

Superintendent's Report



November 11, 2020

Special Recognition

I am pleased to announce that Ms. Jessie Gorant, a TAG teacher at Benjamin Franklin Middle School, was among one of three teachers selected to receive the 2020 Bergen County Audubon Society 2nd Annual Dick Engsberg Teacher Appreciation Award. This award, formerly the Bergen County Audubon Society Teacher Appreciation Award, was renamed to honor Dick Engsberg, former BCAS board member, avid birder, educator and mentor to many. Eligible teachers are those who help cultivate and nurture a love of nature and the environment with their students. Ms. Gorant received her official award on November 4, but I have also invited her to join us this evening so we can celebrate this special recognition.

Return to School Plan for Second Marking Period

Last month, we presented our "Return to School Plan" for the second marking period (which begins on November 16). I want to reiterate that our second marking period is the start to a "phased in" approach as we begin to bring our children back into their school buildings. The attached document represents an update on this Return to School plan for the second marking period – specifically for the groups of students who will be returning to school (see last page). We estimate that approximately 270 students across preschool, kindergarten and special education will be returning to their respective classrooms. All other students will remain remote/virtual for the second marking period.

Additionally, as we move into the second marking period with all schools officially re-opening to specific groups of students and staff, we have made the difficult decision to suspend the district's Drop-in (during the school day) and SACC (after school) programs. We will re-evaluate this for the third marking period.

Teaneck International Film Festival

Now in its 15th year, the Teaneck International Film Festival, a project of the Puffin Foundation, is going virtual. With features, documentaries, and shorts scheduled one at a time over a two week period – November 12 – 25 – everyone will be guaranteed the best seats in the house.

Generation Lockdown – a Teaneck Original Film

A highlight of this year's TIFF festival is the premiere of this 20-minute short, inspired by an essay written by Caleb Brown when he was a sixth grader and produced by his mother, Florence Mitchell-Brown, a Teaneck PTA mom. The film will be shown Thursday, November 19, at 7:30 p.m. and is sponsored by NJ State Senator Loretta Weinberg and Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence. This powerful film was shot in a Teaneck Public School and features Caleb and many Teaneck students as extras. The talkback will be moderated by Dennis Hirschfelder, and will include director Sirad Balducci, Senator Weinberg, Ms. Mitchell-Brown, Caleb Brown, and student representative Laurence Fine of Students Demand Action, Bergen County.

For all TIFF film descriptions and previews; the schedule; information about talkbacks, guests, and tickets - visit the website: www.teaneckfilmfestival.org and click on the "Buy Tickets" box. The all-access pass is back, with a price tag of \$35 for admission to all the films and, for those who don't want to commit to a movie every night, ticket prices are just \$5 per film.

Red Ribbon Week

The Teaneck Schools celebrated Red Ribbon Week commencing October 23 - through October 31. This is the nation's oldest and largest drug prevention awareness program. The 2020 Red Ribbon Campaign Theme was: BE HAPPY. BE BRAVE. BE DRUG FREE. Red Ribbon Week is an alcohol, tobacco, and other drug and violence prevention awareness campaign observed annually in October in the United States. The Red Ribbon campaign's mission is to "encourage children, families and communities to live healthy, happy and drug-free lives." According to the campaign's website, www.redribbon.org, it also serves as a reminder that we are all empowered with shaping the communities around us through positivity, bravery and strength. Some of the activities that students and staff participated in included:

- Monday, Oct. 26 - I Believe in Me...Wear something RED, Take and Post the Pledge
 - Why do we Celebrate Red Ribbon Week? https://youtu.be/A_39-3VcYcE
- Tuesday, Oct. 27 - Turn Your Back on Drugs...Wear your shirt BACKWARDS
 - What is fun to you and keeps you coming back for more?
<https://youtu.be/7bYGLvzajnkeliieveinMe>
- Wednesday, Oct. 28 - Being Drug Free is No Sweat...
 - Wear your SWEATS - What can you do to focus on your health? -
<https://youtu.be/VPHGa09cFuE>
- Thursday, Oct. 29 - Look at Your Future
 - Wear a COLLEGE or CAREER shirt - What are your future goals? - <https://youtu.be/33Lt-HVBGnI>
- Friday, Oct. 30 - Spook Out Drugs - Wear a HALLOWEEN COSTUME -
<https://youtu.be/fgBFoKF7MMY>

Curriculum & Instruction*November Professional Development*

During the first half of November, the district will be participating in a series of learning sessions related to technology, collaborative planning and assessment training. These sessions are designed to strengthen the teaching and learning offered in a remote environment or in an in-person model.

Sessions will include the following:

- Collaborative Planning and Professional Learning Communities: Teachers will work in grade-level and building-level teams to review data and collaborate on lesson plans, online teaching resources and best practices for teaching units in the upcoming weeks.
- Leveling Up with EdPuzzle Training: The district purchased EdPuzzle to provide both teachers and students with an interactive platform for learning new content. During the month of November, teachers will learn new strategies for incorporating EdPuzzle into their lessons. If you'd like to know more, please visit the EdPuzzle website: <https://edpuzzle.com/>
- Leveling Up with Google Enterprise Training: To ensure that teachers and students are utilizing Google Enterprise effectively, teachers will receive training on how to use Google Breakout Groups, Question and Answer Polls, Rubrics and virtual hand-raising techniques. These tools will increase students' ability to interface with the teacher and with one another. Ultimately, these tools will sharpen the remote learning experience for our students.

The Department of Curriculum and Instruction is looking forward to the month of November, and we are excited about providing these learning sessions to district's staff. Be on the look for fun, innovative new additions to your child's learning.

School Counseling Department

- College & Career Fair Week- October 26 - 29- The department hosted 73 total colleges/universities and organizations via Google Meets. Over 100 students participated in the various nights.
 - Monday 10/26 : 6pm-8pm "New Jersey/Tri-State Night"
 - Tuesday 10/27:: 4pm-6pm "Troop, Training and Trade School Tuesday"
 - Wednesday 10/28 : 6pm-8pm "HBCU Night"
 - Thursday 10/29 : 6pm-8pm "Across Country Night"
- Support Services-
 - High School- Beginning November 16, 2:15-3pm, the FORUM will facilitate grade level open groups to support THS students: Mon- Seniors, Tues- Juniors, Wed- Sophomore, Thurs- Freshman
 - Grades k-8 - Mental Health Initiative will return in November to provide support for students and families in grades k-8.
- College Visits are virtual. Students are notified via Google Classroom, Naviance and the THS App of the following schools scheduled to visit. 20 Colleges/Universities are scheduled for the month of November. Students register via Naviance.
- Communication -
 - "THS Connections" Newsletter - THS Counseling Department will publish a monthly newsletter to share information with students and families.
 - YouTube Channel- All webinars will be posted for viewing.
(<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDw7prx6aDcxJmeyAo5sgQw>)
 - Follow @TeaneckSchoolCounseling on Instagram and FacebookSupport Services

Special Services

- To prepare for Phase II Reopening of Schools, the department met with families, staff, administration, school doctors, and nurses regarding a safe return of students, families and staff.
- Ms. Angela R. Davis, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services facilitated an informational session October 20, on the New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC) indicators that will be used to assess Teaneck School District's performance and capacity relative to operations.
- The special education administration met with Special Parents of Teaneck (SPOT) and SEPAG Committee on October 20. The focus of the SPOT meeting centered on privacy issues affecting special education students in general education settings during remote learning. The concerns raised at each meeting were addressed at subsequent PD and in the various reopening meetings held with all stakeholders.
- The department facilitated various professional development opportunities for staff on The Little Blue Book providing practical guidance on CST mandates of Initials/re-evaluations, mediation, due process, and SEMI reporting. In the area of I & RS, PD for the committee at the building level included Navigating the new HIBstervention platform and the I & RS Process/Procedures. A Social Emotional Learning/Universal Design for Learning PD was held for teachers to discuss differentiation, co-teaching and privacy strategies.

Communications, Community Relations & Volunteer Services*Internal & External Communications Plan*

Below is an update with regard to the district's approved Internal & External Communications Plan <https://www.teaneckschools.org/InternalExternalCommunications.aspx> :

- *New Brand Initiative* – As noted in the October report, we are working on Brand Identity Guidelines which are nearly finalized (e.g. new logo, business cards, letterhead, PowerPoint templates, etc.) and will be released in November.
- *District Website Redesign* – Following our recent online parent survey, Ms. Corallo, Director of Community Relations, held two virtual parent focus groups for further input on our current website home page and specifically, the Parent section. We want to thank the parents who participated in these discussions as their feedback (especially about viewing on mobile phones) was extremely valuable and will be used to guide the redesign phase of these two sections. Per Phase I of the Plan, the redesign of these sections is scheduled for spring 2021.
- *School Mobile Apps* – Also per the Communications Plan, the district will be working on the design and launch of mobile apps for all district schools. This initiative will begin in January with a roll-out plan for September 2021.

Special Events

- *New District Office Grand Opening* – a small ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on October 22. The new District office – 651 Teaneck Road (in front of Thomas Jefferson Middle School) – is officially open for business. All visitors should call ahead to schedule appointments if an in-person meeting is needed.

Technology

The Technology department began to equip all teachers with HoverCams, a document camera with multiple uses that will be used to enhance remote learning. The HoverCams can be used as a webcam in addition to a document camera, giving teachers the flexibility to teach from any angle. Teachers will be able to more easily switch from the traditional webcam view to any supporting documents, giving the students a more well-rounded lesson. The technology department has begun distributing the HoverCams to Middle and High School teachers along with a How-To video explaining the device, and held Q&A sessions for any additional information the teachers needed. The technology department will continue to distribute the HoverCams to the remaining elementary teachers this month.

Special thanks to the technology staff for setting up our new Central Office building in a timely manner in order to minimize downtime. The team set up computers, copiers, and phones after working hours, without disrupting the flow of regular business hours.

Bryant School

- It has been “All Hands on Deck” as the preschool team are preparing to safely welcome all children and staff back to the building!
- On October 16, a Bryant Re-entry Collaborative Planning Meeting was held with representative stakeholders across Instructional, Nursing, Special Services, Custodial, Safety, Administrative, and Transportation departments, along with preschool parents. This 20 member team continues to work together to ensure that safety is at the forefront of all plans, and that access to high

- quality, developmentally appropriate learning experiences will be provided whether children are at home or in the classroom.
- Teachers and families continue to find creative ways to build community and enjoy their time together in their Google Meets! During the week of October 26 to 30, many Bryant children enjoyed festive, virtual Character Costume parties with their classmates. Children enjoyed seeing their friends and teachers dressed up, and participated in fun games, crafts, and songs.
- Thanks to the amazing Bryant PTO, all returning Bryant staff will now have Bryant School lanyards from which to hang their masks throughout the school day. The PTO plans to present staff with their lanyards at Bryant School on November 13h.
- On October 30, all Bryant instructional personnel participated in a virtual Professional Development Safety and Hygiene presentation. Principal Davidman discussed the connection between increased attendance rates and classroom sanitizing and disinfecting protocols; Master Teacher Kimberly Thomas-Santangelo reviewed the difference between sanitizing and disinfecting; and pre-k teachers Jennifer Ortiz, Nadia Bermeo, and Mariana Humghok gave live demonstrations of preschool sanitizing and disinfecting protocols. Preschool Nurse Eloiza Cordona-Ruiz reviewed school communication and hygiene protocols.

Theodora Smiley Lacey School

- Week of Respect took place October 5-9. Students participated in a variety of activities and assemblies.
- School Safety Week took place October 19-23. Students learned safety protocols around wearing masks, washing hands, maintaining safe distances, stranger danger, etc.
- All teachers and staff participated in a Promethean Board PD on October 30.
- Lacey classrooms are set up and ready to receive students on November 16.
- Launch of Lacey Google Site containing FAQs regarding the return of school.
- Lacey Spiritwear Store items delivered and well received.
- Phase 2 renovations of the media center/library and gym are currently underway.
- Virtual Scholastic Book Fair taking place on November 16 - November 20.

Hawthorne Elementary School

- This month, we are celebrating the character trait of honesty at Hawthorne School. Our staff will be discussing the importance of this trait and engaging our students in relevant activities.
- On November 2 and November 9, our students arrived to Hawthorne School to take their picture day photos. Our students looked picture perfect.

Lowell Elementary School

- 11/2/2020: Lowell Faculty Meeting w/Dr. Irving - District Update
- 11/3/2020: Election Day - Full Day of Virtual Learning (D Day)
- 11/5-11/6/2020: NJEA Convention - School will be closed
- 11/13/2020: Final Friday for preparations for Return to In-person Learning for Kindergarten and Special Needs MD/LLD Classes; COVID RESPONSE TEAM MEETING (#3) was held with key pandemic team personnel
- 11/16/2020: First Day of School for In-person Learning for Kindergarten and Special Needs MD/LLD (22 Students)

- 11/16-11/25/2020: Half Day Schedule
- 11/20/2020: Report Cards available in Skyward
- 11/24/2020: Monthly PTO Meeting Online 6:30 pm - Reminders will be sent out to parents and guardians via email.
- As a reminder, we are continuously asking our parents to utilize the District and Lowell School website as we continue to update it with the latest information as well as provide links to parent resources.

Whittier Elementary School

- Whittier School conducted Parent/Teacher conferences on Thursday, October 15. Parents were able to speak with their child's teacher about progress, expectations, etc. Many of our teachers met with parents both before and after October 15 to have extended conferences where appropriate.
- Whittier School PTO held its second meeting on Tuesday, October 27. The PTO has kindly agreed to purchase mask lanyards for students returning on November 16. This will help students take off their masks to eat and for breaks without having to put them on any surface. The PTO has also relaunched its Stop & Shop A+ Rewards program.
- Whittier School is in the process of getting our classrooms/school ready to welcome back our special education and kindergarten students on Monday, November 16.
- MAP Testing is currently taking place for all students in grades 1 through 4. This will be the first year Grades 1 and 2 will participate in MAP Testing. MAP (Measures of Academic Progress) is a formative assessment that provides teachers with a snapshot of each student's academic progress in Language Arts and Math Mathematic so that they can better plan and differentiate instruction based on their students' specific needs.

Benjamin Franklin Middle School

- October has been a very busy month to honor many individuals from our school community and community at large. We launched Hispanic Heritage Month on October 15 and provided the following programs:
 - Fridays -Virtual Enrichment Periods
 - Morning Announcements
 - Writing Contest
 - Virtual Latin Dance Lesson
 - Virtual Cooking Classes
- On October 1, we launched a program to celebrate intersectionality during LGBTQ History Month and provided resources for staff members and students. We provided the following program in support of LGBTQ History Month:
- Fun Fridays -Quiz Show offered to students during our half-day to support and teach the history of the movement, including discussions around individuals who have guided much of this work.
- Student Forums called, "Safe Space" was established to give students a voice and space to discuss the history and presence of "gender-based" clubs/organizations in schools.
- In mid-October, Benjamin Franklin Middle School has assembled a committee to begin the work of selecting our nominees for the New Jersey Governors Educator of the Year Award for the 2020-2021 school year. The committee includes our most recent winners, Ms. Javalda Powell, Behaviorist, and Ms. Mariam Muheisen, Teacher of Social Studies.

- Mrs. Jessie Gorant, Teacher from our TAG Program and Biodiversity class was awarded the “Dick Engsberg Teacher Appreciation Award” for 2020 in honor of her work here at Benjamin Franklin Middle School as it relates to environmental education, leadership, and forward movement around other collaborative work in connection with Teaneck Creek Conservancy.
- A Pandemic Response Team was assembled and began meeting in preparation for our November 16 opening. We completed our walkthrough with the district and will continue to make modifications from recommendations.
- On October 17, BFMS and TJMS students were allowed to come and have their instruments tuned in the parking lot of BFMS. The work was done by Strings teacher, Joseph Hochgesang.
- On October 27, Teaneck Creek Conservancy’s interview series entitled, “Conversations from the Cottonwoods” interviewed Mr. Terrence Williams, Principal, Benjamin Franklin Middle School and Mrs. Jessie Gorant, Teacher of Benjamin Franklin Middle School to discuss the significances of building partnerships and collaboration with organizations in and around the Teaneck community. The program garnished about 1000 views.
- We honored 20 students virtually for our October Students of the Month Ceremony.

Thomas Jefferson Middle School

- October 5 was Bullying Prevention Day. Students and staff were encouraged to wear a blue shirt and participate in our daily Week of Respect activities.
- October 16 was Picture Day. Students had their portraits taken in the Benjamin Franklin gymnasium from 1pm-6pm.
- October 21 was a half-day session for virtual Parent-Teacher Conferences. Progress Reports were available online for our families to view.
- Staff and students celebrated Hispanic Heritage month with projects and activities in their classrooms.

Teaneck High School

- Preparing for the return of the Special Education Students on November 16.
- Parent Teacher conferences held on October 27. Teachers and parents were pleased with the process (2401 conferences were scheduled for the high school).
- Fall sports are coming to an end with students are getting ready for Winter Athletics
- Clubs are meeting virtually once a week
- Teaneck International Film Festival is hosting a virtual series for the High School on Friday, November 13 at 12:30 pm. Participants will have the opportunity to view a video presentation created by THS alumni and current student organizers of the Black Lives Matter Mural.
- THS will hold its monthly PTO meeting on Monday November 9, 2020 at 7:00 pm.

Human Resource Management –

Staff Vacancy Updates – see attached document

2020-2021 Second Marking Period Schedule

PRESCHOOL:

General Education:

November 16 - November 25

All-Remote: Monday to Friday: Live Remote 9:15 am to 12:15 pm

Hybrid: Monday to Thursday: In-Person 8:20 am to 10:20 am, Live Remote 11:00 am to 12:15 pm

Fridays: Asynchronous Remote 9:15 am to 12:15 pm

November 30 - January 29

All-Remote: Monday to Thursday: 9:15 am to 2:15 pm; Fridays: Live Remote 9:15 am to 12:15 pm

Hybrid: Monday to Thursday: In-Person 8:20 am to 11:20 am; Live Remote 12:15 pm to 2:15 pm

Fridays: Live Remote 9:15 to 12:15

Special Education Self-Contained

November 16 - November 25

All-Remote: Monday to Friday: Live Remote 9:15 am to 12:15 pm

Hybrid: Monday to Thursday: In-Person 8:30 am to 12:30 pm; Fridays: Live Remote 9:15 am to 12:15 pm

November 30 - January 29

All-Remote: Monday to Thursday: 9:15 am to 2:15 pm; Fridays: Live Remote 9:15 am to 12:15 p,

Hybrid: Monday to Thursday: In-Person 8:20 am to 2:15 pm; Fridays: Live Remote 9:15 am to 12:15 pm

KINDERGARTEN:

November 16 - November 25

Kindergarten - Monday - Thursday, In-Person half day schedule; Friday - Remote Half day schedule

November 30 - January 29

Kindergarten - Monday - Thursday, In-Person Full day schedule; Friday - Remote Half day schedule

** Full and half day schedules follow their respective school schedule*

SPECIAL EDUCATION:

November 16 - November 23

Special Education (self-contained grades 1 - 12)

Monday - Thursday, In-Person and All-Remote, Half-day schedule

Friday, Remote Half-day schedule

Special Education (age 18-21) - Monday -Friday, In-person at THS 8:15 am -12:30 pm

November 30 - January 29

Special Education (self-contained grades 1 - 12)

Monday - Thursday, In-Person Full day schedule

Friday - Remote Half-day schedule

Special Education (age 18-21) - Monday - Friday, In-person at THS 8:15 am - 2:00 pm

** Full and half-day schedules follow their respective school schedule*



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HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



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Payroll Supervisor

Groundsman

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Library Media Specialist

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