

The following is a summary of the April 8, 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. Thank you for coming tonight. As several community members have told me, Full Day Kindergarten has been discussed in Berkeley Heights for many years. I know that everyone here will say that they support Full Day Kindergarten. They are right for doing so, the research is overwhelming that the benefits for students in full day kindergarten are literally life changing. They positively impact student learning for years to come. The issue that has caused emotions to run high is redistricting.

If you ask any Superintendent, they will tell you that redistricting is one of the most difficult decisions that a community faces. Four months ago district administration was tasked with creating a plan to implement Full Day Kindergarten. We have spent the last four months crunching numbers and exploring every possible option and very quickly determined that redistricting was the best solution for the implementation of Full Day Kindergarten. I would venture a guess that is why Berkeley Heights is one of the few I or J districts in the state of New Jersey not to have already implemented a program that everyone knows is so educationally beneficial.

I will let the presentation lay out the reasons and details for our proposals. But I have to thank the administrative team who worked tirelessly for months doing the research and putting the proposal together. I have to thank Donna Felezzola, Scott McKinney, and Marybeth Kopacz for going above and beyond. I also need to thank Diane Azalone, my administrative assistant, and Kelly Sheehan, our Busing Coordinator, who worked through their vacations to provide finishing details.

You may find the final presentation [here](#).

In other news, on April 12th we welcome back all students, grades 1-12, for in-person instruction. In addition, Governor Murphy has given guidance that school districts can provide lunch to students as long as students are socially distanced six feet. Building Principals are currently working through plans to meet these requirements and we hope to have an announcement soon about returning students to school for the normal school day with lunch.

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**Superintendent's Report (continued)**

In other great news to celebrate, Dr. Janosko, our Guidance Director, recently shared with me some impressive college admission acceptance decisions from the Class of 2021:

Princeton University  
Cornell University - 3 students  
Brown University  
Georgetown University  
Duke University  
University of Southern California  
UC Berkeley  
University of Virginia  
Boston College - 4 students  
Washington University in St. Louis  
Wesleyan University  
Wake Forest University  
Washington and Lee University  
Northeastern University  
Villanova University  
George Washington University

Finally, I am pleased to announce that the Hockey Team has won the Kelly Cup. I would like to introduce Coach Michael Criscitello to introduce our athletes as they are honored by the Board of Education.

**Report of the Student Representatives**

**Emily Haines reported on the following:**

- Sports are in full swing at Governor Livingston! Season 3 is coming to a close with GL Wrestling heading toward the regional tournament and Highlander Volleyball gearing up for the state tournament, where they are seeded 5th.
- As those Season 3 final competitions play out, Season 4 is going into full swing. Today, GLHS Softball had its first game and won...this is a moment to remember. Just a short time ago - or should I say long time over the past year - no games were allowed to be played and all sports were shut down. As we come full circle things become amped up for the spring.
- Highlander Boys Lacrosse has its first scrimmage Saturday, while GL Tennis is having challenge matches to decide the team's lineup. GLHS Golf, Track and Field, Girls Lacrosse and Baseball all begin their seasons within the next week. All are happy to be able to play after missing last season!
- As for school, after spring break all the students are looking forward to the new schedules and cohorts that are being decided. Seniors are anxious to see their whole class as one for the start of the fourth marking period as more people come back to school.
- Overall there are lots of exciting moments happening at GL as we look to more normalcy.

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

#### **Thomas Burke reported on the following:**

- With the beginning of the fourth marking period, many clubs are preparing for their final events to wrap up the year.
- The Yearbook Club is actively polling the student body for their preferences in fast food, video games, books, and more which help students remember this point of their lives later on.
- The Sophomore and Junior class Student Governments have been holding fundraisers at nearby restaurants to raise money for their proms.
- The GL Marching Band will be holding a Socially Distant Basket Raffle this Saturday.
- And in a year that has been so challenging for teachers and administrators, the Student Ambassadors are planning Staff Appreciation Projects to show their appreciation for all of their work. The students are making mini-gifts, videos and picture slideshows, mini-goodie bags, and more.
- Additionally, the Guitar Club, Music Club, and Coding Club continue to host regular meetings.
- The Understanding Asian Cultures Club has also continued to hold regular meetings, sharing an informative presentation on Chakri Day, a Thai Holiday, in one of them. In another meeting, the club discussed the recent #StopAsianHate rally and announced a poster contest to spread awareness about hate crimes directed towards Asians.
- Though time is drawing short, students continue to pursue a multitude of activities as the year ends.

**Facilities Report**

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

Our staff has used these past two weeks preparing buildings for the return of students. They have serviced the HVAC units, installed desktop barriers, and performed deep cleaning of the schools. Additionally, they have worked on outside projects, completed drainage repairs, and have been working with the Township on field maintenance projects.

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

- The following revised and new district policies after second reading:  
Board Member Resignation and Renewal 0145 (Revised)  
Remote Public Board Meetings During a Declared Emergency 0164.6 (New)  
Political Contributions 6360 (Revised)  
Lead Testing of Water in Schools 7425 (Revised)
- The Resolution honoring the Governor Livingston High School/New Providence High School Cooperative Ice Hockey Team, the 2021 Kelly Cup Champions.
- Professional development days and travel reimbursement for district staff members.
- A revision to the 2020-2021 school district calendar, establishing Friday, May 28th and Tuesday, June 1st, as days on which all district schools will be closed.
- The submission of the Revised Amended Fiscal Year 2021 Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) grant application in the amount of \$133,232.00 to the New Jersey Department of Education.
- The elimination of the position of Data Analyst/Administrator in the Berkeley Heights Public Schools, effective July 1, 2021.
- The participation of district students and staff members in educational field trips.

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

- For state-approved agencies Hillmar, LLC, Educational Services Commission of Morris County, and Learning Tree Multilingual Evaluation and Consulting to conduct Child Study Team evaluations for the Berkeley Heights Public Schools in languages other than English.
- The agreement with Advantage ABA and Andrea Fontana, BCBA, to provide up to 75 hours of consultation services to district case managers, teachers, paraprofessionals and parents from April 9, 2021, through June 30, 2021.
- The employment of substitute/supplemental personnel for the 2020-2021 school year.
- New and modified leave of absence requests from district staff members during the 2020-2021 school year.
- The extension of the employment of Dr. Joseph Petrosino as Interim Assistant Principal at Governor Livingston High School through May 24, 2021.
- For Christopher Eckert, Lisa Moretti, Richard Ortega, Beryl Roman and Bruno Somma, Teachers of Health and Physical Education at Governor Livingston High School, to teach an extra class beyond their normal teaching schedule effective April 1, 2021, through May 21, 2021.
- The acceptance of the following retirements:  
Ilene Gerstenfeld, Speech-Language Specialist at Mary Kay McMillin Early Childhood Center, effective July 1, 2021.  
Catherine Jones, Grade 1 Teacher at Mary Kay McMillin Early Childhood Center, effective July 1, 2021.  
Toby Marcus, School Social Worker with the district's Child Study Team, effective July 1, 2021.  
Joanne Sheehan, Teacher of Physical Education and Health at Columbia Middle School, effective July 1, 2021.
- The acceptance of the resignation of Laura Marino from her position as Part-Time Speech-Language Specialist at Mary Kay McMillin Early Childhood Center, effective June 30, 2021.

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

- The revised 2020-2021 employment contract for Bindu Pariyacheri, Teacher of Mathematics at Columbia Middle School.
- The employment of Daniella Norcia as Teacher of World Language/Spanish at Columbia Middle School for the 2021-2022 school year.
- The cooperative middle school Wrestling program between the Berkeley Heights Board of Education and Mountainside Board of Education for the 2020-2021 school year.
- The 2020-2021 Special Education Tuition Agreement with Educational Services Commission of Morris County.
- Regular school year transportation agreements with the Morris-Union Jointure Commission for the 2020-2021 school year.

***The Board of Education will conduct a Combined Conference and Regular Meeting and Public Meeting to Adopt Tentative Budget on Thursday, April 29th, at 7:30 p.m. at Columbia Middle School and via Zoom.***