

Bernards Township Board of Education

Personnel Committee Minutes

January 19, 2024

9:00 AM

**In Attendance: Sean Siet, Nick Markarian, Kristin Fox, Russ Lazovick, Csilla Csipak,
Robin McKeon, Keith Molinari, Jennifer White**

CONFIDENTIAL UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED
(confidential sections will be redacted when reported out and posted)

1. Summer Reading

Dr. Lazovick explained that Ridge is one of only a few high schools that allow students to participate in the selection of summer reading books. At most schools, there is a static list of summer reading books for each ELA class and level and students are assigned the books. Instead, for the past several years, Ridge has run March Madness. The book choices change each year. Staff members prescreen books (from a large list of 40-50 titles suggested by students and staff) to make sure the books are appropriate and then students who choose to meet at lunch/opportunity period to work with several staff members to narrow the list to 16 books (of varying genres and styles). The entire student body then participates in rounds of voting during March Madness. The final four winners become the summer reading choices for the entire student body--students choose which one to read. In September, senior students lead discussion groups with students in all 4 grades. March Madness is a great program: it builds school spirit and culture, helps students develop a love of reading, provides leadership opportunities for students, and facilitates bonding between grades. Two teachers lead the entire process, from communicating and assigning the teachers who will read and prescreen the books, leading the student groups at lunch/opportunity period, organizing the March Madness voting process, doing curriculum writing to design the discussion groups, develop website, and organizing and overseeing the discussion groups in the fall.

[REDACTED]

It was requested that the Board consider compensating the staff for the March Madness program. The committee was unanimous that they

would like to see March Madness continue and asked Dr. Lazovick and Ms. Fox to discuss the options further and report back to the committee at the next meeting.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

3. In House Bus Drivers

In response to the driver shortage, Mr. Siet proposed ideas to encourage staff members to get their CDL (for the smaller vehicles or for large buses). We pay for staff members to get their CDL. In the last contract, we had added a \$1,000 bonus and \$3,000 bonus for getting CDL but staff do not get the bonuses until they have driven 20 hours. Mr. Siet suggested giving the bonus right away instead and also increasing the hourly wage for driving from \$35 per hour to \$45 per hour. It was also decided to keep contract BTEA contract language relative to the \$3000 which states they need to drive 20 hours before receiving said bonus. The committee asked Mr. Siet to make a chart showing the cost savings if a staff member was able to cover a route, and also if they drove to athletic events. Mr. Siet is planning to advertise an information session for staff to learn about the opportunities to earn extra money by getting their CDL and driving for the district.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

4) Several buildings also have township rec camps running in the summer and a bad actor would not know whether the students are there for school or for camp. The Committee asked Mr. Markarian to follow up with the township about the idea of sharing the cost, since their rec camp programs are also in the schools in the summer. Committee will discuss this issue further at the next meeting.

5. Staff Survey on Start Times

Mr. Markarian gave a brief update on the results of the survey and will report out further to the board and public. As of the committee meeting, 666 staff had completed the survey and the deadline was later that day. 8 percent indicated they would leave their jobs if we went with the Triple Tiering option and 2-3 percent said they would leave if we went with the double tiering or 1 ½ tier option. Ridge staff expressed concerns about the late dismissal time in several of the options--many staff members would have child care issues and costs and have other jobs after school. Elementary staff also expressed concerns about late dismissal times, including the fact that young students are not “available for learning” that late in the afternoon. There will be another meeting with the BTEA leadership to discuss.

6. Staff Requests for ‘24-’25 -Red indicates confidential information

Mr. Siet said that right now, the only staffing requests are 1) a PE/Health teacher for Ridge to mitigate large class sizes 2) a floating K-5 counselor that has been discussed this year. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

7. Question about class size at MP/LC

A board member asked questions about the class size report, noting that 4th grade classes at Mount Prospect are smaller than at the other elementary schools. Mr. Siet and Mr. Markarian explained the process used to try to balance classes each summer, noting that all attempts to stay within district class size guidelines are made. Student needs also influence decision that principals make about which grades to add or remove a section from. Last minute move ins and move outs are difficult to predict and just by the nature of dividing students into sections, it never comes out perfectly. Each year there are a few grades at a few schools that end up with smaller or larger class sizes than at the other buildings.

8. Review [1/22 agenda](#)

9. [Vacant positions](#) (standing item) Positions are always advertised on the district website (attach link)