

### VISION STATEMENT

Barbers Hill ISD envisions academic excellence characterized by goal-driven, college/ career ready graduates who are responsible, accountable, contributing members of society.

### **Barbers Hill ISD School Board**

Clint Pipes President

Benny May Vice President

Mark Wilson Secretary

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#### **Barbers Hill ISD Administration**

Greg Poole, Ed.D.

Superintendent

#### **Assistant Superintendents**

Kristen Davis Technology

Sandra Duree Deputy Superintendent

Stephanie Martin Special Services

Becky McManus Finance

Barbara Ponder
Human Resources

Chloe Yowell

Curriculum and Instruction

### The Power of We

Barbers Hill's camaraderie and collaboration serve as a great symbol of this year s Convocation theme, The Power of We.

The Power of We is how the district comes together to put children first. Yes, it s one person teaching in the classroom, but it s a collective force – over 1,200 strong - where everyone in Barbers Hill ISD comes together as one.

The Power of We is embodied by the district s slogan: We Can, We Will, We re Barbers Hill!

## One size does not fit all

Primum Non Nocere is a Latin phrase known to all medical students.

It challenges prospective doctors to remember that they may not always cure aliments, but never should they do harm.



Dr. Greg Poole Superintendent

This is my 18th back-to-school message, and in each one I brag (my grandmother would say it is not bragging if you can back it up) and recognize our district's many accomplishments and what a great year 2022-2023 was. Our state accountability test scores are some of the highest in the state and for the 27th year in a row, we won district academically. Barbers Hill High School finished fourth in the state in the Lone Star Cup, using weighted averages which is a score given to schools based on all their competitive endeavors. It was a tremendous year!

However, I would be irresponsible if I didn't alert the readers to something that could hamper future successes and seems intent on making a healthy

Barbers Hill unhealthy. At issue is the ridiculously complex state funding system that seems intent to confuse and hide the fact that the state is increasingly taking more of our money via Robin Hood. The reality is we have never received state funding during my tenure because we always send more back to the state via recapture than we are allowed to keep. Our recapture in 2022-2023 alone was \$22 million. The other complicating fact is the state continues to utilize a-one-size-fits-all funding mechanism, and Barbers Hill is an exception in almost every category.

The most graphic example of how **one size does NOT fit all is a VATRE** (Voter Approved Tax Ratification Election) referendum which we will likely call for this November. The state continues to remove local control by forcing down a district's tax rate if the district has a larger than average tax base increase such as Barbers Hill. The premise is the state is seeking to give tax relief to those paying excessive taxes. However, we already have one of the lowest tax levies in the Houston area, and the main consequence from not holding a VATRE election is the state will take even more of our tax money via Robin Hood. Our many successes have been partly due to our healthy tax base. We pay the highest teacher salaries at every level of experience and these resources are what allows us to give our students all they need for success. Our COVID-19 response, for example, was a state leader, and we didn't spare any costs to keep our students and staff safe. If the school board does call for a VATRE this November, it will be to allow us to keep more money at home, and, contrary to what the ballot says, a Yes vote will NOT raise your taxes. In fact, we would be able to lower the tax rate by keeping more of our money. This isn't the norm statewide, but again we are not the norm!

I would have preferred to recognize more of our achievements in this space rather than sounding the alarm, but our district's health is at stake. The state's term for this new erosion of local control is "compression." I describe it as much like a tourniquet. There are scenarios where tourniquets save lives, but in our instance, it has the potential to do grave harm. If our board chooses to have a VATRE at our August board meeting, I and all Barbers Hill leaders legally will not be able to advocate which is the reason I am using this message to emphasize the importance of our VATRE (if called) passing. We need our money to stay here where our students and staff can continue to maintain the finest school district in Texas!



The Barbers Hill High School varsity cheerleaders attended UCA camp at the University of Texas in Austin and did exceptionally well, bringing home a host of awards and accolades.



### **Brian Hawthorne** – Honorary Eagle

Chambers County Sheriff Brian Hawthorne is the 2023-2024 Honorary Eagle, the second such special designation in the Hawthorne household. The sheriff's wife, Chambers County Clerk Heather Hawthorne, was named an Honorary Eagle in 2020.

Hawthorne moved to Barbers Hill in 2002, following his marriage to Heather. The couple has two sons, Tanner and Adam, and Brian also has a stepson, Justin, and a stepdaughter, Alexis, who graduated from Barbers Hill in 2010. Hawthorne's immediate family members have been an integral part of the Barbers Hill community since he arrived in town.

Born in 1962 in Tempe, Arizona, Hawthorne grew up in Tempe and graduated from high school in 1980. During his time in high school, Brian received several awards and recognitions for his academic achievements.

After graduating from high school, Brian attended Mesa Community College in Arizona, earning an associate's degree in Administration of Justice in 1984.

Hawthorne enlisted in the U.S. Army and served from 1984 to 1988. During his time in the military, Hawthorne was stationed at various locations and received multiple awards for exemplary service.

After his military service, Hawthorne began his career in law enforcement. He joined the Department of Public Safety as a Highway Patrol Sergeant in 1984 and served until 2012. Hawthorne received numerous special awards and recognitions for his dedicated service during his time with the Department of Public Safety.

Hawthorne was elected sheriff in 2012. As the sheriff of Chambers County, Hawthorne has had the opportunity to collaborate with the administration, faculty, and Barbers Hill Police Department to ensure the safety of the students and the community. He believes in the importance of serving the Barbers Hill community and is dedicated to its success.

Outside of his career, Hawthorne has been actively involved in various civic, religious, and community activities. He served as the Past President of the Barbers Hill Lions Club and has been a dedicated member of the organization. In addition, Hawthorne served as a mentor to students in Barbers Hill.

One of Hawthorne's favorite activities in Barbers Hill is the awarding of education foundation grants to teachers. He believes in supporting the teachers and providing them with the necessary resources to enhance the education of the students. Hawthorne recognizes that one of Barbers Hill's greatest strengths is the wide range of extracurricular activities and programs available to the student population. He appreciates the school district's commitment to providing diverse opportunities for the students to excel.

Through his various experiences and roles, Hawthorne remains committed to the safety, success, and overall well-being of the students and residents in Barbers Hill.



### James E. (Jef) Farrell – Distinguished Alumnus

James E. (Jef) Farrell was born in 1961 in the Lily Duke Hospital in Baytown as Mont Belvieu did not have a hospital at the time. He grew up in Mont Belvieu and graduated from Barbers Hill High School in 1980.

Farrell's career has been centered around serving the community. He worked as the City of Mont Belvieu Parks & Recreation Director from 1989 to 2019, organizing events, programs and summer job opportunities for local youth. **Currently, he serves as the Barbers Hill ISD Museum Director, preserving the history of the district.** 

In his career, Farrell has received recognition for his contributions. He was appointed as the Director at Large for the Greater Gulf Coast Parks & Recreation Directors Association in 2008.

Outside of his professional life, Farrell is an active member of the community. He is a member of the Old River Baptist Church and has served on various boards and organizations, including the Barbers Hill ISD Board of Trustees for 15 years, the Texas Recreation and Parks Society, and the Greater Gulf Coast Parks & Recreation Director Association. He is also a board member of the Barbers Hill Education Foundation. In addition, Farrell is involved in living history groups, such as Speight's Battalion Camp 858 SCV and PVT. Company B 1st Texas Infantry Hoods Division, and has conducted demonstrations for Barbers Hill ISD History classes along with his sons Cody and Jacob.

Farrell has always lived in the Barbers Hill community, growing up on Main Street near the Amos Barbers homestead on Barbers Hill itself. He has a deep connection to the area and has chosen to serve the students and community of Barbers Hill because of his long-standing ties and his desire to give back.

One of Farrell's favorite activities at Barbers Hill is being a campus WatchDOG and helping fourth-graders during their visits to the Hall of History, where they learn about the city and school district's history. He believes that Barbers Hill's greatest strengths lie in its commitment to preserving history, traditions, and family values. The schools have been a driving force in making the community a great place to raise a family and educate children.

Throughout his life, Farrell has had numerous opportunities to serve Barbers Hill. He has served on committees planning various projects, including the City Park, Hilltop Senior Center, and Hackberry Creek Park. He has also been involved in organizing special events such as the July 4th celebration, Christmas in the city, and the Christmas Parade on the Hill. He has worked with various civic organizations and has been involved in events ranging from Clydesdales to Santa Claus and the Easter bunny.

Farrell has been married to his wife, Regina Farrell, for 41 years. They have two sons, Cody and Jacob, who are both Barbers Hill graduates. Cody has also become a teacher at Barbers Hill Intermediate School North. They have grandchildren, Landon, Logan, Nathan, Malcolm, and Ryder, with the youngest, Ryder, being a future Eagle.



# Congratulations to the Barbers Hill FFA shooting team that brought home two state championships!

- State Champion Female Sporting Clays: Makenzi Harmon, Samantha Mulvihil and Kenzee Jacobs.
- State Champion Mixed Sporting Clays: Makenzi Harmon, Samantha Mulvihil, Davis Rile, and Nacho Schmadl.
- 3rd Place Female Trap Clays: Makenzi Harmon, Samantha Mulvihil and Kenzee Jacobs.
- 2nd Overall Individual Female Sporting Clays: Makenzi Harmon.

Other team members include: Sean Huset, Dylan Jacobs, Zane LeBlanc and Jacob Livanec.

## Construction to begin on high school additions, renovations

Major construction is set to begin at Barbers Hill High School. The \$75 million project includes 150,000 square feet of new construction, 32,000 square feet of renovation and 73,000 square feet for additional parking.

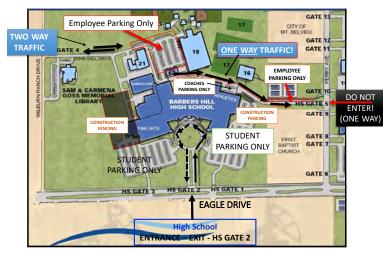
The Barbers Hill High School additions and renovations address a rapidly expanding Barbers Hill ISD student population. The new three-story classroom wing and the one-story PE/Athletic facility will serve an additional 1,000 high school students. Both are master planned to allow for further expansion in the future.

The additions feature 40 grade level classrooms; 10 science labs with prep and storage areas; new administration and counseling suites; a dance studio with dressing rooms and storage; CTE lab spaces for Health Services, Anatomy and Physiology, Business Management and STEM; an auxiliary gymnasium; a PE dressing room; team meeting and multi-purpose activity spaces; football dressing rooms for JV and Varsity; and new offices for the athletic director and coaches.

Renovations to the existing building include modifications to the administration offices and athletic dressing/training rooms; expanding the clinic and attendance office; improvements to faculty workrooms, and foodservice; and centralizing the special services instructional, lab and office spaces.

The work will be phased to accommodate existing campus activities and instruction with all work being completed for fall 2025.

### **High School Car-Rider Traffic Map 2023-24**







**New Instruction Addition** 

Gymnasium Interior

## **BH launches SMART Tag system to enhance safety**

Starting this school year, Barbers Hill ISD bus riders will get a SMART Tag. The tag will ensure students are transported to the right place, along with many other features.

**SMART** (Secured Mobility Authorized Ridership Technology) Tag is a system that utilizes secure cloud technology to share realtime information with the district and parents. The program is designed to increase safety, security, visibility and communication for the district, and most importantly, for our Barbers Hill families.

SMART Tag allows the transportation department to monitor route activity including stop locations, time stamps, what students were picked up and dropped off and bus speed.

Students enrolled for transportation services will be provided with a SMART tag ID badge at no charge. Replacement badges can be purchased from campuses for \$5 each.

SMART Tag badges will be attached to the backpacks of elementary students (K-6), and secondary students are required to display their tag to bus drivers. SMART IDs will be required each time a student boards or departs a bus.

The SMART Tag system also features a Parent Portal. Parents can sign up for "SMART Alert" to receive a text message or email at the end of the school day, providing a 10- to 15-minute notice telling them that their child is on the bus and nearing their bus stop.

"Parents and guardians will be able to know if the bus is running late or ahead of schedule, or if there's a delay for some reason," said Ami Davis, director of transportation. "Parents will have the ability to monitor their student's location while on the bus through the SMART Tag system."

Parents can access the portal from any device that has a Web browser. They can also add or remove authorized guardians to the system as well as keep an up-to-date list of persons who are authorized to meet their child at the bus stop. Please note that SMART Tag only tracks students while they are on the bus.

Students will get their SMART Tag badges at Eagle Launch or on the first day of school on Aug. 16.

### **Enhanced safety measure**

Another important change to bus transportation this year includes a new safety initiative that requires bus riders to be dropped off at ONE address only. Students will no longer be allowed to be routed to multiple addresses or ride home with friends. Bus riders will be dropped off at their primary residence unless parents or guardians opt for daycare or the student has been enrolled on a grandparent affidavit. If a bus-riding student is on a grandparent affidavit, they will be dropped off at grandparents' address only.

This change is necessary to ensure the safety of students and increase the efficiency of bus transportation throughout the district. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Ami Davis, director of transportation, or Michael Kelley, assistant director of transportation, at 281-576-2221 ext. 1279 or visit the district's SMART Tag links at https://www.bhisd.net/departments/transportation

### **Present and Accounted For**

# Barbers Hill ISD modifies Attendance Incentive Program for the 2023-2024 school year

## Here are a couple of the most exciting changes:

- All campus incentives and prizes, including PERFECT ATTENDANCE, will be based on the Official Attendance Taking time only.
- Also, high School students who have perfect attendance during the Official Attendance Taking time will be awarded an additional semester exam exemption!

### Did you know?

If your student has a medical appointment and attends some portion of the school day on the same day, the effect will be beneficial in two important ways. Even partial attendance has proven to increase educational outcomes for students and partial attendance allows our district to benefit financially.

### **An Education on The Hill**

BHISD is unique and outstanding in many ways!

Articles in this newsletter by the superintendent and chief financial officer point out the dysfunctional state funding system that is threatening our way of life. The Legislature did not address

school funding despite having two special sessions thus far and our district will likely hold a VATRE referendum this November to keep more of our tax money in the district.

We are proud to provide a robust educational program for your child that includes top notch safety and educational supports.

The price tag on a BH education is approximately \$162,000 per student (K-12). BH spends a minimum of \$12,500 per student annually!

## Some features that increase the price tag on an Eagle education are:

- Having at least one police officer assigned to every campus!
- Transportation provided to homes within two miles of the school and all daycares with no cost to you!
- Student issued Chromebooks for every student, starting in first grade.
- Staffing at least two counselors per campus and two social workers district-wide.
- Bullet resistant security vestibules at all campus entrances.

### **Official Attendance Taking Times**

High School	9:10	
Middle School	8:20	
Intermediate School	9:25	
Elementary School	9:45	
Early Childhood Center	10:15/ 2:00*	
DAEP	9:15	

\*2:00 is for half-day afternoon only classes

- Facial recognition software in addition to other high-tech gadgets to keep kids safe!
- Indoor practice facility for studentathletes & coaches to minimize training in the Texas heat! (including summer campers!)
- Top notch salaries for teachers in order to hire and retain the BEST!

Even with a successful VATRE, we still are not allowed to keep enough of our tax money to fund our expenditures per pupil which was \$12,500 this past school year.

We need your help! Each day when your child is absent, we lose part of the \$10,500 in state funding we do receive. Please help us by getting your students to school even if they aren't feeling 100 percent. It will enhance their scholastic success and help our district keep more of our money at home.

## New milk policy in place for intermediate schools

Intermediate School North and Intermediate School South have joined the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program.

While student meals at the intermediate campuses will remain mostly unchanged, there is an important change regarding milk. Under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program, whole milk cannot be offered to students. Instead, students will be offered unflavored or flavored (such as chocolate) fat free or unflavored 1% low fat milk. There are no changes to milk policies at the other campuses.

For more information about our meal program, please refer to the FAQs on the School Nutrition page on the district website.

### **School Meal Applications**

The School Nutrition Department would like to encourage all families to complete a meal application. The meal application paves the way for your child to receive free or reduced-price meals. In addition to meal benefits, filling out the school meal

application may help provide resources for students, classrooms and teachers. Students may also be eligible for discounted SAT and ACT test fees for college admission, as well as many other benefits.

Completing the meal application takes less than 10 minutes. Meal applications can be completed online at <a href="https://www.schoolcafe.com/BARBERSHILLISD">www.schoolcafe.com/BARBERSHILLISD</a>.

If you require any assistance or have questions regarding the meal application, please 281-576-2221, ext. 2021.

2023-24 Meal Prices	Grade Level	Breakfast	Lunch
Reduced Price	All Campuses	\$0.30	\$0.40
Elementary/Intermediate	PK – 6th	\$2.00	\$3
Middle/High School	7th - 12th	\$2.50	\$4
Adult/Visitor/Second Meals	All Campuses	\$3.25	\$5

# Back to School August 16th!



School Supplies bhisd.net/parents-student/ school-supply-lists



Online Registration bhisd.net/departments/ studentservices



# Message from the Director of Safe Schools Lori May

Barbers Hill ISD is continually committed to developing an atmo sphere of trust among our parent community, in our ability to provide not only a positive and enriching educational experience, but a safe place for students to thrive too.

That is why we have partnered with Linewize, a leading global pro vider of online safety products and education, to create an educational hub for parents and teachers.

This hub (https://onlinesafetyhub. io/) includes articles, videos, courses and more, to ensure you know how to keep your kids safe online.



**Lori May** Director of Safe Schools



# Robin Hood strikes again and again

State's recapture payments growing exponentially



**Becky McManus**Assistant Superintendent of Finance

That means
roughly 30 cents
of every tax dollar
Barbers Hill collects
is spent elsewhere,
and not always on
educating students.
That recaptured
money – \$305 million
so far – could have
easily paid for the
three or four of the
new schools the

district has built recently.

Recapture – called Robin Hood because "rich" districts must give money back to the state to be redistributed to poorer schools – began as a limited revenue source for education funding. However, recapture has grown exponentially statewide, and Barbers Hill's annual payments have risen 117 percent since its inception.

In fact, last year's payment of \$22 million to the state is the highest ever, more than double the previous year's payment.

Statewide, recapture reached nearly \$5 billion, a staggering increase over estimates of \$3 billion, which would also be a record amount.

While recapture payments rise, the state's portion of funding public education continues to slide to close to 30 percent, while the local share has risen to nearly 60 percent.

Instead of providing all schools with adequate levels of funding, the Legislature has used recapture to justify bringing the top down rather than the bottom up. Over time, recapture has grown so large that the state uses those dollars to support a considerable amount of the state's funding obligation for education, therefore lessening the state's contribution to public education.

Blessed by a robust oil and gas tax base full of corporate giants such as Enterprise and ExxonMobil, Barbers Hill has fared better than most districts because of its remarkable tax base and the fact that it is a destination school district with rapidly increasing enrollment. From the beginning of Robin Hood to today, Barbers Hill's enrollment has increased by 280 percent to more than 7,400

students. While not immune from the effects of recapture tax dollars and the decline in state funding, Barbers Hill has been able to avoid many of the cuts seen in other districts through aggressive tax incentives and the creation of an education foundation, which has grown to \$128 million since it was created in 2010. Presently, the foundation is the largest in the state and No. 1 in the United States in assets per pupil.

"We are fortunate to have a robust foundation and have acted as good fiduciaries in managing the district's resources," Assistant Superintendent of Finance Becky McManus said. "However, we cannot sustain the rapid growth of recapture which is at an all-time high of \$22 million."

The governor recently signed legislation to reduce school property taxes by using \$12.6 billion of the unprecedented state budget surplus. While those billions are being sent to school districts so they can reduce their taxes for all property owners and shift a portion of their maintenance and operations costs to the state, the package gives no new funding to schools. When compared to other states' spending, Texas is ranked near the bottom in per-student funding for education.

With the recent legislature's failure to act on addressing school funding, the only way that school districts will be able to increase funding is to hold a Voter Approval Tax Rate Election or VATRE, to increase their local property-tax rate for Maintenance & Operations.

"We have tremendous community support in Barbers Hill and our last bond issue passed by a remarkable 87% margin. We will need that same level of support should the Board choose to call a Voter-Approval Tax Rate Election," McManus said.



Barbers Hill ISD added 164 employees to the work force this school year. Sixty-five of the new hires were added to accommodate the ongoing growth in enrollment. Barbers Hill has more than 1,250 employees. The district held three days of new employee orientation for training and an overview of the district. Barbers Hill is grateful to our partners in the community for providing meals and goodies for their new teacher baskets thanks to the Mont Belvieu Area Chamber of Commerce. Notable district partners include the Barbers Hill ISD Education Foundation, Patients ER, Gulf Coast Educators Credit Union, Eagle Pointe, Barbers Hill Bank, West Chambers Medical Center, Community Resource Credit Union, MobilOil Credit Union and DuGood Credit Union.

### **New Faces and New Leadership**



Ashlee Boothe
Coordinator of State
& Federal Programs



Jackie Brown
Principal at Elementary
School North



**Trent Manuel**Asst. Principal at High School



**Elva Marroquin** Coordinator of Bilingual Services



**Dr. Tina McCorkle**Principal at Int.
School North



Michael Kelley
Asst. Director
of Transportation



**Charles Woods**Coordinator of Adaptive
Behavior & Transition



# Welcome Jacqueline Bell

BHHS Fine Arts is pleased to announce the new Director for Eaglettes and Dance 1-4.

Mrs. Bell was a 4-year member of the Sterling Stars Drill Team. She held the title of Major her junior year and Colonel, the highest, her senior year.

A graduate of Lamar University, Jacqueline holds Bachelor's Degrees in

Interdisciplinary Studies and Dance.

For ten years, she was the owner of Baytown Dance Company where she taught ballet, tap, and jazz.

Mrs. Bell's passion for dance, teaching, and guiding students will be an asset to our campus. We are excited to watch the program continue to Soar!

### Podcasts returning for season 2

Barbers Hill Superintendent Dr. Greg Poole's weekly podcast "BH Soup" tackles education and real-world issues relative to the school system, students, Chambers County and beyond. New podcasts are released on Wednesdays.

Also, "The Eagle Insider," a district-produced weekly podcast covering various topics on Barbers Hill ISD, education and more, releases a new program each Tuesday.

Find BH Soup and The Eagle Insider podcasts on Spotify,
Apple Podcast, Amazon Music and Google Podcast.





### A SALUTE TO OUR RETIREES



Susan Bell
Computer Technician



Vanessa Brown Custodian



**Beth Dodd**Deputy Tax Collector



Linda Gerhart

State and Federal Programs
Coordinator



**Elise Gibson** Secretary to MSN Assistant Principal



**Becky Johnson**Director of Operations



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