

**BERNARDS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

Monday, January 8, 2024

9:00 a.m.

Board Office Conference Room

**In Attendance: Nick Markarian, Nimish Amin, Janice Corrado, Robin McKeon,
Keith Molinari, Stephanie Smith**

AGENDA

I. Discussion

1. [R 5530.1 - Student Voluntary Random Drug Testing \(Revised\)](#)

The change to this regulation does not require board action, but Mr. Markarian wanted the board and public to be aware of it. The district's voluntary random drug testing program and policy were established about 10 years ago. If parents want to opt their grade 6-12 children into the district's voluntary random drug testing program, they have this option in Genesis at the beginning of each school year. The program costs about \$6,000 a year and about a third of the district's 6-12 students are enrolled. The district also has a separate suspicion based drug testing policy which is triggered if staff members have cause to be concerned about a student being under the influence at school. Students can also be tested by NJSIAA if they are on a sports team. Parents sign the paperwork for this when they fill out the athletic paperwork.

The only change to the regulation is a procedural one involving the processing of the urine samples. The district has been using testing collection cups that give an initial reading of the sample, which could show negative or "non-negative" results (this did not confirm the presence of drugs). If a sample was "non-negative," it was sent to the lab for further testing. The cost of the cups was significant, and it has been established the cost to send out all the samples would be comparable. The benefit is that there is no gray area, which could cause temporary unnecessary concern or stress in the case of a student whose sample was "non-negative" but ended up being negative for drugs. In addition, the testing company will randomly select the students for testing, which removes that responsibility from the district. It is also faster to collect samples. A form was made available last week in Genesis to make parents aware of this change.

2. [P 2419 - School Threat Assessment Teams \(New\)](#)

3. [R 2419 - School Threat Assessment Teams \(New\)](#)

4. [R 8468 - Crisis Response \(Revised\)](#)

The district is required to have a new policy and regulation based on a new statute from the state that specifies who has to be on school threat assessment teams. Threat assessment teams have been in place at each school but we did not adopt this new policy until now because we wanted to incorporate language from our old policy 8468, which identified all types of crisis responses and make the old policy consistent with the new policy and regulation. The district's Director of Security, Hank Werner, is on all the teams, along with the district SRO and SLEOs, principals, counselors or school psychologists, and teachers. The language in pink in the new policy and regulation P2419 and R2419 is from the existing crisis response policy 8468. This existing policy deals with a variety of crisis responses including responses to threat of harm to self or

others, the loss of a student or staff member, bullying and teasing, and violence. The language in purple is now part of the new policy and regulation 2419.

We have always assigned a level of threat, so the mechanism is the same as what we have historically been doing. There are three levels of threat: the level determines whether a student needs an assessment, who will be doing the assessment, and whether the student needs to be held out of school on home instruction while the assessment is being conducted. There are two types of threat assessments: suicide interventions and violence interventions. The violence prevention report that is used by the team when assessing a threat is linked in the policy if people are interested in reading it. Board members asked about trends in the quantity of reports and Ms. Smith explained that while violence interventions have remained stable over the past years (at around one a month), suicide interventions have increased significantly. Data on these is presented annually in the Counseling Department's Trends in Mental Health report. Board members asked if sometimes these interventions involved HIB and Ms. Smith said that there is some overlap between these assessments and HIB investigations.

III. Second Reading

There are no changes since first reading

5. [P 8451 - Control of Communicable Diseases \(M\) \(Revised\)](#)
6. [Revised 2024-25 School District Calendar](#)