



Report of the Superintendent

October 15, 2025

Our Student Representatives

Bernardsville Middle School

R.J. Donado representing XC

Julie Calvert representing Field Hockey

Our BHS Student Representatives

Nolan Baker
Sophia Fazel-Sarjui

Peer Leadership Car Wash



Win Against Summit



In The News...

**Turning
Thoughts
into
ACTION**

How can
I help
hungry
children?



If interested in helping children by making a donation to this initiative, you can [support Rice Kids here!](#)



In The News...

How can I help
bilingual children
get excited about
reading?



Turning Thoughts into ACTION

Support Gold Award Project

68% \$470 raised
\$700 goal - 9 donations

Share

Donate now

Reagan Panik

Hello!

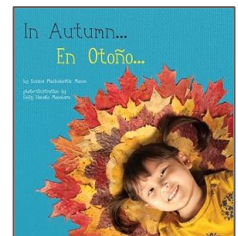
My name is Reagan Panik and I am a member of Girl Scout Troop 60318. As a Girl Scout, the hardest, yet most rewarding award a scout can earn is the Gold Award. Requiring 80 hours of service, the Gold Award is awarded to those who are able to create a sustainable development within one's community. For my project, I plan to build a free lending library alongside a bilingual book club for the students of Bedwell. To make this vision a reality, I am seeking funds to help purchase a library kit.

The goal is to create a small, weatherproof library box where students can take a book or leave a book. The library will include books in both English and Spanish to ensure that all children and families feel welcome to read, share, and enjoy!

I am aiming to raise \$700 to cover the costs of a kit and stand. If you'd like to support my project, please consider donating! Every contribution helps!



If interested, you can
donate *funds* to
**support the Gold
Award Project here**
to help fill the
Little Library!



If interested in donating *books* via an
Amazon Wishlist, **support the Gold
Award Project here** to fill the Little
Library!



In The News...

A Team Effort!

Richard D. Liguori

*Business Administrator/
Board Secretary*

Jodi Smith

Business Office Assistant

Amy Cicenia

Accounts Payable

Julianne Galuppo

Payroll and Benefits



From September 17th through October 1st, Suplee, Clooney & Company conducted the initial phase of their audit process at the Olcott Administrative Office. During that time, members of the Business Office provided information and supporting documentation, with assistance from the Data Administrator, District Registrar, as well as Operations, Curriculum, and Technology departments.

Over the next four months, the auditors will continue to review financials from the district, and will provide Somerset Hills with a final report coming this winter. Additionally, Suplee, Clooney & Company will present their findings at a public SHSD Board of Education Meeting.



In The News...

BHS
Everyday
Hero

Ana Carolina
Borbolla Menare



Ana Carolina Borbolla Menare, a senior at Bernards High School, was recognized by the school as the “Everyday Hero” for September.

Nominees for the monthly Everyday Hero Program are students who have a positive influence on the student body through exemplary qualities. Selected students inspire others, are responsible and respectable and have a commitment to peers and the school community. Students are nominated by one or more teachers, selected by the Everyday Hero committee, and announced schoolwide by either Principal Scott Neigel or Assistant Principal Mike Corbett.

The BHS September Everyday Hero has an infectious enthusiasm for all that she does. She loves her history classes and is also a student who can be depended on to voice her thoughts and lead discussions in class. She energetically engages in assignments related to research and understanding more about the world around her; she can’t wait to get out into the real world and make a difference for people in need. Ana Carolina volunteers for Community in Crisis and advocates for the Latin American community, participating in great advocacy work outside of BHS to support anti-drug campaigns. She will indubitably continue to make positive changes with all that she does, in the days, weeks and years to come!



In The News...

Time to Step Up



“Travis Manion Foundation’s message of ‘If not me, then who,’ is the bedrock of our community service actions at Bernardsville Middle School,” shared Community Service advisor Melissa Kimmel. “If we don’t take the initiative to step up, who will? In order to best serve our community, we all play an important role.”

On September 12th, Gil Balanzat, United States Marine Corp Veteran and mentor at the Travis Manion Foundation, presented to over eighty 5th graders at BMS. He presented the *Character Does Matter* program, specifically focusing on the silent character traits of self-regulation, kindness, and perspective. Students participated in activities to better understand each trait, including “Freeze and Breathe” to understand the feelings of reacting quickly versus slowly to a situation and practiced helping a peer calm down; the “Kindness Ripple,” to understand how a small act of kindness can make a positive impact on others and to appreciate the positive impact being kind towards others has on us; and “Two Sides” to better understand the importance of acknowledging different perspectives.



Bernardsville Middle School has several upcoming community service events around Somerset Hills, and they hosted their first after-school event with Community in Crisis on September 30th to create *Cardz for Kidz*. BMS has been partnering with CiC for several events throughout the years, and they always have a great turnout of student participants!



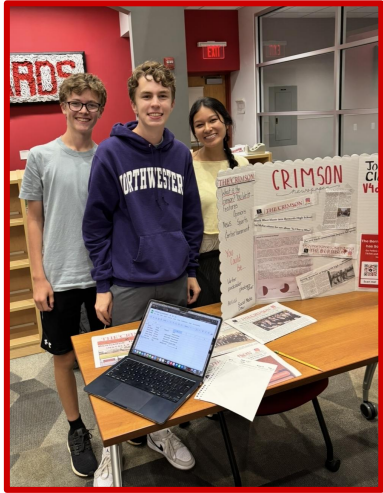
In The News...

“Come one, come all.” That was the energy in the Bernards High School Media Center during lunch block on September 26, 2025. And it is safe to say that hundreds came as student club leaders eagerly welcomed their peers to learn about the 35+ club opportunities available at BHS. There was something (or many things) for everyone such as gardening, cooking, gaming, robotics, writing, art, music, tons of community service, and more!

Clubs meet before and after school, or during lunch block. Lunch is the most popular time since many students have sports and other commitments after school but still want to pursue diverse interests in a social and productive atmosphere. Every club has a faculty advisor, either a volunteer or stipend position. In the evolving landscape of high school, there is always room for growth. Therefore, there is an application process if students want to create a new club, once they secure an advisor and have at least 20 student signatures. The application is then reviewed by a group of student leaders who meet with the principal monthly, to determine if the club aligns with the mission of the school and if it meets the needs of the students.

“The Activities Fair is a great opportunity for our students to learn about all of the amazing clubs and activities that we offer here at BHS. The leaders of the clubs run the fair, and they do an outstanding job reaching out to our new students and encouraging them to join new activities,” shared Dr. Scott Neigel. “At BHS, we feel strongly that all students should get involved in something outside of the classroom. The lessons that they learn and connections that they build in clubs, activities, and athletics make the high school experience so much more valuable and enjoyable.”

Special thanks to Peg Dolson, BHS Library Media Specialist, who helped organize the Activities Fair. This is the second year that the fair was hosted in the library as a large scale event, and feedback was extremely positive once again. It made the process of learning about the clubs, their missions, and their goals for the 2025-2026 school year a lot easier! We cannot wait to see the impact that each club has on the student body, and in many cases, the community at large!



Get involved!





In The News...

**Girl Up
Club**



"This is Your Year"

Girl Up Club members have a passion for student well-being and mental health!

Therefore, they created a display case in September to showcase positive messages and affirmations for the school community.

"Hispanic Heritage Month"

This month, the Girl Up Club partnered with the Multilingual Learner Club to create a display for Hispanic Heritage month, including facts about the history of this event, and acknowledging all of the countries included in Hispanic Heritage.

Special thanks to the Girl Up Club members and their advisor Jade Pietroluongo, as well as to the Multilingual Learner Club members and their advisor Janet Garay.



In The News...



Staff Spotlight: Alex Haenny

Entering her 3rd year of teaching at the start of September brought forth a new level of excitement for Alex Haenny. No longer new to the school, and now equipped with experience and a thorough understanding of the district, she leapt forward into yet another new beginning with confidence and passion for her chosen profession.

Ms. Haenny joined the Somerset Hills School District in 2023 as a math teacher at Bernardsville Middle School. This year, she is teaching Math 7 which she enjoys as students dive deeper into topics like rational numbers, proportional relationships, and multi-step equations. Additionally, she is teaching Math I/E for 6th graders which is a cycle class covering statistics. “One of my favorite units is teaching percentages which strengthens critical thinking and problem solving skills,” shared Ms. Haenny. “I love seeing students understand discounts and markups through real life examples.” This learning enhances financial literacy at a young age.

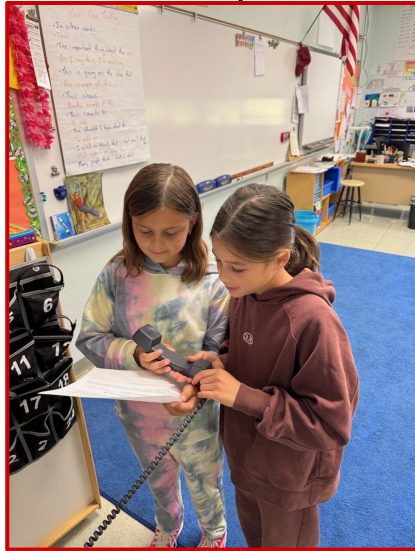
Ms. Haenny is looking forward to growing as an educator and collaborating with colleagues. She is eager to seek out professional development opportunities as well. One math workshop she will attend this fall is geared towards mathematical interactives which she will then turnkey to students making learning more hands-on. A goal of Ms. Haenny’s is to have her classes participate with exploration activities as much as possible, allowing them to experiment with new concepts prior to the lessons. For example, before they get a list of the mathematical rules of rational numbers, she provides them with integer counters to investigate and find patterns. In doing so, students are able to discover the rules on their own. “I feel this helps students grasp the concepts more adeptly at the start, followed soon thereafter by procedural fluency,” she shared. In her classroom, Ms. Haenny encourages students to share their work on a whiteboard or document camera so they can learn from one another, and feel less encumbered by any mistakes. It is an important life lesson she feels, to acknowledge that mistakes happen, and when they do, to take them in stride and grow from them.

As many in Somerset Hills know, Bernardsville Middle School was recently named a [Capturing Kids’ Hearts Rising Star School!](#) The implementation of the CKH motivational program kicked off schoolwide, in September 2024. The program fosters a relationship-driven culture. It does so via a framework for building a rapport with students based upon research showing that students need to feel safe and connected to their teachers to maximize learning. For the past two years, Ms. Haenny has created CKH contracts with her middle school students and feels it helps to create a positive learning environment. During the process, students and their teacher(s) establish very clear and agreed upon expectations. Addressed are how students want to be treated by their teacher, how the teacher wants to be treated by his/her students, and how any conflict should be handled. In Ms. Haenny’s classes they also pick a focus word each marking period which has changed between respect, engagement, and kindness to name a few. One thing is for sure, that only selecting one focus word to describe Alex Haenny would be hard as she is dedicated, motivated, supportive, caring and so much more! We are sure that she will inspire many BMS students to enjoy and appreciate mathematics this school year.



In The News...

Walking... and Talking



Bedwell celebrated National Walk to School Day by gathering together at the Town Library on October 1st. Parents and students then walked the 1.31 miles to school on a beautiful day with crisp air and a bright, blue sky. Arriving at Bedwell, all were greeted by their BES mascot, Character Ed! Special thanks to the Bernardsville Police Depart for their assistance in this fun (and healthy) tradition. GO BEDWELL!



Did you hear? Fourth graders have taken over the morning announcements... and they have been doing a wonderful job! These announcements provide everyone in the school with important information, upcoming events, and a school-wide time to do the Pledge of Allegiance. All 4th graders will have the opportunity to present the announcements if they wish.





In The News...

Hispanic Heritage

Bedwell hosted a Hispanic Heritage Night event for the entire Bedwell community on October 9th. The event included multiple activities, artifacts donated by families, and cultural crafts including: Ojos de Dios, worry dolls, tissue paper flags, country bracelets, lotería, soccer, dancing, food, and face painting. The Hispanic Heritage Month committee collaborated with our Hispanic students and families, who selected the activities and crafts that they felt represented their culture.

The committee worked diligently to make sure the BES event recognized the varied aspects of Hispanic culture worldwide, while specifically highlighting Paraguayan and Guatemalan culture. Paraguay and Guatemala are the two largest Hispanic groups within SHSD, and they were represented with Danza de la Botella (a traditional Paraguayan dance), Jugo de Guayaba (a guava juice), and a display of multiple handmade trajes (traditional indigenous Guatemalan outfits).

Thank you to our community for showing up to represent their culture and to embrace all aspects that make the SHSD community so unique! Thank you to the Bedwell HSA for prioritizing this event with financial support and volunteers to transform the Bedwell cafeteria. With all of the smiles and pride, the work was "vale la pena!" Our planning committee is already discussing ways to make next year bigger and better (and we are taking any and all suggestions for food trucks as well)!



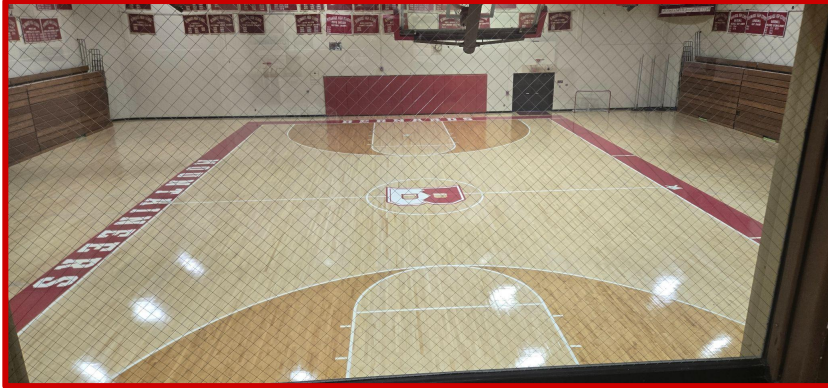
Special thanks to:

Catherine Martin
Allicen Librera
Stephan Mirando
Tatiana Gutierrez
Sarah McShane
Debbie Rokosky
Megan Dooley
Theresa DeRoberts
Scott Wolfe
Jasmine Akauola
Michael Catelli



In The News...

Facilities... and Food



Over the course of 3.5 weeks, Classic Sport Floors worked diligently on a flooring upgrade in the lower gymnasium at Bernards High School thanks to an anonymous donation of \$50,000.

The company sanded and refinished the wood planking, as well as applied game lines and court markings, a center logo, and painted a border with *Bernards* baseline lettering and *Mountaineers* sideline lettering.

Now there is 10,494 sq. ft for SHSD students to take their PE classes and to compete in Girls Basketball, Boys Basketball, Wrestling, and more!

We continue to partner with Maschio's Food Services for the 2025-2026 school year.

Our Area Supervisor, Denise Menza, worked with Chef Krystian Kalinowski to plan special "Chef Days" in October that include:

10/9 Boneless Wing Bar @ BES

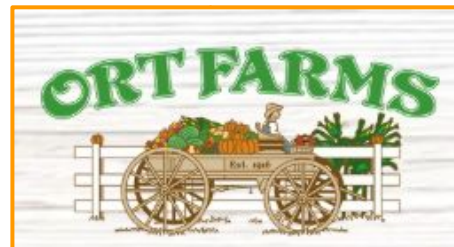
10/16 Jersey Fresh Pasta & Meatballs @ BHS

10/23 Baked Potato Bar @ BMS

BMS & BES students will enjoy Jersey Fresh Pasta meals on 10/27 & 10/30 respectively.

Also in October, there will be an apple oatmeal tasting with different variety of apples from

Ort Farms!





In The News...

BHS Marching Mountaineers!



"The Bernards High School Marching Mountaineers is having a great start to their competition season, taking 5th place in size 1A (1-40 students) at both of their competitions at Randolph High School and at West Orange High School, outpacing several other Marching Bands who are nearly twice their size and have more room for error on the field. Our Marching Band is excited to return to the NJMEA Festival at Wayne Hills High School on Saturday October 18th where they look to take home Silver or Gold Ratings."

~ Stephen Taesler
Director of Marching Band



SHSD SPORTS

Athletic Director Mike Hoppe led a professional development session with our team of SHSD coaches. They discussed up-to-date certifications, sharing game highlights, handling issues or injuries, and more!



"GO MOUNTAINEERS!"
~Coach Simoneau &
Coach Wierzbicki



"The seniors of the BHS Field Hockey team continue to work hard to be leaders on and off the field, and to make sure all of the players are enjoying their experience this season!"
~Coach Falzarano

In The News...

**HAVE
YOU
GOTTEN
YOUR
TICKETS
YET?**


Bernards High School Performing Arts Center presents **Arsenic and Old Lace**, a play full of witty dialogue and an outrageous plot! Every family has secrets, and the eccentric Brewster family is no exception. When Mortimer comes home to announce his engagement, he discovers his two spinster aunts' secret: their penchant for poisoning lonely old men as an "act of mercy"! Chaos ensues with an eccentric brother who thinks he's Teddy Roosevelt and another murderous brother trying to evade the police. This madcap comedy is sure to keep audiences laughing and on the edge of their seats!

OCTOBER 31ST

NOVEMBER 1ST

NOVEMBER 2ND

BHS PAC Parents continue to work to better integrate the Performing Arts to the full BHS student body, the district, and the community at large. Stay tuned for a lot of "new" things such as playbill tribute pages, integration with Fine Arts students, collaboration with athletic booster club parents, partnering with local businesses, holding special receptions for our "golden guest" theater go-ers, and so much more!



**BERNARDS HIGH SCHOOL
PRESENTS**

Arsenic & Old Lace

BY JOSEPH KESSELRING

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 31ST, 7 PM
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1ST, 2 PM & 7 PM
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 2ND, 2 PM

Purchase Tickets Online OR
Cash Only at the Box Office

ARSENIC AND OLD LACE IS PRESENTED THROUGH SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT WITH DRAMATISTS PLAY SERVICE



Stay Informed



[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)



Referendum 2026



SOMERSET HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT

Upgrading Our Facilities to Support Our Educational Programs

To keep up-to-date on the referendum scan the QR code below
Please send questions to: referenduminfo@shsd.org

REFERENDUM 2026

DISTRICT-WIDE FACILITIES RENOVATIONS PROGRAM

VOTE TUESDAY, MARCH 10TH



Referendum 2026: Community Forums

Date	Community Forum
October 27, 2025	Presentation to Bernardsville Borough Council
November 10, 2025	Presentation to Far Hills Borough Council
November 25, 2025	BHS Media Center, 7pm
December 18, 2025	BHS Media Center, 7pm
January 27, 2026	BMS Media Center, 7pm

2026-2027 and 2027-2028 School Calendars

Features for Consideration

Extended School Year Program: Increased from 4 weeks to 5 weeks

New Staff Orientation moved from last week of August to week prior

First day for students prior to Labor Day features advanced instructional time prior to standardized testing (NJSLA, K-12 and Advanced Placement)

Back-to-School Nights announced in advance for alignment with sending district

Winter Break around Presidents' Day (Monday/Tuesday) for students

2026-2027 and 2027-2028 School Calendars

2026-2027

June 29 through July 30: Extended School Year (4 Days per Week)

August 10 through August 17: Student Athletes Return (Sport Specific)

August 18 through August 20: New Staff Orientation

August 25–August 27: Staff Professional Development

August 31: First Day of School

June 11: Graduation

Spring Recess connected to Easter

“Snow Day Givebacks” prior to and following Spring Recess

April, May, and June undisturbed in advance of standardized testing

2026-2027 and 2027-2028 School Calendars

2027-2028

June 28 through July 29: Extended School Year (4 Days Per Week)

August 9 through August 16: Student Athletes Return (Sport Specific)

August 17 through August 19: New Staff Orientation

August 24-August 26: Staff Professional Development

August 30: First Day of School

June 8: Graduation

Spring Recess in March - not connected to Easter

Good Friday - No School

“Snow Day Givebacks” prior to Good Friday and Easter Monday (if applicable)

Reduction of scheduling interruptions in advance of standardized testing

Assessing Matters of School Climate

Engaging our stakeholders and establishing a baseline for the student, parent, staff and community experience in Somerset Hills

SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY REVIEW
<https://doi.org/10.1089/23729668.2024.2396270>

NASP

Check for updates

Initial Validation of the New Jersey School Climate Improvement Survey

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^aGraduate School for Applied and Professional Psychology, Rutgers University-New Brunswick; ^bSchool of Education, University of California, Davis

ABSTRACT

School climate has a profound impact on the wellbeing of staff and students. Although existing measures are available to assess dimensions of school life (Bradshaw et al., 2021; Espelage et al., 2014), surveys that comprehensively assess components of school climate from multiple perspectives are needed. A rationale is proffered for developing the New Jersey School Climate Improvement Survey for students, staff, and parents/caregivers, which varies from existing instruments in its measurement of unique domains; alignment of items across informant types; integration of diversity, equity, and inclusion items across domains; and ability to disaggregate by demographic characteristics, including student gender expansive categories. Internal consistency and structural validity were investigated using data from 5,504 students in grades 3–5, 16,280 students in grades 6–12, 5,464 staff, and 5,874 parents/caregivers. For each survey version, results support a correlated model structure and demonstrate strong internal reliability (e.g., omega coefficients above 0.70). Confirmatory factor analyses and Pearson correlations demonstrate strong internal structural validity across surveys. Implications are discussed, including how the instrument can inform a school climate improvement process that involves identifying strengths and needs, assessing the impact of interventions, and monitoring progress toward goals over time.

IMPACT STATEMENT

This article advances an understanding of the reliability and validity of a new multi-informant school climate assessment known as the New Jersey School Climate Improvement (NJ SCI) Survey. The survey can be used by school support staff including school psychologists, to collect data used to inform school climate improvement to create supportive and equitable learning conditions in schools.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received April 16, 2024
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KEYWORDS

Assessment, environment, factor analysis, intervention, school-wide, research methods, social justice

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Mai Ki Chan

Information forthcoming regarding survey for students in grades 3 through 6, students in grades 7 through 12, staff members, and parents.

Anticipate surveying during December with data analysis to follow in the winter and strategic planning to commence in the spring.

