

BHPS BUZZ

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Message from the Superintendent

We have had a wonderful opening to the school year! I attended Back to School Nights and was so impressed by the support our parents showed our teachers and administrators. We are stronger together and it was wonderful to witness how we continue to forge a stronger partnership with open communication for the academic and personal growth of our students. I conducted my September Learning Walks at each school, and enjoyed the opportunity to engage with the students, asking questions about their learning and learning from them. Students are excited and articulate in conveying their learning and it is wonderful to see their enthusiasm, confidence, and pride in what they are doing!

Warmly,
Dr. Kim Feltre, Superintendent of Schools

UPCOMING EVENTS

✱ 10/5 - 10/9 Week of Respect

✱ 10/5 College and Career Fair
Governor Livingston High School



Welcome to Our New Administrators

Visit ['Meet Our New Admins'](#) to read about a few of our newest BHPS Administrators.



District Spotlight

VISION - LEADING OUR LEARNING

We are pleased to report that 100% of school leaders have completed relational leadership training this summer. Additionally, the family and community communication survey was sent out and we solicited feedback through September 18th. Progress on our goals can be followed on the updated [Strategic Planning webpage](#).

I want to take this opportunity to further explain the five year Academic Excellence and Lifelong Learning Goal of the strategic plan. While student proficiency is the ultimate goal, the strategic plan doesn't explicitly mandate a yearly percentage increase in literacy and math scores for several reasons. One is we are looking at a fundamental shift from chasing a number (proficiency score) to systematically re-engineering the daily classroom experience which will organically foster measurable academic excellence across all content areas. The strategic plan methodically upgrades how children learn and how teachers teach. When we lift the quality of daily instruction, student proficiency on state assessments in ELA and math rises naturally as a direct byproduct.

We want more than just an increase in ELA and math proficiency scores; we want excellent instruction across the curriculum and internal measures of student proficiency, in addition to the NJSLA scores. Traditional schooling has often treated students as passive consumers of information, such as listening to a lecture and memorizing facts to pass a multiple-choice exam. State assessments do not test passive memorization; they test critical thinking, problem-solving, and the ability to apply knowledge to unfamiliar scenarios. Work force proficiencies also expect these skills. The strategic plan transitions the district from teacher-delivered lessons to student-owned inquiry. When students learn to formulate their own questions, conduct independent research, and solve complex, real-world problems, they develop the exact cognitive stamina required to excel on state assessments.

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When reporting annual NJSLA scores to the community, the district can explicitly tie performance trends back to key structural drivers in the strategic plan. For instance: Tier 1 Instructional Redesign via Universal Design for Learning (UDL) focuses on designing classrooms so that high-level, rigorous support is automatically built into the standard daily curriculum for all children, rather than waiting for students to struggle before providing help. UDL baseline initiatives dismantle structural learning barriers by design, raising the floor and the ceiling for everyone simultaneously. This results in gains across broad subgroups (including general education, special education, and multilingual learners) and narrows the achievement gap between subgroups.

To address academic rigor & instructional growth (Danielson Domains 2b & 3b), we will be providing professional coaching to teachers to maximize high-level questioning and academic discussion in the classroom. High proficiency scores directly correlate with classroom environments where students do the heavy lifting. Highlighting this metric demonstrates that investments in teacher professional development are translating into smarter classroom discourse and will lead to an increase in ELA and math proficiency scores.

Updating math and literacy curriculum maps to include real-world application projects and requiring authentic performance tasks annually per grade span will modernize the curriculum. State standardized tests require students to interpret reading passages and solve multi-step mathematical problems in context. Spotlighting that classrooms have implemented these rigorous, multi-week cooperative inquiry projects will prepare students to tackle the complex open-ended items on state assessments.

By shifting to "With the Student" growth data tracking, we will train school staff and students to look at personal achievement data together. Teachers will shift from reporting grades to using assessments to monitor and report student progress. Students will move from blindly receiving grades and report cards to actively analyzing their mistakes and setting their own learning targets, aligning these targets with the standards and course learning goals. This builds a "metacognitive mirror" where students understand exactly which skills they lack and what they need to study. Pointing to high levels of student-led goal setting demystifies standardized testing, turning it into a tool for personal accountability rather than a source of anxiety. When teachers engage in ongoing conversations with students about their performance, the classroom becomes a learning partnership.

Focusing on executive functioning & learning readiness (Goal 1 of the Strategic Plan) is a precursor to optimizing learning time. Teaching children emotional regulation and focus strategies (like the Zones of Regulation) reduces classroom transition chaos and behavioral disruptions, thereby increasing time on task and active learning. A well-regulated brain is biochemically primed to absorb data and execute complex tasks under assessment conditions. Furthermore, reclaiming lost transition time unlocks hours of pure instructional and practicing time in literacy and mathematics over the course of a school year.

As administrators, we worked long and hard to create a viable and attainable action plan that stretches everyone's learning to benefit the students, focusing on promoting academic excellence. The academic excellence and lifelong learning goal has the greatest number of action steps for the next five years. We discussed state testing and proficiency scores and determined that rather than setting an arbitrary numerical goal that simply measures a single test on a single day, the strategic plan's goals methodically upgrade how children learn and how teachers teach every single day. We want to continue striving for academic excellence beyond attaining the targeted proficiency scores in ELA and math. Hence, the intentional focus on specific action steps to promote academic excellence for all.

REFERENDUM 2026

INVESTED TO INCLUDE, INSPIRE,
AND EMPOWER

REFERENDUM 2026 PROJECT UPDATE:

New PA systems have been installed at Governor Livingston, Columbia Middle School, and Thomas P. Hughes. All four elementary schools now have identical headend systems, installed between January 2024 and the present. While much of the existing elementary school wiring and speakers were retained, the GL and CMS systems are entirely new, including speakers and cabling. The clocks at CMS and MP were also replaced.

Installation of the new Meraki security cameras is expected to be completed by the end of October.

Capital projects this summer included a new playground at MKM, new tire swings at MP, GL Blue Gym flooring resurfacing, refinishing and graphics.

Please see the latest [Referendum Presentation](#) for additional details.

GROWING TOGETHER, EXPANDING POSSIBILITIES

Professional Learning: Growing Together Around Our Strategic Plan

This year, Berkeley Heights Public Schools is taking a more connected approach to professional learning, one that brings our Strategic Plan to life in classrooms across the district. Our professional learning system provides staff with meaningful opportunities to grow, collaborate, and explore practices aligned with our district priorities. Through districtwide learning, school- and department-based opportunities, collaboration with colleagues, and ongoing coaching and support, educators can personalize their professional growth while remaining connected to our shared goals. For students, this means classrooms where teachers are continually refining their practice, sharing what works, and finding new ways to engage and support every learner. By investing in our educators, we continue to strengthen learning experiences for every student.

Building Strong Readers and Writers in Grades K–5

Our elementary classrooms are beginning an exciting new chapter in literacy instruction with the K–5 rollout of Readers and Writers Workshop and Units of Study. Teachers participated in dedicated professional learning to prepare for the new programming, with a focus on creating classrooms where students read widely, write authentically, think deeply, and develop their own identities as readers and writers. Students will experience more opportunities to engage with meaningful texts, make choices in their reading and writing, talk about their thinking, and receive targeted instruction and feedback from their teachers. The learning doesn't stop with the initial training, ongoing instructional coaching and collaborative learning opportunities are scheduled throughout the year to support teachers as they bring the new program to life. This sustained approach helps ensure strong, consistent literacy experiences for students across all of our elementary schools.

Taking Math to the Next Level: Multivariable Calculus at GLHS

Governor Livingston High School is expanding opportunities for students to pursue advanced mathematics with the addition of Multivariable Calculus! This new course provides students who have completed the traditional calculus sequence with an opportunity to continue challenging themselves through college-level mathematical concepts, including functions of several variables and three-dimensional applications of calculus. For students who are passionate about mathematics, the course provides an opportunity to go further while still in high school and continue building the problem-solving and analytical skills they will carry into college and beyond. This addition reflects our commitment to creating pathways that allow students to continue growing, exploring their interests, and taking on new academic challenges throughout their high school experience.



Berkeley Heights Public Schools recently conducted its 2026–27 District Communication Survey to gather meaningful feedback from parents, guardians, and staff regarding how school news, updates, and essential information are shared across the community. The initiative aimed to assess current communication practices, evaluate the clarity and accessibility of existing channels, and identify opportunities to further strengthen the connection between home and school.

Community engagement was strong; approximately 481 families, nearly 31% of all households across the district, participated in the survey. Feedback reflected broad and balanced representation from every school, led by high participation at William Woodruff School (41.2%), Thomas P. Hughes Elementary (41.0%), Mary Kay McMillin Early Childhood Center (36.7%), and Mountain Park Elementary (29.7%). Secondary school families also contributed substantial input, with Columbia Middle School reaching a 30.6% response rate and Governor Livingston High School recording 24.9%, offering vital perspectives on parent portals, academic reporting, and secondary activities.

Overall sentiment remained decidedly positive, with families rating their general satisfaction with district communications at an average of 3.86 out of 5. Respondents highlighted direct emails from the district, schools, and classroom teachers, alongside official school websites and parent portals, as their most trusted and preferred channels for critical updates. Community members also noted key areas for future refinement, such as streamlining digital platforms to prevent information overload, improving the timeliness of activity and schedule announcements, and making school resources easier to locate.

District leaders and building administrators are using this data and open-ended feedback to refine communication protocols and enhance home-school partnerships. BHPS extends its sincere appreciation to all community members who took the time to share their voices and support our schools.