

BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION
Communication Committee Minutes

DATE: November 11, 2020

LOCATION: Branford High School Lower Media Center
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
Y	Joanne Borrus	Board of Education
N	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 6:02 PM by Committee Chair, Meredith Gaffney.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

02 A. COVID-19 Cases in BPS Update

Superintendent Hernandez provided an update on the COVID-19 cases in the District. Mr. Hernandez began by stating that all positive cases either student or staff member, have to be reported to the State of Connecticut Department of Education's via their database. We have seen an increase in the positivity rates in recent weeks. Mr. Hernandez stated that prior to this evening's meeting he participated in his weekly meeting with the Department of Public Health (DPH) at the meeting it was reported that we are in the orange with a positivity rate as of last week of just under 13%. Mr. Hernandez stated that when he looked at the data today the positivity rate was right around 17% (per town population of 100,000). The Director of the DPH anticipates that we will go from orange to red. In his update Superintendent Hernandez also discussed the leading and secondary indicators of COVID-19 infection levels in communities for consideration of learning models for school reopening in Connecticut, the learning model (fully in-person, hybrid and fully remote), percentage of Districts offering a predominately fully in-person learning model by week, BPS Hybrid Model (always virtual, hybrid, always present), homeschooling, percentage of students who are fully remote and disconnected, statewide attendance, BPS attendance, voluntary remote vs. return to hybrid requests, and potential budget survey categories (class size, professional learning, post COVID student/staff supports, early learning, enrichment/co-curricular, capital improvements).

Superintendent Hernandez spoke about sports. He stated that we have received guidance from the DPH that our Athletic Director is currently reviewing. Mr. Hernandez stated that we are working with the First Selectman for consistency between recreational sports and school sports. He spoke about indoor sports and the requirement for athletes to wear masks, the girl's hockey team co-op and basketball team which was deemed a moderate sport. Mr. Hernandez concluded by stating that there is no clear direction, the DPH only offers guidance (scheduling, etc). Ultimately the decision to have interscholastic sports reside at the District level.

Continued...

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B. Parent/Staff Budget Survey (FY 22)

Superintendent Hernandez discussed the FY 22 Parent/Staff Budget Survey. Among the items that he discusses were potential budget survey categories; class size, professional learning, post COVID student/staff supports, early learning, enrichment co-curricular, and capital improvements.

C. Walsh Intermediate School (WIS) Project Update

Superintendent Hernandez reported that the project is on time, on schedule, and under budget. The project is in phase 2 and scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2021. Next week members from the Owners, Architect and Construction (OAC) Team will be at the Full BOE meeting to provide a detailed update on the project.

D. 2021 BOE Meeting Schedule

John Prins discussed the 2021 meeting schedule. He asked the Board to take a look at the proposed schedule so that it could be voted on at next week's full BOE meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Laura Green, District parent and employee, asked what the District's plan was to take children back to school when the positivity numbers are in the range of 5-0. She concluded by stating that the hybrid is hard for families, teachers and students.

Derek Green, District parent, complimented Superintendent Hernandez on his COVID case communication. Mr. Green stated that he would like to see communication regarding what schools look like, what/how things will look like today vs. pre-COVID, and cleaning protocols.

Celia Toche, District parent, congratulated the BOE on its changes (new faces, new strategies). Ms. Toche also spoke about communication, social/emotional learning and working toward a true collaborative situation.

Gregg Jerolman, District resident, spoke about communication and asked why the committee meetings were suspended including the interactive aspect of it.

ADJOURNMENT

03 MOTION (Borrus/Raynor) to adjourn.

Approved Unanimously

Ms. Gaffney adjourned the meeting at 6:51 PM.

The next Communication Committee Meeting will be held on
Wednesday, December 16, 2020,
at 6:00 PM Meeting at Branford High School, Lower Media Center.

Respectfully submitted,
Meredith Gaffney
Secretary

Prepared by,
Kerry Eyrich