

BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

DATE: April 22, 2020 LOCATION: Branford High School Lower Media Center
185 East Main Street, Branford, CT
SUBJECT: Board of Education Meeting Page 1 of 4

ATTENDANCE

HERE	ATTENDEE	AFFILIATION
Y	Shannen Sharkey, Chair	Board of Education
Y	John R. Prins, Vice-Chair	Board of Education
Y	Meredith Gaffney, Secretary	Board of Education
Y	Joanne Borrus	Board of Education
Y	Chad Edgar	Board of Education
Y	Maria Ehrhardt	Board of Education
Y	Ellen Michaels	Board of Education
Y	Dawn Perrotti	Board of Education
Y	Riyanshu (Riya) Bam	Student Representative
Y	Mia Josephy-Zack	Student Representative
N	Minsok Lee	Student Representative
Y	Hamlet M. Hernandez, Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Rachel Sexton, Assistant Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Don Neel, Chief Operating Officer	Central Office
Y	Charles Cicarella, Director Student Services	Central Office

Others present: Cristina Cantu, BOE Member Nominee

BUSINESS ITEMS

ITEM DESCRIPTION

**This meeting was conducted remotely in accordance with State of Connecticut
Executive Order No. 7b, issued by His Excellency Ned Lamont**

CALL TO ORDER

01 Meeting was called to order at 6:01 PM by BOE Chair, Shannen Sharkey.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

02 There were no public comments made during this section of the meeting.

VOTE TO APPROVE APPOINTMENT OF NEW BOE MEMEBER

03 Motion (Prins/Gaffney) to appoint, Cristina Cantu, the newest Branford Board of Education Member to fill the seat vacated by Michael A. Krause.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

APPROVE MINUTES

04 MOTION (Prins/Gaffney) to approve the minutes from the February 19, 2020 Full Regular BOE Meeting.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

05 MOTION (Michaels/Prins) to approve the minutes from the February 26, 2020 Full Special BOE Meeting.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Continued...

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DATE: April 22, 2020 LOCATION: Branford High School Lower Media Center
185 East Main Street, Branford, CT
SUBJECT: Board of Education Meeting Page 2 of 4

APPROVE MINUTES (Continued)

- 06** MOTION (Prins/Michaels) to approve the minutes from the March 5, 2020 Full Special BOE Meeting.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY
- 07** MOTION (Gaffney/Prins) to approve the minutes from the March 20, 2020 Full Special BOE Meeting.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

BOE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Rya Bam and Mia Josephy-Zack discussed their experiences with Flex Learning. Among the things that they discussed were incorporating Google Classroom into their daily schedule, using Google Meet for some classes, the flexibility of teachers, and their various assignments. Rya Bam discussed how seniors are losing out on a lot of their end of the year traditions. She stated that “as a whole we are upset about it but we care about our health and the health of other people.” Mia said that she was grateful for access to technology and being able to see classmates and also the vibe of classrooms has been very helpful.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT/WIS PROJECT UPDATE

Superintendent Hernandez began by saying that the Superintendent’s report would be extended to include reports for the Personnel and Finance Committee. He then turned the meeting over to Don Neel to report on monthly expenditures. Mr. Neel stated that the pupil services budget is 82.9% committed, the general operations budget is 88.3% committed for a consolidated commitment of our budget of 87.3%,

In his special education budget report, Mr. Cicarella, reported that last month going into the end of the year \$61,000 of residuals look at April from March lens we were trending toward an increase in tuition and transportation but with COVID-19 and school closing that is going to change our residuals. He stated that a transportation expense that will change is \$37,431. This is a known expense of a student awaiting placement. This was removed from the projection and brought our current projects to \$110,000. Because of the Governors Executive Order there may be some adjustment on our tuition expense report and how we are going to fund those expenses. Mr. Cicarella concluded by saying that he will be working with principals as to what the price point will be.

Mr. Neel stated that the personnel report was stable as we are complying with the Governor’s Executive Order regarding personnel. The focus has been on flex learning and not on hiring. He concluded by saying that pretty soon he anticipates posting some openings for next year.

Superintendent Hernandez provided an update on the meals program. He stated that the Commissioner of Education reported that over 2 million meals have been served in Connecticut. Mr. Hernandez stated that our meals program has been very successful and he cannot say enough about John Turrene and the staff involved in making it happen. He stated that the hours for the food distribution will be changing effective tomorrow to 10:30 AM to 1:00 PM to make it easier for families to pick up breakfast and lunch in one trip. To date over 9,400 meals have been served.

Continued...

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DATE: April 22, 2020 LOCATION: Branford High School Lower Media Center
185 East Main Street, Branford, CT
SUBJECT: Board of Education Meeting Page 3 of 4

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT/WIS PROJECT UPDATE (Continued)

Superintendent Hernandez stated that currently schools are closed through May 20th, based on the Governors Executive Order. He also stated that he anticipates the Governor will provide more information on school closure but it would be premature for us to state that school will be closed for the remainder of the year. However, it is important for us as a school district to contemplate what we should do through June 15th. Superintendent Hernandez discussed the Board amended school year calendar, stating that essentially that there will be a four-day flex week. The five-day spring break was dispersed over the remainder of the school year. The reason for this being; to keep students engaged, ensure students can unplug and also the fact that no one can go anywhere.

Superintendent Hernandez stated that tomorrow a letter is going home to parents asking them questions about flex learning. He stated that it is important for us to get feedback as to as to how it is going thinking about the future. The survey will close on May 1st.

Superintendent Hernandez discussed the WIS project. He stated that abatement continues primarily in the pool area and the old academic wing has been totally demolished. He also discussed the water retention catch basis that is being installed, the demolition of the fire pump room that has already been abated. Superintendent Hernandez concluded his update by discussing students musical instrument redistribution for both WIS and BHS.

Assistant Superintendent Sexton discussed flex learning. She stated that it was setup to meet requirements that were set by Commissioner Cardona and done in a way to structure time to meet the needs of students and staff members. Ms. Sexton stated that time structures varied by grade level. State guidance recognized challenges of student accessing technology and balancing demands of home life. She discussed the pass/fail basis. Stating that reports will be sent to parents regarding student progress and allowing student to have a GPA (transcripts will have a letter grade and a description). She concluded by saying that AP exams will be administered online.

Superintendent Hernandez concluded his report by discussing end of the year activities. He stated that he is engaging administrators and staff to acknowledge student achievement and the milestones that they are reaching. We will take into consideration health guidance and the limitations that COVID-19 environment presents. Students are being surveyed and we are getting their input. He also stated that the best ideas how to come up with alternatives to celebrate milestones will come from the students. These are big moments in their lives. This is also true for 4th and 8th grade students as well.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM

08 A. Cancellation of School Sponsored Fieldtrips (In-State & Out-of-State) in the event School Re-opens this year

Motion (Prins/Gaffney) to cancel all in-state and out-of-state field trips to avoid congregating socially in the event Branford Public Schools reopens and reverts back to a traditional setting this year.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Continued...

BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

DATE: April 22, 2020 LOCATION: Branford High School Lower Media Center
185 East Main Street, Branford, CT
SUBJECT: Board of Education Meeting Page 4 of 4

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM (continued)

09 B, First Reading

Motion (Michaels/Edgar) to approve the first reading of policies:

- a. Policy – 5112 Ages of Attendance
- b. Policy – 5141.5 Suicide Prevention and Intervention

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

10 C. Second Reading

Motion (Michaels/Edgar) to approve the second reading of bylaw:

- a. 9325 – Meeting Conduct

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Gregg Jerolman, Branford resident, thanked everyone for their efforts and discussed the change to Bylaw 9325.

ADJOURN

11 MOTION (Michaels/Ehrhardt) to adjourn.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Ms. Sharkey adjourned the meeting 7:03 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Meredith Gaffney
Secretary

Prepared by,
Kerry Erich