

## BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

**DATE:** August 18, 2021

**LOCATION:** Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria  
185 Damascus Road, Branford, CT 06405

**SUBJECT:** Board of Education Meeting

---

### ATTENDANCE

HERE	ATTENDEE	AFFILIATION
Y	John R. Prins, Chair	Board of Education
N	Ellen Michaels, Vice-Chair	Board of Education
Y	Meredith Gaffney, Secretary	Board of Education
Y	Peter Berdon	Board of Education
Y	Joanne Borrus	Board of Education
Y	Cristina Cantu	Board of Education
Y	Chad Edgar	Board of Education
N	Dawn Perrotti	Board of Education
Y	Dr. Tim Raynor	Board of Education
Y	Hamlet M. Hernandez, Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Rachel Sexton, Assistant Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Don Neel, Chief Operating Officer	Central Office

Others present:

---

### BUSINESS ITEMS

#### ITEM DESCRIPTION

---

#### CALL TO ORDER

**01** Meeting was called to order at 7:25 PM by BOE Chair, John Prins.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Jennifer Orlando, District parent, thanked Mr. Prins for his opening speech. Ms. Orlando also spoke about problems in the District, reactive vs. pro-active, policies around handwashing and mask breaks, and how East Haven increased its school hours.

Laura Troidle, District parent, thanked everyone for being there tonight and stated that she appreciated the tough position the Board and Superintendent are in. Ms. Troidle also spoke about COVID; some forwarding thinking, mask use, keeping close tabs on the data, having a plan in place to collect data on percentages, vaccines, quarantines and testing.

Gregg Jerolman, District parent, spoke about Mr. Prins comments, Board and District leadership, implementing solutions, the Superintendent's evaluation and privacy acts.

Megan Delucia, District parent, spoke about PCR testing, surveys (who, what, safeguards).

Liz Patterson, Branford resident, read a statement from Senator Rob Sampson regarding mask mandates. Ms. Patterson also spoke about calling the Governor, advocating for change, emergency authorization, Shipman and Goodwin's recent correspondence and liability.

Dario Gagliano, Italian American Alliance, spoke about changing the District's school calendar regarding not combining of Columbus Day/Indigenous People Day.

Continued...

## BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

**DATE:** August 18, 2021

**LOCATION:** Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria  
185 Damascus Road, Branford, CT 06405

**SUBJECT:** Board of Education Meeting

---

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS 9(Continued)**

Alima Bryant, District parent, spoke about her child's experience wearing masks, weighing options for her daughter, her decision to homeschool her children and the Unmask Our Children movement.

Justin Pisonia, Branford resident, spoke about PCR testing, teachers not wearing masks and recording teachers and classroom activity.

Kate Foster, District parent, spoke about Unmask Our Kids CT, her son's experience wearing masks, vaccination rates and going against the Governors mask mandate.

### **APPROVE MINUTES**

**02** MOTION (Gaffney/Borrus) to approve the minutes for the May 26, 2021 Full Special BOE Meeting.  
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

**03** MOTION (Berdon/Edgar) to approve the minutes as amended from the June 16, 2021 Full Regular BOE Meeting.  
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

**04** MOTION (Berdon/Gaffney) to approve the minutes as amended from the July 31, 2021 Full Special BOE Meeting.  
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

### **AGENDA CHANGES**

**05** Extension of Policies C19-02 Health and Safety Protocols related to the COVID-19 Pandemic and C19-03 Use of Face Coverings in School will be added as Item D in Discussion/Action Items

### **COMMUNICATIONS**

John Prins stated that he gave BOE members a copy of CAFE's Education Laws booklet. Mr. Prins also stated that he has received and responded to many emails regarding masks, the evaluation and from the Italian American Alliance.

Tim Raynor, stated that it is important to "embrace debate but not to attack people who disagree with us" it takes away from the ability to listen and learn when we are attacked and yelled at.

### **SUPERINTENDENT REPORT/WIS PROJECT UPDATE**

In his report, Superintendent Hernandez discussed; public comment (listening and taking steps that can be looked at), operating under the Governor's Executive Order, the extension of policies C19-02 and C19-03, sharing a united goal to get back to a normal school year, the beginning of the school year – September 1 (convocation) through September 8 (students return), bus dry runs, WIS Phase 1 and 2 opening (the pool will open in December or January).

Superintendent Hernandez also spoke about the fields. Among the items that he discussed were; engaging Antinozzi & Associates for a field study, working with Stantec, engaging Park & Rec to see what their needs are, providing a comprehensive report to Antinozzi that will include the AD's comprehensive review report that will be incorporated into our Capital Budget.

Continued...

**BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES**

**DATE:** August 18, 2021

**LOCATION:** Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria  
185 Damascus Road, Branford, CT 06405

**SUBJECT:** Board of Education Meeting

---

**SUPERINTENDENT REPORT/WIS PROJECT UPDATE (Continued)**

Superintendent Hernandez continued his report by discussing public comments regarding air conditioning, the success of the summer program held at Sliney School (serviced over 500 kids), the ESSER grant (in progress at the State) including the success of three sessions (elementary schools, WIS & BHS) held remotely over the summer, putting dollars that are now permitted through ESSER III into the Capital Budget, bringing the indoor air quality (AC) to the Board as a high priority, the Administrative Retreat,.

Superintendent Hernandez also stated that we were asked by the State if we would be interested in testing our students, a survey with yes or no answers and a turnaround time of 3-4 day, (we received 500 responses that were divided right down the middle). Families that wanted it made it conditional (as long as masks not required). Mr. Hernandez stated that he asked the State who would be doing it but has not heard back from them yet. Mr. Hernandez also stated that he will be meeting with DPH tomorrow around metrics/data, quarantining will look different this year (vaccinated vs. unvaccinated). The majority of staff members are vaccinated.

Superintendent Hernandez concluded his report by stating that the District has four certified openings - 1 music, 1 elementary (by way of promotion), 1 Bilingual (JBS) and 1 STEM Coach (18 total - no new positions opened).

**DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS**

**06 A. 2021-2022 Non-Resident Tuition Rates**

MOTION (Berdon/Borrus) to approve the 2021-2022 non-resident tuition rates.  
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

**07 B. BOE Annual Planning Calendar/Goal Setting Conversation**

Among the items that Mr. Prins and the Board members discussed were; a key function for the Board (partnering with the Administration), working to get a sense of order of what happens in a school year, a monthly listing, what the BOE wants to see, what is configured, building goals, BOE Retreat, the goal setting process, fulfilling obligations as a district, the next iteration (where do we see the District going), the State of the School Year Report, the collaborative process, a good working relationship with Superintendent and Administration, statutory requirements, as a Board agreeing with what the process looks like, a working draft (will be on future agendas)and the possibility of a working committee (Board/Administration).

**08 C. Second Reading of Policies**

MOTION (Berdon/Borrus) to adopt policy 4000.1 – Personnel Title IX – Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment and policy 5145.44 – Student Title IX – Prohibition of Sex Discrimination and Sexual Harassment.  
APPROVED (Cantu abstained)

Continued...

**BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES**

**DATE:** August 18, 2021

**LOCATION:** Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria  
185 Damascus Road, Branford, CT 06405

**SUBJECT:** Board of Education Meeting

---

**DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS (Continued)**

**09 D. Extension of policy C19-02 Health and Safety Protocols Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic and policy C19-03 Use of Face Coverings in School.**

MOTION (Berdon/Gaffney) to act in accordance with Bylaw 9311 to temporarily extend BOE Policy C19-02 and BOE Policy C19-03 effective August 18, 2021 through December 31, 2021 or until the formal adoption of related BOE policies, whichever should occur first.

APPROVED (Borris abstained)

**PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ACTION ITEMS**

Jennifer Orlando, District parent, spoke about a presentation from the Superintendent (back to school), the timeline for the fields study, quarantine and cohorts.

Gregg Jerolman, Branford resident, spoke about inconsistency, Board goal setting, the Board Retreat, diversity, equity and inclusion.

Christina Rooney, District parent, spoke about masks and sound quality, face shields, her daughter's experience and providing access to her peers and amplification.

**STANDING COMMITTEES**

A. Communication Committee (Meredith Gaffney, Chair).

Next scheduled meeting: **Special Meeting August 19, 2021**, 6:30 PM, Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.

B. Personnel & Finance Committee (Dawn Perrotti, Chair).

Next scheduled meeting: September 22, 2021, 7:00 PM, Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.

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

Next scheduled meeting: September 22, 2021, 7:00 PM, Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.

D. Policy Committee (Chad Edgar, Chair).

Next scheduled meeting: Wednesday, September 29, 2021, 6:00 P.M., Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.

**BOARD REPORTS**

A. ACES – Ellen Michaels was not present at this evening's meeting.

B. BECC – Meredith Gaffney discussed BECC's new interim Director, Dr. Tim Dzurila, and next week's meeting with the head of administration for BPS to discuss common goals and themes for next school year.

C. CAFE – John Prins discussed CAFE's Annual Summer Leadership conference.

**FUTURE ITEMS**

A. Board Planning Calendar including forming a committee

B. ESSER Funding (integrating parent feedback)

Continued...

**BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES**

**DATE:** August 18, 2021

**LOCATION:** Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria  
185 Damascus Road, Branford, CT 06405

**SUBJECT:** Board of Education Meeting

---

**ADJOURN**

**10** MOTION (Berdon/Cantu) to adjourn.  
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Mr. Prins adjourned the meeting at 9:21 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Meredith Gaffney  
Secretary

Prepared by,  
Kerry Eyrich