

BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
Communication Committee Minutes

DATE: December 9, 2020

LOCATION: Branford High School Lower Media Center
185 East Main Street, Branford, CT

SUBJECT: Communication Committee

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ATTENDANCE

HERE	ATTENDEE	AFFILIATION
Y	Meredith Gaffney, Committee Chair	Board of Education
Y	Peter Berdon	Board of Education
N	Joanne Borrus	Board of Education
Y	Cristina Cantu	Board of Education
N	Chad Edgar	Board of Education
Y	Ellen Michaels	Board of Education
Y	Dawn Perrotti	Board of Education
Y	John Prins	Board of Education
Y	Dr. Tim Raynor	Board of Education
Y	Hamlet M. Hernandez, Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Rachel Sexton, Assistant Superintendent	Central Office

Others present:

BUSINESS ITEMS

ITEM DESCRIPTION

CALL

01 Meeting was called to order at 6:04 PM by Committee Chair, Meredith Gaffney.

APPROVE MINUTES

02 MOTION (Raynor/Gaffney) to approve minutes from the November 11, 2020 Communication Committee meeting.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

DISCUSSION ITEMS

03 A. COVID-19 Cases in BPS Update

Superintendent Hernandez provided an update on the COVID-19 cases in the District. Mr. Hernandez discussed the following:

- The percentage of districts offering a predominately fully in-person learning model by week. October was the peak for fully in person learning (55%).
- Branford Public Schools COVID (+) Summary/Dashboard. This dashboard is updated every day with (+) cases that have been confirmed with the Public Health Department. These (+) cases are also reported to the State.
- CDC CDC Quarantine Guidelines. The Connecticut DPH has made their recommendation to the Governor for review and final disposition and so far no change in quarantine. Superintendent Hernandez stated this is expected to change and that he wants to make sure that the community is well aware of changes and is prepared to do so.
- Interscholastic Sports. These predominately take place at BHS. The Body (CIAC) that works closely with Athletics has paused athletics until January 19. This has been done in conjunction with DPH and the Governor's Office. Superintendent Hernandez stated what we have done is encourage virtual meetings with our student athletes to keep them connected. The District's Athletic Director will disseminate updated information.

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DISCUSSION ITEMS (Continued)

- Vaccination Administration Plan. Superintendent Hernandez discussed the criteria for Phase 1A and Phase 1B. A survey has been sent to employees who would be interested in taking the vaccine. This survey was done to get an idea of how many would be need. The raw data will be provided to Public Health. The results of the survey showed a varried interest in taking the vaccine. We are working with authorities as BHS could be a place for administration (a walk through was done today). Wenesdays would be ideal, as school can not be in session. Advance notice would be given in the event of having to do hybrid to facilitate this.
- The District has expanded the number of Contact Tracers from five to nine (including a bilingual speaker). Superintendent Hernandez stated that he can not thank these staff members enough for all their long hours and hard work.
- BPS Hybrid Model (example of composition of student body):
 - Always Virtual – 532 students (20.7%)
 - Temp. Virtual – 44 students (1.7%)
 - Hybrid – 1,681 students (65.6%)
 - Always Present – 305 students (11.9%)
 - Homeschooling – 36 students. This number represents an uptick from last year, which is a national trend.
- The number of requests to go into voluntary remote learning and the number of requests to return to hybrid model (includes phased in hybrid). Mr. Hernandez stated that with a combination of vaccine and warmer weather we will see a change in the trendline.
- To give an idea of where the State is Mr. Hernandez showed a slide of the Public School Learning Model Percentages (week of November 30 – December 4):
 - Full in Person – 37.1%
 - Hybrid – 19.3%
 - Full Remote – 43.7%

B. Walsh Intermediate School (WIS) Project Update

Superintendent Hernandez reported that he has asked the construction firm to make a video of Phase 1 and Phase 2 that could be possibly narrated by students. The pool continues to be a challenge, the numbers and scope of work has increased. With the exception of the pool, the project is moving along on schedule. Programmatically there is no day to day impact with the pool but there are implications on the swim teams.

C. Budget Survey

Superintendent Hernandez stated that the budget survey should be out on Friday and will be kept open through the winter break. A reminder will be sent out to parents and community members. Essentially the survey is made up of seven questions, that can be prioritized, from class size, extracurricular activities, enrichment activities, diversity training and technology.

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ADJOURNMENT

- 03** MOTION (Raynor/Cantu) to adjourn.
Approved Unanimously

Ms. Gaffney adjourned the meeting at 6:40 PM.

The next Communication Committee Meeting will be held on
Wednesday, January 6, 2021, at 6:00 PM at Branford High School, Lower Media Center.

Respectfully submitted,
Meredith Gaffney
Secretary

Prepared by,
Kerry Eyrich