

The following is a summary of the March 18, 2021, Combined Conference and Regular Meeting and Public Meeting to Adopt Tentative Budget of the Berkeley Heights Board of Education:

Superintendent's Report

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

In my 13 years of college and graduate education there was not a single class on how to navigate a pandemic while leading a school district. I am sure that this is as true for every teacher and administrator in this district as it is for me. On the anniversary of the Covid-19 Pandemic lockdown, I find myself looking back over the last year marveling over what we have accomplished: Our custodians who adjusted to every new cleaning requirement; our nurses who managed to out contact-trace the department of health; our CST in finding creative ways to support their students; the administrative team who pivoted on the fly to what seemed liked daily changes in direction from the state; the support staff whose efforts in keeping the administrators on track is so often unsung; the teachers who reinvented teaching time and time again, often from scratch; and finally the Board of Education for supporting us as we navigated all of it. My hope is that we emerge from the pandemic stronger from the experience and leverage the lessons learned to make the District more dynamic for all of our students.

I echo Mr. Reinstein's statements regarding the parents who worked hard to get our teachers vaccinated. We are one step closer to a normal school year!

It is with mixed emotions that I announce the retirement of two long time Berkeley Heights central office fixtures, Donna Felezzola and Tom Long. I am sad to be losing so much wisdom and experience, but so happy for them and their families.

Donna Felezzola has been our Business Administrator for 15 years and is retiring effective June 30, 2021. I compliment her for all of her hard work over the years and keeping the district in compliance and in the black. But, Donna's impact on the district is beyond the numbers - she will be remembered for her kindness, humanity, and her care for everyone. Donna, you will be missed.

Tom Long, the assistant to the superintendent has worked for both the Union County Regional District, and after de-regionalization, Berkeley Heights Public Schools for 34 years. Tom Long has been an invaluable resource to the district. His understanding of the ins and outs of the Department of Education and how to navigate it are masterful. Anyone with any experience with the Department of Education knows how truly impressive this is. Tom will also be missed.

We have many other retirements on the agenda, and I wish you all the best.

Superintendent’s Report (continued)

I am also excited to announce that Annie Corley-Hand, Principal of Mary Kay McMillin since July 2009, has been selected as the National Association of Elementary School Principals’ **National Distinguished Principal**. She also was recognized as the **Visionary Principal of the Year (Elementary)**. These organizations have recognized all of Mrs. Corley-Hand’s tireless efforts and critically important work with parents, students and staff during her years as Principal at MKMECC.

I would like to thank everyone for their enthusiastic support of our partnership with the Berkeley Heights Diversity Council in the One Book, One Community event. We will be reading Dr. Ibram X. Kendi’s New York Times bestselling work “How to Be an Antiracist.” We are looking forward to a spirited discussion of this work.

We are in the final stages of wrapping up our investigation from the December 21, 2020, Board Meeting. At this point, we do not have any former students who have come forward to file a formal report. Before we close the investigation we are urging anyone who wishes to make a complaint about any current or former situations in Berkeley Heights Public Schools to come forward now.

As required by law, current student concerns have to be 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 can file a report at BHFormerStudents@cgajlaw.com.

In other news, if we do not have another snow day prior to our April 8th Board meeting, the Board will have the calendar on the agenda to approve the “give back” days of May 28th and June 1st.

We will now present our update on the district diversity initiative.

Dr. Varley and Mr. Stephen Hopkins, District Supervisor, delivered an update on the Berkeley Heights Public Schools Diversity Initiative. Please click [here](#) to learn more about this presentation.

Mrs. Donna Felezzola, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, provided a presentation about the 2021-2022 Tentative Proposed School District Budget. Please click [here](#) to read more about this report.

Report of the Student Representatives

Emily Haines reported on the following:

- Governor Livingston sports are approaching the spring season!
- The Highlander Boys Basketball team ended with a great season, winning 10 games.
- GLHS Ice Hockey finished with a record of 12-1, and they wrapped up their season by winning the Kelly Cup championship.
- Highlander Wrestling just started its season, winning its first match 66-6.
- The GL Indoor Track team participated in two dual-meets these past weeks and won most races. The Highlanders will compete in the Union County meet this Sunday.
- Looking forward to the spring, Highlander Lacrosse, Baseball and Softball are all beginning their preseasons online and their regular seasons will start on April 1st.
- In school, GL seniors were recently all allowed back in person, without cohorts. This was a smooth transition for the seniors and it allowed everyone to have a hopeful glimpse towards the end of senior year. We soon will have more students in the high school as well as the seniors, but that is set to start in motion after spring break.

Report of the Student Representatives (continued)

Thomas Burke reported on the following:

- As the weather improves and we transition into spring, the focus of students has shifted to finishing this year and preparing for the upcoming year.
- In the past few weeks, students have been meeting virtually with their guidance counselors to choose classes for the following year.
- Juniors have also met with guidance counselors and their parents to discuss their post high school plans.
- In regards to clubs, the SAGA club has begun preparing for their pride picnic and the community pride event in June by meeting with members of the BH YMCA and BH Diversity Council.
- Model United Nations and Science Olympiad are finalizing preparations for upcoming conferences and competitions.
- Other clubs, meanwhile, have been focusing on spreading awareness to actions of hate. UAC recently held a discussion on the recent hate actions directed towards Asian Americans and students in diversity based clubs have been selected to produce a video series to target discrimination and stereotyping at GL.
- Additionally, students, teachers, and district administrators took part in a meaningful discussion on the literary elements and impact of Amanda Gordon's "The Hill We Climb."
- Lastly, GL Hilltop Players has begun production for a fully virtual version of the 1985 movie *CLUE* which will be aired over Zoom. Though streaming the play over Zoom is a first, they are working closely with Mr. Voorhees to enhance the video and audio production quality. Look out for information on performance dates and tickets to see it from home!
- Though some clubs may be focusing on their final events of the year, all continue to work diligently to be as successful as possible in these endeavors.

Facilities Report

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

The district continues to purchase PPE in anticipation of having more students in the schools. Tonight, the Board of Education is approving the purchase of additional desk shields for students at Governor Livingston High School and Columbia Middle School. Additionally, the Board is accepting the donation of masks from the Berkeley Heights Huaxia Chinese School.

We are assessing the condition of our parking lots and identifying areas that need immediate repairs and those areas that will be repaved or repaired over the summer.

On the agenda tonight is the approval of the summer sports camps. The camp counselors will be following the established COVID protocols.

The Board of Education formally voted to approve the following:

- The adoption of the tentative 2021-2022 school district budget, using the 2021-2022 state aid figures, and the submission of the tentative budget to the Executive County Superintendent of Schools for approval in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A: 7F-5 and 18A: 7F-6.
- The following new district policies after second reading:
 - 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
- The introduction for study and first reading of the following proposed revised and new district policies:
 - 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)
- Professional development days and travel reimbursement for district staff members.
- The new district position and job description for Instructional Technologist.
- The participation of district students and staff members in educational field trips.

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

- The agreement with Eleanor E. Drago-Stevenson of Teachers College, Columbia University, to conduct two full-day Leadership Institutes for teachers in the Berkeley Heights Public Schools.
- The agreement with F. Jones Consulting & Team for year one of a multi-year roll-out and a full implementation New Jersey Tiered System of Supports (NJTSS) package.
- The employment of substitute/supplemental personnel for the 2020-2021 school year.
- The acceptance of the following retirements:
Diane Corley, Teacher of English at Columbia Middle School, effective July 1, 2021.
Donna Felezzola, School Business Administrator/Board Secretary, effective June 30, 2021.
Thomas Long, Assistant to the Superintendent, effective October 1, 2021.
Jacqueline Petryk, Lunchroom/Playground Aide at William Woodruff School, effective June 30, 2021.
- The appointment of Stephen Hopkins as Director of Special Projects in the Berkeley Heights Public Schools, effective March 22, 2021.
- New and modified leave of absence requests from district staff members during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 school years.
- The appointment of Extra-Curricular Activities personnel for the 2020-2021 school year:

Governor Livingston High School

Activity/Position

Assistant Tennis Coach (Boys)
Assistant Lacrosse Coach (Girls)

Instructor/Supervisor

Andrew Helfrich
Stephanie Soares

- The employment of Dr. Joseph Petrosino as Interim Assistant Principal at Governor Livingston High School, effective March 8, 2021, through April 5, 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 an extra class beyond their normal teaching schedule effective March 1, 2021, through March 31, 2021.

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

- For Bindu Pariyacheri, Teacher of Mathematics at Columbia Middle School, to teach an extra class beyond her normal teaching schedule, effective March 1, 2021, through March 31, 2021.
- For Jacqueline Wells, Teacher of Special Education at Columbia Middle School, to teach an extra class beyond her normal teaching schedule, effective March 1, 2021, through June 30, 2021.
- The revised/extended 2020-2021 employment contracts for the following substitute/replacement personnel:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Position/School</u>	<u>Current Contract</u>	<u>Revised Contract</u>
Elizabeth DiGiovanni	Speech-Language Specialist/ McMillin ECC	1/19/2021- 4/5/2021	1/19/2021- 6/30/2021
David Hay	Teacher of Social Studies/ Columbia Middle School	9/1/2020- 4/5/2021	9/1/2020- 6/30/2021

- To extend the employment of Gregory Chornomaz, Long-Term Substitute Teacher at Columbia Middle School, through May 3, 2021.
- The completion of paving and curbing upgrades for the Governor Livingston High School maintenance garage area by Goldcon, Inc.
- The emergency purchase of school desk barriers from Diamond Enterprises, Inc.
- To accept a donation of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) from the Berkeley Heights Huaxia Chinese School.
- The shared services agreement with the Township of Berkeley Heights for shared use of Comcast Channel 34/Verizon Channel 47 services.

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

- The Resolution opposing P.L. 2020, c. 44 (“Chapter 44”), requiring the School Employees’ Health Benefits Program (SEHBP) to offer plans, beginning on January 1, 2021, for medical and prescription benefits coverage including the New Jersey Educators Health Plan (NJEHP); as adopted and implemented by the School Employees’ Health Benefits Commission.
- The use of facilities at Governor Livingston High School for the following camps during the summer months:
 - Highlander Football Camp – June 21 through June 24, 2021.
 - Highlander Softball Camp – June 28 through July 1, 2021.
 - Highlander Track and Field Camp – July 5 through July 8, 2021.
 - Highlander Volleyball Camp – July 5 through July 9, 2021.
 - Grapplers Wrestling Camp – July 12 through July 15, 2021.
 - Lady Highlanders Basketball Camp – July 19 through July 22, 2021.
 - Highlanders Hoops Boys Basketball Camp – July 26 through July 29, 2021.
 - Highlander Robotics Camp – August 2 through August 5, 2021.
 - Mabuha Lacrosse Camp – August 2 through August 5, 2021.

The Board of Education will conduct a Combined Conference and Regular Meeting on Thursday, April 8th, at 7:30 p.m. at Columbia Middle School and via Zoom.