

**BERNARDS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
BASKING RIDGE, NEW JERSEY
MINUTES INDEX
FEBRUARY 8, 2021
REGULAR SESSION 5:30 P.M.
EXECUTIVE SESSION 5:31 P.M.
REGULAR SESSION 7:02 P.M.
VIRTUAL MEETING - INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPATE
IN THE VIRTUAL MEETING WILL BE POSTED BY 6:00PM
ON FEBRUARY 8, 2021 AT WWW.BERNARDSBOE.COM**

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**BERNARDS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
BASKING RIDGE, NEW JERSEY
MEETING MINUTES
FEBRUARY 8, 2021
REGULAR SESSION 5:30 P.M.
EXECUTIVE SESSION 5:31 P.M.
REGULAR SESSION 7:02 P.M.
VIRTUAL MEETING - INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPATE
IN THE VIRTUAL MEETING WILL BE POSTED BY 6:00PM
ON FEBRUARY 8, 2021 AT WWW.BERNARDSBOE.COM**

I. Regular Session – Call to Order – 5:30 p.m.

II. Salute to the Flag

III. Roll Call

Present: Ms. Beckman, Ms. Gray, Ms. Korn, Ms. McKeon, Ms. Richman,
Mr. Salmon, Ms. Schafer, Ms. White, Mr. Markarian, Mr. Siet, Ms. Fox,
Mr. McLaughlin, Board Counsel John Croot

ABSENT: None

IV. Executive Session – 5:31 p.m.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Bernards Township Board of Education shall meet in closed session to discuss item(s) a, b, e, f, g and h 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 Ms. McKeon and seconded by Ms. Richman and approved by all present, the Board recessed into closed executive session at 5:33p.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. Schafer seconded by Ms. McKeon and approved by all present, the Board closed the Executive Session at 6:55p.m.

V. Reconvene Regular Session – Call to Order – 7:02 p.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 the Open Public Meetings Act.

Due to the public health emergency in the State of New Jersey, as declared in Executive Order 103, the Board will be suspending its normal meeting procedures this evening and conducting a virtual meeting. Directions for accessing the virtual public meeting were posted on the District website: www.bernardsboe.com. These same directions were posted at our intended but unavailable meeting location.

We very much welcome input from the public. Because this is a virtual meeting, public comment will be handled in one of three ways:

PUBLIC COMMENT METHOD 1 (PREFERRED) - FULL VIDEO VIA ZOOM

Step 1: When you are ready to make a public comment, join the Board of Education meeting via the Zoom link posted on the district webpage www.bernardsboe.com. Please plan for your participation in the meeting by:

- Turning your camera and microphone on
- Dressing appropriately
- Maintaining a proper background setting for your camera's view
- Having a quiet space
- Muting the YouTube live stream of the Board of Education meeting when you are speaking so that there is no feedback with your participation in the Zoom meeting

Step 2: You will be placed in a queue and admitted to the meeting when it is your turn to make a public comment. Once you see that you are admitted to the Zoom call it will be your turn to make your public comment. Please begin your public comment by stating your full name and address.

Step 3: After making your public comment please exit the Zoom meeting so that the next person waiting to make a public comment can be admitted.

PUBLIC COMMENT METHOD 2 - DIAL-IN VIA ZOOM (VOICE ONLY)

Step 1: When you are ready to make a public comment, join the Zoom meeting using the dial in phone number and meeting ID posted on the district website www.bernardsboe.com. Please plan for your participation in the meeting by:

- Having a quiet space
- Muting the YouTube live stream of the Board of Education meeting when you are speaking so that there is no feedback with your participation in the Zoom meeting

Step 2: You will be placed in a queue and admitted to the meeting when it is your turn to make a public comment. Once you see that you are admitted to the Zoom call it will be your turn to make your public comment. Please begin your public comment by stating your full name and address.

Step 3: After making your public comment please exit the Zoom meeting so that the next person waiting to make a public comment can be admitted.

PUBLIC COMMENT METHOD 3

If the preferred full video method of public comment is not an option for you and the dial-in method fails, please follow these directions to submit your public comment.

Step 1: Starting at 7PM: email your comment to BTConnect@bernardsboe.com or text your comment to (908) 292-3047.

Step 2: Use PUBLIC COMMENT as the email subject or start of a text message.

Step 3: Indicate your first and last name and address. ***THIS IS REQUIRED FOR YOUR PUBLIC COMMENT TO BE INCLUDED.***

Regardless of whether you use method 1, 2 or 3 for public comment please note that:

- Public comments are limited to a maximum of approximately 3 minutes if read aloud.

- Individuals are permitted a maximum of one public comment during public comment on agenda items. Individuals are permitted a maximum of one public comment during public comment on non-agenda items.
- Public comments submitted via method 1 and 2 will be processed first, then comments submitted by method 3. An individual's comments made using method 1 or 2 will not also be read into the record through method 3.
- The Board of Education reserves the right to limit the length of time allotted for public comment (for both agenda items and non-agenda items). In the event that time limitations prohibit the reading of a public comment received pursuant to these instructions, the comment will be published as part of the meeting minutes.
- No public comments will be accepted before 7PM or after item XXII. Board Forum of the agenda begins.

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 may or may not respond to public comments. 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 providing comments. 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 commenting 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.

Resolution

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Bernards Township Board of Education hereby approves the suspension of its normal meeting procedures pursuant to By-Law 131, and authorizes this meeting to be conducted as a virtual meeting, as described in the Statement of Public Notice, due to the public health emergency declared in Executive Order 103.

VII. Student Representative - Juliet Nolt

Ms. Nolt provided an update regarding the transition at Ridge High School into the second trimester of school and noted that students have concerns regarding the drop schedule and accessibility of music programs.

VIII. Statements from Candidates for Board Vacancy

The candidates were asked to provide written materials including a background statement, qualifications, philosophy of public education, role of a board member and committee interest.

- 1) Ruchika Hira
- 2) Farheen Qadir

Each candidate read a prepared statement.

IX. Second Executive Session – Start 7:22 p.m. – Return to Regular Session 7:54 p.m.

On motion by Ms. Korn seconded by Mr. Salmon, and approved by all present, the Board recessed into the second closed executive session at 7:22p.m.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Bernards Township Board of Education shall meet in closed session to discuss: personnel and contract negotiations; matters of litigation; confidential student matters; and further

BE IT RESOLVED that the matters discussed in closed session will be disclosed to the public as soon as and to the extent that such disclosure can be made without adversely affecting the public interest or without violation of the confidentiality of personnel.

On motion by Ms. White seconded by Ms. Korn and approved by all present, the Board closed the Second Executive Session at 7:52 p.m.

President Gray reconvened the regular meeting at 7:54p.m.

X. Appointment of New Board Member

- 1) Elect New Board Member
- 2) Administer Oath of Office
- 3) Issue Code of Ethics

President Gray thanked each candidate for their willingness to serve noting that both candidates were qualified and that choosing one candidate is a tough decision for the Board.

Ms. Beckman made a motion, seconded by Ms. Schafer, to nominate Ruchika Hira to fill the vacancy on the Board of Education. Ms. Gray asked if there were any other nominations. There were none. The Board of Education then passed the motion to appoint Ruchika Hira to the Board of Education to fill the current vacancy with the following roll call vote:

“Ayes” - Ms. Beckman, Ms. Gray, Ms. Korn, Ms. McKeon, Ms. Richman, Mr. Salmon, Ms. Schafer and Ms. White
 “Noes” - None
 “Abstain” - None

Board Secretary Rod McLaughlin administered the Oath of Office to Ms. Hira as the newly elected Board Member.

Ms. Gray congratulated Ms. Hira and welcomed her to the Board of Education.

XI. Board Presentation

1) 2019, 2020 State and Local Assessments - Kristin Fox, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum & Instruction

Assistant Superintendent Fox provided a summary of the focus of the report, teaching and learning, and the learning process. Ms. Fox noted that the students' mental health and well-being is a priority although it is not the focus of the presentation.

Assistant Superintendent Fox provided a summary of the state reporting guidelines and a description of the New Jersey Student Learning Assessment (NJSLA). Ms. Fox described both the areas of strength and areas warranting further exploration in both ELA and Mathematics. Ms. Fox also described the state assessment graduation requirements.

Assistant Superintendent Fox discussed other assessment results such as the MAP assessment and how assessments are a critical component of teaching so that instructors and administrators may make adjustments accordingly. Ms. Fox discussed the background and logistics of the MAP assessment. Ms. Fox discussed virtual versus blended MAP results, a comparison of MAP district and national mean RIT scores, an analysis of fall MAP results in both Math and Language Arts, report card indicators and grades and strategies for monitoring student engagement. Ms. Fox discussed current and future planning for assessments and provided parent tools and resources.

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

Board members asked for clarification regarding the results of the MAP assessments with regard to timing, diagnostics, student supports and capacity to assess.

XII. Superintendent's Report

BE IT RESOLVED THAT

1) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby affirm receipt of the **HIB Report** dated February 8, 2021.

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

“Ayes” - Ms. Beckman, Ms. Gray, Ms. Hira, Ms. Korn, Ms. McKeon,
Ms. Richman, Mr. Salmon, Ms. Schafer and Ms. White
“Noes” - None
“Abstain” - None

Superintendent Markarian welcomed Ms. Hira to the Board of Education and thanked Ms. Qadir for her interest, provided an update regarding recent webpage issues, provided a link to an article noting that our schools are successfully managing to stay open by implementing the CDC mitigation strategies, programs other districts are using for instruction, a follow up from the January 25, 2021 Board of Education meeting noting that kindergarten and first grade are now attending in-person instruction daily and projected start dates for students through fifth grade, balancing in-person instruction for A and B cohorts and adjustments made to the schedule due to full virtual days as a result of recent weather complications and the COVID-19 activity index update.

To view the Superintendent's Report click [here](#).

XIII. Public Comment on Agenda Items

Public comments were made with regard to the role of the school nurse and importance of the role of the school nurse in the district, concerns about the plan for return to full in-person instruction, questions regarding teacher in-person attendance and the curriculum and a specific issue of COVID-19 testing, contact tracing and quarantine restrictions.

Superintendent Markarian noted the issue with contract tracing that needs to be addressed on an individual level citing the assistance of Assistant Superintendent Siet. Mr. Markarian discussed the goal for the 2021-22 School Year as being full in-person instruction and pointed out that there could be factors that affect this. Mr. Markarian further stated he would like to achieve full in-person instruction by the end of the current school year.

XIV. Approval of Minutes

BE IT RESOLVED THAT

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

January 25, 2021 - Executive Session Minutes

January 25, 2021 - Regular Session Minutes

On motion by Ms. McKeon seconded by Ms. White the foregoing were approved by the following roll call vote:

“Ayes” - Ms. Beckman, Ms. Gray, Ms. Korn, Ms. McKeon, Ms. Richman,
Mr. Salmon, Ms. Schafer, and Ms. White

“Noes” - None

“Abstain” - Ms. Hira

XV. Finance Committee Report

BE IT RESOLVED THAT

1) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby approve a list of disbursements dated February 8, 2021 consisting of warrants in the amount of \$4,256,646.70.

2) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby approve the following field trip destinations for the 2020-21 school year:

<u>Destination:</u>	<u>Group Attending:</u>	<u># of Students:</u>	<u>Date(s):</u>
Bernards High School	Ridge Dance Team	25	03/26/2021, 03/27/2021 and 03/28/2021
Delta Hotels, Woodbridge, NJ	Ridge Dance Team	25	02/19/2021, 02/20/2021 and 02/21/2021
Hilton, East Brunswick, NJ	Ridge Dance Team	25	03/05/2021, 03/06/2021 and 03/07/2021
Virtual NJ High School Dance Fest	Ridge Dance Team	25	03/13/2021

3) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby accept a donation from the Liberty Corner PTO in the amount of \$4,900.00 for additional playground equipment.

4) The Bernards Township Board of Education hereby accepts a bequest from the David F. Thompson Living Trust in the amount of \$15,000.00 for the Ridge High School Media Center in honor of Richard Thomson, Harold B. Thomson and Elinor F. Thomson and authorizes the School Business Administrator to execute any paperwork necessary to complete the bequest.

On motion by Ms. Korn, seconded by Ms. White Items #1-4 were approved by the following roll call vote:

“Ayes” - Ms. Beckman, Ms. Gray, Ms. Korn, Ms. McKeon, Ms. Richman,
Mr. Salmon, Ms. Schafer and Ms. White
“Noes” - None
“Abstain” - Ms. Hira

Mr. Salmon provided a summary of the finance items and thanked the Thompson Family for their bequest.

XVI. Personnel Committee Report

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby approve the following personnel items upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools:

- 1) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby Terminate Employee #6840 effective January 31, 2021.
- 2) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby accept the resignation of **James Sheerin** Instructional Aide William Annin Middle School effective March 4, 2021.
- 3) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby rescind the resignation of **Samantha DeSanto** Instructional Aide William Annin Middle School effective January 25, 2021.
- 4) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby rescind the following Extra-Curricular Assignments:

Sean Ulicny	Freshman Baseball RHS
Michele Mannix	Assistant Softball RHS
Rachel Miranda	Assistant Musical-Choreographer .5 RHS
- 5) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby approve an paid Child Care Leave for **Danielle Clement** Instructional Aide Mount Prospect School effective March 3, 2021 through May 4, 2021 utilizing 37 personal illness days and 2 personal

days then an unpaid child care leave effective May 5, 2021 through June 18, 2021, returning September 1, 2021.

6) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby approve the following **Change in Assignments** for the 2020-21 school year:

<u>Staff Member:</u>	<u>From:</u>	<u>To:</u>
Melanie Sackie	Staff College Peter H. Reynolds Author Study for K-2 Teachers New 4 hours \$700.00	Staff College Peter H. Reynolds Author Study for K-2 Teachers New 6 hours \$1,050.00
Sarah Finer	Grade 2 Teacher Cedar Hill School at a salary of Step 1-4 MA \$59,355 effective February 17, 2021 through June 30, 2021. Certificate of Eligibility w/Advanced Standing-Mentoring required. Salary to be prorated to reflect start date	Grade 2 Teacher Cedar Hill School at a salary of Step 1-4 MA \$59,355 effective February 11, 2021 through June 30, 2021. Certificate of Eligibility w/Advanced Standing-Mentoring required. Salary to be prorated to reflect start date

7) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby appoint **Janelle Kennedy** Art Teacher Mount Prospect School at a salary of 6 BA \$56,622 effective February 22, 2021 through June 30, 2021. Salary to be prorated to reflect start date.

8) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby appoint **Philip Marton** Social Studies Teacher William Annin Middle School at a salary of Step 1-3 BA \$52,872 effective March 29, 2021 through June 30, 2021 as a leave replacement. Certificate of Eligibility w/Advanced Standing-Mentoring required. Salary to be prorated to reflect start date.

9) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby appoint **Francine Luther** School Lunch Aide Oak Street School at a salary of \$19.63 per hour 4.5 hours per day effective on or before February 12, 2021 through June 18, 2021.

10) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby approve the following **Various Assignments** for the 2020-21 school year:

<u>Staff Member:</u>	<u>Assignment:</u>	<u>Salary:</u>
Wyman Wong	Extra Section Ensemble Class WAMS 2/11/21-6/30/21	\$1,057 per month

Clay Beyert	Extra Section Ensemble Class WAMS 2/11/21-6/30/21	\$1,057 per month
Dan Zugale	Extra Section Ensemble Class WAMS 2/11/21-6/30/21	\$1,057 per month
Theresa Emma	Extra Section Entrepreneurs RHS 3/1/21-6/30/21	\$1,057 per month
Heidi Fox	Extra Section Entrepreneurs RHS 3/1/21-6/30/21	\$1,057 per month
Dawn Piper	Extra Section Entrepreneurs RHS 3/1/21-6/30/21	\$1,057 per month

11) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby approve the following **Staff College Instructors** for the 2020-21 school year:

<u>Staff Member:</u>	<u>Course:</u>	<u># of hours:</u>	<u>Salary:</u>
Chiara Kupiec	Communicating in the Classroom	7.5	\$562.50
Vicki Daglian	Communicating in the Classroom	7.5	\$562.50

12) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby approve the following **Substitute Teachers** at a salary of \$105.00 per diem with a Valid County Substitute Certificate, \$115.00 per diem with a Valid New Jersey Instructional Certificate and **Substitute Nurses** at a salary of \$250.00 per diem 2020-21 school year. Substitute teachers with a Valid County Substitute Certificate who have earned longevity will be paid at a salary of \$115.00 per diem. Substitutes with a Valid New Jersey Instructional Certificate who have earned longevity will be paid at a salary of \$125.00 per diem:

Philip Marton

On motion by Ms. Schafer seconded by Ms. McKeon Items #1-12 were approved by the following roll call vote:

“Ayes” - Ms. Beckman, Ms. Gray, Ms. Korn, Ms. McKeon, Ms. Richman,
Mr. Salmon, Ms. Schafer and Ms. White
“Noes” - None
“Abstain” - Ms. Hira

XVII. Policy Committee Report

No report.

XVIII. Curriculum Committee Report

BE IT RESOLVED THAT

1) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby approve the addition of the following **New Courses**:

<u>Proposed Title:</u>	<u>School:</u>	<u>School Year:</u>
Advanced Theater Directing and Production	Ridge High School	2021-22
Introduction to Computer Programming	Ridge High School	2022-23

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

“Ayes” - Ms. Beckman, Ms. Gray, Ms. Korn, Ms. McKeon, Ms. Richman,
Mr. Salmon, Ms. Schafer and Ms. White
 “Noes” - None
 “Abstain” - Ms. Hira

Ms. White provided a report from the February 5, 2021 Curriculum Committee meeting. Topics included Physical Education 9: Introduction to Fitness/Wellness and Introduction to Sport, upcoming committee meeting dates, the bridge year pilot program, a scheduling update for the 2021-22 School Year, a summer curriculum writing update, elementary adjustments, math criteria, a summer intervention update and a midyear status update regarding grade entry into Genesis.

XIX. Wellness Committee Report

No Report.

XX. Liaison Committee Reports

Ms. Richman reported on the SCESC meeting in which transportation and weather conditions were discussed. Ms. Gray discussed the “Upstanders” presentation noting that it was worth watching and very powerful.

XXI. Public Comment on Non-agenda Items

Comments from the public thanked the coaches and staff, teachers and administrators, who have worked diligently for the students in the community, a question regarding the criteria and data used for the determination of opening the schools to full in-person

instruction, concerns about weather impairing the use of the track by the Ridge High School Track Team, full day instruction versus the shortened day instruction, a question regarding AP exams, questions regarding the return to in-person instruction and student and staff data presented on the COVID-19 dashboard.

Superintendent Markarian addressed the metrics being used for full in-person instruction opening, vaccination numbers of staff, commented on the historical decision to shovel the track and referred to Assistant Superintendent Fox regarding upcoming AP exams who responded to the public question.

Ms. Gray inquired about a tarp that had been purchased to cover the track. Business Administrator McLaughlin described the established procedure for snow removal with regard to the use of the tarp and noted that he is working on finding out why the plan was not implemented by maintenance during the past storm. Board members expressed their frustration with the snow removal process for the Ridge High School Track. Board members discussed temporarily using another facility in which students may train.

XXII. Board Forum

Ms. White discussed the forward momentum of the district in the full return to in-person instruction plan.

Ms. Gray read a prepared statement on behalf of the Board of Education relative to the issue of in-person Board of Education meetings citing that the main goal of the district is to have the students return to in-person instruction first without utilizing resources that need to be used to accomplish that goal.

XXIII. Adjournment

On motion by Mr. Salmon and seconded by Ms. Korn and approved by all present, the meeting was adjourned at 11:18p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rod McLaughlin
Board Secretary