



Berlin Middle High School

NEWSLETTER

January 26, 2026

Principal's Message

Dear Mountaineer Families,

I hope everyone enjoyed the recent snow day. As we move forward into the second semester, I would like to share several important updates and upcoming events at Berlin Middle High School.

Course Catalog & Information Night – Thank You

Our 2026–2027 Course Catalog & Course Information Night, along with our PTO presentation, was a tremendous success. Thank you to the families who attended and partnered with us in supporting thoughtful academic planning for our students.

For families who were unable to attend, a link to the presentations and information is included below:

[BMHS Course Catalog 2026–2027](#)

[PTO Presentation 2026–27 Student & Family Course Selection](#)

- [Recording of 1/13 Q&A Session](#)

[1/20/26 Presentation](#) –Please note: For the art slide – if you click on the hyperlinks included, it will give you more information about the classes offered. The second hyperlink on that slide shows the pictures included on the slideshow that are jumbled in the saved version.

[1/20/26 Presentation Recording](#)

If you have questions about course selection, graduation requirements, or academic pathways, please do not hesitate to contact our school counselors:

- Mr. Shaw jtaylorshaw@berlincentral.org
- Ms. Caldwell scaldwell@berlincentral.org

They are excellent resources and look forward to working closely with students and families throughout the course selection process.

Please Reach Out!



James Taylor-Shaw
School Counselor Grades 6-9
jtaylorshaw@berlincentral.org
(518) 658-1500 x 1073



Savanna Caldwell
School Counselor Grades 10-12
scaldwell@berlincentral.org
(518) 658-1500 x 1072



2026-2027 Student & Family Course Selection
Partnering with Families for Student Success

Berlin Middle High School

Questions?

Please submit your questions to the QR Code below:



<https://forms.gle/5GFuHFQAubKFjzAh8>

Supporting Student Wellness: Stress, Trauma, and Mental Health

As a school community, we recognize that many children and adolescents are experiencing increased levels of stress, anxiety, and emotional fatigue, often influenced by academic pressure, social dynamics, family changes, health concerns, and experiences beyond their control.

Stress and trauma can look very different from child to child. Some common indicators families may notice include:

- Changes in mood or behavior
- Increased irritability or withdrawal
- Difficulty concentrating or completing schoolwork
- Frequent absences or requests to stay home
- Changes in sleep or appetite
- Physical complaints such as headaches or stomachaches
- Loss of interest in activities they once enjoyed

When these signs appear, it does not mean something is “wrong” with your child; it means they may need additional support, just as they would if they were struggling academically or physically.

False Stigma

We want families to know that seeking counseling or therapy is not a sign of weakness. There is often a stigma associated with mental health services, but the reality is that many children, adolescents, and adults benefit from professional support at different points in their lives. Asking for help is a sign of strength, self-awareness, and care.

Supporting students is most effective when families and schools work together. If you have concerns about your child’s emotional well-being, please reach out to us. Early communication allows us to collaborate, provide appropriate supports, and connect families with helpful resources.

Berlin Middle High School Counseling Center

Our school counselors are available to support students and families. Please click on to the attachment to find out more information about how we can support you.

[BMHS Counseling Center](#)

In addition, we have included two informational articles with this newsletter that guide recognizing stress and trauma in children and ways families can offer support at home.

[Trauma and Family](#)

[What is Child Traumatic Stress?](#)

We are also happy to assist families in connecting with local counseling and mental health resources when additional support is needed.

At Berlin Middle High School, our goal is to educate the whole child: academically, socially, and emotionally. Please know that you are not alone, and we are here to support both students and families every step of the way.

Upcoming Events & Info

Character Education Assembly

Monday, February 2, 7:45 a.m.

WEB/LINK Program

- Friday, February 6
- The school day will begin in homerooms
- Student workshops will run from 7:30 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.

Additional scheduling information will be shared with families before the event.



Circulate the love Please give blood.

American Red Cross

Blood Drive
Berlin Seventh Day Baptist Church
 41 N Main St., Berlin, NY 12022
 Fellowship Hall
 Sponsored by: Berlin Central School's National Honor Society

Monday, February 2, 2026
 2:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

To schedule your appointment, see a member of the National Honor Society, call 1-800-RED-CROSS, visit www.redcrossblood.org, download the Red Cross App, or see a Sponsor Code Berlin.

Help a graduating senior earn a scholarship by donating at this drive!

redcrossblood.org | 1-800-RED-CROSS | 1-800-733-2767

Attention Class of 2028!

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

The Anxious Generation

How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Creating an Epidemic of Mental Illness

Jonathan Haidt

Join the **Berlin Community Book Club!**

We will be reading **The Anxious Generation** by Jonathan Haidt

Book Talk
 April 1, 2026 at 6 pm
 Berlin Elementary School Library

Please fill out the interest form and learn more by visiting: <https://forms.gle/3Pdp0tKMsxvde18> or scanning the QR Code.

GSA Club meets monthly at the Middle High School. Everyone is welcome - new members and current members!!! See Ms. Monty or Mrs. Roth if you are interested!

Attention Class of 2026!

Berlin 2026 Capital Project Community Survey Information

Please review the information provided in the survey and share your feedback. The Capital Survey will be open through February 4, 2026. Find the survey by scanning the QR code or visiting <https://forms.gle/8zq4qu4AYoRPMWp6>

February 24, 2026 - 7:15 pm - BMHS Auditorium
 BOE Capital Project Community Presentation
 Q&A session with survey results shared and stakeholders input and feedback discussed.

March 17, 2026 - 12pm - 9 pm - Berlin Elementary School
 Capital Project Vote

Click on an image and learn more!

The December Artist of the Month is.....

Lillian VonSchilgen
 (Grade 12)

Lillian truly brings it! With a zest for adventure, humor, and meaning in all that she creates, she is never content with simply finishing a project. Instead, she seeks out challenges and collaboration, always searching for answers and innovative ways to experiment. Her work clearly reflects her joy in the process—and in the journey of discovering new possibilities.

Congratulations, Lillian!

WINK WINTER SOCIAL!

The WEB and LINK Leaders at BMHS are excited to invite any 6th or 9th grade students to attend a winter social event, after school, on Wednesday 1/28 from 2:15-3:15!

ACTIVITIES OFFERED:
 *SNOWMAN CREATION STATION!
 **HOT COCOA & COLORING ROOM!
 **WINTER MOVIE ROOM

(ANY STUDENTS WISHING TO PARTICIPATE AT THE SNOWMAN STATION MUST HAVE APPROPRIATE CLOTHES AND CLEAR FOR OUTSIDE!)

Senior Reading Buddies at Berlin Elementary

Every Wednesday
 2:30 pm - 3:00 pm

Are you a senior interested in being part of the Senior Reading Buddies program or a BES teacher who would benefit from a Senior Reading Buddy?

Reach out to Anna Ward or Morgan Sharpe via school email or Schoology to learn more!

Helping to improve literacy skills while providing community service opportunities!

Berlin Unified Bowling

Registration Open on FamilyID

Berlin is excited to announce the addition of Unified Bowling, now available to students in grades 7-12. We look forward to offering this opportunity for students to come together, build connections, and experience the benefits of inclusive athletics.

Questions? Email Mrs. Reynolds mreynolds@berlincentral.org

Berlin Central School District Skating Party at Gupitll's Arena

Gupitll's Roller Skating Arena, Cohoes, NY
 February 17, 2026
 1 PM - 4 PM

RSVP BY February 11, 2026
 Tickets distributed to students February 13, 2026

Skate For Free - Entry Sponsored by the BCSD PTO
 \$5 skate rental fee not included

Questions Contact Courtney Sreka at msmccoy@bcpsd.com

MOUNTAIN MADNESS 2026
 FEBRUARY 1-5th

9:00 am
 BNL Modified Boys Basketball vs Hawthorne Valley

10:45 am
 BNL Modified Girls Basketball vs Hawthorne Valley

12:30 pm
 BNL Varsity Boys Basketball vs. Oppenheim - Ephratah St. Johnsville

2:00 pm
 BNL Varsity Girls Basketball vs. Oppenheim - Ephratah St. Johnsville

In Support of BCSD's Helping Hands

CANNED FOOD DRIVE

Saturday, January 31st from 9am to 4pm

With a donation to Helping Hands, a committee of teachers, faculty, and volunteers who support the students and families of BCSD, you receive FREE ADMISSION to MOUNTAIN MADNESS!

Admission is \$3 for adults and \$1 for children

**Dough, snacks, rice and chases, breakfast items, cake, pizza, and anything kid-friendly appreciated, no glass please!

Mrs. Honsinger's Health Class

Hygiene Closet Donation Drive

We are collecting any hygiene products or cash donations for kids who need a little help. All products must be unopened.

Donations will be collected during the Mountain Madness event on 1/31/26, please reach out to Mrs. Honsinger directly at honsinger@berlincentral.org if you would like to make donations outside of the event time. Thank you!

Grades 6–8 NYSED Testing Information

BMS Testing Dates

ELA Grades 6–8

April 22–23

Make-ups: April 24 and April 27

Math Grades 6–8

April 28–29

Make-ups: April 30 and May 1

Grade 8 Science

May 11

Make-ups: May 12 and May 13

Spring Testing Simulations (Grades 6–8)

To help students prepare for New York State testing, simulation sessions will take place during regular class periods. These sessions allow students to:

- Become familiar with the testing platform and tools
- Reduce test-related anxiety
- Practice stamina and testing procedures

Simulation Schedule

- Tuesday, January 27: ELA Grades 6–8
- Wednesday, January 28: Math Grades 6–8
- Friday, January 30: Grade 8 Science

Attendance Matters

Daily attendance is one of the strongest predictors of student success academically, socially, and emotionally. Our Attendance Committee, which includes teachers, counselors, and administrators, meets regularly to review data, reach out to families, and identify barriers that prevent students from attending school consistently. Together, we develop proactive plans to support students and help them re-engage before attendance issues become chronic.

This week, I met with a representative from the Rensselaer County Probation Office to discuss the pre-PINS (Person In Need of Supervision) process. This program allows us to partner with the county to support students who have accumulated 10 or more unexcused absences.

What Are PINS Services?

The **Person In Need of Supervision (PINS)** program provides early, supportive intervention for students who are struggling with school attendance, behavior, or other challenges affecting their success. It is coordinated through the **Rensselaer County Probation Office** in partnership with families and the school district.

When a student accumulates **10 or more unexcused absences** or repeatedly violates school rules, the school may begin the **pre-PINS process**. This is **not a punishment**; it's an opportunity to connect students and families with community resources before the issue escalates.

PINS services can include:

- Regular meetings with a probation officer or case manager to develop an attendance or behavior plan.
- Access to counseling, mentoring, and community programs.
- Family support services to address barriers such as transportation, mental health, or home difficulties.
- Coordination between the school, probation office, and family to monitor progress and celebrate improvement.

The goal of the PINS process is to **support, not penalize**. It's about ensuring that students receive the help they need to re-engage in school, succeed academically, and build positive routines.

If your child is absent for **excused reasons**, such as medical appointments or illness, please be sure to provide documentation. These absences are fully understood and recorded as excused.

Middle School Chromebook Process Update

Our **Chromebook Committee** has worked diligently to develop an updated Chromebook process for the middle school.

Mrs. Dunlop has experienced a significant increase in damaged student Chromebooks, which has been both costly and time-consuming. After reviewing usage patterns, we found that damage most often occurs in hallways, on buses, and at home.

New Chromebook Procedure

- Charging carts will be located in designated middle school classrooms
- Students will be assigned a **specific Chromebook for each class period**
- Chromebooks will remain in classrooms and will no longer travel home daily

All middle school Chromebooks will be reviewed during **February break**, and the new process will begin when students return.

Please note:

- This procedure **does not apply** to students whose **IEP or 504 plan requires individual Chromebook access**.

A detailed explanation of the process is available here:

[Community Letter Middle School Chromebook Process Update](#)

Thank you for your continued partnership, communication, and support as we work together to provide a safe, structured, and engaging learning environment for every Mountaineer.

**Together, we rise.
Warm regards,
Dave and Meghan**

Berlin High School Pops Concert

Wednesday, February 11th

6:00 pm

*Berlin Middle High School
Auditorium*

Snow Date Thursday 2/12



Connect With Us

Please make sure your email is up to date with our school messenger system for important messages.

District Calendar of Events

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

Mountaineer Website

www.berlincentral.org

Follow Us on Twitter and Facebook

[Follow us on Facebook](#)

[@BerlinCentralSchoolDistrict](#) or

https://x.com/BNL_MtnLions – BNL Athletics

Subscribe to Our YouTube Channels

[Communications BCSD YouTube channel](#)

[Streaming BCSD YouTube live streaming channel](#)

