

**SPECIAL BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES**

**DATE:** October 27, 2021

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

**SUBJECT:** Board of Education Meeting

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**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
Y	Hamlet M. Hernandez, Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Rachel Sexton, Assistant Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Don Neel, Chief Operating Officer	Central Office

Others present: Jim O'Connor, Tisko School Principal

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**BUSINESS ITEMS**

**ITEM DESCRIPTION**

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**CALL TO ORDER**

**01** Meeting was called to order at 7:06 PM by BOE Chair, John Prins.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Sharon Klarman, District parent, discussed children in quarantine, the Health Department, the risk and benefits of quarantine and she also read a statement.

Meaghan DeLucia, District parent, spoke about quarantining and the Panorama survey.

Jennifer Orlando, District parent, spoke about collaborating with schools and town basketball.

Charlie Mungaho, spoke about COVID, teacher vaccination and lifting the mask mandate.

Gregg Jerolman, Branford resident, spoke about COVID and blaming leadership. Mr. Jerolman also read an article regarding a search for the Superintendent.

Marta Kenney, District parent, spoke about quarantine policies, the need to be updated and her contact with the Health Department. Ms. Kenney also read a statement.

Christina Rooney, District parent, spoke about quarantine and the Health Department. Ms. Rooney also read a statement.

Matt Rettick, District parent, discussed an email that he sent with an article and spike about the Health Department.

Troy Sobieski, District parent, asked if there are any exceptions when a class is quarantined and spoke about his experience at Sliney School.

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**PRESENTATION**

**A. Gift for Departing BOE Members**

John Prins and Superintendent Hernandez presented a gift and proclamation thanking departing BOE member, Joanne Borrus for her service. John Prins read Chad Edgar's proclamation. Mr. Edgar was participating virtually for this portion of the meeting.

**INTRODUCTION OF NEW CERTIFIED STAFF MEMBERS**

The following new certified staff members were introduced to the Board:

- Kaitlyn Kelemen, Murphy School, Grade 3 Teacher
- Christine Natale, Murphy School, Grade 1 Teacher
- Michaela Paholski, Sliney School, Grade 2 Teacher
- Elizabeth Tate, Sliney School, Special Education Teacher
- Jackie Ceccolini, Tisko School, Grade 4 Teacher
- Christine Cudgma, Tisko School, Math Coach
- Cynthia Lerman, Tisko School, Grade 4 Teacher
- Jamie Perrotti, Tisko School, Grade 3 Teacher

The following new certified staff were unable to attend this evening's meeting:

- Tamara Berry, BHS World Language Teacher
- Nicholas Farrell, BHS Physics Teacher
- Kathleen Van Wilgen, WIS Art Teacher
- Shawna Zeisner, Murphy School, Grade 4 Teacher
- Ryan Berry, Sliney School, Music Teacher
- Alena Gonsalves, Sliney School, Grade 4 Teacher
- Christine Riolino, Tisko School, Special Education Teacher

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Mr. Prins stated that we have heard from many parents (by email and in person) regarding quarantining, fields and the celebration of Columbus Day Celebration.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

In his report Superintendent Hernandez discussed the following; the BOE meeting schedule, budget priorities, budget survey, BHS Homecoming, support staff negotiations, the BAO contract transmittal to the Town, the building use process including systems used, out of state field trips (calendar for BOE), student quarantine including a letter regarding a test out option, statute rules, regulations and compliance, mask mandates, community quarantines, social emotional balance and classroom quarantines.

**DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS**

**02 A. Administrators Contract**

MOTION (Berdon/Michaels) to approve the Branford Administrators Organization (BAO) Contract  
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Continued...

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**DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS (Continued)**

**03 B. Board Planning**

The Board members discussed Board Planning. Ms. Michaels stated that T&L was right on schedule for October (Climate Survey and State Assessment Survey) and discussed needing more information for specialized programs (high needs students). Mr. Prins discussed Board self-evaluation.

**04 C. PTA Funding**

Among the items that were discussed were; equity (same opportunities throughout District), background (history of events including past support/stipend), fund raisers (book sales, Mother's Day plant sales), appropriate determination, ESSER dollars for funding, what PTA's fund, a combined PTA presidents meeting, having the same budget for cultural arts, having the PTA's attend a BOE meeting, certain events becoming part of the curriculum, Board PTA Liaisons, dialogue and opportunities.

**05** At 9:00 PM the Board took a short recess and returned to Regular Session at 9:05 PM.

**06 D. Data Presentation Follow-up**

Hamlet Hernandez and Rachel Sexton continued the discussion and answered questions from BOE members on District Data (accountability and climate survey data) that was started at last week's T&L meeting.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ACTION ITEMS**

Laura Troidle, Branford resident, discussed the quarantine policy, classroom quarantine (data on students how many turned positive) and vaccines.

Marta Kenney, District parent, spoke about where quarantine numbers were coming from.

Jennifer Orlando, District parent, spoke about PTA funding, the Murphy School PTA and its fundraising.

Laura Green, District parent, thanked everyone for exploring PTA funding and equity. Ms. Green also discussed having a District wide PTA and policies.

Gregg Jerolman, District resident, spoke about the Data presentation follow-up and the survey numbers.

Brett Jolly, District parent, spoke about his concerns regarding quarantines, PTA access to funds, the survey numbers from last week and steps being taken.

Courtney McCarthy, District parent, spoke about challenging the East Shore District Health Department practices and protocols (pertaining to outside entities), blanket statements, logic and the structure of the Health Department.

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**PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ACTION ITEMS (Continued)**

Christina Rooney, District parent, spoke about the upcoming winter months and movement in the classroom to slow down the quarantines. Ms. Rooney asked how do discussions happen, how we move forward and is there a way to use the district's COVID liaison to partner with rec. leagues?

Stephanie Ducharme, District parent, spoke about moving forward with COVID safety policies and discrimination (vaccinated vs. unvaccinated students) and making the policies for children to be treated fairly.

**STANDING COMMITTEES**

- A. Communication Committee (Meredith Gaffney, Chair).  
Next scheduled meeting: **Special Meeting** November 10, 2021, 6:30 PM, Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.
- B. Personnel & Finance Committee (Dawn Perrotti, Chair).  
Next scheduled meeting: November 10, 2021, 7:00 PM, Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.
- C. Teaching & Learning Committee (Ellen Michaels, Chair).  
Next scheduled meeting: November 10, 2021, 7:00 PM, Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.
- D. Policy Committee (Tim Raynor, Chair).  
Next scheduled meeting: Wednesday, November 17, 2021, 6:00 P.M., Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.

**BOARD REPORTS**

- A. ACES – Ellen Michaels stated that ACES now has electric buses and solar, 184 new hires with 15 resignations, increasing diversity in their staff and an upcoming study group (Teaching for Black Lives).
- B. BECC – Meredith Gaffney discussed BECC's interim director, strategic planning and a grant that they received.
- C. CABA – John Prins spoke about the CABA convention and workshops and the Delegate Assembly.

**FUTURE ITEMS**

- A. Budget season discussion items.
- B. Out of State Field Trips.
- C. Vaccine Statement (clarity).

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

- 07** MOTION (Borris/Michaels) to adjourn into Executive Session to discuss the Superintendent's Contract terms.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Mr. Prins adjourned the meeting into Executive Session at 9:40 PM. All BOE Members present for this evening's meeting adjourned into Executive Session.

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**RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION**

**08** Mr. Prins returned the meeting to Regular Session at 10:44 PM with no action taken.

**ADJOURN**

**09** MOTION (Michaels/Gaffney) to adjourn.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Mr. Prins adjourned the meeting at 10:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Meredith Gaffney  
Secretary

Prepared by,  
Kerry Eyrich