

**BERKELEY HEIGHTS BOARD OF EDUCATION  
COMBINED CONFERENCE, REGULAR  
AND ORGANIZATION MEETING  
MINUTES  
JANUARY 7, 2021**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Combined Conference, Regular and Organization Meeting of the Berkeley Heights Board of Education was called to order on Thursday, January 7, 2021 at 7:00 PM via the media platform Zoom by Mr. Reinstein.

**ROLL CALL**

A roll call indicated the presence of the following members:  
Mr. Hyman, Mrs. Young, Mr. Cianciulli, Mr. D'Aquila, Mrs. Penna, Ms. Reilly, Mrs. Kirsch and Mr. Reinstein. Also present were Dr. Varley, Mr. McKinney and Mrs. Felezzola.

**FLAG SALUTE**

Mr. Reinstein led the board and the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**STATEMENT**

On January 6, 2020, this body by resolution adopted the schedule for this meeting. The time, date and location of this meeting were accurately set forth therein.

On January 6, 2020, this notice was provided to all schools, all PTO Presidents, the BHEA President and posted at the Administration Building. On the same date a copy was emailed to the Public Library, TAP into Berkeley Heights, the Courier News and filed with the Municipal Clerk to file and post at Town Hall. The meeting will also be announced on the District Sign at Columbia School.

**ADMINISTER OATH OF OFFICE**

Mrs. Felezzola administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Hyman, Mrs. Young and Mr. Cianciulli.

**ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION**

It was moved by Mr. D'Aquila and seconded by Mrs. Penna that the Board of Education adjourn to Executive Session. Motion carried.

WHEREAS, the provisions of the Open Public Meetings Act (N.J.S.A.10:4-1 et seq.) expressly provide that a public body may move into Executive Session and exclude the public from that portion of a meeting at which the public body discusses any of the nine areas set forth in N.J.S.A.10:4-12b; and

**ADJOURN TO EXECUTIVE SESSION (continued)**

WHEREAS, the Berkeley Heights Board of Education has determined it necessary to move into Executive Session to discuss the following subjects, all of which are included in the aforesaid exceptions: Substitute/Supplemental Personnel, New/Modified Leave of Absence Requests, Retirement, Termination of Extra Teaching Period Assignments, Extra-Curricular Activities, Temporary Revision of Employment Contract, Salary Adjustments for Professional Growth, Revised/Extended Employment Contracts, Extra Teaching Period Assignment, Rescind Personnel Appointments, Appointment, Revised Employment Contract for Paraprofessional, Employment of Paraprofessional; Student Matters; Negotiations with BHAA.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Berkeley Heights Board of Education that it does hereby move into Executive Session pursuant to N.J.S.A.10:4-12b to discuss the aforesaid matters; and

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that the aforesaid discussions shall be made public on a quarterly basis or at such time as any litigated or personnel matters are concluded; or upon conclusion of any negotiations or related discussions; or as otherwise specified; and

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution shall take effect pursuant to law.

**RETURN TO PUBLIC SESSION**

It was moved by Mr. D'Aquila and seconded by Mrs. Penna the Board of Education return to Public Session.

**RESULTS OF ELECTION**

Mrs. Felezzola read the results of the School Board Election that was held in the Township on Tuesday, November 3, 2020:

Total Ballots Cast:

Joy Young	3,781
Robert Cianciulli	3,223
Sai Bhargavi Akiri	2,363
Ramya Kasthuri	1,920
Peter Cheng	1,446

**ELECTION OF BOARD PRESIDENT**

Mrs. Felezzola asked if there were any nominations for the position of President.

Ms. Reilly nominated Mr. Reinstein. Mrs. Penna seconded the nomination.

With no other nominations to be recorded, it was moved by Mr. D'Aquila and seconded by Ms. Reilly to close the nominations.

Vote:

Mr. Hyman Yes  
Mrs. Young Yes  
Mr. Cianciulli No  
Mr. D'Aquila Yes  
Mrs. Penna Yes  
Ms. Reilly Yes  
Mrs. Kirsch Yes  
Mr. Reinstein Yes

Mr. Reinstein was elected Board president. Mrs. Felezzola turned the meeting over to Mr. Reinstein. Mr. Reinstein thanked the board and added that he looks forward to leading the organization again this year.

**ELECTION OF BOARD VICE-PRESIDENT**

Mr. Reinstein asked if there were any nominations for the position of Vice President.

Mrs. Penna nominated Mr. D'Aquila. Ms. Reilly seconded the nomination.

With no other nominations to be recorded, it was moved by Mrs. Penna and seconded by Ms. Reilly to close the nominations.

Vote:

Mr. Hyman Yes  
Mrs. Young Yes  
Mr. Cianciulli Yes  
Mr. D'Aquila Yes  
Mrs. Penna Yes  
Ms. Reilly Yes  
Mrs. Kirsch Yes  
Mr. Reinstein Yes

Mr. Reinstein congratulated Mr. D'Aquila and added he looks forward to working with him and the board again this year. Mr. D'Aquila thanked everyone for their support.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

It was moved by Ms. Reilly and seconded by Mr. D’Aquila that the Board of Education approve the minutes of the Combined Conference and Regular Meetings held December 3, 2020, and December 21, 2020, and Special Meeting held on December 30, 2020.

YES: Mr. D’Aquila, Mrs. Penna, Ms. Reilly, Mrs. Kirsch, Mr. Reinstein

ABSTAIN: Mr. Hyman, Mrs. Young, Mr. Cianciulli

**CORRESPONDENCE**

The correspondence as listed on the agenda had been provided to the Board for their review and information:

- Email from Mr. and Mrs. E. Diaz; RE: BOE Meeting on December 21
- Email from Ms. A. Viswanath; RE: BOE Meeting on December 21
- Email from Mrs. J. Ringwood; RE: Current Challenges
- Email from Mrs. M. Taylor; RE: Petition-Have BHPS Share Action Plan
- Email from Mrs. L. Wasser-Berlin; RE: Letter for Scott McKinney

-OPRA Requests:

Date	Name	Request	Status
12/2/20	T. Macjiewski	Emails from 156 pages of email headers	Open
12/9/20	S. Adler	Pay rates and proposals for contracted therapists	Closed

Ms. Reilly asked about the OPRA requests, and urged residents to understand that correspondence they send to the Board or the Superintendent or any member of the school, can be requested. Mrs. Felezzola shared that information is redacted as necessary, and that when needed she reaches out to the district attorney. Information about students is redacted, as well as personnel information. If there is information the board is discussing and not finalized, it will also be redacted. Ms. Reilly stressed to the community that a phone call can often work as well as an email.

## **REPORT OF THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES**

Thomas Burke reported the following:

- In the week prior to winter break, clubs made the most of the last few days by hosting numerous events.
- FBLA members competed in the regional competitive events and experienced great success. Students placed first and third in the Securities and Investments exam and another placed second in the Business Law exam. The students will continue preparing for the state level competition in March.
- Student Auxiliary collected over 50 Care Packages for veterans and began sending Pen pal letters to seniors in town. Interact helped at the GLHS PTO clothing drive by collecting donated clothes.
- The Understanding Asian Cultures club co-hosted a meeting with the organization Dear Asian Youth Union County, where they discussed the steps students would like to see from the administration in response to the stories shared by previous GL students.
- Turning to events that have occurred following the break, the Spanish Club is preparing a video where students share their holiday traditions.
- SAGA is creating an online information resource for faculty, students and others can learn about the LGBTQ+ community or work to be a supportive ally. The club is also planning another round of lunch and learns to see if more teachers are interested in joining the newly formed Support Zone. Lastly, the club has created a form to collect members' input on GL's new gender neutral bathrooms and are meeting tomorrow to discuss this change.
- If the activity of the clubs in the new year is any indication of the future, the clubs will surely accomplish a lot.

Emily Haines reported the following:

- The Winter Sports Season at Governor Livingston High School will be starting in the upcoming weeks.
- The Highlander Ice Hockey is returning from a short break, and the GL Cheerleaders will start their season on Monday.
- Finally, the "third season" is being planned smoothly with the Highlander Indoor Track and Volleyball teams getting ready to compete during this newly-created season

## **REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

Dr. Varley then took a moment to acknowledge and welcome the new board members who are taking their seats tonight - Robert Cianciulli - who is rejoining the board, and Joy Young who is a first time BOE member. And Jordan Hyman, our new Mountainside Representative.

As January is Board Member Appreciation month in New Jersey, Dr. Varley took a moment to recognize the board members. Dr. Varley stated that board members are elected officials who do not receive payment for their involvement on the board of education. Many things occur behind the scenes before being brought to this table. This “job” is voluntary, and our board members attend at least one meeting at night and many more during the day, taking time out of their busy lives and away from their families. Their jobs are not easy and they work hard to help make this district better than ever.

Dr. Varley read the following resolution:

WHEREAS, The New Jersey School Boards Association has declared January 2021 to be School Board Recognition Month, a time when all residents can acknowledge the contributions made by our local school board members; and

WHEREAS, The Berkeley Heights Board of Education is one of 580 local school boards in New Jersey, which sets policies and oversees operations for public school districts; and

WHEREAS, The Berkeley Heights Board of Education embraces the goal of high-quality education for all New Jersey public school students; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey’s local school boards help determine the educational goals for approximately 1.4 million children in pre-kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> grade; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey’s 5,000 local school board members, who receive no remuneration for their services, act as advocates for public school students as they work with administrators, teachers and parents for the betterment of public education; and

WHEREAS, School boards strive to provide the resources necessary to meet the needs of all students, including those with special needs; and

WHEREAS, Boards of education provide accountability to the public; they communicate the needs of the school district to the public; and they convey to school administrators the public’s expectations for the schools; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey can take pride in its schools, which rank among the nation’s best in key achievement indicators such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress scores, and the preparation for college through advanced placement offerings and SAT assessments; Now, therefore, be it

## **REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT (continued)**

RESOLVED, That the Berkeley Heights Board of Education, does hereby recognize the services of local school board members throughout New Jersey as we join communities statewide in observing January 2021 as School Board Recognition Month; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Berkeley Heights Board of Education urges all New Jersey citizens to work with their local boards of education and public school staffs toward the advancement of our children's education.

Dr. Varley welcomed everyone to the first meeting of 2021. She knows everyone is hoping that we are in the home stretch of the Pandemic and expressed that we will be on our way back to normal very soon

The Diversity Equity and Inclusion Task Force is being formed. We have enough parent volunteers, and after this morning's email, we seem to have enough teachers, current students, and former students who would be interested in getting involved and volunteering their time and perspectives. The committee will be guided by Marc Strachan, the consultant who led the District DEI implicit bias training at the start of the school year.

As an update on the status of the investigation regarding the recent Instagram posts discussed at the December 21st BOE meeting. By law, HIB incidents reported by current students must be investigated by the district's Anti-Bullying Specialists. Incidents that were reported by former students will be investigated by Cleary, Giacobbe, Alfieri and Jacobs, who specialize in education law. We are using an outside attorney to be transparent as possible. As of today, we have approximately 45 current and former students who spoke, posted, or both. There were many individuals who could not be identified. If a student wishes to report an allegation they may do so through the [district anonymous reporting system](#). If a former student has an allegation or a grievance they may use our attorney's email address to report it: [BHFormerStudents@cgajlaw.com](mailto:BHFormerStudents@cgajlaw.com). Once the investigations are complete we will determine our next steps.

By January 25th, there will be two dedicated Gender Neutral Bathrooms at GLHS. This project has been in the works for some time, and I apologize that it was not up and running at the start of the school year. Unfortunately, it was one of the items that was delayed by the pandemic.

The District has been working very closely with the Berkeley Heights Diversity Council and have announced that they will be holding an on-line celebration and day of service in honor of Dr Martin Luther King Jr. Dr. Varley encourages everyone to be involved. Information is available on their website <https://www.bhdiversity.org>.

## **REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT (continued)**

### **Discussion concerning 2020-2021 Winter Sports Programs.**

The winter sports season is upon us! The start of the Ice Hockey season was delayed by covid cases on our team from students in a partnering district but they should be skating by January 15th. The Highlander Basketball and Fencing teams open the season on January 26th. Season 2A (Swimming, Indoor Track and Field will begin on 2/16) or Season 3 (Volleyball and Wrestling) should begin on 3/16. Cheerleaders will cheer but they are only participating in the halftime show and will be competing virtually. We will be having a limited Middle School Sports schedule but it will not include any games against teams from outside the district.

We understand that having a sports season is an increased risk for students and coaches. However, the district also has a responsibility to educate the whole child and we believe that athletic competition is an important part of that mission. Building on the lessons learned from a successful Fall season, we believe that committing to a Winter Sports Season that follows all NJSIAA guidelines and health and safety protocols is an acceptable level of risk that is in the overall best interests of our students. If at any point we feel that the calculated risk is not worth the overall benefit, then we will revisit this decision. Parents and students should also be aware that by participating in sports, they are increasing their exposure and may need to quarantine due to increasing their potential exposures.

Dr. Varley reminds everyone that, although the light is at the end of the pandemic tunnel, we must continue to be vigilant and stay disciplined with our mask wearing and social distancing. She wants to remind parents that they must inform their schools if their student tests positive for Covid and not rely on the Department of Health to inform us. The DOH has many cases it is dealing with and our notification might be delayed. We are all tired of the pandemic and its restrictions, but we also know that the results of letting our guard down can be devastating. If we all buckle down, we will get through this together.

Mrs. Young has asked if there is a change in interest in fielding teams. Ms. Clifton said we are comparable to last season.

Ms. Reilly commented that these students will be playing with no mask, after visiting other communities, and then back into the buildings. Will they be remote while playing sports? Ms. Clifton responded that NJSIAA protocols state facemasks must be worn until strenuous exercise is not safe any longer. If an athlete wants to wear a mask, they may do so. Referees and coaches and everyone else involved with games will have a mask on at all times. Student athletes will have face masks on at all times until cardio rates make it unsafe.

Mrs. Penna asked which sports were starting for the winter and Ms. Clifton went through the schedule. Remote learning is not required; we cannot force parents to make their child remote. Mr. Hyman asked about spectators at games, and Ms. Clifton said there will be no spectators, but we are working on live feeds. Home swim meets will be virtual meets, no visitor teams will be together, meets will be held and scores shared with competing teams.

## **REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT (continued)**

Mrs. Kirsch asked if the students will be following health protocols. Ms. Clifton responded that they are creating spaces where the athletes will be safe and following protocol. Cheerleaders will be participating in the games during halftime

Mrs. Penna asked if surrounding districts were having fall sports. Ms. Clifton said yes, at this point they are.

Mr. D'Aquila asked about cleaning protocols. Mrs. Felezzola responded that the custodians are following all protocols to clean the gyms at the end of the day ready for the next day of school. Equipment will be sprayed down as was done during the fall.

Mrs. Young asked about transportation. Ms. Clifton said rides will be colder with windows open, and there will be no eating or drinking on the bus. There will be twenty passengers on the bus, including the coach, as was done in the fall.

Mr. Reinstein thanked Ms. Clifton for all of the work pulling the season together.

Ms. Reilly asked about the Diversity task force, how it will be different from the committees. Dr. Varley responded that the committees are working on changing curriculum, and holding celebrations. The task force will be looking at metrics, how do we know we are successful, how do we get there. Ms. Reilly asked who is on the committees in each building so that the board can show support.

## **LIAISON REPORTS**

Ms. Reilly reported that she is on the Mayor's Advisory Council on Truth, Racial Healing and Transformation, and at the December meeting, there was a guest speaker from the Union County Superintendent's office. She reviewed what is going on at county level specifically relating to training opportunities for administrators and teachers on relating to the LGBTQ communities.

Mrs. Kirsch reported that New Jersey School Boards Association announced this is school board recognition month. Their website has great information. The county meeting is on January 13 and is open to all board members.

Ed Services is remote until January 19, and this has been going very well. The distribution of masks by the State police is complete.

The environmental commission has given their report to the township committee so they can apply for the Sustainable Jersey award. They continue to work on the Watershed, and the TREX program.

## **FACILITIES REPORT**

Mrs. Felezzola reported that the custodians and maintenance staff are using this time, with the students being remote, to catch up on building maintenance projects. They are doing preventative maintenance on equipment, exit lights have been replaced, roof top fans replaced and repaired, plumbing repairs have been made in the schools, and painting projects have been initiated. The ceiling in the CMS multipurpose room was replaced and LED lighting installed, and the staff is now working on sanding and painting the stage floor.

## **CITIZENS HEARING**

Mr. Reinstein opened the citizens hearing, asking each speaker to state their first and last name, and for each person to ask all of their questions at once. He stated that the board recognizes students and staff rights to privacy, and encourages members of the public to address their concerns regarding students and staff members by meeting with the appropriate administrator. When addressing the board, the public should refrain from identifying any student or staff member by name, as they are solely responsible for their comments which may be considered inflammatory or slanderous according to the state laws of New Jersey.

Additionally, Mr. Reinstein reminded residents that they will be allowed three minutes to speak.

Mrs. Wendi Goldstein, Berkeley Heights and teacher of Spanish at Woodruff and Mountain Park schools, travels from room to room in each school and sees a few hundred students each week. She follows all protocols, but the students are not always wearing their masks properly. Everyone is working to keep staff safe, but she is concerned about Plan A. Safe distancing is not possible. We have the highest rate of COVID today, it is not time to bring all students back to school. She asked to delay Plan A.

Mr. Michael LeBlond, Berkeley Heights, is concerned about the lack of limits on the costs of the investigations, and asked that there be a limit on costs. Dr. Varley responded that she has asked the attorney for regular updates with costs; in districts with similar situations, costs were not exorbitant, but we want to ensure resolution and a solid investigation.

Mrs. Mary Niedenuhr, West Orange, and librarian at Woodruff and Hughes schools, works with over 400 students and thirty staff members. Plan A is unsafe; we can't be socially distant. She invited board members into the classrooms.

Mrs. Ramya Kasthuri, Berkeley Heights, asked about the process of reporting incidents from former students. She asked under what state or federal laws the investigation will take place? Are they the same HIB laws we currently have or a different set? She asked for clarification on who the client will be, she is assuming the district. Will the district get attorney/client privilege, and how will the attorney guarantee they will stay confidential? Will they sign confidentiality agreements? What about conflict of interest? Dr. Varley responded she does not have all the answers. The attorney will send a letter to the former students, who are all adults now, and it is then up to the former student to respond. They will then proceed to discuss what occurred and try to find corroboration-does the former student have witnesses they would like to share with the attorney. Then the attorney would meet with the district. The attorney may then gather information from the district that counteracts the information. The attorney would then write a report for the board, and it would be up to the board to take necessary action against the employee. If it is between two, now adult, former students, it will be between those former students to discuss. Mrs. Kasthuri asked if she could email Dr. Varley other questions that she could get answers for.

Mrs. Emily Ramos, Berkeley Heights, commented on the task force vs diversity committee, what is the distinction. It is important that we have clearly defined goals and objectives.

Mrs. Stacey Saravay, Warren, and teacher at Mountain Park School, asked about a question that was asked earlier, has the board asked for any advice from medical professionals before moving to Plan A, especially with the new strain. Dr. Varley said the Department of Health has approved Plan A. Surrounding towns, New Providence, Summit, Chatham and Mountainside, have been on Plan A since September. It appears that the outbreaks are not at the elementary levels.

Mrs. Mary Ellen Taylor, Berkeley Heights, spoke about her family situation which is well documented in the district. She is concerned about the rights of the young adults. The attorney hired by the district does not represent the student. She contacted the Attorney General's office and the Prosecutor's office and feels they should investigate these matters. There is discrimination against the disabled. Her daughter's identity was made public to punish her family. The board shuts people down.

Mr. Reinstein responded that the board gives everyone a chance to speak at board meetings, and people can always reach out to board members via email.

Mr. Dan McGovern, Bridgewater, teacher at GLHS and President of the BHEA, commented that the board should consider the health and safety of all staff and students. The data shows that the number of cases is increasing. The district should wait for the vaccine before moving to Plan A.

Ms. Stephaine Spano, Wharton, music teacher at MKM, Mountain Park, Woodruff and Hughes school, is concerned about the schools moving to Plan A. The number of COVID cases are increasing. She asked Dr. Varley if she is willing to meet with the special area teachers to discuss options. Dr. Varley responded that she would meet with them.

Ms. Ursula Engel, Bridgewater, teacher of Spanish at GLHS and co-advisor of SAGA. She stated that she is concerned with reopening schools, and moving to Plan A. Parents are not properly completing forms or following the rules. The schools are not safe for staff, we need to take heed and learn from the past.

Mr. Shaun Procaccini, Berkeley Heights, asked what are the plans for diversifying the administration and staff, and would like confirmation that the district will spare no expense and do whatever is necessary to change the culture of our schools. Dr. Varley responded that we have partnered with CJ Pride, who works to bring diverse staff in schools. We have also partnered with Teacher's College at Columbia University. She reiterated that change takes time, and that we are committed to the process. People should not be treated unfairly because they are perceived to be different. Mr. Reinstein added that we will not spare any expense, we will be transparent, we will follow this through to the end. It is a long term cultural fix.

Miss Olga Brazhnikova, a current student at GLHS, posted about this meeting in her social media post. She said many responded to her post that they are concerned about moving to Plan A. They are worried about physical health and social distancing is difficult.

Mrs. Denise Pianotchka, Berkeley Heights and paraprofessional in the district, has been in the district for over 17 years. She has a diverse background, and she has never felt uncomfortable in the town. We need to move forward and help those who do not feel comfortable.

Mrs. Gale Bradford, Berkeley Heights and teacher at Hughes School, is an alumni of the Berkeley Heights Schools and has been working in the district for 21 years. She is concerned with going to Plan A, the barriers are not appropriate, there is not enough social distancing, masks break cause students to gather together. She is requesting that the district remain on Plan B.

Mr. Joseph Miceli, Union, and math teacher at GLHS, is also the Musical Director in the theater department, commented that the fall play was cancelled and his stipend was rescinded, and he was not properly notified. He has reached out to former theater students, and they have shared that this program, and the music and arts programs, saved them. We let down this year's current students. He and Mrs. Talarico are both willing to make something work for the current students. He is imploring that this goes through. He also believes that Plan A is not safe for anyone, and does not feel that Plan B is safe either. He has been quarantined twice. The new strain is more communicable.

Mrs. Marissa Christine, Berkeley Heights, is relatively new to the community and her children are just starting in the district. She commends the board for creating the task force. She has spoken with other new families, they feel they are not fully invested and wonder if this is the best place for them to raise their children. She was very concerned about the comments from the students at the previous meeting. Mr. Reinstein stressed that addressing this is the boards' highest priority.

Mrs. Tanya Facey, Berkeley Heights, shared that she is glad that some people have not experienced bias and discrimination but added it does exist, and we cannot ignore those individuals who it has affected. It is long term, and impacts a child's psyche. We cannot just move on; we need to address it as a community. We have an obligation to address this, it is a cultural change.

Mr. Steve Seibelts, Bedminster, a school social worker at GLHS, was speaking on behalf of his wife Rebecca, who was exposed in her classroom at CMS. The administration and co-workers at both schools have been very supportive. Mrs. Seibelts has been very ill from COVID, it has been very challenging for their family. The school nurses have been very helpful. They are fearful that someone will get very sick and are recommending to delay Plan A and to consider going remote. Mr. Reinstein acknowledged what they have gone through as a family, and wished a speedy recovery for Mrs. Seibelts, and is encouraged by the compassion of the community and the staff.

Mrs. Karima Bryant, Berkeley Heights, is concerned with the move to Plan A. Regarding the student complaints about racial injustice and discrimination, we must hold people accountable for bad behavior, and that we clearly outline consequences.

Mr. Reinstein commented that while the administration and board members may not always comment, they are listening. We receive emails and phone calls and use all the input to make decisions. We also speak with experts regarding health statistics and the current situation.

Mrs. Dawn Phillips, Berkeley Heights, has a kindergarten student and second grade student. She is concerned about kindergarten and the amount of school time they receive. Full day has been together every day at school. Her child had seven days in school in November, she has not counted for December, and will have five days in January. What is the plan for kindergarten to not be a lost year? What will the board do to help the teachers keep the children and staff safe when so many teachers have spoken that it is not safe. Dr. Varley replied that AM kindergarten has been altered by Monday holidays, we are looking at changing the schedule to give them more time. Mrs. Phillips added that the full day kindergarten is in school so much more. Dr. Varley continued that it is a struggle with half-day programs, but they are working on making it work. Regarding the elementary schools, Dr. Varley said that the principals have worked with the custodians to have the barriers stabilized. Dr. Varley will address with each of the schools the students who are huddling together and not social distancing.

Mrs. Nancy Dasti, Berkeley Heights, asked about the filtration systems on the bus. Cold weather is coming up, and longer rides with sports. Are we keeping the windows open on 15 degree days? Is that the filtration system? Mrs. Felezzola responded that the windows are open, the routes are about 30 minutes, and we are trying to keep them as short as possible. Mrs. Felezzola said she will get back to her about the filtration system.

Mr. Jeromy Marx, Somerville, and a teacher at CMS, commented that information is constantly changing and evolving regarding COVID. He feels that the dividers can cause more harm as the germs build up in the divider and they restrict air flow. He is concerned that we are not doing what we need to. It is not just our district; it is a global issue.

Mr. Reinstein closed the citizens hearing clarifying that the elementary schools are the only ones who will be on Plan A; the middle school will remain on Plan B, and the high school will remain remote until January 25, at which point they will remain on Plan B.

**ADOPTION OF CODE OF ETHICS** It was moved by Mrs. Kirsch and seconded by Ms. Reilly that the Board of Education adopt the following code of ethics:

- a. I will uphold and enforce all laws, rules and regulations of the State Board of Education, and court orders pertaining to schools. Desired changes shall be brought about only through legal and ethical procedures.
- b. I will make decisions in terms of the educational welfare of children and will seek to develop and maintain public schools that meet the individual needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex, or social standing.
- c. I will confine my board action to policy making, planning, and appraisal, and I will help to frame policies and plans only after the board has consulted those who will be affected by them.
- d. I will carry out my responsibility, not to administer the schools, but, together with my fellow board members, to see that they are well run.
- e. I will recognize that authority rests with the board of education and will make no personal promises nor take any private action that may compromise the board.
- f. I will refuse to surrender my independent judgment to special interest or partisan political groups or to use the schools for personal gain or for the gain of friends.
- g. I will hold confidential all matters pertaining to the schools which, if disclosed, would needlessly injure individuals or the schools. In all other matters, I will provide accurate information and, in concert with my fellow board members, interpret to the staff the aspirations of the community for its school.
- h. I will vote to appoint the best qualified personnel available after consideration of the recommendation of the chief administrative officer.
- i. I will support and protect school personnel in proper performance of their duties.
- j. I will refer all complaints to the chief administrative officer and will act on the complaints at public meetings only after failure of an administrative solution.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that each Board Member shall sign documentation that he/she received a copy of the Code of Ethics and has read and understood it.  
A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

## **MEETING DATES**

It was moved by Mr. Cianciulli and seconded by Mrs. Young that the following meeting dates be established:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Location*</b>	<b>Executive Session</b>	<b>Public Session</b>
February 4, 2021	Combined Conference & Regular Meeting	Via Zoom	7:00 PM	7:30 PM
February 25, 2021	Combined Conference & Regular Meeting	Via Zoom	7:00 PM	7:30 PM
March 18, 2021	Combined Conference & Regular Meeting & Public Meeting to Adopt Tentative Budget	Via Zoom	7:00 PM	7:30 PM
April 8, 2021	Combined Conference & Regular Meeting	Via Zoom	7:00 PM	7:30 PM
April 29, 2021	Combined Conference/ Regular Meeting & Public Meeting to Adopt Budget	Via Zoom	7:00 PM	7:30 PM
May 13, 2021	Combined Conference & Regular Meeting	Via Zoom	6:30 PM (7:30 PM Educator of the Year/Retiree Reception)	7:30 PM
June 10, 2021	Combined Conference & Regular Meeting	Via Zoom	6:30 PM (7:30 PM Student Awards)	7:30 PM
June 24, 2021	Combined Conference and Regular Meeting	Via Zoom	7:00 PM	7:30 PM

August 12, 2021	Combined Conference & Regular Meeting	Via Zoom	7:00 PM	7:30 PM
September 9, 2021	Combined Conference & Regular Meeting	Columbia Middle School Vocal Music Room	7:00 PM	7:30 PM
September 23, 2021	Combined Conference & Regular Meeting	Columbia Middle School Multipurpose Room	7:00 PM	7:30 PM
October 14, 2021	Combined Conference & Regular Meeting	Columbia Middle School Multipurpose Room	7:00 PM	7:30 PM
November 11, 2021	Combined Conference & Regular Meeting	Columbia Middle School Multipurpose Room	7:00 PM	7:30 PM
December 9, 2021	Combined Conference & Regular Meeting	Columbia Middle School Multipurpose Room	7:00 PM	7:30 PM
January 6, 2022	Combined Conference & Regular Meeting & Organization Meeting	Columbia Middle School Multipurpose Room	7:00 PM	7:30 PM

\*Tentatively, meetings will be held via Zoom through the end of the school year. If circumstances change and it is possible to have in-person meetings, meeting locations will be announced and advertised.

The group changed the second June meeting date to June 24th.  
A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

## ADMINISTRATION

### Items A-F: All Board members. Item G: Berkeley Heights only.

- A. APPROVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DAYS/TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT** It was moved by Mr. Hyman and seconded by Mr. D'Aquila that the Board approve professional development days and travel reimbursement for district staff members, as indicated on Attachment A.  
A roll call indicated unanimous approval.
- B. APPROVE REPORT OF SUPERINTENDENT** It was moved by Mr. Hyman and seconded by Mr. D'Aquila that the Board approve the report of the Superintendent regarding all acts of harassment, intimidation, and bullying in the Berkeley Heights Public Schools from November 12, 2020, through December 3, 2020.  
A roll call indicated unanimous approval.
- C. APPROVE SUBMISSION OF 2019-2020 SCHOOL NURSING SERVICES PLANS**  
It was moved by Mr. Hyman and seconded by Mr. D'Aquila that the Board approve the submission of the School Nursing Services Plans for the 2019-2020 school year from all six schools in the Berkeley Heights School District to the New Jersey Department of Education. Copies of these documents are on file with the Superintendent of Schools.  
A roll call indicated unanimous approval.
- D. APPROVE SCHOOL DATA MANAGEMENT MANUAL** It was moved by Mr. Hyman and seconded by Mr. D'Aquila that the Board approve the School Data Management Manual of the Berkeley Heights Public Schools for the 2020-2021 fiscal year, as maintained by the school district's Data Analyst.  
A roll call indicated unanimous approval.
- E. APPROVE REVISED TENTATIVE WINTER 2020-2021 ATHLETICS SCHEDULES** It was moved by Mr. Hyman and seconded by Mr. D'Aquila that the Board approve the revised tentative 2020-2021 Winter Season schedules for interscholastic athletics teams representing Governor Livingston High School, a copy of which is on file with the Superintendent.  
YES: Mr. Hyman, Mrs. Young, Mr. Cianciulli, Mr. D'Aquila, Ms. Reilly, Mrs. Kirsch, Mr. Reinstein  
NO: Mrs. Penna

**F. APPROVE SUBMISSION OF ESEA AMENDED GRANT APPLICATION** It was moved by Mr. Hyman and seconded by Mr. D’Aquila that the Board approve the submission of the Amended Fiscal Year 2021 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) grant application in the amount of \$130,882.00 to the New Jersey Department of Education, as follows:

	<u>Original</u>	<u>Carryover</u>	<u>Final</u>
Title I	-	\$33,862.00	\$33,862.00
Title IIA	\$26,118.00	\$ 5,429.00	\$31,547.00
Title III	\$27,547.00 #	\$21,963.00 #	\$49,510.00 #
Title IV	\$10,000.00	\$ 5,963.00	\$15,963.00

Funds received through this grant program will cover the cost of enhanced instruction for at-risk students, professional development efforts for district staff members, and supplies, materials and programs for emerging district initiatives.

# Total funds allocated to Title III consortium, which consists of three school districts (including Berkeley Heights) and one charter school.

Explanatory Note: The amendment for the ESEA grant application is to allow for a carryover of unexpended funds from 2019-2020. The submission of the original Fiscal Year 2021 ESEA grant application was approved by the Board of Education at its meeting on June 30, 2020.

A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

**G. APPROVE RECOMMENDATION FOR MODIFIED MIDDLE SCHOOL WINTER SPORTS SEASON** It was moved by Mr. Hyman and seconded by Mr. D’Aquila that the Board approve the proposal for a modified Columbia Middle School 2021 Winter Sports Season, a copy of which is on file with the Superintendent. A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

**EDUCATION**

**Items A: All Board members. Item B: Berkeley Heights only.**

**A. APPROVE NEW COURSES** It was moved by Mrs. Penna and seconded by Mrs. Kirsch that the Board approve the following new courses to be offered in the Berkeley Heights Public Schools starting in the 2021-2022 school year:

- Governor Livingston High School:
- Race and America in the 21st Century \_\_\_\_\_
- Roots and Rhythm: The History of Rap and Hip Hop Lyrics

Information on these proposed new courses can be found on Attachment B. A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

**B. APPROVE AGREEMENT FOR SPEECH-LANGUAGE SERVICES**

It was moved by Mrs. Penna and seconded by Mrs. Kirsch that the Board approve the Agreement with the Morris-Union Jointure Commission (MUJC) to provide Speech-Language Therapy services to students at Mary Kay McMillin Early Childhood Center for three days per week from December 10, 2020, through January 15, 2021, when school is in session, at the cost of \$920.00 per day.

Explanatory Note: There is a temporary need to contract for these services while the school’s regular Speech-Language Specialist is out on a medical leave of absence and prior to the employment of a full-time substitute/replacement Speech-Language Specialist.

A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

**PERSONNEL**

**Items A-H: All Board members. Items I-M: Berkeley Heights only.**

**A. APPROVE SUBSTITUTE/SUPPLEMENTAL PERSONNEL** It was moved by Ms. Reilly and seconded by Mr. Cianciulli that the Board approve the employment of the following substitute/supplemental personnel for the 2020-2021 school year:

Teachers/Paraprofessionals  
Apicella, Christina  
Springfield, NJ

Burke, Tara  
Chatham, NJ

Calleo, Gina  
Gillette, NJ

Gaiimo, Dennis  
Gillette, NJ

Hart, Margaret  
Chatham, NJ

Hemming, Alea  
Wayne, NJ

Javed, Farkhunda  
Berkeley Heights, NJ

Teachers/Paraprofessionals  
Sathe, Meghana  
Berkeley Heights, NJ

Home Instructors  
Ong, Hengtol  
Riverdale, NJ

Pariyacheri, Bindu  
Berkeley Heights, NJ

Paraprofessional  
Nardi, Gianna  
Basking Ridge, NJ

A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

**B. APPROVE NEW/MODIFIED LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUESTS** It was moved by Ms. Reilly and seconded by Mr. Cianciulli that the Board approve new and modified leave of absence requests from district staff members during the 2020-2021 school year, as listed on revised Attachment C.  
A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

**C. RETIREMENT OF ROBERT SEGGEAR** It was moved by Ms. Reilly and seconded by Mr. Cianciulli that the Board accept the retirement of Robert Segear from his position as Student Assistance Counselor at Governor Livingston High School and Columbia Middle School, effective February 28, 2021.  
A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

**D. APPROVE TERMINATION OF EXTRA TEACHING ASSIGNMENTS** It was moved by Ms. Reilly and seconded by Mr. Cianciulli that the Board approve the termination of the extra teaching period assignments for Jeanmarie Ciarrocca, Angela Lengner, Lindsay Mirabella, Wendy Richards and Christine Talarico, Teachers of English at Governor Livingston High School, effective January 1, 2021.

Explanatory Note: These assignments were approved by the Board of Education at its meeting on September 10, 2020. Due to the recent return of a staff member from a leave of absence, these class assignments can now be covered by a single full-time teacher.  
A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

**E. APPROVE EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES** It was moved by Ms. Reilly and seconded by Mr. Cianciulli that the Board approve extra-curricular activities, staff members and assignments for the 2020-2021 school year, as listed below:

<u>Governor Livingston High School</u>		<u>2020-2021</u>
<u>Activity/Position</u>	<u>Instructor/Supervisor</u>	<u>Stipend</u>
Assistant Ice Hockey Coach	Ryan Daly #	Volunteer
Assistant Ice Hockey Coach	Travis DiLello	Volunteer

# Supersedes appointment as Assistant Ice Hockey Coach (paid position), approved by the Board of Education on June 30, 2020.

A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

**F. APPROVE TEMPORARY REVISION OF EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT** It was moved by Ms. Reilly and seconded by Mr. Cianciulli that the Board approve a temporary revision to the employment contract of the following staff member during the 2020-2021 fiscal year, as indicated:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Current 2020-2021 Contract</u>	<u>Temporary Revised 2020-2021 Contract</u>
Lisa Wiater	Secretary	Full-Time	50% of Full Time
	DistrictAnnual Salary of Supervisors Office	\$47,973.00	Annual Salary of \$23,986.50 (Effective 1/19/2021-5/4/2021)

A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

**G. APPROVE SALARY ADJUSTMENTS FOR PROFESSIONAL GROWTH** It was moved by Ms. Reilly and seconded by Mr. Cianciulli that the Board approve the salary adjustments listed on Attachment D for the 2020-2021 school year, effective February 1, 2021, based on the professional growth of the employee.

A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

**H. APPROVE REVISED/EXTENDED EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS** It was moved by Ms. Reilly and seconded by Mr. Cianciulli that the Board approve revised/extended employment contracts for the following substitute/replacement teachers for the 2020-2021 school year, as indicated:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/ School</u>	<u>Current 2020-2021 Contract</u>	<u>Revised/ Extended 2020-2021 Contract</u>
Domenic Croce	Teacher of Music Governor Livingston H.S.	9/1/2020- 1/4/2021	9/1/2020- 2/1/2021
David Hay	Teacher of Social Studies Columbia Middle School	9/1/2020- 1/4/2021	9/1/2020- 4/5/2021
Bailey Krasovec	Teacher of English Columbia Middle School	9/1/2020- 1/4/2021	9/1/2020- 2/1/2021

Explanatory Note: All three of these staff members are currently replacing permanent employees who have requested extensions of their respective leaves of absence.

A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

- I. APPROVE EXTRA TEACHING PERIOD ASSIGNMENT** It was moved by Ms. Reilly and seconded by Mr. Cianciulli that the Board approve the following district staff member to teach an additional class, beyond her normal teaching schedule, during the 2020-2021 school year as listed below, effective February 1, 2021:

<u>Columbia Middle School</u>			<u>Payment in Addition to Regular Salary</u>
<u>Name</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Assignment</u>	
Lydia Kang	Mathematics	Full	\$10,500.00 (Prorated 2/1/2021-6/30/2021)

A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

- J. RESCIND PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS** It was moved by Ms. Reilly and seconded by Mr. Cianciulli that the Board rescind the following personnel appointments which had been approved by the Board of Education:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Board Approval Date</u>
Kim McLeod	William Woodruff School Writing Club Advisor	September 24, 2020
Karen Porzio	Thomas P. Hughes School ST Math Advisor	September 24, 2020
Jennifer Scharf	Thomas P. Hughes School HELP Teacher	December 3, 2020

Explanatory Note: Mrs. McLeod and Mrs. Porzio had been appointed to advise clubs that will not function in their respective schools this academic year. Mrs. Scharf has declined the offer of employment made to her.

A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

**K. HIRING ELIZABETH DI GIOVANNI** It was moved by Ms. Reilly and seconded by Mr. Cianciulli that the Board approve the employment of Elizabeth DiGiovanni of Staten Island, New York, as a Substitute/Replacement Speech-Language Specialist in the Berkeley Heights Public Schools for the 2020-2021 school year, effective January 19, 2021, through April 5, 2021.

Ms. Di Giovanni earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Education and Environmental Studies and her Master of Science Degree in Speech Language Pathology, both from Seton Hall University. She has one-half year of experience as a Speech-Language Specialist. Her salary will be \$63,492.00 (prorated from January 19, 2021, to April 5, 2021), Step 1c on the 2020-2021 Teachers salary schedule.

Assignment: Mary Kay McMillin Early Childhood Center -  
Speech-Language Specialist (Substitute/Replacement).

Certification: Standard Certificate - Speech-Language Specialist; Certificates of Eligibility with Advanced Standing - Elementary School Teacher in Grades K-6, Teacher of Students with Disabilities.

Explanatory Note: Ms. DiGiovanni is being recommended to replace a staff member who is out on a medical leave of absence.

A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

**L. APPROVE REVISED EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT FOR PARAPROFESSIONAL** It was moved by Ms. Reilly and seconded by Mr. Cianciulli that the Board approve the revised employment contract for the 2020-2021 school year for the following Paraprofessional, as indicated, effective January 25, 2021, through June 30, 2021:

<u>Name</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Current 2020-2021 Contract</u>	<u>Revised 2020-2021 Contract</u>
Gianna Izzi	McMillin ECC	6.75 hours per day 5 days per week \$16.69 per hour Annualized salary of \$20,616.32	6.75 hours per day 3 days per week \$16.69 per hour Annualized salary of \$12,369.79 (prorated)

Explanatory Note: The Board of Education approved Ms. Izzi's initial employment at its meeting on October 8, 2020.

A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

**M. APPROVE EMPLOYMENT OF PARAPROFESSIONAL** It was moved by Ms. Reilly and seconded by Mr. Cianciulli that the Board approve the employment of the following Paraprofessional in the Berkeley Heights Public Schools for the 2020-2021 school year, as indicated:

<u>Name (School)</u>	<u>Effective Dates</u>	<u>Hourly Pay Rate</u>	<u>Hours Per Day</u>	<u>Annualized Salary</u>
Antonino Passalacqua (McMillin ECC)	1/25/2021- 6/30/2021	\$16.69	6.75 (2 days per week)	\$8,246.53 (prorated)

Explanatory Note: Mr. Passalacqua is being recommended to cover the work schedule which is being reduced from another Paraprofessional’s employment contract (Personnel Item L).

A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

**BUSINESS**

**Items A-C: All Board members.**

**A. ACCEPT STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE** It was moved by Mrs. Young and seconded by Mr. Hyman that the Board of Education accept the Health and Safety Evaluation of School Buildings Checklist Statement of Assurance for the School Year 2020-2021.

Explanatory Note: The Berkeley Heights Board of Education is required to organize and conduct a health and safety evaluation checklist of each facility used for educational purposes, as per N.J.A.C 6A:26.

A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

**B. APPROVE TRANSPORTATION CONTRACTS** It was moved by Mrs. Young and seconded by Mr. Hyman that the Board of Education approved the 2020-2021 regular school year transportation agreements with the Morris-Union Jointure Commission for the routes as follows:

<b>Route #</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Aide Per Diem</b>
914	46,710.25	-0-
911	69,330.72	-0-
946	52,578.67	-0-

A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

- C. APPROVE REVISED LEASE AGREEMENT FOR SWIMMING POOL USE** It was moved by Mrs. Young and seconded by Mr. Hyman that the Board of Education approve the revised 2020-2021 Lease Agreement with the Morris-Union Jointure Commission for use of the swimming facilities at the Developmental Learning Center by the Governor Livingston High School swim teams in the amount of \$4,662.50.  
Explanatory Note: This amount has been adjusted for the shortened athletic season per COVID guidelines.  
 A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

**FINANCE**

**Items A: All Board members. Items B-D: Berkeley Heights only.**

- A. PAYMENT OF BILLS** It was moved by Ms. Reilly and seconded by Mrs. Penna that the Board of Education approve for payment the bills as listed on the bill lists as follows:

<b>Payroll</b>	<b>12/15/2020</b>	<b>\$2,217,895.66</b>
	<b>12/23/2020</b>	<b>1,700,970.74</b>
<b>Accounts Payable</b>	<b>12/9/2020</b>	<b>\$ (475.00)</b>
	<b>1/7/2021</b>	<b>783,253.63</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$4,701,645.03</b>

A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

- B. APPROVAL OF BOARD SECRETARY’S REPORT** It was moved by Ms. Reilly and seconded by Mrs. Penna that the Board of Education, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.3, certifies that as of November 2020 after review of the Board Secretary’s monthly financial report (appropriations section) and upon consultation with appropriate district officials, to the best of our knowledge no major account or fund has been over expended in violation of N.J.A.C. 6A:23A-2.3, and sufficient funds are available to meet the district’s financial obligations for the remainder of the year.  
 A roll call indicated unanimous approval.
- C. APPROVAL OF TRANSFERS** It was moved by Ms. Reilly and seconded by Mrs. Penna that the Board of Education authorize transfers for November 2020.  
 A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

**D. APPROVAL OF TREASURER'S REPORT** It was moved by Ms. Reilly and seconded by Mrs. Penna that the Board of Education accept the revised post audit financial reports of the Board Secretary, the Treasurer of School Funds Report for the months ended June 2020 through October 2020, and the financial reports of the Board Secretary, the Treasurer of School Funds Report for the month ending November 2020. A roll call indicated unanimous approval.

### **OTHER BUSINESS**

Ms. Reilly asked about the Civics elective at CMS. Has a class been added at GLHS to give students an appreciation for how the government works? Mr. McKinney added that we are looking to build the course at the middle school, and it will be integrated at the high school once we review the state guidelines.

Mr. Cianciulli asked about the vaccine, since only age 16 and older can register on the state website. What are we going to do for the students when there is no approved vaccine? Dr. Varley replied that there is a small group of students who do not vaccinate for certain reasons. We will have students who will opt out of the COVID vaccine. We know that at this point it is not approved for children under 12.

Mr. Reinstein noted that he will be developing the committee list and it will be on the next agenda.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

It was moved by Mr. D'Aquila and seconded by Mrs. Penna that the meeting be adjourned. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:54 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Donna A. Felezzola  
Business Administrator/Board Secretary