

FULL SPECIAL BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

DATE: March 3, 2021 LOCATION: Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria  
185 Damascus Road, Branford, CT 06405  
SUBJECT: Board of Education Meeting

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**ATTENDANCE**

<b>HERE</b>	<b>ATTENDEE</b>	<b>AFFILIATION</b>
Y	John R. Prins, Chair	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	Meredith Gaffney	Board of Education
Y	Ellen Michaels	Board of Education
Y	Dawn Perrotti	Board of Education
Y	Dr. Tim Raynor	Board of Education
Y	Hanna Bloomquist	Student Representative
Y	Carly Pierre-Louis	Student Representative
Y	Aldin Aksamovic	Student Representative
Y	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: Lee Panagoulis, BHS Principal; Raeanne Reynolds, WIS Principal; Jim O'Connor, Tisko Principal; Charles Cicarella, Director of Student Services

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**BUSINESS ITEMS**

**ITEM DESCRIPTION**

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**CALL TO ORDER**

**01** Meeting was called to order at 6:05 PM by BOE Chair, John Prins.

**02 PRESENTATION**

**A. BPS Decision-making Framework and Anticipated Timeline for Transition to Full In-Person Instruction Model**

Superintendent Hernandez and Assistant Superintendent Sexton discussed the following; Tonight's goal (explain decision-making framework, share anticipated timeline, identify expected changes), BPS priorities for reopening, indicators for consideration of learning model, decision-points (leading indicator, secondary indicators, other considerations), BPS adult and student COVID-19 cases by week, BPS students in hybrid model, voluntary remote & return to district model requests per week, anticipated timeline (returning to full in-person: phase 1, proposed March transition, returning to full in-person phase 2), and expected changes (health and safety measures, sports and spectators: BHS Winter, BHS Sprint)

**03 Question/Answer on Agenda Items**

Megan Delucia, District parent, spoke about what was discussed at an East Haven BOE meeting (hybrid model and schools), demographics of in school transmission, social and emotional health of students and options for phasing students in.

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**Question/Answer on Agenda Items** (Continued)

Becky Gillman, District parent, spoke about the choice of staying tethered to health data, the Superintendent's confidence in the transition period, the transition plan (hybrid to full in-person learning), the data and cohorts.

Jennifer Orlando, District parent, thanked the BOE members for their comments tonight. Ms. Orlando discussed the struggle of parents and children, District teachers, taking a look at Guilford's plan, getting our children back to school safely and a consistent plan.

Tim McCarthy, District parent, discussed sending the K-4 students back first.

Jennifer Alexander, District parent, thanked parents for speaking out, and discussed social/emotional learning, a parent survey and the reopening plan and timeline.

Courtney McCarthy, District parent, discussed getting the younger kids in school sooner and SACC options.

Mimi Leone, District parent, asked what the plan was for SACC before and after care.

Bill Rosen, District parent, discussed suicide rates and the need to open up schools.

Stephanie Carvin, District parent, stated that she appreciated that the District was moving toward full time, discussed a quicker phase in, and asked about student schedules and class size.

Gregg Jerolman, Branford resident, discussed the plan from July, the Director of the East Shore District Health Department and the timeline for opening school's sooner.

Carley Johnson, District parent, discussed the need for a full time reopening plan now, the petition that was started by community members and questioned why half days on Wednesday.

Celia Toche, District parent, thanked everyone who came out and discussed building trust, a sustainable hybrid plan, identifying critical path issues and listening sessions.

Bill Brailsford, Branford resident, spoke about getting more details on why three hour Wednesdays.

Charlie Mungaho, District parent, spoke about new specific data, benchmarks for opening school, the contingency plan, and looking at other town's plans.

Lisa Redmond, District parent, spoke about getting kids back to school, talking to neighboring districts, the District's reopening plan and parent communication.

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**Question/Answer on Agenda Items (Continued)**

Laura Green, District parent and employee, discussed her daughter's academic year and thanked the intermediate school staff. Ms. Green stated that she echoed what Dr. Raynor has addressed and read an article from the Journal of American Medicine Association. Ms. Green spoke again later in the evening and questioned Superintendent Hernandez about his feelings when listening to speakers.

Derek Green, District parent, discussed the mental effect on children, returning in September and the effect to the Town.

Nicole Ball, District parent, read a statement on behalf of BHS student, Karena Megland, who was unable to stay for the full meeting. The statement included students point of view, mental health and online learning. Ms. Ball also asked about 1.3 million dollars that the district will be receiving including the meeting that it would be discussed at, measuring social and emotion wellness, extended learning, and additional stimulus funds.

Melissa Juliano, BHS student, discussed cohorts, phasing in students, her mental health, GPA, the option to attend school 4 days a week and the need to get back to school as soon as possible.

Joe Ball, District parent, stated that he was there for mothers and the kids that he coached. Mr. Ball discussed altered lives, financial loss, the need for all grade levels to be in school, the effect that will ripple through generations and the choice to go somewhere else.

Cheryl Andresen, District parent and WIS PTA President, thanked everyone for getting kids in school and their hard work, her hope for parents to be as passionate when students return and volunteer their time, consistency during the pandemic and information shared.

Sharon Klarman, District parent, discussed her appreciation for the reference to data, how data drove decisions, the state guidance document, what has been learned since September, COVID-19 transmission, the transition period and student comments.

Matthew Rettig, District parent, discussed his frustration over virtual learning and read an email that he sent to Superintendent Hernandez and the BOE.

Karen Lopez, District parent, discussed her concerns for BHS seniors (prom, graduation, sports), contacting the State of Connecticut, the children's need to be in school, and getting a plan for kids to be in school.

Kate Marsland, Branford resident, thanked the BOE and District for having this open forum and the parents for their tireless effort. Dr. Marsland discussed the attitude toward parents, the Reopening Committee, parent involvement, the measurement for academic and social/emotional indicators and the well being of high school students.

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Christine Vazzi, District parent, asked about WIS students changing classes when returning to full session and fulling busses with students.

Marta Kenney, District parent, discussed applauding parents for speaking their minds, new information for parents, getting parents perspectives and past and future parent surveys.

Paul ?, District parent (Murphy School), discussed a phased in return to school, being a Marine and self-reflection.

Maureen Shields, District parent, discussed reiterating the social and emotional piece, impact on high school students, parent input, her experience as a teacher and teacher impact.

Amy Dadona, District parent, spoke about the social and emotional piece, her son's experience, his teachers, keeping morale up and having the children back in school.

Emma Gallo, District parent, spoke about past pandemic information, COVID-19 numbers and surrounding towns, schools start time, cleaning, the Wednesday half day, other towns schools being closed and formulating a plan to be open.

Jennifer Orlando, requested on behalf of parents calling in, a commitment to schedule a meeting to get a full plan as soon as possible to get kids back into school.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Becky Gillman, District parents, spoke about reviewing the plan, allowing discussions and getting kids back to school as soon as possible.

Kate Marsland, Branford resident, discussed the reconvening of the Reopening Committee, and focusing on reopening and how to help students recover from this experience.

**ADJOURN**

02 MOTION (Borrus/Gaffney) to adjourn.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Mr. Prins adjourned the meeting at 11:19 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Meredith Gaffney  
Secretary

Prepared by,  
Kerry Eyrich