

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

101 Peachtree Road
Basking Ridge, New Jersey 07920
www.bernardsboe.com

Nick Markarian
Superintendent of Schools

Phone: 908-204-2600
Fax: 908-766-7641
e-mail: nmarkarian@bernardsboe.com

August 11, 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I hope you and your family have been enjoying a healthy and happy summer! Typically I would not be writing to you for another week or two, but I wanted to specifically highlight something new that I did not want to get lost in my welcome-back-to-school letter. The special news is that our district is changing to a new Student Information System (SIS) effective August 28, 2017.

The decision to move to a new SIS came only after years of work. District staff and parents alike have sought enhancements to our SIS for quite some time. Consequently, a committee of district employees worked over many months to develop a request for proposals which allowed the district to receive multiple options for consideration. Ultimately the district selected Aspen. Some of the benefits of moving to Aspen include: more robust data reporting, the ability to create workflows to automate time consuming tasks and the ability to integrate and sync with other software we use to generate efficiencies and a single source of information.

The actual process of moving our student data from ESchool to Aspen and then validating it, has been on-going for many months. But that is just the tip of the iceberg. Moving from one SIS to another also requires that the new SIS be configured to the district's local needs – this provides a wonderful opportunity to evaluate processes to make them better, more efficient and more user-friendly. For example, when we worked with Aspen to configure our end of course grade calculation we were able to adjust the method to one that is much simpler for users to understand (refer to 2017-2018 student/parent handbooks). Another example is the way we configure Aspen for students and parents to access information from home.

The current student information system that we have been using for many years and that you are likely familiar with is called ESchool. The parent/student portal to ESchool that you have been accessing from home is called the Home Access Center. In Aspen, the connection from home is done via the Aspen *Student* Portal or the Aspen *Parent* Portal. Children in the same family have separate accounts and parents can too. Right away you will see one of the benefits of the new system! Children will no longer be able to view their sibling's grade reports while they view their own.

We are so excited to grow Aspen over time in a way that increasingly serves the needs of students, staff and parents. On Monday, August 21st principals will be sending letters home via email or Friday Folder about how to begin accessing Aspen from home. We will start by opening the Aspen *Student* Portal on our "go-live" date of August 28, 2017 so that students can access their course schedules for the 2017-2018 school year. The Aspen *Parent* Portal will be open on or about October 1, 2017. Please be on the lookout in your email in-box for these letters from principals as well as my welcome-back-to-school letter; they will all be coming very soon!

Enjoy what remains of your summer and thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Nick Markarian