

BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

DATE: February 15, 2023
SUBJECT: Board of Education Meeting

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

ATTENDANCE

HERE	ATTENDEE	AFFILIATION
Y	Peter Berdon, Chair	Board of Education
Y	Ellen Michaels, Vice-Chair	Board of Education
Y	Meredith Gaffney, Secretary	Board of Education
Y	Cristina Cantu	Board of Education
Y	Meaghan DeLucia	Board of Education
Y	John R. Prins	Board of Education
N	Dr. Tim Raynor	Board of Education
Y	Laura Troidle	Board of Education
Y	Marie Watson	Board of Education
Y	Alya Bagdas	Student Representative
Y	Casey Maymon	Student Representative
Y	Rowan Rondinone	Student Representative
N	Eyad Salem	Student Representative
Y	Hamlet M. Hernandez, Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Rachel Sexton, Assistant Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Don Neel, Chief Operating Officer	Central Office

Others present: Lee Panagoulis, BHS Principal; Rob Kovi, Director of Technology and Joe Carbone, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds

BUSINESS ITEMS

ITEM DESCRIPTION

CALL TO ORDER

- 01** Meeting was called to order at 6:50 PM by BOE Chair, Peter Berdon.

AGENDA CHANGES

- 02** There were no agendas changes at this evenings meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ros Lange, Branford resident and District School Nurse, spoke about concerns regarding current staffing levels, the health and safety of the district, an exceptionally difficult few years, an increase in health office visits, a growing need for mental and physical health care, the rising amount of responsibilities, staffing levels, BHS and Early Years Center staffing, the Substitute pool, a float RN, the various types of level of care needed (staff and students), the administration of required assessments and communications.

Gregg Jerolman, Branford resident, discussed last week’s discussion regarding changing the Superintendent’s review, the Ferguson report, recent changes, communication and misinformation regarding movement at Mary T. Murphy School, a question asked of Superintendent Hernandez, personnel decisions and distributing the Ferguson report.

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APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The minutes from the December 21, 2022 Full Regular BOE meeting and the January 15, 2023 Full Special BOE meeting will be approved at the March meeting.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Berdon stated that he received communications from Mr. Jerolman and one other communication that he will address directly with the person who provided it.

STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Committee Chairs Meeting

Next scheduled meeting: March 2, 2023, 5:00 P.M., This meeting is held virtually.

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

Next scheduled meeting: March 8, 2023, 6:00 P.M., Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.

Ms. Michaels stated that there wasn't a meeting this month due to Budget Workshops.

C. Personnel & Finance Committee (Meaghan DeLucia, Chair)

Next scheduled meeting: March 8, 2023, 7:00 P.M., Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.

Ms. DeLucia stated there were lots of budget meetings including the normal meeting.

D. Policy Committee (Marie Watson, Chair)

Next scheduled meeting: March 8, 2023, 7:30 P.M., Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.

Ms. Watson stated that at the last meeting they voted to send the Organizational Chart Policy and the Administrator/Superintendent Policy to this evenings meeting for a first reading.

E. Communication Committee (Meredith Gaffney, Chair)

Next scheduled meeting: March 15, 2023, 6:00 P.M., Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria.

Ms. Gaffney stated that we have made a motion to move forward to school year calendars, discussed Black History Month and heard a COVID update.

STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING

A. Strategic Coherence Committee

Ms. Troidle stated that the Committee met at the beginning of the month, to finalize the Strategic Committee Plan report. Superintendent Hernandez stated that Jonathan provided a draft of the report and the report will be presented at the March meeting as well as a report being presented by Silver Petrucelli on the JBS project.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES REPORT

Among the items that the Students discussed were; the BHS play School of Rock and cast rehearsal, the Music Makers singing telegram, the French class trip to Quebec, BHS programs (Paws for a Cause), student awards, the honors breakfast, 100 scholarships given out, CT automatic admissions programs, Google Classrooms posts, No Place for Hate school wide signing and pledge, positive music being played over PA system, on the 23rd BHS Model Congress trip to Boston, senior internships (May to June), SAT Testing Day and SAT Prep Classes.

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SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Among the items that Superintendent Hernandez discussed in his report this evening were; the poise shown by the BOE Student Representatives, the WIS Fields and the upcoming Kick Off Meeting (Phase 1), the timeline for the MTM Principal posting, the Swimming Enrichment update, Pre-K and Kindergarten registration (Open) and paraprofessional negotiations that are set to begin. Superintendent concluded his report by showing a clip from the WTNH segment “What’s Right with Schools” featuring the grade 6, WIS Spanish class book project.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

03 A. First Reading Organization Chart

B. First Reading – Administrator/Superintendent Evaluation

C. Second Reading – Personnel Policy: Whistleblowing & Retaliation

D. 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 School Year Calendar

MOTION (Prins/Troidle) to approve all Consent Agenda Items.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

04 A. BHS Model Congress Field Trip

MOTION (Troidle/DeLucia) to approve the BHS Model Congress field trip request to Penn Model Congress in Philadelphia, March 23 through 26, 2023.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

05 B. FY 24 Capital Budget

Among the items that Superintendent Hernandez and members of the District’s Administrative Team discussed and BOE member questions answered were; a three-year Capital budget request (down from five years), the total General Fund Capital request of 1.1 million dollars, lease payments (laptops), technology purchases (art, STEM, science, math), Chromebook leases, administrative devices (upgrades and replacements), integrated security system (Verkata), grant monies, camera licensing fees, questions on District equipment, classroom unit heaters (replacements), the use of environmental friendly equipment, JBS lockers (repainted), door maintenance, parking lot and sidewalk repairs, Fire Marshall code compliance, Indian Neck boiler repairs and paving at Tisko and Murphy,

06 C. FY 24 Operating & Capital Budget

a. MOTION (DeLucia/Prins) to approve the proposed budget reductions as presented (exclusive of nurse reduction).

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

b. MOTION (DeLucia/Prins) to approve the Operating and Capital budget as amended by the adjustments as presented to the Board and including the Capital Budget.

APPROVED (Gaffney opposed)

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DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS (CONTINUED)

07 C. Rededication of 1111 Main Street Back to the Town

MOTION (Troidle/DeLucia) to rededicate 1111 Main Street back to the Town of Branford.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

08 Peace Pole Update

Superintendent Hernandez stated that the Peace Pole that was located outside of 1111 Main Street is currently in the workshop being refurbished and we will need to find a location for it before the end of the school year.

09 Superintendent Search

Among the items discussed were; the BOE Search Committee, the study that is available on the District's website, a number of candidates that were received, the pairing down of the list, the meeting tomorrow to finalize interview questions and interviews taking place on March 3rd.

BOARD REPORTS

A. ACES – Ellen Michaels did not have anything to report this evening.

B. CAFE – John Prins discussed the following; the convention theme, the potential for Branford to do two workshops (Finance and Special Ed.), Board Chair discussions (ad hoc), the Board Retreat, staff succession plan, a webinar (Reading Curriculum), Jody Goeler hired by CAFE to do policies and a workshop on diversity in hiring educators.

PTA REPORTS

A. MRT – Meaghan DeLucia discussed the Holiday Market - \$4,000 raised with half going to the Ronald McDonald House, author visits, spring events and end of the year activities.

B. JBS – Laura Troidle discussed the Someone Special Dance, the cultural event, art show, field day and the next meeting date of March 21st.

ADJOURN

10 MOTION (DeLucia/Troidle) to adjourn.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Mr. Berdon adjourned the meeting at 9:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Meredith Gaffney
Secretary

Prepared by,
Kerry Eyrich