



Superintendent's Report

April 28, 2021

Annual Budget Hearing/Presentation

This evening, Ms. Simmons, our Business Administrator, will be presenting the annual budget presentation for the 2021-2022 school year. The Board will vote on this budget this evening.

Pre-K through Grade 4 Return to Four Days Per Week

On Monday, April 26, I sent a letter to our parents, students and staff announcing that our district will be moving from the 2-day cohort model to a 4-day learning model (no cohorts) for our preschool, kindergarten and elementary students. This change will impact our current in-person General Education classes only, as our Special Education self-contained already use a different in-person schedule. Please note that due to Bergen County's current COVID-19 levels and the CDC's updated guidelines pertaining to desk placement [CDC Physical Distancing Guidelines](#), we will continue with the cohort model for our middle and high schools while we monitor and evaluate their possible return to a four-day schedule.

As we work towards combining cohorts in order to provide our preschool, kindergarten and elementary children with more in-person class time, please note the following:

- We will continue to follow the half day release schedule
- Wednesdays will continue to be all virtual days
- Children who are participating in all virtual classes will not be impacted by this change.
- If a child receives bus transportation, there will be no change to the bus schedule; however the parent/guardian may be contacted with a new seat assignment

If you are a parent/guardian of a preschool, kindergarten or elementary school child, you will receive more information on the new four-day approach from your principal.

Vaccination Update

As we prepare for a four day return of our Pre-k through Grade 4 in-person students (through the end of this school year), we are happy to announce that over 400 of our staff members have been fully vaccinated as of April 23rd, representing 74% of Teaneck staff (not including 3rd party vendors). We also want our families to know that effective immediately, all students 16 and older are now eligible to receive a vaccination. While not mandatory, cases are rising and Holy Name Medical Center here in Teaneck will administer the Pfizer vaccine to all eligible children.

Teacher Appreciation Week

May 3 - May 7 is Teacher Appreciation Week and I just want to say a big thank you to our teachers and support staff who have made it through one of the most challenging years in education - at least in this

Century. Many of our teachers have continued their educational growth during this difficult year. I want to share one particular accomplishment of Ms. Ivy Stern, who recently was granted a 2nd Award for Continuing Education (ACE) for Speech-Language Pathologists and Audiologists may meet the requirements of the ACE by earning seven ASHA Continuing Education Units (CEUs) which is equivalent to 70 contact hours in a thirty-six month period. Ms. Ivy B. Stern joins a select group of individuals who have made a concerted, personal effort to continue professional learning beyond an academic degree. During this upcoming week, I invite all of our administrators, students and parents to thank your teachers for all that they do. Also in May, we will recognize our Bergen County Educators of the Year for each school.

Assistant Superintendent Search

With Ms. Angela Davis' retirement this summer, we are currently looking for a new Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services. The job description and posting are up on our website and we are working with a search firm to help with the recruiting for this critical position. Interviews will take place mid to late May and the selected candidate will come to the Board for final approval at the June Board meeting.

Kindergarten Registration

Kindergarten registration for the 2021-2022 school year is now open through May. Children must be 5 years of age on or before October 1, 2021 to qualify for kindergarten. For more information, please visit our website: <https://www.teaneckschools.org/GradesPK3PK4andKindergarten.aspx>

Aspiring Leaders Program

The District is moving ahead with a special professional development program to build future leaders of the district. This program will begin September 2021. My announcement video was sent to staff on Monday, April 26, which was followed up with more program information - including how to apply - which went out today. Applications for our "aspiring leaders" are due May 14.

Middle School "Moving Up" & High School Graduation Ceremonies

The District has been reviewing outdoor "moving up" and high school graduation ceremonies options for our students. Although certain arrangements are still being made, please note the following schedule:

- Thomas Jefferson & Benjamin Franklin Middle School Moving Up Ceremony: June 15, 2021 (TJMS will be in the morning and BFMS will be in the afternoon)
- Teaneck High School Graduation Ceremony (**NOTE NEW DATE**): June 16, 2021 (Per Governor Murphy's latest announcement, we believe we can do one graduation ceremony for all students)
- RAIN DATES: June 17 & 18

COVID-19 Testing

During the month of April - and we will continue to offer in May - the district is offering free COVID-19 Testing for TPS staff, students & TPS families (from 2 pm to 6 pm). Registration is required – see the "Our Latest News" section on the homepage of our website:

[Free COVID-19 Testing](#)

Curriculum & Instruction

New Jersey Department of Education Seal of Biliteracy: The Seal of Biliteracy program is a national initiative which was designed to: encourage students to study languages, certify attainment of biliteracy, provide employers with a method of identifying people with language and biliteracy skills, provide universities with a method to recognize and award academic credit to applicants seeking admission, prepare students with 21st century skills, recognize and promote second language instruction in public schools, and affirm the value of diversity by honoring the multiple cultures and languages of a community. The Teaneck School District is a *proud* participant of this competitive program and we are excited to announce that four of our students have earned this national seal of recognition. Two graduating seniors will earn the Seal of Biliteracy for Urdu, one student for Arabic and one student for Tagalog. We will honor these students and Mr. Ramon Ortiz, District Supervisor of World Languages, during our May Board meeting.

Social Studies, Business and Practical Arts: In April, students in Ms. Pitre's United States History I class, at Teaneck High School, participated in the *Energizing Young Voters* program sponsored by the League of Women Voters. League trained facilitators engaged students in an interactive learning experience titled The Suffrage Timeline (What's it worth?). The lesson immersed students in the sacrifices made to gain the vote, from the start of the nation through the ongoing fight against voter suppression. Students assumed the identity of an avatar with attributes related to voting eligibility over time. Students created a human suffrage timeline as the avatars they were assigned fought for and gained the right to vote.

Science, Technology and Engineering: On April 13, the T.E.A.M.S program held its 1st annual "Virtual Freshman T.E.A.M.S. Night" event. We welcomed the incoming 9th grade T.E.A.M.S. class and their families. A presentation detailing the courses and offerings of the program was shared, and the evening included a virtual Q&A event with a special guest speaker from the T.H.S./ T.E.A.M.S. class of 2006, Dr. Moses Divaker (Aeronautical Engineer and Entrepreneur.)

English Language Learners: On April 26, the district will begin ACCESS 2.0 Testing for all 121 English learners in the Teaneck School District. The ACCESS 2.0 provides information about students' English language abilities and the district uses this information to make informed decisions regarding instructional programming. The ACCESS measures what students know and can do in English in the domains of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing, and students do not need to study for the test, but rather, focus on demonstrating their language abilities. Testing will end on June 11, 2021.

Early Childhood Education: The Early Childhood Department hosted three successful Pre-K Meet and Greet events, where current and prospective families received department and curriculum information. These opportunities allowed time for personalized discussions with Early Childhood Staff, as well as application assistance for new registrants. A virtual Preschool Information Session was conducted in conjunction with the Teaneck Public Library to provide the community an opportunity to learn about our district's full day, high-quality Pre-K program.

Mathematics: The following IFL training sessions were completed for grades 3-8 in March: Supporting and Measuring Conceptual Understanding; Surfacing Student Thinking & Highlighting Mathematics with Purposeful Questions; Math Tasks that Promote and Focus the Talk; and Learning-Centered Routines to Support Math Talk.

This month, we will be collecting and coding math task demands and the quality of student work for two data cycles (December - March, April - May). We are asking each math teacher in grades 3-8 to submit a high-level mathematics task and three samples of student work for each cycle. The purpose of this is to analyze how students "show" their thinking. Areas of focus include: Created/used representations (equation, graph, diagram, table); Used labels; Connected representations; Explained reasoning; Used logical sequence of ideas; and Accuracy.

School Counseling Department

- NJSLA Update: The United States Department of Education (USED) recently informed the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) that the administration of Start Strong assessments in fall 2021 will satisfy the federal statewide assessment requirement for the 2020-21 school year. **Therefore, there will be no spring 2021 administration of the New Jersey Student Learning Assessments (NJSLA).**
The Start Strong assessments will be administered in fall 2021 to all students in English Language Arts (ELA) grades 4-10, Mathematics grades 4-8, Algebra I, Geometry and Algebra II, and in Science grades 6, 9, and 12. More detailed information will be shared as it is available about the schedule and duration of these assessments.
- The Mental Health Initiative - Students and families in grades k-8 have access to licensed mental health clinicians. Telehealth sessions are conducted utilizing Google Meets. Parents can access these services by contacting their child's counselor. Spanish-speaking counselors are available.
- Parent Night Webinar Events: Mental Health Services Program
 - Thursday, May 20 - "Mindfulness and Stress Reduction" -- Meeting joining information and time is forthcoming.
 - Thursday, June 10 - "Curbside with a Clinician" (chat with a Clinician about concerns) - - Meeting joining information and time is forthcoming.
- College & Career
 - College/University Rep visits have begun. Students must sign up via Naviance
 - A Scholarship Tab has been added to the School Counseling page.
<https://www.teaneckschools.org/Scholarships1.aspx>
- Upcoming events
 - Virtual College Fair held on Tuesday, April 27, 2021.
- Communication
 - Please visit the School Counseling Department website for information and resources
 - "THS Connections" Newsletter - THS Counseling Department a monthly newsletter is available on the school website "School Counseling" tab.
<https://www.teaneckschools.org/SchoolCounseling.aspx>
 - YouTube Channel- All webinars will be posted for viewing.
(<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDw7prx6aDcxJmeyAo5sgQw>)
 - Follow @TeaneckSchoolCounseling on Instagram and Facebook

Special Services

New Jersey Inclusive Education Technical Assistance Project

The New Jersey Inclusive Education Technical Assistance Project (NJIETA) commenced April 12. The TPS was awarded the NJIETA technical assistance grant (non-financial) last summer. This is a collaborative effort between the New Jersey Department of Education Office of Special Education (OSE), the Montclair University Center for Autism and Early Childhood Mental Health (CAECMH), and the New Jersey Coalition for Inclusive Education (NJCIE). The coalition will be working with identified special education teachers, as well as general education teachers and specialists to provide technical assistance and systematic change-facilitation to develop more inclusive educational practices and opportunities where all students- with and without disabilities can learn, contribute, and strive.

- NJ Inclusive Education Technical Assistance (NJIETA) project Sessions:
 - Session 1 Introduction Monday, April 12
 - Session 2 Building Relationships, Monday, April 19
 - Session 3 Co-Planning Monday, May 3
 - Session 4 Co-Teaching Models, Monday, May 10
 - Session 5 Wrap Up Monday, May 24
 - NJIETA Summer Inclusion Leadership Conference, June 28

The Teaneck Special Education Advisory Group (SEPAG)

On March 23, the Special Education Advisory Group (SEPAG) held its monthly meeting. Ms. Golding-Cooper, Director of Guidance, Career Services, and Vocational Education, presented college scholarships and post-secondary opportunities for students with special needs.

Upcoming Events:

- **SSI and Medicaid: How To Apply And Why You Need - May 11 (7:00 PM - 8:00 PM)**

The Teaneck learning community is invited to join **Mr. Danny Gareri**, Transition Coordinator and **The Ach of New Jersey** for a Hands-on Virtual Workshop Series on May 11 from 7:00 PM to 8:00 PM. This session is designed to help individuals with developmental disabilities and their families navigate the transition from school to adult life.

- **Transition Planning: Paving the Way for Your Child's Future Success - May 18 (6:30 PM - 8:00 PM)**

The Department of Special Services and The Teaneck Special Education Advisory Group (SEPAG) will be facilitating a virtual parent workshop. In this session, we will provide an overview of state and federal transition policies according to IDEA; and post-secondary resources for parents to learn even more about supporting their child through the transition planning process.

Technology Department

During this school year, the Technology Department closed over 3,400 help desk tickets. These tickets are requests that faculty and staff enter in our help desk system (helpdesk.teaneckschools.org) for technical support. Additionally, the department resolved over 600 issues through our parent/student technical support email and assisted over 1,500 students through our Chrome Depot services.

Communications, Community Relations & Volunteer Services

District Website Redesign

The redesign of our district website is well underway. A beta/demo on the current progress was provided to the Board's Community Relations Committee on April 12 and with our Executive Team on April 20. We are on target for a full launch at the start of the new school year (September 2021).

Annual Communications Survey Coming in May

Per the District's Internal & External Communications Plan, we will be releasing our Annual Communications Surveys this May for your feedback. These surveys (one for parents, one for staff, and one for middle & high school students) helps us to gauge our progress on all types of communication platforms - from our website and social media to our school communications. Please look out for the emails on this and be sure to provide your input!

Community Education

Summer Camp/Camp K – Registration for Camp K will open on May 3 via MySchoolBucks. Summer camp is proceeding under a modified program for kinder through grade 6. Camp will begin a week later than usual to ensure everyone (including campers) are COVID-19 tested. Unfortunately, we will not have an "Explorers Program" this year due to pandemic limitations. This year's camp program is currently scheduled for June 28 – August 6. To register beginning May 3, visit:

<https://www.teaneckschools.org/SummerCamps.aspx>

Bryant School

April Highlights:

- Congratulations to Ms. Brittany Butler for receiving full-funding for your Red-Eared Slider Turtle Habitat Project through DonorsChoose.org!
- The March Hospital and Community Helper theme was the perfect time for Bryant students to make virtual visits to Nurse Cardona-Ruiz 's health office. Children learned why you visit the Nurse's office, and what happens once you get there.
- On April 12, Principal Davidman held a virtual Round Table, where the families of the 30 children changing from all-remote to In-Person Learning for the 4th marking period, discussed safety protocols, hybrid learning, and arrival/dismissal procedures..
- On April 19, spring take-home kits to support remote and at-home learning were distributed at Bryant school.
- The Bryant School community marked the *Week of the Young Child*, from April 10 to 16, with daily themed celebrations including Music Monday, Tasty Tuesday, Work Together Wednesday, Artsy Thursday, and Family Friday.
- Bryant School's newly established Parent Teacher Organization, met on April 20. End of the year celebrations, summer enrichment activities, and fundraising to benefit gifts for children transitioning to kindergarten were discussed.
- Earth Day was celebrated with outdoor learning and fun in the Garden Courtyard, classrooms, and at home for remote learners.

Upcoming in May:

- Bryant School will hold outdoor, socially distant Picture Days for all cohorts on 5/18 & 5/21.
- The "Name our Red Eared Slider Turtles" contest winners will be announced.

- The PTO and Front Office Staff will celebrate our faculty during Teacher Appreciation Week.
- Virtual Kindergarten visits are planned for the week of May 26th. In collaboration with the Theodora Smiley Lacey School, Pre-K and Kindergarten teachers are collaborating to provide a seamless transition to Kindergarten.

Theodora Lacey School

- Congratulations to Ms. Smith for getting two projects funded through Donors Choose ("Supplies in COVID Times for Special Needs Learners" & "HP Color Printer for Special Needs students"
- Lacey will complete Phase 2 which includes Library Media Center Shelving, Stage lighting, Performance curtains, Audio/ Visual equipment, Projector and large screen for viewing.
- April will mark the start of Registration for Kindergarten; registration will be conducted online until further notice
- Lacey K students engaged in IXL Math at Home and in school logging in 9000+ questions and 430 skills practiced. Research shows that answering at least 30 questions per week has a measurable impact on student outcomes.
- Planning for PK4 students "Next school Virtual Visit" & "Virtual Parent Open House" is underway.
- April 19 marked the First Day of in-person learning for Marking Period 4. Lacey School welcomed back students, IN-PERSON for both Cohort AC and BC days. We were happy to see so many of our students back in the building!

Hawthorne Elementary School

- The Hawthorne staff worked on a project which involved professional development from the New Jersey Coalition for Inclusive Education. The purpose of this project is to support best practices for our inclusion instructional model.
- It was a pleasure to see the smiling faces of our students during makeup picture day on Tuesday, April 20.
- The Hawthorne PTA is excited to announce our in-person book fair on Tuesday, April 27 and Thursday, April 29 from 3pm to 6pm on the Hawthorne School blacktop. Additionally, book fair items can be bought online through Wednesday, May 5.
- The Hawthorne School PTA is looking for executive officers for next year's PTA board. Please contact ptahawthorne@teaneckschools.org for more information.
- Do you want your child to leave a physical imprint at Hawthorne School? If so, please check out Art to Remember. This is an opportunity for your child to create an art tile which will be permanently displayed at our school. If you are interested, please see the flyer for more information and complete the registration form: [Art to Remember Flyer \(1\).jpg](#)
<https://forms.gle/RKAzznyQbnj39WX79>
- The Hawthorne PTA are also selling Hawthorne School hoodies and offering birthday signs. Please contact ptahawthorne@teaneckschools.org to purchase yours today!

Lowell Elementary School

- Lowell School is fired up for the Fast ForWord and Reading Assistant Plus to the Finish Line Challenges!
 - Click [HERE](#) for further details as well as for information on the Reading Assistant Plus Challenge, where students have the opportunity to win a \$25 Amazon Gift Card.

- Our first two students were awarded \$25 Amazon Gift Cards via a random drawing.
- Mr. Deubel delivered the Gift Cards to the students on April 19.
- Lowell School and Bergen Reads
 - Lowell School's partnership with Bergen Volunteers for the Bergen Reads Reading Buddies program is off to a great start. Reading buddies have been reading with some of our students weekly in a remote setting.
- Read Across America
 - On March 30, Lowell School partnered up with 7th and 8th Graders from Thomas Jefferson Middle School for the first time to celebrate Read Across America. Throughout the morning hours, 7th and 8th grade volunteers from TJMS virtually visited our classrooms to read books to our Lowell School students.
- Virtual Scholastic Spring Book Fair
 - The PTO hosted the Virtual Scholastic Spring Book Fair from April 5 to April 18.
 - Parents were encouraged to set up Virtual Online Wallets for their Children. Children were encouraged to shop for Summer Reading materials with their parents
 - Students who participated in Lowell's Summer Reading program were given a \$5 certificate which they redeemed during the Virtual Scholastic Spring Book Fair.
- Lowell School's monthly PTO Meeting was held on Tuesday, April 27 at 6:30pm
 - The meeting featured Ms. Tepeli, one of our 4th grade teachers, who presented information on Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Lowell is looking forward to the Month of May and all the great upcoming activities
 - National Physical Education Week: Click [HERE](#) for details
 - Picture Days: May 10 and May 14

Whittier Elementary School

- The Whittier's PTO sponsored two virtual author visits:
 - Raina Telgemeier, author of the book "GUTS" met with Whittier third and fourth grade students on April 20 for a 30-minute chat about the book. Each third and fourth grade student received a copy of the book prior to the virtual author visit.
 - Rebecca Elliott, author of *Owl Diaries* and *Unicorn Diaries* (part of her Branches line aimed at newly independent readers) met virtually with our Kindergarten and first and second grade students on Wednesday, April 28h at 9:00 a.m. Ms. Elliot shared how she created these books and the value of series books for readers of all ages. Students received a copy of one of her books last week.
- The Whittier School Read-A-Thon is Back! The Read-A-Thon began on Monday, April 26th, and will run through Monday, May 10th. Ms. Martinez hosted a short google meet with all students by grade level to explain the read-a-thon.
- The PTO will be hosting a Scholastic Book Fair on Wednesday, May 5th outside in the Whittier Court Yard from 1:00 PM - 6:00 PM.
- The next virtual PTO meeting is scheduled for May 25 at 6:30 PM via Zoom.
- Whittier School welcomed back our new students who have opted for hybrid instruction for the fourth marking period.
- Whittier School will honor and celebrate its incredible teaching staff the week of May 3.

Benjamin Franklin Middle School

- Benjamin Franklin Middle School has held multiple presentations to teach our school community about Ramadan and fasting. These workshops have taken place during our WIN Periods and included presentations by students (who are fasting); staff (who are fasting); a community speaker who is a journalist shared her experience of growing up as a Muslim women in a society where Islam is not as hegemonic. These were all a part of our Asian American Heritage Month celebration and coincide with the start of Ramadan
- To prepare our learners for next year, BFMS asked its Encore Teachers to record promotion videos for our 4th graders who will be moving up. These videos will be shared with our elementary school students to aid in their selection process for the next school year.
- The BFMS Community has installed three Little Free Libraries on our campus. Two of the Little Free Libraries are located in our Garden at the Windsor Road entrance and they contain titles for our 5-8 grade learners. Another Little Free Library is located in the front of the school on Taft Road and it contains literature for all levels and for our community near Benjamin Franklin Middle School. The libraries contain a QR Code so students can log their reading and make suggestions for books they enjoy.
- Benjamin Franklin Middle School, with the support of our Operations & Maintenance Dept. (O&M) have completed the renovation of our Teacher's Faculty Lounge as part of our Beautification Project. The new space is complete with a newly installed kitchen area with new appliances, seating, and tables to welcome our instructional and support staff. A ribbon cutting will be held during Teacher Appreciation Week.
- We have launched a Professional Development Calendar for our staff members. The calendar can be accessed at www.tinyurl.com/BFMSPDCal and it contains free training and workshops for instructional and support staff.
- The BFMS leadership team participated in two virtual job fairs with Ramapo University and Montclair State University where we collectively interviewed over 35 candidates who are interested in teaching.

Thomas Jefferson Middle School

- TJMS teaches about Ramadan observance. During Ramadan, healthy adolescent and adult Muslims all over the world fast from dawn to dusk. The practice of fasting means our students will abstain from eating or drinking (even water) during the day. Ramadan began April 13 and will end on May 12 with the Eid holiday celebrated on May 13.
- Report Cards were posted on April 16 for parents to see their child's academic standing for the end of the 3rd marking period on Skyward.
- TJMS held a PTA meeting via Zoom on April 20 at 7pm.
- Our PTA Council hosts the "Get to Know Your Community" series with the theme of Arab American Heritage Month. This month's speaker will be 6th grade teacher Ms. Charaf's husband, Imam Moutaz Charaf. The event will be held on April 28 at 1:30pm.
- Between April 29 -May 1, TJMS PTA is hosting multiple fundraising events including Krispy Kreme Donuts, Coliseum Pizza and a clothing drive collection. Please visit <https://tjmsteanek.memberhub.store/store> for details.

Teaneck High School

- Wednesday, April 7 was Senior Night for the Girls Volleyball Team.
- Teaneck's Youth Advisory Board presents "**Building Bonds Civics in Action**" April 11 at 4:00pm.
- BQMT met Monday, April 12 from 6:00 pm - 7:00 pm.
- PTO met Monday, April 12 from 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm.
- **Bergen Community College Virtual Student Prospect Nights** - Thursday , April 15 and Thursday May 13, from 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm.
- Bergen County Links hosted their 3rd Annual International Career Panel Sunday, April 18 from 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm.
- The FORUM will host virtual **Employment Enrichment Workshops** for students on Wednesday, April 28 and Thursday, April 29 from 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm.

Human Resource Management –

Staff Vacancy Updates – see attached document



VACANCIES as of 04.20.2021

DISTRICT



SACC Coordinator Part-Time



*Supervisor of Humanities and Gifted Education



General Mechanic



*School Treasurer – Business Office



*Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services



*Supervisor of Visual & Performing Arts



*Messenger - Operations & Maintenance



Bus Driver

TEANECK HIGH



Mathematics Teacher



*Television & Production Teacher



Custodian

THOMAS JEFFERSON



*Grade 5 Teacher



*Physical Education Teacher



Special Education Teacher

LOWELL



*Outreach Worker

THEODORA SMILEY LACEY



*English as a Second Language (ESL) Teacher

HAWTHORNE



*Grade 1 Teacher

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN



Library Media Specialist