



## BYRAM HILLS SCHOOL DISTRICT

*"A great place to learn"*

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*William M. Donohue, Ed.D.*  
*Superintendent of Schools*

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Dear Parents and Community Members,

The Byram Hills Board of Education and administration are committed to ongoing dialogue with our community. We practice a continuous improvement cycle that encourages studying, implementing, evaluating and revising our systems and practices for the benefit of our students. Receiving feedback through respectful dialogue is one approach to our continued learning and improvement planning. We have a dynamic plan to provide information to parents and community members as well as create opportunities for feedback and comment. Some of our communication approaches include:

### **Public Board of Education Meetings**

The Board of Education conducts approximately two public meetings per month from September through June. In addition, Budget Hearings are scheduled during the budget process which begins in January. During July and August, at least one public Board meeting is scheduled with additional meetings scheduled as needed. The Board of Education meeting dates are published on our website and in our school calendar. The agenda for these meetings is listed on our website approximately two business days before each meeting. Please view the Board of Education page on our website for the agenda and other important documents.

The Board of Education Minutes are available on the District website documenting each Board of Education meeting. The minutes can be found under the Board of Education page of our website. You can also watch our Board of Education meetings on Bobcat TV through your computer or Verizon Channel 38 and Cablevision Channel 20. Board Policy 1230 details the procedures for public participation at our Board of Education meetings and can be reviewed by logging onto the District's website, [www.byramhills.org](http://www.byramhills.org), click on Board of Education, Policies.

### **Written Publications**

Spectrum is our District newsletter which arrives at all community homes four times per year. In addition, we publish a budget newsletter prior to our annual budget vote in May.

### **District Calendar**

The District calendar is sent to each of our community homes yearly. It provides the dates for Board of Education meetings, important District and school events, as well as descriptions of programs, notification of rights and District phone numbers.

### **Board of Education Policies**

Board of Education policies are available on our website under the Board of Education page. The development and ongoing review of policies is one of the primary responsibilities of the Board of Education.

### **Principal's Coffees**

Each of our schools offers an opportunity for parents and community members to participate in conversations with our building principals. The meetings often have a specific topic but also include a time for questions and answers. The dates of each Principal's Coffee are listed on each school page on our website, as well as in the District calendar.

### **Board of Education Committees**

The Board of Education can authorize committees to address specific topics. One particular Board of Education committee, the Budget Information Committee, was formed two years ago. The purpose of the committee is to inform the community and answer questions relating to the budget process, thus allowing the community to be well-informed regarding the district budget.

In addition, Site-Based Teams exist at each school. These teams develop initiatives on Character Education and/or Sustainability. Parents interested in serving on these teams should contact the building principal. Other committees include: Health Advisory Committee, Athletic Advisory Committee and Student Nutrition Advisory Committee (SNAC).

### **Bobcat TV**

Bobcat TV is a District operated TV station dedicated to provide information and special programming for parents and community members. The link to Bobcat TV is on our District website. Board of Education meetings are available on this site. In addition, curriculum and extra-curriculum information, as well as athletic events are made available through special programs. The Superintendent often provides updates on District information through Bobcat TV.

### **E-mail and Letters**

The District administration reads and responds to e-mail and letters from parents and community members on a variety of matters. The names and e-mail addresses of Board of Education members and administrators can be found on the District website and calendar. To assist with the flow of information, the Board of Education has developed a policy on public complaints, *Policy 1400, Public Complaints*, is available on our website.

### **Questions Regarding Specific Children, Teachers, Coaches or Programs**

The most effective forms of communication are between those individuals with knowledge of a particular question or concern. Parents are requested to address questions or concerns to a child's teacher or coach first.

To provide guidance on these concerns the schools and the Athletic Department have developed written documents to assist with effective communication. Matters that remain unresolved should be directed to principals or directors. Curriculum questions for grades 6-12 should be discussed with content chairpersons after a conversation with your child's teacher.

### **Suggestions for working with school personnel can be found in the following handbooks:**

- ABC's of HCC ([www.byramhills.org](http://www.byramhills.org), click on Schools, HCC, All About HCC, ABC's of HCC) - Especially useful is the *Problem Solving Model* found on pages 23 and 24 of the handbook.
- The BHHS Community Handbook ([www.byramhills.org](http://www.byramhills.org), click on Schools, BHHS, Community Handbook) - Specific guidance is provided on pages 8 and 9 of the handbook.
- Wampus and Coman Hill have a specific school link on their web page ([www.byramhills.org](http://www.byramhills.org), click on Schools for Coman Hill and Wampus, click on Home-School Connection) - This document can assist in fostering positive relationships between home and school.

- The Athletic Department Handbook ([www.byramhills.org](http://www.byramhills.org), click on Athletics, BH Parent Student Athletic Handbook) - Specific information for addressing parent/coach communications can be found on pages 16 and 17 of the handbook.

### **Website**

The District website is a primary source for information about the District. The website provides information about each school, news, events, faculty directories, curriculum maps, athletic schedules, guidance information, Board policies and other relevant District and school information. Please visit the site regularly for updates.

### **Parent Emergency Notification System**

The District uses a parent notification system that includes parent phone numbers and parent e-mails for unanticipated school delays, early dismissals and closings. This system is also used for other notifications by principals, the Athletic Director and the Superintendent. The database for these notifications comes from e-mails and phone numbers provided by parents to the schools.

The Byram Hills Board of Education and administrators look forward to ongoing dialogue and providing you with information about our schools. We are committed to fulfilling the District's mission:

*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 of the twenty-first century.*

Thank you for your support and interest in our schools.

*Dr. William M. Donohue,*  
*Superintendent*