

**NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
December 18, 2008**

The North Branford Board of Education met on Thursday, December 18, 2008 in the Board of Education Conference room at Totoket Valley Elementary School at 6:10 p.m. The following members attended:

Board Chairwoman:	Deborah Prunier
Board Vice-Chair:	Marcey Onofrio
Board Secretary:	Nancy Lappie
Board Members:	Dr. Christopher Manna John Bozzuto Bonnie Symansky
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 legal matters, negotiations and personnel.

ALL VOTED AYE

MOTION: Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by John Bozzuto to reconvene to public session at 6:57 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

I. Visitors

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

Christine Imperato
Isabelle DeMatteo
Debbie Gibilaro
Karen Scheiber
Tina Acampora
David McMahon
Todd Stoeffler
John Drescher
Jen Marena

Jessica Albert
Jean Benzi
Linda Proto
Bert Strickland
Judy Ruggiero
Cliff Potter
John Fontenault
Joan Williams
Joe Tenczar

Anna DeMatteo
Tom Benzi
Mina Marak
Patricia Carlo
David Lawson
Elizabeth Caplan
Kayla Drescher
Bruce Williams

The North Branford High School Jazz Band, under the direction of Mr. John Tzetzto performed prior to the start of the Board of Education meeting. The Jazz Band performed six different jazz ensembles featuring various NBHS students.

John Tzetzto thanked Dr. Wolfe for all his help and devotion to the growth of the music department in North Branford, stating it was because of Dr. Wolfe that the Jazz Band is what it is today.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that our wonderful music program is the direct result of phenomenal educators, awesome kids and great parents.

David Lawson thanked Dr. Wolfe for bringing the Bridges and Life Skills Programs to North Branford. He stated that his son is autistic and the Life Skills program has enabled his son to be educated in North Branford and his son can be a part of the North Branford community. Mr. Lawson also thanked his son's teachers, stating they have done a tremendous job with his son.

II. Student Representative

The North Branford High School student representative reported on the following items:

Academic

NBHS recently held their Band, Chorus and Jazz Band Concert and it was the debut of Mr. John Tzetzto and the Jazz Band.

January 6, 2009 the Alumni breakfast will be held at NBHS. NBHS alumni return to NBHS to talk about their first year at college.

Sports

Boys' Basketball team is asking for everyone's support at all the games. This is a direct request of Coach Cliff Yerkes.

Girls' Basketball- Friday, December 19th at 7:30 p.m. at NBHS gym.

Boys' Basketball - Saturday, December 20th at 7:30 p.m. at NBHS gym.

Ice Hockey Monday - December 22nd at 6:30 p.m. at the ice hockey rink

Clubs

Helping Hands Cookies were a tremendous success.

Student Council is holding a Toys for Tots Drive. Drop off is at NBHS or the Police Station.

Student Council members and the Select Chorus hosted a Christmas party for North Branford senior citizens. Pizza and cake were served with seniors receiving presents and everyone singing Christmas carols.

III. Consent Agenda

a. Minutes

Minutes of the November 20, 2008 Board of Education meeting.

b. Resignations

The Superintendent has received the retirement resignation of Ms. Margaret (Susan) Pisani, physical education teacher at Stanley T. Williams and Jerome Harrison Elementary Schools, effective June 30, 2008. Ms. Pisani has served the district for 24 years.

The Superintendent has received a resignation from Mrs. Katie Copeland, grade 1 teacher at Stanley T. Williams School, effective November 23, 2008.

The Superintendent has received a retirement resignation from Mrs. Joan Follo, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, effective June 30, 2009. Joan has agreed to continue to provide services through December 31, 2009. Joan has served the district as both a school psychologist and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction. She has been instrumental in implementing the Curriculum Management Cycle. Joan has enabled the district to keep a constant focus on student achievement. Under her leadership, professional development opportunities have been expanded for faculty and staff. She recently received Connecticut Association for the Gifted 2008 Administrator of the Year Award.

c. Appointments

The Superintendent has received a recommendation from Michele Saulis, Principal of North Branford High School, to appoint Kirt Westfall to the position of Assistant Indoor Track Coach.

d. Leaves - None at this time.

- e. Field Trips – None at this time.
- f. Donations - None at this time.

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by John Bozzuto to amend the Consent Agenda to include:

Resignation

The Superintendent has received a resignation for Sean Boardman, mathematics teacher at North Branford High School, effective June 30, 2008

Appointment

The Superintendent is recommending the appointment of Lauren Lombardi, a recent graduate from Southern Connecticut State University to the open mathematics position at North Branford High School effective January 5, 2009 to be placed on Bachelor's, Step 1, (prorated) per the contract between the North Branford Board of Education and the North Branford Federation of Teachers.

Recognition

Emmy Norton, a third grade student at Jerome Harrison School, is making a difference. The Superintendent will provide the Board with information on a community service project that Emmy has initiated.

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

MOTION PASSED 6-0

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by John Bozzuto to accept the Consent Agenda as amended.

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

MOTION PASSED 6-0

Dr. Wolfe and the Board of Education presented the Giraffe Hero's Award to Emmy Norton, a third grade student at JHS for developing a community service project. Emmy initiated a sock drive for the Columbus House in New Haven. Dr. Wolfe stated that the Giraffe Hero's Award is the highest award a student can win.

IV. Superintendent's Report

a. Recognition - None at this time.

b. Communications

The Superintendent attached a copy of a letter from State Representative, Vincent Candelora, informing the school district of the grant award for fuel assistance in the amount of \$29,033.

The Superintendent attached a copy of the North Branford High School Winter Sports Schedule.

c. Summer of '09

The Superintendent announced the new theme for the 2009 Summer Program and introduced a very special guest. Last summer over 2,100 registrations were processed. Cost for the Summer of '09 will be maintained at the same rate as last year. There will be at least 10 new camp offerings. The camp program will again utilize the Shoreline YMCA's pool in Branford. Development and production of the summer brochure will take place in January and February 2009 with anticipated release of the brochure on or about March 1, 2009.

The 2009 Summer Program theme will be Do You Believe in Magic? He introduced Kayla Drescher, a professional magician. She will be a counselor in the summer program.

Kayla Drescher performed some magic tricks for the Board of Education and several members of the audience were involved. Donald Winnicki assisted Kayla with various magic tricks.

d. Life Skills

The North Branford Life Skills Program was established during the 2001/2002 school year. The program was developed to provide in-house programming for a segment of the student population that previously required outside placement. The program currently exists at Jerome Harrison School, Totoket Valley Elementary School, North Branford Intermediate School and North Branford High School. Members of Life Skills Program made a brief presentation about the program.

Tina Acampora presented a brief power point presentation and thanked Dr. Wolfe for making the Life Skills program such a success in North Branford.

Suzanne Wright thanked Dr. Wolfe stating that he truly supports all students and this program allows students to take advantage of all teachers, regular classroom teachers, special education teachers and specials. She thanked Dr. Wolfe for his understanding and help.

Dr. Wolfe stated that the true heroes of Special Education are the faculty and paraprofessionals. He remarked that when he came to North Branford over fifty children were out-placed and today only twelve students are out-placed. He remarked that Suzanne Wright created an environment where students can thrive and Suzanne's leadership has allowed North Branford to move forward.

e. NBIS Project – FF&E

Considerable time and energy has been given by NBIS faculty, staff and administration in collaboration with Central Office administration and Newman Architects in order to make FF&E selections for the NBIS Renovate as New Project. Recommendations could be found on the attached spreadsheet. These recommendations impact all programs and administrative functions of the school. The total recommendation is \$753,962.74. This total includes a 10% contingency. If the contingency is not utilized, several pieces of custodial equipment will be added to the list.

Dr. Wolfe welcomed Michael Scott, Michelle Neuman and Jessica Albert from Neuman Architects to tonight's meeting remarking that these three people work very closely with the NBIS staff.

MOTION: Moved by John Bozzuto and seconded by Nancy Lappie to accept the NBIS Renovate as New Project FF&E Proposal in the amount of \$753,962.74.

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

MOTION PASSED 6-0

John Bozzuto questioned if the motion went to the Building Committee first.

Deborah Prunier remarked that it would go to the Building Committee after it was approved by the Board of Education.

f. Nutrition

Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes requires that all Connecticut Public School Districts eligible to participate in the National School Lunch Program must take action to certify whether all food items sold to students separately from reimbursable meals *will* or *will not* meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards. After review and discussion the North Branford Public Schools has decided not to meet the standard and receive the 10-cent per meal reimbursement. Certification as to the school district's intention for the coming school year must be made and submitted to the State Department of Education no later than Friday, August 31st, for the coming school year. Ed Slubowski, Supervisor of Food Service, will be available to answer any questions the Board may have. The Superintendent is recommending the approval of the following motion:

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Bonnie Symansky that Pursuant to Section 10-215f of the Connecticut General Statutes the North Branford Board of Education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the North Branford Public Schools and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education *will not* meet said standards during the period of July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010.

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

MOTION PASSED 6-0

Christopher Manna remarked that we were giving up ten cents to earn forty cents and later on we might not get reimbursed from the state.

Dr. Wolfe stated this was true.

Donald Winnicki remarked that if this was accepted then we could not allow cupcakes and brownies for birthday or holiday parties in the schools. It would also have an impact on our fund-raisers.

g. StoryTown Update

Harcourt School Publishers' StoryTown is in the first year of implementation. StoryTown is a research-based, comprehensive, balanced literacy program recommended by the K-5 Language Arts Curriculum Committee and adopted by the Board to support the revision of the K-5 language arts curriculum. Alexis Christina, Joan Follo and Principals, Kris Lindsay, Shawn Parkhurst, and Doug Hammel, have worked collaboratively on implementation, planning and professional training opportunities. Many thanks go to Alexis Christina for her dedication to this project. Her commitment to the training of our K-5 staff has been diligent, intensive, and much appreciated by administration and teachers. Alexis and Joan told the story of StoryTown in a PowerPoint presentation.

Joan Follo and Alexis Christina spoke on sight word, high frequency words, benchmark assessment, weekly assessments, theme tests and results of the Story Town Program. (attached)

Alexis Christina remarked that she was privileged to come to North Branford to work with this program. She stated that most parents were on-board with Story Town and Dough Hammel, Shawn Parkhurst and Kris Lindsay give parents helpful ways to help their children in the newsletters that goes home with every student.

h. Full-Day Kindergarten Proposal

As part of the North Branford Public Schools' Strategic Plan, a task force was formed to explore the realities of expanding the existing Kindergarten half-day program to a full-day program. The task force includes Shawn Parkhurst, Chairperson, and Principal of Jerome Harrison School, Douglas Hammel, Principal of Stanley T. Williams School, Joan Follo, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Claudia Faughnan, kindergarten teacher at Stanley T. Williams, and Michele Cook, kindergarten teacher at Jerome Harrison School. The task force examined our reality related to student progress at the elementary level compared to the success of comparable student populations in our DRG-E and our neighboring shoreline towns. Research and best practices related to full day vs. half-day programs were collected and analyzed and developed into a position paper based for the Board's consideration.

The committee agreed that kindergarten students exposed to a full day of instruction have a faster rate of literacy acquisition relative to their peers in half-day classrooms and recommended the adoption of a full-day kindergarten program at JHS and STW commencing in the Fall of 2009. (attached)

Dr. Wolfe stated that our students do catch up by middle school but they are behind in the early years and he believes it is because of half-day kindergarten. He questions if we had all day kindergarten what progress could be made by middle school.

Christopher Manna questioned if there was room at JHS and STW for full day kindergarten.

Shawn Parkhurst and Doug Hammel stated that there was room at JHS and STW.

Christopher Manna asked if the \$326,000 figure would go up each year.

Donald Winnicki stated in terms of salary it would.

Nancy Lappie questioned if Dr. Wolfe felt the state would soon mandate full day kindergarten.

Dr. Wolfe stated that in light of today's economy he doesn't think it will be mandated at this time. He remarked it would take a lot of courage for the Board to support full day kindergarten but he believes it is the right thing to do.

i. Budget Calendar

The Board of Education needed to establish the Budget Workshop dates for January and February 2009. A copy of the proposed budget calendar was attached for Board review.

The Board of Education established Wednesday, January 21st and Wednesday, January 28th as budget workshops with regular Board of Education meetings on January 15th and February 12th.

V. Committee Reports

a. Negotiations - No report at this time.

b. Budget – No report at this time.

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

c. Operations

In 1999, the North Branford Public Schools developed three construction projects that were accepted and approved by the State of Connecticut. These projects involved fire alarm and fire code upgrades. The projects were at Stanley T. Williams School –

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Project #099-0045CV, North Branford High School - Project #099-0046CV, and Totoket Valley Elementary School - Project #099-0047CV. At a recent meeting with the Superintendent, Town Manager and representatives of the State Dept. of Education

Facilities Unit, we were informed that these projects were never officially accepted by the Board of Education and closed by the Department of Education. It is necessary for the Board to officially accept these projects so that these projects can be closed at the State Department.

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Bonnie Symansky to accept Stanley T. Williams School - Project #099-0045CV, North Branford High School - Project #099-0046CV, and Totoket Valley Elementary School - Project #099-0047CV as modified as complete.

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

MOTION PASSED 6-0

John Bozzuto questioned if this would affect any projects going on now.

Donald Winnicki stated no that these projects were closed out.

d. Curriculum

Bonnie Symansky remarked that Story Town is fabulous and she thanked Alexis Christina and Joan Follo for all their work in getting this program up and running.

e. Pension

Donald Winnicki remarked that he attended the last pension meeting and the actuarial report was discussed.

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f. Policy

The Superintendent provided the Board with a copy of Policy #P1400 – Bullying (Revised) for second reading and approval.

MOTION: Moved by Bonnie Symansky and seconded by John Bozzuto to approve Policy #P1400 – Bullying (Revised) as submitted.

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

MOTION PASSED 6-0

Nancy Lappie questioned our policy for cyber bullying and if we are addressing it.

Dr. Wolfe remarked that legal council felt that cyber bullying is happening outside the school system and we cannot be held responsible for everything that happens outside the school.

Deborah Prunier mentioned that the policy could be revised at a later date if needed.

g. ACES

Nancy Lappie remarked that the December meeting is one of the better meetings as they present the annual Christmas cards and tee shirts. She mentioned that many of the students who designed the cards were present at the meeting.

The financial impact of the Wintergreen School was also discussed.

Dr. Wolfe asked for the Board's permission to write to the Governor, Commissioner of Education and members of the Education Board on the proposed changes for magnet schools. He stated he would do whatever was necessary to save the magnet schools.

The Board of Education gave him permission.

h. Strategic Planning – No report at this time.

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- i. Building Committee – No report at this time.

Christopher Manna questioned the water damage..

Dr. Wolfe stated water damage was at the TVES playground parking lot and not NBIS.

- j. Calendar Committee – No report at this time.

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

The Superintendent will report to the Board his efforts in renegotiating the transportation contract with DATTCO. Based on finalizing these negotiations, the Board can then take action on the rollover contract (withdrawn until finalized).

- l. Communication

Bonnie Symansky stated that Channel 19 is up and running but Com-Cast needs to replace the black box.

Christopher Manna asked each principal if they thought it would be better to ease in to an all day kindergarten or jump into it.

All five principals stated they felt we should go with and all day kindergarten for the Fall of 2009.

Dr. Wolfe stated he is in favor of all day kindergarten but he is not in favor of caps. He remarked that caps created too many problems.

VI. New Business

No new business at this time.

VII. Visitors and Press

Jennifer Marenga remarked that she was lucky to have known Superintendent Wolfe and she wished more people in North Branford knew Robert Wolfe like she did. She thanked him for all his help and support over the years.

Deborah Prunier questioned if she could get Dr. Wolfe's email address.

Dr. Wolfe stated that his email would stay the same as long as he was connected with the summer program.

Elizabeth Caplan thanked Dr. Wolfe stating he was an inspiration to her and she felt he benefited all North Branford students. She wished him the very best.

Dr. Wolfe thanked the Board of Education and the North Branford community for the opportunity to work with North Branford students and staff. He remarked that he truly believed that we made a difference.

Dr. Wolfe thanked Dr. Bernadoni, his friend and colleague, for attending his last Board of Education meeting.

Deborah Prunier wished Dr. Wolfe well and thanked him for taking the North Branford School District to new highs. She remarked that he is leaving giant shoes to be filled.

VIII. The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 15, 2009.

XV. Adjourn

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Nancy Lappie to adjourn this meeting of the North Branford Board of Education at 9:37 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Ardine
Account Clerk.