

HURRICANE WINDS



Ben Hill County Schools Newsletter: August/September 2025

WWW.BEN-HILL.K12.GA.US

Congratulations to our Teachers of the Year at our Schools.

BHPK: Brenda Rowe, Preschool Teacher in our Yellow Ducks class

BHP: Ashlie Cross, BHP 1st grade teacher.

BHES: Cassandra Wynn, 5th grade ELA

BHMS: Stephanie Howell, 7th Grade Math

FHSCCA: Kelly Neal, Special Education Co-Instructor /History

The District Teacher of the Year will be announced on September 26, 2025 at the Fitzgerald Hurricanes vs. Appling Pirates football game at halftime.



SUPERINTENDENT HARDEN

Weekly Update by Mr. Harden

BHPK

- BHPK had an awesome time visiting with grandparents last week!

BHPS

- Structured Literacy Superhero's are being spotted daily at BHP! Our kindergarten teachers are identifying standout students each day and they get to wear a cape and mask all day long!
- We had so much fun with the drumline, football players and cheerleaders from FHSCCA on campus with us Friday morning! Thank you to these wonderful musicians and athletes! Our little canes and staff had so much fun!
- We have started our Random Acts of Kindness for September! Our students and staff are participating in a penny drive to raise funds for Childhood Cancer Awareness and will be donating to the Childhood Cancer Awareness Group of Coffee County that serves Ben Hill County.
- We celebrated Grandparents Day on Wednesday, September 3rd and Thursday, September 4th. Thank you to all the "Grands" that came to eat with our Little Canes.

BHES

- BHE has a weekly IEP bootcamp for new special education teachers and that is going very well.
- Our ELA teachers are doing a great job implementing word study lessons that are new to HMH for 3rd-5th grade this year.
- We celebrated Grandparents day on Friday, September 5th and it was a huge success. Thank you to all those "Grands" that came to eat with our Canes.

BHMS

- We are preparing to start the 21st Century Community Learning Center After-School Program at BHMS. The program will start on September 15th.
- The BHMS administrative team selects 5 teachers for "Toot your Horn Tuesday" who have exemplified what it means to be a Cane weekly to highlight the awesome staff in our school.
- BHMS teachers wore their "know your worth" t-shirts last Monday to recognize World Suicide Prevention Day.
- On September 12th, we had a club rotation A. Over 65% of our students are involved in a club. Our goal is 100% participation.
- On September 12th, the BHMS administrative team celebrated a "woot, woot" Friday. Students and staff danced as the staff was treated to drinks, cookies, and snacks. Students enjoyed seeing their teachers dance and some 8th grade students participated in a hallway "ride the train" dance.

FHSCCA

- Our cross country team ran Thursday. Coach Calhoun said no one placed, but she was still proud of the way the students competed.
- The Canes football team had a tough loss Friday night. We are still proud of the way our football players, band and cheerleaders performed.
- The girl's softball team did not have a win last week, but played hard.



This week our students will be participating in softball, cross country, comp. cheerleading and football. Get out and support our CANES!

ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR BHCS

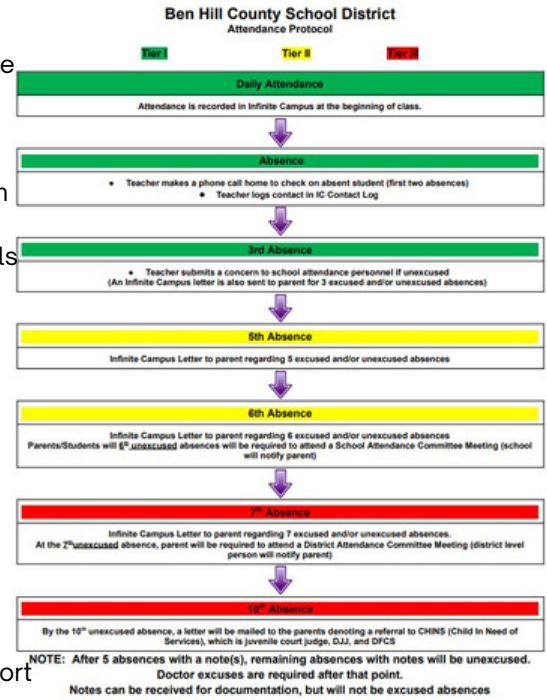
Ben Hill County School District has begun a new Attendance Protocol. This protocol is to align our district with the new Senate Bill 123 (SB 123) that was signed by Governor Brian P. Kemp on April 28, 2025. This bill states that public schools are prohibited from expelling students solely due to absenteeism, promoting a more supportive approach to attendance issues. A student is considered “chronically absent” if they miss 10% or more of the school year. School systems with a chronic absenteeism rate of at least 10% or individual schools with rates at or above 15% are required to establish attendance review teams. The 10% is excused and unexcused absences, so our aim is to monitor ALL absences.

Ben Hill County School District in conjunction with the Department of Education has reviewed our attendance data from the past few years. With that data and a committee assigned by Judge Pack, Juvenile Justice Judge, and other organizations and our schools, the protocol began in our county. This protocol is to lay out specific attendance protocols on how and when we address absenteeism with our students. Ben Hill County School District has begun sending out letters that state when a child in our system is out 3, 5, or 6 days excused and unexcused. This alerts our system and our parents that their child is missing these days and to make sure to notify our schools with excuses from a physician or parent written note.

School attendance is a high priority for student success. Our hope is to reduce the number of unexcused absences, increase the percentage of students present for state-mandated testing, improve school climate in each school, and reduce the number of students who are chronically absent.

As a system, we are here to help you, the parent or guardian, any way we can to make sure that your child is at school and has the keys for academic success. If your child has to be absent from school, please notify the teacher through Class Dojo, phone call or note to the school so that we can make sure to document that in our system.

Our protocol is attached. Please review this protocol and make sure to communicate effectively with our schools. We only want the very best for you and your child. Your child’s attendance, success, and safety are our top priorities. Thank you for your support and cooperation. Go Canes!



Thank you to our Cafeteria staff who did a fantastic job during our “Grand” days at BHP and BHES. Your hard work and dedication did not go unnoticed. Thank you!!!

FHSCCA HOSTS OUTREACH PARENT EVENT



Fitzgerald High School College & Career Academy hosted an Outreach Parent Event at Blue & Gray park. This event was a way to get out into the community and spread the great things going on at FHSCCA. Hotdogs and drinks were served by Mrs. Lynn Gay and our staff at FHSCCA. The band and cheerleaders came to entertain our guests. The information given was about attendance, parent portal importance, feedback and academic success. Please come out at our next event and learn more about how you can help your child become more successful with great attendance, good academic schools and great new skills.

Continue to check out our website at www.ben-hill.k12.ga.us for more information, click on parent toolkit for more resources, and check our Facebook for the latest in news and events. Way to go Canes!!!



"GRAND" PARENTS & FRIENDS SNACK TIME AT BHPK



Childhood Cancer Month Go Gold Day

SEPTEMBER IS CHILDHOOD CANCER
AWARENESS MONTH
GOLD OUT DAY AT BHCS
SEPTEMBER 26, 2025



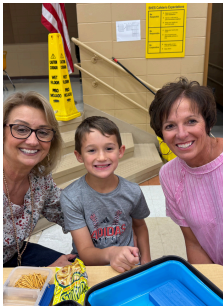
**GOLD OUT
GAME**
Let's Rise
Together
FAMILY

Our schools are turning Gold this month for Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. We have several students in our system who are battling cancer and we want to show them we support them. Get out your Gold on Friday, September 26, 2025 when BHCS goes GOLD for Childhood Cancer Awareness Month.

CANES MINI CHEERLEADING CAMP PERFORMS AT CANES GAME



GRANDPARENTS DAY AT BHES



GRANDPARENTS DAY AT BHP



Staff Perfect Attendance for August 25

BHPK: Nakia Gaulden, Debra Lampkin, Gabriella McDonald, Alyssa McKie, Dorothy Sellars, Debbie Wright, Cora Hall, Cedric Brown, Trisha Griffin, Bailey McClain, Brenda Rowe, Qiaoqiao Tao, & Suzanne Williams

BHP: Melissa Rathburn, John Hadden, Evelyn Dale, Jessica Daniels, Jessica Griffin, Melissa Hannon, Sandra Luther, Gracie Miles, Christopher Pridgen, Ora Ring, Brittany Robinson, Cheryl Tucker, Paula Washington, Kimberly Wilcox-Echols, Christy Jacobs, Jennifer Newell, Pamela Carter, Elvin Anderson, Dedee Braddy, Dena Bryan, Kandace Carelock, Nikki Cobb, Tiffany Coleman, Alana Cowart, Vicki Crosby, Ashlie Cross, Kayla Griffin, Beverly Grimes, Diane Smith, Bailey Miller, Christina Mooney, Kara Morgan, Leanna Morris Mackenzie Rathburn, Benita Reese, Keri Reese, Isabella Rowe, Sonya Sewell, & Dena Windom.

BHES: Christopher Alexander, Nikki Johnson, Kristen Kidd, Ashlyn Sanders, Sonya Smith, Zachary Smith, Emma Tucker, Marissa Morgan, Anna Branch, Kara Day, Robin Gibbs, Janice Green, Stephanie Harris, J Latrelle Ivey, Joanna Johnson, Blake Kerr, Marcey Larkin, Mary Beth Peterson, Brandi Pitts, Caleb Powell, Stacey Powell, Stephanie Price, Anna Reeves, Allyson Roberts, Ericka White, & Cassandra Wynn.

BHMS: Curtis Martellis, Annie Coney, Debra Cox, Ashley Gee, Madison Gonzalez- Rubio, Nikki Newcomb, Amanda Ross, Venice Stevenson, Sandra Anderson, Gennifer Gamble, Melody Hannah, Danielle Berry, Sara Bowden, Melissa Bracewell, Shannon Bynum, Katheryn Calhoun, James Curtis, Curtis Dale, Kensey Davis, Catherine Gay, Debra Hamlin, Stephanie Howell, Austin Johnson, Karen Kelly, Dana Mathis, Phillip Moore, Todd Ragle, Heather Smith, Jessica Smith, & Helen Webb.

FHSCCA: April Dockery, Jason McDonald, John Davis, Payton Dix, Allison Giddens, Dwane Ewing, Jaquadrian Lewis, Regina Massey, Brian Thompson, Demario Johnson, Kelly Aguilar, Raheeluddin Ahmed, Tykevias Bailey, Kristina Bowden, Ja Breedan, Jeanne Brooks, Bailee Bryant, Margaret Byrd, Zachary Byrd, Alyssa Cecil, Amber Clark, Myra Durden, Kenneth Eldridge, Randy Fillingame, Adriana Gregusova, Jonathan Handley, Blane Jacobs, Warren McCorvey, Chrys Milner, Kelly Neal, Christina Olivares, Brendan Pitts, Sherard Reynolds, Sam Rodgers, Kristina Simpson, Nickie Smith, Wesley Tankersley, Harry Tucker & Garrett Wright.

MORNING WITH THE CANES AT BHP



Staff Perfect Attendance for August 25

School Food Nutrition: Teresa Hill, Laverne Harris, Faye Jackson, Iris Paulk, Allene Brown, Falana Green, George Brown, Peggy Campbell, Thelma Holland, Charlotte Jackson, DeAnna Smith, Mary Gauden, Grable Coleman, Glendell Holland, Tytiana Richardson, Joann Veal, Marilyn Jackson, Tanya Kendall, & Karen Naylor.

BOE: Brandelyn House, Natalie King, Kelly Singletary, Dee Wessel, Lisa Stone, Matt Smith, Michelle Joiner, Barney Hamlin, Chase Hester, Casey Cross

Maintenance: Ashley Newell & Kendall Hodges

Rollin Canes Transportation: Carla Pugh, Trisha Thames, John Luke, Edward Starkey, Todd Thompson, Regina Adkinson, Julie Barnes, Gene Batchelor, Sheila Bishop, Travis Bozeman, Kristin Collier, Pamela Daniel, Hayward Ferguson, Mary Gallagher, Tony Griffin, Martin Hough, Garrett McCord, Diane Sears, Leroy Shirk, Kathy Taylor, David Tucker & Latoya Wilcox.

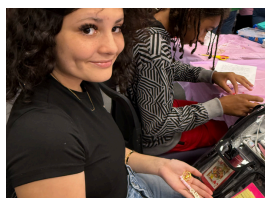
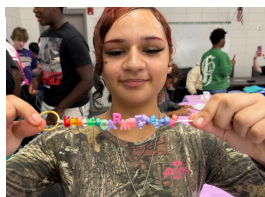
FHSCCA: COWAN/ PUTNAL HAD A FANTASTIC CLASS DISCUSSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DINNER TABLE, BEING YOURSELF, COMMUNICATION AND LEARNING ABOUT YOURSELF (WHAT IS YOUR WORD?)

"Who Understands Me But Me"

by Jimmy Santiago Baca

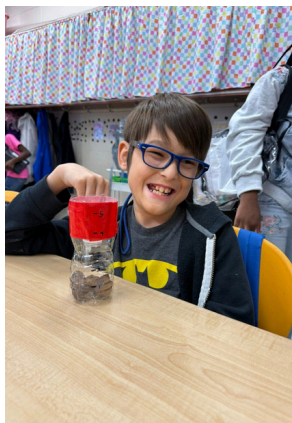
They turn the water off, so I live without water,
they build walls higher, so I live without treetops,
they paint the windows black, so I live without sunshine,
they lock my cage, so I live without going anywhere,
they take each last tear I have, I live without tears,
they take my heart and rip it open, I live without heart,
they take my life and crush it, so I live without a future,
they say I am beastly and fiendish, so I have no friends,
they stop up each hope, so I have no passage out of hell,
they give me pain, so I live with pain,
they give me hate, so I live with my hate,
they have changed me, and I am not the same man,
they give me no shower, so I live with my smell,
they separate me from my brothers, so I live without brothers,
who understands me when I say this is beautiful?
who understands me when I say I have found other freedoms?

I cannot fly or make something appear in my hand,
I cannot make the heavens open or the earth tremble,
I can live with myself, and I am amazed at myself, my love,
my beauty,



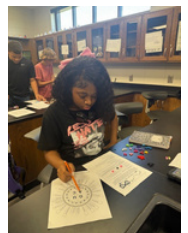
BHES: HAMMOND'S CLASS ~ CLIMATE/WEATHER

Mrs. Brittany Hammond's 4th grade class learned about climate and weather this past week. They discussed the different tools that can be used to measure different types of weather, and to finish out the lesson they created working rain gauges to measure rainfall. They used an old bottle to create the gauge and used a ruler to mark increments in inches on the gauge. They were also able to decorate their rain gauges. The students were so excited about this lesson they are even hoping for rain this weekend so they can test their tools out. What a great hands-on activity for learning!



FHSCCA: Bowden/Byrd Class

Students in Ms. Bowden and Ms. Byrd's biology classes worked with a partner to construct a chain of Taylor Swift-style beads using instructions from a DNA code. They transcribed DNA into mRNA and then translated the message into instructions for assembling the "friendship bracelet" bead chain. They learned that when DNA is replicated, sometimes random mutations occur.



BHES: TROUPE'S CLASS

MRS. NICKI TROUPE'S 3RD GRADE CLASS HAS BEEN LEARNING ABOUT DIFFERENT SOILS AND HAVE HAD THE BEST TIME PLAYING IN DIRT. THIS PAST WEEK THEY PLANTED SEEDS IN CLAY, SAND, AND DIRT (LOAM). THEY MADE PREDICTIONS ON WHAT THEY HAVE LEARNED AND THINK THE SEEDS IN THE DIRT WILL GROW THE BEST. EVERYONE IS SO EXCITED TO SEE THE WILDFLOWERS!



BHMS: IREADY REWARDS

Mrs. Jessica Smith's 8th Grade Homeroom class is "iREADY for Donuts!" 🍩 Today, they received donuts to celebrate 100 passed iReady lessons!



6th grade students in Mrs Heather Smith's homeroom celebrated iready success with delicious donuts! We are proud of your hard work!



WE GOT SPIRIT, YES WE DO, WE GOT SPIRIT, HOW ABOUT YOU?? GO CANES!



Canes Events

- 09/19/2025: BHP Pride Program 8:30am
- 09/22/2025: GA Reads Day in Georgia ~ Fun activities planned for our students. Check out our website and facebook for more fun resources
- 09/25/2025: ESOL/ Migrant Meeting (TBA- see facebook and website for details)
- 09/26/2025: Teacher of the Year for our District will be named and honored at the Fitzgerald Hurricanes vs. Appling Pirates game at halftime.
- 09/29/2025-10/03/2025: Homecoming Week for BHCS (see FB for dress up days per school)

Childhood Cancer Awareness Events for BHMS

For more information daily, please check our website at www.ben-hill.k12.ga.us or our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/benhillschools.org>

Rise Up for a Cure!

BHMS CHILDHOOD CANCER AWARENESS WEEK
SEPTEMBER 22-26, 2025

Monday: Band Together for a Cure Day
Students and staff will receive and wear special bracelets as a symbol of unity and support for children battling cancer. Each band represents hope, courage, and the strength we share when we stand together.

Tuesday: Wall of Hope Day
Students and staff write encouraging messages or draw symbols of hope on paper gold ribbons and place them on a hallway display.

Wednesday: Squeeze Out Childhood Cancer Day
Inspired by Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation, students and staff will enjoy a refreshing cup of lemonade. Just like Alex, we can take small steps that make a big difference in raising awareness and showing kindness. (One Cup at a Time: The Story of Alex's Lemonade Stand video will be shown during Hurricane Time)

Thursday: Kindness Counts Day
Students and staff are encouraged to do one act of kindness (smile at 3 people, write a thank-you note, sit with someone new at lunch).

Friday: Go Gold Day
Gold is the color of childhood cancer awareness. Students and staff are encouraged to wear gold to show support, honor the fighters, celebrate the survivors, and remember those we've lost. Together, we shine bright for hope.

Join in to show your support.