

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

BERNARDS TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION Office of the Superintendent

MEMO

DATE: August 2010

TO: Parent/Guardian

FROM: Valerie A. Goger 

RE: Parental Notification

Hello! I hope that you and your family enjoyed a restful and interesting summer. The new school year brings with it some change, innovation, and new challenges.

In accordance with No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation, we are required annually to advise you of certain parental rights. We are also required to provide additional statements mandated by state and/or federal law. You may review all of this information on the main page of our website (www.bernardsboe.com) under the link 'Parent & Students'. If you would like to respond to any of the NCLB notifications, simply download, sign, and return them to your child's school.

All in all, it has been a busy and productive summer. We were very pleased that Ridge was ranked twelfth out of 322 New Jersey high schools in New Jersey Monthly! With last year's Blue Ribbon designation, Liberty Corner's Character Education recognition, and our standardized test results in all schools, it is a great testimony to our faculty, students, and parents that we have been able to achieve at such a high level during these austere economic times.

Our teachers are returning before Labor Day, and the first day for students is Tuesday, September 7. We look forward to welcoming your child back to school. Please enjoy the last weekend of this glorious summer!

Nutrition Statement

The Board of Education recognizes that child and adolescent obesity has reached epidemic levels in the United States and that poor diet combined with the lack of physical activity negatively impacts on students' health and their ability and motivation to learn. The Board is committed to:

- Providing students with healthy and nutritious foods
- Encouraging the consumption of fresh fruits and vegetables, low fat milk and whole grains
- Supporting healthy eating through nutrition education
- Encouraging students to select and consume all components of the school meal, and
- Providing students with the opportunity to engage in daily physical activity.

State law mandates that all schools participating in the Federal School Lunch Program must meet nutritional guidelines as defined by the New Jersey Bureau of Child Nutrition. The following items may not be served, sold, or given out as free promotion anywhere on elementary or middle school property at any time before the end of the school day:

- Foods of minimal nutritional value

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- All food and beverage items listing sugar, in any form, as the first ingredient, and
- All forms of candy.

Food sent in for school parties and special celebrations is exempt from the requirements, as are student lunch items brought from home. However, fundraisers such as Valentine's Day candy-grams will be discontinued.

Experiments Involving Animals

Legislation now permits public school students to choose not to participate in certain experiments involving animals. Public school pupils from kindergarten through grade 12 may refuse to dissect, vivisect, incubate, capture or otherwise harm or destroy animals or any parts thereof as part of a course of instruction. The law requires schools to provide alternative education projects for those students who choose to "opt out" of these activities. Schools are required to notify pupils and their parents or guardians of a pupil's right to decline to dissect, vivisect, incubate, capture or otherwise harm or destroy animals or any parts thereof as part of a course of instruction.

If you wish to have your son or daughter "opt out" of these experiences you must notify the principal of your child/children's school, in writing, within two weeks from the date of this notification. Please be aware that no exceptions can be made to this date, due to issues with the coordination and purchasing of materials for alternate lessons on a district wide level.

Harassment, Bullying & Hazing

The Board of Education believes that harassing, bullying and hazing activities of any type are inconsistent with the educational process and the board prohibits all such harassing, bullying and/or hazing behavior at any time on school premises, at any school-sponsored function, or on any school bus.

Any person who believes that he or she has been the victim of harassment, bullying or hazing, or any person with knowledge or belief of conduct which may constitute harassment, bullying or hazing, shall report the alleged acts immediately to an appropriate school district official. The building principal is the person responsible for receiving reports of harassment, bullying or hazing at the building level. Any person may report harassment, bullying or hazing directly to the Affirmative Action Officer or the Superintendent.

To review the complete policy and procedures of the Board of Education, please visit the district website at www.bernardsboe.com.

Asbestos Information

In accordance with 40CFR Part 763, the Asbestos-Containing Materials in Schools Rule (commonly referred to as "AHERA" regulations), the Bernards Township Board of Education periodically inspects all buildings throughout the district to re-evaluate the condition and change of asbestos-containing materials. Any required work is conducted when the buildings are unoccupied. Additionally, a written Respiratory Protection Program has been established for all employees, as required by the New Jersey Public Employee Occupational Safety and Health regulations.

The Asbestos Management Plans for each school building are available for inspection by employees, parents, and the public at no charge during the regular school hours. A copy of the Plan is maintained at each school site as well as at the Board Office. If you wish to review the plan or have any other questions, please call the Board Office at 908-204-2600 x 106.

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Bias Incidents

Students and staff members in Bernards Township Public Schools are expected to treat one another with respect regardless of gender, color, race, religion, national origin or sexual orientation. Inappropriate behaviors such as: touching of a sexual nature, gender based or sexual comments, jokes or name calling of any kind by students or staff are not permitted. For students, this also includes traveling on the way to or from school or on school property.

Liaisons

The Bernards Township Board of Education does hereby appoint **Jean O'Connell** as Liaison for the Education of Homeless Children, Public Law 504 Coordinator and Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator; **Regina Rudolph** as Affirmative Action Officer; **Nick Markarian** as New Jersey State Integrated Pest Management Coordinator, Attendance Officer, Qualified Purchasing Agent, Public Agency Compliance Officer, Open Public Records Act Officer, and Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health Act Coordinator.

Child Find Ages 3-21

The Bernards Township Public Schools annually seek to identify children, residing in Bernards Township, from the ages of 3 through 21 who may be at risk for learning disabilities.

Children in this age group who exhibit developmental delays in language, cognition, physical and/or emotional development, may be eligible for services from the public schools as a preschool disabled youngster. If your child is determined to be potentially eligible for services, the local public school district will evaluate your child. Should the evaluation show that he/she has a potentially disabling condition, services will be provided to your child by the public schools of Bernards Township. For those children who are determined to be eligible, services begin on their third birthday. Parents should contact the district, if they have concerns, when their child is 2 years six months of age.

If you suspect that your child has a disabling condition or you would like further information, please call the Office of Special Services at (908) 204-2600 extension 121. All public school districts in the state of New Jersey are required to provide these services.

Homework During Religious Holidays

The Bernards Township Board of Education is aware that during the school year, religious holidays may fall on school days. The Board wishes to work with our students and their families in accordance with applicable law to allow students to participate in observance of these holidays. It is therefore the policy of the Board to permit students an excused absence for observance of a religious holiday. In order for an absence to be considered excused, parents or guardians must provide the student's school with a written excuse explaining that the absence is due to the observance of a religious holiday. The absence may be excused only if it is taken on the actual date of the holiday in question.

The Board is also aware that tests, academic competitions and deadlines may be scheduled on religious holidays. In these situations, the Board has a policy of providing the student a reasonable accommodation, so that the academic activity will not interfere with their religious observance. This means that the teacher or the school will reschedule the test date for any student who is out on the actual exam day, due to a religious holiday. For academic competitions, where students are eligible for awards, alternative arrangements will be made to allow the student to take part in the competition. Similarly, when

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assignment due dates correspond with a religious holiday, teachers will provide an accommodation regarding such deadlines.

Please take special note that when an accommodation is needed, it is the student's and their parent's responsibility to inform the school that they will be observing a religious holiday. A written note, signed by a parent or guardian, requesting an accommodation, must be provided to the school or teacher prior to the religious holiday, in order for the school to make the requested accommodation. Under such circumstances, new test dates, dates of competitions and other deadlines will be set by the staff member having responsibility for the activity in question.