

THE BERLIN BANNER

MAY 2021

BUDGET EDITION

Dear Berlin Central School District Residents,

Thank you for your continued support of our excellent educational, co-curricular and extra curricular programs at BCSD. 2020-21 has been a challenging school year in multiple ways due to the Covid pandemic, and for its effect on our district, community, state and nation. Through it all, the hard work and support of the Berlin community, staff and students, made it possible for us to keep our school open, and not close our buildings for even a single day. We are proud of the resilience, commitment and encouragement that you have shown us as we have gone through this school year.

The proposed 2021-22 budget reflects our commitment to maintain and enhance the programs that we offer to our students. We are not reducing any offerings, but are instead increasing opportunities for our students. The budget includes incorporation of a new Math program at BES, augmented professional development opportunities for teachers and support staff, enhanced mental health and social-emotional support for our students, and increased academic support to eliminate the learning loss due to Covid.

We have both increased, and continuing expenditures, due to Covid, along with a reduction in state aid for next year, but through careful allocation of our resources, and thoughtful planning, the tax levy for the 2021-22 budget will increase by 1.99% (below the allowable tax cap of 4.48%). This is on par with, and in many cases below, levy increases pre-Covid. The district is committed to continuing to meet the needs of our students and staff in a fiscally responsible manner.

Our Capital projects are progressing well. Phase 1 is complete, and we will be starting Phase 2 shortly, which will provide enhancements to classrooms at both BES and BMHS including the science labs, increase security at both buildings, improve our electrical and fire alarm systems and enhance cafeteria and gym spaces, among other improvements. The goal of the projects is to provide a safe and augmented educational environment for our students at all times, in alignment with our academic goals. This project will also have no impact on the tax levy.

The success of all our efforts and the future of all Berlin students depends on your continued support. Please vote on Tuesday, May 18th, at the BMHS cafeteria. Your support counts!

Respectfully,

A. Joseph Dhara
Superintendent of Schools

Capital Project Sees Completion of Multiple Jobs and Begins Planning of Second Phase

The Berlin Central School District has completed Capital Project 1 of a multi-phase/multi-year capital building project that encompasses extensive renovations to the Elementary and Middle/High Schools, construction of a new Bus Maintenance Facility as well as new athletics facilities.

At the Middle-High School, two classrooms were renovated and lockers were relocated. The change allows for sixth graders to adjust to the new building in a calmer environment and have their own space. At the far end of this wing, ongoing renovation is taking place for what will be the Central Office location. The building has also seen the creation of a science wing, featuring the new Aquatics Lab, a flex space, and classrooms dedicated to Chemistry, Earth Science and Physics.

New health, guidance and counseling suites have been completed in what was the previous sixth grade area. The new location brings these offices closer to the front entrance and main office, allowing for easy access and a centralized location for administrative services. Additionally, the two main entry points to the building have seen the construction of enclosed vestibules with two sets of doors, providing an added layer of security. The vestibule near the upcoming business suite contains a service window which will remain open to the public for district business while securing the building itself.

The previous Health and Counseling suites are now fully converted to the new Family and Consumer Science classroom as well as a Science and Technology flex space. The Family and Consumer classroom features a new double oven, six work-stations with new epoxy countertops that feature sinks, overhead industrial ventilation hoods and fully functioning electric cooktops. The flex space consists of modular wall panels that allow for easy resizing and reconfiguring of the room space.

Berlin Elementary School received all new lockers, water bottle filling stations, bathroom updates and the hallways were all painted with new colors. New wall murals were hung mid-year throughout the building, along with new room numbers and signs coordinated with the murals above each doorway. The main office and health suite were updated, and the vestibule has a check-in window for security.

The new Bus Maintenance Facility is now complete. Aspects of the new bus garage include a gravel parking area and forebay, inlet channel for storm water, security cameras to monitor access at the main entrance, and site identification and directional signage as well as power pedestals for bus block heaters, additional bollards, 12 around the propane tank and 2 at gas line inlet, and a jersey barrier to provide temporary protection of the gas line within the maintenance bay.

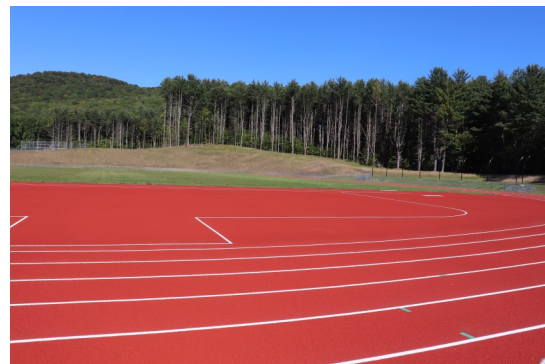
The separate athletic facility upgrades include a totally new asphalt and rubber track system to support the Track & Field team, auxiliary site for discus and shot put, a new outdoor basketball court, as well as bleachers, a scoreboard and metal fencing. The soccer field grass, planted last year, continues to be cultivated (aerated, over seeded, fertilized and watered) by the construction contractor.

A new baseball field has also been constructed. The project included the completion of a new back-stop, fencing and dugouts. The outfield had suffered from water runoff that resulted in ponding, but this has now been remedied through the installation of additional under drains. Similar circumstances exist with regard to the growing of grass on the outfield, with the very same measures being taken as discussed earlier regarding the soccer field. It is hoped that the baseball field will be ready for play in the Spring of 2022.

The \$7 million second phase was approved by district voters in December of 2019. Twenty-four proposed improvements have been identified and approved, with the potential for more improvements in the future. At Berlin Elementary School, planned projects include classroom door replacements, new flooring in first and second floor classrooms, gymnasium bleacher replacements, security cameras, a new boiler, sidewalk replacement and bus lane improvements.

At Berlin Middle/High School, planned improvements include – 7th and 8th grade corridor and classroom renovations (including recessed lockers), middle school and faculty room bathroom renovations, converting the former Family and Consumer Science classrooms to District offices, gymnasium bleacher replacement, aluminum windows along the courtyard side of the building, entry floor replacement, security cameras, fire alarm upgrades and sidewalk and curb replacements.

At the new Bus Maintenance Facility there will be additional site work to improve bus parking, additional receptacles for bus block heaters, enhanced water runoff and storm water control, a new outdoor bus repair / service area, and potentially a new Bus Wash Bay added to address the overall cleanliness and condition of the buses to try and achieve a longer service period.



Fourth Grade Field Trips

The Berlin Elementary fourth grade team has not let restrictions due to the pandemic slow them down. Mrs. Megan Laz, Ms. Stephanie Kneer, Ms. Courtney Bersaw and Ms. Brianne Clark have seen the challenges presented to them as opportunities to explore new ways to immerse their students in the rich history of New York State for the fourth grade social studies curriculum. “This year has given us the opportunity to participate in field trips in a different way,” said Mrs. Laz. “We’ve been able to connect with museums and experts relating to subjects in our fourth grade curriculum.”

The whole fourth grade participated in a virtual field trip to the Albany Museum of History and Art on January 15. The students were guided through the museum by a historian who engaged them virtually, answering questions as he took them on the tour, exploring the evolution of New Netherland to New York through artifacts and art. The tour started with European migration and settlement and continued all the way through to the American Revolution. The fourth graders were able to ask about interactions between Native Americans and colonists and learned from the museum’s collections from the colonial period. “It has been wonderful to see students involved in these virtual field trips that directly connect with the curriculum in the classroom,” said Ms. Clark.

On March 22, the students connected with the friends of the Bennington Battlefield and had another exciting virtual field trip. This one was experienced over several days. The students learned interesting facts and important details about the 1777 Revolutionary War battle in Bennington – information they can use to take their families on an in-person tour in the future. Ask BES fourth graders, and they can tell you that the Bennington monument is not where the actual battle occurred, and that it actually was in New York State. “I love that our students can still engage with experts in their fields and show off what they have learned this year in spite of the pandemic,” said Ms. Bersaw. The students virtually met reenactors who taught them about medicine during the American Revolution. The fourth graders also learned the early history of the American flag on the field trip. “I am so happy that we could bring any type of outside learning despite all the changes and uncertainty of this pandemic,” said Ms. Clark.

In the next few weeks the fourth grade looks forward to welcoming Congressman Antonio Delgado for a virtual field trip to learn more about the New York State legislative branch. “We’ve been excited to offer these field trips to the fourth graders during these ever-changing times,” said Ms. Kneer. “Our students have shared positive feedback about how these experiences have connected and enriched their classroom learning,” said Mrs. Laz.



BCSD 2021-2022 Proposed Budget

Expenses		2020-2021	2021-2022
		Adopted Budget	Proposed Budget
Program Budget			
	Regular Education	5,261,032	5,387,151
	Special Education	2,725,630	3,051,068
	Occupational Education	570,518	568,832
	Continuing Ed/Driver Ed	25,000	25,000
	Library/Technology	597,201	147,315
	Educational Television	7,700	7,700
	Guidance	368,232	419,123
	Health Services	310,368	306,538
	Co-Curricular/Sports	340,467	363,751
	Transportation	1,511,671	1,624,135
	Employee Benefits	5,124,736	5,292,074
		16,842,556	17,664,606
Administrative			
	Board of Education	15,495	15,657
	Central Administration	261,829	244,411
	Finance	380,242	412,176
	Legal/Personnel/Public	119,674	131,422
	Insurance/Dues	73,905	73,905
	School Supervision	153,562	574,455
	Curriculum & In-service	750,483	189,898
	BOCES Administration	47,235	176,175
	Employee Benefits	564,079	565,427
		2,366,504	2,383,527
Capital Budget			
	Operations & Main.	1,331,855	1,473,025
	Central Data	239,300	273,150
	Debt Service	666,785	1,524,800
	Employee Benefits	449,525	521,582
		2,687,465	3,792,557
		21,897,649	23,840,690
Revenue			
	State Aid	10,822,299	12,324,833
	Real Property Taxes	9,767,611	9,961,840
	Miscellaneous	807,739	854,017
	Reserves	0	0
	Fund Balance	500,000	700,000
		21,897,649	23,840,690

Budget Vote

Proposition Vote

Board Election Vote

May 18, 2021

Berlin Middle School/
High School Cafeteria

VOTER QUALIFICATIONS

To vote, you must be:

- A citizen of the United States
- At least 18 years of age
- A resident of the district for 30 days prior to the vote

ABSENTEE BALLOTS

Qualified district residents who are unable to go to the polling place on May 18 can cast their votes by absentee ballot. For an application, call the District Clerk at 518-658-1500 Option 8, Extension 1010. Completed applications must be received by the District Clerk at least seven (7) days before the election if the ballot is to be mailed to the voter, or the day before the election, if the ballot is to be delivered personally to the voter.

All completed ballots must be received by the district clerk no later than 5 PM on May 18.

2021-2022 School Budget and BOE Vote

Voting this year will take place using machines in the Cafeteria of the Berlin Middle School/High School, 17400 NY 22, Cherry Plain, NY 12040, on Tuesday, May 18, 2021.

THE 2021-2022 BUDGET

The Budget for the 2021 – 2022 school year is not to exceed **\$23,840,690**. This is an increase of 1.99% in the tax levy.

PROPOSITION #1

RESOLVED: That the Board of Education of the Berlin Central School District, Rensselaer County, New York, is hereby authorized to purchase in fiscal year **2021-2022** up to one (1) 30 passenger school bus, and two (2) 7 passenger sport utility vehicles/mini-vans and expend a gross sum not to exceed \$160,000. Which said total sum of \$160,000, or so much thereof as may be necessary, may be raised by issue of obligations of the district therefore in accordance with the education law and local finance law.

BOARD OF EDUCATION SEATS

There are two seats up for election this year. Both seats are three-year terms (July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2024). There are three candidates running for the two seats. Voters will be asked to vote for **two** candidates. The candidates will appear on the ballot in this order:

Nick Cave

Trevor Jewett

Katie Snyder

2021 BOARD OF EDUCATION CANDIDATES

The Board of Education is comprised of seven members elected by district residents. All members serve without pay for three year terms. Under the Education Law of New York State, the Board is responsible for the education of students who attend the schools in the district; for the preparation of the annual budget, for district adherence to state law and State Education Department regulations concerning the conduct of the public schools. The Superintendent of Schools is charged with the administration of Board policies. There are three individuals running for two seats on the Board of Education. One board member is running for re-election, Katie Snyder. There are two new candidates that are running, Leonard (Nick) Cave and Trevor Jewett.

Nick Cave



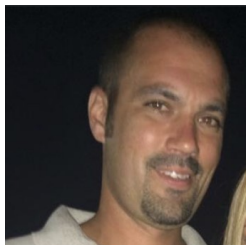
I have been a Resident of Petersburg, NY for 17 Years with two children who have been enrolled in the district from PreK through Middle and High School. My wife is a graduate of Berlin and has lived here her entire life. My goal is to contribute in a meaningful way to the operation and oversight of our School District by serving on the Board of Education. I am a self-motivated “ends in mind” individual with a bachelor’s degree in Psychology from MCLA, where I graduated with Honors.

I am currently employed by TriWire Engineering Solutions as the Director of Business Development and have 21 years of experience managing for large corporations like Walmart, Best Buy, and At&t. During that time, I have had to manage anywhere from 25 to 250 employees and account to P&L/ budgets totaling more than \$170 Million Dollars. In addition to experience in business I have worked in corporate business to business sales for the last 8 years. This has allowed me to develop countless relationships in the North East and provided exposure to numerous industries. This allows me to contribute meaningfully to forward and efficient planning for our district.

During the Pandemic we have had to adjust to a different style of learning. I have worked remotely for the last 8 years and am very adept at several types of conferencing services. I offered to support the district in getting free versions of WebEx conferencing when the Pandemic first hit at the end of the 2020 school year. I am a team player and believe that it takes cooperation and group effort to effect change. My ability to work well with others from multiple backgrounds and experiences will allow me to be successful as a Board Member. I offer a unique perspective to the Board of Education which will support our district.

My desire in joining the Board of Education is to assist the district in growth, performance, and efficiency with a focus on student culture and experience. My combined experience in management and business-to-business sales will be a positive addition to the existing board and allow for our continued growth and success.

Trevor Jewett



I am a lifelong resident of the Berlin Central School District. I live with my family in the town of Berlin. I have two children. My youngest is a freshman at the Berlin High School. My oldest graduated from the Berlin High School in 2019 and is attending college.

After graduating from Berlin High School in 1999, I obtained an Associates degree from SUNY Cobleskill in 2001 and a Bachelors in Business from SUNY Utica in 2002. I am a small business owner of a contracting/building company. I have enjoyed serving as a Member of the Berlin Grievance Board for ten years.

I am very proud to have attended BCS and to have my children attend. BCS has a unique setting in that we are some what isolated, which has through the years allowed for a certain family feel and ability for students to grow as a group. We have the opportunity to implement educational programs which other larger schools may not. I look forward to the challenges ahead and the experience of watching our district continue to grow.

Katie Snyder



I am a lifelong resident of Berlin Central School District. Currently, I live in Petersburg with my husband and our two sons. My oldest son is a first grader at BES and my youngest son will be attending BES in a few short years. In addition to my service on the Board of Education, I volunteer with the Petersburg Fire Company.

After graduating from Berlin High School, I attended Russell Sage College, graduating with majors in Forensic Science and Chemistry, and The College of Saint Rose, majoring in Adolescent Education with a concentration in Chemistry. Recently, I finished my MBA from the David D. Reh School of Business at Clarkson University. I am currently employed at HMA Contracting Corp as the Operations Manager.

I have been on the board for almost nine years and presently serve as Vice President and on the Facilities Committee and Audit Committee. Serving in these capacities has given me vast experience in the district operations from a management perspective. Working with the district administration, we were able to bring two large projects together, which improved the health and safety of our students, staff, and visitors, and advanced academic and extracurricular programs with very minimal impact to taxpayers.



Congratulations to the Berlin Modified, JV and Varsity Masterminds on a season to remember! The JV and Varsity Masterminds ended their regular seasons on the top of their leaderboards and had a great showing in a double elimination playoff. The Modified team finished their regular season strong and will be competing in play-offs at the beginning of May. Mastermind coaches: Ms. Hammond, Mr. Ellis, Ms. Overocker and Mr. Christian, are all so proud of the Masterminds' accomplishments this year. To read more about the team's successes this season, please go to www.berlincentral.org.



Our favorite reading buddy returned to BES this April! Crosby the reading dog and Mr. Raider spent quality time listening to the wonderful readers in Ms. Ruebel's 2nd grade and Ms. Hannigan's kindergarten classrooms.



BCSD Character Education Programs

BES

BES' Character Education Committee hosts virtual assemblies this year, which are attended by all kindergarten through 5th grade students and staff. This year due to necessary safety measures and the importance of maintaining one school with both remote and in person learners, Principal Kent has taken a new virtual approach. This school year's Character Education assemblies are attended by all students, both in person and remote, with all students logging into a school-wide virtual assembly, hosted by Principal Kent. This gives the students a shared experience and a feeling of unity. The assemblies are an opportunity for students and staff to come together, learn and talk about the character traits that will help them succeed socially and emotionally. Each assembly, a new character trait for the month is introduced by the Character Education Committee. This trait is discussed and presented through innovative skits, music, writings, artwork and/or scenarios put together by BES students and staff. Principal Kent also announces the month's character trait in the school's monthly newsletter to give an opportunity for the trait to be discussed and applied at home.

BMHS

The BMHS Character Education Program at the Middle/High school is excited to announce a new weekly video series that launched on March 8. The series, titled "What's up, Mountaineers?," aims to increase awareness and pride, each week highlighting some of the wonderful and exciting happenings at BMHS. Please find the videos on the BCSD website or YouTube channel.



The Berlin Athletics Department has relaunched sports after a year of being on hiatus. BCSD started with intramural programs during the winter for wrestling, cheer, and boys and girls basketball. Fall 2 sports rolled out interscholastic competition for soccer, cross country and volleyball this spring. In May, baseball, softball and track and field will begin. Berlin's Athletic Director Charles Paravella has launched an athletics Twitter page and has been working closely with the BNL Booster Club to offer live-streaming of outdoor competitions. Stay up to date with BCSD's Athletics by following them on Twitter <https://twitter.com/BerlinCSD>. Photo credits to: Doug Hills, Jami Jo Powell-Herrick, Kristi Culbertson and Shannon Gardell

Connect with us!

Attention BCSD: Find the latest news, videos and information about the district on the BCSD website, Facebook page, YouTube channel and now on our newest platform Twitter! Follow the BCSD Mountaineers on twitter @BerlinCSD! Check out the new icon links at the top of the BCSD website page.



Here on the Berlin Central School District Webpage

www.berlincentral.org



Berlin Central School District Facebook Page

<https://www.facebook.com/berlincentralschools>



Berlin Central School District Twitter Page

<https://twitter.com/BerlinCSD>
[BCSD Athletics Twitter Page](https://twitter.com/BerlinCSD)

https://twitter.com/BerlinNY_AD



Berlin Central School District YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIVwH_D8o-DkkCroPw2dFlQ



March was a fun community building month! BCSD's Restorative Practices Committee would like to thank all those who showed their Mountaineer Spirit! Please see the Climate and Culture page on the BCSD website for links to the albums from the month long district-wide spirit days.

Dramateers



During these uncertain times, it's amazing to see that our students in the Berlin Dramateers can give such stellar performances as the ones they gave in our virtual production of *Clue*. This was a completely student run production from start to finish—from acquiring their own costumes and props to doing their own hair and make up as well as helping each other with scene changes and running sound. I am truly grateful to work with such talented, self-sufficient and creative performers as these! -BMHS Drama and Music Department's Ms. Leslie Eliashuk

Stephentown Food Pantry:

Stephentown Federated Church at 1513 Garfield Rd (County Rt. 26).
Open every Saturday from 9AM to 11AM.
For more information, call (518) 487-8606.

Stephentown Summer Food Program- The Town of Stephentown/Library will be holding the summer food program. Pickup will be at the library and it will start on July 5.

Berlin Food Closet:

United Methodist Church at 17 South Main St. in Berlin
Open the third Tuesday of the month 3-5 pm & the third Saturday of the month 9-11.
For more information, call (518) 658-2942

Grafton Food Pantry:

Our Lady of Snow at 31 Owens Rd. Grafton
Open every Saturday 10-2.
If you have students in Berlin Elementary, Middle or High School and struggle to provide enough food, contact Helping Hands.

Grafton - Summer Food Program- will be offered at the old Grafton Elementary School at 13 Babcock Lake Road. It will be served Monday-Friday at 11:30 from June 28th through Sept 3rd.

Berlin Students are 2021 Semi-Finalists in the Samsung “Solve for Tomorrow” Competition

The all-female Berlin InvenTeam was selected as a semi-finalist in the 11th annual “Samsung Solve for Tomorrow Contest.” The team will receive a prize of \$15,000 to be redeemed through Samsung. Berlin’s InvenTeam is advised by BMHS Technology teacher Ms. Dawn Wetmore. Team members: seniors Hope Pelletier and Hailey Beckwith, Team Leads and Electrical Technicians; senior Jordanne Brazie, Software Developer; sophomores Samantha Rokjer and Riley Smith, Computer-Aided Design (CAD) Developers; freshmen Josephine Cummings and Ashlee Evans, Mechanical Technicians.

The Samsung nationwide education competition is a challenge to students in grades 6 through 12 to use science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) skills to address a community challenge. The Samsung Group is a South Korean-based multinational electronics and engineering firm. Samsung set out this challenge to foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills while helping students find an opportunity to solve a current issue in their local community.

The Berlin InvenTeam submitted a proposal to Samsung outlining a plan to take on the eradication of invasive plant species in local waterways. This issue was brought to the team’s attention when the members discussed kayaking over the summer. They recalled how the invasive water chestnut plant was impacting the Dunham Reservoir in Grafton State Park. Upon researching the plant species, team members said, a “eureka moment” occurred for a robotic device that would eradicate the plants from the water. The InvenTeam’s invention, named the Achelous ROV, is designed to help clear clogged waterways. The team members believed their invention would improve the ecosystem and promote the recreational use of creeks, rivers and lakes in Rensselaer County, part of the Hudson River watershed. In their presentation the team points out that invasive plant species, when left unchecked, prevent sunlight from reaching vital plant food sources for fish and adversely affect the ecosystem of the watershed. Over the winter the students fabricated a prototype of a semi-autonomous robot to remove water chestnuts. They worked through all phases of the engineering design process: identifying the problem, researching it, designing a solution, building and coding a prototype and finally testing the prototype in the New Lebanon swimming pool. At the conclusion of the engineering and design process the students and Ms. Wetmore created a three-minute video demonstration to submit for the finalist round of the competition. The team was one of 75 semifinalists nationwide to submit videos for the next round where 10 finalists are chosen.

Seniors Hope Pelletier and Hailey Beckwith saw their leadership roles on this year’s InvenTeam as an exciting opportunity. “I’ve always had an interest in technology, and I wanted to help younger kids who also have an interest in this field,” said Hailey. “I am not planning to go into this field, but I will most definitely be using what I learned here in my life after high school.” Hope Pelletier does not plan to explore this field after high school either but feels this class will have a lasting impact as well: “I do enjoy learning anything that involves technology, engineering and design and I believe it’s very useful to keep at the back of your mind.” Ms. Wetmore continues to strive for improvement in her technology and engineering classes, challenging the students by entering national competitions like Samsung’s. She says these competitions show what opportunities are out there for students, both in the classroom and beyond. Hope reflected on the past four years of these classes: “Ms. Wetmore has helped me enjoy learning about new ideas and information when it comes to technology, building, designing and electrical components.” Hailey shared that sentiment, “Ms. Wetmore helped me understand technology and how to use it. She has always been very helpful when I didn’t understand something.” Though the Berlin InvenTeam did not make it as finalist this year they have accomplished so much in spite of the limited meeting times and hybrid schedule. The InvenTeam and Ms. Wetmore will shortly update the community on how they plan to invest their prize money back into the program.

Berlin Central School District Marks One Year Anniversary of Closing due to COVID

One year ago today, everything changed – our beloved Berlin schools closed, much of society went remote, yet we adapted and found new ways to learn and educate, to be safe, to carry on, and to be a community. One year later, we emerge stronger, sharper, more organized and determined, and also, more caring.

Kasey Hannigan, kindergarten teacher at Berlin Elementary School, reflected not only on how the past year has affected students, but teachers as well. “The overwhelming feelings of disbelief, uncertainty and frustration were often eased by the sweet smiles and countless hellos of Kindergartners through the screen. Little did they know their giggles and toothless smiles helped their teacher trudge through countless hours of research on how to be an effective virtual teacher or conduct out of the box teaching.”

Fred Hutchinson, director of CIA/CIO, said the team used the phrase, “Nothing about this is perfect except the effort” as a guiding mantra. “In these last 12 months, Berlin showed me the strength that comes when you bring together all the stakeholders on an important singular focus. Teachers gave time and energy way beyond what anyone could have expected or asked for, the administrative team proved just how smart, collaborative, and professional we could be, the Board showed such a genuine interest in and concern for students and staff alike that their co-commitment became inspiring, and the kids illustrated a resilience that completely earned them the moniker of Mountaineers.”

Jodi Sullivan, principal at Berlin Middle/High School, echoed those sentiments, “It’s easy to see why everyone talks about what a great school community it is here at Berlin. Every single member has put their best foot forward every day. Drivers, custodians, food service workers, monitors, teaching assistants, teachers, support staff, families, students, administrators, board members, and community members have done nothing but help pull in the right direction for students. What impresses me most is how each person has been able to find that little bit extra to give, even when we were worn down.”

It remains clear that throughout the pandemic, every part of the Berlin CSD community has stepped up to give more than what was expected. According to Tammy Whitman of Food Services, 15,323 breakfast and 15,305 lunches were provided between March and June of 2020. From September of 2020 to mid-March of 2021, another 14,144 breakfasts and 15,329 lunches were provided. The transportation department, likewise, was a lifeline and an essential community connection between the district and its students. They greeted the children day-to-day and decorated their buses to raise spirits.

As the district’s COVID coordinator, Michele Corsey, school nurse, was the heartbeat of Berlin CSD’s COVID response. Among the tasks she has – and continues to – carry out, she has co-facilitated the health and safety task force committee for re-opening plans, developed and wrote health and safety protocols according to NYSDOH and NYSED guidelines, facilitated the creation of a testing plan to meet Micro cluster testing guidelines, coordinated COVID testing of athletes in high risk sports, worked closely with Rensselaer County DOH on contact tracing, and worked closely with the superintendent, athletic director and transportation offices to report, implement and maintain safety protocols.

Another crucial area that stepped up to help Berlin CSD adjust to the challenges of the past year is the IT Department, helmed by Patricia Weber and Tammy Dunlop. They distributed approximately 600 devices to students and staff for instructional/academic purposes, 5 hotspots as well as special headphones with built-in microphones to students and staff, while continuing to issue devices to new students, repair and troubleshoot any reported issues, and assist students who are fully remote with any technical issues.

Tracy Kent, principal of Berlin Elementary School, commented on the connectedness the district has been able to maintain throughout the pandemic. “Despite the challenges of the past year, the teachers and staff of Berlin Elementary have amazed me with their continued commitment to our students. They have learned new technologies, teaching methods, and ways of connecting to ensure that every student has continued to learn and felt a connection to the school community.”

Joseph Dhara, school superintendent, observed, “The Berlin school district is an amazing place filled with dedicated and hardworking staff and an engaged community. In just a brief time here, I have realized the level of support, compassion, helpfulness, and hard work that employees consistently put in for our students and each other. This has made it possible for Berlin to stay strong through the pandemic and continue to do what is best for our students and staff. There is still a ways to go before this is behind us, but we have learned and grown from this experience, both individually and collectively.”



Superintendent Dhara has been looking to raise the student voice at the monthly BCSD Board of Education Meetings. BES Principal, Mrs. Kent, and BMHS Principal, Mrs. Sullivan, have been excited to respond to this call. During March's BOE meeting senior Jordanne Brazie was appointed as Student Representative to the Board of Education for the 2020 – 2021 school year. Jordanne is excited to take on the new role and mentor students to follow for the 2021-2022 school year. Students Rachel Smith and Luke Turetsky presented a snapshot of fourth grade as BES Student Representatives during April's meeting. During the public comment portion of the meeting fifth grade student Jackson Goodermote gave an excellent virtual presentation to the Board. The students' presence has been a welcome addition to the monthly meetings.



THE BERLIN ART DEPARTMENT

Mrs. Colbert, MS/HS Art Educator
 Ms. DeCelle, MS/HS Art Educator
 Ms. MacDonald, BES Art Educator

Department Website:
<https://berlinarthappens.wixsite.com/berlinarthappens>
 Facebook Page: "Berlin Art Department"
 Instagram: @berlinartdepartment

Highlights from the 2020-2021 School Year

From packing up individual art supply kits to teaching a hands-on subject remotely - *what a year it has been!* In the beginning of the year, K-12 Art Students embarked on a "Pinwheels for Peace" project to advocate for peace amongst us in this tough year (*see right*). The Berlin Art Department also welcomed Ms. DeCelle in her first full year as a Mountaineer! With a background in photography, media and journalism, she has proven to be a great addition to the Department. We look forward to what Ms. DeCelle will bring to our school community in future years.



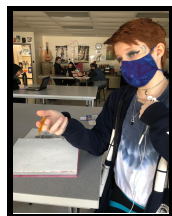
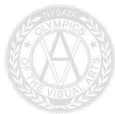
The Berlin High School National Art Honor Society Chapter (NAHS) has been gradually making small, positive pieces of artwork to brighten the days of fellow Mountaineers who might need an extra boost this year! Just a reminder that we're all in this together!
(Examples Below)



(See Below)

Olympics of the Visual Arts (OVA) Competition:

K-12 statewide competition put on by NYSATA to encourage creative problem solving and collaboration. This year's competition is virtual with Berlin participating in 2 categories: Bridget Hermann in Sculpture (Gr. 12) and Brady Hills in Illustration (Gr. 11).



Black History Month

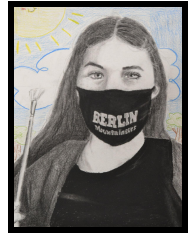
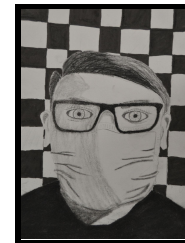
(Right) BES learned about the artist Faith Ringgold. She is a contemporary artist who is most well known for her story quilts, mixed media pieces using canvas, paints, fabrics, and sewing techniques. She also has written and illustrated several children's books.



Inspired by Faith Ringgold's book and story quilt, "Tar Beach," 4th and 5th grade artists created their own story quilt square. Their quilt square was about a special memory they have with their family. Students created their squares with colored pencils and printed papers. 2nd and 3rd grade artists created a mixed media drawing with collage in which they are flying over a magical city at night, like in the story.



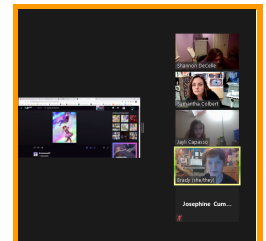
(Right) High School Studio Art students explored stereotyping and prejudices while learning about contemporary artist Kehinde Wiley's work. Wiley investigates these topics through large-scale hyperrealistic portraits with ornamental backgrounds.



*Our students have worked hard creating all year,
 now that special time is here:*

Pay close attention to the District Website for May/June
BES and MS/HS Art Show Display dates!

COVID didn't stop Art Club! Art Club still met every week virtually to learn new techniques and share out what artistic endeavors MS/HS students are investigating on their own.



P. O. Box 259
Berlin, NY 12022

NONPROFIT ORG.
AUTOCR
US POSTAGE PAID
BERLIN, NY 12022
PERMIT NO. 1

Board of Education

- Frank Zwack, President
- Katie Snyder, Vice President
- Rachel Finney
- Derrick Gardner
- Kellie Kaschak
- Sherry Bowman-Kluck
- Jeffrey Paine

POSTAL PATRON

ASBESTOS INSPECTIONS

The school district is required, under rules and regulations of the federal Environmental Protection Agency in response to the Asbestos Hazard Emergency Response Act of 1986 (AHERA), to notify students, parents and employees of the presence of asbestos containing materials (ACM) in its buildings. Notice is hereby given that pursuant to AHERA 40 CFR Part 763 section 763.93, the District will conduct inspections, re-inspections and operations and maintenance activities designed to identify and abate ACM known to exist in its school buildings. Notice is also given that a copy of the district’s Management Plan for Asbestos Abatement, together with supporting documentation, is available for inspection in the District Facilities Office. Questions concerning the District’s response to AHERA regulations should be directed to the Superintendent of Buildings at 518-658-1500, option 8, extension 3011.



Go Mountaineers!