

BERKELEY HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Office of the Superintendent
345 Plainfield Avenue
Berkeley Heights, New Jersey 07922

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**BERKELEY HEIGHTS PUBLIC SCHOOLS MOURN THE PASSING OF LONGTIME
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEMBER HELEN KIRSCH**

The Berkeley Heights Public Schools community is mourning the passing of longtime Board of Education member Helen Kirsch, who passed away June 5th after a brief illness.

Mrs. Kirsch was first elected to the Berkeley Heights Board of Education in 1983 and had continuously served the community and its schools as a Board member for the past 38 years. During that time, she served as President of the Board of Education for over 20 years - from 1989 to 2007 and from 2013 to 2016 - and was a leader in the effort to dissolve the Union County Regional High School District #1 and bring Governor Livingston High School under the control of the local school board.

“We are all greatly saddened by the news of the passing of Helen Kirsch,” said Doug Reinstein, President of the Berkeley Heights Board of Education. “We will always be grateful for her lifelong dedication to the students of Berkeley Heights. Her contributions to our school district are far too many to list. However, suffice it to say that our district wouldn’t be where we are today without her service.

“Mrs. Kirsch’s children and grandchildren were and are being educated in our school district,” Mr. Reinstein continued. “They saw firsthand how she was a model of always doing what was in the best interest of children. Our community owes Helen an enormous thank you for a job MORE than well done.”

During her nearly four decades on the Berkeley Heights Board of Education, Mrs. Kirsch was a member of numerous Board committees - including Negotiations, Long-Range Planning, Athletics/Co-Curricular Activities, Legislative, Personnel, and Curriculum. She also served as the Board of Education liaison to the Township Committee, Municipal Alliance, Berkeley Heights Education Foundation, Berkeley Heights Taxpayers Association, Berkeley Heights Senior Citizens, and the Environmental Commission.

Her devoted volunteer service to the education of young people went beyond the borders of Berkeley Heights and Mountainside as well, as proven by the more than two decades she served on the Board of Education of the Union County Educational Services Commission.

“I met Helen a little over two years ago and was impressed with her ability to voice traditions that have been long standing in Berkeley Heights,” shared Dr. Melissa Varley, Berkeley Heights Superintendent of Schools. “Her desire was to always do what was best for children. She was a dedicated supporter of young people and had an enormous heart. I greatly admired her strength and tenacity. She always checked in with me to make sure I was doing ok, even when things aren’t always going ok. Our community will always owe Mrs. Kirsch a debt of gratitude for everything she did for our schools.”

In recognition of her meritorious service to the students and schools of Berkeley Heights and Mountainside, Mrs. Kirsch was honored as the 2015 *State Board Member of the Year* by the New Jersey School Boards Association.

The Berkeley Heights Public School District and Board of Education extend heartfelt condolences to the family and friends of our dear colleague Mrs. Helen Kirsch at this difficult time.