fall.

She urged the Board of Education to look for the answers from the professionals who will be closely involved with these matters and who have the most direct contact with our students on a daily basis – our teachers.

Cliff Potter questioned Board members if they were aware of a program called SAFE and recommended that as taxpayers we should give our legislators a nudge to get money from this program for North Branford.

Cheryl Smith stated that she and the other Board members were aware of this new program.

II. Student Representatives

NBHS student representatives Deepa Mavani and Jessica Ferraro reported on the following:

The first marking period has ended and reports cards have been distributed.

The FBLA gave flowers to the Veterans on Veteran's Day and the Communications Club completed a movie about various veterans and showed the movie to the veterans.

Homecoming was a great success and all clubs that participated made a lot of money that night. Setting their booths around the T-Bird Nest was a great idea and made for a successful sales and social area. The new set up worked well and a good time was had by all.

A Hat Day was recently held at the high school for diabetes and Ms. Nuhn's health classes coordinated a Great American Smoke-Out Day.

Auditions are being held for the musical Once Upon a Mattress.

Ten students attended a Student Council Leadership workshop on Election Day.

Field Hockey is in the finals and will play Wethersfield on Saturday the 18th.

Football will have their final home game on Friday the 17th.

Winter sports will be beginning soon. (Basketball, fencing, swimming, indoor track and dance.

The History Department at NBHS completed an informal survey of students who were eligible to vote and found that most who were eligible to vote did vote.

III. Consent Agenda

a. Minutes

Minutes of the October 19, 2006 North Branford Board of Education meeting.

b. Resignations

The Superintendent has received a letter of resignation from Mrs. Kristi Koval, special education teacher at Totoket Valley Elementary School, effective December 1, 2006.

The Superintendent has received a letter of resignation from Mr. Joseph Rodgers, world language teacher at North Branford High School, effective November 21, 2006.

c. Appointments

The Superintendent has received a recommendation from Ms. Robin Brown-Criscuolo, Principal of Jerome Harrison School, to appoint Mrs. Pam Kohler and Mrs. Marilyn Modzelewski, to the stipend position of A/V Coordinator for the 2006/2007 school year.

The Superintendent has received a recommendation from Michele Saulis, Principal of NBHS, to appoint Ms. Nicole Esposito-Lacroix to the position of health educator at NBHS.

The Superintendent has received a recommendation from Chris Webster, Athletic Director of NBHS, to appoint Jennifer Miller as the cheerleading coach at NBHS.

d. Leaves - None at this time.

e. Donations - None at this time.

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

Bonnie Symansky had one correction on the October 19, 2006 Board of Education minutes.

Page 13 – fourth paragraph- should read Andrew Bozzuto not Andrew Esposito.

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Bonnie Symansky to accept the Consent Agenda as amended.

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

MOTION PASSED 6-0

IV. Superintendent's Report

a. Recognition

This evening we had a number of exceptional artists whose artwork appeared in the 2006/2007-school calendar. All students were presented with a certificate from the Board of Education for their efforts. These students are:

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|-------------------|---------------|
| Kristen Combs | March '07 |
| Kayla DeLuca | November '06 |
| Giuseppe Diglio | September '06 |
| Anthony Gaudio | November '06 |
| Michael Gerwien | January '07 |
| Lindsey Hottin | August '07 |
| Jessica Ingarra | March '07 |
| Sabrina LeMere | April '07 |
| Rachel Potenziani | December '06 |
| Tiffany Raccio | February '07 |
| Alyssa Rago | October '06 |
| Nicole Romanella | August '06 |
| Amber Shepard | May '07 |
| Connor Sullivan | July '07 |
| Matthew Tiani | August '06 |

Superintendent Wolfe saluted all the artists.

Special thanks was extended to art educators, Mrs. Nilda Gagliardi of Jerome Harrison School, Miss Marci Prinz of Totoket Valley Elementary School, and Mr. Joseph Roberti of North Branford High School for their assistance with this project.

b. Communications

1. The Superintendent has received a Grant Award Notification for the following grant:

State Funds for Technology Infrastructure 1/1/06 – 6/30/07 \$39,520

Special thanks were extended to Tim Hartigan, Director of Technology, for completing the grant application for the infrastructure grant. These funds will be used to improve fiber optic connections between schools.

2. The Superintendent has received a letter from ACES confirming that North Branford will receive five days of on-site professional development and/or technical assistance from ACES.

Special thanks were extended to Joan Follo for completing this grant application.

Strategic School Profiles

In accordance with State Law, Superintendents are required to provide a copy of the Strategic School Profile to local Boards at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Education after receipt of these documents. This profile covers both regular education and special education for school year 2005-2006.

Administration highlighted data contained in this report and was available for any questions that the Board had.

c. Community Round-Up

The 17th Annual Community Round-Up was a huge success. Over 130 students and parents and 41 staff members from NBIS and NBHS braved rainy, cold conditions and collected 7200 food items and \$1,000.00 to fill the two food closets in North Branford. In addition students at JHS, STW and TVES collected over 1300 personal hygiene items for the food closets.

Dr. Wolfe gave high praise to NBIS administrators and staff especially Carol Evans, physical education teacher at NBIS, for her 17th year of coordinating this event. He thanked all students who participated and the community.

d. Principal Search

The Superintendent shared with the Board a proposed timeline for the search and selection of a new principal for JHS.

An eleven- member committee comprised of administrators, teachers, Board member and parents has been formed. The committee met this past week and discussed the characteristics and qualities that are being looked for in a new JHS principal and they have started to craft the questions that will be utilized in the principal search interviews on December 13th and 14th. From here it is hoped that two final candidates will be chosen for a second interview process. When the final candidate is chosen the committee will conduct an on-site visit. Hopefully, we will have a candidate to present to the Board at the January 2007 Board of Education meeting. Dr. Wolfe stated that twelve candidates have submitted their resumes and the closing will be December 1, 2006.

f. NBHS Advance Placement

There are many indicators of success in the public school system - standardized test scores, graduation rate, percentage of students going on to secondary education, community service, college acceptance and advance placement courses are just a few. Attached for Board review was a summary of last spring's Advance Placement examinations.

Bonnie Symansky questioned what the scores meant.

Michele Saulis stated that the AP scores were from 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest. A score of 3,4 or 5 meant the student gained a college credit before starting college. She stated she was very confident students could handle these courses.

g. CABE Awards

The North Branford Public Schools has been awarded three distinguished communication awards for 2006 presented by CABE (Connecticut Area Boards of Education).

The school district's Annual Report received a first place award, while the Calendar and the Summer Brochure received honorable mention awards.

Dr. Wolfe extended his thanks to all of the administrators and faculty members who contributed to these publications. Special thanks were extended to Joan Follo who coordinated the information that went into the Annual Report brochure.

h. Teacher of the Year – Carter Welch

Department chair and health educator at the high school, Carter Welch, was honored at the Teacher of the Year Program held November 15, 2006 at the Bushnell Auditorium. Carter was escorted across the stage by the Superintendent of Schools and received his award from the Interim Commissioner of Education, Dr. George Coleman.

In attendance were ten individuals representing Carter's family and friends. We salute our North Branford Teacher of the Year—Carter Welch!

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that Carter would attend a future Board of Education meeting.

Superintendent Wolfe remarked that a World Language teacher from Regional School District 9 won Connecticut Teacher of the Year. This is also the first in the Teacher of the Year Award that someone from the Alternative Route to Education won.

i. Special Education

Director of Special Services, Suzanne Wright, provided an overview of the comprehensive educational services that are provided for special education students in the North Branford Public Schools. This overview detailed the broad spectrum of services that are provided within the district and those contracted for outside of the district. Emphasis will also be placed on the pre-referral process and the planning and placement team process.

Suzanne Wright and Dr. Kris Lindsay presented the program and highlighted on the different types of classrooms for special education students.

- Regular Classroom classes
- Inclusion classes
- Reverse Mainstream courses
- Resource Room – Academic assistance
- Self-Contained classrooms
- Out Placement

Suzanne Wright stated that in 2000-2001 North Branford had 38 out placements and today we only have 17 out placements.

Dr. Lindsay highlighted the process of developing a PPT (Planning and Placement Team) and an IEP (Individual Education Plan). She mentioned that each student has an annual review (1 year) and a triennial review (3 year).

Suzanne Wright thanked the Board of Education for their support of the Special Services Program.

Dr. Wolfe saluted Suzanne Wright for a very successful Special Services Department.

j. Professional Development

On Tuesday, November 7, 2006, the district held a Professional Development Day for certified staff members. Professional development activities were designed to accommodate the professional growth of educators in one of the four major district initiatives; differentiation, technology integration, character education, and writing across the curriculum, and to support their personal goal. Personal goals vary from participation on a curriculum team to participation on a site-based improvement team.

Some educators have designed their yearly professional growth plan as an independent study while others have selected to form a study group to carry out action research. All district and personal goals are designed with the ultimate outcome in mind: to improve student achievement.

Other professional growth activities included 'teachers training teachers' in the new science embedded tasks and in strategies to support student literacy in reading and writing. In some instances, outside consultants worked with a team of educators in a variety of areas such as the Columbia Writing Project, Developing and Selecting Data Collection Tools to Monitor Student Progress, and Multi-sensory Structured Language Strategies.

The 6-12 Mathematics Department attended the Greater Hartford Academy of Math & Sciences conference and the Music Department visited the Yale Museum of History of Musical Instruments.

Most educators are pleased with the opportunity to work individually or in teams to increase their knowledge and improve the skills in areas that improve student learning and increase student success.

All educators are asked to complete an evaluation form for the day. The District Professional Development Team reviews teacher responses and recommendations for improvement are taken under advisement.

Joan Follo stated that the evaluation forms were rated 100% either excellent or good.

Dr. Wolfe thanked Joan Follo for all her work to make this day a successful event.

k. High School English Curriculum Proposal

At the last Board of Education meeting, Board members were provided with a copy of a proposal to re-vamp the 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.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that this curriculum was generated through the English department and never for budget purposes.

Mark Fabrizi, NBHS English Chair, remarked that this curriculum was developed over several years and was not an idle proposal.

Dr. Wolfe stated that Mark Fabrizi was selected by the State of Connecticut to participate in the new development for High School Frameworks.

Marcey Onofrio questioned if we had teachers that are certified to teach this.

Mark Fabrizi stated that we did.

Dr. Wolfe distributed brochures from the TVES and NBIS after school enrichment programs. He also distributed several notes from various staff members.

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Bonnie Symansky to approve the 9-12 English curriculum changes as proposed.

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

MOTION PASSED 6-0

Dr. Wolfe read a letter from a student who was responsible for the recent bomb scare at NBHS. (attached)

Superintendent Wolfe introduced long time educator, Joseph Tenczar who will assist with the auditorium and teach communication courses at NBHS.

V. Committee Reports

The Board of Education will review and take possible action on committee reports.

a. Negotiations

Cheryl Smith stated that the administrators' contract was ratified and highlighted some areas of the contract.

- Three year contract
- \$25,000 increase in life insurance
- New health plan with increased co-pay
- 3.25 % each of the three years
- Annuity of \$500.00 increase in the second year of the contract.

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by John Bozzuto to approve the collective bargaining agreement between the North Branford Board of Education and the North Branford School Administrators' Association for the periods of July 1, 2007 to June 30, 2010.

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

MOTION PASSED 6-0

b. Budget

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

Superintendent Wolfe remarked that he was concerned with the price of electricity for January and February 2007. He mentioned that all administrators are preparing their next year's budget to be submitted to the Superintendent in December.

c. Buildings & Grounds

Ron Haskins stated there were several repairs :

Water pumps at TVES

Separate hot water heater at NBHS for the food and nutrition class

Gym floors are being made ready for basketball season

Replace circulator pumps at the auditorium

JHS fire pumps

Mr. Haskins stated the supervisor of Building and Grounds is compiling a list of projects that have to be addressed in 2007-2008.

Bonnie Symansky questioned about the outside lights.

Donald Winnicki remarked that we continue to work on them and the life span of the bulbs are not like they used to be as they are not as long lasting. He stated the times have been adjusted at TVES and ballast and pole fixtures are being worked on at the auditorium. Ballasts are on order

d. Curriculum

Bonnie Symansky stated that the communications curriculum has to be updated.

e. Pension

Elisabeth Caplan mentioned that retirements requests from a cafeteria worker, police officer and an assistant town clerk are being acted on. She remarked that the pension funding has been changed.

Vinny Candelora stated that there was a change in the funding amount because the funds have been stable and are in good shape.

f. Policy

Cheryl Smith stated that it was an organizational meeting and the use of a Breathalyzer at high school dances was discussed

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

Policy # P1020 (Revised) Attendance

Marcey Onofrio stated that Lisa Gagliardi raised a good point on the absences in the Policy and in the student handbook

Cheryl Smith stated the Policy was not written to go along with the student handbook. She mentioned she would welcome feedback from NBHS administrators.

Todd Stoeffler stated that in the handbook allowances were made for medical excuses, certain field trips (college interviews, and school sanctioned functions). These do not count towards absences.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that the Board does not write Policy to match up with handbooks. The handbooks are printed first but Policy drives the handbook.

John Bozzuto stated the policy should be tabled until the policy is clear.

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by John Bozzuto to approve Policy #P1020 Attendance as submitted.

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| CHAIRWOMAN SMITH: | NAY |
| VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY: | NAY |
| SECRETARY ONOFRIO: | NAY |
| JOHN BOZZUTO: | NAY |
| ELISABETH CAPLAN: | NAY |
| RON HASKINS: | NAY |

MOTIONED FAILED 6-0

g. ACES

Cheryl Smith could not attend this meeting.

h. Strategic Planning

Dr. Wolfe remarked that Site-Based planning is continuing at each of our Buildings with the high school scheduled for this spring to enter into their ????????

i. Building Committee

Ron Haskins remarked that an architect and a construction manager has been approved and hired for the NBIS project.

j. Calendar Committee

No meeting this month.

k. Transportation/Bus Safety Committee

No meeting this month.

l. Communication

Bonnie Symansky stated that there is a closer collaboration with the Cable Access Group and the school and they have agreed to loan NBHS some equipment. She stated this is saving us thousands of dollars.

VI. New Business

No new business at this time.

VII. Visitors and Press

Joanne Wentworth thanked the school staff; students and administrators for the marvelous Community Roundup stating the two food banks are overflowing.

Dr. Wolfe thanked Public Works and Fran Merola for all their help and transportation of the food articles to the food banks.

Lisa Gagliardi thanked the Board for the Board packets she receives each month. She stated that she was outraged when she heard that Board members had no problems with the Superintendent's decision regarding the appeals of some of the athletes involved in the recent party incident. She remarked that she felt the Board of Education failed at their job by not adhering to Board policy, NBHS handbook and CIAC rules. She stated that the policies along with the strategic plan are the framework by which our school district runs. By not stepping up and doing their job, the Board A- showed total disregard for people's efforts who wrote the policies and student athlete/parent affidavit, B- make a mockery of the framework and C- allowed the negative publicity to continue thereby making a mockery of this town. Upon the first quarter of their term she gave

them a grade of D but remarked that there is plenty of time for the Board to improve if they want to put forth the effort. She stated that policies are meant to be followed and implemented and this Board needs to become more knowledgeable and serve our students. She stated that this has nothing to do with politics.

**VIII. The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for
December 21, 2006 at Totoket Valley Elementary School.**

IX. Adjournment

MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Bonnie Symansky to reconvene to executive session at 9:14 a.m. to discuss negotiations and personnel.

ALL VOTED AYE

MOTION: Moved by John Bozzuto and seconded by Elisabeth Caplan to adjourn this executive session at 9:50 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Ardine
Account Clerk