

# Berlin

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

FEBRUARY 2023



## Welcome to our Mid-Year Newsletter

This Newsletter is a new opportunity for the Berlin Central School District to celebrate our Mountaineers' achievements, our community engagement, and new school initiatives.

The Mid-Year Newsletter is one of three to be published each year along with the Budget Newsletter to be published at the beginning of May and the Annual Report at the end of July.

This Newsletter reflects on the first half of the school year, while looking forward to what is ahead for the district.

To all BCSD stakeholders – students, staff members, families and community members – thank you for your commitment and energy in working for the very best for our Mountaineers.

With a strong commitment to our students and community, Berlin Central School District operates from these CORE VALUES:



**EMPATHY:** Acting with compassion to build relationships and foster community.



**PERSEVERANCE:** Understanding that excellence requires hard work, patience, and persistence.



**INTEGRITY:** Acting with honesty, respect, trust, and transparency.



**TEAMWORK:** Working collaboratively to achieve a common goal.



**PRIDE:** Demonstrating a strong connection to our school, district, and community.



**GROWTH MINDSET:** Modeling a love for life-long learning.

*BES Kindergarten and Fourth grade Mountaineers collaborated on a STEAM project to create a Thanksgiving Ballon Parade for their BES peers before the Thanksgiving holiday break.*

Scan the QR code or go to  
<https://berlincentral.org/district-newsletters/>  
to find this and previous newsletters with live links.



# — COMMUNITY OUTREACH —

## HOLIDAY BEARS

BCSD's Helping Hands thanks the many supporters of our Holiday Bears program at Berlin Elementary. This year we supported 45 families, making 116 local children very happy. Please find more information about our sponsors on our website <https://berlincentral.org/helping-hands-of-bes/>.

## THE BES AMBASSADORS MAKE A SPECIAL DELIVERY

Thanks go to the Berlin school community for making the food drives such a success. The drives are hosted and delivered by the BES Ambassadors, Middle School and High School Student Councils.

During their visit, the elementary students helped and learned from food pantry director, Ms. Dianne Mosher, and the Berlin Food Closet volunteers.

"The volunteers and I were so excited to see the donations that were brought in by the school children," said Ms. Mosher. "They were a great help in sorting the food, and packing baskets for needy families."

Ms. Mosher said that the Berlin Food Closet is open to families, on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month from 9–11 am, at the Methodist Church at 17 South Main Street in Berlin.

If you have students in the district and struggle to provide enough food, contact Helping Hands. Families with elementary students, call Deanna Baker: (518) 658-1500 and press 3.

Families with middle and high school students, contact Melissa Putterman-Hoffmann (518) 658-1500 x 2116.

Find more information about our local pantries on the Berlin's Community Assistance page <https://berlincentral.org/community-assistance/>.



## MOUNTAINEERS CAN CHANGE THE WORLD

BES second grade students participated again this year in a special project called "Read to Feed." The program, which is sponsored by Heifer International, encourages children to help others through the power of reading.

Donations were collected, and the classes raised \$325! The second graders assembled and voted on how the money should be spent. They will send their donation to Heifer International and it will be used to purchase one alpaca and four flocks of chicks for families in need.



*BMHS students thanked our local Veterans for their service and for honoring them with their presences at the annual BMHS Veterans Day Assembly.*

## BCSD HONORS VETERANS

The Berlin Middle High School and Elementary School held Veterans Day assemblies to honor local Veterans through musical performances and presentations. Thanks go to the many local Veterans who attended the assembly.

"We are here today to honor our heroes, to remember their achievements, their courage and their dedication, and to say thank you for their sacrifices," said Middle High School Principal Brownell during the BMHS Veterans Day Assembly.

*BES Ambassadors delivered their donation to the Berlin Food Closet during the month of December.*



*Top left: Third grade class at Hancock Shaker Village, top right: Fourth grade class at Olana State Historic Site, bottom: Second grade class at Grafton Lakes State Park.*

## Students Take Field Trips to Historical Sites, Parks and Museums

During November and December elementary students explored cultural sites and state parks.

**Second Grade Mountaineers** took a field trip to Grafton Lakes State Park where they had an immersive lesson on predators and prey. Second grade students also studied Jan Brett’s artwork in their classes with art teacher, Ms. Macdonald and took a field trip to the Albany Institute of History & Art to see an exhibit on author and illustrator.

**Third Grade Mountaineers** toured Hancock Shaker Village, which included exploring the 1830 Brick Dwelling, the Round Stone Barn, the Schoolhouse, and the Discovery Barn. The students learning about the Shaker way of life in their village.

**Fourth Grade Mountaineers** took a cross-curricular field trip to Olana State Historic Site, a historic 19th-century estate on the Hudson River and home to Frederic Edwin Church.

BES art teacher Ms. MacDonald brought the study of American Landscape art to life at Olana as the students sketched Hudson River landscapes from observation using a viewfinder to help frame their compositions.

The students also had an “immersive lesson” from fourth grade teacher Mrs. Kneer, highlighting unique characteristics of the Hudson and its significance to Native Americans, explorers, and traders in the 1600s.

Read more about these trips and see photo highlights on our district’s website here: <https://berlincentral.org/2022/11/21/bes-4th-3rd-and-2nd-graders-take-field-trips-to-historical-sites-and-parks/>.



*Pre-K student Bryer Faulkner shows off his Mountaineer Pride on Green and Gold Day.*

## DISTRICT HONORED WITH SCHOOL SAFETY EXCELLENCE AWARD



Superintendent of Buildings & Grounds Cyril A. Grant and Superintendent Joseph Dhara were proud to receive the highest School Safety Excellence Award from Utica National Insurance Group, for the sixth year in a row, on behalf of the staff at Berlin CSD. BCSD earned the highest level-titanium honor.

— SAVE THE DATE —

### BCSD MIDWINTER FESTIVAL AND COOK OFF!

SATURDAY, MARCH 4, 4-7 p.m.

The Berlin CSD PTO and BMHS Art Club are excited to announce that they will be hosting a Midwinter Festival! The festival will include a Chili and Mac & Cheese Cook Off, outdoor activities, bingo and more! Please contact Ms. DeCelle at [sdecelle@berlincentral.org](mailto:sdecelle@berlincentral.org) with questions.

# BMHS Mountaineers Celebrate Academic Success

- In early December the Berlin High School Student Council hosted its first Academic Pep Rally. BMHS students and staff were asked to wear green and gold and bring all the school spirit they could rally.
- The BNL Cheer Squad and the Berlin Mountaineer welcomed students to the gymnasium. BMHS Spanish teacher Ms. Karen Day helped emcee the event.
- Principal Brownell announced the Quarter 1 BMHS Core Value Mountaineers, who were nominated by their teachers. The BMHS Core Values include; empathy, integrity, pride, perseverance, teamwork and a growth mindset.
- High School Student Council members announced Quarter 1's Merit List, Honor Roll and Principal's List winners. These students then played games organized by the Student Council as their fellow Mountaineers and the BMHS staff cheered them on.
- Principal Brownell rewarded the Quarter 1 award recipients with different experiences to celebrate their academic success: Principal

List recipients celebrated with a trip to the Empire State Plaza for an afternoon of ice skating. Honor Roll recipients had a cookie decorating party, and Merit list recipients had a hot cocoa social.

- Congratulations to the Quarter 1 Merit List, Honor Roll and Principal's List recipients. Find BMHS 2022- 2023 Quarterly Honor Rolls here <https://berlincentral.org/bmhs-2022-2023-quarterly-honor-rolls/>.



*Principal List recipients celebrated their academic achievement with a trip to the Empire State Plaza for an afternoon of ice skating.*



November's BMS Dramateers' performance of Shrek Jr. was a hit. (l-r) Princess Fiona; Alyah Varela, Donkey; Markell Popov and Shrek; Xavier Lamica.

On March 24 – 26, the Berlin High School Dramateers will present *The Addams Family!* Stay tuned for more information coming soon.

In the spring, the BES fifth-Grade Drama Club will present *What Happened After Once Upon a Time*.



*Eighth grade student Peyton Geerholt proudly wears her Mountaineer pride on the district's spirit days.*

# Initiatives Focus on Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS)

BCSD is among the first schools in NY to use the MTSS framework, which helps with early identification and quick intervention for struggling students. MTSS supports the “whole child” in their academic growth, behavior, social and emotional needs, and absenteeism.

Several students from BMHS and BES spoke to the members of NYSED about the positive impact the framework is having on their day-to-day education. The district’s goal is to have MTSS seamlessly integrated into the school environment.

It was a proud day for administrators and staff to witness the students expressing themselves so eloquently to the State Education representatives.

## MAXIMIZING ASPIRATIONS

At Berlin Central School District, our focus is on maximizing the diverse talents and aspirations of our students and developing successful, responsible, and contributing members of our 21st Century society. Thanks to our supportive community, Mountaineers enjoy a hands-on, interactive approach to learning in modern, updated facilities with access to the latest learning technology.



*Representatives from the New York State Education Department visited both schools to meet with students, staff and administrators, learn more about the implementation of MTSS at BCSD and gather feedback from the students.*

## SHARED EXPECTATIONS

Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Angela Pastizzo and staff collaboratively created expectations in classrooms settings. Example of this at BES include student participation in community meeting/check-in, interactive skits on how to treat each other with kindness and respect and acknowledging attendance through “attendance heroes”.

## “RECOVERY ZONE”

At BMHS, a stand out example is the “Recovery Zone.” The purpose of the recovery zone is to support any student who is struggling in class due to anxiety or social-emotional needs. The recovery zone is a reset option for classroom-managed misbehavior.

According to Ms. Pastizzo, building a positive and supportive school culture is the first step to an effective MTSS Framework. Community norms help shape behavior, and this increased sense of belonging leads to increased accountability based on the student’s own motivation.

For more information on the progression and impact of the new MTSS framework initiative follow the latest news on the district MTSS website page here: <https://berlincentral.org/2022/12/12/mtss-framework-includes-community-building/>.



## MOUNTAINEER QUESTAR III STUDENTS EXPLORE CAREER INTERESTS AND DEVELOP SPECIALIZED SKILLS

Twenty nine students in 11th and 12th grades are currently enrolled in the Rensselaer Questar III’s Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs which offer hands-on training in a variety of career fields: Auto Technology, Criminal Justice, Heavy Equipment, HVAC, Auto Services, Construction, Certified Nursing Assistant, Cosmetology, Culinary and Information Technology.



# New Visions Provides Real-World Experience for Seniors

Insight into career options from a real-world perspective is the focus of Questar III's New Visions, a one-year, honors-level program. The selected students are placed into area schools, businesses, health-care facilities and government buildings for half of their school day in their field of interest. Participating students receive course credits and in some cases can also receive college credits.

Berlin seniors enrolled: Sadie Giumarra, Pathways to Education; Nora Colin, Medical; Cadence Church, Scientific Research and World Health; and Elsie Corbett, Scientific Research and World Health.

"The Pathways to Education program helped me find a niche in a school system that I really enjoy," said Sadie Giumarra.

"The program will help me get ahead of incoming college students pursuing education by letting me shadow teachers first hand, create lesson plans, and understand classroom dynamics all while still in high school."

A highlight for BCSD is that Sadie is bringing her experience full circle and shadowing BES Speech Therapist, Mrs. Heather Riccardi.

The Scientific Research and World Health program have offered seniors Cadence Church and Elsie Corbett a college-level academic experience with hands-on laboratory research in biotechnologies, scientific literacy and global health.

"Most of the time, I attend lectures in a classroom. However, we get rotations with prominent scientific figures every few weeks and go on science-based field trips frequently," explained Cadence.



*From left to right: Berlin seniors Cadence Church and Elsie Corbett, Scientific Research and World Health; Sadie Giumarra, Pathways to Education; Nora Colin, Medical*

"I spend three and half hours at New Visions, and then get to return to take AP Psych and do a Marine Bio Independent Study at BMHS," explained Elsie.

Cadence recommends students take time to look into all the programs and make sure to select the one that best suits them. "You don't miss out on being a senior at Berlin."

Nora Colin is enrolled in the Medical program and is in a clinical setting. She learns directly from medical professionals for the first half of her school day before returning to BMHS.

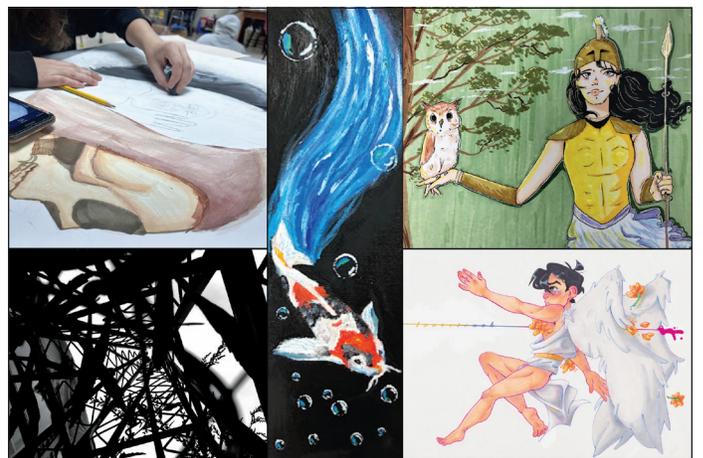
Nora would like to become a Pediatrician and sees the New Visions pathway as a great starting point. "It is so helpful taking college courses and being more independent," said Nora.

## MOUNTAINEERS COMPETE IN STEM COMPETITION TO PLAN A BRIGHTER FUTURE

BHS Technology teacher Ms. Dawn Wetmore has been coaching the Samsung Solve for Tomorrow. The team submitted a design proposal for an adaptive skiing device for sight-impaired. The team has been awarded \$2,500 for moving to the next round of the national competition.



*BHS Mountaineers' InvenTeam members Raymond Ericson, Owen Lowry, Samantha Rokjer, Daniel Rivera, Curtis Hurd and Nathaniel Mace (missing from photo Riley Smith) with their robot before qualifying rounds of the Excelsior FIRST Tech Challenge (FTC).*



## BHS ARTIST OF THE MONTH AWARD

The "Artist of the Month" award is a high school award for our most dedicated students in the Visual Arts. So far this school year BMHS Art Educators have selected the following artists: September, Josephine Cummings, grade 11 (top left); October, Abigail Thela, grade 11 (top right); October, Danny Rivera, grade 12 (center); December, Curtis Hurd, grade 10 (bottom left); January, Rebecca Moore, grade 11 (bottom right).



## SENIOR NIGHTS FIRST GAMES FOR NEW SOCCER FIELD

The Board of Education was excited to announce the acceptance of our new athletic fields this past fall.

It was great to see our students play on our new soccer field. The baseball field is ready for use this spring. The Board of Education thanks the community for their patience over the past couple of years as the fields were completed. Go BNL!



## DISTRICT CALENDAR OF EVENTS

From parent information nights, academic testing dates, community events, school concerts, drama performances to school holidays and more, the Berlin CSD calendar offers a quick glimpse at the activities happening in our district. <https://berlincentral.org/district/calendar/>

**MOUNTAINEER WEBSITE:** Our website is your one-stop news and information source. Find out about the latest Mountaineer achievements, events, classroom spotlights, staff features, BNL sports news and highlights and much more. [www.berlincentral.org](http://www.berlincentral.org)

**FOLLOW US ON TWITTER AND FACEBOOK:** BCSD's social media accounts offer a quick glimpse into the day-to-day activities and achievements of our Mountaineers. They offer important reminders for students and families. Follow us on Facebook [@BerlinCentralSchoolDistrict](https://www.facebook.com/BerlinCentralSchoolDistrict) or Twitter at [@BerlinCSD](https://twitter.com/BerlinCSD) or for athletic updates [@BerlinNY\\_AD](https://twitter.com/BerlinNY_AD)

**SUBSCRIBE TO OUR YOUTUBE CHANNELS:** Our [Communications BCSD](#) YouTube channel offers an opportunity to see what's happening in our district from student accomplishments, capital project updates, recordings of forums and more. The district also has a [Streaming BCSD](#) YouTube live streaming channel, that allows for BNL games and matches taking place in our gymnasium to be viewed live. Subscribe to these channels so you are the first to know when a new video is posted or a live stream is underway.

**GET INVOLVED:** The best way to stay up-to-date with what's happening in the Mountaineer Community is to take an active role in our school community. Please consider joining Berlin CSD Parent Teacher Organization (PTO). Follow on Facebook [@BerlinElementaryMountaineers PTO](https://www.facebook.com/BerlinElementaryMountaineersPTO) / [@BerlinMS/HS PTO](https://www.facebook.com/BerlinMSHSPTO) or email [BESPTO@berlincentral.org](mailto:BESPTO@berlincentral.org) / [Berlinmshspto@gmail.com](mailto:Berlinmshspto@gmail.com). For the Berlin New Lebanon Booster Club Follow on Facebook [@BerlinNLBooster](https://www.facebook.com/BerlinNLBooster) or email [berlinboosterclub@gmail.com](mailto:berlinboosterclub@gmail.com) for more information.

## BMS FUTURE CITY TEAM BRINGS HOME THREE TROPHIES

In January the Middle School Future City team had a great performance at the Capital District Regional Future City Competition.

Future City is a hands-on cross-curricular middle school Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) competition. Students are tasked with designing a futuristic city for the competition with innovative solutions to some of today's most pressing sustainability issues. This year's focus was climate change.

Our Berlin team brought home three trophies! They were awarded the Greenest City, Most Neighborly City and won fifth place in the overall competition!

Middle school students interested in joining the team for next year, please see BMHS Science Teachers/Coaches Mrs. Amanda Hayes or Mr. Brendan Scannell.



*Future City Team (back row l-r) Coach Mrs. Amanda Hayes, Mentor Mr. Christopher Hayes, New York State Senator Jake Ashby, Kenny Bull, Coach Mr. Scannell (middle row l-r) Damon Vickery, Luke Turetsky, Gerard (Roddy) Gardell, Savannah Hammon, Easton Montanye (front) Mary Perkins.*

# Berlin

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

P. O. Box 259 • Berlin, NY 12022

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## POSTAL PATRON

### BOARD OF EDUCATION

Frank Zwack, *President, Audit Committee*  
Katie Snyder, *Vice President, Facility & Audit Committees*  
Andrea Beckwith, *Audit & Merged Sports Committees*  
Sherry Bowman-Kluck, *Merged Sports Committee*  
Kim Collen, *Wellness & Merged Sports Committees*  
Derrick Gardner, *Facility Committee*  
Trevor Jewett, *Facility Committee*

### SUPERINTENDENT

Joseph Dhara

[www.berlincentral.org](http://www.berlincentral.org)

**BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS:** Monthly BOE meetings are held at 7:15 p.m. at the Berlin Middle High School on the third Tuesday of the month. Please join us. Your voice is important. <https://berlincentral.org/district/board-of-education/>

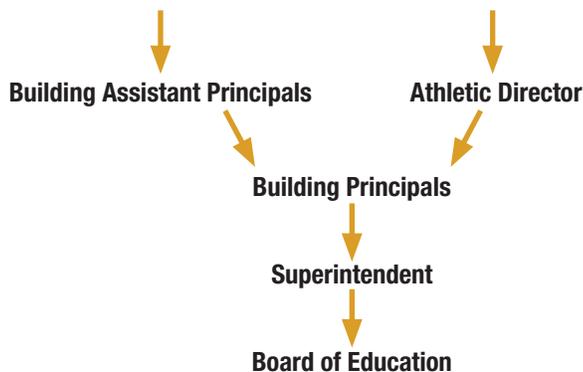
## Where to Find District News & Information

Our Mountaineers are enthusiastic and the district is full of activity! Stay up-to-date on District events, news and other important information by engaging with us in the following ways:

### HOW TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE WITH BERLIN SCHOOL AND DISTRICT STAFF

As a BCSD parent please take time to review the “chain of command” or where to begin the communication sequence regarding a problem or concern. Many parent and community questions are easily and completely answered by communicating directly with the educator in charge of the class or program. Each situation should first be addressed at whatever level the initial action was taken, with appeals moving on to the next level in the chain of command.

### EDUCATOR IN CHARGE OF THE CLASS OR PROGRAM



*Middle School Mountaineers Isabella Ray and Avery French conduct an archaeological dig in Mrs. Hammersmith sixth grade Social Studies class.*

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter: <https://www.facebook.com/berlincentralschools> • <https://twitter.com/BerlinCSD>

# Berlin

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



District

High School

Middle School

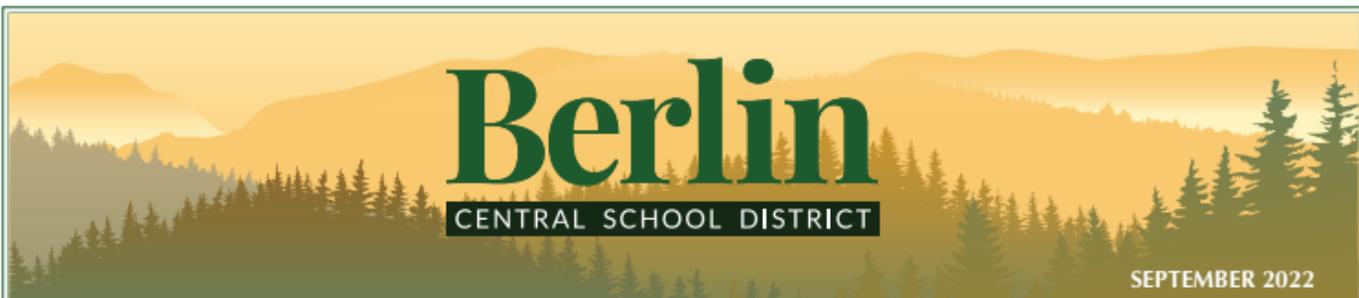
Elementary School

Athletics

## DISTRICT NEWSLETTER ARCHIVES

### BCSD Back to School Newsletter August 2022





## Superintendent Welcome Letter

**Dear Berlin Families,**

Welcome to the 2022-2023 school year. It is a tremendous honor for me to welcome back both our returning and our new families to a brand new school year.

The 2021-2022 school year presented many challenges and opportunities for all of us. A large factor in us successfully completing last year was your collaboration, understanding and patience with the district. We hope to keep building on the district's relationship with the community through stronger communication in both directions.

The Berlin school district has a new Strategic Plan that was created by a group of stakeholders that included parents, students, administrators, community members, teachers and support staff. This plan will provide us with a guideline for our goals and decision making in the coming years. Please review the plan on our website and send in your feedback to me, so that we can review and revise the plan for future years to continue to best meet the needs of our students.

Safety is a priority for us. We have made several strategic changes to enhance the security in our district. These are outlined in detail later on in the newsletter, but I wanted to highlight two of them – we welcome Deputy McGuire to Berlin as our School Resource Officer (SRO) and we look forward to incorporating his ideas and energy into our district's safety initiatives. We will also be installing a Raptor Visitor Management System in both our buildings. Any visitor to either school, will have to present a Driver's ID

Our capital projects are progressing well. These projects have provided much needed updates to our aging systems and facilities and enhanced our security measures and academic learning environment throughout the district.

I am looking forward to the coming school year because we have learned a lot through the past three years that we can continue to incorporate in a meaningful way throughout this year to better serve our students, staff and parents. The excitement of our students and their smiles are always a welcome reminder of why we exist as a district.

I am sure that the 2022-2023 school year will have challenges, but with your collaboration I am confident that we will continue to be successful. Through the year we will continue to communicate important information to you as it becomes available.

In closing, I will say that it always fills me with pride to see the hard work and dedication that all our students, staff and families put in each and every day to help each other out and to ensure that our students are successful. Thank you for being our partner in this journey.

***We are Stronger Together. Go Mountaineers!***

Respectfully,  
A. Joseph Dhara, *Superintendent of Schools*





– 9 p.m.  
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## Systems S

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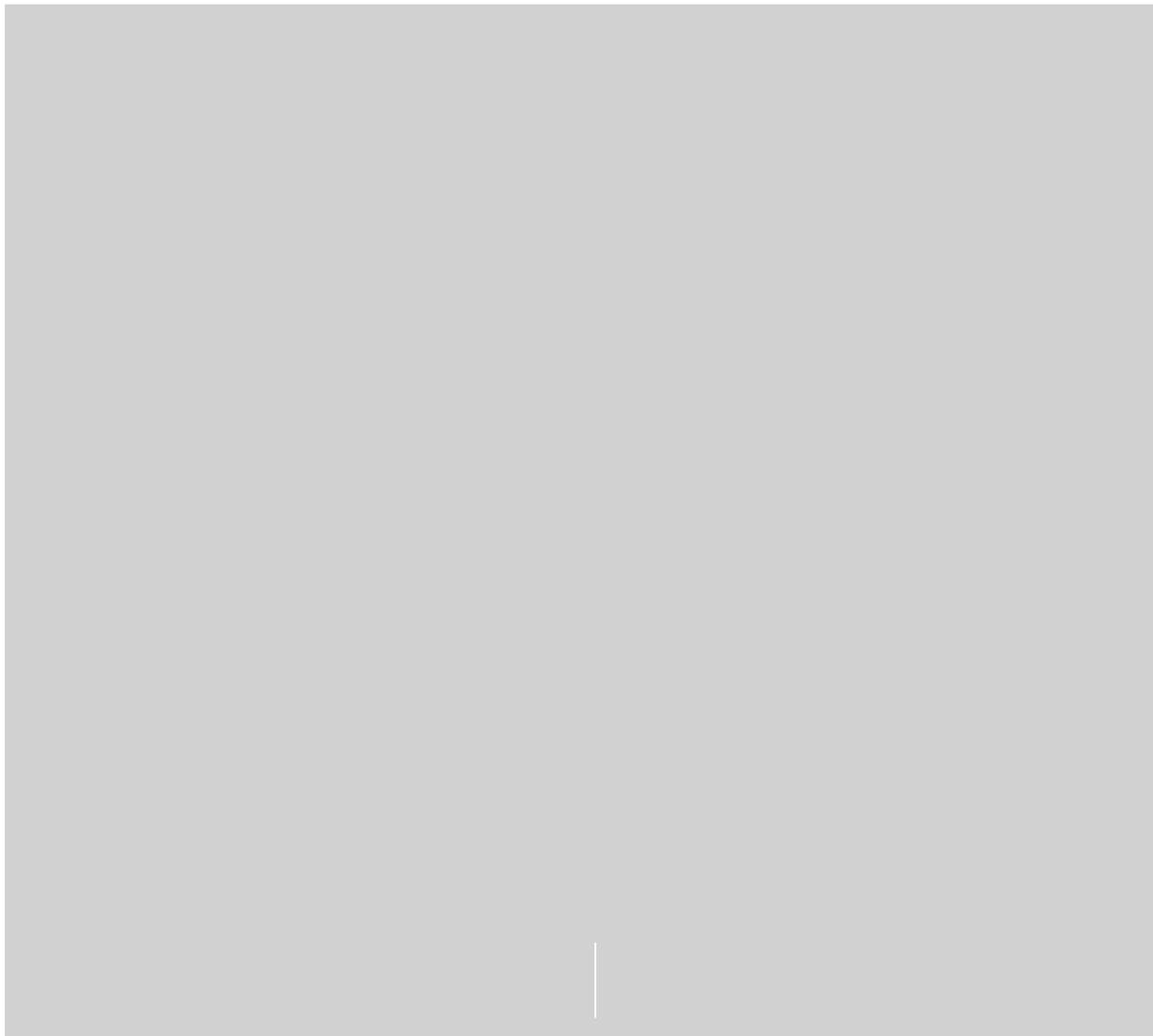
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- Estimated tax levy increase: 0%

#### PROJECT GOALS:

- Replace aging heating oil tanks  
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**EDITION**

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students keep getting excellent instruction. Our transportation and support staff have worked dedicatedly every day to ensure that our students arrive safely at school, have proper nutrition, and a productive, clean and safe learning environment. Our nurses have worked closely with families and students to accurately contact trace Covid cases and provide related support.



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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

Berlin Central School District

Middle/High School

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Plain, NY 12054

Elementary School

Street

NY 12022

518-658-1500

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