

2008/2009 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BRANFORD BOARD OF EDUCATION

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. Frank Carrano, Chairman
Dr. David Squires, Vice-Chairman
Dr. Linda Barr
Mrs. Ann C. Caruso
Mr. John Prins
Mrs. Judith Hotz, Secretary
Peter A. Berdon, Esq.
Mr. Michael A. Krause, CIC
Mrs. Marie Watson

MEETINGS OF THE BOARD

During the period of July 1, 2008, through June 30, 2009, the Board met in regular monthly sessions on the third Wednesday of each month and in committee sessions on the first Wednesday of the month for the Personnel & Finance Committee and the Communication Committee. Additionally, on the second Wednesday of the month, the Teaching & Learning in the 21st Century Committee met. In total, there were 55 regular, committee, workshop and special meetings of the Board.

All meetings were conducted in compliance with Connecticut General Statutes with public participation invited and encouraged.

ENROLLMENT AND STAFF DATA

As of October 1, 2008, pupil enrollment (3,479) in the various levels of the school district was distributed as follows:

ENROLLMENT (as of October, 2008)

Indian Neck School—Early Years Center	(Pre-K)	77
Mary T. Murphy School	(K-4)	409
John B. Sliney School	(K-4)	363
Mary R. Tisko School	(K-4)	436
Walsh Intermediate School	(5-8)	1,083
Branford High School	(9-12)	<u>1,111</u>
TOTAL (includes Special Education)		<u>3,479</u>

PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Providing instruction and necessary support services to the 3,479 pupils enrolled were 293 regular and special education teachers, 41 professional staff members in speech, social work, guidance counseling, nursing, school psychology, and library and a total administrative staff of 20.

COST OF OPERATING THE SCHOOLS

During the 2008/2009 school year, the Branford Board of Education was granted an appropriation of \$45,822,707 from the Town of Branford. In addition, the schools received additional grants as follows:

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Branford Board of Education Grant Awards, Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2009:

<u>GRANTS</u>	<u>Public</u>	<u>Fiscal Agent</u>	<u>Non-Public</u>	<u>Total</u>
State Grants				
School Readiness	\$ 53,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 53,500
Adult Ed-ERACE State/Local	118,208	212,797	-	331,005
Family Resource Center	97,200	-	-	97,200
Inter. Coop SCC Diversity Dream	1,161	34,275	-	35,436
Adult Ed-ERACE Crossroads	50,000	-	-	50,000
School-Based Health Center(Elem WIS &HS)	341,794	-	-	341,794
School-Based Health Center(MTM Bldg.)	81,380	-	-	81,380
Magnet School Transportation	6,500	-	-	6,500
Open Choice	77,083	-	-	77,083
Total State Grants	\$ 776,826	\$ 247,072	\$ -	\$ 1,023,898
Federal Grants				
Adult Ed-ERACE Family Literacy	60,000	-	-	60,000
Adult Ed-ERACE Trans	45,000	-	-	45,000
Adult Ed-ERACE Diploma Program	40,000	-	-	40,000
Adult Ed-ERACE Civics	\$ 35,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 35,000
Adult Ed-ERACE Workplace	30,000	-	-	30,000
Adult Ed-ERACE Finance	19,000	-	-	19,000
IDEA Sect.611	694,478	-	9,696	704,174
IDEA Sect.619 Preschool-Special Ed	28,829	-	815	29,644
Perkins Grant	37,976	18,935	-	56,911
Title I Improving Basic Programs	316,176	-	-	316,176
Title II Teachers & Principals	90,102	-	5,882	95,984
Title II Technology	1,516	-	118	1,634
Title III Part A English Language Acquisition	12,011	6,821	-	18,832
Title IV Drug Free Schools Act	6,400	-	493	6,893
Total Federal Grants	\$ 1,416,488	\$ 25,756	\$ 17,004	\$ 1,459,249
Other Grants				
Adult Ed-ERACE Workforce Bfd. Hills	\$ 20,000	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 20,000
Adult Ed-ERACE CREC	2,000	-	-	2,000
Adult Ed-ERACE Family Literacy	3,000	-	-	3,000
Adult Ed-ERACE Unileaver	33,910	-	-	33,910
Alcoa Healthy Youths	15,000	-	-	15,000
Universal Service Fund Schools &Libraries	53,981	-	-	53,981
Total Other Grants	\$ 127,891	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 127,891
Total Grants	\$ 2,321,205	\$ 272,828	\$ 17,004	\$ 2,611,037

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REIMBURSEMENT GRANTS TO TOWN FOR EDUCATION EXPENDITURES

(Unaudited)

Education Cost Sharing (ECS) / Special Education	1,648,530
Transportation	142,917
Health & Welfare [Non-Public]	<u>35,470</u>
TOTAL REIMBURSEMENT	\$ 1,826,917

RETIREMENT

Retirees during and at the close of the 2008/2009 school year were:

Rosalie Acabbo	Sandra Ardito	Victoria Blake
Joan Callahan	Jeanne Connolly	Barbara Gelo
Judith Johnson	Rita Peck	

Branford Board of Education – 2008/2009

The school year 2008/2009 was the second year of implementation of the Strategic Plan.

BPS Strategic Goals

- 1. Branford Public School students will demonstrate proficiency in the 21st Century skills needed to be successful in an information-based, technology driven, global society.**
- 2. The Branford Public Schools will ensure that all students are successful by building consistent and coherent Pre-K to 12 processes for curriculum development and implementation, assessment of student learning, uniform data collection and analysis, and program and personnel evaluation.**
- 3. The Branford Public Schools will continuously improve communication through interaction, involvement, and engagement with all key stakeholders in order to enhance the success of every student.**

Indicators of success have been developed for each goal, which outline very specifically what to expect at each level of accomplishment. These indicators were reviewed in May, 2009 by the district's Leadership Team.

The Leadership Team is a team of educators representing all levels and departments within the school system. This Team, with the support of the Superintendent, Administrative Council, district-wide instructional staff, and the Board of Education, directs the work of all major systems (goals, assessment, professional development, curriculum, and technology) in support of the identified district learning priorities. The progress noted on the indicators of success, as determined by the Leadership Team, were shared with the Board of Education. This evaluation was used to develop an action plan for year 3, 2009-10.

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Branford Board of Education – 2008/2009 (Continued) **Subcommittees**

Three subcommittees of the Board of Education met during the 2008-09 year. The Teaching and Learning for the 21st Century Committee, chaired by John Prins, met on issues of broad interest in education, including textbook adoption, new or revised curriculum, evaluation of programs and new initiatives. The Personnel and Finance Committee, chaired by Michael Krause, reviews the status of the school budget, including budget transfers, expenditures and special education budget implications; personnel issues are also part of the agenda. The Communication Committee, chaired by Marie Watson, addresses Board of Education communication issues with the Branford community.

Branford Education Foundation

Under the leadership of Mr. Robert Babcock, the Branford Education Foundation operates under tax-exempt 501 (C) (3) status. The Foundation Board as well as ex-officio members of the Board of Education have granted Innovation awards to several Branford teachers for programs they have created. Additionally, the Foundation hosts "Open House" meetings at our schools to promote the community's awareness of the Foundation's work.

Some of the grants awarded are: Computer Measuring Devices for Branford High School Science, Connecticut River Salmon Association School Program (BHS), Branford Community Youth Mentoring Program (BHS), 2009 Teacher of the Year, RM Math Frameworks (Walsh), Trout in the Classroom Program (MRT), Culinary Arts Program (BHS), Forensic Science Program (BHS), "Weatherbug" Weather Program (all district), Garden Beautification Projects (all schools), and Operation Solar Energy (BHS).

Technology

BPS Goal One: 21st Century Skills

Branford Public School students will demonstrate proficiency in the 21st Century skills needed to be successful in an information-based, technology driven, global society.

The Branford Public Schools Technology Department continues to play a critical role in the implementation of the Board of Education's strategic goals, specifically in the area of teaching and learning 21st Century skills.

During the 2008-2009 school year the technology program moved forward in many areas.

At Branford High School:

- Received a grant for full laptop cart for the English department
- Participated in Foreign Language webcast with Glastonbury Public Schools
- Facilitated training workshops for new administrative and instructional information systems
- Installed and trained staff in the use of electronic smartboards
- Continued the roll-out, training and support of teacher laptops
- Upgraded the school video surveillance system for better school security

At Walsh Intermediate School:

- Replaced network switches for classroom computers
- Held student elections using new web platform
- Facilitated professional development on teacher web pages, posting homework assignments, Infinite Campus Grade book, smartboards and creating lessons with smartboard software
- Facilitated student assessment data input into student information system
- Issued to Special Ed department new laptops with training
- Installed new stage lighting system for student events
- Installed math software with built in smartboard integration and web access for students
- Upgraded video editing software for Media Technology classes

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Technology (Continued)

At District Elementary Schools:

- Facilitated professional development on Infinite Campus; Attendance Module and Grade Book Module for Reading, Writing and Math Assessments
- Facilitated professional development with reading teachers on curriculum based reading software
- Facilitated professional development on Webpage content posting
- Facilitated professional development on smartboards and creating lessons with software
- Installed new desktop computers - 25 per school; towards a (upgrade or new) 4 to 1 ratio
- Updated all teachers laptops; OS and memory

District wide:

- Installed fiber optic cabling between the schools.
- Implemented Infinite Campus student information system
- Partnered in the UTC Power Project - Monitoring and Management through the BPS network
- Partnered with Enernoc - Monitoring of electricity usage in the building through BPS network
- Assisted in the implementation of school id badges for teachers and staff
- Completed district wide printer and multifunction device study

Over the course of the 2008-2009 school year, the Technology department will be overseeing the creation of the next three-year technology plan as required by the State of Connecticut Department of Education. A committee of stakeholders from across the Branford community will participate in this endeavor. The goals of the plan are to specify the actions Branford Public Schools has and will take to achieve the stated strategic goals and to support teaching and learning for all students. The planned curriculum renewal process for the schools will play a large part in the technology planning process. Research has shown that students are more successful when technology resources are integrated into existing curriculum and instruction. Therefore, the technology plan will include strategies for continued implementation of the use of information and communication technologies into curricular areas such as math, language arts, social studies, and science.

The Technology department has been working to continue the practice of supporting all students with modern information and communication technologies that support teaching and learning. All district schools are now connected with high-speed dedicated network lines and network switching equipment has been replaced in all schools to leverage these new lines. Technology related hardware and software continues to be maintained, upgraded, and replaced. The use of laptops and mobile carts has risen to support learning in the classroom. Multimedia projectors are being adopted in a significant number of classrooms along with electronic "white boards." Teachers are adapting their instructional practices to incorporate these tools into their teaching to provide students with 21st Century experiences.

Students in grades 5-12 are being issued accounts that provide access to web-based electronic mail and productivity software. These "Web 2.0" services not only replace traditional software, but they come at low to no cost, they can be used anywhere at anytime, and they provide collaborative sharing and publishing features that are critical components to the 21st Century learning process.

The Branford Public Schools Technology department will continue to play an active role in supporting the goals of the school district and its students. Modern, research based methods of planning, training, managing, organizing, and facilitating will be used to guarantee success.

CMT and CAPT Results

For the fourth time in the State of Connecticut, these tests were administered in the month of March. The students in grades 3-8 were required to take the Connecticut Mastery Test and students in grade 10 were given the CAPT test. This is also the second year our students were tested in Science in grades 5 and 8. These tests gauge our students' mastery in key instructional areas.

Results of these tests indicate our students continue to progress toward proficiency in some grade levels in the areas of reading, writing, and math but we need to work toward having more students achieve goal or above goal in all areas. Special Education will be a focus for the 2009-2010 school year. Our goal will be to improve the achievement gap between regular education and special education students. The administrators and teachers will work diligently to address this area of concern.

Student Performance

Connecticut Mastery Tests 2009:

Percentage of Students At or Above Goal

<u>GRADE</u>	<u>MATH</u>	<u>READING</u>	<u>WRITING</u>	<u>SCIENCE</u>
GRADE 3 BRANFORD	62.9	63.5	63.3	
GRADE 3 STATE	63.0	54.6	62.6	
GRADE 4 BRANFORD	59.2	75.9	63.9	
GRADE 4 STATE	63.8	60.7	64.2	
GRADE 5 BRANFORD	79.1	76.1	71.3	79.6
GRADE 5 STATE	69.0	66.0	66.0	58.3
GRADE 6 BRANFORD	75.0	79.4	72.5	
GRADE 6 STATE	69.0	69.0	62.2	
GRADE 7 BRANFORD	71.3	71.7	67.7	
GRADE 7 STATE	66.3	74.9	62.9	
GRADE 8 BRANFORD	75.3	78.1	77.6	74.6
GRADE 8 STATE	64.7	68.5	66.5	60.9

CAPT

Connecticut Academic Performance Test % grade 10 Meeting State Goal

<u>TEST</u>	<u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>STATE</u>
Reading Across the Disciplines	56.3	47.5
Writing Across the Disciplines	63.9	55.1
Mathematics	52.0	48.0
Science	52.4	43.0

DISTRICT GOALS: 2009-2010
STUDENT PERFORMANCE GOALS

All Branford Students were expected to:

- Improve their literacy skills in responding to text
- Improve their skills in mathematical applications

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS

Working together, Branford's administrative teams and our teaching staff:

- Continue to analyze student performance data to devise strategies to elevate the overall performance of all students through the development of our school improvement plans
- Continue to improve models of substantive collegial collaboration through the development of professional learning teams
- Continue to Implement model coaching opportunities for all teachers to improve instruction, especially in the areas of reading and mathematics

Curriculum, Professional Development, and Student Performance Outcomes

Our administrative staff and teachers devoted considerable attention to curriculum and professional development with the emphasis on improving student performance. This year, the schools focused a great deal of attention on reading instruction and math instruction. The elementary schools and the secondary schools worked with consultants in helping their teachers improve instruction to achieve greater reading and math success for all students. District-wide formative assessments continue to be developed and implemented to monitor student learning. The Branford Board of Education supports our district's endeavors.

Curriculum Development

The District Curriculum Plan: The revised Branford School District Curriculum Plan updated by the Branford Public School's Leadership Team, a committee developed from our District Strategic Plan, will be followed during the 2009-2010 school year. This team put together a new process for improving curriculum revisions based upon the new state frameworks and grade level expectations for math, social studies and language arts. The goal of these curricula teams is to complete the curricula for math, social studies and language arts during this upcoming school year.

Implementation of the K-12 Science Curriculum –A Science Vertical Team, comprised of members from K-12 teaching staff will be meeting to update and improve the curriculum based upon the state's new grade level expectations for science.

Awareness and understanding of the state Grade Level Expectations- It is our goal to have ongoing discussions during the school year on the new established State Grade Level Expectations (GLE's) in Language Arts, Mathematics and Science. This will help us in the curriculum revision process for the 2009-2010 school year.

Professional Development

A Professional development/ teacher evaluation committee will meet this year to discuss the best process we can use for meeting the professional development needs of our staff. The district will continue to focus on our need for greater knowledge of **21st Century Skills** to prepare our students for life long learning. During the school year the professional development activities will focus on: literacy and improving students' abilities to respond to text and mathematical applications. In addition, continuous focus is on the use of technology as a tool for enhancing student learning.

Horizons Program

Horizons is BHS's alternative learning program for "at-risk" students and disaffected learners. This program provides additional supports and structure for students that are not able to move successfully towards graduation in the traditional school program. The program is in its 18th year of operation. The program has service over 70 students this year. Fourteen students have graduated from the program this year. The program is at maximum capacity for the upcoming 2009/2010 school year.

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Summer Studies 2008-9

Another successful summer semester was enjoyed with our programs taking place at Branford High School and the Indian Neck Early Years Center.

At Branford High School, the self-supporting program of grades 1-8 enrichment courses had 256 students in 32 courses. Of the 39 courses offered, 7 were cancelled, some 18%. This is about the average for attrition in enrichment course offerings. Student participation is an increase of 92 students from last year and an increase of 76 students from the summer of 2006-07. These very positive results can be attributed the aggressive marketing program: our internet registration site, our brochure insert in a newspaper and an attractive selection of course for customers.

At Branford High School, the self-supporting programs of grades 9-12 remedial courses had 111 students participating in 13 courses. This is an increase of 17 students. We created an Algebra II Prep course to accompany our Algebra I course at the suggestion the Branford High School administration and the Math Department. Some 62 students participated in our Algebra courses, an increase of 25 students from last year, the same increase as in 2006-07.

The Board of Education supported programs include the grades 5-8 remedial retention program with 17 students, 8 more than last year and 1 less than in 2006-07.

The Board of Education supported Pupil Services programs had 28 students participating in 3 classes, grades 1-5, 1 less than last year and 7 less that 2006-07. The job experience program served 13 students at BHS and WIS, 2 more than the past 2 years.

At Indian Neck Early Years, we had 29 students in 4 pre-school classes, 3 less than last year and 2 more than 2006-07.

Our two speech/language teachers provided services at both sites to 54 youngsters, 5 more than last year and 3 more than 2006-07.

Adult Education

Mr. Paul Dzialo, Adult Education Director, reported that:

Branford has completed its 16th year as provider for the five-town region of ERACE - East Shore Region Adult and Continuing Education with the cooperating towns of North Branford, Guilford, Madison and Clinton. About 330 students participated in our state mandated programs [Citizenship (6 students), English As a 2nd Language ESL (96 students), Adult Basic Education (2 students), GED (High School Equivalency Program Preparation) (40 students) and High School Credit Diploma Preparation (186 students) at our four learning sites. Thirty-six students received a Branford Adult High School Diploma and twelve received a Connecticut state GED Diploma.

ERACE will start offering the External Diploma Program for adults that want a high school diploma based on 65 life skill competencies. This is a national program we have been trying to implement for the past two years. Currently we have 8 potential students and plan on having 3-5 students graduate this program by June 08.

ERACE has increased the number of instructional hours from 150hrs/year to 512hrs/year. We are now an open enrollment, year-round school. This operational model allows students to continue their education without waiting for a new semester to start. Our goal is to have each student graduate the same year they would have if they stayed in high school. If the student graduates the year they were suppose to, then they are not considered a high school dropout.

We have experienced great success with our younger students by offering more opportunities to earn credits to obtain their high school diploma. ERACE students are now taking advantage of earning credits via distance-learning courses that are taught by Connecticut certified teachers.

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Adult Education (Continued)

The distance-learning courses are offered by the Ct Virtual High School which is a federally funded program. ERACE is now requiring all students to take a ½ credit technology course and one credit Transitions course for graduation. The Transition course is focused on transitioning from high school to work and post secondary education.

ERACE has added two more guidance counselors and a social worker to meet the needs of all our high school and GED students. All high school students must attend all classes during the term to earn credit which reflects our zero absence policy. In addition, we encourage all high school students to have their parents participate in new student orientation to ensure that our program is the appropriate learning environment and meets their academic goals.

ERACE developed collaborations with two employers, CINTAS and Unilever, for workplace training. We provided one shift of ESL training at CINTAS, and 3 shifts of training at Unilever. We are currently writing competitive grants to help employers pay for additional training.

Fee-based enrichment/general interest courses offered in Branford Adult Education, primarily at Branford High School, enrolled nearly 1,100 students in the fall and winter/spring semesters. Our mission to offer a diverse selection of courses at reasonable prices to our residents continues. ERACE has a new web site that now allows new students to register for enrichment courses via the internet. This past year, we had 60% of all registration via on-line.

We are fortunate that our brochure combines courses from Branford, North Branford, Guilford/Madison and Clinton Adult Education. This allows Branford residents to participate in nearly 300 courses in our five-town region. The brochure may be viewed at any time on-line at www.erace-adulted.com.

Summary

The 2008-09 school year was a successful one for our students. Students achieved new levels of excellence in academics, sports, and the arts. Our students' success can be traced directly to our excellent teaching staff, talented administrators and supportive, involved parents. Our website hosts a great deal of information about our schools (www.branford.k12.ct.us), and we will hold Open Houses at all of our schools during National Education Week (November 16-20, 2009). We invite you to volunteer in our schools or to mentor a student.

The Board of Education actively seeks your suggestions and support, and appreciates your interest in our children and in their futures.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen C. Halligan _____

Kathleen C. Halligan, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Judith Hotz _____

Judith Hotz, Secretary
Branford Board of Education

KCH:w; 10/09