

BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

DATE: November 20, 2024
LOCATION: Walsh Intermediate School, Collaboration & Innovation Center, Room 112
185 Damascus Road, Branford, CT
SUBJECT: Board of Education Meeting

ATTENDANCE

HERE	ATTENDEE	AFFILIATION
Y	Peter Berdon, Chair	Board of Education
Y	Ellen Michaels, Vice-Chair (Virtual)	Board of Education
Y	Meaghan DeLucia, Secretary	Board of Education
Y	Judith Barron	Board of Education
Y	Adam Greenberg (Virtual)	Board of Education
Y	Marie McNamara	Board of Education
Y	Ram Shrestha	Board of Education
Y	Shawn Tiernan	Board of Education
Y	Laura Troidle	Board of Education
Y	Carson Jarvis	Student Representative
Y	Grace Grammatico	Student Representative
Y	Nneoma Obi	Student Representative
Y	Dr. Christopher Tranberg, Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Allison Moran, Assistant Superintendent (Virtual)	Central Office
Y	Blaize Levitan, Chief Operating Officer	Central Office

Others present: Jeff Wyszynski, Derek Bride, Eddie Widofski and Laura Hill, from Tecton Architects; Tom Dillon, District Security Consultant and Brendan Leddy, Facilities Director

BUSINESS ITEMS

ITEM DESCRIPTION

CALL TO ORDER

01 Meeting was called to order at 6:32 PM by BOE Chair, Peter Berdon.

AGENDA CHANGES

There were no agenda changes made this evening.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Berdon shared a thank you note from Laura Troidle and stated that he received an email regarding last month's incident.

OE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES REPORT

Among the items that the BOE Student Representatives discussed this evening were; the Girls Field Hockey Team last Saturday against Guilford and the fan bus that was provided, the Girls Swim Team participation in the CIAC Finals, the School Hive Live's encouragement for parents and students to download ParentSquare, Homecoming Dance will be held on November 22nd, Feed Branford Kids raffle ticket sales for a chance to win \$2,500 in gift cards to local businesses, the Class of 2025 Spirit Wear Fundraiser (all proceeds go toward Project Graduation), the upcoming Girls Powderpuff Game, tonight is the opening night for the Fall play, Hornet Cards (undirected study hall/community discounts)

Continued...

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BOE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES REPORT(Continued)

are being given out to students who have 95% attendance and/or high honors in quarter one, academic opportunities (head of UCONN pharmaceuticals speak at BHS, college and other career path representatives coming to speak with students, etc), internal internships happening at BHS (i.e.; athletic and technology departments) and the Principal's Advisory Group has begun to meet,

SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Dr. Tranberg began his report by welcoming the members of the community and elected officials who were in attendance this evening and extending his congratulations to the Girls Field Hockey Team and Coach Pete Frye for their fantastic season. Among the items that Superintendent Tranberg discussed this evening were; the Boards participation in the Trunk or Treat Event (a new tradition and next years theme), the Boards recognition for a second year in a row (Level II Distinction) at the CAFE convention and also receiving Communication Awards for our Annual Report, JBS has been recognized for a second year in a row as a School of Distinction by the Connecticut Department of Education (due to SBA performance and level of student growth on the English subtest - 70%), the BAO contract was approved by the full RTM, a scholarship fund that was established in perpetuity in the name of Deb Maloney (funds will be management by the Branford Community Fund), the District partnership with the Branford Martin Luther King Heritage Foundation MLK Breakfast (January 20th at 8:30 AM).

Dr. Tranberg ended his report by discussing the October 21st event and student discipline by discussing the following; his continuation of having conversations with community members specifically about the physical violence that occurred on October 21st. He spoke about procedural items when things like this happen in the community - he and Assistant Superintendent Moran are in schools all of the time and the narrative that has spread throughout the community is not what school is actually like, to say that students are not being disciplined is not true, our administrators are spending a disproportionate amount of time their time on disciplines. The issues that we have is suspending kids and detentions as a consequence don't traditionally work, they don't get kids to stop. For years we have been working on a restorative approach and trying to build relationships to get better things to happen. Just like when a student is struggling academically, we want to teach them and there are circumstances and safety is paramount we need to do that but we want to teach them. Dr. Tranberg mentioned his recent community statement and the opinion of some that he was not firm enough, he reiterated that physical acts of violence are completely unacceptable, we take it very seriously, there are procedural things in place and we have a progressive discipline policy that we are moving thing (a lot of this is still in the works for the bigger cases). He appreciates the many conversations and the open communications about the topic the more we talk about it the more we can understand what is actually happening, even though we can't speak specifically about a specific student and specific cases (everyone has their right to privacy). Dr.

Continued...

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SUPERINTENDENT REPORT (Continued)

Tranberg explained the definition of expulsion (anything more than 10 days of suspension), expulsions are recommended to him, held by an impartial hearing officer and they are publicly noticed but are private meetings. Another piece is if a student has a disability through an IEP or 504 and there is a request for their expulsion, a manifestation is held to see if their disability is a cause into the behavior that happened, if it is determined that yes their disability played a role, that student is no longer eligible for expulsion and they are protected under the law. Dr. Tranberg again reiterated that he wanted the legal things to be clear. He concluded his report by reciting a quote from *Into the Woods* that has been resonating with him lately.

INTRODUCTION

A. Master Plan Facilities Consultant

Among the items discussed during this evening's introduction were; Introduction to the Tecton Team, relevant experience. Tecton's approach (Well Building, Evidence-Based Design, Sustainability and Resiliency), Why it Matter (School Facilities and Mission), Review of Demographics and Enrollment Analysis, BPS Demographic Analysis and Forecasting Future), Benchmarking BPS Schools, Demographic and Wnrollment Analysis, Community Engagement and Input, How Ideas Get Built/The Conversations (meeting people where they are; boards/banners/flyers/one-pagers/social/video; think tanks – who, what, when, where, why; steps-brainstorm, upvote, consolidate and upcoming events), Educational Programing Needs (why it matters; student health - building components and their effects, human health; program summary number of general classrooms and elementary specials; elementary schools), Educational Programming/Diagrams, Infrastructure Assessment – Existing Conditions/Analysis (programmatic needs, physical condition; tier I, II and III) Existing Conditions/Report and Living Document (“develop a tool for future uses – living document” and develop a flexible capital maintenance plan), Facilities Master Planning – Developing the Options/Introducing Options for Discussion/Seek Community Input and Feedback/Compare Options/Refining the Details/ Safety and Security/Sustainability and Resiliency - 10% of building's lifetime cost is in the construction budget/90% of the total cost of building ownership is in the operating cost, Sustainability-Comprehensive Approach (design philosophy, building material, building systems, rebates and incentives), Developing the Options/Maximize Funding Sources (Inflation Reduction Act – IRC Section 48, Federal Tax Credit for – solar, geothermal, combined heat and power system, waste energy recovery properties), The Final Master Plan (finalizing the plan), Branford Revised Draft Milestone Schedule (Action Item – 2024 and 2025) and the State Grant Application Process.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Becca Mitchell, District parent, spoke about behavior and discipline issues, addressing incidents of racism, hearing stories from parents. Ms. Mitchell also wanted to read a statement from a friend who could not attend this evening's meeting regarding this person's daughter's personal experience.

Continued...

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PUBLIC COMMENT (Continued)

Gregg Jerolman, Branford resident, spoke about the executive session scheduled for this evening, how discussion is needed and necessary, police presence, the upcoming budget, last year's budget and opportunity for additional funding, stepping forward and going the extra mile, money and better leadership and getting us where we need to go.

Babu, District parent and resident at 21 Burbon Drive, spoke about his main concern is safety, especially after the incident last month, time to think about mental health, protecting our kids, roles to model for kids, physical safety (metal detectors), hiring more mental health staff, identifying kids who need help and "thinking about software and not only the hardware."

Ashishna, District parent and resident of Florence Road, spoke about racism, what kids experience in school, parents need to release what kids are doing, a shout out to Murphy School for an excellent job with diversity, inclusion and amped up security, considering metal detectors, having a mental health crisis help line or app for students to access, prevention being the key, recent school lockdowns, letting parents know what is going on and making PTA's aware so they can market it.

Mr. Tapa, District parent and resident of Gilbert Lane, spoke about the incident at Dunkin Donuts, speaking with his child and other children and what they explained happens in schools and his child suggestion that they move

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

02 MOTION (DeLucia/Tiernan) to approve the minutes from the October 16, 2024 Full Regular BOE meeting.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Teaching & Learning Committee

Ms. Michaels reported that the Committee had a great presentation by the elementary school principals on the Aimsweb data and they also spoke about their goals which was very informative.

B. Personnel & Finance Committee

Ms. DeLucia stated that the Committee spoke about their monthly reports and there was an excellent presentation on our budget workshops on our current grants and how they are expended and the employees that are encompassed in them.

C. Policy Committee

Mr. Tiernan stated that Committee discussed changed to three of our policies in light of legislative changes, all three are on our agenda this evening for first reading

D. Communication Committee

Ms. Troidle stated the Committee had a very efficient meeting with Community Updates from Dr. Tranberg, they voted to send the 2025 meeting schedule to the full Board for approval, continued our discussion on cell phone usage and a timeline of discussion on this important topic and will hopefully have a policy by the end of the year.

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CONSENT AGENDA ITEM

- 02 A. To consider and if appropriate, vote to approve the Second Reading of Bylaw 9325 – Meeting Criteria**
MOTION (DeLucia/Tiernan) to approve the second reading of Bylaw 9325 – Meeting Criteria.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY (Michaels-yes, DeLucia-yes, Shrestha-yes, Troidle-yes, Shawn-yes)

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

- 03 A. To consider and if appropriate, vote to approve the 2025 BOE Meeting Schedule**
MOTION (DeLucia/Barron) to approve the 2025 BOE Meeting Schedule
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY (Michaels-yes, DeLucia-yes, Barron-yes, Shrestha-yes, Tiernan-yes, Troidle-yes)
- 04 B. To consider and if appropriate, vote to approve the First Reading of Policies:**
- a. 5300 – Administration of Medications**
 - b. 5750 – FAFSA Completion Rate**
 - c. 5800 – Student Discipline**
- MOTION (Tiernan/Shrestha) to approve the First Reading of Policies 5300, 5750 and 5800.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY (Michaels-yes, DeLucia-yes, Barron-yes, Shrestha-yes, Tiernan-yes, Troidle-yes)
- 05 C. To consider and if appropriate, vote to approve the WIS Dance Teams Field Trip Request to Orlando, Florida**
MOTION (Troidle/DeLucia) to approve the updated BOE Master Schedule
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY (Michaels-yes, DeLucia-yes, Barron-yes, Greenberg-yes, Tiernan-yes, Troidle-yes)

BOARD REPORTS

ACES – Ms. Michaels spoke about ACES service rates that will be going up to 4.26% and programs will be going up to 4.7% and their tuition rates range anywhere from \$74,000 to \$160,000 and that doesn't include transportation.

CABE – Mr. Tiernan spoke about his attendance at the recent CABE/CAPSS Convention. He stated that Tim Shriver gave the keynote address and the breakout sessions were excellent.

PTA REPORTS

Tisko - Mr. Greenberg stated that Mr. O'Connor was present at last night's meeting and he gave a full report similar to what he gave the Board so he updated the PTA of their plans. Mr. Greenberg also reported that there are a bunch of events coming up and a lot of successful fundraisers. The schools shared in the Trunk of Treat, there is an \$8500 scholarship fund for Tisko. There are a lot of great things over at Tisko.

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EXECUTIVE SESSION

06 A. To discuss District Safety and Security

MOTION (DeLucia/Barron) to adjourn into executive session to discuss District Safety and Security.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY (Michaels-yes, DeLucia-yes, Barron-yes, Greenberg-yes, Shrestha-yes, Tiernan-yes, Troidle-yes)

Mr. Berdon adjourned the meeting into executive session at 8:03 PM. All BOE members present for tonight's meeting both in person and virtual, Superintendent Tranberg, Tom Dillon, Blaize Levitan and Brendan Leddy adjourned into executive session.

RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION/ADJOURN

07 Mr. Berdon return the meeting to regular session at 9:08 PM with no action taken.

08 MOTION (DeLucia/Tiernan) to adjourn.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY (Michaels-yes, DeLucia-yes, Barron-yes, Greenberg-yes, Shrestha-yes, Tiernan-yes, Troidle-yes)

Mr. Berdon adjourned the meeting at 9:09 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Meaghan DeLucia
Secretary

Prepared by,
Kerry Eyrich

UPCOMING BOE MEETINGS

(All meetings will take place in the

WIS Collaboration & Innovation Center, Room 112 unless otherwise specified)

BOE Committee Chairs Meeting (Virtual)	December 4, 2024 at 5:00 PM
Teaching & Learning Committee Meeting	December 11, 2024 at 6:00 PM
Personnel & Finance Committee Meeting	December 11, 2024 at 7:00 PM
Policy Committee Meeting	December 11, 2024 at 7:30 PM
Communication Committee Meeting	December 18, 2024 at 6:00 PM
Full Regular BOE Meeting	December 18, 2024 at 6:30 PM