

NORTH BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
May 12, 2010

This special meeting of the North Branford Board of Education was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the Library Media Center at Totoket Valley Elementary School on Wednesday, May 12, 2010 to receive information submitted by New England School Development Council. The following members attended:

Board Chairwoman:	Nancy Lappie
Board Vice Chair:	Shannon Querfeld-Miscio
Board Secretary:	David McMahon
Board Members:	Dr. Christopher Manna Marcey Onofrio Deborah Prunier
Superintendent of Schools:	Scott Schoonmaker

I. Visitors

Director of Business/Personnel:	Donald Winnicki
Director of Curriculum/Instruction:	Joan Follo
Principals:	Shawn Parkhurst, JHS
NESDC:	Margery Clark Donald Kennedy

Paul Carbone	Theresa Frandson	Michele Adinolfi-Lucibello
Brandi Little	Suzanne D'Albero	Jennifer Welchire
Sue Barile	Gina Cosgrove	Jennifer Carroll
Claudia Faughnan	Denise Judelson	Rose Spinelli
Meg Peterson	Annie Masselle	Vincent Fico

May 12, 2010

Julie Amendola
Angelique Burke
Drew Ackerman

Irene Baumgaertner
Mary Villano

Geoff Baumgaertner
Michele Ackerman

I. Information Submitted by NESDC

Superintendent Schoonmaker mentioned that two members of the New England School Development Council, Margery Clark and Donald Kennedy would submit their report at this meeting. Superintendent Schoonmaker also mentioned that he met with his administrators today and there are a few corrections to make on this report. NESDC will have the report ready by mid-morning Monday and it will be on-line on Monday for anyone who wishes to read the report.

Donald Kennedy remarked that he and Margery Clark are life-time educators. He mentioned that they both had been teachers, administrators, etc. and now they both do educational searches for NESDC.

Donald Kennedy remarked that John Kennedy was also a part of the study and he visited North Branford High School and North Branford Intermediate School. Margery Clark visited the elementary schools.

Mr. Kennedy mentioned that they received a lot of participation from parents on their concerns for transportation, class sizes, savings, etc.

Mr. Kennedy commended North Branford on their Family Resource Program, North Branford Educational Committee, Before and After School Programs, Teacher Resource Center, etc. He mentioned that our administrators are thinking broadly and of the future. He remarked that the student enrollment in North Branford is dropping and we would have seventy-five less students by 2012-2013.

Donald Kennedy remarked that the report has four final options:

1. Close Stanley T. Williams School and use it for municipal purposes saving \$446,000 to \$511,000. Prekindergarten through second grade would be at Jerome Harrison School and grades three through five at Totoket Valley Elementary School. Portables from STW would be needed at JHS. FRC and Board offices would be located at North Branford High School.

May 12, 2010

2. Close Stanley T. Williams School and use it for prekindergarten, teacher resource center, and school board offices saving \$406,000 to \$511,00. Jerome Harrison School would house kindergarten through second grade and Totoket Valley would house third through fifth grades.
3. Jerome Harrison houses Prekindergarten, kindergarten and one-half of grades one through three. Totoket Valley would house one-half of grades one through three and Board offices. There would be teacher layoffs and larger class sizes.
4. Keep all grades where they are and will require teacher layoffs.

Class sizes at STW would be 22-23 first grades, 28-29 second grades and 26-27 third grades. Class sizes at JHS would be 21-22 first grade, 28-29 second grades and 27 third grades. Fourth grade classes would also have 27-28 students.

Mr. Kennedy mentioned that the savings in the first two options depends on the addition of buses and parking spaces.

Donald Kennedy remarked that North Branford is well on its way to accomplishing a wonderful working together atmosphere between regular teachers and special education teachers. He stated we are truly becoming a professional learning community with our teacher resource center and our science consortium.

Margery Clark remarked that transition is a part of life but children are always at the center of our concerns. She stated that she was impressed with the North Branford teaching staff and administrators. She also remarked that adults have to be the role models for our children. She mentioned that families could help by putting children on the bus instead of picking them up every day.

Ms Clark remarked that this is not an easy time for any of our New England states as they all have multiple problems in their communities.

Deborah Prunier questioned where the figures for the projected enrollments came from.

Mr. Kennedy stated that the enrollment for next year came from Donald Winnicki and long range enrollments came from a ten year study on district researches.

May 12, 2010

Mr. Kennedy remarked that New England states are expected to have a slower recovery for the job market and many of our younger people are moving to southern or western states for jobs and to raise their families.

Dr. Manna questioned if electricity, heat and water were factored in with the half-million in savings for STW to be used as Board offices and prekindergarten classes. He also remarked that if STW was closed we could save the position of ten teachers.

Donald Winnicki stated no, that the savings factored one less nurse, principal, etc. There would be some janitorial services needed and maintenance.

Deborah Prunier questioned if retentions were figured into the class size numbers.

Superintendent Schoonmaker stated they were not.

Shannon Querfeld remarked that 28 and 29 students are very high for lower grades.

Dr. Manna questioned if any New England states at this time mandate full day kindergarten.

Mr. Kennedy stated it was not a mandate and the few districts that receive grant money for full day kindergarten usually back off from full day when the grant money is no longer available

Joan Follo remarked that results are good with half day kindergarten if time is spent on learning. With full day kindergarten you must have lunch time, recess, etc. and you might gain an extra half-hour to forty-minutes for educational instructions.

Mr. Kennedy stated that is why a lot of small school districts seem to group all of their students together, K with K, first graders with first graders, etc. You can accomplish more if all the same grades are in the same school.

Nancy Lappie stated that this would have educational advantages as well as savings.

Shannon Miscio questioned Donald Winnicki on the DATTCO handout.

Donald Winnicki mentioned that the handout had four options.

May 12, 2010

1. Leave the bussing system similar to the way it is now. There would be three tiers - K-5, 6-8 and 9-12. Add one bus at the cost of \$45,000, and routes on the southern end of town would increase by 5 minutes and on the northern end of town by 10-12 minutes. If we do not add an extra bus, routes on the southern end of town would increase by 10 minutes and the northern end of town by 15-17 minutes. In the PM the increased riding time is partially offset by decreased loading time by eliminating the double loading at STW/TVES.
2. Leave the three tiers at K-5, 6-8 and 9-12 but combine the buses so that all elementary buses are used for both schools. These routes would have less stops but similar total riding times because there would still be the double loading at TVES and JHS.
3. Change the three tiers to K-2, 3-5 and -12. This could reduce the number of vehicles needed, or reduce route times if we left the number of vehicles as it is now. This combines the middle and high school students into one tier with a common start and dismissal time.
4. Change to 2 tiers K-5 and 6-12. This creates the opportunity to renegotiate the contract based on four-hour vehicle utilization instead of five-hour vehicle utilization, with potential savings to the district.

Marcey Onofrio remarked that most of the NBHS students do not ride the bus at this time.

David McMahon questioned how many NBHS students ride the bus.

Superintendent Schoonmaker stated less than 15 percent.

Nancy Lappie remarked that parents picking up and dropping off children is always a problem.

Superintendent Schoonmaker stated there is room at JHS for 42 more parking spaces.

Nancy Lappie stated if parents had questions on the NESDC report that they could email Superintendent Schoonmaker.

The Superintendent stated that he would forward them to NESDC.

Marcey Onofrio stated that Board members received copies of all petitions and emails.

Nancy Lappie remarked that it is very important that we all work together for our children.

May 12, 2010

MOTION: Moved by David McMahon and seconded by Dr. Manna to adjourn this meeting of the North Branford Board of Education at 7:31 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

Sincerely submitted,

Sherry Ardine
Account Clerk

