

**NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**  
**February 18, 2010**

The North Branford Board of Education met on Thursday, February 18, 2010 in the Conference Room of Totoket Valley Elementary School at 5:30 p.m. The following members attended:

Board Chair:	Nancy Lappie
Board Vice-Chair:	Shannon Querfeld-Miscio
Board Secretary:	David McMahan
Board Members:	Marcey Onofrio Deborah Prunier

Superintendent of Schools: Scott Schoonmaker

**MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Shannon Querfeld-Miscio 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 meet with Attorney Anne Littlefield.**

**ALL VOTED AYE**

**MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Deborah Prunier to reconvene to the Library Media Center for public session at 7:07 p.m.**

**ALL VOTED AYE**

**I. Visitors**

Director of Business and Personnel:	Donald Winnicki
Director of Instruction & Curriculum:	Joan Follo
Director of Special Services:	Suzanne Wright
Supervisor of Operations:	William Choti
Principals:	Michele Saulis, NBHS Alan Davis, NBIS Alexis Christina, STW Shawn Parkhurst, JHS

Heena Mavani	Kelsey Platner	Joseph Tenczar
Paul Calamita	Michael Pompano	Kelly Miller
Ray Miller	Carter Welch	Todd Stoeffler
Stephanie Martinik	Kim Neubig	Trisha Coe
Robert J. Altermatt	Brandi Little	Dolina Potter
Clifford Potter	Christine Imperato	Ann-Marie McCarthy
Rose Angeloni	Carolyn Candelora	Julie Shadman
Raffaella Hunt	Michelle Provencher	

## II. Student Representative

Heena Mavani and Kelsey Platner reported on the following events at NBHS.

### Academic

Mid-year exams took place on January 21, 22, 25 and 26. Second semester began on January 27 and report cards were distributed on Friday, February 5.

Because of last weeks' snow day, the eighth-grade parent night was postponed from February 10 to Monday, February 22 at 7:00 pm in the auditorium. Parents will be offered important information about our high school's academic programs and allowed to ask questions about the courses the class of 2014 will be taking.

The sophomores and some juniors will be taking the state CAPT exams on March 2, 3, 4, 9, 11, 16, and 18. On those mornings, students will be attending classes on a shortened schedule. Freshman will be taking practice CAPT tests during five of those seven afternoons and on the other two afternoons they will be attending programs for the entire freshman class in the auditorium.

One of those programs will be on March 11. The freshman class will be attending a program called "The Yellow Dress" which is about preventing dating violence. An actress will be performing a play and then conducting a discussion on this topic with the students and staff. This program is supported by a grant from the Peter Rose Memorial Fund.

The other program that the freshman class will be attending will be held on March 18. The program, which is sponsored by a grant from the State, is about internet safety and will be presented by a group of their peers from Cogenchaug Regional High School who are trained in this topic and have committed to presenting this information to at least five schools in the state.

On March 5<sup>th</sup>, the English department is sponsoring another "Write the Night" event. This is the program's sixth year. The event is primarily directed towards the creative writing class which must write a novel with the goal of 50,000 words in a month's time. However, any student that is genuinely interested can sign up.

On February 5, 6, and 7, 49 students and 5 high school staff went on a 3-day trip to Quebec City, Canada. Although the trip was short, it was full of traditional activities such as dog sledding, folk dancing, and experiencing the sweet taste of maple with almost every meal. The students enjoyed snowshoeing up a mountain, snow tubing and visiting the sights of Old Quebec during their Carnival. Many of the staff and students were able to practice their French speaking skills during this trip.

On Monday, February 8, Jillian and Frank Thorpe, a couple with Old Saybrook roots and who were working in Haiti when the earthquake happened, gave two presentations in the auditorium to the high school student body, as well as the 8<sup>th</sup> grade class. The presentation was extremely shocking as well as inspiring. The students learned about the suffering of the people in Haiti, as well as the values of different cultures.

## **Athletics**

Seeded first in states, was the girls' 4x8 relay team: Junior Alyssa Arre, Sophomore Sara McDonald, Senior Jackie Steinke, and Senior Kellie Walker. They came in second place with a time of 10:18:65. They only lost first place by 2 seconds, but the girls' are now on their way to State Opens this Saturday, February 20, which will be taking place at Hill House High School at noon.

Girls' basketball ended the regular season 11-9 and will play Cromwell in the first round of shorelines on February 20 at 7:00 pm.

Boys' basketball current record is 7-10 and their Senior Night is Wednesday, February 24.

The hockey team's record is currently 8-8 and has their senior night on February 26<sup>th</sup>.

On February 6, the Harlem Rockets comedy basketball team played an exhibition game at NBHS against "The Dream Team" representing North Branford. The Dream Team included Superintendent Schoonmaker, Fran Merola, Chris Webster, Carter Welch and many others. The proceeds from this event went to Project Graduation 2010.

## **Social/Clubs/ Civic**

Helping Hands is working on a "Roses for Autism" fundraiser that is on March 19<sup>th</sup> and is currently finishing a pie fundraiser.

The Student Council's "BIG GIVE" project had a reception on February 8<sup>th</sup>. Student council members and their parents attended this meaningful event where their charitable projects were presented. The grand total of all the donations was an amazing \$10,000. Congratulations to the student council, led by president Heena Mavani and advisor Stephanie Byrd, for an extremely successful program. Thank you to the Board of Education for donating the last \$400 dollars or so that helped the student council reach the \$10,000 mark.

The Student Council is planning the high school semi-formal which will take place on Friday, February 26. The theme is "Tropical Paradise".

The Student Council's annual blood drive will be held at the high school on March 12.

## **III. Consent Agenda**

### **a. Minutes**

Minutes of the January 12, 2010 North Branford Board of Education – Special Meeting.

Minutes of the January 21, 2010 North Branford Board of Education – Regular Meeting

Minutes of the January 27, 2010 - First Budget Workshop.

Minutes of the February 3, 2010 - Second Budget Workshop.

- b. Resignations - None at this time.
- 1) Appointments - None at this time.
- 2) Leaves - None at this time.
- 3) Donations - None at this time.
- 4) Field Trips

The Superintendent has received a Field Trip Request from Ms. Marie D'Alessio, World Language teacher at North Branford High School. The trip is to New York City on May 12, 2010. The bus will depart North Branford at approximately 7:00 a.m. and return to the school at 8:00 p.m. The cost to each student is \$80.00.

Deborah Prunier stated that on the consent form for the proposed field trip to New York City, the medical attention line is blank. Michele Saulis stated that the deposit for the trip is not due until March 1<sup>st</sup> and that all information will be completed by that time.

**MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by David McMahon to approve the Consent Agenda as submitted.**

**CHAIRWOMAN LAPPIE: AYE  
VICE-CHAIR MISCIO: AYE  
SECRETARY MCMAHON: AYE  
MARCEY ONOFRIO: AYE  
DEBORAH PRUNIER: AYE  
MOTION CARRIED 5-0**

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

- a. Recognition - None at this time.
- b. Communications - None at this time.

c. BOE Briefs

Superintendent Schoonmaker commented that the “BIG GIVE” had collected a total of \$9,600. He asked each school if they would donate \$80 from their student activities fund to meet the \$10,000 goal. Superintendent Schoonmaker thanked the administrative team for donating the \$400 and helping the NBHS Student Council reach their goal. He is proud of both the students and administration for this project.

Superintendent Schoonmaker read a letter from NBHS teacher Brett Joly. Mr. Joly described the wonderful time the students had on their field trip to Québec City. He commended the 49 NBHS students that participated in the trip for their excellent behavior. He thanks the Board of Education, staff and chaperones who supported and made the trip a smashing success. The superintendent also thanks the board for supporting this endeavor and states that he sent a letter to all 49 students recognizing their behavior as ambassador students and they should be receiving it soon.

d. Science K-5 Curriculum Guide

Under separate cover, the Board has received a copy of the K-5 Science Curriculum Guide for a first read. Appreciation for the successful completion of this project is extended to Jeremy Rice, K-5 Science Curriculum Leader and his curriculum team consisting of Shelly Thompson, Beth Siena, Anita Pantalena, Katie Leining, and Jackie Thurston. This revised guide supports the K-5 science team’s philosophy that “every student needs and deserves a rich and challenging education in science.” The delivery of the curriculum will be supported by the continued implementation of three Science & Technology for Children science kits and one teacher designed kit per year. The guide is comprehensive yet “teacher friendly” in that a pacing guide indicates when units will be taught and a scope and sequence aligns the CSDOE frameworks and grade level expectations to the science units, instructional activities, and assessments per grade level.

A separate packet of common assessments will accompany the revised curriculum guide. Teachers will have access to the guide on an in-district curriculum web site. An ‘essential curriculum’ will be posted for parent and community access on the district web-site.

Joan Follo stated that this is a “first read” of this document. The board has a month to look over and read it. At the next board meeting, the board is welcome to ask questions. Jeremy Rice and the rest of the science team will be at the next board meeting. She feels this is a fabulous document is quite exemplary and there is a tighter alignment with the Connecticut State Board of Education framework.

Nancy Lappie stated that she was quite impressed and that there was a lot of work put into it, as always.

e. Transition from BEST to TEAM

Legislation passed in October of 2009 has established a teacher education and mentoring program to provide support and professional growth to beginning teachers. **Implementation of this program will commence with the school year beginning July 1, 2010.**

Districts need time to transition from **BEST to TEAM**. They must create the infrastructure to support the requirements of TEAM. During the 2009-10 school year, districts will use the time to develop those structures; the development and delivery of training for mentors and district support personnel, and the state will develop professional growth modules to provide the context of support for beginning teachers.

Joan Follo stated that a TEAM Coordinator Committee (TCC) has been established and she has been selected as the facilitator. TCC members include Joan Follo CO, Kris Lindsay TVES, Jen Marena NBHS, Brian Bodner NBHS, Marcella Ardine NBIS, Stephanie DeFrance TVES, Anita Pantalena JH, and Jaime DeFelice STW. Training will be on March 4<sup>th</sup> at ACES.

f. North Branford Education Foundation Update

Members of the Education Foundation are presently involved in preparing for their first Shining Star Award Dinner honoring Vin Candelora, Fran Merola, Ed Slubowski, and Joanne Wentworth for their outstanding dedication and extraordinary service to the North Branford Public Schools and the community. The dinner will be held on Friday March 26, 2010 at Amato's Ristorante. Cocktail hour from 6:30-7:30 p.m. and Dinner at 7:30 p.m. The cost of this event is \$45 per person and tickets can be purchased at each school.

The Education Foundation is accepting applications for their mini-grant program until February 19, 2010. At this time, there are five exceptional mini-grant proposals.

g. Summer Camp 2010

Summer Camp offerings will be released on March 1, 2010 as the Summer Camp brochure is distributed. This summer the program obtains its name, *Prehistoric Days*, from a new dinosaur camp for students entering grades 3-6. In total there are 14 new camps being offered, including *Wet & Wild Jr. Edition; Fizz, Bubble and Goo; Camp's Got Talent; and Plundering Pirates*. Other camps have added new trips. Wet & Wild has added trips to the Portland Quarry. Swimming will again be offered in cooperation with the Shoreline YMCA. The Director of the Summer Program is Tippi Chupron. A total of 30 teachers, aides, college and high school students will provide services. It is anticipated that registration will top the 1,500 mark.

h. State of Our Schools Report

The North Branford Public Schools is in the process of developing a “State of the Schools” report. This report will be available to the public online in the near future. This report is a method of conveying the direction of the school system to the community. It will highlight programs, technology initiatives, goals, as well as state test score data within the district. It is an avenue for providing information to the public so that they can become informed partners in the education of the children of North Branford.

i. Superintendent’s Budget Request

The Board must finalize its 2010-2011 budget request. The zero-growth budget requires \$1,018,670 increase in expenses over 2009-2010. An addition of 0.35 HS music (\$31,829), a reduction of \$15,000 for a central office server, and an SRO at the high school (\$43,621 with the remainder borne by the NBPD) increases the request to \$1,079,120, or a total request of \$29,888,400.

As mentioned in earlier presentations, all of the percentages previously discussed were based on the total expense budget of \$28,809,280 without regard to funding source. When we look to reconcile our numbers with the Town budget, it is noteworthy that the original BOE budget for the 2009-2010 fiscal year includes a \$100,000 payment from FRC (included in the total expenses) and a \$56,068 reduction in the expense budget to reflect an additional contribution from FRC. So the budget originally approved by the Town Council was actually \$28,753,212. An additional reduction of \$1,158,029 was adopted to reflect the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund grant, making the final 2009-2010 BOE budget \$27,595,183.

So the percentage increase associated with this request is complicated by these unusual revenue sources in the 2009-2010 budget. The real net increase of the \$1,079,120 compared to the total expense budget of \$28,809,280 is 3.75%. However, the total budget request of \$29,888,440, less the SFSF funding of \$1,158,029, would actually be \$28,730,411 and appear as 4.11% increase in the Board expenditures in the Town budget. This difference is caused by two factors, the first is simply mathematical (reducing both the 2010-2011 request and the 2009-2010 budget by the same SFSF grant payment of \$1,158,029 results in a somewhat higher percentage); the second is the \$56,068 FRC contribution that is not deducted from the 2010-2011 request. It is also important to note that the first \$100,000 contribution from FRC was included in the expenditure budget (as a payment from FRC instead of a reduction), and that this will have an additional impact on the Town budget.

Since the budget workshop, the SRO position is off the table for this year. The Police Commission has met and felt it is something they are unable to support it at this time. They liked the idea and would like to entertain it again next year. A job description has been put together and it will be kept on the table for next year.

The only personnel change to the budget is the increase of the part-time high school music position from 0.45 to 0.8, which is an increase of \$16,829.

A conversation was had regarding fuel cost. Superintendent Schoonmaker commented that it will take time to get a good read on the cost of heating and cooling on the new NBIS building. Don Winnicki said he felt that the school would presently be better off heating with gas than oil. The furnace is able to be fueled on either.

Central Office has also decided to eliminate the need for an AS400 server to archive files, which was estimated to cost \$15,000.

The new grand total for the operating budget is now at \$29,844,779, which represents a 3.59% increase.

The \$40,000 request for the capital improvement budget is for reserve for track repair at the high school. It was last serviced two years ago. The initial investment was \$200,000, therefore it is necessary to maintain it.

**MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Deborah Prunier to approve the operating budget request of \$29,844,779 for school year 2010/2011.**

**CHAIRWOMAN LAPPIE: AYE  
VICE-CHAIR MISCIO: AYE  
SECRETARY MCMAHON: AYE  
MARCEY ONOFRIO: AYE  
DEBORAH PRUNIER: AYE  
MOTION CARRIED 5-0**

**MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by David McMahon to approve the capital budget request of \$40,000 for school year 2010/2011.**

**CHAIRWOMAN LAPPIE: AYE  
VICE-CHAIR MISCIO: AYE  
SECRETARY MCMAHON: AYE  
MARCEY ONOFRIO: AYE  
DEBORAH PRUNIER: AYE  
MOTION CARRIED 5-0**

## **V. Committee Reports**

The Board of Education will review and take possible action on committee reports.

a. Negotiations –

The administration contract has been accepted. Negotiations will begin soon on the secretaries' contract.

b. Budget - No report at this time.

A copy of the February 1 financial statement was enclosed for Board review.

c. Curriculum - No report at this time.

d. Pension -

Nancy Lappie stated that Morgan Stanley Smith Barney has taken more defensive strategies and less risk. Don Winnicki touched on changes in pension plan. Angelo Tossi was elected chair of the pension committee. Nancy stated they are looking for an alternate the Pension Committee and the next meeting is in May. Shannon Querfeld-Miscio volunteered to fill the spot on the committee.

e. Policy - No report at this time. Did not meet due to weather.

f. ACES –

Nancy Lappie met with ACES last week and worked on budgets. Nancy stated that there are not a lot of North Branford kids involved in ACES after this year. CAMS will be disbanding at the end of this school year. ACES may use the CAMS as a Center for Autism (ages 11-21). ACES also stated that the Northford Food Bank can remain in the building.

g. Building Committee –

Dave McMahon has been going through a punch list at NBIS. Staff and students should be able to move into the last area next week. Superintendent Schoonmaker stated there was a delay in the Tech Ed area because the wrong spray booth was ordered. This is being worked on and should be rectified very soon. The modulars will be gone by the end of next week and the area will be returned for town use as a parking area. The project was completed on time and under budget. A security bid has been accepted.

**VI. New Business** - None at this time.

**VII. Visitors and Press**

**Carolyn Candelora** stated that there's a lot of talk about kindergarten and there was an article in the newspaper. She expressed concern about children adapting and developing good relationships with school social workers. She also is concerned about long bus rides and multiple buses coming at same time for different schools. She asked the Board to please investigate these issues and put this on the agenda for the next meeting.

**Robert Altermatt** stated concerns regarding a long bus ride for his son (White Hollow Rd to Jerome Harrison). He feels that a 45-minute bus ride for a 5-year-old is way to long. He also expressed concerns about different buses coming at to the bus stop from different schools.

**Julie Shadman** stated she has already written a letter to the Board of Ed expressing her concerns about the all kindergarten being held at Jerome Harrison. She understands that this move does not affect the budget; therefore there is no reason to discuss it right now. It seems like it is being tabled until later. She feels that parents should be notified

**Stephanie Martinik** stated she is concerned about 1-hour bus ride. She disagrees with kindergarten going to Jerome. The move would interrupt continuity. Academics are not always important – social is more important at their ages.

**Paul Calamita** commented on how everyone can help get the budget passed.

**Superintendent Schoonmaker** thanked Town Council members Paul Calamita and Rose Angeloni for being at his evening's meeting. He appreciated council members being here and making the effort to physically be here and see some of the hard work that went into this. As stated, this is a 0 budget personnel. Each percentage point equates to 6 certified staff members. If the budget does not pass, it will mean the loss of certified staff at the elementary level and that will affect class sizes.

**Rose Angeloni** states that there will be a public hearing Tuesday, March 16<sup>th</sup> in the auditorium. This is when the Town Council and the Board of Ed will be presenting their budgets.

**Cliff Potter** urged the Board of Ed to attend Town Council meetings and the Town Council to attend Board of Ed meetings. Also, all community members should attend both Town Council and BOE meeting.

**Superintendent Schoonmaker** commended the cooperation between different town municipalities and the school system. There has been a spirit of cooperation.

**XIII. THE NEXT REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 18, 2010 AT TOTOKET VALLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.**

**XIV. Adjournment**

**MOTION:** Moved by David McMahon and seconded by Marcey Onofrio to adjourn this meeting of the North Branford Board of Education at 8:23 p.m.

**ALL VOTED AYE**

Respectfully Submitted,

Sherry DelGaudio  
Acting Board Secretary