

BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

DATE: March 17, 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
Y	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
Y	Dawn Perrotti	Board of Education
Y	Dr. Tim Raynor	Board of Education
N	Hanna Bloomquist	Student Representative
N	Carly Pierre-Louis	Student Representative
N	Aldin Aksamovic	Student Representative
N	Patricio Banegas	Student Representative
Y	Hamlet M. Hernandez, Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Rachel Sexton, Assistant Superintendent	Central Office
N	Don Neel, Chief Operating Officer	Central Office

Others present: Patrice McCarthy, CABE Deputy Director and General Counsel

BUSINESS ITEMS

ITEM DESCRIPTION

CALL TO ORDER

01 Meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM by BOE Chair, John Prins.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

02 MOTION (Berdon/Borrus) to adjourn into Executive Session.
APPROVED (Perrotti opposed)

Mr. Prins adjourned the meeting into Executive Session at 7:08 PM. All Board members present at this evening's meeting including Superintendent Hernandez adjourned into Executive Session.

RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION

03 Mr. Prins returned the meeting to Regular Session at 8:22 PM

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Gregg Jerolman, Branford resident, spoke about Board and District leadership.

Laura Green, District parent, spoke about wearing masks during lunch time, transparency and being placed on hold for a long period of time for public comment.

Jennifer Orlando, District parent, discussed the citizen petition, leadership and trust issues and blacking out part of the meeting.

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PUBLIC COMMENTS (Continued)

Carly Johnson, District parent, echoed what the two previous callers said. Ms. Johnson also discussed Branford's use of CAFE policies.

Derek Green, District parent, spoke about Board member participation, transparency and the citizen petition.

APPROVE MINUTES

- 04** A. MOTION (Borrus/Gaffney) to approve minutes from the November 18, 2020 Full Regular BOE Meeting
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY
- B. MOTION (Michaels/Gaffney) to approve minutes from the December 21, 2020 Full Special BOE Meeting.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY
- C. MOTION (Borrus/Michaels) to approve minutes from the January 14, 2021 Full Special BOE Meeting.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY
- D. MOTION (Michaels/Borrus) to approve minutes from the February 10, 2021 Superintendent's Budget Presentation.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY
- E. MOTION (Michaels/Borrus) to approve minutes from the February 17, 2021 Special Budget Workshop Meeting.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY
- F. MOTION (Borrus/Michaels) to approve minutes from the February 24, 2021 Full Special BOE Meeting.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY
- G. MOTION (Borrus/Michaels) to approve minutes from the March 3, 2021 Full Special BOE Meeting.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

AGENDA CHANGES

- 05** MOTION (Cantu/Raynor) to move Discussion/Action Item A – Action Regarding the Citizen Petition under Comment General Statute 10-238 to the next item on the agenda.
APPROVED

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEM

- 06** A. **Action Regarding the Citizen Petition under Connecticut General Statute 10-238**
On behalf of the Board, Ms. Michaels thanked the parents and community members for their efforts on behalf of the Branford educational community. Ms. Michaels then invited community members to attend the April 7, 2021 Communication Committee meeting to continue the dialogue and address varied concerns.
- MOTION (Michaels/Borrus) MOVED, that the Board deny the request for a hearing under Section 10-238 of the Connecticut General Statutes filed by the Town Clerk on February 26, 2021, on the grounds that: 1) the petition does not satisfy the signature requirements; 2) the Town Clerk therefore could not verify any signatures and 3) the listing of typewritten names attached to the petition was generated from an online petition that was different from the petition filed with the Town Clerk.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Continued...

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COMMUNICATION

Superintendent Hernandez stated that he wanted to acknowledge emails that he has received in the past few weeks from parents raising concerns around the petition and returning to school. A letter has been sent regarding the presentation, timeline and mitigation measures. Mr. Hernandez also stated that building principals will be communicating directly with information that is particular to their schools.

PRESENTATION

A. Board of Education Role and Responsibilities (CABE)

Mr. Prins explained who CABE was and what they do. Patrice McCarthy, Deputy Director and General Counsel, discussed the role and responsibilities of a Board of Education member. Among the items that Attorney McCarthy discussed were legal requirements, best practices, policies, budgets, Superintendent's evaluations, responding during public participation and to emails.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

The Student Representatives did not attend this evening's meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT/WIS PROJECT UPDATE

Superintendent Hernandez discussed the following; public health data for Branford and neighboring communities (total cases, % positivity, rate per 100,000, and fatalities), the scheduled return of elementary students (next Monday), plexiglass dividers in schools, last Friday's community to parents (what to expect from the transition), tents for outdoor eating areas (if needed), Corona relief funds - ESSER I and ESSER II), the anticipation of ESSER III funds and proposed legislation for expanding the timeline for using funds, employee vaccination percentages, employee second dose dates, spectators at events and new District COVID (+) cases.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS (Continued)

07 B. 2021-2022 School Year Calendar

Superintendent Hernandez and Assistant Superintendent Sexton discussed the three options presented to the Board for the 2021-2022 school year calendar. For planning purposes, the calendar will be voted on at the next full regular Board of Education meeting.

08 C. Repeal Policies:

MOTION (Raynor/Berdon) to repeal the following policies:

- a. 5124 - Reporting to Parents.
- b. 5131.61 – Substance Abuse by Athletes.
- c. 5142.3 - Safety: Skateboard/Rollerblade/Scooter and Other Such Recreational Equipment Use.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

MOTION (Raynor/Berdon) to repeal Policy 5145.5 - Sexual, Racial and other Unlawful Harassment of Students
NOT APPROVED - Policy referred back to the Policy Committee before repealing.

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DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS (Continued)

09 D. First Reading of Policies:

MOTION (Raynor/Berdon) to table the following policies and refer back to Policy Committee:

- a. 4000.1 - Personnel Certified/Non-Certified Title IX
- b. 5145.44 - Students Title IX

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ACTION ITEMS

Celia Toche, District parent, discussed attending BOE meetings, CABE, communication, transparency and the citizen petition.

Gregg Jerolman, Branford resident, spoke about the citizen petition, public comments, this evening's executive session and CABE.

Laura Green, District parent, spoke about decision making during this evening's executive session, parent representation, and returning to school.

Courtney McCarthy, District parent, thanked the Board for deliberation for having an executive session, continued dialogue, question follow-up, and positivity rates data.

Derek Green, District parent, spoke about the Boards message to the public, its spirit and the citizen petition and community representation.

Megan Delucia, District parent, spoke about the denial of the citizen petition, public comment response, and sent emails.

Jennifer Orlando, District parent, echoed what others have been saying. Ms. Orland discussed her disappointment with the citizen petition decision.

Jennifer Alexander, District parent, echoed what others have said. Ms. Alexander spoke about two way dialogue.

STANDING COMMITTEES

- A. Communication Committee (Meredith Gaffney, Chair).

Next scheduled meeting: April 7, 2021, 6:30 PM, Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.

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

Next scheduled meeting: April 7, 2021, 7:00 PM, Branford High School Lower Media Center.

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

Next scheduled meeting: April 7, 2021, 7:00 PM, Branford High Lower Media Center.

- D. Policy Committee (Chad Edgar, Chair).

Next scheduled meeting: Wednesday, April 21, 2021, 6:00 P.M., Branford High Lower Media Center.

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BOARD REPORTS

- A. ACES – Ellen Michaels stated that at the last ACES meeting they discussed teacher residency programs to recruit minority candidates, and ECA had over 200 applicants for 88 seats.
- B. BECC – Meredith Gaffney discussed the BECC community survey.
- C. CABA – John Prins discussed CABA Day on the Hill.

FUTURE ITEMS

- A. Communication Committee parent engagement, dialogue and collaboration.

ADJOURN

10 MOTION (Michaels/Perrotti) to adjourn.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Mr. Prins adjourned the meeting at 10:44 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Meredith Gaffney
Secretary

Prepared by,
Kerry Eyrich