

Superintendent's Report



January 16, 2019

Superintendent's Advisory Committees

The six committees (Student, Faculty, Beyond Diversity, SEPAC, Faith-based and Student Code of Conduct Review) continue to host their respective committee meetings and the next round of meeting notes will be posted on our website in February.

Preschool Education Expansion Aid Grant

Our expanded preschool program (full day at Bryant and additional 30 pre-k seats at Christ Episcopal Church) officially opened on January 2, 2019. I am pleased to report that all went smoothly; and I want to thank all of our staff who helped to develop and implement this expansion plan in less than three months. Additionally, our Ribbon-cutting ceremony held on January 10 was well-attended and received prominent media coverage on News 12 and in The Bergen Record. I would like to thank NJDOE Deputy Assistant Commissioner Hasan, Assemblywoman Huttler, Bergen County Freeholder Chairwoman Ortiz, and our Town Council and Board members who participated in this special event. I also want to thank the many parents and staff members who attended this momentous occasion.

District Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan Steering Committee meetings (for the remainder of this year) will occur on January 30, March 12, April 30, and May 21. Focus groups will take place during February and March with key stakeholders including former Board trustees. An online survey will be released during February. We will also host two Town Hall meetings at Teaneck High School on February 20 and March 4. All progress on the development of this plan is being shared via email and on our website.

2019-2020 Budget Forums

As per our Board Budget Planning Calendar, the district will host two special budget forums on February 19 at The Rodda Center and on March 26 at Teaneck High School. These forums will provide the Teaneck community with additional opportunities to participate in the budget development process for the 2019-2020 school year.

College Partnerships

On tonight's agenda, I have included a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Teaneck Public School and Bloomfield College. With the Board's approval, this MOU will provide our students a wide variety of opportunities to receive substantial scholarships to attend Bloomfield College. It also includes internship opportunities and academic support. It should be noted that I have a follow-up meeting with President Mercer of Ramapo College on February 12 and it is my hope that we pursue a similar MOU for our students.

Meeting with the SDA

As a follow-up to a recent productive meeting with the new NJ Schools Development Authority (SDA) Chief Executive Officer and members of her team, I am pleased to announce that she will be coming to Teaneck on January 23 to do a tour of some of our schools. She has also requested a list of Teaneck's emergent projects for their consideration under the funding that deemed for "Regular Operating Districts" (non-Abbott).

Black History Month Calendar of Events

On January 7, I met with the leaders of many community organizations in an effort to collaborate and develop a community calendar of events focused on Black History Month. This poster-format calendar will be displayed in all district schools (as well as many other community facilities). I want our students to continue their education by attending some of these special events. It is my intention to create something similar for Women's History Month in March, and Holocaust and Heroism Remembrance Day in May.

Recent Student Recognition

Immediately prior to tonight's meeting, we recognized our winter sports team captains. These young men and women have assumed leadership roles for their respective sports teams and I congratulate each of them for serving as role models for their fellow team members and all of our students. Also, we celebrated the outstanding accomplishment of our Girls Bowling Team who became Bergen County Champions this past week.

Student Liaisons to the Board

Updates from Saima Jamal, Vernon Johnson, Stephanie Menendez, and William MacIntosh.

Curriculum & Instruction

World Language/ESL: The World Language and ESL departments are working together to have our district participate in the Seal of Biliteracy program sponsored by the New Jersey Department of Education. This program identifies graduating high school seniors who are able to demonstrate proficiency in English in addition to one or more world languages. We have identified 31 students who may qualify for the seal if they pass the criteria, which includes taking an exam in another language and passing with proficiency. The students will take the world language assessments in February 2019.

Professional Learning: The Office of Curriculum & Instruction created a peer-led professional learning program focused on an ongoing cycle of growth and development. Ten teachers volunteered to lead thirteen workshops/courses, which took place after school between October and January. Seventy-five teachers and staff members enrolled in these sessions! This project will be repeated in the spring with additional opportunities for teachers and staff to lead professional learning sessions for their peers.

Guidance Department: On Friday, January 11, 2019, 35 students were able to apply directly to Bergen Community College as part of Instant Decision Day and all were accepted. The representatives discussed all options for students, in particular degree-granting programs. Some upcoming events:

- January 17th – College Application Instant Decision Day. Some of the fourteen colleges include Rutgers University-Newark, NJIT, FDU, William Paterson University, Seton Hall University, Kean University, College of St. Rose and Dominican College. Students will have the opportunity to meet with the college representatives and learn of their admission decision immediately.
- January 22nd – Fairleigh Dickinson University Latino Promise Instant Decision Day. The representatives from FDU Latino Promise will be here to meet with students and conduct an onsite application with instant decision.
- January 31st – Junior Student Parent Night. The guidance department staff will present information on college admissions to students and parents. The presentation will provide students and parents with all information necessary to plan for post-secondary education.

Community Relations & Volunteer Services

Teaneck Public Schools successfully launched its official District Facebook page on Monday, January 7. As of January 14, we already have garnered 259 "Likes" and 285 "Followers". Ms. Corallo, Supervisor of Community Relations, is the primary content provider for this page and while overseeing our preschool ribbon-cutting ceremony on January 10, she posted "live" on Facebook. Pictures from this special event can also be found on the district website. Other recent website changes include the addition of a "Strategic Plan Development" drop-down option where we are providing regular updates to the planning process, and the new "Executive Team Roles" section found under "District Administration".

Plans are underway for two upcoming Strategic Plan Town Hall events and two additional Budget Community Forums. Additional projects include the creation of a Black History Month Calendar of Events poster and the development of the 2019-2020 School and District calendars.

Hawthorne Elementary School

Recent and upcoming activities/events at Hawthorne include:

- NEHS Induction Ceremony held on 1/10/19. Eighteen students inducted.
- MLK Essay Contest will end on 1/30/19.
- New to the school this year is The Teaneck Young Explorers Club. The club will meet during lunch and recess times, once per week, and activities will focus on math, science, and STEM activities. Ms. Brown facilitates the club.
- Second Parent Engagement event was held on 12/11/18. The topic was "Helping Your Child Succeed with Homework and Studying". The presenters were Ms. Blount, Ms. Norris, Ms. Nunez, and Ms. Thomas.
- In line with Hawthorne's Title I Parent Engagement/Parent involvement goal, a third event will be held on January 30. The event will focus on grades K – 4 and the topic will be Cyberbullying and the Dangers of Gaming. The presenter will be Ms. Brantley, Guidance Outreach.
- In line with the school's goal to introduce a Girl's Circle program as a social-emotional tiered intervention, the first group has convened. The group meets once per week, after school, for one hour. Ms. Brantley facilitates the sessions.
- Preparations for Hawthorne class and school level Spelling Bees (grades 2 – 4) have begun. The winner of the school's school bee will compete in the North Jersey Spelling Bee in mid-March.
- CORRECTION: In line with School Level Goal of producing teacher/staff generated video tutorials, the staff has begun producing parent video tutorials and submitting them to Mr. Jennette. Links to be available on the Hawthorne School web page starting 1/22/19.

Lowell Elementary School

Recent activities and upcoming events at Lowell included:

- Lowell's PTO is having a Book Drive, accepting gently used books to donate to students and teachers in the school community.
- The second grade students learned about different cultural holidays and some family traditions. To culminate this learning, they celebrated with a holiday feast. Delicious foods were prepared and served by the parents to the students and staff at Lowell School.

- The third grade were learning about the community on why and how people participate in government. Then they went on a field trip, to see firsthand how the Teaneck Police Department and Municipal Court contribute to the community.
- The third grade held an Information Writing Publishing Party to celebrate student's accomplishments of publishing their information writing pieces, and parents and staff were invited.
- As mentioned last month, the school is currently hosting a MATH Competition every "F" Day; the students compete to answer fundamental math fact questions/problems.
- Lowell School's Physical Education teachers, Ms. Ryerson and Mr. Cho, presents a class with the Golden Sneaker Award monthly. Classes earn points throughout the month by showing great behavior, being prepared for class, and being a role model class.

Whittier Elementary School

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Whittier include:

- Whittier School held its Family Math Night on December 6. Students and their families were invited to participate in a fun evening exploring math concepts through hands-on learning and games. The evening was a success with 22 families attending.
- In conjunction with KPMG and the Teaneck High School Heroes Group, students at Whittier School participated in a Junior Achievement Financial Literacy Program. Students participated in grade appropriate lessons and activities on finances.
- On December 20, Whittier School held its Annual Winter choral and instrumental concert.
- On January 7, students participated in a dental assembly sponsored by New Jersey Children's Oral Health Program. Students learned about foods to prevent cavities and the importance of good oral hygiene.
- The After the Bell Math and Literacy Title 1 program began on January 10. Whittier School will hold its second Family Literacy Night on January 17 with a night full of Roald Dahl reading, writing and science activities.
- Town Hall meetings will be held in recognition of no-name calling week.
- A PTO-sponsored Chess Club will begin on January 23 for students to learn or improve their chess game.

Benjamin Franklin Middle School

Recent and upcoming activities/events at BFMS include:

- The annual BF Cares initiative, a gift drive with the purpose of BFMS staff and community seeking to brighten the holidays for students, was held in the month of December.
- BFMS musicians treated the school community to a resounding winter concert on December 13. The BFMS band, jazz band, orchestra, and chorus put their talent on display.
- On December 17, BFMS hosted its first BF basketball games against Fairview. The girls and boys BF Bulldogs team were victorious in front of a packed gym.
- BFMS staff participated in a potluck on December 21.
- BF's PTO meeting was held on January 8. Anny Eusebio, an e-cigarette/ tobacco prevention specialist and BFMS parent, facilitated a parent workshop about the dangers of vaping and juuling.
- The school's "Student of the Month" recipients were honored at a ceremony on January 11.

- Looking ahead, the biodiversity TAG class will be visiting the elementary schools to share vital environmental information on February 5.
- The PTO is sponsoring a winter dance on February 13.
- BFMS' annual "Night at the Museum", in honor of Black History Month, will be taking place on March 7.

Thomas Jefferson Middle School

Recent and upcoming activities/events at TJMS include:

- TJ's National Junior Honor Society Induction Ceremony on January 10. It was well attended by parents, extended family and others who support our student's quest for excellence. Ms. Davis, school principals, is extremely proud of the 40 eighth grade students who were inducted into the prestigious National Junior Honor Society. Each of these students demonstrated Knowledge and Truth, Scholarship, Leadership, Service, Character and Citizenship.
- Ms. Luckman Jacobs, technology teacher, provided an opportunity for the fifth and sixth grade students to participate in the Hour of Code during the week of December 3 – 9, which is Computer Science Education Week. Students were able to work on Code.Org at home or any place they had access to a device with internet access. This year, students worked on creating a Dance Party. They learned how to create a character (sprite) and make it dance. The key term students learned was VARIABLE. Students learned to name the variable, assign attributes to it and instruct it to dance. There are many other options available for students to work with, including Frozen, Flappy Birds and Mine Craft. Students enjoyed this activity and look forward to continuing.
- TJMS students are competing in the National Geographic Bee. For the 31st year, the National Geographic Society is holding the National Geographic Bee for students in the fourth through eighth grades. TJ's students are competing in the preliminary round of the Bee in their Social Studies classes. The semi-final round and championship round will take place in January.
- Empower Girls group wrapped up its school-wide Sock Drive. Over 300 pairs of socks were collected and donated to the following two charities: the Center for Food Action and Paterson Cares' street outreach.
- The Thomas Jefferson Middle School Media Center will be named "The Leola Weaver Maddox Media Center" on February 15. A gathering dedication and an unveiling ceremony will take place. More information will be forthcoming.

Teaneck High School

Dr. Martin Luther King Celebration

The Annual Dr. Martin Luther King celebration will take place this Friday, January 18, during "A" lunch and "B" lunch in the Student Center. Students will sing Happy Birthday and cake will be served during both lunch periods. There will be a poster of Dr. King –I Have a Dream and students will write on post-it notes finishing the statement "I Have a Dream" A student DJ will also play music from the civil rights era during lunch.

Teaneck Teen Idol

Teaneck Teen Idol will be held on January 19 in the Auditorium at 8 pm. Students who live in Teaneck were able to audition for Teen Idol. Tickets are \$5 dollars for students. Current senior, Dallas Jeannette

won the competition last year. Teaneck alum Felicia Temple, who was a former contestant on *The Voice*, will be one of the judges.

Junior Parent Night

The Guidance Department will host the annual Junior Parent night on January 31. Topics that will be covered are:

- Senior course selections –Maintaining a rigorous schedule
- Testing - Understanding the difference between the ACT and the SAT
- The Approach to College Research
- Naviance –updating your information on Naviance
- Summer Programs

Black Youth Organization Show

BYO is having their annual Black History show on February 8. There will be an assembly during the day for students and a show in the evening. Please come out and support this event. The students perform and inform many contributions of African Americans.

Human Resource Management

Staff Vacancy Updates – see attached document