



Berkshire Waldorf High School

14 Pine Street
Stockbridge
MA 01262
(413) 298-3800

PO Box 905
Great Barrington
MA 01230

berkshirwaldorf.com

July 2019

Dear Students and Parents,

I hope that you are enjoying a good and restful summer. I also hope you are happy to turn your thoughts toward fall and our return to school. The faculty and I are pleased to announce that we are entering the fall of our 18th year with some great additions and changes to our program and staff.

1. First, please welcome Elizabeth Orenstein, Class of 2010, as our new life science teacher. Elizabeth has a degree in botany, ethnobotany, and botanical illustration from Goddard College. She taught botany to last year's 11th grade. She is a knowledgeable, talented, enthusiastic, and energetic teacher. She has been collecting syllabuses from Lee Magadini and me, and she completed a one-week introduction to Waldorf high school teaching at Sunbridge Institute this summer.

Welcoming Ms. Orenstein doesn't mean saying good-bye to Ms. Magadini. She will teach one or two mini-blocks (see below), and she is committed to taking students to the "Day in the Life of the Hudson River," as she has done for several years.

2. We are also pleased to adopt a new weekly schedule. Next year almost all classes will be 90 minutes (see schedule on website or pick up copy at school). This means a longer, more in-depth exploration of a subject each day, and far less time lost to transitions. It also means students can focus on fewer subjects for homework each night—usually, seminar and one academic subject. We believe this schedule hews more closely to Rudolf Steiner's (rather obvious?) insight that rushing arbitrarily from subject to subject does not promote learning.

3. Please note that next year we will combine 10th and 11th grade foreign language classes. These two classes will travel in April 2020—Spanish language students to Costa Rica, and German language students to Munich—and combined classes will allow teachers to prepare them for these trips. (Last year, 11th and 12th grade language classes were combined.)

4. Next year's seminar block schedule includes one-week mini-blocks every second block (again, see website or pick up at school). We believe this will introduce a "breather" each season and it will allow us to teach subjects—including elective subjects—to which we cannot or do not wish to devote 3 or more weeks.

5. Changes to teaching assignments are minor.

In math, Susan Bilodeau will continue to teach grade 12 Calculus and grade 10 Algebra 2 and Stephen Sagarin will teach grade 11 Precalculus and grade 9 Geometry.

In English, Samantha Stier will teach grades 9, 10, and 12 and Sarah Blexrud will teach grade 11. Ms. Blexrud will become Admissions Director, in addition to her many other hats, in order to free Ms. Stier to teach more English.

This year, Chorus will consist of the whole high school combined for two periods per week. Rob Kelly will direct the chorus, aiming at two performances—one in the fall and

one in the spring—and he will also direct the jazz ensemble or other student elective instrumental group.

We look forward to welcoming you—or welcoming you back—to a great school year in September. For now, please read below for a wealth of back-to-school information.

CALENDAR

All current calendar information for 2019-2020 is posted on our online calendar, <http://berkshirewaldorf.com/events/>, or click on the “News and Events” tab in the upper right corner of our home page, then click “Calendar.” Check your email and this website calendar for up-to-date information.

INFORMATION

Back-to-school information, including this letter, may be found under the “Back to School Information” tab in the upper left corner of our home page, berkshirewaldorf.com, or at <https://berkshirewaldorf.com/back-school-information/>.

- **Student Book List.** Required books for the coming year. Please obtain before the opening of school! (New York State residents only: Please note that most of these books are provided via the **Questar** program, administered by your school district of residence. The Book List will specify any required books that are *not* provided by Questar.)
- **Student Supply List.** Required items for the start of school and every day after that. Students may keep supplies in their lockers or cubbies at the school so they are available when needed.
- **Student & Parent Handbook.** This document contains lots of information for all members of our school community. If 2019-2020 is your first year at BWHS, please read to ensure a smooth transition.
- **Transportation.** This year we will have bus service for Taconic Hills residents directly to and from the high school. We will also have bus service for Chatham residents, as we did last year. This means that we will NOT offer a shuttle from the lower school to the high school and back. Students who may have used our shuttle in the past may now ride the BRTA to and from Great Barrington. The route number is 21, and you may find the schedule here: <https://berkshirerta.com/schedules.php>

REQUIRED FORMS

Find the forms listed below under the “Back to School Information” tab on our website, berkshirewaldorf.com. Please download, print, and complete the following forms and give them to Ms. Blexrud by Friday, August 30, at our Back-to-School Pot-Luck Picnic. You may also mail them to Berkshire Waldorf High School, PO Box 905, Great Barrington, MA 01230, or scan and email them to office@berkshirewaldorf.com.

- Student Driver & Passenger Information form**

- Student Information and Permission form**, including sections for:
 - Health & Emergency Contacts
 - Medical Information
 - Consent & Authorization Regarding Emergency Medical Treatment
 - Dismissal Authorization
 - Consent to Photograph
 - Field Trip Permission
- Internet Acceptable Use Agreement**, signed by student and parent
- Health Record** (aka Medical Form, Doctor's Form) You may substitute another form/record as long as they have been completed per the dates below:
 Student athletes: Massachusetts law requires each student athlete playing on their school team to have a physical exam every year. If you plan to play soccer, basketball, or baseball, you need a physical dated September 4, 2018 or later.
 Students not playing soccer, basketball, or baseball: Your physical must be dated September 4, 2016 or later.
- Either the **Certification Immunization Form** or a **Religious Exemption Form**
- Allergy-Asthma Action Plan**. If you have one, provide it for your safety.
- Camp Hi-Rock Group Camping Waiver & Health Form**

BACK-TO-SCHOOL DATES AND EVENTS

Sat., Aug. 17, 9:00 a.m. to Noon. School Cleaning and set-up for fall. Join our community as we prepare our school building for the fall. This is a great opportunity to meet new families, and help us prepare for the year ahead. We provide cleaning supplies, but feel free to bring your favorites.

Fri., Aug. 30, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Back-to-school pot-luck supper at the school to welcome new families and get reacquainted. There will be an **all-school meeting (parents, students, teachers) at 6:30 p.m.** Please plan for at least one member of each family to attend and bring a dish to share. Please bring your completed back-to-school forms. And please park on Main Street and walk to the school.

Wed., Sept. 4. First day of school. Academic half day. Students should arrive at school no later than 8:15 a.m. in assembly dress—see the Handbook for details. Please note: This is a school day and students will have a first seminar class; they should be prepared for this with required books and school supplies. Students will have time at school to change out of assembly dress before heading to Camp Hi-Rock.

Wed., Sept. 4 through Fri., Sept. 6. Orientation at Camp Hi-Rock. We will leave for Camp Hi-Rock at 1 p.m. on September 4, following a lunch break after morning classes. Packing list, required camp form, and other information regarding Orientation is posted online. The Camp Hi-Rock Group Camping Waiver & Health Form is due to Ms. Blexrud on or before Monday, August 26. Please note: There is a \$150 per student fee for Orientation.

Sun., Sept. 15 through Fri., Sept. 20. Senior Class trip to Hermit Island, Maine, to study tide-pool zoology. Information available online and at school after the school year begins.

Please note: Enrollment contracts for 2019-2020 school year should already be set up and signed within the TADS system. All contracts have been sent via e-mail through TADS. Please contact Patrick White, Business Manager, business@berkshirewaldorf.com, with any questions about your contract.

Please call or email if you have questions about this letter or anything else, and enjoy the rest of the summer.

Sincerely,



Stephen Sagarin, Ph.D.
Executive Director & Faculty Chair