

Good afternoon,

It is with great sadness that I join the Board of Education in offering my condolences, and those of the entire district to the family and friends of Mrs. Helen Kirsch. It was a great privilege to work with Helen over the past two years. She was our institutional memory and was a tireless advocate for generations of students. We honor her memory, her service, and her lifelong dedication to the children of Berkeley Heights. She will be dearly missed.

I am sure I am not alone when I say that this year has been the most challenging one of my career, and I want to take a moment to thank everyone for all of their support and patience as we worked through a very challenging school year that had so many changes. It has been through the cooperation of the whole community- the BOE, the parents, the students and the hard work and dedication of the BHPS staff that we have been able to be in school since September. Give or take a few hiccups along the way.

In other news, the Governor has given Superintendents the right to lift mask mandates in the event of excessive temperatures. Fortunately, the majority of our spaces are air conditioned, but I have directed the building principals to inform teachers in non-climate controlled classrooms that teachers and students who feel comfortable removing their masks may do so. Also, outdoor classes can also be maskless to individual comfort level.

As of now, masks are required for 21-22. I've attached our "Road Forward Plan" [here](#). Please understand that it will most likely change. We are asking for feedback on this plan [here](#). I'm encouraged by the fact that we have not had a student case of covid for 6 weeks, but we wish to remain prudent.

I also want to take a moment to thank everyone who volunteered for our Diversity Committees, our Action Teams, and our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force. Each individual teacher, administrator, student, parent, and community member has given their time to make BHPS a more inclusive place. Our One Book One Community Book Club information is coming soon!

A Final reminder to complete our DEI survey for parents [here](#). And our DEI survey for CMS and GL students [here](#).

These are anonymous and voluntary.

I would like to take a moment to congratulate Patricia Gasparini on her retirement. We thank her for her many years of dedicated service to the district. Patty, you have been an institution.

Congratulations to the 2021 Varsity and JV Baseball Teams on winning the Union County Championship!

Finally - Congratulations to the Class of 2021! You have persevered through adversity and found a way to excel academically, athletically, and artistically. I am attaching this [link](#) of college acceptances but want to remind everyone that there are many paths to a successful life. Many of these paths do not depend on a college degree. We are proud of all our graduating seniors.

May we come back to school in September in-person, full-day, and without masks! I wish you all a fantastic summer.

Sincerely,

Dr. Melissa Varley