



Berlin Middle High School

MOUNTAINEER COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

ACADEMICS

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September 13, 2026



PEOPLE HIGHER
BRIGHTER FUTURES
A STRONGER TOMORROW

A Great Start to the 2026–2027 School Year

Dear Mountaineer Community,

What a great first week of school.

There is always a special energy in a school building during the first few days of a new year. Students are reconnecting with friends, meeting new teachers, learning new routines, and settling back into the rhythm of school. After walking the halls, visiting classrooms, talking with students, and watching our staff work throughout the week, I am very pleased with the start we have had at Berlin Middle High School.

Most importantly, our students have been outstanding. They have returned with positive attitudes, and I have seen countless examples of students helping one another, interacting respectfully with adults, and simply enjoying being back together.

Our Town Hall: Lead the Climb

This past week, I had the opportunity to meet with our students during our opening Town Hall.

My message to them was pretty simple: the choices we make each day matter.

We talked about being positive, treating people with respect, making good decisions, taking responsibility for our actions, and understanding that each of us plays a role in determining the kind of school Berlin Middle High School will be.

I also reminded our students that some of the most important things that make someone successful require absolutely no talent—things like effort, attitude, being on time, being prepared, being kind, listening, working hard, and doing a little more than what is expected.

You don't have to be the smartest student, the best athlete, the most talented musician, or the most outgoing person in the room to make a difference. You simply have to make the decision to bring your best effort and attitude each day.

That is what being a Mountaineer means to me.

It isn't about being perfect. It is about continuing to move forward, supporting the people around you, and becoming a little better each day.



Attendance Matters

One of our continued priorities this year is student attendance.

There is simply no substitute for being in school.

When students miss school, they don't just miss assignments. They miss classroom discussions, instruction, opportunities to ask questions, conversations with teachers, group activities, relationships with classmates, and all of the little moments that make up a school experience.

Those missed opportunities add up.

We understand that students get sick and that families occasionally face circumstances that make an absence unavoidable.

We also understand that sometimes there may be other barriers that make getting to school difficult.

If that is happening, please communicate with us. We would much rather have a conversation with a family about how we can help than allow attendance concerns to grow.

Our message to students will remain consistent:

Be here. Be engaged. Be part of your school.

Every day matters.



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School Safety and Required Emergency Drills

I also want our families to understand why you will periodically receive notifications from us regarding emergency drills.

New York State requires schools to conduct emergency preparedness drills throughout the school year. These are not something unique to Berlin; they are requirements for schools across New York State.

The requirements are intentionally weighted toward the beginning of the school year so students and staff have opportunities to learn and practice our emergency procedures early.

September through December

Between September 1 and December 31, schools are required to conduct at least:

- 6 evacuation/fire drills
- 2 lockdown drills

January through the End of the School Year

During the remainder of the school year, schools must complete at least:

- 2 additional evacuation/fire drills
- 2 additional lockdown drills

Schools are also required to conduct an annual emergency dismissal drill.

The purpose of these drills is straightforward: practice and preparation. We want students and staff to know what to do and where to go should an actual emergency ever occur.

As part of our required evacuation drills, BMHS will conduct three fire drills this week:

- Monday, September 14
- Wednesday, September 16
- Friday, September 18

Our goal is to conduct every drill calmly, efficiently, and with as little disruption to instruction as possible. We take school safety seriously, while also recognizing the importance of conducting drills in a manner that is appropriate and reassuring for our students.

Our School Looks Fantastic

I want to take a moment to recognize our Buildings and Grounds Department.

The interior and exterior of Berlin Middle High School look fantastic.

A tremendous amount of work takes place during the summer that most people never see. Classrooms are cleaned and prepared, floors are finished, grounds are maintained, repairs are completed, and countless other projects have to come together before students walk through our doors. Their hard work was obvious on opening day, and they should be very proud of how our school looked when our students returned.

Thank you to everyone who helped prepare BMHS for the new year.

Transportation: An Outstanding Start

Transportation also deserves tremendous recognition.

Getting hundreds of students to and from school safely—particularly during the first few days when everyone is adjusting to routes, times, and routines—is no small task.

Our Transportation Department had an outstanding opening week. Their preparation, patience, and professionalism helped make our transition back to school incredibly smooth.

Thank you to our drivers, monitors, transportation staff, and everyone behind the scenes who made that happen.

Food Services Came Ready!

I am not sure anyone told our Food Services Department that the first week was supposed to be a warm-up.

They certainly didn't hold back.

Our students were treated to some terrific meals during the opening week, and I think calling some of them gourmet school lunches would be completely appropriate!

Beyond serving great food, our Food Services staff help create a welcoming environment for students every day. We appreciate the care and effort they put into feeding our students and starting the year on such a positive note.

Chromebooks for High School Students

Our high school students received their Chromebooks this past week.

The middle school classrooms have the chromebooks in them for student use.



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Sixth Grade Families — How Are You Doing?

I have been asking our sixth graders how they are doing, but I also want to ask their parents: How are you doing?

Moving from elementary school to middle school is a big transition, not only for students, but for families.

New teachers. New classrooms. Changing classes. Lockers. Different expectations. Older students. More independence.

That is a lot of change.

So far, I have been very pleased with how our sixth graders have made the transition. They are learning their way around, developing routines, and becoming more comfortable each day.

If something doesn't seem right, you have a question, or you simply want to check in, please don't hesitate to contact the sixth-grade team, our school counselors, or me.

We want our sixth-grade families to feel connected to us throughout this transition.

Seniors: Your Year Is Beginning

To our Class of 2027, this is finally your year.

Our seniors will be hearing from their class advisors, Mrs. Hayes and Mrs. Murphy (Marbot), this week regarding senior privileges and information about receiving and painting their senior parking spaces.

There will be plenty of important information coming your way throughout the year.

Seniors, enjoy these traditions. You've earned the opportunity to experience them. At the same time, remember that being a senior means something. Our younger students are watching you. You have an opportunity to set the tone for our school and leave BMHS better than you found it.

Make the most of it.

Thank You for Supporting Our Expectations

I also want to thank our students and families for supporting two expectations we discussed before the school year began: energy drinks and electronic devices.

Our students did a very good job during the first week adhering to our expectations regarding both.

That does not happen without support from home.

We know changes in expectations can take some adjustment, but our students have responded positively. The result has been fewer distractions and a greater focus on learning, relationships, and being present during the school day.

Thank you for reinforcing these expectations with your children. Your partnership makes a difference.

A Strong Beginning

The first week of school does not determine how the entire year will go, but it certainly establishes a foundation.

And I like the foundation we are building.

Our students have brought great energy into the building. Our teachers and staff have worked incredibly hard. Our classrooms are active.

Our hallways feel positive. Our facilities look fantastic. Transportation got us off to a great start. Food Services came out swinging. And, most importantly, our students seem genuinely happy to be back.

There will certainly be challenges during the year. Every school has them. What matters is how we respond to those challenges and whether we continue to work together on behalf of our students.

That is where our families and community are so important.

Thank you for trusting us with your children. Thank you for supporting our teachers and staff. Thank you for reinforcing our expectations at home.

And thank you for continuing to make Berlin Middle High School a special place.

We have a lot to look forward to this year.

Be positive. Be present. Take care of one another. And Lead the Climb.

I hope everyone has a wonderful week.

Warm regards,

Dave

David S. Bernsley

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Principal