

# Teaneck Public Schools District Advisory Team

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## District Advisory Team Meeting Minutes for June 6, 2013

Present:

Bryant School	No attendee
Hawthorne School	Rebecca Alston, Florence Mitchell Brown
Lowell School	No attendee
Whittier School	Vanessa Bing
Ben Franklin Middle School	Tamika Francis
Thomas Jefferson Middle School	Chondra Young
Teaneck High School	Patricia Phillips, Denise Sanders

**Ms. Pinsak began the meeting at 7:05 pm with review of the April 1, 2013 Minutes. The Minutes were approved.**

**Reports from each building representative summarizing the key points of the latest BQMT meeting, including questions, comments and/or concerns for the district team.**

Mrs. Phillips summarized the **high school BQMT Meeting** held on May 23, 2013; Minutes of the meeting are **attached**. The Principal's report highlighted the freshmen and junior class visits to Rutgers University. On May 31, 2013, Career Day was a success with alumni visiting classrooms to speak to students about their careers. The Valedictorian breakfast was held on June 4<sup>th</sup>, Honors Award Ceremony on June 13<sup>th</sup> and Teaneck High School Graduation is June 25, 2013.

Mrs. Phillips continued that a guest speaker, Dr. Michael Fallon, psychologist and actor gave an excellent presentation at the high school. Consideration, by the committee, to invite Dr. Fallon to present to students next year. Price Waterhouse gave a financial presentation that was well received. The requirement for Senior Service is a "C" average but should be set to a higher standard. Ms. Pinsak suggested a four to six week college prep course for students in lieu of Senior Service. Mrs. Phillips stated that the committee suggested the use of technology with cellular phones to be incorporated into the classroom.

In 2013-14, Literacy Festival is tentatively scheduled for October 22-25, 2013, to include workshops and a panel discussion. Recommendations for the high school BQMT in 2013-14 is to focus on three or four major concerns, create an action plan with measurements and monitor the progress. Ms. Phillips concluded that a districtwide ESL parent night was a success with over 40 percent of high school parents in attendance.

Ms. Alston summarized the **Hawthorne School BQMT Meeting** that occurred on May 28, 2013; Minutes of the meeting are **attached**. The end-of-year strategic plan was discussed. Dr. Spollen-LaRaia shared with Hawthorne staff the process of collaboratively developing their goals. Some topics discussed were I&RS, School Safety Team and lunch/recess student discipline which Dr. Spollen-LaRaia addressed. Student achievement goals to review student learning; students' strengths, weaknesses; what is effective and what is not effective in school. Ms. Alston concluded that the recommendation was made

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to expand school messages, more parent involvement, Words of Wisdom messages shared with parents through a newsletter.

Ms. Mitchell-Brown stated that more conversation is needed for understanding of Special Needs children. Ms. Sanders stated that Dr. Michael Fallon's assembly that dealt with many issues of identity and the feedback from parents was positive. Ms. Pinsak stated that Dr. Edwards and the SEPAG committee watched the movie *Bully* with students and their parents and had a good conversation about their feelings. Barnes & Noble sponsored a contest and one of our students wrote an essay about being teased in school and won first prize. He took his essay to the teacher and she taught the class about this behavior, students accepted it, normalizing it. Ms. Pinsak continued that the approach should be the uniqueness of all of the children.

Ms. Young summarized the **Thomas Jefferson Middle School BQMT Meeting** that occurred on May 15, 2013. The committee discussed the state of the school, NJASK Pep Rally and make-up testing. The students felt they did well. TJMS renovated the library and books were donated by the Mocha Moms committee. The books are shelved by Lexile scores for students to understand their scores. Renovations will be completed before the end of the school year. An issue with school lunches too early or too late and no food left. Ms. Pinsak stated that the district through an RFP (Request for Proposal) acquired a new vendor, Sodexo, for food service to begin on July 1, 2013.

Ms. Young stated that TJMS raised \$2,000 per grade for field trips but the fifth grade opted out of trips and voted to get iPads. Next year 8<sup>th</sup> grade not interested in going to Washington, D.C. prefer to stay closer to home. Ms. Pinsak stated that the policy has changed regarding field trips. A concern is what makes a class trip, is it the percentage of students attending, especially for overnight trips. We want all of our students to experience the Washington, D.C. trip and it has to be inclusive but if only 60% of students participate then it is not a class trip. The trip is quite expensive for the district to cover classes for the seventh and eighth grade teachers. Students who choose not to go or could not go we want them in school; they are entitled to an education while others are on the trip. Ms. Young continued that the overnight trips are a lot of responsibility for the chaperone volunteers. Ms. Pinsak stated that Field Trip Policy #2340 and Regulations would be sent to the District Advisory Team Committee and on the agenda for discussion at a Principal's Meeting. Ms. Young concluded that they are interested in starting a TJMS alumni association.

Ms. Francis summarized the **Benjamin Franklin Middle School BQMT Meeting** that occurred on April 30, 2013; Minutes of the meeting are **attached**. A discussion about the BFMS State Report Card available online at the State Department website. It was noted that BFMS had a lot of positive aspects of the report. Teaneck was compared to peer groups in other districts such as Garfield, Hackensack, Cherry Hill, New Brunswick and Freehold in theory the comparison with districts of similar student populations. Ms. Pinsak stated that the State Department of Education changed the report card three or four times; highly controversial. BFMS did not meet the growth in mathematics for Hispanic population and Whittier School did not meet the growth in Literacy for African-American population and both schools were required to complete an action plan. Ms. Francis continued that BFMS was actually high performing compared to other districts. Prior to NJASK testing, BFMS principal spoke to each class in an assembly. Ms. Francis concluded that the Heroes and Cool Kids Mentoring Program for 8<sup>th</sup> grade mentors has worked out well at BFMS.

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Ms. Bing summarized the **Whittier School BQMT MEETING** that occurred on April 18, 2013. A discussion about security measures with the PTO and BQMT in agreement that they would like a Forum for parents with guest speakers to present information about school security. Ms. Pinsak stated that the Bergen County Prosecutor offered to do an assessment of the buildings. They are backlogged now but we have very good communication with the Teaneck Police Department. The Chief of Police informed Ms. Pinsak that trained police officers would do the assessment at each school and give us feedback. Ms. Pinsak had a meeting with the Chief of Police and the Director of Facilities to discuss security measures. They will review the option of putting locked chain link fencing around gas pipes, weight down trash cans and put additional cameras in place. Parents inquired about replacing the windows in schools and our Director of Facilities will get a quote for replacement windows. A suggestion was made to add a camera in the Whittier School vestibule with a camera and buzzer at the desks of the principal, nurse and clerk typist.

### **PTO Membership**

District Advisory Committee Members stated that some schools are having difficulty replacing PTO members as parents and their children move up to the next school. Ms. Pinsak stated that Bryant School has challenges to get people in the PTO. PTO Council has tried to encourage new members to join. Ms. Pinsak continued that she will reach out to the principals regarding the PTO/A membership. Ms. Bing stated that she was invited to join by Ms. Kaplan at Whittier School.

### **A.C.E. (Architecture, Construction and Engineering) Program**

Ms. Pinsak reported that the high school A.C.E program was acknowledged in a great morning event in Newark. Ms. Pinsak attended the celebration breakfast with Dr. Walser and Yvonne Witter. The Teaneck Public Schools student received a scholarship and the district was honored for educational award. Dr. Walser made a wonderful speech. The educational award had never before been given to a public school district. Never had a district Board of Education been so supportive of the program.

### **Additional Items:**

Summer Assignments posted on the Teaneck Public Schools website: [www.teaneckschools.org](http://www.teaneckschools.org)  
NJASK parent reports expected by September, 2013

**Respectfully submitted by Linda Kuhran**

**BQMT Meeting Minutes**  
**May 23, 2013**

**Attendees:** Dennis Heck, Patty Monaco, Faith Mootoo, Barbara Morris-George, Michelle O'Reilly, Pat Phillips, Denise Sanders, Pedro Valdes

**I. Principal Report & Update**

A. Several events and programs have been planned. Highlighted below are a few:

1. May 7 & 8 – Junior class visit to Rutgers University
2. June 3 & 4 – Freshmen class visit to Rutgers University
3. May 13 –Senior Service began
4. May 28 –Honors Convocation
5. May 29 – Senior Prom
6. May 31 – Career & Alumni Day
7. June 4 – Valedictorian Breakfast
8. June 11 –Community Scholarships
9. June 13 –Honors Award Ceremony
10. June 25 – Graduation

B. Dr. Michael Fallon, clinical psychologist, gave an excellent presentation at THS. Dr. Fallon deals with issues of race, discrimination and violence prevention in a way that keeps students engaged. Consider inviting Dr. Fallon back to speak to the students.

C. Price Waterhouse Cooper gave a financial education presentation that was well received.

**II. Recommendations for 2013-2014 BQMT**

A. Several topics were discussed during the 2012-2013 school year:

1. Guidance counselor intervention and communication with parents and students
2. Overall communications between school and home
3. HSPA transition to new PARCC testing
4. ELL support
5. Evaluating TEAMS Academy
6. Identify students with GPAs under 2.0 and track their success from year to year
7. Block Scheduling --considering 60 minutes instead of 85 minutes
8. Not enough students scoring advanced proficiency on standardized tests although more students are taking Honor and AP courses
9. Improve math achievement on standardized test.
10. Improve transition from middle school to high school.

--It was noted by a parent that this may no longer be an issue.

THS

- B. The plan for the next school year should be to focus on 3 or 4 major concerns and put together an action plan with some measurements to monitor progress.

### **III. Literacy Festival**

- A. Festival tentatively scheduled for October 22 – October 25 2013
- B. The goal is to celebrate the spoken and written word. Encourage a love for reading.
- C. The festival will consist of readings, panel discussions, workshops and dramatic performances

### **IV. District wide ESL Parent Night**

- A. THS had very good representation. 40% of the parents in attendance were from THS.

### **V. New Business**

- A. Review the requirements for Senior Service. Currently the requirement is to have a "C" average. This maybe too low. Reevaluate and consider raising the requirement. 247 out of 299 seniors qualified for Senior Service this year.
- B. View ways to incorporate cell phone usage into the classroom experience.

### **VI. Selection of BQMT Co-Chairs 2013-2014**

- A. Denise Sanders and Michelle O'Reilly will be the co-chairs.
- B. Patty Monaco will be joining the BQMT Committee

**No meeting scheduled for June 2013**

# Hawthorne School

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*Deirdre Spollen-LaRaia, Ed.D.*  
*Principal*

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## *Hawthorne BQMT Meeting*

*May 28, 2013*

3:30 PM – 4:15

### Agenda

- ✦ End-of-Year Strategic Planning Discussions
  - I&RS
  - LET/MET
  - School Safety Team
  - Inclusion Teams
  
- ✦ Suggestions for BQMT 2013-2014
  
- ✦ Reports/Concerns/Questions from Team Members/Staff
  
- ✦ Next Steps/Follow Up
  
- ✦ Report from District Advisory Team (DAT)
  
- ✦ Good of the Order

# **Hawthorne School**

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*Deirdre Spollen-LaRaia, Ed.D.*  
*Principal*

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## Hawthorne BQMT Meeting May 28, 2013

Meeting Minutes  
3:30 PM – 4:15

### **Team Members Present:**

Lois Bono, Teacher  
Florence Mitchell-Brown, Parent  
Rebecca Riveiro-Alston, Parent  
Deirdre Spollen-LaRaia, Principal

### **Principal Report**

- ✦ **End-of-Year Strategic Planning Discussions:** Dr. Spollen-LaRaia shared that Hawthorne staff was in the process of collaboratively developing our vision, values and goals as well as to reflect on programs/processes/protocols that served our students and staff in 2012-13, including, but not limited to, I&RS, School Safety Team, LET/MET, BQMT, inclusion teams, lunch/recess, student discipline, student achievement goals and inclusion. The purpose is to review current levels of student learning, develop strategies and ideas to build on our strengths, address weaknesses, and discover what was effective and what was not effective for our school.

### **Suggestions for BQMT 2013-2014**

- ✦ Dr. Spollen-LaRaia elicited suggestions for improvement from the Hawthorne BQMT Members:
  - Access to more information via technology (twitter feeds, e-mails, eBoards)
  - Target more parent involvement
  - Expand school messages (Making Great Choices, Words of Wisdom) to parents/guardians possibly through a newsletter or monthly homework activities which would be connected to the School Safety Team message.
  - Examine protocols and procedures for WPA including walkie talkie system
  - Sensitivity training for all staff related to children's needs with monthly character education units that expand to adults to address the unique needs of our children and families.

### **Next Steps/Follow Up**

#### **Report from District Advisory Team (DAT)**

- ✦ Ms. Alston shared reports from the April 1, 2013 DAT

### **Good of the Order**

## Benjamin Franklin Middle School

### BQMT Minutes

April 30, 2013

#### Attendance:

1. R. Kiem
2. P. Monaco
3. S. Warren – Givens
4. T. Francis

- ✓ Mr. Kiem gave an overview of the NJ State Performance Report for BFMS. Highlighted in this overview was the high scores received on “student growth” – which Mr. Kiem indicated reflects the level of instruction being presented by the teachers.
- ✓ Other factors of the growth plan were discussed such as what it meant to be a part of a peer group & how to compare overall achievement between peer schools and the state.
- ✓ The parents asked about teacher volunteerism and what was the state of any “beautification” projects going on at BF.
- ✓ Mr. Kiem explained what was in place and turned over the conversation to 2 members of the committee that are also TPS teachers.
- ✓ The trickle down effects of “working to contract” were discussed – specifically how that practice leads to a lack of programming and after school activities.
- ✓ Changes in next year’s master schedule were discussed which includes efforts to lower class sizes, to use teacher’s more effectively throughout the day, and to create parity between 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade period scheduling.
- ✓ The upcoming trips for 8<sup>th</sup> graders were discussed.