

BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING MINUTES

DATE: August 14, 2024

LOCATION: Walsh Intermediate School Cafeteria

SUBJECT: Board of Education Meeting

185 Damascus Road, Branford, CT

ATTENDANCE

HERE	ATTENDEE	AFFILIATION
Y	Peter Berdon, Chair	Board of Education
Y	Ellen Michaels, Vice-Chair	Board of Education
N	Meaghan DeLucia, Secretary	Board of Education
Y	Judith Barron	Board of Education
Y	Adam Greenberg	Board of Education
Y	Marie McNamara	Board of Education
N	Ram Shrestha	Board of Education
Y	Shawn Tiernan	Board of Education
Y	Laura Troidle	Board of Education
Y	Dr. Christopher Tranberg, Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Allison Moran, Assistant Superintendent	Central Office
Y	Blaize Levitan, Chief Operating Officer	Central Office
Y	Kimberly Castoro, Director of Business Services	Central Office

Others present: Attorney Julie Reznik, Shipman & Goodwin, LLC

BUSINESS ITEMS

ITEM DESCRIPTION

CALL TO ORDER

- 01** Meeting was called to order at 6:35 PM by BOE Chair, Peter Berdon.

AGENDA CHANGES

There were no agenda changes made this evening.

COMMUNICATIONS

Mr. Berdon reported that he did not have any communications to discuss this evening.

PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no public comments made at this evening's meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 02** MOTION (McNamara/Tiernan) to approve the minutes from the following Full Board of Education meetings:
- A. May 8, 2024 Full Special BOE Meeting
 - B. June 5, 2024 Full Special BOE Meeting
 - C. June 17, 2024 Full Special BOE Meeting
 - D. June 25, 2024 Full Special BOE Meeting
 - E. July 23, 2024 Special Board Retreat Meeting
 - F. July 23, 2024 Full Special BOE Meeting

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Continued...

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SUPERINTENDENT REPORT

Dr. Tranberg began his report this evening by stating that the RFP for the Master Plan has been posted and there is excitement for the plan being underway. Among the items that Superintendent Tranberg discussed this evening were; Governor Lamont's being vocal about cell phone use in schools (his current plan is to leave it up to local districts but he is strongly encouraging the use of Yonder bags/pouches), the Board received a copy of the book *The Anxious Generation* and will be working through it over the next several months, due to enrollment we will be adding a kindergarten class at JBS (interviews under way shortly), negotiations will be underway soon for the Branford Administrators Organization (BAO) and there will be a meeting with the Board of Finance for guidance this month, meeting regularly with Zum transportation to prepare for the launch (going incredibly well), excitement about the technology and Zum's application, including training this week for Administrators and parents will be pleased with the access, parents were sent an invitation to join ParentSquare and an invitation to join the Zum app, BOE registration for the CABE/CAPSS convention in November, starting next week meetings will be changed to the large collaborative space located in room 112 at Walsh (next Tuesdays BOE Retreat will take place there), students first day of schools is August 29th and convocation will be on August 27th.

STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Teaching & Learning Committee

Ms. Michaels stated that the next meeting will take place in September and she will be working with Assistant Superintendent Moran in the next few days to set the agendas.

B. Personnel & Finance Committee

Ms. DeLucia was not present this evening.

C. Policy Committee

Mr. Tiernan stated much like Teaching & Learning and Personnel & Finance his Committee has not met, but there are a lot of new things they will be doing and he too will be speaking with Ms. Moran to set the agendas for the coming months.

D. Communication Committee

Ms. Troidle stated that the next meeting is September 18th.

DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

03 A. To consider and if appropriate, vote to approve the 2024-2025 Non-Resident Tuition Rates

MOTION (Tiernan/Troidle) to approve the 2024-2025 non-resident tuition rates.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

04 B. To consider and if appropriate, vote to approve the 2024-2025 School Year BHS Senior Graduation Date

MOTION (Troidle/Tiernan) to approve the 2024-2025 School Year BHS Senior graduation date of June 11.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Continued...

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DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS (Continued)

05 C. To consider and if appropriate, vote to the BHS Model Congress Field Trip Request to Harvard Model Congress in Boston, Massachusetts

MOTION (Tiernan/McNamara) vote to approve the BHS Model Congress Field Trip request to Harvard Model Congress in Boston, Massachusetts.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

06 D. To consider and if appropriate, vote to appoint Pullman & Comley, LLC as the law firm whose attorneys will serve as an Impartial Hearing Officer for Student Disciplinary matters, expulsion expungement requests and for hearing school accommodation appeals, including transportation appeals as provided by Statute for the 2024-2025 school year, as they arise.

MOTION (Troidle/Greenberg) to appoint Pullman & Comley, LLC as the law firm whose attorneys will serve as an Impartial Hearing Officer for Student Disciplinary matters, expulsion expungement requests and for hearing school accommodation appeals, including transportation appeals as provided by Statute for the 2024-2025 school year, as they arise.

APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

07 E. Personnel & Finance Reports

Blaize Levitan began his report by introducing Kimberly Castoro, Director of Business Services.

Among the items that Mr. Levitan discussed this evening were; changes to the monthly expenditures report including format changes (same data, just in a different format including comparisons for current and last fiscal year), reports will include grant funds, capital funding as well as food services which is independent of the general fund. Mr. Levitan stated for fiscal year 25 we are only one period in and we are in the process of encumbering right now, most of the non-certified personnel costs are encumbered, the teachers' contract will be fully encumbered within the next few weeks, he is working very closely with Charles Cicarella to encumber Special Education tuition upfront, when these reports are received the available balances will be more accurate because they will include all of Special Educations anticipated costs for the year, every tuition agreement will have its own schedule and will be reflected in the year-to-date expenditures (live as opposed to after the fact), utilized and contractual obligations are fully encumbered in this balance with the only thing left to encumber is some coordination with Zum (transportation expenses for the year). Some things that are being monitored by Central Office Leadership is the new electric rate (going up about 30% in December, we have bid out jointly with the Town), high substitute utilization rates and teacher absenteeism (expected to remain a budget pressure point), chartered bus services there is a higher field trip rate that is variable and so is athletics), at JBS a kindergarten section is needed due to enrollment. The goal of the report changes is to give more context and to have more budget conversations.

In his Personnel Report, Mr. Levitan discussed; adding context to the report by making it a little more digestible by including what's occurring each month on staffing changes (under each category there is a

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DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS (Continued)

monthly total and then a year-to-date total), focusing on how does it tie back to the budgeted staffing (is the position grant funded, a budget funded position or an unfunded position), leaves of absence are still on the report but the person’s name has been removed including reason for leave (HIPAA reasons). Mr. Levitan continued by stating that we are open to feed back regarding the report. He concluded by stating that we have a stable workforce and hoping to see more stabilization in paraprofessional staffing.

BOARD REPORTS

ACES - Ms. Michaels stated that ACES will meet again in September.

CABE - Mr. Tiernan reported that CABE just had their summer meeting at Waters Edge where the big topic was phones in school. Ms. Michaels described the meeting's new format.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

- 08** MOTION (Troidle/Tiernan) to adjourn into Executive Session.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

At 7:21 PM, Mr. Berdon adjourned the meeting into executive session to discuss BAO negotiations. This discussion was facilitated by Attorney Julie Reznik, Shipman & Goodwin, LLC. All Board members present for this evening's meeting including the Central Office Leadership staff, Superintendent Tranberg, Allison Moran, Blaize Levitan and Kimberly Castoro adjourned into executive session.

RETURN TO REGULAR SESSION

- 09** Mr. Berdon returned the meeting to regular session at 7:54 PM with no action taken.

ADJOURN

- 10** MOTION (Troidle/Tiernan) to adjourn.
APPROVED UNANIMOUSLY

Mr. Berdon adjourned the meeting at 7:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Laura Troidle
Pro Tem Secretary

Prepared by,
Kerry Eyrich

SEPTEMBER BOE MEETINGS

(All meetings will take place in the WIS Collaboration & Innovation Center unless otherwise specified)

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