

The following is a summary of the October 8, 2020, Combined Conference and Regular Meeting of the Berkeley Heights Board of Education:

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Melissa Varley, Superintendent of Schools, provided the following report:

Good evening! We have been in school for over six weeks! I'm very proud of the staff and students for going above and beyond. I'm happy to report that we have brought back our Full-Day Kindergarten students every day for a half day. I have visited the classroom a couple of times and everyone is extremely happy. Thank you to Ms. Panarese and Ms. Fischer for working so hard to get the classroom ready for all the students.

This year is a challenge for everyone and we will only get through it if everyone keeps working together and doing their part. We must remain diligent in our efforts to stay safe and healthy so that we can continue to keep our schools open for as much in-person instruction as possible.

As districts around us close for a couple of weeks at a time, I am sure that we will experience the same thing. I am committed to keeping the community updated on information regarding our cases as information becomes available. This past Saturday, in my effort to coordinate the timing of my announcement with the Mayor, I pulled information from Powerschool but was unable to confirm it with the building principal. Unfortunately, the Powerschool information was incorrect. I sent a follow-up with a message with the correct information as soon as possible.

I realize that many of you want more specific information. I want to make it clear moving forward that I will try to balance the health and safety of the students and staff with the privacy of the family involved. In situations where a student has not been in school for more than ten days, then there has been no exposure to students and staff through school. It is then the obligation of the family to inform those they have been in contact with. In situations where there is exposure to Covid-19 through the school, the school will meet its obligation to inform students and staff. I know you all join me in wishing a speedy recovery for the students who are ill.

I have spoken with at least 20 parents who are planning to go to Florida, or other states that are currently on Governor Murphy's quarantine list over the teachers' convention long weekend. In all of these conversations, everyone has been very understanding of the need to keep students in remote following these trips. As the holiday season approaches, it is also apparent that this will be a recurring issue. In trying to work with families, while still maintaining a safe and manageable attendance policy for hybrid learning, the two weeks after teachers convention, Thanksgiving, and Winter break will be quarantine periods where students who traveled and need to work remotely can do so. When the quarantine period ends students must report to school with their designated cohort. Students who did not travel will be expected to report to school with their designated cohort. The end dates for the quarantine periods are November 23, December 14, and January 18th, respectively. I hope that this helps families navigate this dilemma.

Superintendent’s Report (continued)

In other news, the State has mandated that School Districts be remote on November 3rd, regardless of their polling status location. Principals will be notifying all families in the very near future.

I know that it has been a long seven months since the pandemic began. I know that everyone is tired of wearing masks, and social distancing, and all of the other disruptions to our lives. But history tells us that in the late fall and early winter, with everyone moving back indoors and the onset of the cold and flu season, we will see an increase in the number of Covid-19 cases. It is already starting to happen in the communities around us. The more diligent everyone is in wearing their masks and social distancing, the safer everyone will be and the more likely it will be that we can keep our students where they need to be - in school.

With that, I will be sending a survey to our staff and our students (6-12) tomorrow to get feedback on our current model. We will use that feedback to decide what our next steps will be. I will be meeting with administrators next week to flesh out the details of our next steps.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we continue to pivot and make changes.

Mrs. Christina Zaun, Anti-Bullying Coordinator for the Berkeley Heights Public Schools, delivered the following presentations to the Board of Education and public:

- Report on Incidents of Violence, Vandalism, Substance Abuse, Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) for the period of January 1, 2020, through June 30, 2020.
- Review of 2019-2020 HIB Self-Assessment Results/Review of Anti-HIB Programs.

Please click [here](#) to see a summary of these reports.

Mr. Doug Reinstein, President of the Berkeley Heights Board of Education, announced that after several meetings of both the Board’s Curriculum and Facilities Committees, it was being recommended by both committees that the proposed district referendum be postponed until sometime during the 2021-2022 school year. In addition, both committees have recommended that the implementation of universal Full-Day Kindergarten in the district be postponed until September 2022. Mr. Reinstein explained that the complete focus of the school district needs to be on this school year and providing the best possible education to its students despite the many challenges being posed by the COID-19 pandemic. In the meantime, the Board will decide upon a date for the referendum during 2021-2022, and the Full-Day Kindergarten Pilot Program currently being conducted by the school district will again be offered next school year.

Report of the Student Representatives

Emily Haines reported on the following:

- The sports seasons are off to a great start! The ticket system for home and away games has kept the community safe while still allowing all to support the teams. I know I have loved the chance to go to games as well as many other students.
- The GL Girls and Boys soccer teams had Senior Nights this past week and the Highlander Boys tied in double overtime. Both Boys and Girls Soccer won their games this afternoon.
- The Governor Livingston Football team started off their season strong with a win over Keyport and are hoping to continue their success this Saturday at 2 p.m. for the Football and Cheerleaders Senior Day. The students are planning on making this a “whiteout game,” in hopes to keep up the student spirit with the loss of Friday Night Lights.
- The Highlander Field Hockey Senior Night is tomorrow at 5:00 p.m. at GLHS. We hope to see you all there. Go GL!
- And as a segue to Thomas, the Executive Board of the Student Council is planning to try to create a two-week Spirit Week for Halloween in an effort to continue the tradition while including both in-school cohorts! All are excited for what’s to come!

Report of the Student Representatives (continued)

Thomas Burke reported on the following:

- With regard to clubs at Governor Livingston, the Club Expo recently took place where over 30 organizations shared a brief overview of the main activities and purpose of their club. Even though it was held virtually, the event was still a success as clubs gained new members. Groups such as Science Olympiad, Auxiliary Club, Environmental Club, and Programming Club have made plans for introductory meetings in the coming weeks to welcome these new members.
- The Math League Team will host its first Math competition next week.
- Interact held a car wash this past Sunday at Columbia Middle School and was able to raise over \$1,000 for the Center for Food Action. If anyone is wondering why Mr. Reinstein's car looks so clean, it is because his car was cleaned at the event.
- Spanish Club held its first meeting this past Tuesday to introduce their new officers and discuss plans for their first event of the year, "Cena y Cine," or dinner and a movie.
- Similarly, Photography Club, Italian Club, and the newly formed Operation Smile Club held their first meetings this past week to define goals and events for the upcoming year.
- The beginning of October has also marked the beginning of the Week of Respect. Numerous events were held this week to celebrate diversity including a poster contest and, tomorrow, students will celebrate their cultural pride through t-shirts and zoom backgrounds that display their ethnic backgrounds.
- Now that clubs have adjusted to this new reality and held meetings with new members, they will begin working toward preparing themselves for events and competitions as they normally would.

Facilities Report

Donna Felezzola, School Business Administrator, presented the following report:

- The school district is continuing its efforts to improve air circulation in the schools. Rooftop exhaust fans are scheduled to be installed at the Columbia Middle School multipurpose room, Thomas P. Hughes School multipurpose room, and both gyms at Governor Livingston High School beginning the week of October 19th.
- We are continuing the process of repairing window springs throughout the district.
- Our maintenance staff is installing LED lighting in the Columbia Middle School multipurpose room. They are also painting the ceiling grid and replacing the ceiling tiles.
- We are also beginning to plan for facilities projects for next summer.

The Board of Education formally voted to approve the following:

- Professional development days and travel reimbursement for district staff members.
- The semi-annual District Report of Violence, Vandalism, Substance Abuse, Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying for the period of January 1, 2020, through June 30, 2020, as submitted to the New Jersey Department of Education via the School Safety Data System (SSDS).
- The tentative 2020-2021 Winter season schedules for all interscholastic athletics teams representing Governor Livingston High School and Columbia Middle School.
- For Elizabeth Cohen Hamblett, a Learning Disabilities Consultant and expert in post-high school options for students with disabilities, to provide a workshop for parents of students with disabilities on December 9, 2020, via live webinar.
- For Dr. Shivani Raina to be employed as a consultant to complete a maximum of 10 speech-language evaluations for students in the Berkeley Heights Public Schools, as needed, during the 2020-2021 school year.
- For the district to contract with Viva Your Voice, Inc., to provide translation services on an as-needed basis for Child Study Team meetings in the Berkeley Heights Public Schools during the 2020-2021 school year.

The Board of Education formally voted to approve the following (continued):

- To approve or modify leave of absence requests from district staff members during the 2020-2021 school year.
- Extra-Curricular activities, staff members, assignments and stipends for the 2020-2021 school year.
- The salary adjustment for a district staff member based on the professional growth of the employee.
- The employment of Gianna Izzi as a Paraprofessional at Mary Kay McMillin Early Childhood Center, effective October 9, 2020.
- For Christopher Eskin to teach an additional class, beyond his regular teaching schedule, at Governor Livingston High School from September 21, 2020, through November 13, 2020.
- The revised 2020-2021 employment contract for the following staff member:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/ School</u>	<u>Current 2020-2021 Contract</u>	<u>Revised 2020-2021 Contract</u>
AnnaMarie Labisi	Grade 4 Teacher/ Mountain Park School	9/1/2020-10/1/2020	9/1/2020-12/31/2020

- For Julie Figlar and Brenda Marley, Part-Time Reading Specialists at Mary Kay McMillin Early Childhood Center, to be employed for 12 additional days each during the 2020-2021 school year.
- For the Board of Education to accept the New Jersey Department of Education Coronavirus Relief Fund Grant for the 2020-2021 school year in the amount of \$58,886.00.
- For the Board of Education to accept the New Jersey Department of Education COVID-19 Technology Funds for Non-Public Schools for the FlexSchool in the amount of \$1,392.00 and for the Diamond Hill Montessori School in the amount of \$566.00.
- For the Board of Education to accept additional Non-Public Nursing Services Aid for the 2020-2021 school year from the New Jersey Department of Education to be utilized by FlexSchool in the amount of \$165.00 and Diamond Hill Montessori School in the amount of \$65.00.

The Board of Education formally voted to approve the following (continued):

- Regular school year transportation agreements with the Morris-Union Jointure Commission for the 2020-2021 school year.
- The donation of a Sunny Health & Fitness therapeutic pedal bike from Mrs. Tracy Procaccini for use in the ABA Classroom at Governor Livingston High School.

The Board of Education will conduct a Combined Conference and Regular Meeting on Thursday, November 12, 2020, at 7:30 p.m.