



nj21st weekly news summary

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NJ21ST WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

This week at NJ21st: DOE Accountability, Civic Education and Referendum Coverage

A look at statewide education oversight, new reform efforts, and what the Berkeley Heights school referendum means for local taxpayers and students.

Week of November 15–21, 2025

Featured Hubs

Your NJ Government - Civic Education Hub

A clean, student-friendly starting point for understanding how New Jersey government actually works. The hub pulls together our full civic series on local forms of government, county and state roles, OPRA, OPMA, and how public bodies make decisions.

<https://nj21st.com/yournjgov/>

Berkeley Heights School Referendum - Coverage Hub

All referendum explainers, cost breakdowns, Q&A responses, agenda notes and community perspectives in one place. Updated as new documents and questions emerge.

<https://nj21st.com/referendum/>

NJDOE, Statewide Education and Accountability

NJEdReport Highlights NJ21st's Analysis of Testing Overhaul

Our coverage of New Jersey's proposed testing and accountability changes continues to ripple statewide. The piece examines missing comparability studies, baseline shifts, and what the Department of Education has not yet released to the public.

<https://nj21st.com/2025/11/17/nj-education-report-highlights-concerns-connected-to-new-jerseys-testing-and-accountability-overhaul/>

Video: Will New Tests Conceal Declining Performance?

A video walk-through of how the new scoring system could make year-to-year comparisons harder and what parents should be watching for when State reports are released.

<https://nj21st.com/2025/11/15/video-new-nj-school-tests-new-scoring-system-will-this-hide-declining-performance/>

DOE Affirms That School Boards Are Responsible for Instruction

This piece breaks down a key clarification from the Department of Education: local Boards of Education are not just budget bodies. They have responsibility for instructional oversight, grading policy, and the conditions that shape student learning.

<https://nj21st.com/2025/11/14/doe-affirms-boards-are-responsible-for-instruction/>

State Public Safety Reform and Legislative Developments

New Centralized Police Training Institute

From "street cop" style trainings to a centralized, state-supervised institute, New Jersey is reshaping how officers are prepared for the job. We explain what is changing, what remains unclear, and what this means for local departments.

<https://nj21st.com/2025/11/20/from-street-cop-to-state-oversight-nj-launches-centralized-police-training-institute/>

Legislative Preview: University Merger, PFAS Bans and Consumer Protections

A look ahead at major bills moving through Trenton this week, including a proposed university merger, PFAS-related environmental protections, and new consumer protection measures affecting residents across the state.

<https://nj21st.com/2025/11/16/this-weeks-nj-legislative-preview-university-merger-pfas-bans-and-consumer-protections/>

Civic Education Series: Understand Your Government

OPMA: New Jersey's Public Meeting Law Explained

Part of our civic education series, this guide explains what counts as a public meeting, how quorum works, the nine reasons a body can go into closed session, and what residents can do when OPMA is violated.

<https://nj21st.com/2025/11/21/understanding-your-nj-government-opma-new-jerseys-public-meeting-law/>

The full civic series, including OPRA and New Jersey's different forms of local government, is collected in the Your NJ Government hub:

<https://nj21st.com/yournjgov/>

BHPSNJ Referendum Explainers and Fact-Checking

The Berkeley Heights Referendum Explained - Part One

A foundational overview of what is in the proposal: project categories, tax assumptions, timelines, and how the structure of the questions sets up the vote.

<https://nj21st.com/2025/11/12/the-berkeley-heights-public-school-referendum-explained-part-one/>

The Berkeley Heights Referendum Explained - Part Two

A closer look at Question 1 and Question 2, how capital projects are grouped, and how the proposal lines up with what residents identified as priorities in the District's own survey.

<https://nj21st.com/2025/11/18/the-berkeley-heights-public-school-referendum-explained-part-two/>

Referendum Hub

The full set of referendum articles, documents and tools is available in the referendum hub:

<https://nj21st.com/referendum/>

BHPSNJ BOE Responses and Agenda Analysis

BOE Member Sai Akiri Responds to Referendum Questions

Akiri addresses the idea of "no tax impact," explains why expiring debt does not make new borrowing free, and raises questions about enrollment trends, survey priorities, and transparency around existing reserves.

<https://nj21st.com/2025/11/19/boe-representative-sai-akiri-responds-to-questions-on-referendum/>

Dr. Feltre Responds to Questions on the Referendum

The District's response to community questions on scope, timing and project mix, including how administration views the balance between facilities needs and financial impact.

<https://nj21st.com/2025/11/19/dr-feltre-responds-to-questions-on-referendum/>

John's Notes on the 11/20 BHPSNJ BOE Meeting Agenda

A detailed set of notes on the rest of the November 20 agenda: contracts, policies, and other decisions that provide context for the referendum and the District's broader priorities.

<https://nj21st.com/2025/11/19/johns-notes-on-the-rest-of-the-11-20-2025-bhpsnj-boe-meeting-agenda/>

Community Voices

Berkeley Heights Deserves Clear Answers Before the Referendum Vote

A parent and long-term resident questions the timing of a March vote, the “kitchen sink” feel of the proposal, and the absence of a clear plan to address the community’s top concerns around instruction and staffing.

<https://nj21st.com/2025/11/20/community-voices-berkeley-heights-deserve-clear-answers-before-the-referendum-vote/>

Viswa Reddy Joins NJ21st



Viswa Reddy is the former Board of Education President in Millburn and an experienced technology leader. He writes about technology, education and public governance, with a focus on how local decision-making shapes daily life in New Jersey communities.

Top Three Articles for October



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