

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

I hope that the first marking period of school has been going well for you and your children. I wanted to take a moment to share with you a few informational items.

Busing and School Opening/Closing Times for 2016-2017

You may have seen recent editions of the Bernardsville News where our district's bus and school schedules for next year have been written about. Our bus provider shared with us that the cost of providing our in-district buses is about a half million dollars higher than anticipated. An increase of this magnitude is not something our budget can handle in the long term, so we are in the process of evaluating cost saving options. One way that we may be able to lower our busing expense by such a vast sum is to restructure our school opening and closing times to allow for a more efficient use of buses and bus drivers. Nothing is decided for certain at this time; however change is a very real possibility for the 2016-2017 school year. Of course we realize that shifting school start/stop times earlier or later impacts everyone: staff, students, families, and their before and after school programs. We plan to present this issue to the Board of Education and the public at the Board of Education meeting on November 23rd. If you are unable to attend the meeting, both the meeting and presentation will be posted on the district website.

Alcoholic Beverages on School Premises

Please be advised that alcoholic beverages are prohibited on school grounds – this applies to everyone regardless of age. School grounds include any Board of Education buildings or property. This issue arose at a recent home football game where alcoholic beverages were present during pregame socializing in a parking lot. While we encourage everyone to enjoy our public events, we ask you to please be mindful of this prohibition which is defined in both state statutes and Board of Education Policy 7435.

Safe Driving

Common sense tells us that being distracted while driving increases the chance of having an accident, but have you ever seen actual statistics about it? At a recent conference that I attended, I was exposed to some staggering numbers associated with how much more likely a driver is to have an accident while distracted by a host of things. Friends in the car, texting, talking on the phone, eating and fiddling with electronics are all examples of things that have led to some really tragic outcomes. Distraction.Gov (<http://www.distraction.gov/take-action/parents.html>) has some great resources for parents. What I learned has changed my perspective on the Graduated Driver License (GDL) rules and the example I set in the car with my own behavior as a driver. I really encourage you to check it out and talk to your children about this issue.

Thank you all for your support,



Nick Markarian