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Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the 2025-2026 school year! I wish you and your students well as they arrive at their rooms eager to learn, excited to connect with their teachers and their peers, and prepared to take the next step in their respective education. Whether this year marks their very first day in our Kindergarten rooms or the first day of their last year with us as members of the BHS Class of 2026, each of you makes an impact, and each of you allows the District to become an essential part of the story of many children.

Before we welcome your children on September 4, 2025, teachers will participate in a variety of professional development exercises, compliance training, and subject area-specific refreshers. Over the summer, the District held robust programming in July and into August for students classified for special education, new Multilingual Learners, and subject-specific sessions. During July and August, it was common to have teacher-led professional development conducted on-site in advance of the school year. Our student-athletes at BHS returned for preseason practices and scrimmages this week, ahead of the season, and our schools are preparing for the arrival of your children.

We are welcoming our new staff to the District next week for Orientation, and expect that you will meet some of these passionate educators and staff soon.

Building	Staff Member	Position
BES	Scott Wolfe	Principal
BES	Jennifer Adams	Kindergarten
BES	Diana Heesemann	Nurse
BES	Mercedes Lippert Lozano	Preschool
BES	Claire Lodato	Kindergarten
BES	Gabriela Matos	Special Education
BES	Yarelis Pacheco	Bilingual
BES	Shannon Vitale	Grade 1
BES	Deborah Cortigiani	ESL/MLL-Leave Replacement

BES	Terri Johnson	Art - Leave Replacement
BMS	Max Fritsche	English
BMS	Ashley Kellett	School Psychologist
BMS	Julie Weinstein	Special Education
BHS	Stephanie Camooso	Spanish
BHS	Indira Gonzalez	ESL/MLL
BHS	Mark Mason	Special Education
BHS	Tyler Nadolny	Physical Education/Health
BHS	Joanna Neiss	Biology
BHS	Tori Resnick	School Counselor
BHS	Rachael Richard	Social Studies
BHS	Kristina Rovtar	Art
BHS	Maiya Torres	Social Studies
BHS	Julie Blackstock	Permanent Sub
District	William Paltan	Driver
District	Desiree Noland	BCBA

Our operations team was hard at work this summer as well. Frankly, we have the best operations department, and I am so thankful for them. This summer, our team stripped and re-applied finishing to every tile in the District, while also performing a deep cleaning in every classroom and common area. Our maintenance team was busy preparing for a new school year as well, and supported many projects to ensure the upkeep of equipment and facilities. When you see our operations team around the District, please thank them for their service as they enable teachers to teach well and students to learn unimpeded in outstanding facilities.

This summer saw the completion of extensive projects in the area of the performing arts and athletics. The 2025-2026 budget approved by the Somerset Hills Board of Education included an allocation to install LED lights on Olcott Field. That work has been completed and the system has been fully commissioned.

Our first outdoor event is scheduled for next Friday, August 29, 2025, when the BHS football team plays Cranford High School at 7:00 pm.

The 2025-2026 budget also included an allocation to continue a multi-year plan to upgrade sound and lighting in the Bernards High School Performing Arts Center. The arts are indeed alive and well in the Somerset Hills School District! We have finalized our second summer dedicated to this work, and the students will experience a higher quality level of lighting and sound when performing in the Performing Arts Center.

During the spring and summer months, the District convened a team of health and wellness professionals who examined the use of cellular telephones in school. Let's start with our goal: to provide environments where students can be present and free from as many technological distractions as possible. To strike a balance, the District has elected to do the following during the 2025-2026 school year:

- Bedwell (no changes)
 - If a student brings a cell phone or communication device (e.g., Apple Watch, Gabb Watch, or other device), it must be kept in a backpack or cubicle with other personal belongings (**e.g., not on the student's person**).
- Bernardsville Middle School (no changes)
 - If a student brings a cell phone or communication device (e.g., Apple Watch, Gabb Watch, or other device), it must be kept in the student's locker with other personal belongings (**e.g., not on the student's person**).
- Bernards High School
 - Phones will be permitted in the hallways, at lunch, and during passing time.
 - Phones will be stored in *photels* (e.g., phone hotels) as students enter each classroom and will not be available during instruction.
 - Students may take phones from the *photels* at the end of each class period.
- District: Student Database Management System Restriction ("Genesis")
 - The "Gradebook" tab will close each day for parents and students at 8:00 am and open each afternoon at 2:30 pm to minimize distractions from real-time parent-child text communication, which may occur when accessing this information in "real time" as it's uploaded. Other Genesis functionality, like accessing your child's schedule through the "Schedule" tab and logging absences through the "Attendance" tab, will remain open throughout the school day for all users. We will monitor the impact of this closure throughout the school year.

To reiterate, the above outlines attainable changes in practice that seek to support all of the students in our charge. Please assume positive intent during this implementation and subsequent review.

We strive to keep you informed throughout the year; please see below how to stay apprised of matters from the District.

- [Messages from the Superintendent](#) (Third Thursday of every month and as needed)
- [District News](#) (ongoing)
- [Superintendent Reports](#) (posted after each Board meeting)
- [Board Briefs](#) (Monday following each Board Meeting)
- [Pathways](#) (Every other month)
- [YouTube Channel](#) (ongoing)
- School Friday Folders (Every Friday, except winter/spring break)

The coming week will begin with communications from each school Principal to their parents on August 25, 2025. Additionally, class assignments at Bedwell and student schedules at Bernardsville Middle School and Bernards High School will be released on August 28, 2025.

Enjoy the journey this school year by joining your child's Home and School Association ([BHS](#), [BMS](#), and [BES](#)).

I seek to serve you and do so comprehensively. While understanding that I believe in solving problems as close to the classroom and school level as possible, please feel free to contact me at your convenience if you ever need to meet or talk. In the meantime, I look forward to seeing you around the District in the coming months.

Sincerely,



Brian Brotschul, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools