

**North Branford Board of Education Meeting
November 19, 2009**

This meeting of the North Branford Board of Education was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Conference Room at Totoket Valley Elementary School on Thursday, November 19, at 6:15 p.m. The following members attended:

Board Chair:	Deborah Prunier
Board Vice-Chair:	Marcey Onofrio
Board Secretary:	Nancy Lappie
Board Members:	Dr. Christopher Manna Bonnie Symansky
Superintendent of Schools:	Scott Schoonmaker:
Absent:	John Bozzuto, Jr.

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Deborah Prunier 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 VOED AYE

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Christopher Manna to reconvene to the Library Media Center for public session at 7:03 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

I. Salute to the Flag

II. Visitors

Director of Personnel / Business:	Donald Winnicki
Director of Instruction / Curriculum:	Joan Follo
Director of Special Services:	Suzanne Wright

Principal:

Michele Saulis, NBHS

Heena Mavani
Maria Humphrey
Doreen Donath
Rynne O'Connor
Caitlin Doyle
Mark Riordon
Cliff Potter
Sarah Cook
Margaret Wray
Shannon Querfeld-Miscio
Rick Valine

Kelsey Platner
Carly Donath
Colleen O'Connor
Kelly Brenner
Karen Doyle
Lynn Riordon
Dolina Potter
Ashley Testa
Michelle Cook
Mike Stein
Mea Riordon

Alana Vernik
Robert Donath
Donald O'Connor
Alex Brenner
Peter Doyle
Elise Picciuto
Stephanie Testa
Lynne Testa
Mathew Edwards
Roy Haller

No visitor comments at this time.

III. Student Representative

Heena Mavani and Kelsey Platner reported on the following items:

Academic

New rules for academic expectations for participation in athletics and clubs are in place. In the last six weeks the rules have been implemented and there have been many after school study halls for those students struggling in their classes. Several students have been able to receive tutoring from teachers or their peers, which has been a success.

On Wednesday November 11, 2009 NBHS celebrated Veterans Day and students had the opportunity to hear stories and speak to Veterans of several different wars.

A recent North Branford graduate will be going to Afghanistan within the next few weeks. NBHS students plan to stay in contact with him while he is overseas.

On November 17th and 18th parent – teacher conferences were held. Members of student council guided parents in the right directions.

Seniors are busy completing college applications.

Athletics

Both boys' and girls' soccer teams made it into the shoreline and state tournaments with the boy's soccer team making it to the state semifinals.

Sara Robertson made scholar –athlete for Field Hockey.

The unified sports team is nearly twice the size as it has been in previous years, with the majority of students in life skills and 15 other students participating. So far the team has competed in two soccer tournaments, winning both a silver and gold medal. In February the team will compete in bowling.

Social

The attendance rate at the Homecoming dance was the highest in the past five years.

All fund-raising went well at the Homecoming game.

Stephanie Fiorentino and John Lasko were masters of ceremony at the Homecoming pep rally and they did a great job.

The National Honor Society won the 1st place banner.

A two round system was used this year for electing the Homecoming king and queen. Teachers nominated a boy and girl from each class and then students were given ballots to vote for king and queen. This was done to ensure the same person didn't win every year.

Junior students will be able to buy parking passes from the office in order to park in the students' parking lot.

Civic / Club

National Honor Society members are tutoring fellow students struggling in their classes.

November 12th several members of the Interact Club volunteered at the Nicole DeFlippo Memorial Blood Drive at the Branford Community Center.

170 students from NBHS and NBIS comprised 49 teams for the annual Community Roundup. Over 13,000 food items and monetary contributions were collected.

Helping Hands Club put together small gifts of thanks for the Veterans who visited NBHS on Veterans Day.

Five Hundred Moose Track bars were sent to our active duty troops from our Helping Hands Club. They also cooked and served a meal at the Ronald McDonald House.

IV. Consent Agenda

a. Minutes

Minutes of the October 15, 2009 Board of Education meeting.

b. Resignations – None at this time.

c. Appointments

The Superintendent has received recommendations from administration for the following winter coaching positions.

NBIS

Boys’ Basketball Jesse Pusycki (Head Coach)
 Kevin Torzillo (Volunteer Assistant)

Girls’ Basketball Rhonda Gallo (Head Coach)
 Carla Gallo (Volunteer Assistant)

NBHS

Ice Hockey Ryan Connolly (Assistant Coach)

Boys’ Basketball Greg Jordan (Assistant Freshman Coach – Volunteer)

Fencing Meghan Ruszczyk (Coach)

d. Leaves - None at this time.

e. Field Trips

The Superintendent has received a field trip request from Mrs. Jennifer Marenga, world language teacher at NBHS, for a one-day trip to New York City. The trip is scheduled for Wednesday, June 2, 2010, from 6 a.m. to 9 p.m.

f. Donations

The Superintendent has received a request for approval of a donation to NBHS. The donation is a sign for the student parking lot and is from the “family and friends of Matthew Picciuto.” Specifications of the sign are attached for Board review and consideration.

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

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

MOTION CARRIED 5-0

V. Superintendent's Report

a. Recognition

1. North Branford Public Schools 2009 Teacher of the Year

Jerome Harrison School kindergarten teacher, Michelle Cook , was recently honored at the Teacher of the Year Program held October 29, 2009 at the Central Connecticut State University. Michelle was escorted across the stage by the Superintendent Scott Schoonmaker and received her award from the Commissioner of Education, Dr. Mark McQuillan. Michelle's family and friends were in attendance. Superintendent Schoonmaker and Board members saluted our North Branford Teacher of the Year, Michelle Cook with a special trophy.

2. NBHS 2009 CAPT – Student Recognition

Eight North Branford High School students have distinguished themselves by performing at the advance level on all four of the 2008 Connecticut Academic Performance Tests (CAPT) subtests. By so doing, their high achievement in mathematics, reading, writing and science makes them among the academic best in the State of Connecticut. The Commissioner of Education, Dr. Mark McQuillan, is recognizing each of the eight students with a letter of congratulations. The Superintendent and Michele Saulis, NBHS principal presented each student with this letter from Dr. McQuillan.

Alyssa Arre
Alexander Brenner
Carly Donath
Caitlin Dolye
Sara Gaechter
Rynne O'Connor
Alana Vernik
Michael Wray

3. UI Lighting Improvemnet

Over the last two years we have undertaken significant lighting improvement projects, first in gymnasiums and then in the entire high school. UI has been a partner in these projects. The partnership comes in two ways. First, there is a 30% incentive payment for the installation cost of the projects. Second, UI has provided interest free financing of the other 70%, so that the savings from the project offset the balance of the installation on our monthly bills.

Mike Stein has been particularly helpful in evaluating and coordinating these activities. Tonight Roy Haller, Manager of C&I Energy Services presented a check to the North Branford Public Schools for \$53,000. Also in attendance was Rick Valine, North Branford Account Manager. Although we have already received the incentive payment, this is a way of highlighting the work that has been done, so that both UI and the district can raise the public awareness of the project.

Donald Winnicki remarked that this was a very important project for all of us. He mentioned that he has heard from many faculty members at NBHS about how much better the school looks with the new lighting. Mr. Winnicki stated we have better lighting for less money.

Roy Haller presented the check to North Branford and received thanks from Donald Winnicki, Scott Schoonmaker and all Board members.

b. Communications

The Superintendent attached Board of Education Briefs for the month of November from each school.

c. 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 were the 2008/2009 Strategic School Profiles. Administration highlighted data contained in this report and was available for any questions that the Board had.

The state reissued selected Strategic School Profiles for NBHS with regrets for any inconvenience. Figures affected were the number of different non-English home languages spoken by families in our district. Also, the percentage of graduates employed and pursuing education. These two reports were replaced. (attached)

Nancy Lappie questioned the amount of time spent on Language Arts for 8th graders compared to state levels.

Joan Follo stated we must include the time spent on World Languages with Language Arts.

Mr. Schoonmaker thanked Joan Follo, Suzanne Wright and all administrators for all their work in compiling the information for this report.

Bonnie Symansky remarked that she is very impressed to see how many AP courses our students at NBHS are taking each year.

Bonnie Symansky also requested that we keep our eye on class sizes.

Superintendent Schoonmaker stated this would be critical for student success.

d. State AYP - Update

The State Department of Education has requested that school districts whose special education students have not made sufficient Annual Yearly Progress, as determined by CMT and CAPT results, attend a collaborative meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to share pertinent information with other districts through a data wall process. Information displayed on the data wall reflects the district's area of concern, the root causes, and plans to improve student performance. Suzanne Wright, Director of Special Education, and Joan Follo, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, attended the meeting held on November 12th. Suzanne Wright shared the data wall with Board members and gave a brief overview of the findings.

Suzanne Wright spoke on the need for early intervention for special education students, especially in reading. She remarked that the new program, Story Town, is very important and she feels there will be a difference with scores later on. Suzanne spoke about our strategies being aligned with our root causes.

Suzanne stated that 12 special education students took the CAPT and it was found that all 12 students had no geometry or access to algebra before grade 10. In the 9th grade some of our math teachers were non-tenured and NBHS principal, Michele Saulis is looking at ways to pair non-tenured teachers with veteran teachers.

There was a high representation of students with disabilities in one C class. Michele Saulis is also working with the special education department to align the curriculum with the CAPT test.

Suzanne thanked Michele Saulis, Board of Education members and staff for their support with special education.

Scott Schoonmaker thanked Suzanne Wright, Joan Follo and administrators for their hard work and understanding of the problems facing our students. He remarked students have to be exposed to certain skills for success on tests. We can't expect them to succeed on tests if they are not exposed to the materials.

Deborah Prunier questioned if special accommodations are made when special education students take the CAPT.

Suzanne stated yes, extended time, use word processing, reader for directions, 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 is 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. High School Principal, Michele Saulis was available for any questions the Board had.

Michele Saulis stated that she is very proud of the Advanced Placement Program. The focus over the last two years has been to increase the number of students taking Advanced Placement courses and the number of students who choose to take the final exam for college credit. Many colleges view successful performance in an AP course as a strong indicator on how a student will perform in college. Mrs. Saulis encourages an AP students to take the final exam because the experience in taking a college level assessment is important. Even if they receive a B or C in the course they should take the exam. Earning a three or higher out of five is passing and could earn a student college credit.

Michele Saulis mentioned that scores are low in AP Spanish Languages. She mentioned that we did not have a language lab at NBHS.

Michele Saulis remarked that at least 53 students are enrolled in at least one AP course.

Superintendent Saulis stated that Michele Saulis is doing a great job at NBHS with AP courses.

f. Professional Development

On Tuesday, November 3, 2009 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.

NBHS: The high school focused on completing the self evaluation for accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. In addition Dept. Leaders worked with their teams on making the ACES Data Decision Making Protocol more in line with the needs of the high school.

NBIS: Jacqueline Lavoie, art teacher at NBIS, presented an amazing slide program on Mayan architecture and culture along with an exotic food luncheon. Training on the use of Smartboards as a teaching tool and on differentiated instruction in Tier 1 of RtI rounded out the day.

TVES: Staff preparation in the use of standards based reporting for both report cards and parent conferencing along with planning sessions for next steps in the effective use of trade books, PLC work, and the behavior component of RtI; Positive Behavioral Support.

JH: Staff worked on webpage development, exploration of resources on StoryTown website, RtIm Direct Software Training, time to collaborate with teams members and time to select additional training on Lexia, Symphony Math, PinPoint Math and use of Student Response 'clickers'.

STW: Lesson design presentation to staff members by Alexis Christina, Symphony Math training by the company representative, training on the new writing curriculum.

Other Activities:

Scantron training on Performance and Achievement Series to assist staff with the implementation of Response to Intervention was held throughout the day for school level teams and administrators.

PE teachers attended a Physical Education Mini-Conference at Trumbull High School

Linda Humphrey, music teacher from JHS, attended a workshop entitled Teaching Music Composition.

Grade 3 teachers from TVES & JH worked on the integration of Math CMT into the EveryDay Math Unit Tests

Joan Follo mentioned that our school calendar indicates that K-5 report cards will be distributed on December 11, 2009 but they will not be distributed at that time and parents will be informed by ConnectEd. She also mentioned that a letter went home to all elementary parents concerning the new report card. (attached)

g. 2010/2011 Budget

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

Donald Winnicki mentioned that the 2010-2011-school budget is being developed and workshops will be set at the December meeting.

h. Community Round-Up

The 20th Annual Community Round-Up was a huge success. Students, parents, and staff members formed teams on Saturday, October 24th. The teams collected nearly 13,000 items as well as over \$2000 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 20th year of the Community Round-up. Many thanks to the staff, students and parents who participated in this event.

Scott Schoonmaker stated our hats are off to Alan Davis.

Nancy Lappie remarked that Joanne Wentworth mentioned that the Food Banks were distributing over forty food-baskets to North Branford families for Thanksgiving.

VI. Committee Reports

a. Negotiations

Donald Winnicki stated that negotiations are ongoing with the paraprofessionals and administrators.

b. Budget

No report at this time. Marcey Onofrio remarked that things are quiet right now.

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

c. Operations

No report at this time. Deborah Prunier thanked Bonnie Symansky for all her time and efforts on the Operations Committee, Board of Education and other committees.

Bonnie Symansky stated that she enjoyed and learned a lot serving on the Board of Education. She remarked that she admired the Yale British Museum project of STW and JHS as they worked with the whole child and it is a wonderful undertaking.

d. Curriculum

No report at this time.

e. Pension

No report at this time.

f. Policy

Christopher Manna remarked that the Policy Committee met on October 23, 2009 and the suspension policy was reviewed and several other upcoming policies were looked at. (technology, genetic testing, allergies, building security, etc.)

g. ACES

Nancy Lappie reported that ACES reviewed a draft audit at their last meeting. She mentioned that the Magnet School population is down and enrollment for Special Education students is growing.

Superintendent Schoonmaker mentioned that CAMS school would not provide for middle school students in the next school year so provisions are being made to bring these students back to NBIS.

Donald Winnicki remarked that ACES can carry forward any extra money in their budget but North Branford could not. If North Branford School System has any money left in the budget it is given back to the town of North Branford.

h. Strategic Planning

No report at this time.

i. Building Committee

Christopher Manna stated that there was a problem with the NBIS new gymnasium floor due to an error on the contractor's part and it is being replaced.

Superintendent Schoonmaker stated that 55% of the floor has been replaced at this time and the gymnasium should be turned over to us by the second week of December.

j. . Calendar Committee

No report at this time.

k. Transportation / Bus Safety Committee

No report at this time.

l. Communication

Joe Tenczar stated the communications program at NBHS is expanding and there is no room for further expansion. They are thinking about moving the television production to the middle school but there is still not enough room for editing labs and they need room to grow. Mr. Tenczar thanked Bonnie Symansky for all her help and support.

No new business at this time.

VII. Visitors and Press

Michele Saulis thanked the Picciuto family for the sign at NBHS stating "Slow Down Drive Safe; Always rememberMatthew Picciuto 1991-2009"

Board of Education members also thanked the Picciuto family.

A parent questioned why visitor comments were cut off from the televised Board of Education meetings.

Joe Tenczar remarked that some meetings are longer than other meetings and the rest of the meeting was on the second tape. At this time they televise using one deck not two, so the last part of the meeting could look like it was cut off.

The same parent questioned where the minutes of the last policy meeting were as she would like to review them.

Superintendent Schoonmaker stated there is just an agenda for this meeting and no official minutes are taken.

The parents remarked that this is public meeting and minutes should be taken. She wanted to know what was discussed about suspensions at this meeting. She questioned what the policy maintains to protect yourself when in a fight.

Superintendent Schoonmaker remarked that the administrator has flexibility for suspensions.

The parent stated that if you were defending yourself you shouldn't be suspended. She questioned what to tell her child so he wouldn't be suspended at NBHS.

Deborah Prunier mentioned that students are given alternatives on whom to report to for these incidents.

Christopher Manna asked Michele Saulis if she has seen several fights at NBHS.

Michele Saulis stated that every fight is different and treated accordingly.

Christopher Manna stated that a principal must use their discretion for these incidences and we must support the principal's decision.

Cliff Potter questioned if the water damage at NBIS was related to the roof.

Scott Schoonmaker stated no, that it was a contractor's error in not covering the roof properly.

Cliff Potter questioned if they think there will be a problem with mold later on.

Superintendent Schoonmaker remarked that the wall was completely replaced.

Deborah Prunier thanked Bonnie Symansky for her support over the last two years. She mentioned that Bonnie served on many committees and her input was very valuable.

Superintendent Schoonmaker stated Bonnie Symansky was a champion for kids and she always put kids first.

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Bonnie Symansky remarked that she has learned and grown a lot. She stated that she felt it was very important to serve your community and she is very impressed with what is going on in North Branford.

Nancy Lappie stated there will never be another Bonnie and she was truly a unique person.

Deborah Prunier also thanked John Bozzuto for his help and support over the last two years.

**VI. The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Thursday
December 17, 2009.**

VIII. Adjournment

MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Nancy Lappie to adjourn this meeting of the North Branford Board of Education at 8:35 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

Sincerely Submitted,

Sherry Ardine
Account Clerk

