
SOMERSET HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT

Pathways to Success



Mar/Apr 2026

Superintendent's Corner by Dr. Brian Brotschul



The calendar has turned to May, and the finish line is in sight in what has been a successful school year for the District and scores of students.

Misha Collins is an American actor and a co-founder of the non-profit organization Random Acts. Collins reinforces the impacts of focusing on the “small things” and stated that “Even small acts of kindness can make a profound difference to somebody else.”

As partners in your child’s education, you influence the character that your child portrays in their words and deeds. Likewise, we are all responsible for guiding their growth in character and values. In my view, being kind is a simple act, whose outcomes have a broad reach. Being kind is an important value.

Our words matter.

I ask for your continued support in reinforcing the importance of kindness at home. Conversations about empathy, respect, and understanding others’ perspectives, upbringing, and values of inclusivity and respect are impactful and may influence your child’s choices in the future.

Encouraging your children to pause, reflect on how their words and actions affect others, and choose kindness helps build habits that last and will have a significant impact on their experience here in Somerset Hills, as well as on their peers’ and classmates’ experiences.

The District is your partner, and you are ours. Thank you for your ongoing partnership and for all you do to foster a positive, caring environment for every student. In Somerset Hills, we believe that All Means All, and it is our collective responsibility to do everything we can in our homes to thread that needle.

All Means All. Let’s ensure that we all do our part.

NJPSA Scholarship Winner: Ana Carolina Borbolla Menare

by Dr. Scott Neigel



Ana Carolina Borbolla Menare has been selected as a recipient of a prestigious student leadership scholarship from the New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association (NJPSA), an honor awarded to just 25 graduating seniors across the state. This scholarship recognizes students who have demonstrated exceptional leadership in their schools and communities in roles outside of athletics, and Ana was chosen as Bernards High School’s sole nominee. Her selection highlights a consistent commitment to service, initiative, and making a meaningful impact on those around her.

Ana’s leadership journey began at a young age through her involvement with Community in Crisis, where she has volunteered regularly and taken on key roles such as organizing Prevention Month initiatives. She has expanded her impact by delivering bilingual health presentations and creating inclusive service opportunities that make it easier for all students to participate. Her work has also reached the national level, where she was selected to represent youth in a White House initiative focused on prevention efforts. Ana’s recognition by NJPSA reflects not only her impressive accomplishments, but also the positive and lasting influence she continues to have within her school and community.

Earth Week

by Marcos Vargas and Scott Wolfe

Bedwell Elementary launched Earth Week with a high-impact assembly by The Grand Falloons, made possible in part through the Bernardsville Borough Clean Communities grant. The performance blended environmental education with humor and interactive elements, engaging students while reinforcing key concepts related to sustainability, conservation, and responsible stewardship.



Students responded positively to the presentation’s format, which translated complex environmental topics into accessible, memorable takeaways. The program’s reputation for being both informative and entertaining was evident, as it sustained student attention and prompted thoughtful reflection on everyday actions that contribute to a healthier environment.

This assembly served as an effective entry point for Earth Week, establishing a clear tone for continued learning and schoolwide activities focused on environmental awareness.

VFW Chat and Chew by Dr. Michael Catelli

An annual tradition continued, with local veterans from our VFW Post 7858 spending lunch with Bernards High School students. The event was set up as a “Chat and Chew,” open to all students during the high school lunch block, which created an accessible and welcoming space for dialogue, reflection, and connection across generations.

Veterans from multiple conflicts had the opportunity to connect with students eager to deepen their understanding of history, as well as those considering future military service. Students were able to ask questions, hear firsthand accounts, and engage with perspectives that extend beyond the classroom. Many of our veterans brought in artifacts and memorabilia to share, making their experiences more tangible and humanizing history.



A particular highlight this year was memorabilia shared by Mr. Bob Walsh, a World War II veteran from the Pacific Theater and a BHS graduate, who brought the letters he wrote to his “future wife” while stationed overseas. The VFW Post Commander Mr. Phil Heinold commented that the veterans were “impressed with the number of students who stopped by, and by their genuine interest in our stories, photos, and the quality of the questions the students asked.”

Our local veterans also recognized Colette Shovlin as the winner of the Voice of Democracy competition. The Voice of Democracy is an annual speech competition organized by the VFW that asks students to write and deliver a 3 to 5 minute speech and awards scholarships to winners and participants.

IMPORTANT REMINDER:



SHSD Preschool Program

by Jamie Koransky

The Somerset Hills School District provides a full day, five days per week, preschool program that provides our students with a variety of learning experiences. The program follows the same hours as Bedwell Elementary School, 9:05am- 3:41pm.

The program has group therapy experiences for physical therapy, occupational therapy, and speech therapy. Our district behaviorist provides classwide support. Students will attend age appropriate related arts including art, music, physical education, technology, and library time. Students will eat lunch in the cafeteria and participate in recess daily.

If you are interested in the Somerset Hills School District Preschool Program, please [complete the application](#) found on the website or in the Friday/Community folder highlights!

*Please return the application to Student Services in the Administrative Building located at 25 Olcott Ave by **May 1, 2026.***



Did you hear?



At the April 15th Board of Education meeting, Mrs. Arielle Rementilla was approved as Assistant Principal of Bedwell Elementary School for the 2026-2027 school year. We are excited to have her join the SHSD community! You can read more about Mrs. Rementilla [here](#).

A Team Effort

by Frank Riccio

With the changing seasons bringing unpredictable temperatures, our maintenance and transportation teams have been hard at work keeping everything running smoothly.

The maintenance team has been especially busy ensuring our climate systems are functioning properly, often switching between heating and cooling as needed. Alongside this, they continue to focus on preventative maintenance while quickly addressing any issues that arise. Meanwhile, our transportation team is in a particularly active period, supporting a full schedule of class trips, in addition to maintaining reliable daily routes. Their efforts help ensure safe, efficient travel for all throughout this busy time of year!

SHSD Celebrates Take Your Child to Work Day
by Lindsay Barna



Walking the halls of the Somerset Hills School District's buildings on April 23rd, might have surprised you. Staff members brought some very special visitors to school that day... their children!

Take Your Child to Work Day, originally founded by Gloria Steinem and the Ms. Foundation for Women to boost adolescent girls' self-esteem and career aspirations (expanded in 2003 to include boys), aims to show all children the value of education and future career possibilities.

Bedwell Elementary, Bernardsville Middle School, and Bernards High School opened its doors to staff members' children, exposing them to the joys of teaching and learning in the public school environment. They took part in class, experienced lunchtime, and learned what the day-to-day life of an educator looks like.

In addition, the Bernards High School podcast studio hosted some enthusiastic guests, with BHS students showing Mr. Bale-Peña, Mr. Spautz, and Ms. Barna's kids the ropes.

Counseling Corner:
Second Annual Wellness Fair Held at BHS
by Dr. Jaime Walker

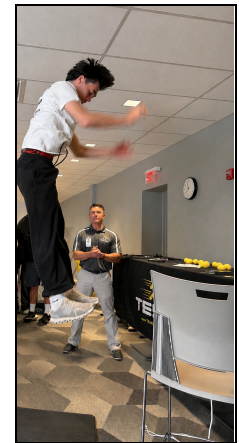
On April 22nd & 23rd, BHS held its second annual Wellness Fair. BHS counselors partnered with Community in Crisis (CiC) and a number of other community organizations to bring healthy options to the students and staff during the lunch block, providing an even bigger event than last year!



Participating attendees included:

- *Blueprint Mental Health - Wellness resources and wheel activities
- *Zufall Health Agency - Healthy heart and reproductive health information
- *Atlantic Health MMH - Sugar Bottle presentation and caffeine in energy drinks
- *Rutgers Cooperative Extension - Herbs/teas/plants/outdoors and nutrition
- *Richard Hall Mental Health - Teen Stress, family, peer issues. Giveaways: stress ball and fidget toys

- *Bernards Twp Health Department - Prevention against ticks and sun safety
- *1-800-GAMBLER - Resources and information about gaming and addiction
- *Kearny Bank - Tips for financial wellness, college planning and savings, scams to avoid
- *Bedminster Twp. Police Dept - Impaired driving/goggles, laws, consequences, dangers
- *Bernardsville Police Dept - E-bike rules & new drivers/ car safety
- *Bernards HS School Nurse - Annual health screenings
- *Maschio's Food Service - Apple salsa food samples
- *Somerset Hills Chiropractic - Postural Screening and stress scan
- *American Heart Association - Heart health information
- *Yoga for Everybody - Stretches/demos
- *Stigma Free Somerset - Public awareness/education about mental health
- *Center for Discovery - Eating disorder information
- *Safe and Sound Somerset - Info on teen relationships, safe dating, and consent
- *RWJ Hospital - Skin cancer prevention, interactive game, giveaways and resources
- *Somerset Hills YMCA - Partner activities, grip strength, fitness dice, giveaways
- *CiC for Prevention and Recovery - Stress management, coping skills, mindfulness and gratitude activities
- *Test Fitness - Fitness Challenges: vertical leap and broad jump leap competition
- *Bright & Beautiful Therapy - Therapy Dogs



The AI Buzz by Jeremy Schwarz

Artificial intelligence (AI) is bringing new types of fraud and scams. Here's how to protect yourself and your identity in 2026!

It is changing fraud in big ways, by making scams more realistic, harder to detect, and more common.

AI may be the most revolutionary technology of our time, with industries scrambling to embrace its possibilities. AI's early influence seems similar to the positive disruptions brought about by past innovations such as the personal computer, the internet, and the smartphone.

However, as AI reshapes everything from business to education to healthcare, criminals are also utilizing it in innovative, creative, and often undetectable ways. Last year saw a surge in AI-generated scams, impersonation fraud, and synthetic identity theft.

What's happening:

- Scammers use AI to create convincing emails, fake voices, images, and even videos
- Impersonation scams and deepfakes are rapidly increasing
- Fraud losses are rising, with billions lost each year
- Even a few seconds of your voice or a photo online can be used to mimic you

Why it matters:

Anyone can be targeted, but people with more online presence or public information are at higher risk.

How to protect yourself:

- Verify urgent requests (call back using a known number)
- Be cautious of messages that create panic or urgency
- Limit what you share on social media
- Use strong passwords and multi-factor authentication
- Create a family "code word" for emergencies

Bottom line:

AI is making scams smarter—but staying cautious, slowing down, and double-checking requests can help keep you and your family safe.

Anticipated Openings for 2026-2027

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>District</u></p> <p>#785 Special Education Paraprofessionals #776 Full Time Custodian 3pm – 11pm</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>BHS</u></p> <p>#784 Biology Teacher #759 English Teacher #758 Chemistry Teacher</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>BMS</u></p> <p>#769 Science Teacher #782 Psychologist/Social Worker</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Interested? Apply under the Employment Tab.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Leave Replacements</u></p> <p>#781 CST Case Manager (full year) #770 Library Media Specialist Bedwell Elementary (Aug – Nov) #772 Special Education Teacher Elementary/Middle School (Aug – Nov)</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>SUBSTITUTES</u></p> <p>#293 Nurses: \$225/day #492 Custodians \$18/hour #656 Maintenance \$20/hour #491 Bus Drivers \$34/hour</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Questions? Contact Kathy Mehan, HR Specialist kmehan@shsd.org or 908-636-2939</p>
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Author-in-Residence Visit

by Lisa Garofalo

Bernardsville Middle School had the privilege of a two-day author-in-residence experience with author, illustrator and cartoonist, George O’Connor. This amazing opportunity was provided by the BMS HSA. Mr. O’Connor held large group sessions for 5th-8th graders, speaking about his own personal



experiences as a child that led him to become the published author he is today. His engaging and entertaining presentations were enjoyed by students and staff alike! He ate lunch with students who had accrued the most community service hours in all four grades. Afterwards, Mr. O’Connor spent time with students broken out into small group experiences by grade level. At the end of the day he left the school some of his very unique and on-the-spot sketches which BMS will be framing for the building. As always, BMS is grateful to its generous HSA.

Celebrating Coach O'Connor

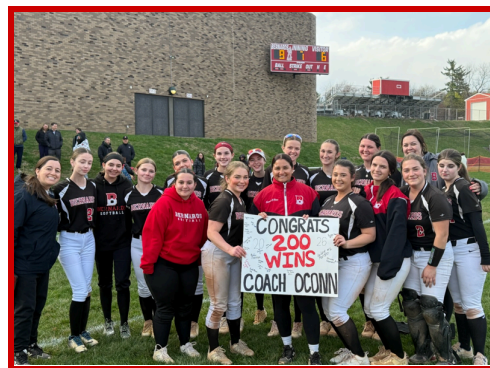
by Mike Hoppe

Coach Leslie O'Connor has been a valued member of the Bernards High School athletic community for the past 20 years. She was a Springfield College graduate where she excelled at softball. Throughout her tenure in SHSD, she has served as the Assistant Coach for the BHS Field Hockey team, the Head BMS Girls Basketball Coach and the Head Softball Coach for BHS. Recently, she took on the role of Head Coach for our Fall Interscholastic Cheer Team at BHS.

Coach O'Connor has played an integral role in numerous team accomplishments. She was a Field Hockey Assistant Coach when Bernards won three consecutive SCIAA titles. During this past winter, she led the BMS Girls Basketball team to their first ever GMCJSCA Championship! This spring she captured her 200th win in softball with a 8-6 win over Madison on April 6th. She was more emotional than usual with that milestone because she is a Madison High School graduate.

When asked about her coaching philosophy, she stated: “My coaching philosophy centers on developing confident, resilient young women through a balance of skill growth, mindset training, and competitive experiences. I believe competitiveness is a lifelong skill not just about winning but embracing challenges, responding to adversity and striving for excellence in all areas of life. I encourage athletes to push their limits while supporting one another as teammates. I aim to build confident young women who trust themselves, communicate effectively, and lead with integrity. Success is measured not only by performance, but by the character, discipline and self belief they carry beyond the game.”

When asked about motivation she stated: “We use several strategies to maintain motivation throughout the season. I incorporate a goal-setting process that includes both individual and team objectives. Our coaching staff meets with athletes two to three times during the season to review these goals and ensure continued focus. Additionally, the seniors and I develop a team mantra each season—a simple, meaningful phrase that helps center and motivate us in key moments. This year’s mantra is “Leave it all on the dirt,” which encourages our athletes to stay present, and focus on each pitch.” Coach O'Connor takes great pride in her coaching within the district, and the lasting impact she has made on her athletes.



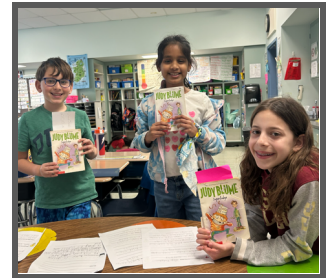
Congratulations on win **#200!**

Read all about it!

You can access the District News section to read fun and informative articles from all of our campuses! Simply [click here](#) to catch up on highlights about our students, staff, events, and more!



***SHEF30: Celebrating 30 Years of Innovation in SHSD
by Olga Christie: Chair, Somerset Hills Education Foundation***



Over the past 30 years, generations of trustees, volunteers, educators, and community members have helped shape and sustain the Somerset Hills Education Foundation (SHEF) into what it is today: a community-driven organization dedicated to supporting innovative educational opportunities across the Somerset Hills School District.

To honor this shared legacy, SHEF will host SHEF30, a community-wide festival-style celebration on Saturday, September 26, 2026 on the Bedwell and Bernardsville Middle School campus. This event will bring together students, families, educators, alumni, and community members for an afternoon of food trucks, student showcases, interactive activities, and live entertainment.

SHEF30 is both a celebration of what our community has built together over three decades and an opportunity to invest in what comes next. Proceeds from the event will directly support teacher-led grants and innovative programs that enrich student learning experiences across the district.



We hope SHEF30 will serve as a true community gathering that reflects the pride we share in our schools and the collective investment we continue to make in our students' growth.

We count on the continued partnerships that make this work possible and encourage community members to get involved, whether by attending, volunteering, or supporting the event. Additional details will be shared in the next newsletter. We look forward to celebrating with you!




*A Note from
Sam Frenda,
SHSD Board President*

As I had hoped in February, the sights and sounds of spring are now officially upon us. After a retreat indoors during an unusually cold and gloomy winter, the students, staff and their collective energy are again visible throughout the district. It infuses new life into the community and builds excitement for end-of-year festivities, the promise of summer, and the celebrations of new beginnings.

In the spirit of new beginnings, I would like to take a moment, on behalf of the Board, to thank the members of our community who came out to engage and vote on the District Referendum in March. It was an extraordinarily decisive vote and speaks to the value this community places on education and the opportunities the Somerset Hills School District provides and is eager to expand.

As we look forward to new and reimagined spaces for academic achievement, I would like to highlight a few of the many accomplishments of the last two months within our current walls, including but not limited to: the wonderfully entertaining stage performances of *The Wizard of Oz* at BHS, *Frozen* at BMS, and the *Crimson Café* featuring musicians from BMS, BHS and Bedminster, *Battle of the Books* at Bedwell, “Bark” Madness at BMS which raised funds for Crisis Response Canines, and the 3rd annual STEM competition at BHS featuring Mario Kart inspired cars with trophies developed using laser printers and laser engraving by the BHS Technology and Robotics Club. Our student athletes wrapped up their winter seasons and spring sports are now in full swing, not only bringing home wins but also demonstrating what teamwork and collaboration look like both on and off the field. Thank you to all of our student reporters throughout the district for making sure we are in the know and understanding how these opportunities shape you and your school experience.

I encourage all of our students and community members to feel inspired to elevate their voices, share their experiences with the Board, and continue to help us build the most robust, inclusive and meaningful school community possible. Happy Spring!

<p>Mrs. Sam Frenda Bernardsville, President</p> <p>Mrs. Heather Santoro Gladstone, Vice President</p> <p>Ms. Felicia Ballard ~ Bernardsville Mrs. Holly Clark-Emerly ~ Bernardsville Ms. Nicole Cooper ~ Gladstone Mrs. Gaby Gomez ~ Bedminster</p>	<p>Mrs. Mindy Hoppe ~ Far Hills Mrs. Kelly Hunt ~ Bernardsville Mrs. Allicen Librera ~ Bernardsville Mrs. Pat Wry ~ Bernardsville</p> 
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