



Report of the Superintendent

June 15, 2026

Our Student Representatives

Bernardsville Middle School

Addison Knaus

representing Spring Sports and Class Trips

Adyin Failey

representing Culture & Climate and Retirees

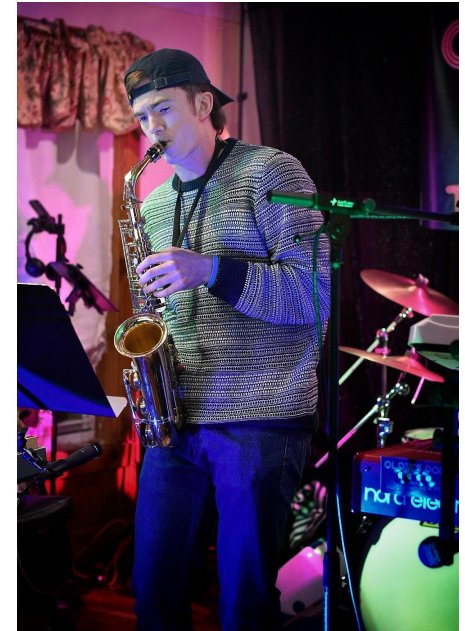
Bernards High School

Nolan Baker & Sophia Fazel-Sarjui

***THANK YOU to our Bernards High School
Student Representatives***



***Sophia Fazel-Sarjui
& Nolan Baker***



THANK YOU to our BMS Student Representatives

Julie Calvert

Darcy Canberg

Teo Consolla-Kutsuna

Genevieve deGrandpré

Zander Diemar

R.J. Donado

Adyin Failey

Charlotte Fazio

Gwen Finnerty

Grace Flaherty

Joseph Gomez

Addison Knaus

Titus Knaus

Callie McCormick

Miles Olechnowicz

Jillian Pooler

Teddy Quinn

Charlie Sachsel

Harper Watt

Rahima Wellington



**Parking
Pandemonium**



Welcome Jess McGinn



At its Board of Education meeting on May 20, 2026, the Somerset Hills School District approved Mrs. Jessica McGinn as Supervisor of Athletics, Health, and Physical Education for the 2026-2027 school year. She will join the district on July 1, 2026.

Beginning her career in 2001 as a Health and Physical Education teacher, McGinn taught for 19 years, starting in the Morris School District at the high school level and, after four years, joining the Somerset Hills School District to work with middle school children. In addition to focusing on health and fitness education with students, she also wrote and revised curriculum and adapted instructional strategies to promote learning amongst varied skill levels. During her time at Bernardsville Middle School, she was very involved in nurturing the school community and planned many school-wide events and team-building activities. She served on both the BMS School Safety Team and the Climate and Culture Committee. In 2021, McGinn was nominated by colleagues, students, and parents and subsequently received the Educator of the Year award.

Following her career in the classroom (and gymnasium), McGinn gained experience as both a Director of Athletics and a Supervisor of Health/PE & Athletics in Morris County. She oversaw robust athletics programs that encompassed a wide range of sports, coaches, and trainers. She supervised Health and PE teachers and planned meaningful professional development opportunities.

Additionally, she managed budgets for both PE and Athletics, and collaborated with administrators and staff to advocate for overall student wellness. Many of McGinn's strengths align with her upcoming role within the Somerset Hills School District, including her strong commitment to building character-driven student-athletes and a positive atmosphere of teamwork and stellar sportsmanship. As an athletic administrator, her goal is to cultivate a culture where character, integrity, accountability, and leadership are valued as highly as athletic achievement. McGinn believes that athletics provide an opportunity to develop confident, resilient, and compassionate young people who will lead beyond the playing field. Through high standards and meaningful relationships, she strives to create programs that promote excellence in competition and academics.

“Returning to the Somerset Hills School District feels like coming home,” said McGinn. “Some of my fondest memories of my professional career happened right on Olcott Field. Mike Hoppe has led Bernards Athletics through decades of excellence, and I am grateful for the opportunity to carry on his legacy.”

McGinn earned her Bachelor of Science in Sports Management from Rutgers University and her Master of Arts in Educational Leadership from the College of Saint Elizabeth. She was a former Division I Collegiate Athlete at Rutgers University. She was the BHS Varsity Girls Lacrosse Coach for fourteen years, accumulating 200+ wins while leading her teams to capture three State Sectionals and one State Championship. McGinn has also earned multiple regional coaching awards and was the New Jersey Coach of the Year in 2014.

Congratulations Nate DeNicola!



Two Bernards High School students were nominated for awards at the Central Jersey Marquee Awards ceremony on May 18, 2026. Over 27 high schools were recognized from the counties of Somerset, Hunterdon and Middlesex.

This was the fourth year of the ceremony, and the third year that BHS received nominations from the Central Jersey Marquee Awards competition.

In 2024, Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat received five nominations and six honorable mentions, followed by Legally Blonde: The Musical receiving five nominations and one win in 2025.

This year we congratulate the following BHS seniors for their roles in the BHS production of The Wizard of Oz, and their subsequent nominations/win:

Madeline Halliez for Best Hair & Makeup and
Nate DeNicola for Best Supporting Actor (won).



And the Band Marched On...



The Bernards High School Marching Band was quite active throughout the greater Somerset Hills communities this spring. On May 25th, they supported Bernardsville and Bedminster by participating in the Bernardsville Memorial Day Parade and sending students to Bedminster to march in their parade as well.



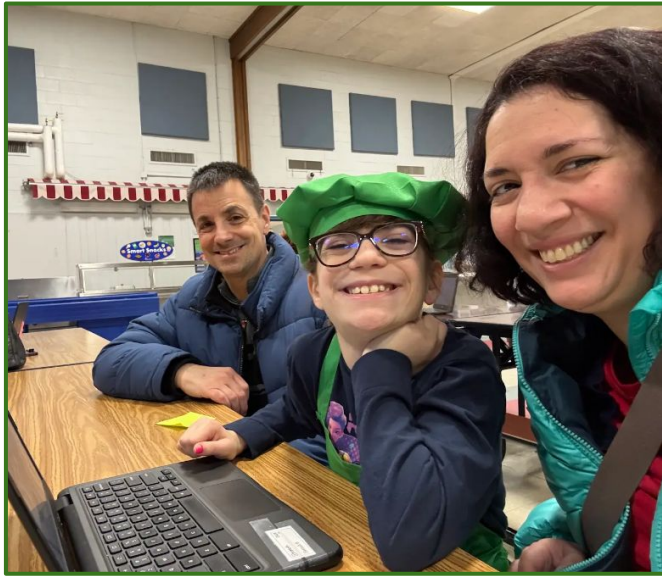
That morning, twenty-one BHS students and their four directors arrived early to practice their cadence and music in parade formation. Then they joined the parade procession from High School Lane at Bernards High School to march in the drizzle that punctuated a rainy holiday weekend. They performed with respect and precision, a collection of military marches that included "The Marine's Hymn", "When the Caissons Go Rolling Along", and "Anchors Aweigh" as they followed the parade route to the Bernardsville Fire Company and First Aid Squad. To remember our fallen heroes, a ceremony was held with BHS Drum Major Jack Cohen performing Taps for the last time in his high school career. It was evident that gathering together to show pride and honor for the military lives lost, is something that is still cherished by many residents of this community.



On May 30th, the Marching Band showed up once again for their communities, providing cheer and support for the residents of Matheny hospital and school, located in Peapack-Gladstone, at their *Miles for Matheny* fundraiser. This annual event, celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, features a 5k trail run/walk, an obstacle course for children, games, food, fellowship and more! It was at the finish line of their ever popular Lu Huggins Wheelchair Walk, that the Marching Band was enthusiastically providing music and Matheny spirit! As the residents completed a lap around a trail connected to the facility, the band played tunes such as "Let's Go Team", "Iron Man", "Hey Song", "Land of 1,000 Dances", "Runaway Baby", and "The Force Theme from Star Wars." The event was clearly a success, because in addition to the money raised, it accomplished something much more important... connecting people through activity and music... and more than the miles, were all the SMILES!



Dreaming **BIG** at Bedwell

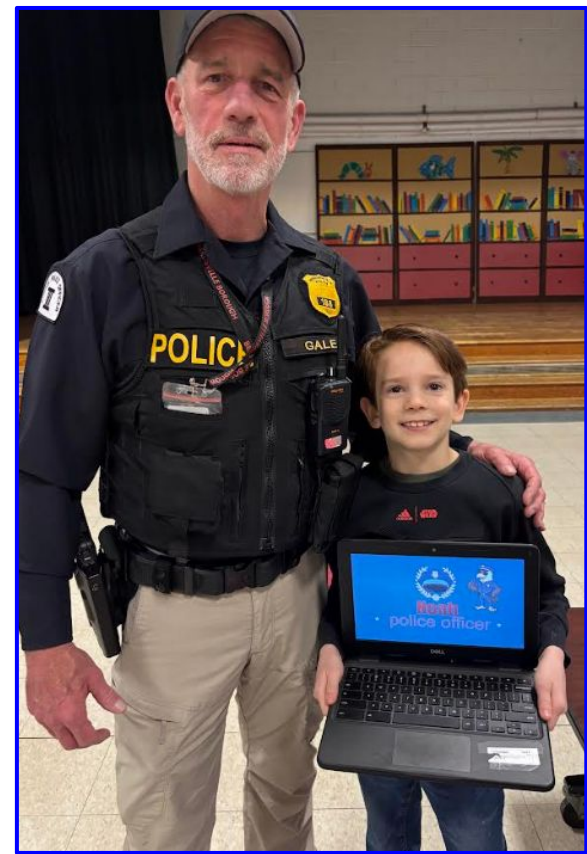


Fourth graders have some big dreams of becoming athletes, astronauts, artists, chefs, police officers, teachers, authors, and so much more!

In Allen Thurlow's Tech & Design classes, students combined presentation skills, public speaking, slide layouts, digital animations/transitions, and word processing, to create slideshows in Google Slides... all while exploring future career decisions and pursuing their dreams.

Parents, staff, and administrators were invited to a round-robin presentation event in the BES cafeteria.

In addition to the students, the adults walked away with the Dream BIG spirit as well!



Shout-out to Officer Jack who inspired this young cadet!



Climate and Culture at BMS

BMS 's Culture and Climate Team wrapped up a very successful 25-26 school year with a lunch celebration and a planning session for the upcoming school year.

Legacy members received an award for their dedication as well as years and service.

Congratulations to
Dr. Rose Rizzuto, Teddy Quinn,
Owen Gagliardi, Owen Finnerty,
Teo Consolla Kutsuna,
Zander Diemar, Grace Healy,
Aydin Failey and Jillian Pooler.

After dreaming up and implementing school-wide activities to bring the school together, it is clear that by creating common experiences, time for social interaction, and opportunities to engage with others outside the classrooms, BMS is a better place.

Look at all they did!



- Summer greetings to new students
- School-wide Jeopardy about BMS
- Holiday Name that Tune Contest
- Healthy Heart Scavenger Hunt
- Hosted a Teacher Pumpkin Carving Contest
- Hosted a December Door Decorating Contest
- Grade-level Movie Day
- Kickball Game Tournament with Houses and Teachers
- Helped to plan House Spirit Days
- Mystery Teacher activities
- French Week activities
- Guidelines for school costumes on Halloween
- Reviewed/offered suggestions to the BMS Student Handbook
- Provided compliments and placed them on lockers for every middle school student on National Compliment Day

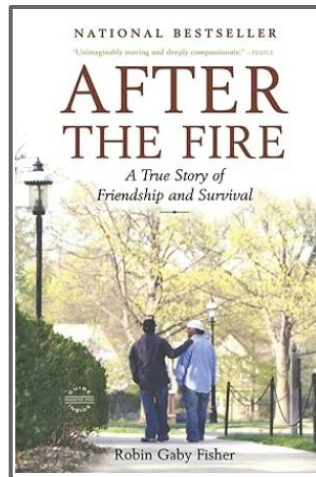
Welcome Back Alvaro & Shawn...

After the Fire

On a January evening, 26 years ago, so many lives changed as a result of an unthinkable tragedy on the campus of Seton Hall University where an arson fire was started in the 3rd-floor lounge of the 6-story freshmen residence hall.

Alvaro Llanos and Shawn Simons, who were 18 year old roommates at the time, thought it was just another false fire alarm. However an inferno was brewing and burning down anything in its path: sofas, carpets, ceiling tile.

Alvaro and Shawn travel to high schools and colleges all across the country to talk about their ordeal. They wrote a book and made a movie about being college burn survivors. They also speak at conferences, as well as at fire safety training and firefighting seminars. Their motive is to be advocates for fire safety and prevention so that no other students will have to endure the pain that they suffered. Also, they strive to be the voice of many burn survivors across the country who may feel "trapped in their new skin."



Their story is one of survival, perseverance, inspiration, hope, courage and friendship. Their goal is to motivate students and professionals with the understanding that life will present many obstacles... but what matters is how you overcome those obstacles by drawing strength, knowledge and motivation from those around you... and from within!

SHEF Grant Update:

Holly Jablonski & Debbie Rokosky

BES, 1st Grade

Step Into Learning: An Outdoor Sensory Path for

Whole-Child Development: \$5,000



Through a recently completed SHEF grant project, new recess and movement-based activities were installed under the front awning at Bedwell School. The painted activity spaces include hopscotch, a sensory path, a four-square court, and a “Mirror Me” movement area where students can copy and create different body movements. These additions transform the covered front area into a purposeful play space that supports movement, creativity, coordination, and social interaction.

The goal of the project is to provide students with structured opportunities for play, especially on inclement weather days when the playground is unavailable. By creating an engaging space protected from the weather, Bedwell students will have more opportunities to stay active, interact with peers, and enjoy recess in a safe and meaningful way throughout the school year.

The Somerset Hills Education Foundation awarded a total of \$15,646 in classroom mini-grants for innovative educational projects across the Somerset Hills School District.

Student to Student Ambassadors

On June 2nd, five high school Student to Student Ambassadors of the Jewish Federation of Greater Metrowest New Jersey visited Bernardsville Middle School. They met with 8th grade students to share stories of their faith, culture, and experiences as Jewish students in New Jersey.

Their visit was both a culmination of the Holocaust unit from their Social Studies class and a continuation of [their February visit](#) from third-generation Holocaust survivor, Mara Berger.

This opportunity afforded students a chance to listen to and learn from their peers, in a small casual setting that welcomed questions and encouraged open dialogue.

Students were able to attach names and faces to the Jewish experience, and overall it fostered heightened empathy for others.

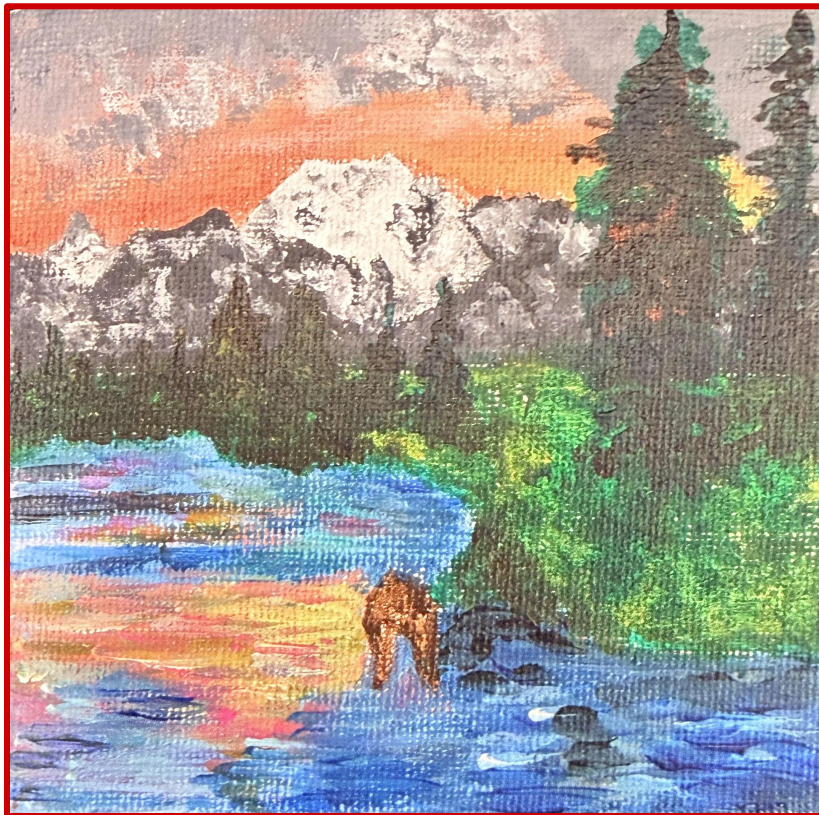


Special thanks to BMS teacher Brett Cox, as well as to the following individuals for their information, education, and insight: Avi Siegel, Director of Teen Initiatives, Jewish Federation of Greater Metro West NJ and Samantha Meyler, Coordinator of Teen Experiential Learning, Jewish Federation of Greater Metro West NJ.

Applause for our Artists

From the students in Salome Chaffee's classes at Bernardsville Middle School:

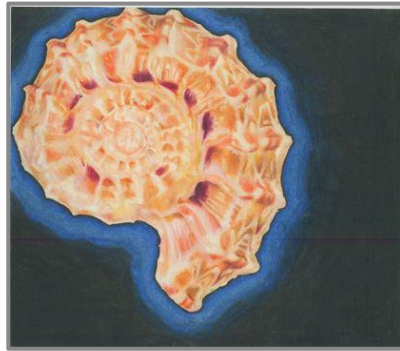
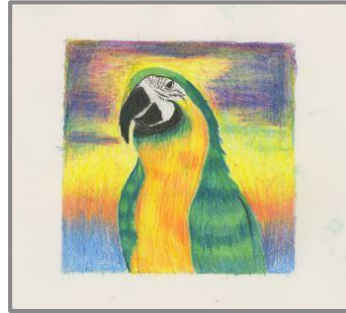
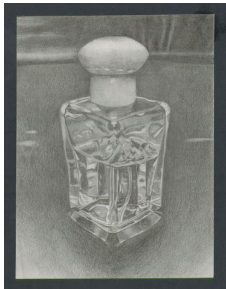
Watercolor, 7th grade
Graphite on paper, 8th grade
Acrylic on canvas, 8th grade



More Applause for our Artists

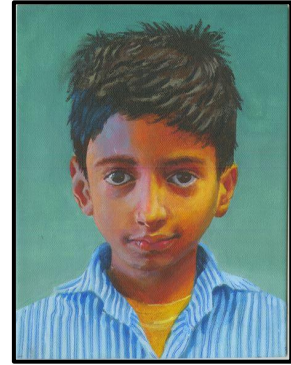
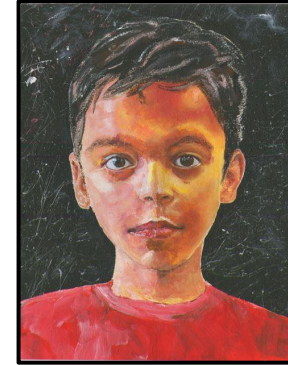
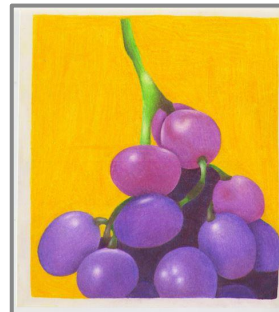
From the students in Gillian Crisman's
classes at Bernards High School...

ART 1: Acrylic Paint & Graphite



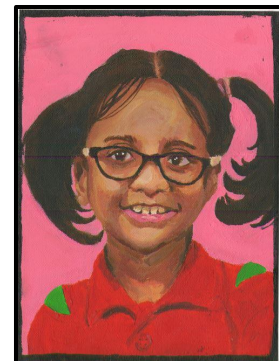
ART 2:

*Colored
Pencil*

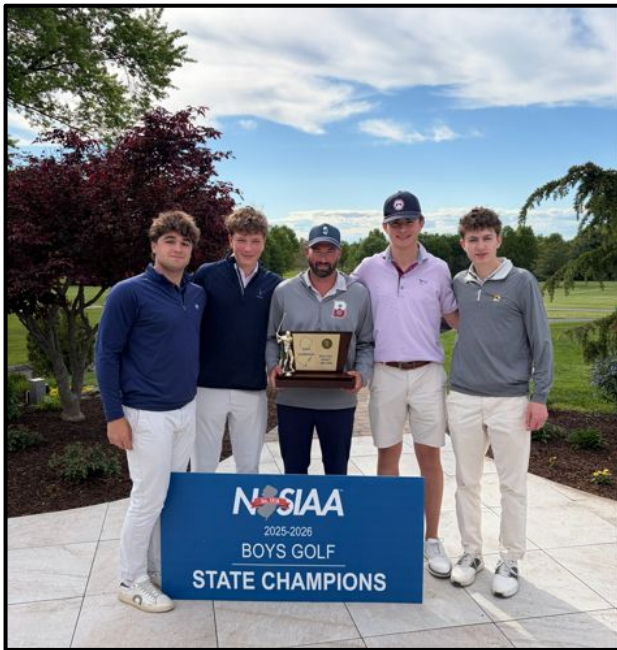


ART 3H & AP ART: Portraits

A full article on this project is
coming this summer!

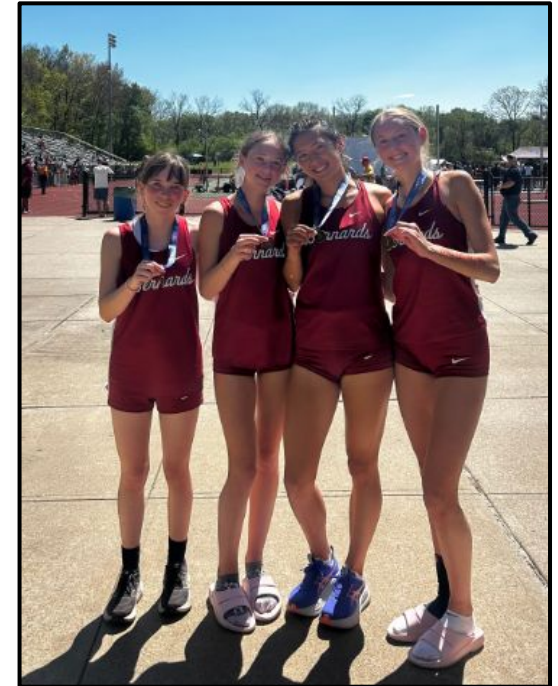


Sports Snaps



Congrats to Coach Spautz and to our Group 1 State Champions: Thomas Diemar, DJ Allen, Brady Cassidy, and Daniel Senior!

“Ali Black, Erin Dougherty, Mia Bong, and Fiona Dougherty ran the 4x800 at sectionals and qualified for groups,” shared Coach Szostak.



“Brooke Helpinstill reached a major milestone of 100 hits and she did it in just three years,” shared Coach O’Connor. Her teammates were very excited to celebrate her and their state tournament win versus Hackettstown!

Medal winners for the Group 2 Spring Track & Field Championships:

Victor - Javelin 4th place

Brody - 800 meter 2nd place, 1600 meter 3rd place

Sean, Daniel, Julian, Nate - 4x800 6th place



Sports Snaps



The 2026 Bernards Boys Tennis team won the Skyland Valley Divisional Championship this season and finished with a 9-6 record!

Congrats to the team and their coaches, Derek Boudreau and Doug Voight.

In The News...

BHS Everyday Hero



Isabella Nodes



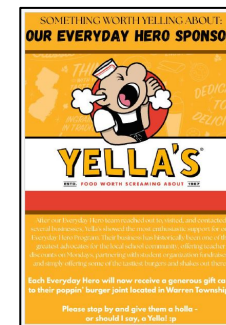
Isabella Nodes, a senior at Bernards High School, was recognized by the school as the “Everyday Hero” for the month of June!

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.

Isabella is a young lady whose kindness and maturity shine through her everyday actions, making her truly deserving of the Everyday Hero recognition. She consistently looks out for her peers, offering help, encouragement, and patience whenever someone is struggling, and she does so quietly without seeking recognition. Teachers and staff can rely on her as well, as she is respectful, responsible, and always willing to assist—whether that means helping organize materials, supporting class activities, or creating props to help a teacher complete their Halloween costume. What sets Isabella apart is how often she goes above and beyond expectations, choosing to do the right thing simply because it helps others and improves the community around her. Her caring nature, strong sense of responsibility, and positive attitude make a lasting difference every day. And she leads by example in a way that *inspires everyone* around her.

Congratulations to the June Everyday Hero, Isabella Nodes!

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!



A message from SHEF....

SHEF: Celebrating Impact, Looking Ahead

As another school year comes to a close, we would like to thank our community for continuing to invest in the students and educators of the Somerset Hills School District.

This spring, SHEF's Teacher Tribute Campaign once again invited families, students, and community members to recognize the educators who make a difference. Each tribute serves as more than a thank-you, it helps fund SHEF Classroom Mini Grants, providing teachers with resources and opportunities that spark creativity, enrich learning, and bring innovative ideas to life in our schools. As we look ahead, we are excited to invite the entire Somerset Hills community to save the date for

SHEF30: 30 Years of Impact. One Incredible Community.

Join us on **Saturday, September 26, 2026**, on the Seney Drive Campus for an afternoon of food trucks, live music, student showcases, family activities, community vendors, and celebration as we honor three decades of supporting innovation in our schools and look forward to the next thirty years.

Whether you have been involved with SHEF for years or are just discovering our work, we hope you'll be part of this special community event.



Special thanks to Dr. Catelli for hosting a tour of the Olcott Building during a recent SHEF luncheon.



Anticipated Openings for the 2026-2027 School Year



District:

#786 Bus Driver

#809 Bus Aide



Bernardsville Middle School

#769 Science Teacher

Leave Replacements:

#781 CST Case Manager (full year)

#770 Library Media Specialist Bedwell Elementary (Aug-Nov)

#772 Special Education Teacher Elementary/Middle School (Aug-Nov)

SUBSTITUTES

#293 Nurses: \$225/day

#492 Custodians: \$18/hour

#656 Maintenance: \$20/hour

#491 Bus Drivers: \$34/hour



*If interested, please visit our [Human Resources](#) page
or email HR Specialist Kathy Mehan at kmehan@shsd.org.*

Preparing for 2026-2027

Athletes Return in 55 days

New Staff Arrive in 63 days

Infrastructure Project: Operations and Security

Heavy Cleaning Projects

Tennis Court Construction

Climate and Culture Matters

NJSCI Platform, Data Analysis, and Strategic Planning

Capturing Kids Hearts @ Bernards High School

Onboarding of Administrative Staff: Leadership Blueprint

Academic Matters

Student Achievement and Data Literacy

Intervention and Referral Services Programming

Benchmark Assessments: Planning for the Future

Policy Matters and Community Engagement

Use of Internet Enabled Devices (e.g., Cell Phone Ban)

Timing on First Reading and Second Reading

Artificial Intelligence

Random Drug Testing: Consequence for Positive Test

Partnership with Interfaith Leaders, Local Leaders and
Community Members: Combating Hate Speech and Actions

Graduation and Promotion

Preschool: June 11

Fourth Grade: June 12

Eighth Grade: June 17

Twelfth Grade: June 18

