

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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February 12, 2015

Dear Parent/Guardian:

You may recall that last year I sent you several letters regarding two important issues: PARCC testing and drug use among students. At this time I would like to share a brief update with you on the two issues since they both remain important.

First, the PARCC test. Very simply the PARCC test is the new test the state is using to satisfy the annual standardized testing requirement that has been in place a long time. The PARCC test measures students in both mathematics and language arts and is replacing the old tests (NJASK grades 3 to 8 and HSPA grade 11). The PARCC test is different in that it will now also be given to students in grades 9 and 10. Additionally, students will take the PARCC test on a computer. A child's scores on the PARCC test will have absolutely no impact on the grades that they receive each marking period from their classroom teachers. Also, the PARCC test results will not be reported back to schools until October 2015 at the earliest so they will have no impact on student course placements for the start of school in September.

There has been some buzz around the state and country about the PARCC test so I'd like to try and reassure you that while the test is different, it is simply one standardized test replacing another. Students in New Jersey have taken the state's standardized tests for years, so this is nothing new – just a different format for testing and a new version of the state test. The law in New Jersey is that all students are expected to take the PARCC test; it is possible that there could be negative consequences for our schools and district if students refuse the test. Please know that we are planning on supporting our students and making this testing process as simple as possible for everyone. We ask you to support us as we do our jobs. Please send your child to school well-rested, well-fed and ready to go on the testing days. We will be encouraging all the children not to worry, but to simply do their best and we would ask you to do the same. For complete information on the PARCC test, including school testing schedules and sample test items, please refer to our website [here](#).

Secondly, I wanted to update you on our progress in our efforts to deter student use of controlled dangerous substances. We are still making our plans to conduct a canine sweep at Ridge High School sometime this year. Also, we are days away from rolling out our Voluntary Random Drug Testing program for students in grades 6 to 12. We have purchased the necessary test kits to screen the students. We have obtained the requisite equipment to create the proper school facilities at Ridge and Annin so that we can have the right conditions for screening the students. Finally, we have completed our online selection system and are now testing it to make sure parents can quickly and easily make the required selection for all grade 6 to 12 students. Please remember that when the selection system goes live parents must make a selection for all grade 6 to 12 students to either enroll them into the testing pool or not. There are no consequences for not enrolling a child into the program, but selections must be made for all grade 6 to 12 students. Please stay tuned as the system will be posted to the district website in the next few days.

Sincerely,



Nick Markarian