

**North Branford Board of Education
Special Meeting
September 16, 2010**

The Thursday, September 16, 2010 Board of Education meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. in the Conference Room of Stanley T. Williams Elementary School on Thursday, September 16, 2010. The following members attended:

BOARD CHAIR:	MARCEY ONOFRIO
BOARD VICE-CHAIR:	SHANNON MISCIO
BOARD SECRETARY:	DAVID MCMAHON
BOARD MEMBERS:	MARIE DIAMOND
	DR. CHRISTOPHER MANNA
	DEBORAH PRUNIER

SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS:	SCOTT SCHOONMAKER
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MOTION: Moved by Marcey Onofrio and seconded by Shannon 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 at 5:37 p.m. to discuss negotiations and personnel.

ALL VOTED AYE

MOTION: Moved by Shannon Miscio and seconded by Marie Diamond to reconvene to the Board meeting room for public Session at 6:00 p.m.

ALL VOTED AYE

I. Visitors

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

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Maggie Sullivan
Carter Welch
Anne DeAngelo
Diane DeNardis
Angel Wulff
Liuggi Mercuriano
Theresa Frandsen
Alisa DelVecchio
Susan Misur, Register
Bruce Abelson
Lydia Mattson
Briana Dautaj
Linda Bow
Fran Cassisla
Gina Mauro
Susan Pearson
Cole Lauro

Jacquelyn Ferraro
Todd Stoeffler
Samantha DeAngelo
Rich DeNardis
Nancy Fama
Jennifer Carroll
Jennifer Melchiore
Colby O'Rourke
Jamie Abelson
Gina Cosgrove
Edit Dautaj
Auvelo Dauktaj
Carolyn Candelora
Michelle Farkash
Daniel Armin
Tara Lauro
Chris Lauro

Dolina Potter
Brandi Little
Angel Wulff
Alyssa DeNardis
Louisa Mercuriano
Keith Shadman
Claudia Faughnan
Raffaela Hunt
Alicia Abelson
Dana Mattson
Euselo Dautaj
Cindi Anastasio
Mary Cassisla
Janet Mauro
Charles Pearson
Laura Lauro
Mary Villano

Marcey Onofrio announced that there would be a Transportation committee meeting immediately following this Board meeting.

II. Student Representatives

Board Chair, Marcey Onofrio, introduced two new student representatives from NBHS Maggie Sullivan and Jacquelyn Ferraro. They reported on the following:

NBHS started the school year with a new, up to date library, main office and guidance office.

Academics

NBHS provided a freshman orientation for the incoming class of 2014 on August 25th and 26th. Twenty – seven upperclassmen volunteered their time to aid as mentors for the welcoming program created by our Assistant Principal and Guidance Counselors.

There is a new class this year taught by the new business teacher, Rebecca Podzikowski, Freshmen Seminar. This class will help students learn to manage time, take notes and study effectively.

Senior Parent Night was held on September 14th and parents were able to get extra information concerning the college application process and all seniors found out their class rank.

The National Honor Society has new advisors this year, Miss Young and Mrs. D'Alessio and all are looking forward to a very successful year.

Social

The Interact Club has been very busy with their farm and has been donating the food they have grown to the North Branford and Branford Food Banks. On the 25th of September the club will be attending a leadership conference at Choate Rosemary Hall.

An informational meeting was held on August 25th with over 600 students and parents attending. The program was about making good decisions related to drug and alcohol use.

Athletics

Boys Soccer won against Westbrook-

Field Hockey won against Branford-

Volley Ball won against Valley Regional-

Girls Soccer tied against Westbrook-

First Football game tonight against Enfield (if it doesn't get rained out)

Field Hockey is promoting awareness for breast cancer by wearing pink uniforms this month and will also participate in Light the Night-

On the 28th of September many captains of sports will attend a Shoreline Leadership Conference with other team captains in our league to create better leaders in athletics.

III. Consent Agenda

a. Minutes

Minutes of the August 19, 2010 Board of Education Special Meeting.

b. Resignations - None at this time.

c. Appointments

The Superintendent has received recommendations from all schools for stipend positions for the 2010/2011 school year. These positions include, lead teachers, advisors, directors, coordinators and coaches. Special thanks are extended to administration. The Superintendent is pleased with the personnel that will be guiding these activities. All of the positions are stipends in accordance with the contract between the North Branford Board of Education and the North Branford Federation of Teachers. As such all appointments are renewed annually. (attached)

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The Superintendent is recommending the appointment of Ms. Mauri Shields, TESOL educator (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) for the North Branford Public Schools for the 2010/2011 school year. Ms. Shields will be paid at Masters, Step 4, in accordance with the contract between the North Branford Board of Education and the North Branford Federation of Teachers for a period of one year only.

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

MOTION: Moved by David McMahon and seconded by Shannon Miscio to accept the Consent Agenda as submitted.

CHAIRWOMAN ONOFRIO:	AYE
VICE-CHAIR MISCIO:	AYE
SECRETARY MCMAHON:	AYE
MARIE DIAMOND:	ABSTAINED
CHRISTOPHER MANNA:	AYE
DEBORAH PRUNIER:	ABSTAINED

MOTION PASSED 4-0-2

IV. Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Schoonmaker welcomed Marie Diamond to the Board of Education stating he has had the pleasure of working with Marie on the Education Foundation Committee and she has been a great support to the school system.

Superintendent Schoonmaker also presented a bounty of vegetables grown by students in the Interact Club stating these students planted over 1000 seeds at Augur Farm. They spent the summer watering these plants and cultivating them. Mr. Schoonmaker also recognized Joe Tenczar who advises this club.

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a. Recognition

2010/2011

This evening we had a number of exceptional artists whose artwork appears in the 2010/2011 school calendar. Each student was presented with a certificate from the Board of Education for their efforts. Their work was on display at this Board meeting. Students recognized were:

Alicia Abelson
Sophia Anastasio
Jimmy Augur
Rachel Boyers
Derek Candelora
Briana Dautaj
Samantha DeAngelo
Alyssa DeNardis
Cheyanna DeRosa
Albert Doheny
Caitlin Doyle
Jessica Iannucci
Tara Lauro
Lydia Mattson
Robert Onofrio
Annika Pearson

The Board congratulated and thanked these students for their artwork!

b. Communications

Attached for Board review were the BOE Briefs from each school for the month of September.

Marcey Onofrio stated that as she read the briefs from each school she realized that all schools had a very busy ten days as school just barely started.

c. CMT/ CAPT School Improvement Plans

The CMT and CAPT testing data was presented to the Board at the July meeting. At that time, the Superintendent announced that each principal would present an action plan to the Board at the September meeting. This allowed the administrators time to analyze their test scores and to work with the central office staff and teachers to plan for the upcoming year. The principals presented their school improvement plans at this Board meeting and Board members were shown a PowerPoint presentation along with a more detailed account of the action plan.

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Sara Querfeld remarked that she was very pleased that our schools that were having difficulty have moved into safe harbor.

Shawn Parkhurst spoke on DRP's and focusing on reading comprehension at JHS. He stated that the new math program is in place and every day, students would have a ten minute math lesson that is focused on the CMT's. He also remarked that students will have monthly writing prompts that his staff will score. Mr. Parkhurst mentioned that there will be a heavy emphasis on staff development on strategies in reading, writing and math.

Dr. Lindsay stated TVES will focus on CREC benchmark assessments. She remarked about revising their standard base report cards at TVES. Her staff will continue to work on increasing reading fluency and working with degrees of reading power. Staff will work on building background information and organizing thoughts with their students. TVES staff will receive more professional development.

Sara Querfeld remarked she is very impressed with JHS and TVES teachers and principals as they have already researched what strands need more work and have already put plans in place so the students can start working right away.

Alan Davis stated NBIS will focus on writing across the curriculum. He spoke on the current freshmen class and how well they did at NBIS and how they were able to achieve almost a 95% proficiency rate in math, a 20.7% growth in reading and an 11.6% growth in writing. He remarked that NBIS staff has a ten step plan to increase scores. They will continue work with the Step Literacy Program and work with the in-house Step Team. Mr. Davis stated that students are expected to take responsibility for their scores so there is an opportunity for students to conference with their teachers for extra help. Students will participate in the New England Math League Contest. Mr. Davis also spoke on mini-mesters, courses that staff developed. They are a five week course offered to sixth and seventh graders. All courses are based on content-area literacy and feature many topics including, Grade 6: Math Explorations, Give a Hoot- Amazing Owls, It's Not Easy Being Green an environmental studies class and Grade 7: Financial Literacy – Money and You, Current Events- We're Living History, Consumerism – Chew on This. The staff at NBIS will also work on professional development.

Michel Saulis remarked that by 2012 it is hoped that 80% of all NBHS students will be at or above State standards in math, reading and writing. Michele stated that all sophomores will take geometry to develop their skills before the CAPT's. She spoke on after school study sessions for students and all of the students who attended these sessions last year did very well in the CAPT's. She spoke on the English department and the focus on reading. Mrs. Saulis remarked that she is very proud of the writing scores at NBHS and stated that the English department and the Social Studies department focus on writing skills as well as the rest of the high school.

Sara Querfeld remarked that she provided the Board with scores over time and also compared our scores to surrounding towns.

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Sara Querfeld mentioned there would be a meeting for parents on CMT's on September 29 1010 in the auditorium at 7:00 p.m.

Superintendent Schoonmaker recognized all principals for their dedication to improving our scores and the work that goes into it.

d. Opening Convocation, Activities, and Training

The Opening Convocation began with a 'welcome back' breakfast in the North Branford Intermediate School cafeteria on August 30, 2010 followed by a convocation led by the Superintendent of Schools in the auditorium. The Superintendent gave an inspiring opening address and recognized staff accomplishments and the school building improvements completed during the summer. Chairman of the Board of Education, Marcey Onofrio, and the President of the Teacher's Federation, Phil Palma, welcomed the staff back to the new school year. North Branford Education Foundation Chairman Marie Diamond recognized teachers receiving grants for innovative projects. The Superintendent recognized North Branford Teachers of the Year: Stephanie Byrd from the high school; Danielle Perry from the intermediate school, and Patricia Darragh representing the primary schools. Finally, Shelly Thompson, Totoket Valley 4th grade teacher, was introduced as the North Branford Teacher of the Year and she presented an inspirational photo presentation of her commitment to children and teaching. This was followed by the Superintendent introducing new staff and giving out service awards to those staff members celebrating 5,10, 15, 20, 25, and 30 plus years of service in the North Branford Public Schools. At the conclusion of the convocation, staff returned to their buildings to prepare their classrooms, preview student files, plan instruction, and to attend staff, department and curriculum meetings. The next two days were spent attending professional development and preparing for the new school year.

Superintendent Schoonmaker complimented Edward Slubowski, Chef Ed, and his staff for preparing the breakfast and the lunch.

David McMahon stated the teachers were very motivated and anxious to get back to work and remarked that he had a great time meeting all staff members.

e. Summer Curriculum Work Accomplished

The summer months provide the opportunity for teachers to work in-depth on curricular areas of need. This summer the following initiatives were accomplished to promote increased student achievement.

Sara Querfeld remarked that the high school worked on the following: the English Department developed a pacing guide for grades 9 and 10; staff developed a manual for Response to Intervention; staff edited the NEASC report and developed plans for the upcoming evaluation; the Business Department developed a new course for incoming students focusing on study skills and organization for academic success. Sara complimented Department Chair Carter Welch who presented Positive Behavior Interventions and Support, a program targeted at improving school climate, to the entire high school staff prior to the start of the school year. The high school

administration and department chairs Carter Welch and Tammy Mockus revised the high school advisory program for the upcoming school year.

The intermediate school based Research Team completed its work on plans to incorporate essential research skills, with a focus on writing, at each grade level. In addition, the teachers developed 26 day mini-mesters for grades 6 and 7. These plans include a variety of literacy-based enrichment courses in each of the content areas. The mini-mester classes meet daily. This period affords the opportunity for offering Response to Intervention tier 2 and 3 instruction in reading and mathematics.

Grades K-5 worked on a variety of math and language arts related curricular areas. In math the summer work focused on the following: including math fluency reporting at grades 3-5, math pacing guides for grades K-5, correlating the math assessments with the grade level expectations, aligning the new math program with the Connecticut Mastery Test requirements, and preparing for the roll out of the new math program: Math Expressions.

f. Curriculum Management Cycle Revisions

Sara Querfeld remarked that the 5-Year Curriculum Management Cycle has been revised to accommodate district needs. The major changes include the consolidation of the Career Education programs and Business; keeping K-12 Social Studies in the Review year, keeping Language Arts K-5 in the Implementation year, and adding 6-12 Guidance to the Evaluation year. Guidance has not been a part of the 5-year cycle in the past, and the administration and Guidance department feel that it is a necessary step as we move toward higher achievement for all students.

g. SAT and Advanced Placement Assessment Results

The Class of 2010 SAT scores were as follows: Critical Reading 507; Mathematics 504; and Writing 512. While our students were slightly below the State average (Critical Reading 509; Mathematics 514; Writing 513), North Branford students exceeded the National averages (Critical Reading 501; Mathematics 516; Writing 492) in the areas of reading and writing, but lagged behind in the area of mathematics.

A comparison of the results of the Class of 2010 SAT scores show that North Branford High School seniors' scores were the highest for Critical Reading and in Writing over the course of the last 5 years, while mathematics for the Class of 2010 was the second highest during that 5 year period.

In addition, the high school will be moving the all-class administration of the PSATs to sophomore year in order to provide students with more time to prepare for SATs, and to provide staff with a way to increase the number of students prepared to take Advanced Placement in junior and senior year. This year both 10th and 11th graders will take the PSAT in October.

The Advanced Placement tests were administered in English Language and Composition, Calculus, Psychology, Spanish Language, Biology, US History, Physics, Computer Science, and Literature and Composition. The scores for each Advanced Placement course are included in the Board packet, and show that the majority of students scored a 4 or better.

Sara Querfeld remarked that it is advantageous for students to take their first college course at NBHS with teachers they are comfortable with.

Marcey Onofrio mentioned she feels AP courses are very important at the high school and it really helps the students to build rapport with their teachers.

h. 2010 Graduation Follow-Up

Three NBHS seniors did not graduate in June of 2010 as a result of lacking credit. One student has returned to NBHS and will complete graduation requirements by the end of the first semester. One student is working with pupil services to complete the necessary requirements for graduation. The third student has completed all coursework and will be awarded a diploma in January. The Strategic Plan sets a goal that 100% of all students will graduate from NBHS.

i. Enrollment

A snapshot of enrollment from September 1 was attached for Board review.

Superintendent Schoonmaker stated we will be tracking eighth graders who choose to attend other schools than NBHS. He feels that by offering more vocational courses at NBHS we will keep more of our students in the district such as the greenhouse and automotive courses. We had fourteen students attend Vinal Tech this year.

j. Community Round-Up

The 21st Annual Community Round Up is scheduled for Saturday, October 23rd. This day is critical for the stocking of the two food closets in the North Branford Community. The success of this event is in large part due to the number of North Branford students and faculty who contribute their time and energy towards this event. Superintendent Schoonmaker encouraged everyone to check their calendars to see if they can give of their time.

David McMahon questioned the difference of transportation from day one until today.

Superintendent Schoonmaker stated that there is a big difference and we have made significant gains. NBIS and NBHS routes have greatly improved. He mentioned they are getting over one-thousand students off campus in fifteen minutes. We are getting there but we are still monitoring crowded buses. Most problems should be worked out within another seven to ten days.

Marcey Onofrio stated the times have improved quite a bit.

Shannon Miscio questioned the pick- up times of parents at JHS.

Superintendent Schoonmaker stated from eight to ten minutes.

Shawn Parkhurst remarked that there are forty to seventy cars daily.

Superintendent Schoonmaker stated that administrators, staff and DATTCO are working hard to make all bus routes work.

Christopher Manna stated other districts are having the same problems.

V. Committee Reports

a. Negotiations

Donald Winnicki remarked that there is a tentative agreement with the Secretaries' group and there should be results by the October Board meeting.

b. Budget

Marcey Onofrio stated it was a very quiet meeting.

The Superintendent provided the Board with a copy of the September 1 financial statement.

c. Operations

No report at this time.

d. Building Committee

Christopher Manna remarked he was glad to see the heavy rain as it will be another test for the NBIS roof. He mentioned that the NBIS project is wrapping up. The committee is working on the FRC stand alone building.

Superintendent Schoonmaker stated that we have received three bids and all are within budget.

e. Curriculum

David McMahon stated that the committee reviewed the revised summer curriculum, the 6-12 guidance cycle, SAT scores were discussed. PSAT changes were discussed and the district joining the CREC assessments.

f. Pension

No report at this time.

g. Policy

Christopher Manna remarked that the committee will be meeting next Thursday, September 23rd to review our substance abuse policy dealing with drinking, drugs, etc. He explained that all policies are reviewed every few years to make sure they are timely and accurate and changes in state statutes.

h. ACES

Marie Diamond mentioned that the committee had discussion on the CAMS building being used for an autism center, the executive directors' appointment to a state task force for IEP's and the Race to the Top program, and the paraprofessionals contract settlement.

VI. New Business

Donald Winnicki distributed figures for the STW facilities account. (attached)

Marcey Onofrio questioned if STW had to be brought up to code because of the change in the use of the building.

Donald Winnicki remarked that because we had to get a building permit we had to bring the building up to code with the fire marshal and the building inspector. (lever handles, etc.)

Christopher Manna questioned what would happen if the town uses half of the STW facilities.

Superintendent Schoonmaker stated we are using only one-third of the building and if the town does use the other two-thirds of the building they will be responsible for that expense.

Marie Diamond questioned the cost of renovating at TVES.

Donald Winnicki remarked the cost was very minor as it was mostly just taking walls down.

Dr. Lindsay stated that the space TVES gained worked out beautifully and her staff was very pleased with the results.

Christopher Manna questioned the air-conditioners installed at STW and where the cost came from.

Superintendent Schoonmaker remarked that the money came from last years budget and new air-conditioners were installed in the four FRC rooms, teachers' resource room, pupil services and

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the Tech room. The south side of the building has window unit air-conditioners that were already installed at STW.

VII. Visitors and Press

Brandi Little remarked that she was very pleased with her daughter's teachers at TVES last year as her child's CMT scores had greatly improved. She also stated that many school Board members said during the election campaigns last year that they wanted to be transparent but she accused the Board of not being transparent but opaque. She feels Board members are keeping things from the parents and not letting them know what is really going on. Mrs. Little also remarked that she was concerned about the bus routes when the weather gets worse as she feels too much pressure is being put on bus drivers to keep on schedule. Brandi Little also questioned why a few more buses couldn't be added to the schedule as we are building a stand alone FRC building so why can't some of that money be used for more buses.

Carolyn Candelora stated children are being dismissed early, losing educational time, just so the buses can run on time. She questions what this will do to CMT scores that everyone is so psyched about. We are losing two hours of educational time every week. She also questioned the cost of the FRC building stating it will be over \$300,000 and mentioned the use of the gym at JHS for FRC and the loss of gym for JHS students. She accused Superintendent Schoonmaker and Board of Educational members of making rushed decisions and not thinking things through.

David McMahon asked Carolyn Candelora to check her watch against the school clocks as his cell phone is off by five to seven minutes with the school clocks.

A parent questioned why the bus meeting scheduled for after the Board meeting was not on the district website. She remarked she didn't feel sixth graders belong on the same bus as high school students. She also questioned what happened to senior privileges.

Keith Shadman questioned the purpose of the communications committee.

Superintendent Schoonmaker remarked the committee was started for communications with Channel 19.

Shannon Miscio mentioned that this committee is starting to form and is in the works.

Christopher Manna remarked that ConnectEd is part of our communications.

Theresa Frandsen questioned why the Transportation Committee is not on the Agenda.

Marcey Onofrio remarked that this committee has been on the agenda several times.

David McMahon mentioned that this committee meets as needed.

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Mrs. Frandsen also questioned the fingerprinting of school visitors.

Superintendent Schoonmaker remarked that persons who will work with students regularly will be fingerprinted. If you will be spending time with students without adult supervision you will have to be fingerprinted. Administrators will be distributing information to all parents.

Mrs. Frandsen remarked that her son should be at his desk at ten of nine but his bus doesn't arrive until that time or after.

Superintendent Schoonmaker remarked that DATTCO is here tonight to discuss these concerns.

A parent questioned the twenty minute lunch at NBIS, not having time to get extras, not being able to carry backpacks or go to their lockers and the absence of study halls.

Another parent questioned her child having to cut math class fifteen minutes short one day and science class was cut short the next day to make sure students boarded the buses on time. She remarked that all this time adds up and it will cost us CMT scores in the long run.

One parent stated the Board should have waited longer before closing STW making sure all kinks were worked out. The parent remarked that it started out at \$25,000 to move the portables to over \$100,000. The parent felt all these problems should have been established before STW closed.

Carolyn Candelora stated the bid for the FRC stand alone building came in at \$400,000.

David McMahon stated he is on this committee and he never saw a bid that high.

Superintendent Schoonmaker remarked that bids came in and the highest was for \$314,000 which is not realistic. Three bids came in today which are half that amount. We are looking at three options at this time.

One parent complained about three students to a seat on the NBIS-NBHS bus routes. She stated that putting NBIS students with NBHS students is an accident waiting to happen.

Another parent questioned why JHS can't be move to dismiss school at 3:30 p.m.

One parent questioned what the timeline is for the FRC building as it is not fair JHS students can't use the whole gym.

Christopher Manna stated that it is not just Board members on the building committee but also Town Council members and we are working with the Town.

David McMahon stated there are too many rumors floating around town.

Theresa Frandsen questioned the cost of \$25,000 for the JHS gym partition.

Donald Winnicki stated the cost was \$9,000.

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Superintendent Schoonmaker remarked that the partition will always be there and JHS can use the gym for more than one purpose when needed.

The next regular Board of Education meeting is scheduled for Thursday, October 21, 2010.

VIII. Adjournment

MOTION: Moved by Shannon Miscio and seconded by Marie Diamond to adjourn this meeting of the North Branford Board of Education at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherry Ardine
Account Clerk