



Report of the Superintendent

March 18, 2026

In The News... **An Unsung Hero...**

At an evening banquet on March 2, 2026, thirteen students across the county were recipients of the Unsung Hero Award on behalf of the Somerset County School Boards Association. They were celebrated by parents, guardians, family, friends, and members of their school community. Of this unique group of very special young people, Allison Arcentalez Shaigua was selected from the Somerset Hills School District to receive this honor.

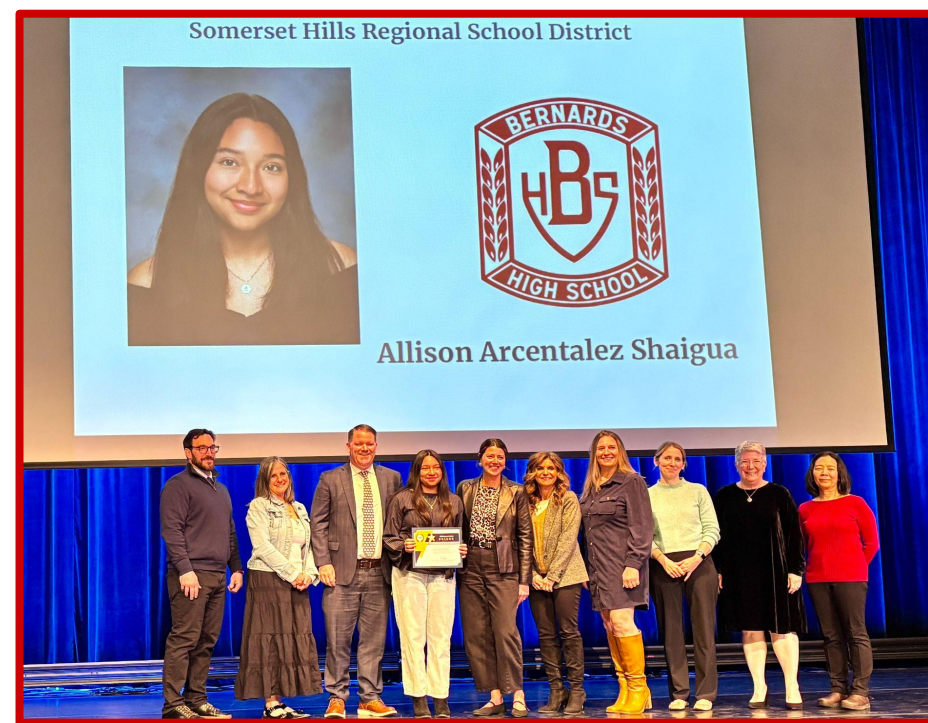
“Allison is one of the most resilient, driven, and compassionate students I have ever encountered,” shared BHS School Counselor Amanda Ellis.

Throughout high school, Allison managed complex family circumstances that led her to take on a caregiving role within her household. As a result, she learned how essential it is to take ownership of her own life. Allison built confidence in herself, her choices, and her actions. She made the conscious

decision that rather than wait for the “right time,” she would passionately pursue her goals in the here and now. She began volunteering at the Bernardsville firehouse as an EMT. Navigating a world where language and money create a barrier to accessible healthcare, Allison also started to work with her local health department to emphasize the need for affordable healthcare services in the area. With a local demographic of uninsured families, Allison has been coordinating with mobile health clinics to create opportunities for free or low-cost primary care. To understand how charity care can be beneficial to uninsured residents, Allison also connected with Overlook Hospital; she is in the process of bringing a hospital representative to town to make families aware of their eligibility and sign them up for financial assistance.

In addition to Allison’s unwavering commitment to the Somerset Hills community, she is a top-notch student who enrolls in the most rigorous coursework Bernardsville High School has to offer. At BHS, she serves as president of the Green Team, is a Board member for Peer Leaders, is a founding member of the BHS HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America) chapter, and is an avid dancer and dance instructor. What makes Allison’s accomplishments even more remarkable is the strength and perseverance she has shown in the face of personal challenges. She carries significant responsibility at home, yet she has never let these circumstances define her or dampen her spirit. Instead, they have fueled her motivation to pursue a career in neuroscience and emergency medicine. In every way, Allison embodies the qualities of an Unsung Hero.

At the event, Allison was celebrated by her father and members of the Somerset Hills School District: Amanda Ellis, School Counselor; Dr. Brian Brotschul, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Coleen Butler, Assistant Superintendent; Sam Frenda, Board President; Heather Santoro, Board Vice President; and Board members Pat Wry, Allicen Librera, and Kelly Hunt.



BHS Fundraiser to Kick Cancer!

The St. Baldrick's fundraiser at Bernards High School on March 4th was a huge success once again! A total of 16 students and one staff member volunteered to get their heads shaved for a most worthy cause. At the event, \$29,480 was raised, with every single dime going directly to Pediatric Cancer Research! Donations are now **over \$30,345** so if you would like to keep that total growing, you can [donate here!](#)

The Campbell's Flutterflies Club began over a decade ago by Caitlin and Caroline Hoyt, whose younger sister Campbell died from a rare brain/spine cancer called anaplastic ependymoma. Her death was felt throughout the community, but her legacy continues to live on through events and fundraising led by the Team Campbell Foundation and Campbell's Flutterflies, with all monies being donated to childhood cancer research.

Special thanks to the main event organizers: BHS students Jane Stauffer, Aletha Reynolds, Max Caldwell, and Anakh Sawhney; as well as to BHS staff members Janice O'Brien, Kelly Clark and Heather Hunkele.

**They were BOLD enough to go BALD...
for pediatric cancer research!**

BHS students: AJ MacCracken, Declan Meyer, Chris Peterson, Erik Annette, Hudson Gershon, Jack Martin, Jake Wieczorek, James Renz, Liam Calulo, Patrick Grabow, Sean Griffin, Sonny Liranzo, Tucker Gallagher, Tyler Pace, Avery Calulo, Nolan Baker and BHS teacher Mr. Peter Mathus.



Our Student Representatives

Bernardsville Middle School

Gwen Finnerty

representing Frozen Kids

Zander Diemar

representing Spring Track

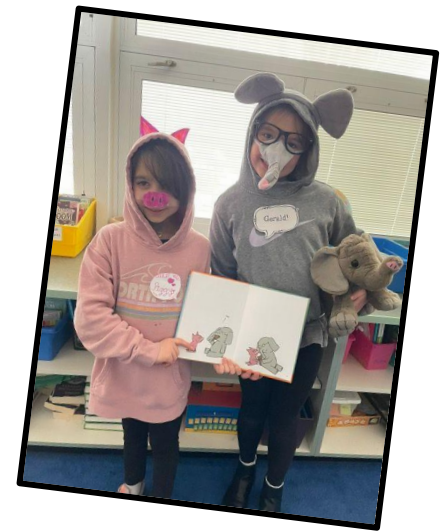
Bernards High School

Nolan Baker

Sophia Fazel-Sarjui

In The News...

Read Across America at Bedwell



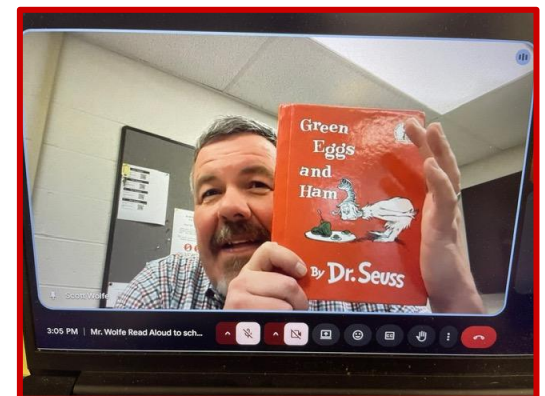
What a special week at Bedwell! Read Across America events included an author visit by Beth Ferry, a whole school "read in," a story night, and a SEL Day!

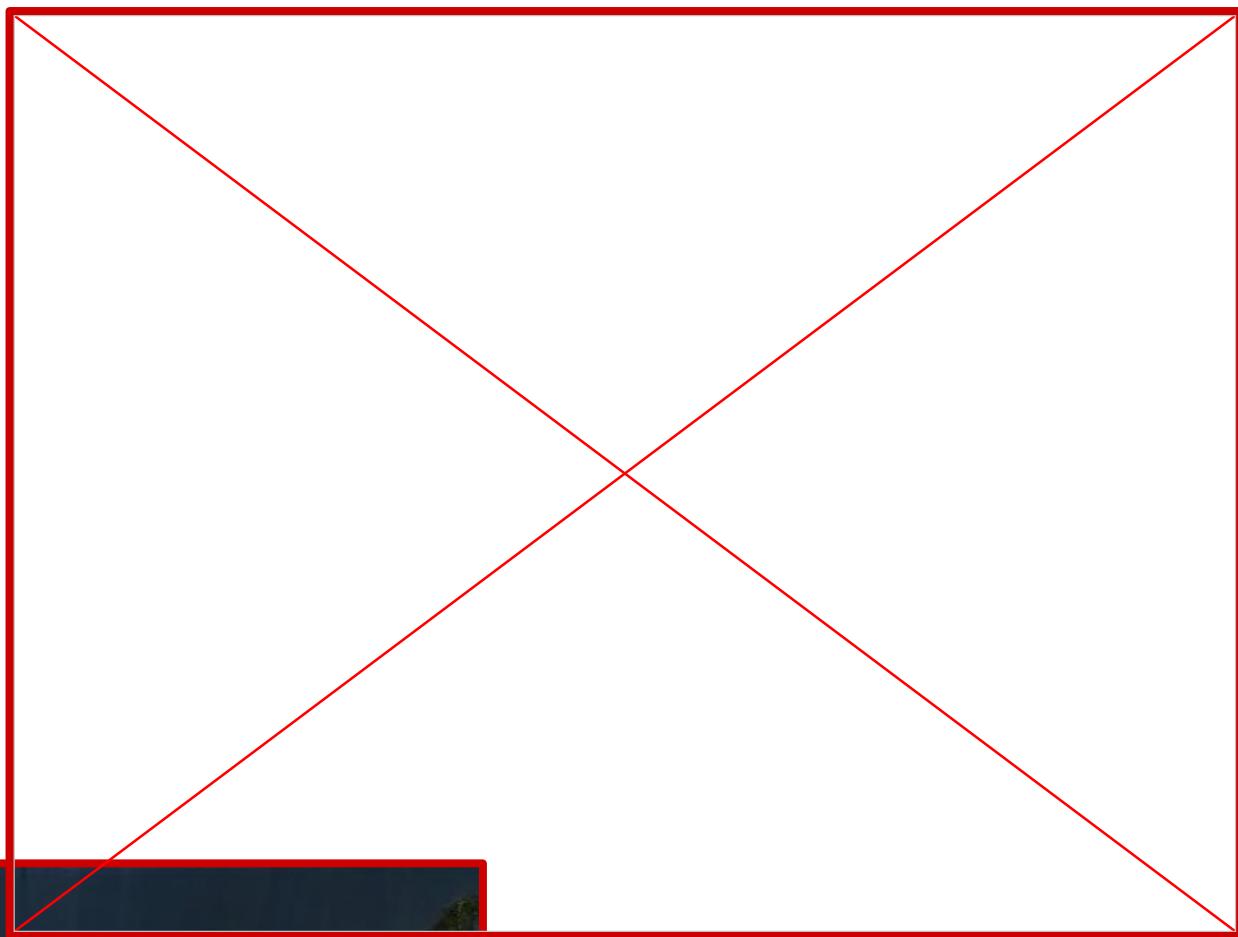
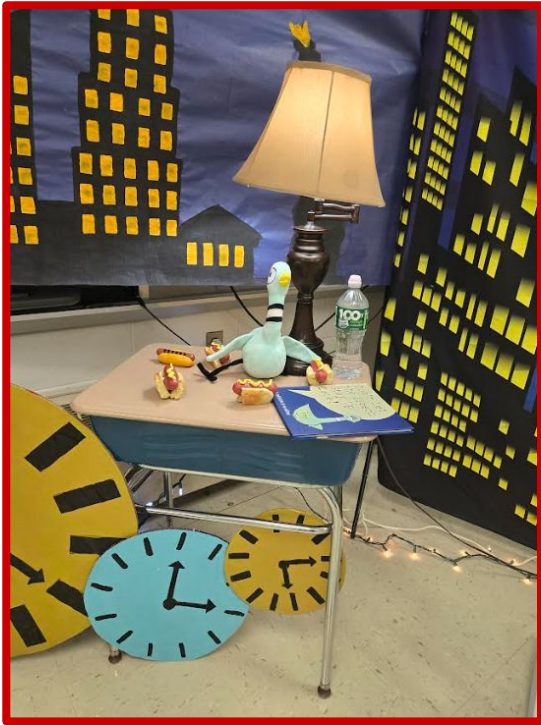


Traditional curriculum got put on pause for the day as BES staff and students focused their attention on the 5 CASEL competencies: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

All activities were a hit, including the community portrait in the hallway where students and adults were encouraged to draw themselves in one of the circles.

Special thanks to Darcey Brooten for organizing the Read Across America events, to Megan Dooley for orchestrating the SEL day, and to the Bedwell HSA for their making Story Night such a success!





**Stories...
and Songs**



In The News...

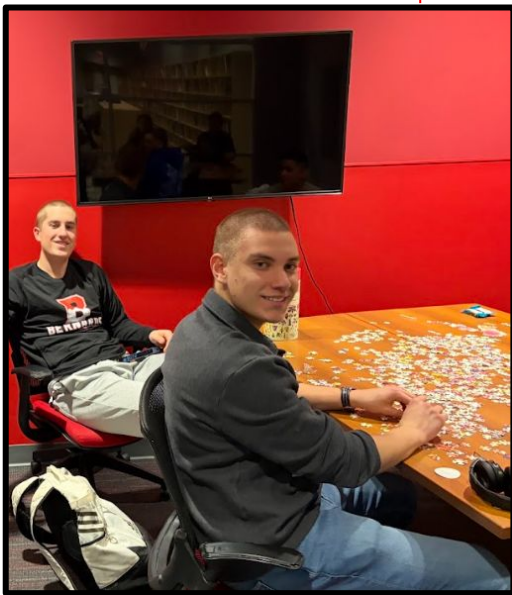
Wellness Day at BHS

On Friday, March 6th, the Bernards High School Student Council held its first-ever school-wide Wellness Day, where students and staff focused on mental health, self-care, and peer relationships. Teachers devoted the day to wellness activities like puzzles, affirmation stations, collaborative activities, gratitude journaling, yoga, and more!

The incredible SHSD community also got involved in the day. The HSA generously donated KIND bars to the student body; Community in Crisis gave study hall students self-care tips; J Walker Salon styled hair and tutored students on skin and hair wellness; and Amanda Modale of Yoga for Every Body did yoga, meditation, and fun planking contests!

An added bonus to the day was a series of health-related raffle prizes donated by various community members and organizations. Thank you to Bill Simpson, the YMCA of Somerset Hills, Quantum Wellness, Karla Simpson, Christina Rutz, Jennifer Walsh and Pilates Love, and Guallpa's Green Bati Juice Bar for their generous donations. Special thanks to the main event organizers including Student Council

Advisor Allison Snyder and Student Council Officers Jack Rutz, Logan Stevens, Ricky Giebel, Ella Patel, and Andrew Tropp; and a big shout-out to the entire BHS teaching staff for collectively prioritizing school-wide mental health awareness and activities.



The Wizard of Oz



By the numbers...

- 21** BHS cast members
- 50+** cast from BES/BMS
- 4** orchestra students who joined professional musicians
- 21** crew members
- 20** hrs a week of rehearsals
- 4** performances
- 1,395** tickets sold
- Endless** laughter
AND
Infinite pride and joy



By the numbers...

- 46** BMS cast members
- 26** BMS crew members
- 11 weeks** of rehearsals
- 2** energetic performances to packed houses

Never-ending clapping
AND
Complete happiness and excitement

Special thanks to
Director Allyssa Jurgens and
Assistant Director Julie Weinstein!

Frozen





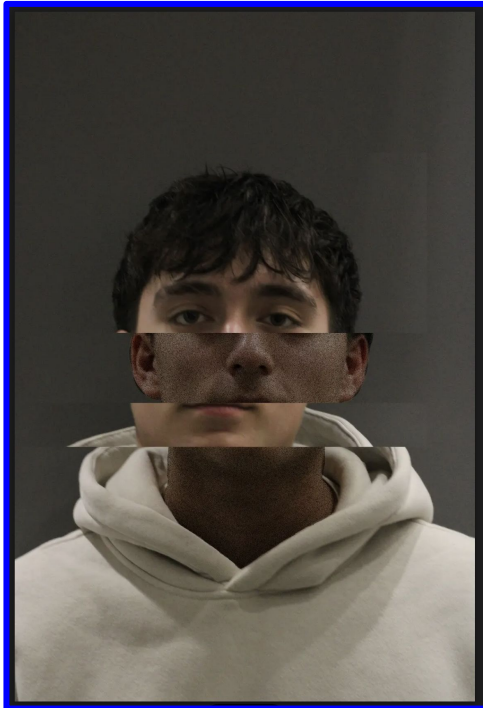
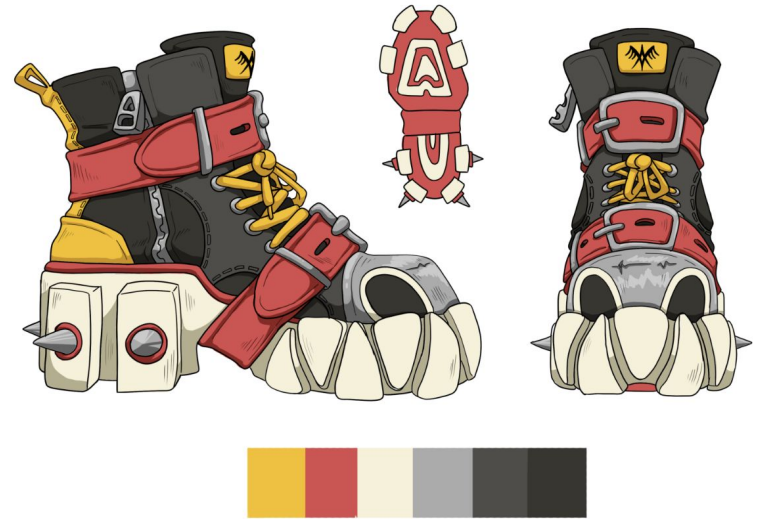
Check out what's happening in
Ms. Rovtar's BHS art classes!

In The News...

Art Matters!

Experimental Digital Portraits,
Digital Photography 2 Honors,
Thiago Montalvo

A Mile in Your
Shoes Project,
Digital Art 2,
August Roy



Experimental
Digital Portraits,
Digital
Photography 2
Honors, Isabella
Marques de la
Ossa

In The News...

BHS Everyday Hero



Abigail Dooley



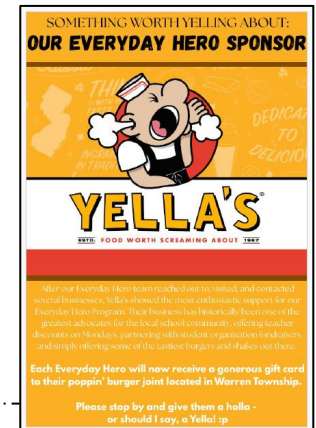
Abbie Dooley, a senior at Bernards High School, was recognized by the school as the “Everyday Hero” for March!

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.

Abbie Dooley has been recognized as an Everyday Hero for her consistent dedication to helping others and for leading by example. Through her work as a peer leader and board member, Abbie goes out of her way to support and uplift those around her, always putting the needs of others first. She is an active and positive community member, a committed athlete, and a hardworking student who is always willing to help classmates in every setting. Abbie leads with kindness, responsibility, and integrity, and her actions never go unnoticed. Because of her selflessness and strong character, she is someone everyone looks up to and trusts, making her truly deserving of this recognition!

Congratulations to March’s Everyday Hero, Abbie!

A BIG thank you to **YELLA'S** in Warren Township, our Everyday Hero program sponsor. Their business continues to be an enthusiastic advocate for our school community by offering teacher discounts, partnering with student organization fundraisers, and now for our Everyday Heroes by awarding them with a generous gift card each month!



How it started:

In The News...

Preparing for Battle!

The Battle of the Books is a book-based, team trivia competition for Bedwell's 4th grade students, and is hosted by the HSA.

It will be a rockin' event, as the theme is Battle of the Books meets Battle of the Bands!

Teams are forming. Students are reading. Excitement is growing!

Battles are forthcoming... Elimination Round 3/11 Championship 3/13

Book Titles

- ★ Tales of a Fourth Grade Nothing
- ★ The Lemonade War
- ★ The Talented Clementine
- ★ The Stonekeeper: A Graphic Novel (Amulet #1)
- ★ Fourth Grade Rats
- ★ The Guardian Test: (Legends of Lotus Island #1)
- ★ Babymouse: Rock Star
- ★ Love That Dog
- ★ Diary of a Wimpy Kid: Diper Overload
- ★ Lily to the Rescue
- ★ What is Rock and Roll?
- ★ Fenway and Haric



The excitement was high at this year's **Battle of the Books Finale**, where six outstanding 4th grade teams competed for the championship.

The teams - **The Beatles, Oasis, Guns N' Roses, AC/DC, Metallica, and Imagine Dragons** - showed impressive knowledge, teamwork, and determination as they faced off in the *ultimate literary showdown*.

After two intense rounds and 36 challenging questions, the competition was incredibly close. Three teams - **The Beatles, Metallica, and Guns N' Roses** - ended the rounds tied at the top, forcing the battle into a dramatic overtime!

During overtime, the stakes were even higher. On any given question, a team could be eliminated or claim victory. After a few more nail-biting questions, The Beatles were eliminated, leaving Metallica and Guns N' Roses to battle it out for the title.

In the final moments, **Team Metallica** pulled ahead to secure the championship!

A big congratulations also goes out to all of the 4th graders who participated in this year's Battle of the Books at Bedwell. Their dedication, reading and teamwork made this year's competition a fantastic success.



How it ended:

The Battle Finale!



Signing Day! March 11, 2026



*Congratulations to the following
BHS student athletes:*

- Brody Watt** Track/XC at U Penn
- Jaykob Marquez** Soccer at Old Dominion
- Samuel Rios** Soccer at Rutgers - Newark
- Fouzi Danial** Football at TCNJ
- Thomas Diemar** Football at Trinity
- Justin Simpson** Football at TCNJ
- Logan Stevens** LAX at Cornell
- Tanner Pagel** Swimming at Trinity
- Dominick Sharkey** LAX at Elizabethtown
- Brooke Helpinstill** Softball at Ramapo
- Aletha Reynolds** Basketball at Catholic U
- Tim Koke** Soccer at Neumann U



In The News...

A Successful SHEF Job Fair



The Somerset Hills Education Foundation's first Summer Job Fair at Bernards High School on March 5th brought together 26 local organizations offering 500 summer job, internship, and volunteer opportunities. Over 125 students attended, meeting directly with employers from across industries to explore meaningful ways to work, learn, and contribute this summer.

The event highlighted the power of collaboration between schools, local businesses, and community organizations to expand real-world opportunities for students. By connecting students with employers in person, the fair helped build confidence, professional skills, and pathways to summer experiences that support both personal growth and community engagement.



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: Thank You for Voting

THANK YOU



SOMERSET HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
REFERENDUM 2026
DISTRICT-WIDE FACILITIES RENOVATION PROGRAM

Referendum 2026

What is Next?

Certification of Special Election (March 24)

Prepare for Bond Sale

Finalize Bond Sale in Annual Budget

Develop Course of Action for
Summer 2026 and Beyond

Preparing for FY27

On March 21, 2026 the Board will have its annual Budget Retreat and be provided with a State of the Schools update in concert with the FY27 tentative budget proposal.

We will outline all areas of our District and initiate discussions regarding our priorities for FY27 and how those priorities influence the annual budget.

We will meet at 8:00am in the BHS Community Room.

Somerset Hills Regional Mayors and SHSD Roundtable

The respective mayors in the region will be meeting with the District throughout each year moving forward in order to articulate on our respective organizations.

Although we have several municipalities and different roles we serve, we are here for the Somerset Hills!

Understanding BUDGET STRESSORS FOR SCHOOLS

Health Benefits

- Rising healthcare costs

Prescription Benefits

- Increasing costs for *medication*

Salaries

- Costs of staff pay raises

Utilities

- Rising energy and service costs

Decreasing Enrollment

- Reduction in state funding as *enrollment declines*

Balancing the needs to provide excellent education outcomes for students

Preparing for

FY27

Upcoming Meetings

Budget Retreat: March 21

Committee Meetings: March 30, March 31, and April 1

Regular Public Meeting: April 15

Board Retreat: April 18

FY27 Budget Hearing: April 29