

NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING  
MAY 17, 2007

The North Branford Board of Education meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Board of Education conference room at Totoket Valley Elementary School on Thursday, May 17, 2007. The following members attended:

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

Superintendent of Schools:	Dr. Robert K. Wolfe
Director of Personnel & Business:	Donald A. Winnicki

**MOTION:** Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by Elisabeth Caplan 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 negotiations, personnel and legal.

**ALL VOTED AYE**

**MOTION:** Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by Elisabeth Caplan to reconvene to Public Session at 7:00 p.m. in the Library Media Center.

**ALL VOTED AYE**

**I. Visitors**

Director of Business/Personnel:	Donald Winnicki
Principals:	Michele Saulis, NBHS Alan Davis, NBIS Dr. Karen Johnson, STW Shawn Parkhurst, JHS

Joe DeFrancesco	Christin Baldwin	David McMahan
Barbara Travisano	Phil Palma	Jean Sunny
Heide Ahlstrom Miller	Connie Misiti	Stephanie Flanagan
John Flanagan	Mike Misiti	Michelle Misiti
Joan Williams	Mary Humby	Bruce Williams

Todd Stoeffler  
Jacqueline Folz  
Angela Varca  
Tyler Flanagan  
Andrew Esposito  
Joe Humby

Rebecca Folz  
Franz Folz  
Brianna Viglione  
Peter Fappiano  
Jenny Juliano

Joe Folz  
Marcia Staffa  
Ryan Williams  
Joanne Wentworth  
Mike Humby

## II. Student Representatives

Jessica Ferraro reported on the following:

- Sports: Baseball 12-5  
Lacrosse 10-5  
Girls Tennis 8-9  
Boys Tennis 4-12  
Girls Track 2-4
- Relay for Life: Teams are forming  
Basketball and volleyball participants have teams  
Students are selling purple bows at lunch to raise money.
- Talent show: The talent show was very successful. There were winners in two categories: Individual winner: Giovonna LaVorgnia - a dancer, Group winner- Piano Man: Mr. Boardman, Billy Kottage, and Joe Lasko.
- National Honor Society: Ceremony has been postponed to June 7<sup>th</sup> due to inclement weather.
- Academic Awards: May 31<sup>st</sup>.
- Scholarship Ceremony: June 12<sup>th</sup>
- Junior Prom The prom was held at Laurel View on April 27<sup>th</sup> and went very well.
- Senior Prom: The senior prom is May 18<sup>th</sup> and everyone is very excited. It will be held at Cascade in Hamden.

Cheryl Smith made a statement that Board members are well aware of the media coverage of the issue regarding alleged grade tampering at the high school. The event is in an ongoing investigation, and there will be no discussion regarding this because it is being investigated. The Board wanted to let everyone know that they are aware of these allegations. It is under investigation.

### **III. Consent Agenda**

#### **a. Minutes**

Minutes of the April 19, 2007 Board of Education meeting.

#### **b. Resignations**

The Superintendent has received a letter of resignation from Mrs. Laura Baldino-Durante, grade 3 teacher at Jerome Harrison School, effective immediately. Mrs. Baldino-Durante had been on leave for the 2006/2007 school year. We wish Mrs. Baldino-Durante best wishes in her future endeavors.

The Superintendent has received a retirement resignation from Mrs. Margaret Hrabchak, language arts consultant at Stanley T. Williams School. This resignation is effective June 30, 2007. Margaret has dedicated the past 19 years to the North Branford Public Schools. We thank Margaret for her dedicated service to the children of North Branford and wish her a happy and healthy retirement.

#### **c. Appointments**

The Superintendent is recommending the appointment of Concetta Misiti to the position of mathematics teacher at North Branford High School for the 2007/2008 school year. Ms. Misiti will be placed on Masters, Step 3, of the agreement between the North Branford Board of Education and the North Branford Federation of Teachers.

The Superintendent is recommending the appointment of Anne Young to the position of social studies teacher at North Branford High School for the 2007/2008 school year. Ms. Young will be placed on Masters, Step 1 of the agreement between the North Branford Board of Education and the North Branford Federation of Teachers.

#### **d. Leaves**

The Superintendent has received an unpaid leave request from Mrs. Katie Copeland, grade 1 teacher at Stanley T. Williams School for the 2007/2008 school year under Article 20 of the agreement between the North Branford Board of Education and the North Board Federation of Teachers.

#### **e. Field Trips – None at this time.**

f. Donations

The North Branford Booster Club has made a generous donation of \$4,000 towards the purchase and installation of a new scoreboard on the stadium football field. Rose Angeloni, President of the Booster Club, will make the presentation after acceptance by the Board.

**MOTION: Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Marcey Onofrio to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted.**

<b>CHAIRWOMAN SMITH:</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>VICE-CHAIR SYMANSKY:</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>SECRETARY ONOFRIO:</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>JOHN BOZZUTO:</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>ELISABETH CAPLAN:</b>	<b>AYE</b>
<b>RON HASKINS:</b>	<b>AYE</b>

**MOTION PASSED 6-0**

**IV. Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Wolfe welcomed Connie Misiti to the position of Math teacher at our high school.

Connie Misiti thanked the Board for the opportunity and feels honored and privileged to serve as math teacher at North Branford High School.

Dr. Wolfe welcomed Annie Young to the position of Social Studies teacher at North Branford High School

Annie Young thanked the Board for this opportunity and looks forward becoming a member of the staff.

Dr. Wolfe stated that both ladies are graduates of Quinnipiac.

Dr. Wolfe introduced Rose Angeloni, the President of the Booster Club at the high school, who gave a donation to the Board of Education.

Rose Angeloni spoke about the Booster Club's function and presented a check for \$4,000.00 which was raised from the 2005-2006 funds.

Dr. Wolfe added that the Booster Club will be sponsoring a coach's clinic at the beginning of the year. He thanked the Club for this as well.

Dr. Wolfe stated that the check is going to go towards the replacement of the main stadium scoreboard. The scoreboard will be a digital scoreboard on the football field, and the long range plan is to include the replacement of the baseball scoreboard and the installation of a two sided scoreboard for field hockey and soccer. He added that Representative Candelora has secured some money for the school system for the balance of the scoreboard.

#### a. Recognition

##### Field Hockey

State Representative Vincent Candelora sponsored recognition of the 2006/2007 Girl's Field Hockey Team at the State Capitol on Wednesday, May 2, 2007. Coach Babby Nuhn led her State Champion T-Birds onto the floor of the Legislature to receive public recognition for their dream year. The girls won the State Championship and on route to the title defeated the first, second and third-ranked teams in the State. Special thanks to Representative Candelora for arranging for this high honor.

##### AmeriCares

Dr. Wolfe recognized the students and faculty that participated in the AmeriCares project.

Cheryl Smith presented the students and faculty members with a gift for their participation.

Thirty-eight high school students and seven faculty members were joined by members of the building trades in an exciting AmeriCare Homefront Day Project on Totoket Road during the weekends of April 28th and May 5th.

The project was intended to renovate the home of an elderly resident and make it more handicap accessible. Students scraped, primed and painted the home, cleaned the yard and assisted in the rebuilding of the porch and ramp as well as making interior doors wheelchair accessible.

The owner of the home stated that "this has totally restored my faith in high school students—it is amazing what they have done."

The project was coordinated by high school teacher, Barbara Travisano, who has made many wishes come true during the past two decades. Joining her were faculty members Heidi Ahlstrom Miller, Bob and Patti Darragh, Peter Fappiano, Kate Fleming, Jean Sunny. Congratulations to all the volunteers.

Barbara Travisano thanked the Board for her gift and stated that she has received several phone calls remarking that the group from North Branford did a fabulous job, and next year's project is on May 3, 2008.

b. Communications

The Superintendent has received a letter from Stephanie Monroe, Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. The letter thanks the North Branford School District for our efforts in completing the 2006 Civil Rights Data Collection.

Dr. Wolfe saluted the administration, secretarial and technology staff for their extra time, energy and efforts.

c. Summer of 2007

The Summer of 2007 – “Classic Toys – Great Camps” brochure was released for distribution in both North Branford and North Haven on March 1<sup>st</sup>. As of May 9<sup>th</sup>, 1200 program registrations have been received. Approximately two-thirds of the registrations are from North Branford and one-third from North Haven.

Dr. Wolfe added that the Co-Directors are Tippi Chupron and Michele Kronkitis-Horn.

d. Kindergarten Registration

JHS 77  
STW 71

e. 2007-2008 Budget

The referendum on both the Town and Board of Education Budget was held this past Tuesday. Only 378 voters out of more than 8,500 eligible voters went to the polls. 131 stated that the budget was acceptable, 228 rejected the budget as too high and 19 rejected the budget as too low. The 378 voters represented only 4.4% of those eligible. A minimum of 15% or 1,281 was required for the budget to go back to the council for further action. When less than 15% vote, the Charter does not have a mechanism for further cuts.

Dr. Wolfe stated that he has met with the Administration, and will continue to meet to determine where the cuts totaling \$292,000 will be made. He feels it is better to take this slower at this time. He has had one workshop with the budget sub committee, and will have another one. It is expected that this work will be substantially completed by the June Board of Education Meeting. Administration's recommendations will be first made to the Budget Subcommittee.

Dr. Wolfe added that the reason that it is better for this process to go slowly is because of teacher turnover. Teacher turnover helps. There have been one or two more individuals that have announced that they are either retiring or leaving. Teacher turnover does not always work in the school system's favor because there are times when the person coming in may cost more than the person leaving and there are shortage areas which makes some of those difficult areas. For the most part there is a savings, and the greater the savings on teacher turnover, the less impact the budget reduction will have on both reduction in force and programs. We are working on that and will continue to provide information to the budget sub committee. The amount of savings because of teacher turnover has risen to about \$23,000. We will be providing the budget sub committee with an update on June 4<sup>th</sup>.

f. Teacher of the Year 2008

The Superintendent announced the committee's selection for the 2007/2008 Teacher of the Year. The following building representatives have been selected:

NBHS	Brian Bodner
NBIS	Erin Flood-Harrison
TVES	Tina Acampora
JHS/STW	Barbara Gasparine

Dr. Wolfe stated that he will announce in the very near future to the Board of Education and the school system the individual that has been selected as the representative for the entire school district. The mentioned individuals are in the running and a committee has been formed which is comprised of administration, as well as their peers. They will go through a process which includes written material and an interview. They will make a recommendation to the Superintendent. On or about June 7<sup>th</sup>, he will make an announcement about who will represent North Branford. The person will go to a ceremony in Hartford where they will receive their award from the new Commissioner of Education and will be in the running for Teacher of the Year for the State of Connecticut.

#### g. National Honor Society

Dr. Wolfe stated that the Honor Society induction was supposed to be held on May 16<sup>th</sup> but due to the weather conditions and tornado warning it has been postponed to Thursday evening June 7<sup>th</sup>. There will be 37 students inducted this year. Tracy Wootton and Jen Marena are the high school faculty advisors. We look forward to that event.

#### h. Curriculum - End of the Year Reports

Dr. Wolfe thanked Michele Saulis for filling in for Joan Follo on the three end of the year reports for the Curriculum Management Cycle which are listed.

##### ***Math 6-12: Review Phase EXHIBIT E***

##### ***World Languages 6-12: Implementation 1 Phase EXHIBIT F***

##### ***Science 6-12: Evaluation Phase EXHIBIT G***

Chairpersons of these departments have shared their report with the BOE Curriculum Subcommittee prior to this meeting.

Michele Saulis gave an overview regarding these reports.

Elisabeth Caplan stated that the CMTs have not kept up with the frameworks and it poses some challenges and they are trying to work that out to continue to align themselves with the state frameworks. Eventually when the CMT does catch up the school system will be ahead of the game, which is great. With the science, because it is such an expensive area to teach, the school system will need to make some investments with some equipment and with maintenance of the equipment.

Bonnie Symansky stated that the microscopes seem to be falling apart, and we should be looking at the budget to allocate some money so that things that need to be replaced can be replaced over time.

Bonnie Symansky added that there has been a little resurgence in French, and Italian is not as strong as it was. There was a lot of interesting ideas that all of them shared. Jen Marrenna wanted to thank the Board for the great new textbooks that the kids are using in foreign languages and they are helping a lot.

Cheryl Smith asked if the money for supplies will come out of strategic planning.

Dr. Wolfe replied that it would. He added that money has been allocated in every building for science plus there is money in the curriculum management cycle.

Bonnie Symansky added that what made it very difficult is that they have redone at the state level the CAPT test that the students have to be doing. It is much more rigorous than it was and more materials are needed. In terms of math, they are looking at some form of 4<sup>th</sup> year math that would prepare the non-college students for things that have to do with business or the trades.

i. District Retirement Dinner

Dr. Wolfe stated that the sixth annual North Branford Public School Retirement Dinner will be held on Wednesday, June 6<sup>th</sup> at the Country House Restaurant in East Haven. Invitations have been sent to current and retired employees. The following individuals will be honored at this year's event:

***Rosann Adamczyk – cafeteria employee at STW***

***Josephine Cozzi – cafeteria employee at NBHS***

***Doreen Elia – Special Education Teacher at JH***

***Nancy Gray – Physical Educator at TVES***

***Margaret Hrabchak – Language Arts Consultant at STW***

***David Prather – Health Educator from NBHS***

Dr. Wolfe added that the event will be a wonderful salute to these longtime employees.

**V. Committee Reports**

a. Negotiations

Ron Haskins reported that the committee met twice in the last few weeks to interview legal counsel for the upcoming negotiations between the Board of Education and the teacher's union and also met with the Superintendent to give guidance with the non affiliated contracts.

b. Budget

Elisabeth Caplan reported that the budget committee met.

Cheryl Smith reported that there were not a lot of surprises in the budget. In terms of energy, we have encumbered some funds, but are not sure if we are going to end up in the black or red because there were a lot of warm days this year and may not have spent as much money on heating as we have expected.

Donald Winnicki added that there not any major changes. There was a slight variance in building improvements which was largely a result of the fact that there were some discretionary funds that the administrators wanted to move into that category. They are allowed to use their funds for that.

c. Building and Grounds

John Bozzuto reported that there is a meeting scheduled for May 29<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. There is also a Permanent Building Project Committee meeting that night.

d. Curriculum

Curriculum was covered by the information reported by Michele Saulis.

e. Pension

Elisabeth Caplan reported that the committee met and approved three pensions and year to date we are 11.98% above market. It is doing very well. The next meeting on August 15<sup>th</sup> there will be a presentation which will include a snapshot on how the funds are doing.

f. Policy

No meeting. The meeting has been rescheduled for May 29<sup>th</sup>.

The Board of Education is receiving the following policies for second reading and approval:

Policy #P5000	Administration – Basic Concept
Policy #P5010	Organizational Chart
Policy #P5020	Hiring School Administrators
Policy #P5030	Administrative Councils and Committees

**MOTION:** Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by Cheryl Smith to approve Policy #P5000 Administration – Basic Concept as submitted.

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

**MOTION PASSED 6-0**

**MOTION:** Moved by Elisabeth Caplan and seconded by Bonnie Synmansky to approve Policy #P5010 Organizational Chart as submitted.

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

**MOTION PASSED 6-0**

**MOTION:** Moved by Elisabeth Caplan and seconded by Bonnie Symansky to approve Policy #P5020 Hiring School Administrators as submitted.

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

**MOTION PASSED 6-0**

**MOTION:** Moved by Elisabeth Caplan and seconded by Marcey Onofrio to approve Policy #P5030 Administrative Councils and Committees as submitted.

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

**MOTION PASSED 6-0**

g. ACES

Cheryl Smith reported that she attended a short ACES meeting this month. She reported that it was decided that the daycare center will be closing two years from now.

Dr. Wolfe asked if he should write a letter on behalf of the Board to the Executive Director of ACES who will be receiving his Doctorate.

Cheryl Smith replied that it would be nice to do that.

#### h. Strategic Planning

Dr. Wolfe reported that each of the building site based plans are coming to a closure. Each of the principals will be submitting a summary evaluation of their work, and he will provide the Board with a summary of the Strategic goals that were established for the school system. In August the Board will be presented with new specific action plans and goals for this coming year.

#### i. Building Committee

Dr. Wolfe reported that the Building Committee will be meeting at least once or twice a month, probably for the next thirty to thirty six months.

The Superintendent has received approval from the State of Connecticut for Phase 1 of the NBIS Renovate as New Project. A copy of the approval is enclosed for Board review. In addition, the Superintendent will provide the Board with an update on the planning meeting for Phase 2 of the project which was recently held in Hartford and Phase 4 (Portables).

Dr. Wolfe added that the state asked the architects to make some modifications. Drawings to date are always on file in the conference room of Central Office, both the specifications and the drawings. If the Board Members or the public would like to review the drawings, they are all there. There will be a third generation of drawings based on the changes that either the focus groups that Alan Davis and Christine Imperato ran, or the State asked us to make changes in. These drawings should be in next week. Phase 4 is scheduled for a review meeting in Hartford in early June. There will be initially two portables in the 07-08 school year, and eight added for the 08-09 school year, for a total of ten portables.

Dr. Wolfe thanked Don Winnicki, Alan Davis, Christine Imperato and the Central Office staff that are involved in this project because it has added an entire new scope of work and heavy demands. The haz-mat contract should be awarded and that will begin to commence the project once the students are out in June. In order for the portables to be eligible for reimbursement as part of this project, the Board must approve the following motion:

**MOTION:** Moved by John Bozzuto and seconded by Marcey Onofrio to approve Final Plans and Professional Cost Estimates for Phase 4, Acquisition and Installation of Portable Classrooms for Project 099-0049RNV/E North Branford Middle/High School as submitted and to submit the corresponding Form ED-042.

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

**MOTION PASSED 6-0**

j. Calendar Committee

Marcey Onofrio reported that the Calendar Committee has not met at this time. Calls will be made to previous committee members to see if they are interested in working on this committee. A committee will then be set up and work will start on the next calendar.

k. Transportation

No report at this time.

l. Communications

Bonnie Symansky reported that work was done at the high school last Saturday installing equipment for channel 19, the electronics, DVD decks. Channel 19 is up and running. The cable facility donated some of the equipment for that. The question is whether we want to run the Board meetings on channel 19. The meetings are currently run on channel 20, which is the government channel, or on both channels. If so, who will do that – which is a manpower issue.

**VI. Visitors and Press**

Joe DeFrancesco thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak at the Board meetings. He spoke about the incident at the middle school concerning the graffiti/bomb scare. He is concerned about the fact that students were allowed into the school and then evacuated since the graffiti was discovered at 6:00 by a custodian.

Alan Davis gave a timeline of events, and an explanation of the process taken by administrators and the police department.

Joe DeFrancesco stated that if the discovery was made at 6:00, why was the decision made later for the dogs to be brought in and the students be evacuated.

Cheryl Smith stated that once the police are called, they take over a lot of the decisions.

Alan Davis added that he has 100% faith in the police department who are trained to respond to these conditions.

Joe DeFrancesco asked what changed between 6:15 and when the dogs were called in.

Alan Davis replied that a decision was made to bring the dogs in as a precautionary measure.

Officer Doody stated that the facility was locked and alarmed at night, and the police department did not receive any alarms. The police department has to wait for the trained dogs to arrive as there are only a few in the state.

Christin Baldwin asked why the students were allowed in the school while the decisions were being made to bring the dogs in. By bringing the dogs in later shows that there is a doubt.

Cheryl Smith thanked the parents for sharing their concerns because one of the things that happen following these events is to review the entire process and think about ways to do things better.

Cheryl Smith added that the communication with parents is a major issue in our community. Following the last bomb scare, there was a discussion to get a communication system to communicate with the parents immediately. Our hope is that it will be in place for the next school year. The communication issue is being dealt with after learning from the last issue.

Cheryl Smith stated that she appreciates the parents coming in to share their concerns and as the process is reviewed and thinking about ways to do it better, these are the things the Board needs to know from parents, and hopefully all of these issues are taken into account.

Officer Doody stated that the police department followed procedure 97% of the way, and explained their procedures.

Joe DeFrancesco added that the only issue he had was that the children should not have been allowed into the school.

Christin Baldwin stated that some of the parents drop the children off before the buses arrive. Someone should have been outside of the school to inform the parents of the situation.

Office Doody stated that everyone is rechecking their policies since the last incidents with the colleges. Everyone is working together.

Christin Baldwin added that she thinks allowing the children in school was not the right thing to do.

Cheryl Smith thanked the parents for sharing this information.

Lisa Albert stated that she was told that graffiti was written inside the school, on a blackboard, and if everyone is sure that there was no security breach between 11:00 and when the janitor came in the school when did that get put there?

Alan Davis replied that he did not receive any reports of anything written inside the school.

Lisa Albert stated that she heard this from a teacher.

Alan Davis stated that it hadn't been reported to him.

Lisa Albert added that she called the police department at 8:15 and was told that the buses were being rerouted. When she arrived at school, she found out that was not true and the students were outside.

Cheryl Smith stated that the buses were letting students off at the tennis courts.

Laura Pierson thanked the Board for talking about the issue at the middle school because she had a lot of concerns.

**MOTION:** Moved by Elisabeth Caplan and seconded by Marcey to adjourn executive session at 8:10 p.m.

**ALL VOTED AYE**

**MOTION:** Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by Ron Haskins to reconvene too Public Session at 9:45 p.m.

**ALL VOTED AYE**

**VII. The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for  
June 14, 2007 at Totoket Valley Elementary School.**

**VIII Adjournment**

**MOTION:** Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by Ron Haskins to adjourn this Board of Education meeting at 9:46 p.m.

**ALL VOTED AYE**

Sincerely submitted,

Terri Rienzo  
Secretary