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# THE FOCUS

THE OFFICIAL BYRAM HILLS HIGH SCHOOL NEWSLETTER



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## NATIONAL MERIT SEMIFINALISTS

Congratulations to the following students who have been named as National Merit Semifinalists this year: **Samara Brown, Aaron Lestz, Daniel Ndocaj, Alexander Woodworth, and Yicheng Yang**. These students are recognized for their exceptional academic achievement and were chosen from more than 1.6 million high school students in 22,000 schools nationwide. Their selection as National Merit Semifinalists places them among the top 1% of all high school seniors in the country. This prestigious recognition highlights their outstanding performance on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) and opens doors to various educational opportunities. Congratulations once again to these outstanding students!



Left to right - Samara, Aaron, Daniel, Alexander, and Yicheng.

## BHHS ARTISTS SHINE WITH ALL-STATE HONORS



Left to right - Aaron, Valentina, and Morgan.

Three Byram Hills High School seniors have earned prestigious All-State honors from the New York State School Music Association. They were selected from a pool of thousands of students who auditioned at music festivals across the state in the spring. **Aaron Lestz**, a talented trombonist, secured a spot in the All-State Symphonic Band and will showcase his skills at the upcoming NYSSMA All-State Conference in Rochester, New York, this fall. Additionally, **Morgan Hecht**, an alto, and **Valentina Marino**, a soprano, were chosen as alternates for the All-State Mixed Chorus. The All-State NYSSMA performances are scheduled for December 3rd at Kodak Hall, Eastman Theatre, University of Rochester.

Three Byram Hills High School seniors have earned prestigious All-State honors from the New York State School Music Association. They were selected from a pool of thousands of students who auditioned at

## CHANGEMAKER NIKOLET VATAJ'S INSPIRING INITIATIVE

Byram Hills senior and Global Scholar Changemaker **Nikolet Vataj** has taken a heartfelt initiative to address the educational challenges underprivileged children face in Kenya. Inspired by hearing from BH retiree Ken Kaplan's experiences in Kibera, she organized the "Spike for Scholars Volleyball Tournament" to raise funds for scholarships, enabling impoverished children to access K-12 education. Combining her passion for this cause with her love for volleyball, she rallied participants to donate \$20 each to raise \$1,000. Remarkably, the tournament exceeded this target, collecting \$1,600. The surplus will support various school programs, including funding the Chess Team's trip to nationals.

Nikolet also reconnected with her teacher's organization, Crossing Thresholds, and engaged with students and faculty from Facing the Future School in Kibera via Zoom. She crafted lesson plans and provided free tutoring sessions for 7th-grade students, fostering empathy and communication skills. Nikolet plans to establish a mentorship program and hopes to make Spike for Scholars an annual event, demonstrating her commitment to educational access for all.



## POSITIVE COACHING ALLIANCE ASSEMBLIES

We are excited to announce some exciting developments for the upcoming academic year. First and foremost, we are thrilled to inform you that all high school students will participate in a special assembly on September 21st focused on making smart decisions as young adults online and on social platforms. In today's digital age, it's essential for our students to navigate the online world wisely and responsibly. This assembly aims to equip our students with the knowledge and tools necessary to make informed choices while engaging with the digital realm.

In addition to this crucial educational initiative, Byram Hills High School has forged a significant partnership with the Positive Coaching Alliance (PCA), a respected national non-profit organization dedicated to providing all youth and high school athletes with a positive, character-building sports experience. This partnership will undoubtedly enhance the overall athletic experience at our school, promoting values such as teamwork, sportsmanship, and personal growth among our student-athletes.

Collaborating with PCA will bring valuable resources and support to our athletic programs, coaches, and athletes. Byram Hills High School is committed to fostering not only athletic excellence but also the development of well-rounded, resilient, and responsible young individuals. We believe that the Positive Coaching Alliance's expertise will contribute significantly to achieving this goal.

## DRIVER EDUCATION INFORMATION

Our Driver Education Program will start on October 1st and continue until February 3rd. To sign up and reserve a spot for the semester, students and their families should fill out [this application](#) and return both the application and check to the Main Office.

Please call the Main Office with any questions.

## BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHTS

Our final Back-To-School Night will be held on Wednesday, September 20th (N-Z), starting at 6:30 pm for all parents. The evening begins with an assembly in the theater, and then parents will follow their student's schedule of classes during the evening. The program is designed to let parents meet teachers and hear a brief introduction to the classes. Parents can pick up their child's schedule in the cafeteria at the beginning of the evening. This night does not include time during the program for individual conferences. However, parents are welcome to follow up with telephone conferences or meetings.

## HOMECOMING/SPIRIT WEEK 2023

Spirit Week will run from Monday, October 2nd through Saturday, October 8th this year. A complete schedule of Spirit Week events will be sent out prior to October 2nd. The members of the Grade Activity Board will meet during the first week of school to decide on the themes for each day of Spirit Week.

## DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT

As of July 2012, New York State's Dignity for All Students Act went into effect. This law prohibits harassment and discrimination of students based upon a person's perceived or actual race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religious practice, sexual orientation, gender or sex. Instances of this type are never tolerated in the Byram Hills School District and we have developed extensive programs and structures to promote a sustainable, positive school environment. For more information on our Bullying Preventions initiatives, [CLICK HERE](#).

Furthermore, the new law supports our already thorough disciplinary process, as described in our recently revised [CODE OF CONDUCT](#). Our faculty and staff received thorough training on the Dignity Act and we continue to foster an environment focused on our character education principles: respectful dialogue; respect for self and others; and service and kindness. The DASA Coordinator for the HS is Ms. Albert.

## AUP UPDATE

All Students must sign new AUP's (Acceptable Use Policy) every year, which includes the 'Students and Personal Electronic Devices Policy'. Any student who does not have an AUP on file as of September 30 will have their Google and network accounts locked until the form has been turned in. If your child needs a form, please have them stop by the Tech Center office to pick one up. Please refer to the Board of Education Policy #4526 for more information.

## AUP UPDATE, CON'T

The AUP is not signed by parents as part of the Emergency Contact Update. Parents are provided links to the AUP and Code of Conduct so they can discuss it with their child.

[Technology and Network Acceptable Use and Personal Privacy \(Policy #4526\)](#)

[High School Code of Conduct](#)

## CHROMEBOOKS UPDATE

The Technology Department has been issuing Chromebooks since our opening on September 5th. If your child still needs a Chromebook or has an issue with it that needs to be addressed, please email Peter Lichten ([PLichten@byramhills.net](mailto:PLichten@byramhills.net)), our Building Technology Coordinator, to set up an appointment for your student to meet with him.

## THANK YOU, PTSA AND BHEF

The PTSA and the BHEF are two organizations that support our work every day and help shape the school experience through volunteerism, fundraising, and collaboration. Please watch these two videos that highlight each organization.



## SOFT SKILLS

Each month throughout the school year, the high school faculty and staff will focus on helping our students develop and strengthen an important soft skill. Studies have shown that “non-academic” or soft skills play a critical role in the future success of students. We are asking that parents and guardians partner with us each month to encourage the development of each new soft skill.

The soft skill for September is **Resiliency**: The ability to react positively when facing a setback, crisis, or trauma. The American Psychological Association has a terrific primer on developing resiliency which can be accessed by [CLICKING HERE](#).

CLICK HERE FOR  
**ATHLETICS**  
EVENTS & GAMES

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### Friday, September 15th

- No Athletic Games/Practices End by 5 pm
- Rosh Hashanah Begins at Sundown

### Saturday, September 16th

- No Athletic Games or Practices

### Sunday, September 17th

- Jamie's Run for Love @ Wampus Brook Park 10 am
- BHPA Carnival/Cider and Donut Festival to Follow

### Monday, September 18th

- Gr. 9 Parent Mtg. with School Counseling 7 pm

### Tuesday, September 19th

- Principal's Coffee 9 am
- Board of Ed. Mtg. 7:30 pm

### Wednesday, September 20th

- Back-to-School Night 6:30 pm (N-Z)
- PTSA Exec Mtg. @ DO 9:30 am

### Thursday, September 21st

- College Admissions & Financial Aid Workshop 7 pm

### Friday, September 22nd

- Registration Deadline for 10/28 ACT

### Monday, September 25th

- No Athletic Games or Practices
- Yom Kippur - Schools & Offices Closed

### Thursday, September 28th

- C.H.I.L.D. Event 7 pm

### Friday, September 29th

- Last Day for Schedule Changes

### Saturday, September 30th

- Senior Portraits
- Armonk Outdoor Art Show 10 am - 5 pm

# BHHS SEPTEMBER 2023 CALENDAR

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					1	2
						Regular Athletic Schedule
3	4	5-1	6-2	7-3	8-4	9
	Regular Athletic Schedule Labor Day - Offices Closed	First Day of School for Students		Registration Deadline for 10/7 SAT		Senior Portraits ACT
10	11-5	12-6	13-7	14-8	15-1	16
			School Counseling Discussion Group 9 am BHEF Board of Directors Mtg. @ DO 7 pm	Back-to-School Night 6:30 pm (A-M)	No Athletic Games/Practices End by 5 pm Rosh Hashanah Begins at Sundown	No Athletic Games or Practices
17	18-2	19-3	20-4	21-5	22-6	23
Jamie's Run for Love @ Wampus Brook Park 10 am BHPA Carnival/Cider and Donut Festival to Follow	Gr. 9 Parents Mtg. with School Counseling 7 pm	Principal's Coffee 9 am Board of Ed. Mtg. 7:30 pm	Back-to-School Night 6:30 pm (N-Z) PTSA Exec Mtg. @ DO 9:30 am	College Admissions & Financial Aid Workshop 7 pm	Registration Deadline for 10/28 ACT	Regular Athletic Schedule
24	25-7	26-8	27-1	28-2	29-3	30
	No Athletic Games or Practices Yom Kippur Schools & Offices Closed			C.H.I.L.D. Evening Event 7 pm	Last Day for Schedule Changes	Senior Portraits Armonk Outdoor Art Show 10 am - 5 pm