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TECH FORWARD

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COMPREHENSIVE, CUTTING-EDGE TECHNOLOGY CURRICULUM SETS BYRAM HILLS APART

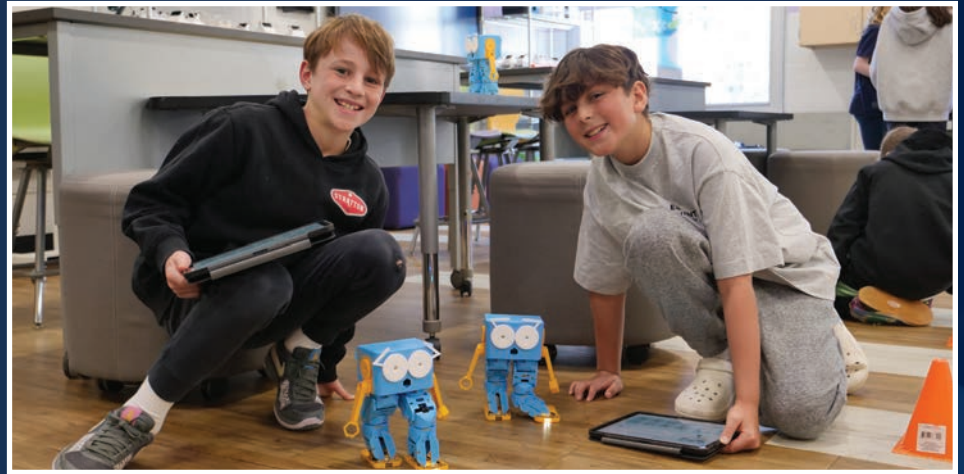
Coman Hill Elementary School students built Lego objects including a swinging golf club and a spinning pinball game, added programmable elements and wrote code to put the machines into motion. At Wampus Elementary School, a student who loved to play music programmed a robot to play “Eruption” by Van Halen.

H.C. Crittenden Middle School students designed and 3D-printed cars and raced them to see which one went the farthest. Students at Byram Hills High School created and coded a robot to take out a trash can and bring it back to a set position.

These feats were accomplished through Byram Hills’ pioneering K-12 technology curriculum, which was redesigned 15 years ago to move beyond the basics and encompass not only the latest in coding and robotics but also important problem-solving skills and digital wellness strategies.

“Our students enjoy a comprehensive, flexible and innovative technology program that prepares them to be strong technical thinkers and leaders in the tech industry,” said Deputy Superintendent Dr. Tim Kaltenecker, who helped revamp the curriculum.

“The program builds in complexity so students become better problem solvers in all content areas and develop a solid foundation that may



inspire them to explore engineering, computer science or other technology areas in college or their careers,” he added.

When the curriculum was revised, the goal was to teach students the skills and traits needed for the rapidly changing world of technology. The District is succeeding through its expansive, hands-on, integrated model, which has drawn praise from tech experts and officials in other districts.

The curriculum provides students in kindergarten through eighth grade with a solid foundation in technology skills they can adapt to future applications. Digital wellness and problem-solving strategies are embedded in each grade’s curriculum as well.

“We have a pioneering approach designed to make sure our students can thrive in the digital future,” said the District’s Director of Technology and Professional Learning, Kevin Guidotti. “Our focus is on teaching core skills steeped in design thinking that are applicable to real-world problems while also making sure our students have a healthy balance with technology.”

At Coman Hill, students are introduced to coding and use fun, web-based, drag-and-drop block coding to program robots. Students learn how to log in to a Chromebook, use a web browser and are taught that they leave a digital footprint behind when they go online.

Wampus students progress to more complex coding tasks and use different types of robots. They also learn to use 3D printers to make creative projects. The idea of the design thinking problem-solving approach is introduced.

At H.C. Crittenden Middle School, students continue coding and start

building robots, and apply design thinking to solve problems in several projects. They also create functional arcade games and learn about the limitations of generative artificial intelligence.

Byram Hills High School students can continue their technology studies through electives in computer science, robotics and engineering. The robotics program features three semester-long classes where students work and learn together in a collaborative, project-based environment. Students build, program and drive robots through increasingly difficult challenges and competitions.

Students benefit from modernized technology classrooms and an adaptable curriculum that is updated annually to ensure it remains relevant and challenging. “We have amazing faculty who are constantly participating in professional learning and refining our curriculum,” Dr. Kaltenecker said.

It’s clear from a visit to a technology classroom that students are enjoying the lessons. “Our curriculum is engaging and exciting for students,” Dr. Kaltenecker said. “They are learning the skills for a wide spectrum of studies beyond high school and career opportunities, including jobs that have yet to be invented.”





CELERY SLIDES AND BROCCOLI BUMPS: COMAN HILL P.E. CLASSES ARE A FUN WAY TO MOVE

When it's time for physical education class at Coman Hill Elementary School, the music is pumping and the students are a burst of activity. They are focused, ready to be active and have a blast with their classmates, all while learning the basic foundational skills of physical fitness and sports.

The classes, taught by Joseph Grippi, John McNamara and John Schmitt, provide an engaging, comprehensive curriculum that is fun and designed to help young students develop a lifelong love of movement and physical activity.

There's no doubt that the students love physical education class.

"The students walk down the hallway and the second they come into the gym, they're ready to move," Mr. Schmitt said. "It's like a switch turns on and they enter a different mode of excitement and wanting to play."



Mr. Grippi added: "The moment they walk in, their eyes light up and they're ready to go."

And there's so much to do. The school year begins with activities that help young students with spatial awareness. They learn to safely control their bodies and find their own space as they move around the gym.

The students learn movements that can take them places, like running, skipping, hopping, leaping and galloping. They perform fitness moves in fun ways, by doing broccoli bumps (knee to elbow), sausage squats and mountain climbers known as celery slides. There are situps, jumping jacks and pushups, too.

Physical education classes also offer instruction in skills needed to play sports, like throwing and catching a ball, kicking a ball and handling a basketball.

"While skills like throwing and catching may seem very simple, this is a foundational period and they'll take these skills with them to Wampus and some will go on to play high school athletics," Mr. Schmitt said. "This is where they're starting to learn these basic skills."

A fall highlight is a huge game of fitness Monopoly, when several classes are combined and the whole gym is opened up to become a giant game board with each square posing a different fitness challenge at one of 20 stations.

During a physical education class this winter, young students were working

hard in the tumbling/gymnastics unit, another student favorite. They climbed up and over the Mountain, flipped over the horizontal bar, slid across a low bench and hung upside down from an apparatus called the Beast.

Students also enjoy the spring bowling unit. To help keep students engaged, they all have jobs. While one bowls, other students are pinsetters and ball-getters, and they learn to keep score.

Students practice problem-solving and collaboration as they play games in small groups, and learn social skills like lining up properly, playing nicely and showing good sportsmanship. The units become more challenging as students progress through the grades, and the activities are always adapted so all students achieve their own success.

While physical education is a break from the classroom routine and a great way for students to let their energy out, the teachers incorporate math and reading into their activities. They encourage the students to read the instructions on the fitness Monopoly board or may ask them to add the number of exercises they are doing on each side of the body.

"We engage them in ways that strengthen their physical, cognitive, and social and emotional learning skills," Mr. Grippi said. "In P.E. class, students get to move their bodies in ways they don't in the classroom or other specials, and they really love being here."

AT WAMPUS, BOBCAT AMBASSADORS SHARE PASSIONS AND POSITIVE CHARACTER TRAITS

What role does cooperation play in the water pollution problem? How can we use empathy to increase social awareness? What does it take to be a good leader? How does being respectful benefit our school community?

Students at Wampus Elementary School took on these weighty questions through the Bobcat Ambassador leadership program. The student ambassadors connect issues and ideas they are passionate about with one of the positive traits they learn in Character Strong, the social and emotional learning curriculum.

The young leaders share their research with classmates in different ways: Fifth graders present to the entire 500-member student body during community meetings, fourth graders share with third grade classrooms and third graders create digital slides displayed throughout the school.

“Our Bobcat Ambassadors are role models,” said Assistant Principal Leisa Palmer, who runs the program. “They are practicing leadership and building speaking and listening skills while teaching their peers about important topics and traits. By helping these positive character traits become further ingrained in our school culture, their work strengthens our Wampus community. Students in each grade level are excited about the role they play in spreading a positive message.”

Students sign up to be Bobcat Ambassadors and their applications are reviewed by Ms. Palmer and

their classroom teacher before they are approved. They must be up-to-date on their schoolwork, agree to practice good citizenship at school and commit to completing the work needed for their project. That means dedicating lunch and recess once a week for about six weeks to work with

Two fifth grade ambassadors said although their projects required a lot of work and they were nervous to speak to a large audience, they felt proud.

“It was really fun to work on your project for months and share it with

the entire school,” said Timothy Rabbah, whose presentation was about personal responsibility. “Kids are used to hearing adults speak to them, but when kids present to other kids, I feel like it gives a different perspective.”

Anna Ling, who presented with two friends about water pollution and cooperation, said she was nervous at first, especially because “there were 1,000 eyes” staring at her. But, she

said it was nice to see her friends in the audience cheering her on.

“After I did it, I felt really good about myself and I was proud of myself,” Anna said. “It was a fun but hard process, but it was worth it in the end.”

She added: “I get to be a role model and help other people be their best self.”

Ms. Palmer said the fall ambassadors did an amazing job.

“They stood in front of 500 peers and presented their information with age-appropriate eloquence, and I could see the growth in their confidence,” she said. “They now understand they have a powerful voice. It’s one thing to be inspired but it’s another thing to inspire, and that’s just what they did.”



Fifth grade Bobcat Ambassadors presented their projects during a schoolwide community meeting in the fall and received enthusiastic applause from their classmates.

Ms. Palmer, school counselor Annie Schmitt and classroom aide Kaitlin McLynn.

Twelve fourth and fifth graders participated in the fall and more than 50 students in all three grades participated in the winter session. In the spring, students from both groups will visit second graders at Coman Hill Elementary School to teach them about Character Strong and the expectations for being a Wampus student.

At a community meeting in the fall, fifth graders stepped up to the microphone as students from every grade sat before them in the cafeteria. The ambassadors outlined their issue, offered definitions, illustrated their ideas with photos on a giant screen and included audience participation. The excitement was palpable as they all drew enthusiastic applause.

H.C.C. EIGHTH GRADERS CONSTRUCT CREATIVE GAMES THAT DELIGHT THE WINTER FESTIVAL CROWD

They brainstormed and built. They painted and problem-solved. They tested and refined. And finally, after several weeks of work, the eighth graders at H.C. Crittenden Middle School had finished creating their original arcade games and were ready for the Winter Festival.

The event, held after school on Jan. 24, was a lively, community-wide afternoon of fun and games at H.C.C. that supported the annual eighth grade trip to Washington, D.C.

The students, who made their games in technology class with teacher Danielle Brooks, were on hand to run them at the Winter Festival. They explained the rules and cheered on the younger players from Coman Hill and Wampus elementary schools and H.C.C.

“The eighth graders did an amazing job,” Ms. Brooks said. “They really enjoyed operating their games because they saw kids playing them and having fun, which was very rewarding for them.”

For the project, students were asked to take an element from a sport, a carnival game and a board game and create something new to play using cardboard and other materials. They also had to rely on their earlier technology skills and use the laser cutter or 3D printer (or both) to produce parts for their game.

The result was a gym full of colorful, imaginative, one-of-a-kind games that remixed sports including soccer, basketball and badminton, carnival games like ring toss and skee-ball, and board games including Clue, Boggle and Battleship, that young students had a blast playing.

With careful collaboration and planning, H.C.C. was able to modify students’ technology schedules to allow all eighth graders to participate and build

their game in time for the event.

The project involved the design thinking process, working through a creative idea and refining it until it worked. It was also a reminder of the creativity that can be found in technology.

“Through this assignment, students realized they can be engineers, they can be the designer who creates new things, and they don’t have to rely on other people,” Ms. Brooks said. “To me, that is really important.”

The students enjoyed the hands-on project and the freedom to create. They loved watching their games in action and felt good supporting the class trip in the spring.

Eighth grader Sofia Occhino said it was rewarding to see her game being played. “It’s fun to see how people like it and how entertaining it is with everyone playing it,” she said.

Her classmate Wil Spiegelman said watching kids having fun with his soccer-Plinko-Clue game felt “really good, because all my time I put into it was worth it.”

As he was running a basketball-carnival leapfrog game, Grady Nenadich said: “I feel really excited because all this support is going to make our trip better,” he said. “I’m obviously super excited for that trip.”

Players won prizes and families enjoyed snacks and drinks as the community came together.

“The event gave the eighth graders a chance to be the teacher and to show off what they’ve been working on to their friends and family members,” Ms. Brooks said. “The younger students got a glimpse of what they can look forward to at the middle school. This event united the Byram Hills community in a fun, uplifting way.”



BYRAM HILLS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ARE OFF TO EUROPE THIS SUMMER!

Byram Hills High School students can now experience the wonder of international travel through school-sanctioned trips, starting this summer with a 12-day educational journey to Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany.

On the first trip, students will travel to Brussels, The Hague, Amsterdam and Berlin, touring the cities, visiting historical sites and museums and enjoying international culture and cuisine. The trip concludes in Berlin with a global leadership summit.

Byram Hills plans to offer a trip every summer. The 2026 trip will be to Japan.

“We’re so excited to offer this opportunity to our students and extend what they’re learning in the classrooms beyond our borders,” Principal Christopher Walsh said. “The trips allow us to step outside the Armonk community to learn about different parts of the world first-hand while reinforcing the leadership and global competency initiatives we are working on at school.”

Melissa Stahl, the Byram Hills World Languages and ENL Chairperson, organized the trip, run by EF Educational Tours. Ms. Stahl, who will attend as a chaperone, chose the European trip because of the summit.

“The trip offers the perfect blend that allows students to see the historical sites in old Europe, work with other students and apply what they learn at school to the real world,” she said. “This type of travel brings the classroom to life and creates lifelong learners.”

Highlights of the trip include visiting European Union buildings in Brussels, the Peace Palace in The Hague, the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam and the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin. Students will reflect on each day’s activities with their chaperones.

The theme of the leadership conference in Berlin is Future Readiness in a Changing World. Byram Hills students will work with peers from around the world in small teams to try to solve a global challenge.

To address their global issue, students will use design thinking, a methodical, human-centered problem-solving technique, the same approach that Byram Hills students use in the Global Scholars and StartUp programs. At the end of the conference, the teams present their ideas to the entire summit and judges choose a winner, whose work will be featured in the Nobel Prize Museum in Stockholm.

“The summit is a fantastic leadership opportunity,” Ms. Stahl said. “Our students will combine forces with international students to become changemakers. As they brainstorm ideas and share their different viewpoints, they will build skills including collaboration, perseverance, decision-making, creativity, active listening and providing and receiving feedback.”

Ms. Stahl, a longtime world traveler, knows that students will benefit from the trip in many ways, including strengthening their global competency skills.

“In today’s interconnected global society, we need our students to have

the ability to investigate the world and recognize perspectives,” Ms. Stahl said. “These trips allow our students to gain greater empathy and a better understanding of how to work together with other people.”

Calling the trips “an experience of a lifetime,” she said they allow students “to witness first-hand what they’ve been learning about in school and process the experience for themselves.”



Byram Hills High School students are embarking on a school-sanctioned educational trip to Europe this summer.

BYRAM HILLS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WIN PRESTIGIOUS SCIENCE RESEARCH HONORS



Senior Andrew Levy was chosen as one of the top 300 scholars in the Regeneration Science Talent Search, the nation's oldest and most prestigious science and math competition for high school seniors.

Andrew investigated a potential method to effectively determine whether a specific type of cancer treatment, immunotherapy, would work well for individual head and neck cancer patients by analyzing their blood samples. This noninvasive and personalized approach may facilitate the transition from surgical biopsy to blood draws, ultimately improving patient experiences and outcomes.

"Congratulations to Andrew Levy on this important honor," said Stephanie Greenwald, director of the Byram Hills three-year Authentic Science Research Program. "His work could potentially revolutionize cancer diagnosis and care."

The 300 scholars were chosen from nearly 2,500 entrants. Andrew and Byram Hills were each awarded \$2,000.

Senior Ella Saltstein won the Bhuwan Garg High School Neuroscience Research Prize, an honor from the American Academy of Neurology and the Child Neurology Society that recognizes outstanding achievement in neuroscience research.



Ella received a \$1,000 honorarium, a certificate of recognition, and the opportunity to present her work during a scientific poster session at the Child Neurology Society Annual Meeting in October.

At Yale University last summer, Ella studied congenital hydrocephalus, a potentially deadly brain condition that occurs from an abnormal buildup of fluid in the brain. Her findings will help with the understanding of the development of hydrocephalus, which could allow for more effective treatment methods to be created for children born with the condition.



Senior Sebastian Lashmet, one of five Byram Hills students selected to present at the New York Upstate Regional Junior Science and Humanities Symposium, advanced to the national competition for his computer science research that could further develop the real-world reasoning capabilities of artificial intelligence. The other students

who participated were seniors Andrew Levy, Cooper Lipton, Addison Rappaport and junior Lindsay Coady. Cooper is an alternate for the national symposium.

TENNIS TOWN: BYRAM HILLS GIRLS VARSITY TENNIS TEAM IS BACK ON TOP



The Byram Hills Girls Varsity Tennis Team captured the New York State Public High School Athletic Association Division II team championship once again, its third state title in four years.

In the fall, the girls defeated Bayport Blue Point at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center to become the 2024 New York State Champions. Byram Hills won the team championship in the event's first year, 2021, and again the following year. Girls Varsity Tennis has three of the five New York State athletic titles in Byram Hills history.

"Congratulations to our Varsity Girls Tennis team champions for another history-making victory," said Rob Castagna, the District's Director of Health, Physical Education and Athletics.

Head coach Jessica Kaplan said: "Individually, these girls were fantastic, but as a team they were unstoppable. Their teamwork is what got them the prize."

As with the past championships, the team was celebrated with a victory parade through Armonk.

Co-captain Jordyn Bernstein said winning the championship during her senior year as a captain was "a dream come true."

"To celebrate this win with my teammates and the community is something I'll cherish forever and the ultimate reward for all the hard work and effort we've put into the sport," she said.

Co-captain Jenna Kleynerman said the team entered the season "hungrier than ever" to reclaim the title, adding: "That feeling of hard work and determination paying off is like no other."

"Our school and community's support has meant the world to us, and the tradition of organizing a parade to celebrate our victories is something I'll cherish forever," she said.

In addition to the co-captains, the team was made up of Anika Bobra, Anisha Bobra, Amelia Deeks, Sophia Deeks, Layna Delk, Ava Gitler, Danielle Goldman, Eliza Moy, Emerson Pace, Charlotte Sanders and Katherine Shil.



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In an environment of mutual respect, the Byram Hills School District and its community will provide students with the means, the knowledge, and the opportunity to excel in order to become productive and responsible citizens and leaders of the twenty-first century.
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THE BYRAM HILLS EDUCATION FOUNDATION IN ACTION!



With a generous grant from the BHEF, Byram Hills High School students studied the rich tradition of Mexican printmaking through an interdisciplinary approach: They made prints based on ancient Mexican designs and visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art to view the intricate details of notable artwork up close.

The students in Michael Young’s Spanish Communications III classes learned about Mexican printmaking. Mr. Young felt that an exhibit at the Met, “Mexican Prints at the Vanguard,” would be the perfect opportunity to create a new multidisciplinary lesson.

To make their prints, students chose a Mexican design, traced it and transferred it to a linoleum-like mat. Using special tools, they carved and cut away the negative space to reveal their design, which became a stamp they inked to make prints. Then students visited the Met, which brought the lesson alive as they studied the artwork in person.

“Having the students participate in a hands-on art project and getting first-hand interactions with Mexican art deepened their understanding and appreciation of this historically important art form,” Mr. Young said.



The Lights, Learning, Action! renovation project at Byram Hills High School is moving full steam ahead. Students in the Global Scholars and StartUp programs have been enjoying the revamped Lecture Hall, which opened in the fall. “The space is much more collaborative, with the ability to work in small and large groups,” Principal Christopher Walsh said. “The new technology enhances collaboration and the college-like setting has the most comfortable chairs in the building.”

The Learning Commons, which was transformed into a modern, open space, opened on March 12. The community is invited to a reception celebrating this exciting new facility on April 24 from 5:30-7 pm.

“We’re very excited for the Learning Commons, which together with the Lecture Hall, will create our 21st century Learning Commons and benefit all of our students for years to come,” Mr. Walsh said.

Looking ahead, the installation of a second turf field is scheduled to begin over the summer and be completed by the new school year. Lighting will be installed at athletic courts and fields in 2026 and 2027, providing the thrill of night games.



Seniors at Byram Hills High School considered risk versus reward as they became investors in an online simulation this fall, with dozens becoming members of the Millionaire’s Club. In fact, two students saw their portfolios grow to eight figures.

The Harrow Education-Investment Simulation was conducted in all senior-level social studies classes this year. The students all assumed the same status: They had their first job after college and were living frugally, with \$6,000 a year to invest over 40 years, a total of \$240,000 to invest for retirement.

During the 10-week simulation, students made investment allocations every Monday through Thursday, with each day representing a year. Students chose what percentage of their portfolio to keep in a savings account or invest in treasury bonds, an index fund, a streaming platform company stock, a social media company stock and cryptocurrency.

“The investment simulation offered seniors an engaging and competitive environment to explore real-world financial decision-making,” Social Studies Chairperson Jennifer Laden said.