

Dear Families and Staff;

I hope that this email finds you and your families well. It is hard to believe that we are already in February and are starting the process for planning for the 21-22 school year! We are finalizing the budget, looking at staffing, and at Governor Livingston, students are in the process of selecting their courses for next year.

In addition to our normal planning process, I am pleased to announce that last night, the Board of Education confirmed that the district will have Full Day Kindergarten for the Fall of 2021!

Full Day Kindergarten will be a tremendous benefit to the BHPS community. Students who experience a robust early childhood education have been proven to be more successful in their academic careers.

Full Day Kindergarten provides more opportunities to address standards in a meaningful and developmentally appropriate manner, as well as a deeper integration of content areas through investigation and sustained projects. Further, it provides the opportunity for more intentional and deliberate interactions with students and more effective instructional time. Finally, there is an opportunity for choice time, when children have the freedom to explore their ideas, seek out their own answers, test predictions, navigate new social interactions and experiment with a variety of materials in both structured and unstructured ways while increasing self-regulatory skills. You can see how excited I am for Full Day Kindergarten!

As exciting as the prospect of Full Day Kindergarten is, it will also be a huge undertaking getting all of the details hammered out. I ask you for your patience as the Administrative team goes to work creating this wonderful new program. I promise that we will give the students the best program we can, and that we will have more information for you soon.

Last night the Board of Education also approved Marc Strachan as the consultant to the District Diversity Task Force. The Task Force will be developing a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategic plan and metrics for the district. Those of you who volunteered for the Task Force will be hearing from us shortly.

Although the challenges are formidable, all of these initiatives will make Berkeley Heights Public Schools a better place. With so much of the past year spent reacting to the pandemic it is rejuvenating to plan and build towards a better future.

Covid Update:

New Cases (since 2/3 update)		
School	Staff/Student	Result
GLHS	1 Student	Last day in School 12/23 No in-school exposure

Finally, as a follow up, at the December 21st board meeting numerous people spoke to the Board of Education about experiences in our buildings that were not inclusive and accepting. As required by law, current student concerns have been investigated through the 1-11B process. If a student wishes to report an allegation, they may do so through the [district anonymous reporting system](#).

Former students and graduates were given the opportunity to file a complaint through our outside counsel. At this time, we have received no official reports to the outside counsel. We urge people to come forward to report anything about events that have made them feel uncomfortable. Former students can file a report here BHFormerStudents@cgajlaw.com.

Sincerely,
Dr. Melissa Varley