

June 16, 2021

Dear Teaneck Community,

Tomorrow, the 2020-2021 school year will officially come to a close for our students. Today, I proudly watched 315 Teaneck High School students graduate and begin the next chapter of their lives. We wish them much success as they move forward with their college and career aspirations.

“Moving forward” will be a central theme for our upcoming school year; but for now, I would like to take a moment to reflect on this *past* school year - one that was unique in so many ways due to the ongoing pandemic.

Let me start by noting that despite the many challenges and obstacles of our remote/virtual environment, I am exceptionally proud of what we accomplished together during this second year of our District Strategic Plan implementation. These include, but are not limited to:

- 1.) Opened our new **Theodora Smiley Lacey School** serving approximately 180 kindergarten students and our new Central Office/District Administration Building on Teaneck Road (in front of the Thomas Jefferson Middle School).
- 2.) Revamped our **Gifted & Talented Program** to relaunch in the 2021-2022 school year with our first and second grade students.
- 3.) Began the implementation of a **Revised Special Education Plan** to strengthen the district’s special education services:
  - Developed ongoing professional development plan for special education teachers, Child Study Team and other support staff
  - Providing ongoing training for special education staff (LLD & RCR grades 1-8) on implementing multisensory reading intervention program;
  - Restructuring the MD STAR 18-21 Post graduate program at Teaneck High School;
  - Providing ongoing training on establishing and maintaining BD 5-6 Program at TJMS (Middle School BD program continuum).
- 4.) Awarded a \$500,000 **School Safety Grant** (federal) to improve security measures in the district.
- 5.) Began the implementation of our Internal & External [Communications Plan](#) by:
  - Introducing Brand Identity Guidelines which included a new Teaneck Public School logo featuring our new vision: *“Teaneck Advantage: Educational Excellence for All”*;
  - Revising the district and school websites to create a **new & improved District Website that will launch for the start of the new school year** (September 2021);
  - Developing and will roll-out **mobile apps for all schools** for September 2021
- 6.) Provided free COVID-19 testing and COVID-19 vaccine opportunities for our students, families, and staff.

As we look towards this fall, we are planning for a full return to our schools. If you have not already reviewed my May 12th presentation “Return Plan: Summer & Fall 2021”, you will find it here: [Summer/Fall Return to School Plan](#). This plan includes many details about the upcoming year. However, I specifically want to highlight our commitment towards reacclimating our students to their respective schools as well as our concerted efforts towards the social/emotional health of all students, staff and family members. For instance, in order to safely introduce the middle and high schools to our incoming students, we will be creating video tours that will be shared with our sixth and tenth grade students - who may have never entered their schools during this pandemic year. Our incoming 5th & 9th grade students will also have their own orientation session. Additionally, we will be implementing “Wellness Wednesdays” - which will focus on SEL & Mental Health sessions and activities for each school community; and we will be introducing a Parent University - a district-wide initiative to increase parent engagement and provide support to parents. For more details on this, **please listen to my End of Year Video Message:** <https://youtu.be/-r7gCjDU4W8>.

Over the summer, several learning opportunities will continue via our Summer IMPACT Academy and ESY program, and we will continue with our Free Lunch Distribution and ChromeDepot Services for all students that come to pick-up breakfast and lunch. Students participating in in-person learning academy and Camp K will receive lunch at their program sites. NOTE: The District is closed on July 5 for the Fourth of July/Independence Day holiday. You can view the full 2021-2022 district calendar here: [2021-2022 District Calendar](#)

In closing, I am confident that we are on the right path towards ensuring a successful future for our children! Our students, staff, parents/guardians, and the Teaneck Board of Education have very high expectations for our school system - and I am proud to report that we are making tremendous progress towards our goals. As this district’s educational leader, I assure you that we will not lose momentum and together, we will show everyone what we mean by “The Teaneck Advantage”.

Best wishes for a healthy, safe and wonderful summer!

Dr. Christopher Irving, Superintendent of Schools