

Berkeley Heights Public Schools
Clausen Administrative Complex
345 Plainfield Avenue
Berkeley Heights, Union County, New Jersey 07922

Stephen E. Hopkins
Director BHPS /
Custodian of Public Records



(908) 464-1601 x1700
sehopkins@bhpsnj.org

Via Electronic Mail (bhcommunitywatch1@gmail.com)

February 28, 2023
BH Community Watch

Re: Open Public Records Act (OPRA) Request

Dear Sir or Madam:

The Berkeley Heights Public Schools ("District") is in receipt of your Open Public Records Act ("OPRA") request emailed on February 9, 2023 and February 10, 2023. Please note that OPRA requests received on weekends or after business hours are deemed received on the next business day. The seven-business day deadline to respond to your OPRA request is February 21, 2023 and February 22, 2023, respectively. As such, the District is timely responding to your request in accordance with New Jersey law.

You requested the following:

1. All emails to/from superintendent Varley, Asst Superintendents Kopacz and Greer
2. All emails to/from superintendent and asst superintendents to Angela Penna, Joy Young, Robert Cianculli, Pamela Stanley, Thomas Foregger, Dipti Khanna, Gale Bradford, Jordan Hyman, Julie Kot, Samantha Oates, Diane Azalone, Sarah Latzke and Lisa Mcadam
3. Date range: January 5, 2023 January 16, 2023
4. Subjects:
 - * Board meeting
 - * Policy/policies
 - * onboarding
 - * Custodian of record

Your OPRA request is granted. A good faith search of District records was conducted and documents responsive to your request are being provided. Minor redactions have been made to preserve personal privacy.

Your OPRA request is now deemed answered and closed.

Very truly yours,

s/ Stephen E. Hopkins

Stephen E. Hopkins
Director/ Custodian of Public Records
Cc: Dr. Melissa Varley, Superintendent of Schools (via email)

Custodian of Record

mvarley@bhpsnj.org Varley, Dr. Melissa

Friday, January 13, 2023 at 8:26:34 AM Eastern Standard Time

Bcc: pstanley@bhpsnj.org Pamela Stanley, dkhanna@bhpsnj.org Dipti Khanna, apenna@bhpsnj.org Angela Penna, dgreer@bhpsnj.org David Greer, jyoung@bhpsnj.org Joy Young, mkopacz@bhpsnj.org Marybeth Kopacz, jkot@bhpsnj.org Julie Kot, rcianciulli@bhpsnj.org Cianciulli, Robert, tforegger@bhpsnj.org Thomas Foregger, jhyman@bhpsnj.org Jordan Hyman, gbradford@bhpsnj.org Gale Bradford

Good morning,

On the 1/19 agenda, you will see the appointment of a Custodian of Record. The personnel committee met regarding this on 12/15/2022. Here are the minutes from that meeting:

- Due to the overwhelming amount of Opras (some taking up to 95 hours of work from Ms. Kot), she is unable to do the main functions of her job. It is the same 6-8 people who consistently OPRA tedious amounts of data that must be redacted. Our options are to stipend this position out, or send it all to the attorney; thus costing hundreds of thousands of dollars. While we would love for these people to just stop with the insanity, we have no control over that.
- Mr. D'Aquila stated that the town had to do the same thing due to the amount of OPRAS. Mrs. Penna asked if we could remove the stipend if the OPRAS became reasonable, which we agreed. Mr. Cianciulli voiced concerns about the public.
- Dr. Varley and Ms. Kot stated that the people who will voice their concerns are the same ones who are inundating us with OPRAS.

The main function of Ms. Kot's job is ensuring our bills are paid, health benefits are paid, employees are paid, we have enough money to run the district and that students and staff get the resources they need to be successful. With her spending days upon days answering these tedious OPRA requests, she is unable to get her job done. She works long hours. With budget season in full swing, there is absolutely no way she can do all of this. No one takes the BA position to be the OPRA person.

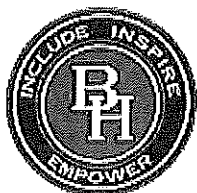
We had two people interview for the position. One was clearly more organized and diligent than the other. That individual will go on the 1/19 agenda. As the minutes state, we will abolish this stipended position as soon as these individuals stop with their nonsense.

Just as an FYI, they have OPRA'd all of my emails and when they didn't find anything, they have moved on to Board members. Please make sure that there is nothing in your email that you do not want public. As our attorney has stated, pick up the phone.

Julie is leaving for a much needed vacation next week. If you have questions about this position, please contact her today. I'll answer questions next week while she is away.

Thanks,

Melissa



Dr. Melissa Varley
Superintendent of Schools
Berkeley Heights Public Schools
 Pronouns: She, her, hers