

The following is a summary of the February 25, 2021, 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. Last year there were four inches of snow. This year there has been over 35 inches of snow! I hope that by our March Board of Education meeting Spring will be in the air and we will be finished with the snow.

As a follow up from 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 HIB 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](mailto:BHFormerStudents@cgajlaw.com). Due to lack of information, we will be closing this investigation soon.

We will be making two very important presentations this evening. The first is the LINKIT data and benchmarking and warehousing system. Our current data system is woefully inadequate. It presents limited information to very few people.

LINKIT delivers broader and deeper data for every student, and most importantly it puts it right into the hands of the teacher. With LINKIT, teachers can look at years of academic data across all subject areas on their students and target areas of weakness and build remediation and differentiation strategies into their planning. Additionally, building administrators can also review the data, check for its implementation in lesson and assessment construction, and then more accurately evaluate the effectiveness of the instructor. I have used LINKIT in the past and think that it will be a tremendous tool for our teachers and administrators to improve student learning and achievement. (Please [click here](#) to learn more about this presentation.)

The second presentation concerns our relationship with Mountainside. I cannot speak to past efforts of curriculum alignment and articulation, but I want to take this opportunity to state that Janet Walling - the Superintendent of Mountainside - and I have had several discussions on the topic and we are both committed to all students entering Governor Livingston with the same academic rigor and curricular experience. Working closely with Mountainside gives their students, who become our students, the greatest opportunity for success in high school. I am excited to build this partnership with our sending district. (Please [click here](#) to read more about this presentation.)

**Superintendent's Report (continued)**

Finally, at the last meeting we had a brief discussion about Full Day Kindergarten. There is still a lot of work to be done. The admin team is working on the proposal, and will make a presentation to the Board of Education. Both the Board of Education and the Administration are committed to Full Day Kindergarten.

It is now my pleasure to introduce Chad Marcus from LINKIT.

**Report of the Student Representatives  
Emily Haines reported on the following:**

- The athletics atmosphere at Governor Livingston at this moment gives everyone some happy news. The winter seasons are coming to a close and the third season, volleyball and wrestling, will be starting this Monday.
- In the current season, the GLHS Ice Hockey team has a semifinal game this Monday night which will be a live-streamed.
- The Highlander Boys Basketball team is currently 10-3 with some big wins and they have a home game next Monday as well.
- The GL Cheerleaders have been able to attend the basketball games to show off their halftime routines. These have been live-streamed as well, and videos of the performances will be submitted for three virtual cheer competitions.
- The Highlander Girls Basketball team was undefeated until losing to tough rivals New Providence. This young GL team is progressing as the season moves along.
- Looking forward to the Spring season, it is planned to be as normal as possible with the first month of practice being virtual until the start of April. A new statewide rule has been implemented which will enable students to participate in two sports simultaneously, as the indoor track and lacrosse seasons overlap during the late winter and early spring. So, athletes no longer have to worry about choosing between the two. And lastly, there is now a rule that allows two parents/guardians per student-athlete to attend home games.
- And an honorable mention for Mr. Seager, as tomorrow will be his last day. TREND and Student Ambassadors had a meeting today to honor him and all that he's done for the high school.

**Report of the Student Representatives (continued)**

**Thomas Burke reported on the following:**

- Despite the number of virtual days in recent weeks, students have learned to not only make the most out of their classes, but also their clubs.
- The Highlander Newspaper Club especially has accomplished a lot in the past few weeks. Last week, the club had a discussion with Vanity Fair writer and journalist David Kamp. In this fantastic opportunity for students, Kamp shared personal anecdotes from his writing career and fielded questions from students. Later that week, the hard work of the club's writers was shown when numerous students received awards from the Garden State Scholastic Press Association. Tonight, two staff members from the club are joining the New Jersey Student Journalist Forum to discuss student journalism and the New Voices bill that will help confront school press censorship issues.
- Other clubs, too, have been active with both the Technology Students Association and Science Olympiad preparing for the state-level competitions.
- The Understanding Asian Cultures Club held a meeting last week where they discussed Asian representation in GL's history curriculum.
- GL's newest club, the Music Club, will be hosting its first meeting in the coming weeks. This club will discuss the cultural significance of music, explore the diversity of music, and observe a variety of music to expand their musical knowledge.
- Lastly, Berkeley Heights and GL Unfiltered held a meaningful discussion on Sunday where a panel of current and former students shared their experiences as minority students at GL. Although many had negative experiences, the students worked to develop an action plan on the next steps the district should take to improve students' experiences at school. The willingness of students to partake in events like these shows the aligned goals of both the students and the Board to bring forth a positive change in the school's culture.

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### Facilities Report

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

With the help of our architects, we recently submitted a Local Government Energy Audit Application. The purpose of the audit is to have a third party analyze our current HVAC equipment and energy operations and to recommend energy improvements that can be made. They will also provide funding opportunities for some of these projects.

The information submitted as part of the application included utility bills and building square footages etc.

The next step is a physical audit of our buildings, which is anticipated to be conducted in the next several months. Once the audit is completed and the engineers have reviewed our utility usage and current equipment, they will make recommendations for upgrades.

More to come as we move through this process.

### The Board of Education formally voted to approve the following:

- The following revised district policies after second reading:
  - Expenditures for Non-Employee Activities, Meals and Refreshments 6423
  - Use of School Facilities 7510
  - Emergency and Crisis Situations 8420
  - Wellness Policy on Nutrition and Physical Activity 8505
- The introduction for study and first reading of the following proposed new district policies:
  - Board Member Use of Electronic Mail/Internet 0169
  - Electronic Communications Between Teaching Staff Members and Students 3283
  - Electronic Communications Between Support Staff Members and Students 4283
- Professional development days and travel reimbursement for district staff members.
- The new district position and job description for Director of Special Projects.
- The reinstatement of the Freshman level team for the Girls Lacrosse program at Governor Livingston High School for the Spring 2021 season, and the employment of a second assistant coach for the Girls Lacrosse program at the school for Spring 2021.

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

- Tentative Season 3 (late Winter) and Season 4 (Spring) schedules for all interscholastic athletics teams representing Governor Livingston High School.
- The agreement with Melanie Medina, LDTC, of MEM Education Services LLC to complete Learning Evaluations for Berkeley Heights Public Schools students during the 2020-2021 school year.
- The employment of substitute/supplemental personnel for the 2020-2021 school year.
- The employment of Monica Szalus as a long-term substitute Secretary at William Woodruff School, effective February 26, 2021, through June 30, 2021.
- New and modified leave of absence requests from district staff members during the 2020-2021 school year.
- The appointment of Extra-Curricular Activities personnel for the 2020-2021 school year:

**Governor Livingston High School**

**Activity/Position**

Assistant Swimming Coach  
Drama Director - Spring Productions  
Music/Effects - Spring Productions (1/3)  
Music/Effects – Spring Productions (1/3)  
Music/Effects – Spring Productions (1/3)  
Producer – Spring Productions (1/2)  
Producer – Spring Productions (1/2)

**Instructor/Supervisor**

Emiliano Chirigliano  
Joseph Miceli  
Josef Ellis  
Nicholas O’Sullivan  
Sarah Peszka  
Tracy Procaccini  
Christine Talarico

- The employment of Madison Rowohlt as Student Assistance Counselor at Governor Livingston High School and Columbia Middle School, effective February 26, 2021.
- The employment of Christina Apicella as Part-Time Teacher of Special Education at William Woodruff School, effective February 22, 2021, through June 30, 2021.
- To rescind the appointment of Christopher Eskin to the position of Long-Term Substitute Teacher from February 19, 2021, through June 30, 2021.
- The re-assignment of Gary Kowaleski from the position of Paraprofessional at Governor Livingston High School to the position of Substitute/Replacement Teacher of Special Education at Columbia Middle School, effective February 19, 2021, through June 30, 2021.

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

- For Gary Kowaleski, Teacher of Special Education at Columbia Middle School, to teach an extra class beyond his normal teaching schedule, effective February 22, 2021.
- For Erin Crostewitz, Teacher of Special Education at Governor Livingston High School, to teach an extra class beyond her normal teaching schedule, effective February 1, 2021.
- To accept the retirement of Catherine Egan from her position as Paraprofessional at Mary Kay McMillin Early Childhood Center, effective March 1, 2021.
- To accept the retirement of Katherine Rottenberg from her position as Grade 1 Teacher at Mary Kay McMillin Early Childhood Center, effective May 1, 2021.
- The revised/extended 2020-2021 employment contract for the following substitute/replacement teacher:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/School</u>	<u>Current Contract</u>	<u>Revised Contract</u>
Kacie Worswick	Grade 1 Teacher/ McMillin ECC	9/1/2020- 5/3/2021	9/1/2020- 6/30/2021

- To revise the employment contract of Loriann Carbone, Paraprofessional at William Woodruff School, from 3.0 hours per day to 4.25 hours per day, effective February 22, 2021, through June 30, 2021.
- For Jeffrey Stiefel to serve as technician/service provider for the Governor Livingston High School auditorium/theater during the 2020-2021 school year.
- The revised 2020-2021 Lease Agreement with Morris-Union Jointure Commission for use of the swimming pool at the Developmental Learning Center, Warren, by the Governor Livingston High School swim teams.

***The Board of Education will conduct a Combined Conference and Regular Meeting and Public Meeting to Adopt Tentative Budget on Thursday, March 18th, at 7:30 p.m., via Zoom.***