

## NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

November 14, 2007

The North Branford Board of Education meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday November 14, 2007 in the Conference Room of Totoket Valley Elementary School. The following members attended:

Board Chairwoman:	Cheryl Smith
Board Vice-Chairwoman:	Bonnie Symansky
Board Secretary:	Marcey Onofrio
Board Members:	John Bozzuto Elisabeth Caplan Ron Haskins
Superintendent of Schools:	Dr. Robert K. Wolfe

**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.

**ALL VOTED AYE**

**MOTION:** Moved by Elisabeth Caplan and seconded by John Bozzuto to reconvene to Public session at 7:00 p.m.

**ALL VOTED AYE**

### I. Visitors

Director of Personnel / Business:	Donald Winnicki
Director of Curriculum / Instruction:	Joan Follo
Director of Special Services:	Suzanne Wright
Principals:	Michele Saulis, NBHS Alan Davis, NBIS Nancy Brittingham, TVES Shawn Parkhurst, JHS

Christopher Fraenza  
Gayle Bodner  
Nancy Lappie  
Jenny Juliano

Kathy Gargiulo  
Joanna Bodner  
Chris Manna  
Christine Imperato

Brian Bodner  
Cliff Potter  
Debbie Prunier

No visitor comments at this time.

**MOTION:** Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Ron Haskins to amend tonight's agenda to discuss two resignations.

<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 PASSES 6-0**

## **II. Student Representatives**

Christopher Fraenza and Kathy Gargiulo reported on the following:

### **Academics**

Report cards were issued on Tuesday November 12, 2007.

Parent conferences were held on Wednesday November 13, 2007 and student council members were there to assist the parents.

### **Social**

Homecoming events were spread out between two weekends. The game was held on November 2<sup>nd</sup> and the dance was held on October 20<sup>th</sup> and it was a safe and fun night for all students.

The Holiday Concert will be held on Wednesday, December 12, 2007.

### **Charity**

Many acts of charity are occurring throughout the school for the holiday season:

Salvation Army gift tags will be going on sale soon.

FBLA is sponsoring Tuna Towers.

National Honor Society are selling Christmas ornaments with the money raised going to Yale's Children Hospital.

Student Council is holding a canned food drive.

### **Sports**

Fall sports are coming to an end.

Field Hockey lost in the semi-finals against Granby.

Girls' Soccer won Shorelines. 15-3-2

Boys' Soccer made it to the Shorelines. 11-4-1

Last football game will be held on Saturday November 17, 2007.

In preparation for winter sports the gym floor is being redone.

### **III. Consent Agenda**

#### a. Minutes

Minutes of the October 18, 2007 Board of Education meeting.

#### b. Resignations – None at this time.

#### c. Appointments

The Superintendent has received a recommendation from Alan Davis, Principal of NBIS, to appoint Mr. Michael Votto to the position of 6-8 Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator.

The Superintendent has received a recommendation from Michele Saulis, Principal of NBHS, to appoint Mr. Cliff Yerkes to the position of NBHS Head Basketball Coach.

#### d. Leaves - None at this time.

#### e. Field Trips

The Superintendent has received a field trip request from North Branford Intermediate School. The request is for a trip on May 29, 2008 to Boston, Massachusetts. The departure time is 6:30 a.m. from NBIS and will return at approximately 9:15 p.m.

The Superintendent has received a field trip request from Mrs. Jennifer Marenga, world language teacher at NBHS. The proposed trip is to New York City where students will experience authentic food and learn about Hispanic and European cultures. Students will leave NBHS at 6 a.m. and return at 9 p.m. on either Wednesday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, or Wednesday May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

f. Donations – None at this time.

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

<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 PASSES 6-0**

#### **IV. Superintendent's Report**

a. Recognition

Board Members

Superintendent Wolfe stated that this evening marks the last regularly scheduled meeting for three sitting Board Members. All three have given exceptional service on behalf of the children, faculty and staff of the North Branford Public Schools. Current Chair, Cheryl Smith, has been on the Board of Education for four years, the last two years as Chair. She has also been a member of the Policy, Budget and Negotiations Subcommittees as was the district's representative to the ACES Governing Board. Board Member, Ron Haskins, has also served for four years – two as Chair. He currently is a member of the Policy, Buildings and Grounds, Negotiations and Transportation Subcommittees. Liz Caplan has been a Board Member for two years. She is currently a member of the Policy, Curriculum and Strategic Planning Subcommittees. She has also served as liaison on the PAC.

During their tenure as Board Members, much has been accomplished. He saluted these individuals and thanked them for their dedicated service. Dr. Wolfe remarked that all three individuals were driven by what was best for the students of North Branford. He also mentioned the unique relationship between the Superintendent and Board Chair stating they are in contact almost daily.

Alan Davis, Principal of NBIS and President of the Administrators' Union stated that all administrators extended their sincere appreciation for their incredible level of dedication and stated that they all paved the road for the future of our school system.

Brian Bodner, NBPS Teacher of the Year

Department chair and social studies teacher at the high school, Brian Bodner, will be honored at the Teacher of the Year Program scheduled to be held November 15, 2007 at the Central Connecticut State University. Brian will be escorted across the stage by the Superintendent of Schools and receive his award from the Commissioner of Education, Dr. Mark McQuillan. Brian's family and friends will be in attendance. We salute our North Branford Teacher of the Year!

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that Brian is involved in a large variety of activities with the leadership team and he is also involved in many sports such as football and track. This is Brian's ninth year at NBHS and he is working on his 092 administrators' degree. He remarked that Brian Bodner is a leader at NBHS and he epitomizes what we want in our teaching staff.

Michele Saulis remarked that Brian is indeed a leader at NBHS and well respected by his peers and students.

Cheryl Smith presented Brian Bodner with an award for being chosen North Branford's 2008 Teacher of the Year.

Brian Bodner stated it was a great honor to represent NBHS and the district of North Branford.

b. Communications

The Superintendent shared a letter from the State of Connecticut Department of Education thanking the district and individuals who served as scorers for the Beginning Educator Support and Training (BEST) Program.

The Superintendent is in receipt of a letter from "Kiducation" confirming their donation of \$153 which was generated from a Northford donation container.

The Superintendent shared with the Board communication from Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro.

Superintendent Wolfe shared hundreds of letters with the Board from students who attended the Blue Jupiter music concert at our auditorium. The group changed their performance and tailored their presentation for every grade level. The group won the Oreo Cookie Jingle as they were one of ten finalists from ten thousand applicants.

Blue Jupiter will return to North Branford on March 15, 2007 and will do two concerts if needed. The proceeds will go to the North Branford Educational Foundation and tickets will go on sale in January.

Alan Davis stated that Blue Jupiter was a phenomenal group who did a complete drum set by only using their mouths. He remarked that they were unbelievable.

c. Girls Hockey Club

At the last regular Board of Education meeting, Board members received information regarding a proposal for a Girls' Hockey Club.

This item was again tabled as no representative attended tonight's meeting.

d. 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. Attached are the 2006/2007 Strategic School Profiles. Please note that Special Education Strategic School Profiles were eliminated and key tables were integrated into the main Strategic School Profile.

Administrators highlighted data contained in this report and were available for questions that the Board had.

Bonnie Symansky questioned what part of this data they should be concerned with.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that North Branford had many students on the Free and Reduced lunch program and even more students could qualify but for some reason or another their parents do not apply.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned we had a high graduation rate, high attendance rate and a low drop out rate.

Christine Imperato mentioned that North Branford has a per pupil expenditure lower than many districts in our ERG.

Joan Follo mentioned that our kindergarten students attend 450 hours of instruction and the state mandates 900 hundred hours for full time kindergarten

Dr. Wolfe stated that in the near future the state of Connecticut would mandate full time kindergarten.

Ron Haskins questioned if the state of Connecticut or the state Board of Education would mandate this.

Dr. Wolfe stated both, and we now have nine sections of kindergarten half-days. We do not have the space for all-day kindergarten and we would have no where to house them. When STW is renovated we must make sure that there are rooms built for all-day kindergarten.

Bonnie Symansky questioned if there is technical support in eighth grade because from this report it didn't look like they had support.

Alan Davis stated that there was.

Dr. Wolfe suggested that we take a look at how this information was compiled and come back to this item.

e. 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.

Elisabeth Caplan questioned how this year's student grades compared to last year's student grades.

Michele Saulis stated about the same. Michele mentioned that more advanced courses would be offered next year.

Bonnie questioned what the grade of 1 was.

Michele Saulis stated that one was not a passing grade and that you need a three or better.

Superintendent Wolfe remarked that Dr. Karen Johnson, Principal of STW, would be leaving in December 2007. Dr. Johnson's husband received a promotion and they were relocating to North Carolina. He mentioned that Dr. Johnson was very knowledgeable and an avid supporter of visual literature.

**MOTION:** Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Bonnie Symansky to accept the resignation of Dr. Karen Johnson effective December 2007, with regrets.

<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 PASSES 6-0**

Elisabeth Caplan stated that as a parent and a Board member it has been a pleasure working with Karen Johnson and she would be missed.

Superintendent Wolfe stated he would send a letter to Dr. Johnson with regrets.

Dr. Wolfe stated that he received a letter from Nancy Brittingham stating she would retire in June 2008.

**MOTION:** Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Bonnie Symansky to accept The resignation of Nancy Brittingham, Principal of TVES effective June 30, 2008.

<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>

Cheryl Smith stated that Nancy Brittingham made it very easy for her daughter to enter the North Branford School System as Nancy Brittingham was very caring and kind and she made school pleasurable for her daughter

Dr. Wolfe remarked that Nancy Brittingham has been an administrator at North Branford for fourteen years of her thirty-nine years as an educator. He mentioned that she brought an incredible wealth of knowledge to North Branford. She has helped many teachers through the BEST process as our district BEST coordinator.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that one search committee would be formed to hire principals for STW and TVES. We will use an interim principal at STW from January 1, 2008 through June 30, 2008

Nancy Brittingham thanked everyone for her wonderful fourteen years and stated North Branford had been a wonderful place to land. She feels she has learned a lot from her staff and hopes they have also learned from her.

f. 2008 Summer Program

Plans are nearly complete for the Summer Program of 2008. This summer's theme is entitled "Do You Zoo?" Several camps will feature trips to zoos. In addition to the new science camps, there are also several new arts and crafts camps including duct tape camp. Campers will make a wide variety of accessories and clothing using all-purpose duct tape. This summer will also feature an expansion of the relationship with the Shoreline YMCA and the distribution of brochures in Regional School District #13 – Middlefield and Durham. The Superintendent announced that Eileen Chupron would be appointed as camp director for the 2008 summer program.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that Summer Camp brochures would be distributed March 1, 2008.

g. Scoreboard Dedication – Phase 1

The Superintendent was pleased to report that the new scoreboard dedication was held at Colafati Field on Friday evening, November 2<sup>nd</sup>. State Representative Vincent Candelora, Booster Club Officers, Rose Angeloni and Penny Seaman, joined NBHS Principal, Michele Saulis, and Athletic Director, Chris Webster, and the North Branford Cheerleaders in the ribbon cutting. This action completed Phase 1 of the scoreboard project. Funds are now being raised for Phase 2 which is a two-side scoreboard for Field Hockey and Soccer. Phase 3 is replacement of the baseball scoreboard.

h. Curriculum Guide

Under separate cover the Board received a copy of the Art Curriculum Guide for grades K-12 for first read. A special thanks to the Art Team: Joe Roberti, David Holland, Marci Prinz, Alice Chittenden, and Nilda Gagliardi for their dedication in producing a document that is standards based and teacher friendly. This is a living document in the sense that assessments will be developed and administered over this school year, exemplars determined and levels of proficiency defined based on the work of North Branford students. A section on the future of Visual Arts in the North Branford Public Schools has been included in the guide. These plans have their foundation in the school system's strategic plan, the NBPS Art's Study, national and state standards and frameworks and educator foresight.

Bonnie Symansky stated that this was an outstanding document. She mentioned that over ninety students could not take Art each year as we did not have enough teachers. She also mentioned that North Branford spends about \$6.00 per pupil on art resources and feels the Board should look closer at this.

Dr. Wolfe stated that North Branford could not compete with many school systems as we are lacking in the arts. There are plans to hire a .6 art teacher at NBHS for the next school year and we need to have a more comprehensive art program if we are to get our students into good colleges and art schools.

i. Science

The Superintendent and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Joan Follo provided the Board with an update on the elementary science program and shared with the Board some very exciting developments.

Joan Follo stated that we are realigning our science subject matter and science will now be on the Mastery testing.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that the elementary schools use science kits that are refurbished in a warehouse located in New Haven. We are in a consortium with Branford and New Haven at this time but plans are being developed to form a consortium with ACES. There is a possibility of grant money for science from the state.

j. Professional Development

On Tuesday November 6, 2007 the district held a Professional Development Day for certified staff members. Professional development activities were designed primarily around the work of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). For the most part, educators across the schools met in their collaborative teams to have meaningful conversations about student learning and achievement. Topics such as the development and scoring of common assessments, analysis of assessment data, and the development of instructional and intervention strategies were discussed.

Other activities related to site-based strategic planning at the high school, teaching and learning of reading strategies across the content areas at the middle school, and effective teaching strategies at the primary level were provided. In addition, training in the use of selected reading software for special education educators and paraprofessionals and physical management training for new special education educators were also part of the day's professional growth options.

k. Community Round-Up

The 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Community Round-Up was a huge success. Over 110 students and parents and 41 staff members braved rainy, cold conditions and collected nearly 7000 food items and \$740 to fill the two food closets in North Branford. Alan Davis, Principal of NBIS, was incredibly pleased with the support from his school. This was the 18<sup>th</sup> year of the Community Round-Up. In addition, students at JHS, STW and TVES collected nearly 1000 personal hygiene items for the food closets.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that this year's Community Round-Up was video taped by Joe Tenczar and his students and would be shown on the Fox network.

Deputy Mayor Joanne Wentworth also telephoned Dr. Wolfe stating the Senior Citizen dinner held on the same day was a great success.

**V. Committee Reports**

a. Negotiations

Ron Haskins stated the negotiations sub-committee met last week and a mediator, if needed, was picked and the next meeting will be held on November 19, 2007.

b. Budget

Elisabeth Caplan stated that at the last meeting the septic system was discussed and the Town Council has approved the bonding to commit to hooking up to the sewer system.

Bonnie Symansky questioned how the problem would be handled until we connect to the town sewer system.

Donald Winnicki stated we would have to keep pumping the STW sewer system and he and Kurt Weiss are working on this matter.

He also mentioned that we are contracting speech and psychological services.

The Superintendent enclosed a copy of the November 1 financial statement for Board review.

c. Buildings & Grounds

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that we submitted four security grants with the State of Connecticut and he thanked administrators, Karl Kilduff and Lisa Coughlin for all their work with this grant.

d. Curriculum

No report at this time.

e. Pension

No report at this time.

f. Policy

The Superintendent provided the Board with copies of the following policies for second reading and approval:

Policy #P3200 – Uniform System for Assignment and Changing of Student Grades

Bonnie Symansky remarked that the way this policy was written to please too many different people. She mentioned that she did not agree with the way the policy read that gave the building principal authority over teachers and where were the grade changes going to be stored. She felt that the way the policy was written was too wishy-washy.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that according to legal council the Principal has to have the authority.

Cheryl Smith stated that the principals have to have some authority.

Elisabeth Caplan questioned how Bonnie Symansky would word this authority.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that all Board members who did not agree with the way the policy was written to send in their views to the policy sub-committee.

**MOTION:** Moved by Elisabeth Caplan and seconded by Ron Haskins to approve Policy #P3200 – Uniform System for Assignment and Changing of Student Grades as submitted.

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

**MOTION FAILS 2-4**

Policy #P5050 – Superintendent of Schools  
Policy #P5090 – Educational Research in District Schools  
Policy #P5130 – Administrative Reports  
Policy #P5140 – Freedom of Information

John Bozzuto stated that the rest of the policies should be tabled until Board members could read them more thoroughly.

Marcey Onofrio also suggested the remaining policies be tabled as she just received her Board packet on Tuesday and didn't have time to fully read all policies.

The Board tabled Policies #P5060 - #P5090 - #P5130 - P#5140

g. ACES

Cheryl Smith reported that Shipman and Goodwin did a presentation on legislation for expulsions and the audit report was discussed.

h. Strategic Planning

No report at this time.

i. Building Committee

Dr. Wolfe stated that the State of Connecticut has approved the project as renovate as new and is hopeful the project will go out to bid soon.

j. Calendar Committee

A copy of the 2008-2009 District Calendar was attached for Board approval.

**MOTION:** Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Bonnie Symansky to approve the 2008-2009 District Calendar 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 PASSES 6-0**

k. Transportation/Bus Safety Committee

No report at this time.

l. Communication

No report at this time.

**VI. New Business**

No new business at this time.

**VII. Visitors and Press**

Cliff Potter questioned why students are standing in the road on the corner of Route 17 and Route 22 as he felt this was very dangerous.

Donald Winnicki stated the owner of the private property filed a complaint and students could no longer stand in the parking lot.

Ron Haskins questioned how many students were involved.

Donald Winnicki stated eight or ten students and because it was a cul-de-sac a full size bus could not go down this road. He remarked that we already have held a formal hearing on this matter. He mentioned that students have been told that they can wait back off the road and the bus would wait for them.

Dr. Wolfe suggested that he and Donald Winnicki would drive the site.

**VIII. The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 20, 2007.**

**XIV. Adjourn**

**MOTION:** Moved by Ron Haskins and seconded by Elisabeth Caplan to adjourn this meeting of the Board of Education at 8:43 p.m.

**ALL VOTED AYE**

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Ardine  
Account Clerk