

**NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**  
**August 14, 2008**

The August 14, 2008 meeting of the North Branford Board of Education was called to order at 6:03 p.m. in the Conference Room of Totoket Valley Elementary School. The following members attended:

|                               |                          |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Board Chairwoman:</b>      | <b>Deborah Prunier</b>   |
| <b>Board Vice-Chairwoman:</b> | <b>Marcey Onofrio</b>    |
| <b>Board Secretary:</b>       | <b>Nancy Lappie</b>      |
| <b>Board Members:</b>         | <b>John Bozzuto</b>      |
|                               | <b>Christopher Manna</b> |
|                               | <b>Bonnie Symansky</b>   |

**Superintendent of Schools:**                      **Dr. Robert K. Wolfe**

**Motion:**            Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by John Bozzuto to adjourn to executive session as per Section 1-225 of the Connecticut General Statutes as permitted by Section 1-200 (6) (a, b, & c) of the Connecticut General Statutes to discuss personnel and legal matters.

**ALL VOTED AYE**

**Motion:**            Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by Nancy Lappie to reconvene to public session at 6:55 pm.

**ALL VOTED AYE**

Board Chair, Deborah Prunier asked for a moment of silence in memory of Marilyn Tufano, retired cafeteria manager of NBHS who passed away earlier in the week.

**I.        Visitors**

|                                 |                  |
|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Director of Personnel/Business: | Donald Winnicki  |
| Director of Curriculum:         | Joan Follo       |
| JHS Principal:                  | Shawn Parkhurst  |
| STW Principal                   | Doug Hammel      |
| TVES Principal:                 | Dr. Kris Lindsay |
| NBHS Assistant Principal:       | Todd Stoeffler   |
| Marcia Staffa                   | William Mitchell |
| David McMahon                   | Daniel Cassidy   |
| Joseph Tenczar                  | David Cassidy    |

No visitor comments at this time.

**II. Student Representative – No report at this time.**

**III. Consent Agenda**

a. Minutes

Minutes of the July 15, 2008 Special Board of Education meeting.

Minutes of the July 17, 2008 Board of Education meeting.

b. Resignations

The Superintendent has received a resignation from Mr. Alphonse Proto, Cooperative Work Education Coordinator at North Branford High School. Mr. Proto has served the North Branford Public Schools for 28 years.

c. Appointments

The Superintendent has received recommendations from NBHS for 2008/2009 Department Chairs and Advisors. The Superintendent has also received recommendations from NBIS for stipend positions. Special thanks are extended to administration. The Superintendent is pleased with the personnel that will be guiding these activities. All of the positions are stipends in accordance with the contract between the North Branford Board of Education and the North Branford Federation of Teachers. As such, all appointments are renewed annually.

The Superintendent provided the Board with a listing of recommendations for both high school and intermediate school coaching positions.

d. Leaves - None at this time.

e. Field Trips – None at this time.

f. Donations – None at this time.

**Motion:** Moved by Marci Onofrio and seconded by Nancy Lappie to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted.

|                            |            |
|----------------------------|------------|
| <b>CHAIRWOMAN PRUNIER:</b> | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>VICE-CHAIR ONOFRIO:</b> | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>SECRETARY LAPPIE:</b>   | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>JOHN BOZZUTO:</b>       | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>CHRISTOPHER MANNA:</b>  | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>BONNIE SYMANSKY:</b>    | <b>AYE</b> |

**MOTION PASSED 6 - 0**

#### IV. Superintendent's Report

a. Recognition - Dr. Wolfe welcomed Billie Mitchell, the new varsity baseball head coach. He also asked the Board if they would like him to send a letter thanking Mr. Al Proto for his many years of service to the district at NBHS. Al was the Cooperative Work Education Coordinator who recently retired from NBHS. The Board agreed this would be a nice gesture.

b. Communications

The Superintendent shared a letter from Mr. & Mrs. Cappelli of Northford who have donated \$500 to the Project Pride program at Stanley T. Williams School.

c. Authority to Hire

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

|                 |   |                   |
|-----------------|---|-------------------|
| Kristen Eveland | TVES Special Education                      | Bachelors, Step 9 |
| Laura Neville   | NBIS Instrumental Music/General Music       | Bachelors, Step 1 |
| Marcia Robinson | NBIS Special Education                      | Masters, Step 2   |
| Susan Moore     | JHS(.6) & STW (.4) Library Media Specialist | Masters, Step 1   |

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that the District was fully staffed.

d. Curriculum Management Cycle

The Curriculum Management Cycle (CMC) drives instructional improvement. Each year the Superintendent and the Administrative Team review the CMC to ensure that any changes to the schedule are made with the intention to improve teaching and learning within the school systems capacity to support the modifications. The Superintendent and the Administrative Team reviewed and modified the CMC on July 19, 2008.

The following changes were made:

1. Combined the Technology Education, Communications, Food Service and Child Development into a Career Education Dept which will be managed by the Chairperson of Business and Technology.
2. Science will remain in the development/revision phase since we wanted to measure our success on the new science portion of the CMTs before making changes to the curriculum.
3. Character Education will not be in the evaluation phase next year...this area will be revisited by the administrative team to determine where monitoring will take place.

Dr. Wolfe distributed an updated copy of the CMC and noted that in 2008-09 there would be two major implementations: Language Arts, K-5 and Math, 6-12.

### Mathematics 6-12 Curriculum Guide

Under separate cover the Board has received a copy of the Math 6-12 Curriculum Guide for grades 6-12 for their first read. A special thanks to Tracy Wootton, Math Department Chairperson, and the 6-12 Curriculum Management Team for the consistent and persistent work accomplished in keeping our math curriculum aligned with state and national standards and supportive of CMT and CAPT assessment objectives.

Bonnie Symansky commented that the guide is very thorough and easy to follow. All teachers, new and tenured, will be able to tell exactly what material needs to be covered each marking period so there is consistency and the students will be tested equally no matter who the teacher may be for a particular subject area.

### Art K-12 Implementation Phase Report

As part of the Curriculum Management Cycle, the Art K-12 team developed the Art Implementation Phase report. The Implementation Phase 1 phase is the first year of full implementation of a new or revised curriculum. Art educators have been enthusiastic about their new curriculum. Not only about the connections to national and state art frameworks, but at the K-5 level, to visual literacy, the museum school partnership, and integration.

Dr. Wolfe commented about a letter he received from the Director of the Yale Center of British Art stating they are very enthusiastic about continuing the very successful program they had last year with grades 1 – 3.

#### e. Summer Professional Development

Each summer the district focuses on staff summer learning opportunities that are tied to the strategic plan and/or the delivery of curriculum. This summer the following individuals are registered for the conferences noted below.

Technology, Writers & Writing: An Advanced Mini Institute - July 1-3, 2008  
Bob Darragh

Education Connection- Writer's Workshop – July 21-24, 2008  
Kelly Golia

Columbia Writing – Most of our experienced staff K-5 have been trained in the Columbia Writing model. This model, along with other research based methods that support the teaching and learning of writing and thinking, are part of the training K-5 teachers will receive throughout the 2008-2009 school year by StoryTown's professional development support program. New teachers and staff not trained through the Columbia model will be trained through the StoryTown approach.

Everyday Mathematics – August 13, 2008  
Kris Lindsay  
Shawn Parkhurst  
Doug Hammel  
Deb Welton

### Responsive Classroom – Choice of July or August 2008

Responsive Classroom provides strategies and practices that address the social, emotional, and academic needs and development of the K-5 child. About 90% of our K-5 staff have been trained in this model.

Ashley Steele  
Linda Franklin-Biggs  
Lisa Flannery

### CONFRATUTE 2008 UConn Summer Institute – July 2008

Two weeks of training at Confratute is a prerequisite for our K-12 teachers who are preparing to become school level consultants for the gifted and talented student. Shelly Thompson completed her training last summer and is presently the G&T resource person for TVES. Cindy Genzano will complete her second week this summer and is the G&T resource person for NBHS. Marcella Ardine is training for the NBIS position and Michele Borbely is training for the STW/JHS position this summer.

Dr. Wolfe also commented that eight staff members attended the Profession Learning Communities (PLC) workshop in Boston and he has received several emails from staff who attended this conference excited about the work that will take place this year regarding PLC.

Bonnie Symansky asked if the district had anyone trained in English at the high school level through UConn. Dr. Wolfe stated that Robert Ford has been trained and has received certification in that program.

#### e. Enrollment

Kindergarten enrollment as of August 10<sup>th</sup> has leveled out and we currently have class sizes of 21's and 22's. The Board has supported this with full-time paraprofessionals. The numbers are as follows:

JHS 85

STW 85

#### f. Connecticut Mastery/ CAPT Test Scores

##### Connecticut Mastery Test, Fourth Generation (CMT 4)

This is the third administration of the Connecticut Mastery Test Fourth Generation. It is not a reliable practice to compare this generation of the assessment to the last generation. Therefore, comparisons reported for grade and class include school years 2006, 2007, and 2008. State comparisons are indicated for 2008 only.

The CMT 4, are in alignment with the Connecticut Curriculum Frameworks that are in alignment with national and state standards. The Connecticut state assessment provides school systems with the percentage of students who reach the state goal and proficiency standards. Assessment results also indicate levels of achievement in important knowledge and skills in the areas of mathematics, reading, and writing. This year the assessment includes science at grades 5 and 8.

There are five levels of achievement on the CMT 4 with level '5' the highest and '1' the

lowest. Goal attainment includes levels 4 and 5 and proficiency attainment includes levels 3, 4, and 5. The proficient level monitors Annual Yearly Progress for purposes of the No Child Left Behind national data collection. The CMT is administered during the spring of each school year to students in grades 3 through 8.

#### General Findings Compared to State Goal Level Results:

Grade 3: Below state goal in math and reading, and comparable in writing

Grade 4: Below state goal in math and reading and comparable in writing

Grade 5: Above state goal in math, reading, writing, and science

Grade 6: Above state goal in math, reading, and writing

Grade 7: Above state goal in math, comparable in reading and below in writing

Grade 8: Above state goal in math, reading, writing, and science

The most significant information derived from CMT results is the tracking of trends in student performance. For example, we are able to monitor the same class of students over the grades. This information helps us determine whether a specific class (same students) is learning what we expect them to learn and at what level of performance.

Comparing the same class of students over time is a more reliable and valid indicator of student progress than comparing the same grade over time. Results of this year's grade 4 students should be compared to their performance last year while in grade 3; this year's grade 5 students should be compared to last year's grade 4 students and the previous year's grade 3 students. These are the same students over time. Each class is unique, consisting of students with specific interests, learning styles, and ability differences all of which impact on overall assessment results.

Dr. Wolfe discussed the two major trends that the administration has seen develop over the years. The first trend is that our district does not do well at the lower level, but we cannot look at that statistic in isolation. This fact needs to be put in context with the second trend, which is as the students move through the system the students not only gain speed but they are significantly higher than state average as they reach the upper grades. By the time they reach the CAPT level they are reaching the percentile of the high 80's, low 90's for proficiency levels.

Dr. Wolfe explained some of the various reasons for these trends. Several reasons discussed included the retooling of the district curriculum, a vast majority of our students are not enrolled in pre-school, and we do not have full time kindergarten. Massive amounts of time and energy have been spent to provide the necessary resources and materials in language arts and math. Results will not be seen for a couple of years as the students continue to build on the new curriculum. A new language arts program is being introduced in the 2008-09 school year. Data will be collected in the coming months regarding the pre-school numbers and the costs associated with all day kindergarten.

Dr. Wolfe commented that once the data is presented to the Board regarding options of all day kindergarten and time on task at this level they will have to weigh this with the competing demand to continue to add staff to benefit from block scheduling.

Nancy Lappie asked if all day kindergarten would be state mandated. Dr. Wolfe responded that the Commissioner of Education, at an earlier meeting he attended, stated that it most likely would be but they don't know when. The Commissioner also

stated that funding for this would most likely go to priority districts that do not have all day kindergarten. North Branford does not fall into that category.

Bonnie Symansky asked for articles on the pros/cons of all day kindergarten to be included with the data being collected.

Dr. Wolfe also noted that this was the first year the CMT tested in science starting at grade 5 and the district did very well.

Marcey Onofrio asked why the significant drop in math with the present 8<sup>th</sup> grade class over time. Dr. Wolfe will look into this.

#### Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT 3)

Results of the CAPT3, administered in the spring of 2008, indicate that our 2008 grade 10 students improved in all areas (Mathematics, Science, Reading, and Writing) and scored higher than the state goal level in all areas tested on the state assessment. In addition, the number of students not making goal or proficiency is 10% or less, indicating that 90% of our students tested met or exceeded state and local grade level expectations.

#### g. Nutrition Report

The Superintendent provided the Board of Education with a summary of activities that were conducted in each of the schools in the 2007/2008 school year. These activities were in support of the Board's Nutrition Policy. Many significant changes have been made in the school lunch program which includes incorporating many whole wheat products and more fresh fruit and produce.

A side note regarding not only the food service program but also buildings and grounds department is the district is investigating more ways to become green. Some ways are the elimination of styrofoam products and water based cleaning supplies.

Nancy Lappie inquired if there was a school wide policy regarding cupcakes. Dr. Wolfe responded that we encourage healthy snacks for celebrations but the administration does have latitude in determining this level.

#### h. Giraffe Heroes Report

Action Plans 2.7, 2.8 and 2.9 call for voluntary community service on the part of all North Branford Public School students. The Superintendent reported that community service has become operational in the North Branford Public Schools. The Superintendent provided the Board a report detailing community service performed at all levels of our school system.

He reported there is a wide array of activities that have taken place over the past year. October is a very heavy month due to Make-A-Difference Day, the holiday months see very heavy activity, and the spring is busy with Relay for Life activities to highlight a few. Dr. Wolfe thanked all of the staff, students, and parents for their continued support of all of these very worthwhile organizations. The staff will be thanked with a special luncheon on Aug. 29 prepared by Chef Ed and his staff at the NBHS cafeteria.

i. Summer Camp Program

The Summer of '08 was a very successful summer with nearly 2120 registrations. The program has seen significant growth over the years. In 2001, enrollment was 104, 07-08 it was 1766. The program is designed to be fun, educational, safe, and cost effective. The camp was under the direction of Tippi Chupron. Among the most popular camps were Wet & Wild, Bowling and Ping Pong. Approximately 2/3 of the attendees were from North Branford and 1/3 from North Haven and Durham.

j. New Teacher Orientation

New Teacher Orientation is scheduled for August 25 & 26, 2008. The agenda features an overview of the Strategic Plan and the Fish and Hero philosophies as well as mini-workshops in the BEST program, Special education services, the Professional Growth Educator Evaluation Program, the Curriculum Management Cycle, Technology, and information related to Personnel and Business, as well as information about the North Branford Federation of Teachers.

Each new staff member will be paired with a 'school buddy' who has volunteered his/her time to assist their newest colleague in becoming acclimated to the programs, procedures, and layout of the school. New staff members will meet with their building principal on matters specific to school operations and will also have time to prepare their classrooms.

A New Teachers' breakfast and a New Teachers' Luncheon will be held on August 25<sup>th</sup>. These functions will provide new teachers the opportunity to meet Board of Education members, Central Office and School Administration, and their 'Buddy'.

Special thanks are extended to the entire administrative team and to the many faculty members who share their time and energy in support of our new employees.

New teachers will be assigned a BEST mentor who will guide and support them through the beginning phases of teaching and learning. Dr. Wolfe reported that one significant change in BEST is the video portion has been eliminated and the current program is being transformed for the 2009-10 school year.

Chris Manna inquired about how the BEST mentors are chosen. Dr. Wolfe explained that each mentor is trained through the BEST program and assigned a new staff member in their field. The mentor may not necessarily be in the same school.

k. Professional Development

August Professional Development Days are scheduled for August 27 – 29, 2008. Over the three days, particular attention will be focused at the K-5 level on the implementation of the new language arts curriculum guide, the StoryTown language arts materials, and on the introduction of our Response to Intervention philosophy and procedures. At the 6-8 level the focus will be on Web Page Training and Response to Intervention. The 9-12 staff will focus on SmartBoard training, Web site update and development, and action team work on school-wide rubrics.

I. Opening Convocation

The Opening Convocation for the North Branford Public Schools is scheduled to be held Wednesday morning, August 27<sup>th</sup>. Employees will return to a system-wide breakfast beginning at 8 a.m. in the high school cafeteria followed by the Opening Convocation in the auditorium at 9:15 a.m. The Opening will include comments from the Superintendent, Town Manager, Chair of the Board of Education, President of the Teachers Union, and the Teacher of the Year. There will also be several "Friends of Education" awards presented.

The Superintendent provided the Board with a copy of the 2008/2009 publications. These publications will be provided to each employee at the Opening Convocation.

V. **Committee Reports**

a. Negotiations

The North Branford Board of Education and the Nurses' union have reached agreement on a new contract commencing July 1, 2008 and ending June 30, 2011. Director of Personnel and Business, Don Winnicki, highlighted the new features of the contract.

**Motion:** Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Nancy Lappie to approve the new collective bargaining unit agreement between the North Branford Board of Education and the Local 1303-220 Connecticut Council #4 AFSME (Nurses) - for the period commencing July 1, 2008 and ending June 30, 2011.

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| <b>CHAIRWOMAN PRUNIER:</b> | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>VICE-CHAIR ONOFRIO:</b> | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>SECRETARY LAPPIE:</b>   | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>JOHN BOZZUTO:</b>       | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>CHRISTOPHER MANNA:</b>  | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>BONNIE SYMANSKY:</b>    | <b>AYE</b> |

**MOTION PASSED 6 - 0**

b. Budget

The Superintendent provided the Board with a copy of the August 1 financial statement. Don Winnicki commented that the teacher salary and transportation accounts will see a significant amount encumbered once school begins. The summer months are the slowest months for activity.

The Superintendent provided the Board with a list of Proposed 2008/2009 Budget Subcommittee meeting dates. Don Winnicki stated the Budget subcommittee meets the week before the board meeting so the financials can be included in the board packet.

**Motion:** Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Nancy Lappie to approve the 2008/2009 Budget Subcommittee meeting schedule as submitted.

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| <b>CHAIRWOMAN PRUNIER:</b> | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>VICE-CHAIR ONOFRIO:</b> | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>SECRETARY LAPPIE:</b>   | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>JOHN BOZZUTO:</b>       | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>CHRISTOPHER MANNA:</b>  | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>BONNIE SYMANSKY:</b>    | <b>AYE</b> |

**MOTION PASSED 6 - 0**

c. Buildings & Grounds

Dr. Wolfe gave an update on projects that have been worked on over the summer. They included a new roof over the TVES café; two new scoreboards will be installed on Aug. 19 at NBHS – one for soccer/field hockey, one for baseball; portables are ready for the school opening; the NBIS construction project is three weeks ahead of schedule; the studio conversion to art rooms is being completed at NBHS; Smartboards have been installed; and a new kiln room will be added to TVES during the school year. Bill Choti, John Florio, and the entire custodial staff were thanked for their outstanding efforts.

d. Curriculum – Report given under Superintendent’s report

e. Pension

Don Winnicki reported they met on Aug. 13 and elected Andrew Bozzuto – Town Council as Chairman and John Landolfi – Police Commission as Vice Chairman. Discussion was held regarding the new structure of the pension funds.

**Motion:** Moved by Nancy Lappie and seconded by Bonnie Symansky to approve the resolution for the establishment of a Board administered defined contribution pension plan.

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|----------------------------|------------|
| <b>CHAIRWOMAN PRUNIER:</b> | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>VICE-CHAIR ONOFRIO:</b> | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>SECRETARY LAPPIE:</b>   | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>JOHN BOZZUTO:</b>       | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>CHRISTOPHER MANNA:</b>  | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>BONNIE SYMANSKY:</b>    | <b>AYE</b> |

**MOTION PASSED 6 - 0**

f. Policy – Will start meeting in September.

g. ACES – No report at this time

h. Strategic Planning

The Board was provided a copy of the recommended goals from administration for the 2008/2009 school year. These goals in part drive the work of the school system and constitute a major piece of our school improvement plan.

Bonnie Symansky asked about the dates provided in the Strategic Plan Workbook for 2008-09. Dr. Wolfe explained that if there is no date next to an item it has not been approved by the Board as a goal. Dr. Wolfe reminded the Board the Plan is due to be updated in the 2008-09 school year and they should go ahead with it as planned with the new superintendent.

Marcey Onofrio asked for clarification on Strategy 4, Plan 6 – Each school would have a separate gym facility. Dr. Wolfe stated this would be scheduled when they address the facility needs of Stanley T. Williams, which is the only school without a separate gym.

**Motion:** Moved by John Bozzuto and seconded by Marcey Onofrio to approve the Strategic Planning Action Plans and Steps, as specified, as goals for the 2008/2009 school year.

|                            |            |
|----------------------------|------------|
| <b>CHAIRWOMAN PRUNIER:</b> | <b>AYE</b> |
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| <b>SECRETARY LAPPIE:</b>   | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>JOHN BOZZUTO:</b>       | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>CHRISTOPHER MANNA:</b>  | <b>AYE</b> |
| <b>BONNIE SYMANSKY:</b>    | <b>AYE</b> |

**MOTION PASSED 6 - 0**

i. Building Committee

Dr. Wolfe thanked Bonnie Symansky and Deborah Prunier for their time and effort in serving on this committee especially with the very involved project at NBIS.

j. Calendar Committee – No report at this time

k. Transportation/Bus Safety Committee – No report at this time

l. Communication – No report at this time

**VI. New Business**

Chris Manna asked the new principals how their transition into their new positions was going. Dr. Lindsay and Doug Hammel both reported tremendous support from their staff and colleagues and things were going very well.

**VII. Visitors and Press - No comments**

**VIII. The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 18, 2008.**

**XIV. Adjournment**

**Motion:** Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Nancy Lappie to adjourn this Board of Education meeting at 8:10 pm.

**ALL VOTED AYE**

**Respectfully submitted,**

**Rose Angeloni  
Recording Secretary**