

# Berlin

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

MAY 2024

## 2024-2025 SCHOOL BUDGET & BOE VOTE

**VOTE**  
**TUESDAY**  
**May 21, 2024**

**12 p.m. – 9 p.m.**

Voting will take place at  
**Berlin Elementary School**  
**53 School Street, Berlin, NY 12022**  
Tuesday, May 21, 2024  
from 12 p.m. – 9 p.m.

- **Budget Vote**
- **Proposition Vote**
- **Board Election Vote**  
(2 Open Seats)

### THE 2024 – 2025 BUDGET

The Budget for the 2024 – 2025 school year is not to exceed **\$25,527,077**. This is an increase of **3.5%** in the tax levy.



## Letter from Interim Superintendent Dr. Maureen Long

**Dear Berlin CSD Residents,**

The development of the 2024–2025 budget has been a challenging and emotional process. I want to begin by thanking all of you who have actively engaged during the process by attending budget presentations and forums, sharing your perspectives via public comment or by completing surveys and, especially, for advocating on behalf of the district by reaching out to elected officials.

I also wish to acknowledge the members of the Board of Education for their thoughtful consideration of the needs of our students along with the feedback from our community. All information related to the process can be found on the [budget page](#) of the district website.

**A number of factors** contributed to our current circumstances: Foundation Aid remaining at current year levels, the fact that COVID related funding is coming to an end, and a structural deficit moving into the next fiscal year.

Given the fiscal stress we are experiencing, we have exhausted all efforts to maximize and advocate for other available funding sources to maintain and create opportunities for our students, schools, and the district. Please see the story on page 2 related to the district's plans to take advantage of Smart Schools Bond Act funds.

Important to us during the budget development, was to provide as much as we can for our students, while being mindful of the impact on our community. The budget adopted by the board, and being proposed to our voters, is \$25,527,077; reflecting a 3.5% tax levy, and below the 3.6% allowable tax cap. Passage will require a simple majority (50% + 1 vote).

**In addition to** the proposed budget, the ballot will include a separate transportation proposition, and two candidates for two open board seats (see page 7).

I encourage all of you to come out and vote on Tuesday, May 21, 2024, from noon to 9:00 pm at the Berlin Elementary School.

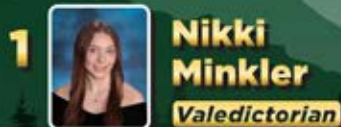
Sincerely,

Dr. Maureen A. Long, Interim Superintendent



*Staff and students at this year's Berlin Middle High School Academic Top 10 Ceremony.*

# Berlin High School Class of 2024 Top Ten



## Smart Schools Bond Act

Berlin will maximize Smart Schools Funding to enhance security, technology and instruction.

Since 2014 the Smart Schools Bond Act (SSBA) has made funds available to school districts for improvements to educational technology and school infrastructure.

This year, the BCSD Technology Team has worked diligently with the Smart Schools Planning Committee to develop the Smart Schools Investment Plan that is required to access our district's \$947,237 allocation.

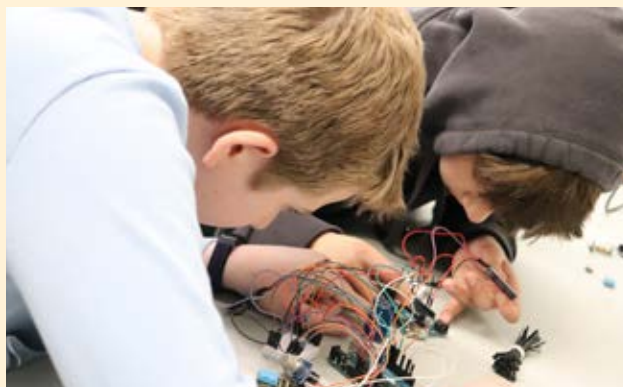
The district's proposed plan would enhance security, and provide much needed upgrades to technology infrastructure, devices, and educational technology at no cost to the taxpayers.

Our plan is in the final stages of being submitted to the NYS Education Department and, upon approval, the work can commence immediately.

A public hearing was held on February 29, 2024, followed by a period of public comment. More detailed information can be found on the district's web page <https://berlincentral.org/2024/02/29/berlin-csd-smart-schools-bond-act-open-for-public-comment/>

During these challenging fiscal times, all those involved in securing the funding deserve our sincere thanks. Without utilizing this funding source, many of the essential upgrades and improvements would otherwise fall to the BCSD general fund and taxpayer dollars.

The purchases made via SSBA funding will create improved security and valuable instructional opportunities for all our students.



*BMHS Mountaineers on the Berlin InvenTeam prepare a prototype for the 2024 Project Invent competition. They are creating a cave monitoring system to aid in the research of bats in Bentley Cave in Berlin. The team will be presenting their prototype in New York City this spring.*

# Class of 2024 Valedictorian and Salutatorian

## NIKKI MINKLER

### 2024 BERLIN HIGH SCHOOL VALEDICTORIAN

Russell Sage College  
Nursing



Congratulations to Nikki Minkler, daughter of Carrie and Charles Minkler of Grafton, the 2024 Valedictorian of Berlin High School.

Nikki is graduating with an Advanced Regents Diploma and will attend Russell Sage College this fall for Nursing.

As a Mountaineer, Nikki has enrolled in a challenging academic schedule while exemplifying what it means to be a well-rounded student. Nikki's combination of academic and athletic excellence, leadership, and a genuine desire to make a difference in the lives of others is how she has achieved her success.

**Nikki's dedication** to academic pursuits has allowed her to accumulate well over the required amount of credits for graduation. Throughout high school she has taken a rigorous college preparatory schedule, including an accelerated track in math and science and honors English and social studies courses.

During her senior year Nikki has split her time between the Questar III Nursing Program and Berlin High School. She enrolled in a Career Technical Education program this year to work on her goal of becoming a nurse.

Beyond the classroom, Nikki is a leader in her school community. She is a member of the National Honor Society, New York State Science Honor Society, National Art Honor Society, High School Student Council, and has been the Class of 2024 vice president for the past two years.

Nikki can also be found leading on the basketball court, and during her senior year earned the distinction of Section II Girls Basketball Scholar-Athlete. Nikki has played for three years on varsity, two of which she was co-captain. During her first year on the team she was awarded Most Improved Player and in her junior year the Coach's Award.

Community Service and volunteering is paramount in her life. Since 2023 Nikki has been a volunteer firefighter at the Grafton Fire Department. Nikki has also spent the last four years volunteering at the Capital City Rescue Mission, serving food and helping with clerical duties, and as a Children's Church teacher at the Mountain Chapel Church.

Last year Nikki received the University of Rochester George Eastman Young Leaders Award, and this year was awarded the Russell Sage College 2024 Trustee Excellence Merit Scholarship.

"Nikki is an above average student with exceptional time management skills," said Berlin High School Counselor, Mrs. Melissa Cleary. "She is an excellent self-advocate and has great communication skills."

Her motivation to help others through nursing and community service makes Nikki an outstanding example of a Mountaineer. She will be sure to shine at Russell Sage in the fall.

## ELIZABETH HUNT

### 2024 BERLIN HIGH SCHOOL SALUTATORIAN

Massachusetts College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences  
Pediatric Dentistry



Congratulations to Elizabeth Hunt, daughter of Mary Lou and Steven Hunt of Petersburg, the 2024 Salutatorian of Berlin High School.

Elizabeth is graduating with an Advanced Regents Diploma and will attend Massachusetts College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences for Pediatric Dentistry.

Throughout high school Elizabeth has taken a rigorous schedule, which included six college level (dual enrollment) courses and one advanced placement course.

In her high school career Elizabeth participated in several sports at the varsity level: the Girls Soccer team, Swim team, and Softball team.

Elizabeth's consistent focus has been on soccer. She has been an integral part of the girls' varsity soccer team since eighth grade. She has been recognized as Rookie of the Year, Most Valuable Defender, Most Improved Player, and this year was co-captain. In addition to sports teams, Elizabeth is a long time youth hockey player, and continues to compete on the ice.

**Elizabeth's strengths** in character and leadership have been assets both on and off the field. Elizabeth is the student representative on the Board of Education, student council officer, class treasurer, member of the Prom Committee, and a part of the mentoring programs throughout middle school and high school.

Elizabeth is a member of the National Honor Society and NYS Science Honor Society. Last year she received the Clarkson Leadership Award, University of Rochester's Bausch and Lomb Award, and the Northern Berkshire Youth Hockey Charlie Cooper Award.

Elizabeth has made a point to give back to her community. She is a referee for local youth soccer and an instructor in the learn to skate program for the Northern Berkshire Youth Hockey program. During the summer months, she can be found life-guarding at Grafton State Park.

"Elizabeth is hardworking and kind, high achieving and modest, and an all-around role model and mentor to peers of all ages," said Berlin High School Counselor, Rachel Harrison.

We look forward to seeing all that Elizabeth will accomplish at Massachusetts College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences.



#### Community Member

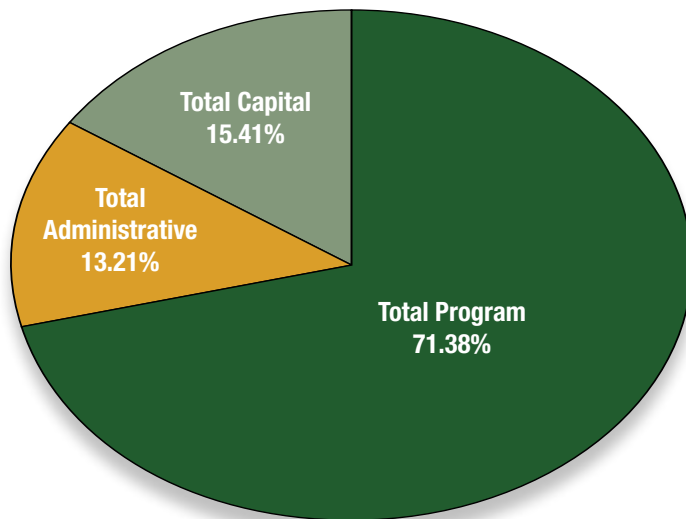
School Messenger Request Form <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf8K5CQrpaQpEhQ3hPVHvjhPz-KIQ-QgYzC0yUyjCRhKfNf5FQ/viewform>

## REVENUES:

	Actual 2023–2024	Proposed 2024–2025
State Aid	12,352,498	12,805,537
Real Property Taxes	10,151,095	10,506,381
Miscellaneous/Federal	1,456,651	690,339
Reserves (ERS, TRS)	1,512,709	524,820
Fund Balance	800,000	1,000,000
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>26,272,953</b>	<b>25,527,077</b>

## THREE-PART BUDGET

All public schools in New York State are required by law to report their spending in the three categories: Program, Administrative and Capital.



BES Student Ambassadors Madeline Clark and Emma Hunt interview Pat Casavant, a member of the Grafton Senior Center, for a community outreach project led by retired BES teacher Mrs. Brenda DeMagistris.

## EXPENSES:

### PROGRAM BUDGET

	Actual 2023–2024	Proposed 2024–2025
Regular Education	5,296,518	5,303,021
Special Education	3,838,681	3,973,048
Occupational Education	565,076	618,950
Continuing Ed/Driver Ed	25,000	11,000
Library/Technology	635,912	658,068
Guidance	443,572	369,632
Health/Psychological Services	335,441	318,796
Co-Curricular/Sports	387,133	379,690
Transportation	1,723,971	1,625,628
Employee Benefits	6,037,436	4,963,090
<b>Total Program Budget</b>	<b>19,288,740</b>	<b>18,220,923</b>

### ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET

	Actual 2023–2024	Proposed 2024–2025
Board of Education	21,250	29,078
Central Administration	245,358	322,059
Finance	483,943	497,248
Legal/Personnel/Public Info./Records	175,440	224,248
Central Printing/Mailing/Data Processing	327,902	232,077
Insurance/Dues	77,405	84,500
School & Dept. Supervision/Security	689,477	881,535
Curriculum & In-service	109,612	138,061
BOCES Administration Expenses	181,462	186,908
Employee Benefits	768,355	776,031
<b>Total Administrative Budget</b>	<b>3,080,204</b>	<b>3,371,745</b>

### CAPITAL BUDGET

	Actual 2023–2024	Proposed 2024–2025
Operations & Maintenance	1,501,123	1,556,100
Debt Service	1,886,642	1,971,269
Transfer to Other Funds	65,000	23,000
Employee Benefits	451,244	384,040
<b>Total Capital Budget</b>	<b>3,904,009</b>	<b>3,934,409</b>
<b>Total Budget Expenses</b>	<b>26,272,953</b>	<b>25,527,077</b>

# Berlin Central School District Budget Notice 2024-2025

Overall Budget Proposal	Budget Adopted for the 2023-24 School Year	Budget Proposed for the 2024-25 School Year	Contingency Budget for the 2024-25 School Year *						
Total Budgeted Amount, Not Including Separate Propositions	\$ 26,272,953	\$25,527,077	\$24,962,381						
Increase/Decrease for the 2024-25 School Year		(\$745,876)	(\$1,310,572)						
Percentage Increase/Decrease in Proposed Budget		(2.84%)	(4.98%)						
Change in the Consumer Price Index		4.12%							
<b>A. Proposed Levy to Support the Total Budgeted Amount</b>									
	\$10,151,095	\$10,506,381							
<b>B. Levy to Support Library Debt, if Applicable</b>									
	\$	\$							
<b>C. Levy for Non-Excludable Propositions, if Applicable **</b>									
	\$	\$							
<b>D. Total Tax Cap Reserve Amount Used to Reduce Current Year Levy</b>									
	\$	\$							
<b>E. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy (A + B + C - D)</b>									
	\$10,151,095	\$10,506,381	\$10,151,095						
<b>F. Total Permissible Exclusions</b>									
	\$293,577	\$387,289							
<b>G. School Tax Levy Limit, <u>Excluding</u> Levy for Permissible Exclusions</b>									
	\$10,256,282	\$10,129,218							
<b>H. Total Proposed School Year Tax Levy, <u>Excluding</u> Levy to Support Library Debt and/or Permissible Exclusions (E – B – F + D)</b>									
	\$9,857,518	\$10,119,092							
<b>I. Difference: G – H (Negative Value Requires 60.0% Voter Approval – See Note Below Regarding Separate Propositions) **</b>									
	\$398,764	\$10,126							
<b>Administrative Component</b>									
	\$3,080,204	\$3,371,745	\$2,904,745						
<b>Program Component</b>									
	\$19,288,740	\$18,220,923	\$18,177,227						
<b>Capital Component</b>									
	\$3,904,009	\$3,934,409	\$3,880,409						
<p>* Provide a statement of assumptions made in projecting a contingency budget for the 2024-25 school year, should the proposed budget be defeated pursuant to Section 2023 of the Education Law.</p> <p>If operating under a contingency budget, equipment, curriculum development and inservice, contractual services, BOCES services and administrative support would be removed from the budget.</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 10px;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Description</th> <th style="text-align: right;">Amount</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>School Bus Proposition to purchase 4 school buses</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$295,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>(no budgetary impact for the 2024-25 school year)</td> <td></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>** List Separate Propositions that are not included in the Total Budgeted Amount: (Tax Levy associated with educational or transportation services propositions are not eligible for exclusion and may affect voter approval requirements)</p>				Description	Amount	School Bus Proposition to purchase 4 school buses	\$295,000	(no budgetary impact for the 2024-25 school year)	
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School Bus Proposition to purchase 4 school buses	\$295,000								
(no budgetary impact for the 2024-25 school year)									

	Under the Budget Proposed for the 2024-25 School Year
Estimated Basic STAR Exemption Savings <sup>1</sup>	\$397

The annual budget vote for the fiscal year 2024-25 by the qualified voters of the Berlin Central School District, Rensselaer County, New York, will be held at the Berlin Elementary School gymnasium in said district on Tuesday, May 21, 2024 between the hours of 12:00 pm and 9:00 pm, prevailing time at which time the polls will be opened to vote by voting ballot or machine.

1. The basic school tax relief (STAR) exemption is authorized by section 425 of the Real Property Tax Law.

Our priority is to engage, equip, and empower each Mountaineer student to achieve their chosen pathway.

**Student Achievement**

Create an environment where students reach their full potential in their chosen pathway through rigorous, student-centered teaching and learning.

**Engaged Mountaineers**

Build an inclusive culture where students, employees, parents and the community belong and demonstrate trust and pride in our schools.

**Community Partnerships**

Support student success through collaboration and communication with families and the community.

**Facility & Fiscal Responsibility**

Establish transparent facility plans and fiscal processes that align to the needs of students and support staff in meeting these needs.

**EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION**

**Berlin Central School District**

## What is a Contingent Budget?

When the voters reject a school budget, the Board of Education has three options under the NYS law:

- submit the same budget for a second vote;
- submit a revised budget for a second vote; or
- adopt a contingent (or contingency) budget

When the voters of a NYS school district fail to approve a school budget the second time, the district is required by law to operate under a contingent budget.

What happens when a contingent budget must be adopted?

State law mandates that under a contingent budget, a school district must adopt a budget with no tax levy increase and eliminate all non-contingent expenses, such as certain student supplies, certain equipment purchases and community use of school facilities that results in a district expense.

The administrative budget would also be subject to certain restrictions.

What would a contingent budget mean for Berlin?

If operating under a contingent budget, the tax levy can be no greater than the prior year tax levy (zero percent increase).

Based on the Adopted Budget, the tax levy would need to be reduced from \$10,506,381 to \$10,151,095, a decrease of \$355,286. Additional reductions of \$209,410 would be required to remain within the administrative cap. Therefore, the budget would need to be reduced by \$564,696 if operating under a contingency budget.



*BHS Senior Jacob Maxon talks to BES fourth graders about the Berlin Aquatic Science program. Jacob and BHS Science teacher, Mr. Christian, brought sea life for the students to engage with using their mobile touch tank.*



*Berlin High School's Jayli Capasso received 2nd place award for her piece, Entangled, at the 35th Annual Questar III Juried High School Invitational Art Exhibit! Jayli's award marked the first time Berlin CSD has placed in 1st or 2nd at the invitational art exhibit.*



*Seventh grader Logan Chittenden thanks local Veterans for their service at the BMHS Annual Veterans Day Breakfast and Assembly, organized each year by BHS Social Studies teacher Mr. Bob Gould.*

## Berlin CSD Vision and Mission

**VISION:**

All Berlin Central School District students will graduate with an excellent education and experiences that prepare them to become productive members of society. Our students will be ready to assume responsibility for their own success in the workforce, college, the community, and life.

**MISSION:**

The mission of the Berlin Central School District is to maximize the diverse talents and aspirations of its students. Our students will be prepared to assume responsibility for their own success in the workforce, college, the community, and life.



## PROPOSITION

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Berlin Central School District, Rensselaer County, New York is hereby authorized to (1) acquire in fiscal year 2024-2025 up to four (4) school buses, including two (2) school bus vehicles and two (2) 7-passenger vehicles, at a cost not to exceed \$295,000 which is estimated to be the maximum cost thereof, (2) expend such sums for such purpose, (3) levy the tax necessary therefor, to be levied and collected

in annual installments in such years and in such amounts as may be determined by the Board of Education, taking into account state aid received, and (4) in anticipation of the collection of such tax, to issue bonds and notes of the District at one time or from time to time in the principal amount not to exceed \$295,000, or enter into a lease-purchase agreement at a principal amount not to exceed \$295,000 to acquire such school buses.

## Board of Education Seats

There are two seats up for election this year. Both seats are three-year terms (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2027). There are two candidates running for two seats. Voters will be asked to vote for two candidates. The candidates will appear on the ballot in this order:

- **Katie Snyder**
- **Penni Eggsware**



*Mr. Toole's Freshwater Studies students released the Brown Trout they raised this school year into the Little Hoosic River.*

## Board of Education Candidates



### 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 fourth grader at BES and my youngest will be attending BES in the fall. In addition to my current service on the Board of Education, I serve my local fire department and have held various

positions in the Town of Petersburg.

After graduating from Berlin in 2003, I attended Russell Sage College majoring in Forensic Science and Chemistry, the College of St. Rose majoring in adolescent education, and obtained an MBA from Clarkson University School of Business. I recently graduated from the Rensselaer County Regional Chamber of Commerce Leadership Institute.

I have served on the BOE for twelve years and currently serve as Vice President and sit on the Facilities and Audit Committees. Throughout my tenure, I have been an active voice for education and opportunities for all students. I remain

committed to continue making my decisions based on the best interest of our students in a fiscally responsible manner. I look forward to continuing my service to the BCSD community.



### PENNI EGGSWARE

I am a lifetime resident of Petersburg and a graduate of Berlin. I currently have two children enrolled in the Berlin School District. My oldest will be graduating from Berlin High School this June and my youngest is currently a freshman at BHS. I am a sports mom and can be heard cheering at a variety of sporting events. I am a voting member of the BNL Booster Club and also a member of the Merged Sports Committee.

I am currently employed by Rensselaer County Soil and Water as their District Clerk and prior to that I worked as a Broker in the Health/Life Insurance field.

I feel that my experiences in those fields would be a great addition to the board.

Let's go Mountain Lions!!

## SAVE THE DATES

- Budget Vote – May 21st, 2024, 12 pm – 9:00 pm
- High School Concert – May 15th, 6:00 pm
- 3rd Annual Night of the Arts 3rd-5th Grade Concert and Art Show – May 21st, 6:30 pm
- 3rd Annual Night of the Arts K-2nd Grade Concert and Art Show – May 29th, 6:00 pm
- Arts Alive! Student Art Exhibit at the MS/HS – June 5th, 5:30 pm
- Academic Awards – June 12th, 7:00 pm
- 8th Grade Moving Up – June 13th, 9:00 am
- Kindergarten Moving Up – June 24th, 9:30 am
- 5th Grade Moving Up Ceremony – June 25th, 9:30 am
- Senior Graduation – June 28th, 7:00 pm

# Berlin

CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

P. O. Box 259 • Berlin, NY 12022

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

## POSTAL PATRON

### BOARD OF EDUCATION

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

### INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT

Dr. Maureen Long

<https://berlincentral.org/district/board-of-education/>

**BUDGET  
VOTE**  
Tuesday, May 21

## 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 21st 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 p.m. on Tuesday, May 21, 2024.



*Mrs. Kasey Hannigan's kindergarten class received a lot of love from all over the country thanks to their Hearts Around the USA project. Messages from all 50 States made it to their classroom, many from alums of Berlin Central School District.*

## CONNECT WITH US

### DISTRICT CALENDAR OF EVENTS

<https://berlincentral.org/district/calendar/>

### MOUNTAINEER WEBSITE

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

### FOLLOW US ON

### TWITTER AND FACEBOOK

Facebook @BerlinCentralSchoolDistrict

Twitter at @BerlinCSD

Athletics @BerlinNY\_AD

### SUBSCRIBE TO OUR

### YOUTUBE CHANNELS

Communications BCSD

or Streaming BCSD