

NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

November 20, 2008

The North Branford Board of Education met on Thursday, November 20, 2008 at 6:10 p.m. in the Superintendent's Conference Room of Totoket Valley Elementary School. The following members attended:

Board Chairwoman:	Deborah Prunier
Board Vice-Chair:	Marcey Onofrio
Board Secretary:	Nancy Lappie
Board Members:	Dr. Christopher Manna Bonnie Symansky

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

Absent:	John Bozzuto
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MOTION: Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by Marcey Onofrio 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 legal, personnel and negotiation matters.

ALL VOTED AYE

MOTION: Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by Marcey Onofrio to reconvene to public session at 6:50 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

I. Visitors

Director of Special Services:	Suzanne Wright
Director of Curriculum / Instruction:	Joan Follo
Supervisor of Operations:	William Choti
Principals:	Michele Saulis, NBHS Alan Davis, NBIS Dr. Kris Lindsay, TVES Shawn Parkhurst, JHS

David McMahon
Tina Acampora
Amy Smullen
Kelly Clifford

Jennifer Marena
Mary Lyden
Karyl Derbacher
David Lacroix

Katie Augustyn
Maria Troiano
Nicole Lacroix
Mary-Ellen DiLella

Angela DiLella
Cliff Potter

Barbara Girard
Kim Neubig

Karen Scheiber
Todd Stoeffler

No visitor comments at this time.

II. Student Representative

Deseray Peterson and Greg Sheiber reported on the following:

Academic

First marking period grades closed and report cards were sent out. Parent-Teacher conferences were held Tuesday and Wednesday where parents went from teacher to teacher meetings. December 6th will be the last date that seniors can take the SAT for this school year. NBHS has improved and enhanced its moral code and mission. New posters have been created and placed throughout the school. The code emphasizes respect, responsibility, integrity, caring and citizenship. On November 10th NBHS honored Veteran's Day and fifteen veterans visited the school to speak to various history classes. On December 2nd there will be a financial night at NBHS for seniors.

Social

Homecoming weekend started with a pep rally, where the homecoming kings and queens were announced. NBHS won the homecoming game and the various fundraisers were very successful. Homecoming dance was held on Saturday November 15th. Monday, November 10th, the powder-puff football game was held as a fundraiser for Project Graduation with seniors winning the final game. Helping Hands is planning a fundraiser to benefit our troops overseas. Each member of the club will bake three dozen cookies which will be sent to various troops overseas for the holidays. Our Food Service class has set up a collaborative program with Branford High School where each school will work together to participate in different cooking events. Drama Club tryouts will be held this week for parts in the years' school play, Seussical.

Athletics

The fall season has officially ended for all sports except football.

Cross-Country team ended with an awesome record and Alyssa Arre and Alyssa Selmquist were awarded first team all- shoreline. Kellie Walker was awarded first team all state.

Volleyball ended their season 7-11. Senior Nicole Paolini was awarded first team all-shoreline.

Girl’s soccer team ended their season 13-4-1. The soccer team entered the state tournament but lost in the PKs. Juniors Kelsey Platner and Kelly Martin were first team all-shoreline. Maddie Simonsen and Shannon Anderson were awarded second team all-shoreline.

Boys Soccer team ended their season 9-4-4.The qualified for the state tournament but lost in the PKs

Field Hockey ended their season 10-4-2. They lost to New Fairfield in the state tournament in the quarterfinal game. Kirsten Kilburn and Meghan Halligan were awarded second team all-shoreline. Sam Scavo, Mary DeMatteo and Deseray Peterson were part of the all-state team also.

Football is undefeated 9-0 and will play undefeated Cromwell this Saturday at Cromwell. Winter sports will officially start Monday the 24th with basketball.

III. Consent Agenda

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Nancy Lappie to amend the Consent Agenda to add the appointment of Ms. Kathleen Susat to the position of physical education teacher at Stanley T. Williams School and Jerome Harrison School for the balance of the 2008/2009 school year to be placed at Bachelors, Step 1, per the contract between the North Branford Board of Education and the North Branford Federation of Teachers.

CHAIRWOMAN PRUNIER:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR ONOFRIO:	AYE
SECRETARY LAPPIE:	AYE
CHRISTOPHER MANNA:	AYE
BONNIE SYMANSKY:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 5-0

a. Minutes

Minutes of the October 16, 2008 Board of Education meeting.

Minutes of the November 5, 2008 Special Board of Education meeting.

b. Resignations – None at this time.

- c. Appointments – None at this time.
- 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 - returning at approximately 9:15 p.m.

- f. Donations – None at this time.

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Nancy Lappie to approve the Consent Agenda as amended.

CHAIRWOMAN PRUNIER:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR ONOFRIO:	AYE
SECRETARY LAPPIE:	AYE
CHRISTOPHER MANNA:	AYE
BONNIE SYMANSKY:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 5-0

IV. Superintendent's Report

a. Recognition

1. Connecticut Association for the Gifted 2008 Administrator of the Year Award

The Superintendent was pleased to announce that the Connecticut Association for the Gifted has awarded Joan Follo, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, the CAG 2008 Administrator of the Year Award. Katie Augustyn, President of CAG, presented this award to Joan.

Ms. Augustyn stated that this award was a special inaugural award in recognition of what Joan Follo has done for the gifted students in North Branford. She remarked that Joan is an administrator who went above and beyond to establish a program for parents of talented students called POETS. Not only did Ms. Follo facilitate at these meetings but she was very instrumental in placing gifted resource specialists at each school in North Branford. Cindy Conforte entered the letter nominating Joan Follo for this honor.

Joan Follo remarked that she appreciated the award but she had many people involved in helping this program grow. She thanked Superintendent Wolfe and all Board

members for their support.

Dr. Wolfe and all Board members thanked Joan Follo for all she has done to benefit the students of North Branford.

2. North Branford Public Schools 2009 Teacher of the Year

Totoket Valley Elementary School special education teacher, David Lacroix, was recently honored at the Teacher of the Year Program held November 13, 2008 at the Central Connecticut State University. David was escorted across the stage by the Superintendent of Schools and received his award from the Commissioner of Education, Dr. Mark McQuillan. David's family and friends were in attendance. We salute our North Branford Teacher of the Year – David Lacroix!

Board Chair, Deborah Prunier presented a special award from the Board of Education to David Lacroix stating he is to be congratulated and commended for this honor.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that in the three years David has been at TVES he has established himself as a very important part of our special education program and the Totoket Valley School. Many of his colleagues were here tonight to honor David.

David Lacroix remarked that the process he went through as North Branford's Teacher of the Year made him reflect on what you do as a teacher. He stated that he is thrilled to be able to give back to his hometown and he thanked Suzanne Wright, Dr. Wolfe, Nancy Brittingham and Dr. Kris Lindsay for all their help and support.

b. Communications – None at this time.

Deborah Prunier read a letter to the Board of Education from a North Branford parent Valerie Mirabella. Her letter was addressed to Dr. Wolfe thanking him for all he has done for the North Branford School System and especially the Special Education Department. She wanted Dr. Wolfe to know that all the publicity he had to go through was unfair to him. She asked him that when he thought back on his North Branford experiences to remember the hundred of kids who will be better adults because of him and the environment he created in our small town. She remarked her family would be forever grateful for all he has done for her daughter.

c. Central Office News

Lisa Coughlin, Supervisor of Fiscal and Support Services, has submitted her retirement resignation effective December 1, 2008. Lisa has been employed by the North Branford Board of Education for the past 13 years. Lisa will be retiring to Florida. We wish Lisa the very best in the next chapter of her life.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that Lisa was responsible for managing Central Office, in charge of all grants, Family Resource finances, has the overall responsibility for finances of food service, supervises payroll, accounts payable and all accounting to the state of Connecticut. He remarked that Lisa Coughlin is an incredible employee and we wish her well.

The Superintendent was pleased to announce the appointment of Kim Neubig to the position of Supervisor of Fiscal and Support Services, effective with the retirement of Lisa Coughlin on December 1st.

Kim joined our district three years ago as a secretary at NBIS. Prior to that, she worked for a public sector auditor, and later as a staff accountant and then controller for a private company.

Kim has a BS in Accounting from Quinnipiac University and recently obtained her SDE certification as a School Business Official. Congratulations to Kim on her promotion to Supervisor in Central Office.

Deborah Prunier congratulated Kim Neubig and asked Dr. Wolfe to send a letter to Lisa Coughlin thanking her for all her hard work and dedication.

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

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that there was a rise in free and reduced lunches (250 students or 10%) in North Branford. He also remarked that there is not a lot of diversity in North Branford. In order to create diversity in our school system we have to manufacture it (Project Choice, etc.)

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. Attached for Board review was a summary of last spring's advance placement examinations. The North Branford Public Schools have been increasing advance placement opportunities for its high school student body. Registration for advance

placement courses totaled 110 last year. High School Principal, Michele Saulis, was available for any questions the Board had.

Michele Saulis stated that the high school provides challenging subjects for their students and she hope to see all students take at least one A/P course before graduation.

Dr. Wolfe stated that staffing continues to be an issue.

f. Professional Development

On Tuesday, November 4, 2008 the district held a Professional Development Day. Certified staff, nurses and paraprofessionals participated in a full day of professional growth activities designed around the needs of their school and/or department.

Activities included:

K-5: the implementation of the new language arts StoryTown writing materials

6-8: STEPS Literacy training for language arts and social studies teachers
Technology training for SmartBoard Implementation, Digital Photography and WebPage Development

Teamwork on pacing guides and common assessments

9-12:NEASC Committee Work
Benchmark development to support the School-Wide Rubric

Special Education:

Determine students' present level of academic achievement and functional performance (pre-K - 12 sp. ed. staff)
Writing standards based goals and objectives for specially designed instruction and learning strategies (pre-K - 12 sp. ed. staff)
Pediatric Disaster Management (nurses)
American Diabetes Association (nurses)

g. World Language K-5 Curriculum Proposal

Our Strategic Plan calls for the implementation of a world language/world culture program in grades PreK-5 under Strategy 3.5. The specific result of this plan includes:

1. the development of a World Language program that seamlessly integrates into the present curriculum
2. determine staffing needs associated with the delivery of the program

Jennifer Marena, World Language Department Leader K-12, presented the work accomplished by the World Language Curriculum Committee consisting of Marie D'Alessio, Catherine Elrick, Wendy Jones, Carrie Seiden, and Shelly Thompson. The presentation included the rationale for introducing World Language at the elementary level, the recommended program, staffing needs, budgetary implications, and future impact on middle school and high school world language programs. Board members were provided an advance copy of this presentation for their review.

Jennifer Marena stated that Spanish would be taught at JHS and STW two times a week with fifteen -minute classes. The classroom teacher would remain in the room but would not be responsible for World Language instruction. No textbooks would be needed for grades one through five but the teacher would need a cart and resources.

Jennifer Marena remarked that she has been working on this program since 2000 and she hopes to see it become a reality.

Chris Manna questioned what language Jennifer would like to see taught besides Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Chinese.

Jennifer stated Japanese.

h. 2009/2010 Budget

The Superintendent provided an update on the 2009/2010 budget process and calendar.

Dr. Wolfe mentioned that according to the Town Charter the BOE budget has to be submitted to the Town Manager by the end of February.

Marcey Onofrio questioned why the meetings had to be on Thursdays.

Dr. Wolfe stated that they didn't and the Board could discuss the times and dates and decided at the December Board meeting.

i. Community Service Montage

Community service is an important component of developing responsible students. Community service is embedded within the Strategic Plan in Action Plans 2.7, 2.8 and 2.9. The Superintendent shared with the Board of Education a brief montage of community service activities during the 2007/2008 school year. This montage was produced by Barbara Girard and was shown against a backdrop of Phil Collins music.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that our students were involved in a wide variety of community services from Community Roundup, Relay for Life, collecting coats, scarves and hats for the needy, collecting money for the Ronald MacDonald House, working in shelters and hospitals, etc.

j. Community Round-Up

The 19th Annual Community Round-Up was a huge success. Over 142 students and parents and 40 staff members formed 42 teams on Saturday, October 25th. The teams collected nearly 12,000 items as well as over \$1500 in cash donations 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 19th year of the Community Round-up. In addition, students at JHS, STW and TVES collected nearly 1200 personal hygiene items for the food closets. Many thanks to the staff, students and parents who participated in this event.

Joanne Wentworth, Deputy Mayor submitted an article to Totoket Times thanking everyone who took part in the Community Roundup stating they filled the food closets on both sides of town.

V. Committee Reports

a. Negotiations

Donald Winnicki stated he is still negotiating with two bargaining units.

b. Budget

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

Dr. Wolfe remarked that the budget sub-committee met and were given some frameworks and at the next meeting they will receive more information.

Superintendent Wolfe mentioned this will be a difficult budget year but we have to be very careful that we don't go backwards. We are looking at every possibility of where there could be cost savings from energy to health care.

Deborah Prunier questioned when the next meeting was scheduled.

Marcey Onofrio asked if this meeting date could be changed.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that the 3rd and 4th are not possible but he would look into another date and get back to the Board.

c. Operations

As part of the security grant, the school system is awarding the bid for additional work on door replacement.

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Nancy Lappie to: award the contract for door replacement for North Branford Public Schools, RPF 02-2009 in the amount of \$82,035.40 to Engineered Door Systems, LLC (the low bidder) to fulfill all of the necessary requirements of the bid.

CHAIRWOMAN PRUNIER:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR ONOFRIO:	AYE
SECRETARY LAPPIE:	AYE
CHRISTOPHER MANNA:	AYE
BONNIE SYMANSKY:	AYE

MOTION PASSED 5-0

Dr. Wolfe remarked that this money originated from the security grant we were awarded.

Donald Winnicki stated there is a fifty per-cent reimbursement from the state and some of the funds were taken from the security grant.

Bonnie Symansky questioned how much money was left of the grant.

Donald Winnicki remarked that we already installed cameras and this project would consume the rest of the grant.

Christopher Manna questioned if there was another grant in the works.

Donald Winnicki stated there is an application.

Christopher Manna questioned when we would find out if we would receive another grant.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that the State of Connecticut has not let it be known when the grant would be announced.

c. Curriculum

Marcey Onofrio questioned if the creative writing workshop could be added for the junior year to get students started on their college essays and for students who are not going on to college, as they will need some sort of writing skills for technical schools or jobs. Juniors would have the summer to work on their essays and revise them.

Michele Saulis remarked that she would look into this and also find out how other school systems support their students.

e. Pension

Donald Winnicki mentioned that the committee discussed two pensions, cafeteria worker and a volunteer fireman. He remarked that the committee has agreed to hold the meetings at 4:00 p.m. and the dates of February 11th, May 13th, August 12th and November 18th have been established. The committee also covered actuarial reports at this meeting. Don remarked that the 401 plan and police pensions were also discussed. He mentioned that he would agree to serve as the Board representative at these meetings if a Board member could not attend.

g. Policy

The Superintendent provided the Board with a copy of Policy #P1400 – Bullying (Revised) for first read.

Bonnie Symansky asked if anyone had any questions or changes to please get back to the committee as soon as possible.

Christopher Manna asked that everyone keep in mind that the committee is upgrading their existing policy and incurring mandatory State Statutes.

Nancy Lappie stated that at the last ACES meeting Cyber bullying was discussed and it must be in their policy if they want to participate in E-RATE funding.

Bonnie Symansky questioned if we have a policy in place for students using the internet.

Donald Winnicki stated that we do have an acceptable use policy.

Nancy Lappie stated that the state seems to indicate they wanted particular words used in the policy for Cyber Bullying.

Dr. Wolfe stated he would check with legal council.

Marcey Onofrio questioned if Dr. Wolfe has received word from legal council on drug testing.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that he has talked with legal council and is waiting for them to get back to him

h. ACES

Nancy Lappie stated Tom Heinick, Connecticut Freedom of Information Commission, attended the meeting to discuss forthcoming changes. He is also the School Board Chair of Region 13. He reported that as of October 1st any public agencies that take minutes have to post the minutes on the internet within seven days of the meeting. He also mentioned that any sub-committee that meets must take minutes.

Dr. Wolfe stated he would also check this with legal council, as he knows that if minutes are taken they have to be posted but he will check if we are required to take minutes at all types of meetings.

Nancy suggested the Board could invite Tom for a workshop on FOI to make sure we are up to date on all issues.

h. Strategic Planning

No report at this time.

i. Building Committee

Bonnie Symansky stated the ductwork, and mechanical work is on time. There were issues with the brickwork and walkway but both have been resolved. She mentioned that the cafeteria is slated to open between mid-February and early March.

Dr. Wolfe stated that every student and staff member at NBIS would sign the last steel beam before it is erected on Friday, November 21st.

j. Calendar Committee

No report at this time.

k. Transportation/Bus Safety Committee

No report at this time.

I. Communication

Bonnie Symansky remarked that there is a problem with channel 19 as it was struck by lightning. Comcast would replace the modulation box but we must replace our computers.

Marcey Onofrio questioned if we have insurance.

Donald Winnicki stated the deductible would be higher than the cost of computers.

Joseph Tenczar remarked we would use channel 20 for now.

VI. New Business

Related only to items removed from the Consent Agenda.

No new business at this time.

VII. Visitors and Press

No comments at this time

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

XIV. Adjourn

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Nancy Lappie to adjourn this North Branford Board of Education meeting at 8:21 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Ardine
Account Clerk