

BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

DATE: September 29, 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
Y	Hamlet M. Hernandez, Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Rachel Sexton, Assistant Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Don Neel, Chief Operating Officer	Central Office

Others present: Frank Carrano, BACA and Donna Mingrone, Director of Technology

BUSINESS ITEMS

ITEM DESCRIPTION

CALL TO ORDER

- 01** Meeting was called to order at 7:23 PM by BOE Chair, John Prins.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Alima Bryant, District parent, spoke about COVID funding (where it's going) and PCR tests. Ms. Bryant asked about the COVID vaccine (5-11 years) - will it be mandated and will it need parent consent?

Gregg Jerolman, Branford resident, spoke about the Superintendent's review (FOIA request), an event that he said occurred at the August 11, 2021 Board meeting and his FOIA request.

Jason Simmons, District parent, spoke about policies happening fast (mandates, science changes, and bylaws), looking toward the future, the mask mandate, improper mask usage, training teachers on mask usage, providing masks for students, types of masks and mask changes.

APPROVE MINUTES

- 02** MOTION (Gaffney/Michaels) to approve the minutes for the August 11, 2021 Full Special BOE Meeting. APPROVED (Berdon abstained)
- 03** MOTION (Gaffney/Berdon) to approve the minutes as amended from the August 18, 2021 Full Regular BOE Meeting. APPROVED (Michaels abstained)

AGENDA CHANGES

MOTION (Perrotti/Michaels) to add Item XIV Possible Action Regarding the Superintendent's Contract as an agenda item.

APPROVED (Raynor opposed, Cantu abstained)

This change was differed for another time.

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COMMUNICATIONS

John Prins stated that he has received multiple communications regarding concerns about a number of things and also a thank you for putting the safety of our students above anything else at this time.

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT/WIS PROJECT UPDATE

In his report, Superintendent Hernandez discussed; BOE Student Representatives (attending next month), the Governor’s mandate (school personnel vaccinated or participating in a program), the District is 92% vaccinated, 48 employees are participating in a testing protocol, his communication to families (looking at participation in voluntary testing program), the District is not mandating testing or vaccinations for students), quarantines, exploring with DPH to have quarantine time reduced, since August there have been 18 positive cases (13 students, 5 staff), the District has received 3 buckets of money (dollars have not been used toward testing for students or staff), we have purchased PPE (masks provided), students have been doing a wonderful job, proper mask wearing, feedback from recent parent forums - ESSER funds and Superintendent’s Check-Ins (summer programs and school opening), the school calendar (holiday observances and calendar committee).

In his WIS Project Update Superintendent Hernandez stated that the project is progressing on time (except for the pool) and under budget. Mr. Hernandez reported that next week he will be going to the State to look at change orders and we will start to plan an open house.

Superintendent Hernandez also discussed amounts for the following programs; JBS summer spectacular was approximately \$150,000, WIS Summer Enrichment was approximately 183,000, BHS Credit Recovery portion \$11,000, ESY Program was approximately \$129,000 and transportation was approximately \$100,000. Mr. Hernandez stated that we used approximately \$151,000 of either ESSER II or ESSER III or LEA (\$300,000). This is a dynamic process that takes place at Personnel & Finance.

PRESENTATION

A. Branford Arts & Cultural Alliance (BACA)

Frank Carrano, Robin Sandler and Mary Grande provided a presentation on BACA. Among the items that they discussed were; who BACA is, opportunities to get children involved, their focus is to support arts in Branford and create an environment in which arts are appreciated and elevated, their mission to channel this effort, appreciation of the arts, attracting younger students, BACA events, their \$1,000 scholarship (BHS students going into the arts), funds allocated to provide opportunities for Branford students (student enrichment), their gallery in town, getting support from the district/teachers and looking at art across the spectrum.

B. District Website Changes

Donna Mingrone discussed the recent changes to the District’s website. Among the items that she discussed were; changing to version 2, community feedback, new icons, it is a work in progress (things are still being adjusted), all sites (District and schools) have a similar look, streamlining information, collapsing menus (expandable), ADA compliant, everything posted is translatable, and archived events (BOE meetings, sports, etc.).

Superintendent Hernandez presented Ms. Mingrone with a retirement gift to thank her for her service to Branford Public Schools.

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DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

04 A. Nurses Bargaining Unit Contract

MOTION (Gaffney/Borrus) to approve the Nurses Bargaining Unit Contract
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

05 B. Custodians Bargaining Unit Contract

MOTION (Perrotti/Michaels) to approve the Custodians Bargaining Unit Contract
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

06 C. Modification of Bylaw 9325

MOTION (Raynor/Cantu) to modify Bylaw 0325
APPROVED (Borrus and Michaels opposed, Prins did not vote)

07 The Board took at short recess at 9:52 PM and return to Regular Session at 10:02 PM.

08 D. Board Planning Calendar

This item has been differed for another time.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON ACTION ITEMS

Gregg Jerolman, Branford resident, thanked Dr. Raynor for his efforts regarding Bylaw 9325. Mr. Jerolman spoke about the BOE Retreat, different standards, voicing concerns and consistent actions.

Jennifer Orlando, District parent, thanked the Board for adding dialogue. Ms. Orlando spoke about the difference between threat vs. dialogue, frustration, community member attendance at meetings, Executive Sessions and concerns.

STANDING COMMITTEES

- A. Communication Committee (Meredith Gaffney, Chair).
Next scheduled meeting: **Special Meeting** October 20, 2021, 6:30 PM, Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.
- B. Personnel & Finance Committee (Dawn Perrotti, Chair).
Next scheduled meeting: October 20, 2021, 7:00 PM, Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.
- C. Teaching & Learning Committee (Ellen Michaels, Chair).
Next scheduled meeting: October 20, 2021, 7:00 PM, Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.
- D. Policy Committee (Tim Raynor, Chair).
Next scheduled meeting: Wednesday, October 27, 2021, 6:00 P.M., Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.

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BOARD REPORTS

- A. ACES – Ellen Michaels did not have anything to report this evening.
- B. BECC – Meredith Gaffney stated that BECC Interim Director, Tim Dzurilla met with Hamlet and other regional stake holders over the past month and an interim board has been set for new strategic planning, and if anyone is interested please contact BECC.
- C. CAFE – John Prins spoke about the Friends of Education Award.

FUTURE ITEMS

- A. Board Planning Calendar.
- B. Superintendent’s contract discussion.
- C. PTA financial support (dialogue).

EXECUTIVE SESSION

This item has been differed for another time.

ADJOURN

09 MOTION (Perrotti/Michaels) to adjourn.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Mr. Prins adjourned the meeting at 10:17 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Meredith Gaffney
Secretary

Prepared by,
Kerry Eyrich