

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

Have you ever noticed that when people get together and have dialogue about a particular topic that certain points related to the subject always seem to become central to the discussion? Maybe you have noticed this when you are at a party and you are talking about relationships. Themes of listening, understanding and mutual sacrifice prevail. Or you are watching the news and it is always politics and the economy. Or maybe you are with friends talking about football before the kickoff and the same keys to the game are brought up again and again (yes, turnovers!). There is probably a good vocabulary word for this. I was a math teacher, not a language arts teacher so I'm not sure. Maybe if they had Membean when I was in school I would know. I suppose the phenomenon is just another symptom of the aging process. I'll just call it conversational *deja vu*.

When talking about school and education (I do this a lot) I experience quite a bit of conversational *deja vu*. Conversational *deja vu* is not a bad thing, in fact it is a good thing, when you recognize it, it really helps you identify what matters to people. Recently, themes of assessment/grades and homework have been at the forefront of many of my educational conversations; these are timeless hot topics for educators, parents and students alike. For this reason, I have given some reminders to staff and I wanted to also make sure parents were aware of basic philosophy and procedures.

Paraphrasing our policy, the purpose of homework is to extend learning outside of the classroom, it should be meaningful and further the learning or instructional concepts presented in class. Specifics regarding the approximate amount of time homework should take at various grade levels is described in our regulation [here](#). The purpose of grading and assessment is to measure progress toward achieving the educational goals and objectives of the instructional program. Tracking and reporting pupil progress is critical in the process of learning. Teachers using the Home Access Center to post grades do so in two week cycles or more frequently. More district information on grading can be found [here](#).

As is so often the case in teaching and learning, the heart of the action lies between individual teachers, students, and parents. It is for this reason that communication between instructor, pupil and parent is so important. If you have questions related to homework and/or assessment, I strongly encourage direct communication with the teacher. Our teachers are wonderful but if for some reason they are not able to help, we also have super department supervisors and building principals who are excellent resources for assistance.

Speaking of communication, I wanted to close with two reminders. Back in January I shared with you our district goals and mentioned that some surveys would be coming this spring – well spring is finally here, so please be on the lookout for surveys on school climate in the next few weeks. Finally, I wanted to you remind you of the [letter](#) Jillian Shadis sent last week where you were invited to a parent presentation on Wednesday, May 17th at 7PM in the Ridge High School Performing Arts Center. George Scott Ed. S., M.F.T, and Statewide Resource Coordinator for the Traumatic Loss Coalitions for Youth will be presenting on recovering from suicide and other sudden losses. The flyer is available [here](#).

Thank you for your attention and support.

Sincerely,



Nick Markarian