

**BERNARDS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
BASKING RIDGE, NEW JERSEY
MEETING INDEX
FEBRUARY 13, 2023
REGULAR SESSION 6:05 P.M.
EXECUTIVE SESSION 6:05 P.M.
RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER
REGULAR SESSION 7:05 P.M.
RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA**

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**BERNARDS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
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MEETING AGENDA
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RIDGE HIGH SCHOOL MEDIA CENTER
REGULAR SESSION 7:05 P.M.
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I. Regular Session – Call to Order – 6:05 p.m.

II. Salute to the Flag

III. Roll Call

Present: Mr. Amin, Ms. Csipak, Ms. Hira, Ms. Light, Ms. McKeon, Mr. Molinari, Mr. Rascio, Mr. Salmon, Ms. White, Ms. Brooks, Mr. Markarian, Mr. Siet, Ms. Fox. Board Counsel John Croot

Absent: None

IV. Executive Session – 6:05 p.m.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Bernards Township Board of Education shall meet in closed session to discuss item(s) a, e, f and g below which falls within an exception of our open meeting policy and permits the Board to have a private discussion, since it deals with specific exceptions contained in N.J.S.A.10:4-12b. Matters rendered confidential by Federal Law, State Law, or Court Rule:

- a. Individual privacy
- b. Collective bargaining agreements
- c. Purchase or lease of real property if public interest could be adversely affected
- d. Investment of public funds if public interest could be adversely affected
- e. Tactics or techniques utilized in protecting public safety and property
- f. Pending or anticipated litigation
- g. Attorney – client privilege
- h. Personnel – employment matters affecting a specific prospective or current employee

On motion by Mr. Molinari seconded by Ms. Light and approved by all present, the Board recessed into executive session at 6:05p.m.

Any discussion held by the Board, which need not remain confidential, will be made public as soon as practical. Minutes of the private session will not be disclosed until the need for confidentiality no longer exists. All appropriate persons, who may be discussed in private session, have been adequately notified.

On motion by Ms. Light seconded by Ms. White and approved by all present, the Board closed executive session at 6:56p.m.

V. Reconvene Regular Session – Call to Order – 7: 05p.m.

VI. Statement of Public Notice

This is a regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Bernards Township. Notice of the time and place of this meeting was provided and copies of that resolution were forwarded to the official newspapers as designated by the Board of Education and to the Township Clerk and a copy of the notice was posted on the bulletin board of the Board of Education Offices in accordance with P.L. 1975 Chapter 231A.

For those members of the public who are unable to attend our meeting in-person, a livestream link of the meeting is posted on the district website, www.bernardsboe.com.

We very much welcome input from the public. There are two times during regular meetings that the public is invited to speak. One time is early in the meeting before the Board votes, when you may speak about any item that is listed on tonight's agenda. Towards the end of the meeting, there is another public forum to address any matter of public concern related to the schools.

When you approach the microphone, please state your name and address. Each statement made by a participant shall be limited to three (3) minutes duration. No participant may speak more than once during a given public comment session. In order to run efficient meetings and to allow maximum opportunity for members of the public to speak, the Board reserves the right to set a different time limit for individual comments and/or to set an overall time limit for the public comment portions of the agenda. All statements shall be directed to the presiding officer, no participant may address or question Board members individually.

As a courtesy to those individuals unable to attend our meetings in person, public comment may be made remotely through Zoom. Interested individuals should navigate to the district webpage, www.bernardsboe.com, and select "Board of Education" followed by "Public Comment" to review specific instructions, or click [here](#).

Public comments made in-person will be processed first, then comments via Zoom. No public comments will be accepted before 7PM or after item XIX. Public Comment of the agenda ends.

Please understand that public comment portions of our agendas are not structured as question and answer sessions, but rather they are offered as opportunities to share your thoughts with the Board. The Board/Administration will respond to public comments to the extent possible. Any Board responses to public comments will generally be addressed during Board Forum, or during committee reports. However, all comments are considered and will be investigated and addressed as appropriate.

Please be courteous and mindful of the rights of others when speaking. Comments may not be abusive, obscene, threatening or irrelevant. Please understand that students and employees have specific legal and privacy protections. The Board is not permitted to respond in public to comments about students and employees. Please also understand that the Board will not be responsible for the content of comments made by members of the public. Members of the public are cautioned that they are speaking at their own risk and any personally directed statements they make may subject them to legal liability to the effected individual.

If it is necessary for the Board to go into executive session at the end of the meeting, we will provide an estimated length of time for the session and whether any action is anticipated to be taken upon returning to public session.

VII. **Student Representative** – Kyle Swan

No report.

VIII. **Board President Comments**

President Molinari discussed the logistics for the meeting.

IX. **Superintendent’s Report**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT

- 1) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby affirm receipt of the **HIB Report** dated February 13, 2023.
- 2) The Board of Education does hereby approve the following **2023 Board Liaison Committee Assignments**:

Liaison Committee:

Municipal Alliance
Bernards Township Committee
NJSBA Legislative Committee
PTO Advisory
SCESC

Board Member:

Csilla Cspiak
Kirsten Light
Ruchika Hira
Nimish Amin
Keith Molinari
Alternate: Robin McKeon

SEPAC Advisory

Lawrence Rascio

On motion by Ms. White seconded by Ms. Light Items #1-2 were approved by the following roll call vote:

“Ayes” - Mr. Amin, Ms. Csipak, Ms. Hira, Ms. Light, Ms. McKeon, Mr. Molinari,
Mr. Rascio, Mr. Salmon, Ms. White
“Noes” - None
“Abstain” - None

Superintendent Markarian discussed the ability to live stream the meetings and thanked everyone for their patience and participation. Mr. Markarian addressed an SOS Express sent clarifying the budget process for the 2023-24 School Year and that there will be a preliminary budget presentation on March 13, 2023.

X. **Public Comment on Agenda Items**

In order to accommodate the BT Connect discussion, President Molinari explained that public comment on agenda items would be taken after committee reports.

XI. **Approval of Minutes**

BE IT RESOLVED THAT

1) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby approve the following minutes:

January 23, 2023 – Board Retreat Minutes
January 23, 2023 – Executive Minutes
January 23, 2023 – Regular Session Minutes

On motion by Ms. Hira seconded by Mr. Salmon the foregoing were approved by the following roll call vote:

“Ayes” - Mr. Amin, Ms. Csipak, Ms. Hira, Ms. Light, Ms. McKeon, Mr. Molinari,
Mr. Rascio, Mr. Salmon, Ms. White
“Noes” - None
“Abstain” - None

XII. **Finance Committee Report**

Report: Committee meeting of January 19, 2023

Ms. Light provided a Finance Committee report from the January 19, 2023 Meeting. Topics at the meeting included an Aramark update, food service contract update, facilities contract and renewal logistics, an update for the need to replace and upgrade kitchen

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equipment at the schools, project planning updates, an HVAC update, a district facilities update including the OSS Roofing project, Ridge Varsity complex, Ridge locker room floors and Ridge lighting fixtures, an update regarding the Ridge Wrestling Room mats and the Budget calendar.

Ms. Light discussed the upcoming budget and district needs that have to be balanced over time.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT

1) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby approve a list of disbursements dated February 13, 2023 consisting of warrants in the amount of \$5,750,484.70.

On motion by Mr. Salmon seconded by Ms. McKeon Item #1 was approved by the following roll call vote:

“Ayes” - Mr. Amin, Ms. Csipak, Ms. Hira, Ms. Light, Ms. McKeon, Mr. Molinari,
Mr. Rascio, Mr. Salmon, Ms. White
“Noes” - None
“Abstain” - None

XIII. Personnel Committee Report

Report: Committee meeting of January 20, 2023

Mr. Salmon provided the report from the January 20, 2023 meeting. Topics at the meeting included instructional aides and staffing requests for the upcoming school year and an enrollment projection.

XIV. Policy Committee Report

Report: Committee meeting of January 9, 2023

Ms. Hira discussed the January 9, 2023 Policy Committee Meeting. Topics included first readings of school visitor and public attendance at school events policies and a policy alert including recommended proposed changes and alterations to existing policies.

XV. Curriculum Committee Report

Report: Committee meeting of January 6, 2023

Ms. White provided a report from the January 6, 2023 Curriculum Committee meeting. Topics at the meeting included textbook approvals, math placement criteria, a class size report for the 2022-23 school year and an update on Health curriculum opt out reports.

Ms. Hira asked about changes to the math placement criteria.

XVI. Wellness Committee Report

Report: Committee meeting of January 26, 2023

Ms. White provided a report from the January 26, 2023 Wellness Committee Meeting. Topics at the meeting included wellness plans for the elementary schools, middle school and high school including intervention training and professional development and an update for the Lifelines Suicide Prevention Program.

XVII. Liaison Committee Reports

No report.

Public Comment:

Comments from the public included the topics of fundraising for the Ridge Fencing Team and budgetary concerns, a question about measuring social emotional learning, questions and comments regarding the Health curriculum and the opt-out process, a representative from the Bernards Chinese American Association thanking the district for their support for the Lunar New Year celebration and a donation to the district, an expression of appreciation for Vice Principal Pepitone at Mount Prospect School for his support, concerns with administrative staffing and the importance and appreciation of Assistant Principals and a request for an Assistant Principal for the 7th grade at William Annin Middle School.

XVIII. BT Connect: Equity Audit

Superintendent Markarian discussed how the BT Connect meeting will work including feedback.

Assistant Superintendent Siet provided a report for the DEI Audit and follow up. Mr. Siet provided a rundown of the roles and responsibilities he takes on for the district in relation to DEI and provided the following objectives:

- Themes and recommendations from the DEI Audit
- Share ideas for ways to respond to the audit
- Collect feedback from the audit themes, recommendations and ideas for how to respond

Assistant Superintendent Siet discussed the audit metrics and focus areas that included the survey and focus groups during the spring of 2022, participant numbers, survey participation results throughout the student body, staff and community members and the focus areas. Mr. Siet stated that there were four major themes:

- Theme 1: Voice and Decision Making:
 - Creating an avenue for all to speak and share perspectives
 - Effective staff and administrator relationships
 - Support for issues
 - Opportunities for staff/ supervisor interactions
- Theme 2: Sense of Belonging and Culture/ Climate
 - Invested parent community
 - Commitment to social emotional learning
 - Continued interest in stress and mental health for students including the impact of the Pandemic and residual effects
 - Exploration of opportunities for school transitions from elementary school to middle school
 - HIB Education and remediation strategies/ programs
 - Inclusivity training
- Theme 3: Communication
 - Effective district wide communication/ outreach into the community
 - Accessible building administrators
 - Accessibility to Board of Education meetings
 - Clear student expectations
 - A potential for a clear and cohesive communication calendar
 - Ways to increase caregiver involvement
 - Continuous reflection and follow up
- Theme 4: Disproportionality/ Access
 - Strong support for struggling learners
 - Ease of access to technology
 - Increase communication for discipline response/ consequences
 - Implement restorative practices
 - Increase staff diversity
 - Increase awareness of advanced level class opportunities for Special Education students.

Assistant Superintendent Siet discussed possible next steps that included increasing community outreach, school based equity teams, a Comprehensive Equity Plan/ needs assessment utilizing school teams and stakeholders, student club review-access and representation and a speaker series for students with regard to awareness.

Assistant Superintendent Siet provided discussion questions to the community and the desired feedback and follow up ideas.

To view the presentation please click [here](#).

XIX. Public Comment

Comments from the public may be reviewed by clicking [here](#).

XX. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Light and seconded by Mr. Salmon and approved by all present, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Beth Brooks
Acting Board Secretary