

Superintendent's Report



October 10, 2018

Superintendent's Advisory Committees

Since my arrival in our community, I have spoken countless about the need to gauge community feedback and use this to help inform the future of the district. To that end, I discussed a series of stakeholder committees that would be in place to help guide my administration (Student, Faculty, Beyond Diversity, SEPAC, Faith-based and Student Code of Conduct Review). Information about these advisory committees was shared broadly, and applications were posted on our website. We also issued reminders that applications were due by October 9th. As the committee meetings are scheduled, I invite members of the Board to attend these meetings and bear witness to the type of conversations that I expect to take shape.

Preschool Education Expansion Grant Approved

After receiving the great news that we have been awarded a \$1.2 million Preschool Education Expansion Grant, I held a staff meeting to begin the implementation process – from registration to staffing to facility needs. This group will meet regularly between now and end of December to have us ready for a January 2019 start. Also, our press release generated media coverage by News 12 and The Record – and is expected to appear in Thursday's issue of The Suburbanite.

District Strategic Plan

At the November Regular Board meeting, I will be making a presentation to the Board regarding the Strategic Planning Process.

Recent Student Recognition

One of the many changes to our district website is the addition of a Student Accomplishments section – which we will also celebrate at our Board meetings. In fact, this evening we will be recognizing two young women who were selected to serve as Junior Commissioners of the Bergen County Commission on the Status of Women. Teaneck was the only district to have two students selected to serve and *attached is a copy of the acceptance letter.*

Additionally, many of you were present last week when two of our high school students, Anthony Williams, Jr. and Moniah Dailey, were recently honored by Teaneck Comes Together, Inc., for their "Youth Achievement Award".

Next month, prior to the November Board meeting (at 6:30 pm), we will be recognizing approximately 90 students who achieved a "5" (exceeding expectations) on both the 2018 PARCC ELA and Math, and 7 students who received a *perfect score* on one of these assessments. It is my intention to make this an annual celebration and I hope you will join me on November 10th to recognize these outstanding student accomplishments.

Student Liaisons to the Board

It is with great pleasure that I introduce to you this evening our four high school seniors who will be attending and participating in our Board meetings this year: Saima Jamal, Vernon Johnson, Stephanie Menendez, and William MacIntosh.

Curriculum & Instruction

Language Arts: Throughout the district, teachers spent the first few weeks poring over achievement data. Growth in the reading standards was a positive trend that teachers found encouraging. One area of focus, specifically for our middle school language arts classes, is the area of writing.

English as a Second Language: The department was glad to welcome Ms. Diana Sanchez to the ESL department. Ms. Sanchez will be providing ESL services to Lowell Elementary School and Whittier Elementary School. The team was also very busy screening new students who may be in need of language assistance. This year, the team will be implementing a new assessment when screening students for ESL services. In order to implement the new screening tool, teachers were required to complete five hours of training during the month of September. The district is happy to report that all teachers are now certificated to administer the WIDA SCREENER. We look forward to using the online screening tool to support the work that we do with our English language learners.

Guidance Department:

1. *Freshman Parent Orientation: Thursday, August 30, 2018*
Evening program held for parents/guardians of incoming 9th grade students. The program gives parents and guardians a holistic perspective about Teaneck High School and I welcomed them to Teaneck High School.
2. *College Representatives Visit THS: September-Present*
College/university representatives continue to visit with our junior and senior students. Some colleges/universities include: Amherst College, Rutgers U-New Brunswick, Temple, U. of New Haven, St. John's University, Caldwell University, Bowdoin College, Boston University. Additional colleges/universities have been scheduled to visit throughout October and November.
3. *Senior Parent Night: Thursday, September 27, 2018*
Evening program for senior students and parents discussing all aspects of the college admissions process. The guidance department gave a presentation explaining vital information regarding college applications, SAT and ACT testing information, college essays, teacher letters of recommendations, as well as identifying all materials needed for college applications.
4. *Financial Aid Night: Thursday, October 4, 2018*
Mr. Doug Wilson from Kean University was here to discuss and explain the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. He provided students and parents an overview of when and how to submit financial aid forms.
5. *PSAT: Wednesday, October 10, 2018*
All sophomores and juniors will have the opportunity to take the PSAT on this date. This test will allow students to experience for the first or second time a college admissions exam.
6. *Teaneck High School College Fair: Tuesday, October 30th*
The annual Teaneck High School College Fair will be held on Tuesday October 30th from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm in the main High School gymnasium. The fair is open to all Teaneck High School students and families. A large array of colleges and universities will be on hand to share information and answer questions.

Community Relations & Volunteer Services

We held our annual "Volunteer Appreciation Event" this evening, and I want to thank our student's for their special performances, as well as the Board members who joined us in recognizing our volunteers. Upcoming events include the November 10th "Exceptional Achievers" student celebration (previously noted). Additionally, we continue to make progress on the district website (e.g. new district video and

Board policy sections) and our Supervisor has a meeting scheduled with the content management vendor to discuss further enhancements. Actions this fall will include the creation of a Volunteer Taskforce to help assess and improve the program moving forward, and an electronic survey of parents to gauge most effective communication vehicles. Finally, we will be launching our very own district Facebook page. It is currently in the "verification" stage with Facebook.

Bryant Elementary School

Bryant has a very successful Back to School night (70% turn out) and parent conferences were held this past week for all students. The PTO held their first meeting and filled several key positions including new co- Presidents: Alexandra Riddick and Kelly Cambridge. For the Week of Respect, the school took several pictures of students working on Respect & Kindness badges. For School Safety Week, the Teaneck Fire department will bring trucks to teach the children fire safety and give them a chance to see an engine and ladder truck up close. The school's Red for Respect assembly will take place 10/17. This assembly is a culmination of all the safety, respect and kindness initiatives have taught since the school year began.

Hawthorne Elementary School

Last week, the school hosted a celebration breakfast for the students who took part in and met certain performance levels for the Summer Reading Challenge. Student Council presentations and elections are taking place this month. The school is helping students learn the formal process, roles and responsibilities of Student Councils.

Hawthorne is focused on meeting its specific goals for the year. These include Professional Development events that will be delivered by outside consultants:

- 10/18/18 staff will be trained in Differentiated Mathematics instruction to better meet the needs of all students. Focus will be placed on utilizing Intentional Math Talk, the research and practices of Marilyn Burns, how to step out of the prescribed GoMath lessons, and teach the same standards/concepts in more creative, engaging, and effective ways;
- 11/5/18 staff will receive training in Co-teaching/Inclusion pedagogy, communication, roles/responsibilities, and receive Learner/Teacher resources and lesson plans to use within the classroom to meet the needs of all students.

Principal Jennette is coordinating all efforts to have the 2018/2019 Title I A/S Program ready for BOE approval at the 11/14/18 meeting. He also sent out a Parent Engagement Survey via Google forms to assess parent needs and obtain valuable feedback. Additionally, Hawthorne staff members are currently developing presentations to meet the following indicated areas of need: Student Math Skills, Student Reading/Writing Skills, Parent Technology skills for using Google Classroom and learning applications, Parent Technology skills for using Skyward Student Information System, and Student Behavior Management/Character Development skills/concepts.

Lowell Elementary School

Lowell School celebrated its Summer Readathon Assembly which honored 96 students who read consistently during the summer months. Activities during the Week of Respect included a school-wide assembly (K-4) on respect and bullying along with grade level presentations, and the creation of respect and anti-bullying posters in individual classrooms. Professional development involved the creation of

math centers to provide differentiated instruction for students and planning for the Title I After-School program was finalized. The Teaneck community participated in Lowell's "Walk for Safety" which involved the Teaneck police, Teaneck firefighters, Teaneck EMS, Hackensack Medical Center, and FedEx.

Whittier Elementary School

The first month of the school year has been a very busy time at Whittier School. The PTO held its Fall Picture day on September 18. It also hosted a Fall Book Fair, from September 24 through September 28, for students, and a Book Fair Family Night on September 27 which gave parents an opportunity to visit the book fair with their children to purchase/peruse the book selection. Whittier School held its back to School Night on September 27 for all grade levels. There was a Principal's meeting with all parents. Mr. Valdes spoke about what is expected of students both academically and behaviorally and how the Whittier staff, teachers and parents can work together to enhance the learning experience. Mr. Valdes introduced the PBIS program (Positive Behavior Intervention and Support). This program utilizes a proactive systems approach in an effort to create and maintain a safe and effective learning environment.

Benjamin Franklin Middle School

September and October have been busy months. The BFMS PTO kicked off the Kastle Fundraiser on September 21st. A search is also underway for the BF mascot. Students, staff, and families were able to offer suggestions and a selection committee will choose amongst the most popular options.

BFMS celebrated the State's annual "Week of Respect" (October 1st – 5th) by participating in HIB assemblies and student-led assemblies regarding character education. Also, students and staff participated in themed attire wearing jerseys for Team Up Against Bullying Day, black for Black our Negativity Day, or hats for "All Hats on Deck". In an exercise of civic duty, candidates vied for the votes of their peers during the Student Council elections.

Other October events include:

- Our TAG students took a field trip to the Teaneck Creek on October 4th.
- Student of the Month recognition. Students are nominated based on exhibiting the monthly character trait of cooperation.
- On October 8th Kelvin Oliver, a national consultant who specializes in the areas of character education and restorative practices visited BFMS to work with our students and staff.
- October 9th Back to School night.
- The PTO is hosting a book fair during the week of October 15th – 19th.
- Parent/teacher conferences will be held on October 18th.
- Principal Pitt is inviting the community to come out to hear the "State of BF" during her annual BF Envisions presentation on October 23rd. Immediately following the presentation, the PTO is hosting the annual multicultural dinner.

Finally, through the assistance of Parent Matterz, a few of our 8th grade girls were recently accepted into and started a program at FDU, known as Girls Exploring Engineering.

Thomas Jefferson Middle School

October started with a concerning message left on the school secretary's phone regarding a planned shooting to take place that day at the school. The Superintendent and the Teaneck Police Department were called and an investigation was conducted. All outdoor recess/activities for that day were brought indoors; and the Mile Run and the Cross Country practice were postponed. Parents were notified by the school principal via a robo call, and a police officer was assigned to the building for the remainder of the day. Principal Davis held class meetings sharing the actual course of events related to the phone message and reminded students to continue to be aware of their surroundings to continue to make good choices.

TJMS also has many activities taking place regarding this month's "HIB – Week of Respect" and has specific themes for each day of the week. Other upcoming events include:

- October 8-12 – Fall Book Fair (the theme is Enchanted Forest)
- October 12 – Bergen County Prosecutor's presentation to 7th grade on Drug Use and Opioids
- October 14 – Teaneck comes together in partnership with Teaneck Schools. Healing Hearts Benefit Concert for the Trinidad Family, 3:00 p.m., Thomas Jefferson auditorium
- October 18 – Parent/teacher conferences
- October 19 – Bergen County Prosecutor's Gang Presentation to 7th grade

Teaneck High School

On September 12th and 13th, class meetings were held with each grade level. The meetings were led by Principal LoGiudice, along with the appropriate grade level Assistant Principal, Dean, Dr. Kleinman, Nick Campestre from the Forum, and Mr. Murphy from the Athletic Department. Mr. LoGiudice gave his words of encouragement to open the school year and staff led the students through a PowerPoint presentation about the school's policies and expectations. The session concluded with a new motivational video by Nike featuring Colin Kaepernick.

At the "Teaneck Comes Together" event on October 4th, various members of the Teaneck High School family were recognized. The esteemed list of honorees included: Christine Mayers, Educators Award recipient; Heroes and Cool Kids received the School Club/Youth Organization Award; and as previously noted, seniors Moniah Dailey and Anthony Williams, Jr. received the Youth Achievement awards.

Human Resource Management

After a successful first month, Human Resource Management ("HRM") has shifted its focus to making sure the district is in compliance as it relates to personnel. Between September and mid-October the "HRM", the department will enroll all novice teachers into the Department of Education's Provisional Program. The Provisional Program requires that novice teachers spend time throughout the school year with in district mentor teachers. Our mentor teachers are tenured teachers trained by professionals from Montclair State University's Center of Pedagogy. "HRM" will also be transmitting all personnel information for the 2018-2019 school year to the Department of Education's data warehouse, NJSMART. The Department of Education requests pertinent information for all staff members servicing the Teaneck Public Schools. This includes employees of vendors servicing the district. "HRM" will upload sensitive information into the district's personnel database system then transmit to NJSMART. Finally, the Manager of Human Resources and Compliance will be attending professional development on diversifying the teacher workforce during the month of October, as the department continues its diversity effort. *Staff Vacancy Updates – see attached document*