



# Report of the Superintendent

April 15, 2026

# *Our Student Representatives*

Bernardsville Middle School

*Genevieve deGrandpré*

representing Softball

*Harper Watt*

representing Track

\*\*\*\*\*

Bernards High School

*Nolan Baker*

*Sophia Fazel-Sarjui*



## More to March Than

To promote a love of reading and to build excitement around books, many 2nd, 3rd, and 4th grade classrooms participated in a “March Madness” book bracket tournament at Bedwell Elementary School. This event encouraged students to think critically, share their opinions, and make thoughtful choices about texts. Throughout the activity, students were presented with pairs of books on different subjects, including Science, Social Studies, Art, and more.

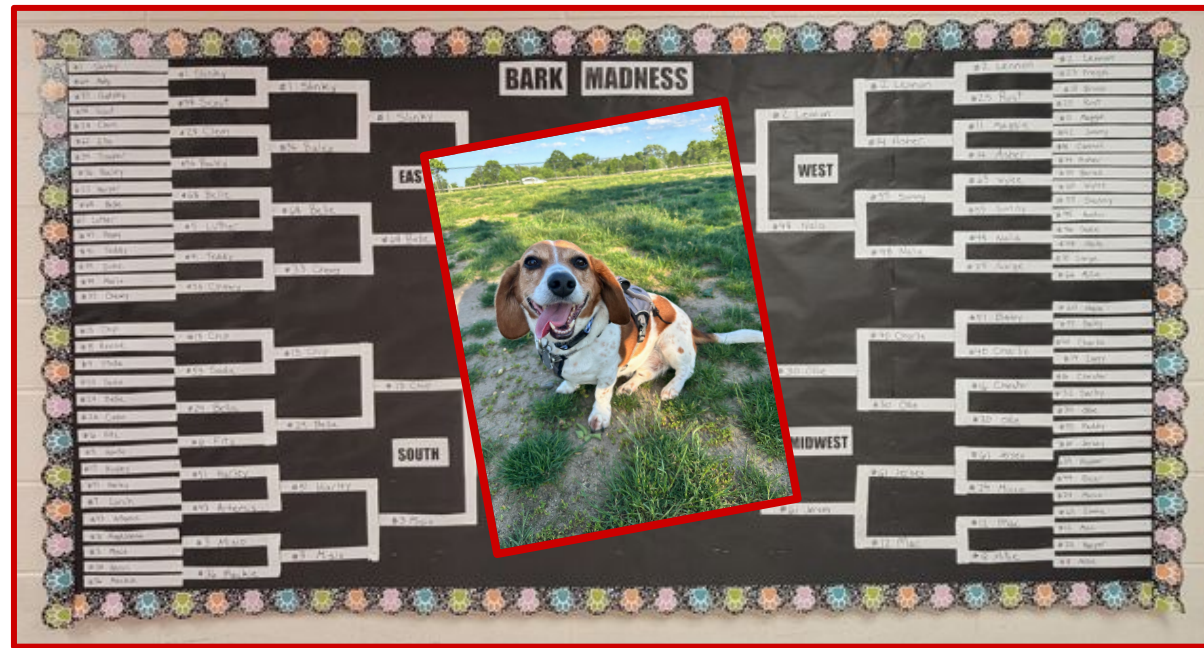
For each matchup, teachers read two books aloud and then students voted for their favorite of the pair.

The book with the most votes advanced to the next round in the bracket.

At the end of each school day, students were eager to see which books won their matchups. As the competition continued over the course of 24 days, everyone was excited for the champion to be crowned. The victor in the 2026 March Madness Book Bracket was *Bittersweet!*

This activity promoted active listening and comprehension, while most importantly, it helped students discover new books and develop an enthusiasm for reading in a fun, interactive way. Special thanks to Jess d’Anunciacao for organizing, to all staff who participated in reading, and to all students who voted.

# BARK Madness!



Paying homage to their mascot, our BMS Bulldogs were excited to show their school spirit by participating in the recent Bark Madness! Created by Student Council members and their advisor Adriane Gash, they created the canine concept and brainstormed a bracket. Students and staff were then able to register their delightful dogs into the tournament. Over the course of 2 1/2 weeks, students read bios about each of the fantastic four-legged friends. Engagement was high all month, with more than 75% of BMS voting!

While they were all amazing, Slinky reigned victorious! His human received a gift certificate to shop on his behalf at the local pet store, Well Bred. His other three furry friend finalists, Misio, Jersey, and Lennon also received small prizes (...hopefully a treat, bone, or pup cup)!

The experience was fun for all, and it was heartwarming to see the love that BMS had for all of the precious pups! Additionally, \$315 was raised and subsequently donated to the BMS 25-26 charity, *Crisis Response Canines*. Prior to Bark Madness, Student Council held three other successful events. In November they hosted Chain of Gratitude where students bought a slip of paper to write a message of gratitude, and then Student Council members created a chain of gratitude that was hung in the BMS cafeteria. The Affirmation Candy Cane Sale in December allowed Student Council to attach affirmations to candy canes with ribbons, which they sold for \$1 as a fundraiser. The Valentine's Day Candygram Sale in February had students eager to buy valentines and lollipops to have delivered to their classmates. Student Council has proudly raised a total \$1,845 so far this year, to donate to *Crisis Response Canines*.

## BHS Hosts STEM Competition



Five student leaders from the Technology and Robotics club held their 3rd annual STEM competition at Bernards High School in March. Lucian Spiteri, Jack Ecklund, Elizabeth Chen, Charlie Quinn, and Dheirya Tyagi invited 11 other northern New Jersey high schools to compete in a STEM competition centered around planning, designing, and creating a car inspired by Mario Kart using simple Direct Current (DC) motors and circuits. The Karts were then used to race around a built track, avoiding obstacles and various surfaces. Pascack Hills secured first place, with Pascack Valley and Passaic County Technical institute coming in 2nd and 3rd place respectively.

The BHS Technology and Robotics club created Mario Kart inspired trophies using 3D printers and laser engraving technology, which were awarded to the top three teams.

Bernard High School also had their own team compete in the event; the team of Ria Lewis, Allison Arcentalez Shaigua, Spencer Singlevich, Elizabeth Sugarmann, Matthew Todd and Rohan Yitta did remarkably well, securing a 4th place overall.

There are two more STEM events for the 2025-2026 school year; Bloomfield High School is hosting an event on April 16th and Northern Highlands is hosting an event in May which, in a unique twist, will be a water-based event at a pool!

A big shout-out to the BHS Tech and Robotics Club advisor Kevin Koch and to the student leaders for organizing and executing such a successful event. It was five months in the making and garnered a lot of praise from the visiting teams and coaches on how unique and challenging the event was. Additionally, special thanks to all of the judges who volunteered their time to support youth in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.



In The News...

## Youth Arts Showcase at the Hunterdon Art Museum

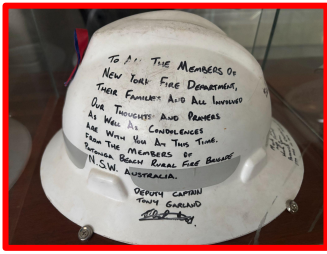


March was *Arts in our Schools Month*, and the district was excited to celebrate our student's creativity at the HAM Young Artist Showcase!

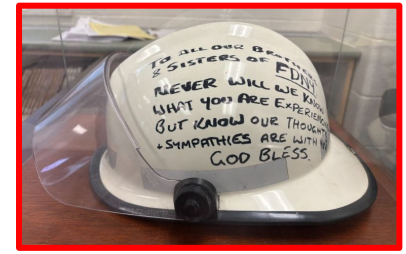
This special exhibition, held at the Hunterdon Art Museum, located in Clinton, New Jersey, highlighted the hard work and artistic achievements of our BMS students!

“This is a wonderful opportunity to recognize the accomplishments of our young artists in a professional gallery setting,” said Salome Chaffee, BMS Art teacher. “Our students shared a variety of artwork including painting, charcoal, graphite, ceramics, and watercolor.”





## 8th Grade Civics



In Shane Porter's 8th Grade Civics class, students recently participated in a meaningful lesson that connected history, civic values, and international goodwill. The lesson centered on a set of firefighter helmets originally donated from a fire department in Australia to American firefighters in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks.

Thanks to the generosity of community member Mr. Cagnassola, who loaned these items to the school, students had the opportunity to see and discuss these symbols of global solidarity up close. During the lesson, students explored how communities and nations come together in times of tragedy. The helmets served as powerful artifacts illustrating the compassion and support that flowed to the United States from around the world following 9/11.

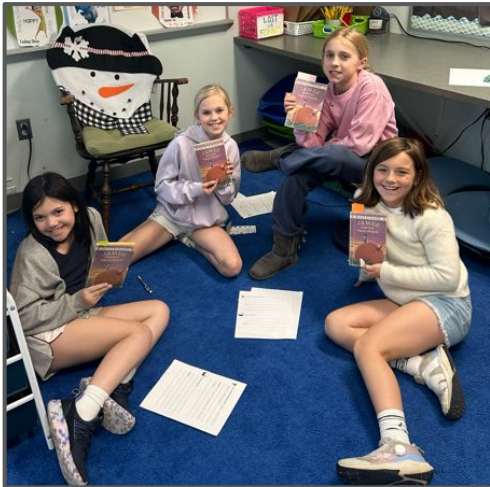
We extend our sincere appreciation to Mr. Cagnassola for sharing these important artifacts with our BMS students. His generosity helped create a memorable educational experience that deepened students' understanding of history, civic values, and the importance of global solidarity.



## Book Clubs & Dump Punch

Following their non-fiction unit, 3rd grade students at Bedwell Elementary School have been working diligently on a character studies literacy unit, where they focused on character development and inferencing skills. Teachers Sarah McShane and Grace Kartelias began by surveying the students about their favorite genres. Classroom book clubs were then created with students joining in groups of four. They had time to read in class, setting goals for their individual titles, and jotting notes and questions as their stories progressed. Their shared goals helped with accountability as students had to keep up with their peers, yet not read ahead. And by taking notes, they were able to make predictions, highlight passages, and offer clarity if a book club member was confused about a given part. “I loved watching the students collaborate, take on a more active role in their own reading, and lead thoughtful discussions,” shared McShane. “One of the most rewarding parts of the book club is that the children are able to converse on a deeper level and build upon their peers’ ideas.” The third graders were also encouraged to develop theories about the characters based on the patterns of behavior they noticed in their stories. They investigated how characters faced and reacted to challenges, and debated characters across book series with questions like, “Who is a better problem solver?” or “Who is braver?” and then supported their opinions by providing text evidence.

Following the district’s spring break, students were offered a myriad of culmination activities such as designing a travel brochure, compiling a mystery bag, and producing a slideshow. Having a variety of options allows for creativity and self-expression. They also had a whole-class novel study on the book *Because of Winn Dixie* by Kate DiCamillo. As is a Bedwell tradition, all of the 3rd grade classes will gather together to recreate the memorable party from the end of the book. Students will be serving the same quirky treats that are described in the book: pickles, “Dump Punch,” egg salad for the adventurous eaters, and hard candies to represent the “Littmus Lozenge.” Teachers also plan to incorporate the movie adaptation into their celebration which will inevitably result in lively discussions, comparing and contrasting the book with the film.



## Making Music & Memories in Disney!



The BHS Concert Band and Orchestra attended Festival Disney again this year to present their progress on this Spring Concert's Repertoire Selection. They played for conservatory professors who provided sound feedback and a clinic for both Mr. Taesler and the students to use in practice. A total of 35 students attended and provided their clinicians with four total works appropriate for high school wind and string ensembles. They all had a wonderful time in the parks and cherish the lessons they learned on musicianship and enjoyment of craft.





## **SHEF Grant Update:** *The Shaper Origin*

**Judge Ellis**, BHS, Woodworking (Grades 9–12)

*Portable CNC Tool (Shaper Origin) for  
Advanced Design & Fabrication: \$3,599*



The Shaper Origin has been quickly adopted into the workflow of the various woodworking classes that Bernards High School offers. Through the generous grant from the Somerset Hills Education Foundation, students have been able to access an amazing piece of machinery and technology all in one. Students have been able to plan, design a digital template for their work, and create wonderful projects with the guidance of the handheld CNC Shaper Origin.

"It's like a video game" is a quote that has been spoken by every student who has utilized the system. Pictured, you can see senior Kaia Alexander creating an internal structural component of her 8 foot wooden surfboard. Additionally, Kaia plans to incorporate the Shaper Origin to create a hand-drawn inlay on the bottom of the surfboard, which the Shaper Origin will help her create an exact copy of her original artwork. The Shaper Origin has increased 21st century skills in the wood shop, while having students remain part of the process from the initial planning through the final project creations. Each and every day, students are finding more and more uses for this incredible piece of technology and machinery.

The Somerset Hills Education Foundation awarded \$15,646 in classroom mini-grants for innovative educational projects across the Somerset Hills School District. We will continue to provide updates on these teacher-led initiatives.



Ninfa “Abi” Miranda, a senior at Bernards High School, was recognized by the school as the “Everyday Hero” for April!

In The News...

## BHS Everyday Hero



Ninfa “Abi”  
Miranda

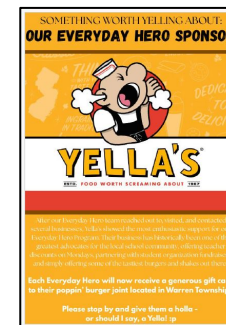
Nominees for the monthly Everyday Hero Program are students who have a positive influence on the student body through exemplary qualities. Selected students inspire others, are responsible and respectable and have a commitment to peers and the school community. Students are nominated by one or more teachers,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

Abi Miranda is one of those students who comes into the school with respect and positive vibes only - *every single day*. She’s the one who takes the best care of new students enrolling in Bernards High School and one who teachers can count on to be dependable and responsible. She’s simply someone you can trust - and that speaks volumes.

Compassion, maturity, and tenacity are what define Abi. And it’s not just her teachers and peers who have seen it! You can ask Camp Bedminster where she serves as Camp Counselor... or ask the two club teams she’s captain of, and the three school sports teams she’s an integral part of. A strong work ethic, team spirit, and respect are what she stands for. And for that, Abi deserves the BHS recognition of being an everyday kind of hero.

### Congratulations to April’s Everyday Hero, Abi!

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!



By the numbers

Baseball - 39

Softball - 22

Golf - 33

Boys Lacrosse -49

Girls Lacrosse -50

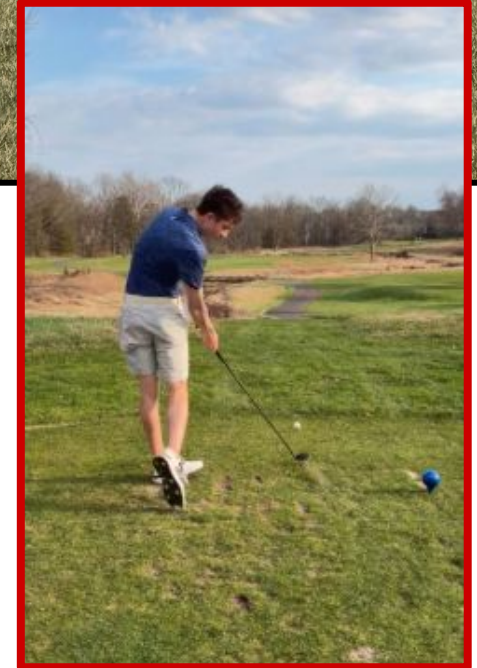
Boys Tennis - 19

Boys Track & Field - 67

Girls Track & Field - 58



**SPORTS  
SNAPSHOTS**



# SPORTS SNAPSHOTS



# Education Opportunities Fair

Dr. Brian Brotschul and Kathy Mehan, HR Specialist, were part of the TCNJ Education Opportunities Fair last month. There were 114 employers in attendance, and over 200 students participating, which made for a successful event.

The day was divided into two parts. In the morning, potential TCNJ candidates visited the tables to learn more about the school districts and openings. In the afternoon, Dr. Brotschul and Ms. Mehan held multiple interviews with interested candidates who aligned with available SHSD positions. Prospective candidates were interested in the climate and culture of the district as well as social-emotional learning. They spoke about their hands-on

practicums, as well as their student teaching experience. They were eager to share their teaching philosophies and growth mindset. Additionally they discussed classroom management, overcoming challenges, and building positive relationships with students and parents to create a true, school “community.”





# 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)



# ***i-Ready : An Update***

## Three Components of i-Ready

i-Ready Inform assessment

i-Ready Personalized Instruction

i-Ready Comprehensive Math Program

# ***i-Ready : An Update***

## Practical Application in Somerset Hills

i-Ready Inform assessment (Grades K–8):  
Administered up to three times per year to measure  
student progress

i-Ready Personalized Instruction (Grades K–8):  
Supports skill development in mathematics

*i-Ready is implemented minimally in SHSD in comparison to what it offers. We focus on diagnostic benchmark assessments to **support, not supplant** instruction.*

# ***i-Ready : An Update***

## Why Use i-Ready?

To support high level instruction and curriculum taking place in our schools

Help educators understand academic status for individual students and modify instruction accordingly

# ***i-Ready : An Update***

## Why Use i-Ready?

Support and enhance school to family engagement

Benchmark data is shared with families and the personalized instruction may be used for extension work at home and over the summer

# ***i-Ready : An Update***

## Historical Implementation

In the Spring of 2020, two elementary math programs were chosen for final review by the K-5 teaching staff based on content alignment to NJSLs, rigor, and overall quality of materials (Ready Classroom Mathematics 2020 and EnVision Math 2020).

Ready Classroom Mathematics was selected for grades K-5 to ensure a consistent, high-quality math experience for all students in Spring 2020.

# ***i-Ready : An Update***

## Historical Implementation

Program materials have earned the highest rating possible for all grade levels from EdReports.org.

The materials meet expectations for alignment to the standards; focus and coherence; rigor, and practice-content connections. The program emphasizes conceptual understanding, problem-solving, and math discourse.

# ***i-Ready : An Update***

## Collecting Student Data

Basic student information (e.g., name, date of birth, school)

Academic performance data (e.g., assessment scores, lesson pass rates) to help teachers support learning

Limited technical information (e.g., device/browser type, not linked to student identity)

# ***i-Ready : An Update***

## Collecting Student Data:

*What Does Data Allow Educators in SHSD to do?*

Deliver personalized instruction at the right level

Provide teachers with actionable insights

Ensure the platform functions properly

# ***i-Ready : An Update***

## Collecting Student Data:

### *What Data is Not Collected?*

i-Ready does not collect health information, Social Security numbers, student mailing addresses, phone numbers, emails, or social media profile information.

# ***i-Ready : An Update***

## i-Ready's Statement Regarding the Protection of Student Privacy

“We do not sell student data—ever.

We do not use student data for advertising or marketing.

We do not create commercial profiles of students.

Our data handling practices are consistent with all applicable federal and state requirements, including Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, and state-specific privacy laws.”

***The Administration is closely following a class action lawsuit involving i-Ready and other educational technology companies and will keep the Board and community informed.***

# *Bedwell Assistant Principal Recommendation*

Ms. Arielle Rementilla Joins Bedwell on July 1, 2026

Assistant Principal - Mendham Township

Teacher - Millburn, Fair Lawn, Edgewater, and New York City

Certified Elementary (K-6); Students with Disabilities;  
Orton Gillingham; Reading Specialist; Supervisor; and Principal

B.S. Childhood Education and Special Education

M.S. Literacy and Teaching English to Students of Other Languages

M.A. Educational Leadership



# *Transitioning to Cell Phone Free Schools*

Bedwell - Currently Cell Phone Free

Bernardsville Middle School - Currently Cell Phone Free

Bernards High School - Becoming Cell Phone Free in September, 2026

Bernards High School - Health Fair and Cell Phone Free Day

## ***School Start/End Times***

Bernards High School will start at 7:55 am and end at 2:51 pm

Bernardsville Middle School will start at 8:00 am and end at 2:56 pm

Bedwell Elementary School will start at 9:05 am and end at 3:41 pm

Start times allow for equity regarding arrival times for BHS students, particularly those who live in Far Hills, Peapack, and Gladstone, which has been a decades old problem.

*Arrival and Dismissal times shift 10 minutes later*

# ***FY27 Budget Hearing***

The Board of Education will conduct a Budget Hearing on April 29, 2026 in the BHS Community Room at 7:30 pm.