

BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

DATE: October 18, 2023
SUBJECT: Board of Education Meeting

LOCATION: Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria
185 Damascus Road, Branford, CT

ATTENDANCE

HERE	ATTENDEE	AFFILIATION
Y	Peter Berdon, Chair	Board of Education
Y	Ellen Michaels, Vice-Chair	Board of Education
Y	Meredith Gaffney, Secretary	Board of Education
Y	Cristina Cantu	Board of Education
Y	Meaghan DeLucia	Board of Education
Y	John R. Prins	Board of Education
N	Dr. Tim Raynor	Board of Education
Y	Laura Troidle	Board of Education
Y	Marie Watson	Board of Education
Y	Clare Barnett	Student Representative
Y	Kimberly Caracondo	Student Representative
Y	Iva Sekerovic	Student Representative
Y	Conor Spaulding	Student Representative
Y	Dr. Christopher Tranberg, Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Allison Moran, Assistant Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Don Neel, Chief Operating Officer	Central Office

Others present: First Selectman, James Cosgrove; Dominick Celtruda, BL Companies and Alex Paluzzi, Parks & Recreations Director

BUSINESS ITEMS

ITEM DESCRIPTION

CALL TO ORDER

01 Meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM by BOE Chair, Peter Berdon.

AGENDA CHANGES

There were no agenda changes made at this evening's meeting.

PLEDGE

Mr. Berdon read the District's pledge.

COMMUNICATIONS

There were no communications shared this evening.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Gregg Jerolman, Branford resident, spoke about this being the last full Board meeting for some members, the election/re-election of the Board Chair, the need for change, the previous Board Chair and new leadership.

Josh Brooks, Branford RTM member, spoke about defending Mr. Berdon, absurd and offensive comments and being civil and productive.

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APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 02 A. MOTION (Troidle/Gaffney) to approve the minutes from the September 20, 2023 Full Special BOE Meeting and September 20, 2023 Full Regular BOE Meeting.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

BOE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES REPORT

The Student Representatives began by introducing themselves. Among the items that they discussed in their report this evening were; Hispanic Heritage Month events, the new HIVE schedule and HIVE live, the new senior parking spots (monies collected going toward class funds), pep rallies (two so far this year) including the pep band and cheer team, locations, games and activities, the fall play (As You Like It), the arts magazine - Calliope, the quiet lunch/quiet cafe, the upcoming college fair for seniors (taking place on Friday) and the Branford Buzz (article includes our new Superintendent).

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Superintendent Tranberg began his report by welcoming the new BOE Student Representatives, all of the guests in attendance this evening and thanking the departing BOE members. In his report this evening Superintendent Tranberg also discussed the following; Assistant Superintendent Moran's first meeting, Sean Kennedy serving as the interim Athletic Director for the remainder of the year, safety and security (the implementation of the guest management system next week), Global Learning Competencies, the upcoming early release day (next Wednesday), the BOE teacher negotiating committee members (Peter Berdon, Meaghan DeLucia and John Prins) and its tentative agreement and vote next week (Special BOE meeting, October 25th at 6:00 PM).

RECOGNITIONS

A. John B. Sliney (JBS) School PTA

Peter Berdon and Superintendent Tranberg presented/recognized the following past and present JBS PTA officers with a certificate for their recent recognition by Connecticut PTA:

Ashley Murphy (Last Year's President)
Jeremy Pastore (Last Year's Vice President)
Alana Abbott (Last Year's Secretary)
Sara Anglemire (Last Year's Treasurer)

Teresa Peruzzi (Current Co-President)
Jennifer Rossi (Current Co-President)
Keisha Smith (Current Vice President)
Danielle Flocco (Current Secretary)
Tiffany Gray (Current Treasurer)

B. Departing Board Members

Peter Berdon and Superintendent Tranberg thanked departing Board members, Cristina Cantu, Meredith Gaffney and John Prins, and presented them with a Proclamation and a gift for their service. Mr. Prins was also presented with a chair for his many years of service.

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PRESENTATIONS

A. WIS Athletic Field – Facilitated by Dominick Celtruda from BL Companies

First Selectman Cosgrove began this evening's presentation by stating “when doing a municipal/school project it really is a relay race with a lot of passing the baton.” Mr. Cosgrove also spoke about parents and other stakeholders in the community who attended BOE meetings requesting that athletic facilities and also other recreated areas to be improved as well, in the Summer/Fall of 2021 the previous Superintendent engaged Antinozzi and Associates to do a conceptual plan, which was then transmitted to the town to consider, the financial feasibility, capturing the greater community needs (school and different sports groups needs), the RFP that was issued, the committee ultimately engaging BL and the plan that was implemented.

In his presentation Mr. Celtruda discussed the following: starting the design process a year ago, background on BL Companies, learning as the projects are developed, the team that worked on the project, studying the site, working with Antinozzi, the site improvement project (field renovation), understanding what program elements were underway, the capacity of the site, environmental and program elements, accessibility, safety and security (getting out to program areas for people with limited means), incorporating environmental factors, moving some program elements around, moving the basketball court and accessibility areas, the thought process that went into the site, the outdoor classroom (outdoor amphitheater for approximately 15 to 20 students), rain gardens/pollinator gardens, strengthening the wetland buffer areas, the fields including geotechnical studies, wetland evaluation, looking at the surfaces (raising a foot and a half to two feet), allowing for accessible walkways, providing a track, walking through the entire design, a swing set and a climber, providing after school interest areas, an outdoor classroom area, four square and hopscotch area, providing a half court, dual synthetic athletic fields, surrounding the entire field is a three lane track, viewing areas (50 to 60 people), an overlook area (wetlands and pollinator garden), both fields (softball and multi-purpose) will have lights, two toilet rooms, three scoreboards proposed, how the educational aspects always took precedence, its an educational campus first and foremost and it was designed as such, conforms to children throughout town who use it, the meetings that were held and the different stakeholders who comprised those who worked with BL.

B. Superintendent’s Goals

Superintendent Tranberg discussed the following items; the presentation by way of a draft memo, the overview of the Board policy, framing the goals pulled from the State of Connecticut Common Core of Leading, five areas (student achievement, professional and personal leadership, board and community relations, educational leadership and business and operations), under each categories four goals were indicated (still in draft form - increase SAT, SBAC and NGSS student achievement scores - most visual and high stakes, moving scores so we are in top four of our DRG, develop actions for Strategic Coherence plan, increasing opportunities to increase student and staff development, model celebrations and recognizing them, board and community relations (improved communication), educational leadership (different pathways, multiple options), and safety and security being a priority.

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STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Committee Chairs Meeting

Next scheduled meeting: November 2, 2023, 5:00 P.M., This meeting is held virtually.

B. Teaching & Learning Committee (Ellen Michaels, Chair)

Next scheduled meeting: November 8, 2023, 6:00 P.M., Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.

Ms. Michaels thanked Ali and her team for their first meeting. Ms. Michaels reported that the Committee went over District assessment data and discussed the Arts and Education resolution.

C. Personnel & Finance Committee (Meaghan DeLucia, Chair)

Next scheduled meeting: November 8, 2023, 7:00 P.M., Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.

Ms. DeLucia stated that the Committee went over the financial reports and specifically looked at the Special Education over budgeted items, the use of facilities policy and a motion to discuss it at the full meeting.

D. Policy Committee (Marie Watson, Chair)

Next scheduled meeting: November 8, 2023, 7:30 P.M., Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.

Ms. Watson discussed policies 3500 and 5450 that the committee worked on and will move for first reading.

E. Communication Committee (Meredith Gaffney, Chair)

Next scheduled meeting: November 15, 2023, 6:00 P.M., Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.

Ms. Gaffney stated that the Committee discussed community updates, social media metrics, the Superintendent Entry Plan and the State of Connecticut Board Comprehensive Plan.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

03 MOTION (Prins/Gaffney) to approve the second reading of the following policies:

- a. 1000 Non-Discrimination (Community) P/R
- b. 4160 Emergency Action Plan for Interscholastic and Intramural Athletic Events P
- c. 4300 Employment and Student Teacher Checks P
- d. 4350 FMLA P
- e. 4600 Non-Discrimination (Personnel) P/R

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

04 A. To consider and if appropriate, vote to approve the Arts Education Resolution.

MOTION (DeLucia/Troidle) to approve the Arts Education Resolution.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

05 B. To consider and if appropriate, approve the vote to approve the timeline for the implementation of Facilities Use policy.

MOTION (DeLucia/Watson) to approve the timeline for the implementation of the Facilities Use policy as amended.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

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- 06 C. To consider and if appropriate, vote to appoint Pullman & Comley LLC as the law firm whose attorneys will serve as an Impartial Hearing Officer for student disciplinary matters, expulsion expungement requests and for hearing school accommodations appeals, including transportation appeals as provided by Statute for the 2023-2024 school year, as they arise.**

MOTION (Prins/Watson) to appoint Pullman & Comley the law firm whose attorneys will serve as an Impartial Hearing Officer for student disciplinary matters, expulsions expungement requests and for hearing school accommodations appeals, including transportation appeals.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

07 D. John B. Sliney School Project Update

Among the items that Superintendent Tranberg discussed were; the March 15, 2023 Silver and Petrucelli presentation and recommendations, a meeting held in the Fall with First Selectman Cosgrove, Jim Finch and Don Neel, the steps, looking ahead long term, the Indian Neck School Feasibility Study, the high school roof, the CoGen Plant, indoor air quality, library spaces, tennis courts and how Branford is well and responsibly run.

08 E. 2024 BOE Meeting Schedule

MOTION (DeLucia/Troidle) to approve the 2024 Board of Education meeting schedule.

MOTION WITHDRAWN

F. First Reading of Policies

- 09 a.** MOTION (Troidle/DeLucia) to approve the first reading of policy Policy 3500 Purchasing as recommended by the Policy Committee.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

- 10 b.** MOTION (Watson/Troilde) to approve the first reading of policy 5450 Student Drug and Alcohol Use and Chemical Health as recommended by the Policy Committee.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

BOARD REPORTS

A. ACES – Ms. Michaels discussed the following; ACES met last Thursday, the Executive Director presented his goals, there are construction projects at a few of their facilities, the open choice program and there are 1200 people who work for the ACES organization.

B. CABE – In his report this evening Mr. Prins discussed the CABE Convention, the Delegate Assembly and the December 6th New Board Member Workshop.

PTA REPORTS

A. Tisko School - Ms. DeLucia discussed the following; the PTA met last month, they had their opening book fair, their Literacy Night, their fundraisers (including birthday grams), the holiday parade committee and the next meeting is tomorrow night.

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ADJOURN

- 09** MOTION (DeLucia/Gaffney) to adjourn.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Mr. Berdon adjourned the meeting at 9:06 PM.

NEXT FULL BOARD MEETING:

November 15, 2023 at 6:30 PM, Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria

Respectfully submitted,
Meredith Gaffney
Secretary

Prepared by,
Kerry Eyrich