

**BERNARDS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
BASKING RIDGE, NEW JERSEY
MEETING INDEX
JANUARY 4, 2021
REORGANIZATION OF BOARD INDEX 7:03 P.M.
REGULAR SESSION 7:10 P.M.
VIRTUAL MEETING - INSTRUCTIONS TO PARTICIPATE
IN THE VIRTUAL MEETING WILL BE POSTED BY 6:00PM
ON JANUARY 4, 2021 AT WWW.BERNARDSBOE.COM**

- I. **Salute to the Flag** – page 227
- II. **Statement of Public Meeting Notice** – page 227
- III. **Reorganization of Board - 7:03 p.m.** – page 230
- IV. **Oath of Office** – page 230
- V. **Roll Call of New Board** – page 230
- VI. **Election of Board President** – page 230
- VII. **Election of Board Vice President** – page 230
- VIII. **Regular Session Agenda - 7:10 p.m.** – page 231
- IX. **Approval of 2021 Board of Education Meeting Schedule** – page 231
- X. **Distribute Ethics Act & Administer Code of Ethics** – page 232
- XI. **Student Representative - Juliet Nolt** – page 232
- XII. **Superintendent’s Report** – page 232
- XIII. **Public Comment on Agenda Items** – page 233
- XIV. **Approval of Minutes** – page 233
- XV. **Finance Committee Report**
 - 1) Approve **List of Disbursements** Dated January 4, 2021 – page 234
 - 2) Approve **Out-of-District Placement** 2020-21 School Year – page 234
 - 3) Approve **Stipulation of Settlement** – page 234

- XVI. **Personnel Committee Report** – page 234
Report on Progress
- XVII. **Policy Committee Report** – page 234
Report on Progress
- XVIII. **Curriculum Committee Report** – page 234
Report on Progress
- XIX. **Wellness Committee Report** – page 234
Report on Progress
- XX. **Liaison Committee Reports** – page 235
Report on Progress
- XXI. **Public Comment on Non-agenda Items** – page 235
- XXII. **Board Forum** – page 235
- XXIII. **Executive Session – 9:12 p.m.** – page 235
- XXIV. **Reconvene Regular Session – Call to Order – 10:25 p.m.** – page 236
- XXV. **Adjournment** – page 236

**BERNARDS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION
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MEETING AGENDA
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- I. **Salute to the Flag - 7:03 p.m.**

- II. **Statement of Public Meeting Notice**

This is a regular Meeting of the Board of Education of Bernards Township. Notice of the time and place of this meeting was provided and copies of that resolution were forwarded to the official newspapers as designated by the Board of Education and to the Township Clerk and a copy of the notice was posted on the bulletin board of the Board of Education Offices in accordance with the Open Public Meetings Act.

Due to the public health emergency in the State of New Jersey, as declared in Executive Order 103, the Board will be suspending its normal meeting procedures this evening and conducting a virtual meeting. Directions for accessing the virtual public meeting were posted on the District website: www.bernardsboe.com. These same directions were posted at our intended but unavailable meeting location.

We very much welcome input from the public. Because this is a virtual meeting, public comment will be handled in one of three ways:

PUBLIC COMMENT METHOD 1 (PREFERRED) - FULL VIDEO VIA ZOOM

Step 1: When you are ready to make a public comment, join the Board of Education meeting via the Zoom link posted on the district webpage www.bernardsboe.com. Please plan for your participation in the meeting by:

- Turning your camera and microphone on
- Dressing appropriately
- Maintaining a proper background setting for your camera's view
- Having a quiet space
- Muting the YouTube live stream of the Board of Education meeting when you are speaking so that there is no feedback with your participation in the Zoom meeting

Step 2: You will be placed in a queue and admitted to the meeting when it is your turn to make a public comment. Once you see that you are admitted to the Zoom call it will be your turn to make your public comment. Please begin your public comment by stating your full name and address.

Step 3: After making your public comment please exit the Zoom meeting so that the next person waiting to make a public comment can be admitted.

PUBLIC COMMENT METHOD 2 - DIAL-IN VIA ZOOM (VOICE ONLY)

Step 1: When you are ready to make a public comment, join the Zoom meeting using the dial in phone number and meeting ID posted on the district website www.bernardsboe.com. Please plan for your participation in the meeting by:

- Having a quiet space
- Muting the YouTube live stream of the Board of Education meeting when you are speaking so that there is no feedback with your participation in the Zoom meeting

Step 2: You will be placed in a queue and admitted to the meeting when it is your turn to make a public comment. Once you see that you are admitted to the Zoom call it will be your turn to make your public comment. Please begin your public comment by stating your full name and address.

Step 3: After making your public comment please exit the Zoom meeting so that the next person waiting to make a public comment can be admitted.

PUBLIC COMMENT METHOD 3

If the preferred full video method of public comment is not an option for you and the dial-in method fails, please follow these directions to submit your public comment.

Step 1: Starting at 7PM: email your comment to BTConnect@bernardsboe.com or text your comment to (908) 292-3047.

Step 2: Use PUBLIC COMMENT as the email subject or start of a text message.

Step 3: Indicate your first and last name and address. ***THIS IS REQUIRED FOR YOUR PUBLIC COMMENT TO BE INCLUDED.***

Regardless of whether you use method 1, 2 or 3 for public comment please note that:

- Public comments are limited to a maximum of approximately 3 minutes if read aloud.

- Individuals are permitted a maximum of one public comment during public comment on agenda items. Individuals are permitted a maximum of one public comment during public comment on non-agenda items.
- Public comments submitted via method 1 and 2 will be processed first, then comments submitted by method 3. An individual's comments made using method 1 or 2 will not also be read into the record through method 3.
- The Board of Education reserves the right to limit the length of time allotted for public comment (for both agenda items and non-agenda items). In the event that time limitations prohibit the reading of a public comment received pursuant to these instructions, the comment will be published as part of the meeting minutes.
- No public comments will be accepted before 7PM or after item XXII. Board Forum of the agenda begins.

Please understand that public comment portions of our agendas are not structured as question and answer sessions, but rather they are offered as opportunities to share your thoughts with the Board. The Board may or may not respond to public comments. Any Board responses to public comments will generally be addressed during Board Forum, or during committee reports. However, all comments are considered and will be investigated and addressed as appropriate.

Please be courteous and mindful of the rights of others when providing comments. Comments may not be abusive, obscene, threatening or irrelevant. Please understand that students and employees have specific legal and privacy protections. The Board is not permitted to respond in public to comments about students and employees. Please also understand that the Board will not be responsible for the content of comments made by members of the public. Members of the public are cautioned that they are commenting at their own risk and any personally directed statements they make may subject them to legal liability to the effected individual.

If it is necessary for the Board to go into executive session at the end of the meeting, we will provide an estimated length of time for the session and whether any action is anticipated to be taken upon returning to public session.

Resolution

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Bernards Township Board of Education hereby approves the suspension of its normal meeting procedures pursuant to By-Law 131, and authorizes this meeting to be conducted as a virtual meeting, as described in the Statement of Public Notice, due to the public health emergency declared in Executive Order 103.

III. Reorganization of Board - 7:00 p.m.

IV. Oath of Office

Rod McLaughlin, Board Secretary, administered the Oath of Office to the following newly elected Board members:

Jennifer Korn and Jennifer White

V. Roll Call of New Board

Present: Ms. Beckman, Ms. Gray, Ms. Korn, Ms. McKeon, Ms. Richman,
Mr. Salmon, Ms. Schafer, Ms. White, Mr. Markarian, Mr. Siet, Ms. Fox,
Mr. McLaughlin, Board Counsel John Croot

Absent: None

VI. Election of Board President

Mr. McLaughlin requested nominations for the position of President of the Board of Education.

Ms. Richman nominated Ms. Gray.

Ms. Schafer seconded the nomination of Ms. Gray.

On motion by Ms. Richman, seconded by Ms. Schafer, nominations were closed, and Ms. Gray was elected President of the Board of Education by the following roll call vote:

“Ayes” - Ms. Beckman, Ms. Gray, Ms. Korn, Ms. McKeon, Ms. Richman,
Mr. Salmon, Ms. Schafer, Ms. White

“Noes” - None

“Abstain” - None

VII. Election of Board Vice President

Board President Karen Gray requested nominations for the position of Vice President of the Board of Education.

Ms. White nominated Ms. McKeon.

Ms. Korn seconded the nomination of Ms. McKeon.

Ms. McKeon was elected Vice President of the Board of Education by the following roll call vote:

“Ayes” - Ms. Beckman, Ms. Gray, Ms. Korn, Ms. McKeon, Ms. Richman,

Mr. Salmon, Ms. Schafer, Ms. White
 “Noes” - None
 “Abstain” - None

VIII. Regular Session Agenda - 7:10p.m.

IX. Approval of 2021 Board of Education Meeting Schedule

2021 SCHEDULE OF BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS

EXECUTIVE SESSION (as necessary)
 PUBLIC SESSION 7:00 P.M.

<u>Meeting Date:</u>	<u>Location:</u>
January 4, 2021*	Virtual Meeting <i>Reorganization Meeting</i>
January 25, 2021	Virtual Meeting
February 8, 2021	Ridge High School PAC
February 22, 2021	Ridge High School PAC
March 8, 2021	Ridge High School PAC
March 22, 2021	Ridge High School PAC
April 5, 2021*	Ridge High School PAC
April 26, 2021	Ridge High School PAC
May 10, 2021	Ridge High School PAC <i>Public Hearing on 2021-22 Budget</i>
May 24, 2021	Ridge High School PAC
June 7, 2021*	Ridge High School PAC
June 14, 2021	Ridge High School PAC
July 26, 2021	Board of Education Office
August 23, 2021	Board of Education Office
September 13, 2021	Ridge High School PAC
September 27, 2021	Ridge High School PAC
October 4, 2021*	Ridge High School PAC
October 18, 2021**	Ridge High School PAC
November 8, 2021	Ridge High School PAC
November 22, 2021	Ridge High School PAC
December 20, 2021**	Ridge High School PAC
January 3, 2022*	Ridge High School PAC

*1st Monday of month

**3rd Monday of month

On motion by Ms. McKeon seconded by Ms. Schafer, the 2021 schedule of Board of Education meeting dates was approved by the following roll call vote:

“Ayes” - Ms. Beckman, Ms. Gray, Ms. Korn, Ms. McKeon, Ms. Richman,

Mr. Salmon, Ms. Schafer, Ms. White
 “Noes” - None
 “Abstain” - None

X. Distribute Ethics Act & Administer Code of Ethics

Board Secretary Rod McLaughlin distributed a copy of the Code of Ethics to the Board Members and requested that signed acknowledgements of the code of ethics from each Board of Education member be sent to his office.

XI. Student Representative - Juliet Nolt

Ms. Nolt provided an update regarding the much needed winter break and the return to temporary all virtual instruction.

XII. Superintendent’s Report

Superintendent Markarian first wished everyone a Happy New Year and congratulated the newly elected Board of Education members Jennifer White and Jennifer Korn and thanked them for their willingness to serve the community and staff.

Superintendent Markarian noted that there is a vacancy for the Board of Education that needs to be filled and that the Board plans to do so as of the February 8, 2020 Board of Education meeting stating that anyone interested in the position should reach out to Jennifer Nicholson at the Board Office via email at jnicholson@bernardsboe.com.

Superintendent Markarian thanked both Ms. Gray and Ms. McKeon for continuing to serve the Board of Education as the Board President and Board Vice-President.

Superintendent Markarian also made note of the snow day in December 2020 stating that February 17, 2021 would be a makeup day and that the district calendar has been updated to reflect such. Mr. Markarian provided a summary of current local health data, noting that the school health data is updated regularly on the website, discussed contract tracing, the vaccination of school nurses, and quarantine requirements for travel and close contact/ positive cases.

Superintendent Markarian discussed the return to in person instruction, our district’s profile and steps that the district is taking toward the return to school including technology updates, hygiene facility improvements, staffing, proposed amendments to the current instructional plan, surveys that have been sent to staff, students and parents and the continuing monitoring of conditions and consideration of alternatives to increasing in-person instruction as variables change.

Superintendent Markarian provided a reminder regarding an upcoming abbreviated day for William Annin Middle School and Ridge High School and shared information for the Bernards Township Health Department regarding an upcoming testing clinic.

XIII. Public Comment on Agenda Items

Ms. Gray provided instructions for public comment.

Public Comments included the topics of Board of Education zoom meetings, concerns regarding the return to instruction, questions regarding the timing of return to full time instruction, staffing questions, comments regarding vaccinations, concerns regarding the daily COVID screening form and student stress and mental health concerns.

Superintendent Markarian addressed some of the frustrations and sentiments regarding the return to full time instruction in relation to staffing, space and start dates. Mr. Markarian discussed some of the plans that are being considered and noted the timeline of bringing the kindergarten, first and second grade students in five days per week. Mr. Markarian discussed the second phase of the plan to return to full day instruction noting that it is being discussed with administrators and staff.

Board members discussed the return to five day per week and full time in-person instruction acknowledging the frustration from the public and outlining the steps that are being taken and considerations being made to bring students back into the classroom but also outlining some of the hurdles.

XIV. Approval of Minutes

BE IT RESOLVED THAT

1) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby approve the following minutes:

December 21, 2020 - Executive Session Minutes

December 21, 2020 - Regular Session Minutes

On motion by Ms. White seconded by Ms. Richman the foregoing were approved by the following roll call vote:

“Ayes” - Ms. Beckman, Ms. Gray, Ms. Korn, Ms. McKeon, Mr. Salmon,
Ms. Schafer, Ms. White

“Noes” - None

“Abstain” - Ms. Richman

XV. Finance Committee Report

BE IT RESOLVED THAT

- 1) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby approve a list of disbursements dated January 4, 2021 consisting of warrants in the amount of \$7,235,469.36.
- 2) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby approve specialized therapeutic services to various Bernards Township Board of Education students from the time period of October 28, 2020 to June 20, 2021 for an amount not to exceed \$18,000.00.
- 3) The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby approve the stipulation of settlement for student ID #304324 and authorizes the administration to implement its terms.

On motion by Ms. Richman, seconded by Ms. White Items #1-3 were approved by the following roll call vote:

- “Ayes” - Ms. Beckman, Ms. Gray, Ms. Korn, Ms. McKeon, Ms. Richaman,
Mr. Salmon, Ms. Schafer and Ms. White
- “Noes” - None
- “Abstain” - None

Mr. Salmon provided a summary of the finance committee items.

XVI. Personnel Committee Report

No report.

XVII. Policy Committee Report

No report.

XVIII. Curriculum Committee Report

No report.

XIX. Wellness Committee Report

Ms. White provided a report from the December 22, 2020 Wellness Committee Meeting. Topics included a counseling update including a cancer support counseling group, freshmen support meetings, senior mid-year support meetings, a junior college planning event, a middle and elementary school counseling update and plans for the upcoming academic planning session for the 2021-2022 school year.

XX. Liaison Committee Reports

No report.

XXI. Public Comment on Non-agenda Items

Public comment included a question regarding how to access the plan for return to instruction and a letter shared by a student from the district asking when they could return to school.

XXII. Board Forum

Board members addressed return to in person Board of Education meetings noting that capacity considerations could be an issue with allowing the public to make comments and understanding guidelines.

Mr. Salmon addressed some of the public comments acknowledging that everyone wants the students back to in person learning noting the criteria for return to in person learning and the different considerations and information that are impacting the return. Mr. Salmon also noted that there is no specific criteria or instruction presented by the state to the school districts for the return. Mr. Salmon assured the public that every consideration possible for the return is being made.

Ms. White discussed the winter break and urged families to complete the Daily COVID Screening forms accurately during the virtual learning week.

XXIII. Executive Session – 9:12 p.m.

BE IT RESOLVED that the Bernards Township Board of Education shall meet in closed session to discuss item(s) g and h below which falls within an exception of our open meeting policy and permits the Board to have a private discussion, since it deals with specific exceptions contained in N.J.S.A.10:4-12b. Matters rendered confidential by Federal Law, State Law, or Court Rule:

- a. Individual privacy
- b. Collective bargaining agreements
- c. Purchase or lease of real property if public interest could be adversely affected
- d. Investment of public funds if public interest could be adversely affected
- e. Tactics or techniques utilized in protecting public safety and property
- f. Pending or anticipated litigation
- g. Attorney – client privilege

- h. Personnel – employment matters affecting a specific prospective or current employee

On motion by Ms. Gray and seconded by Ms. Schafer and approved by all present, the Board recessed into closed executive session at 9:12p.m.

Any discussion held by the Board, which need not remain confidential, will be made public as soon as practical. Minutes of the private session will not be disclosed until the need for confidentiality no longer exists. All appropriate persons, who may be discussed in private session, have been adequately notified.

On motion by Ms. Schafer seconded by Ms. Korn and approved by all present, the Board closed the Executive Session at 10:25p.m.

XXIV. Reconvene Regular Session – Call to Order – 10:25 p.m.

XXV. Adjournment

On motion by Mr. Salmon and seconded by Ms. White and approved by all present, the meeting was adjourned at 10:32p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Rod McLaughlin
Board Secretary