

Superintendent's Report

October 14, 2020

Special Recognition

I am pleased to announce that one of our students was among the winners of the Inaugural Bergen County Sheriff's Youth Writing Contest. Joseph Cecchini, a 5th grade student at Thomas Jefferson Middle School, has been selected as one of this year's awardees. Anthony Cureton, Bergen County Sheriff, hosted an award ceremony today; but I have also invited Joseph to join us this evening so we can recognize his wonderful accomplishment.

Return to School Plan for Second Marking Period

This evening, we are presenting our "Return to School Plan" for the second marking period (which begins in mid-November). I want to stress that this presentation is the current framework for how we plan to proceed with a "phased in" approach to bring our children back into their school buildings. However, we will not finalize these plans until I have completed my upcoming parent, student and staff focus groups over the next week and half. Also, these plans assume no major changes in COVID-19 numbers over this next month – to a point where such returns are not possible. We will proceed with finalizing this plan over the next two weeks.

New District Office

Now that we have officially opened our Theodora Smiley Lacey School – the site of our old district offices – I am pleased to announce the opening of our new District Office building at 651 Teaneck Road (right in front of Thomas Jefferson Middle School). This office building includes the Superintendent's Office as well as our Business, Human Resources and Special Education offices. Additionally, we are relocating our Registration and Community Education departments to this new building. However, while our district staff will be working in these offices, we are still in a pandemic and are strongly encouraging the community to reach out to all district departments by email or by phone. Visitors will be limited to advance appointments. This is a very exciting time for our district and we are looking forward to our special ribbon-cutting ceremony next week.

Free Meal Extension & Introducing Weekend Meals

I want to remind all of our families that we have a weekly meal distribution program that is available to all district students under the age of 18; and we are now pleased to announce that we are providing meals for the weekend as well (which began on Friday, October 9, 2020).

Additionally, we have received great news that the USDA is extending the current **free** meal programs until June 30, 2021 (which also provides an extension of current SFSP and SSO meal programs at no cost to students and allows parents and guardians to pick-up meals for their children). See the attached press release for more details: <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2020/10/09/trump-administration-extends-free-meals-kids-entire-school-year>

Week of Respect

The New Jersey Anti-Bullying H.I.B. Legislation has designated the first week of October as the "Week of Respect" across the state of New Jersey. In our current remote learning environment and in accordance with the law, our schools have participated via google classroom meetings in various activities which emphasized the importance of making good choices, being respectful and being an "upstander."

All schools began the week with daily announcements with poems, quotes, songs and tips about Social Emotional Learning. All homeroom teachers introduced the Week of Respect Choice Boards and reviewed activities (e.g. Respect Boards, "Things we should do more often", and H.I.B. Slideshow and virtual presentations) for use throughout this past week. Students were engaged and participated in writing poems, songs, and letters about respect, acceptance, and inclusion. They also made virtual collages and each day was a theme day. Additionally, to honor "National Stomp Out Bullying Day" on October 5, all students and faculty wore blue. Ms. Adrienne Williams, our district's HIB coordinator, will post resources on the website where students and families can access them for future reference.

Curriculum & Instruction

Instructional Resources

Curriculum Supervisors spent the last month equipping instructional practitioners with resources and materials for teaching remotely. During the month of September, students throughout the district received new textbooks, reading materials, hands-on learning materials and new online resources to ensure that all students have a second-to-none learning experience. In support of these materials, curriculum supervisors have been working diligently with teachers to model the effective use of these materials. Padlet, Google Meets and KAMI are among some of our newer online platforms. The Curriculum and Instruction team is confident that we will be able to boost the virtual learning experience with these tools in hand!

English Language Learners:

The district's ESL team has been actively identifying and screening students who are in need of language support. In an effort to support both students and families, the ESL team will be hosting an online webinar that will be translated into Spanish and Urdu that will explain the use of Google Classroom. The webinar will include explanations on the use of Skyward, the district's student information system, and useful information about school-related procedures such as the Chromebook Depot and lunch distribution. We are excited to meet our bilingual families in November and we are looking forward to another positive family event!

District Assessment Calendar:

In accordance with New Jersey Administrative Code, the district has released the 2020-2021 District Assessment Calendar. To access the calendar, please visit the following website: <https://www.teaneckschools.org/TestingSchedule1.aspx>. The calendar outlines the dates, times and subject areas of all our assessments for this school year. If there are any questions or concerns, feel free to email Ms. Patricia Dent, Director of School Innovation, English and ESL, at PDent@teaneckschools.org. Summer Curriculum Writing

School Counseling Department

- Support Services - The School Counseling department is continuing to provide support to students and families virtually. All Elementary Outreach Workers, School Counselors, and F.O.R.U.M staff are available during school hours via Google Meets. High School Counselors and F.O.R.U.M staff are available after school hours via appointments. Parents and students are encouraged to email their counselor for support.

- THS Senior Meetings have begun. Students are able to view their counselors availability via Google Appointment Calendar
- Fairleigh Dickinson Partnership Update-
 - FDU has continued the Saturday Programs virtually. Teaneck students are participating in GEE (8th Grade girls), TEOP, CSEOP, and META
 - Middle College Credit Program (Dual Enrollment) - The opportunity to earn college credits via THS courses is underway. Students enrolled in one of the 11 THS courses are eligible for FDU college credit.
- Virtual Presentations - All presentations are posted on the School Counseling website
 - Freshman Orientation- August 28
 - Senior Students- Post-Secondary Planning - September 24
 - Senior Parent Meeting/ Financial Aid- October 1.
- College Visits are virtual. Students are notified via Google Classroom, Naviance and the THS App of the following schools scheduled to visit. 39 Colleges/Universities are scheduled for the month of October. Students register via Naviance
- Upcoming events:
 - College Fair Week- October 26 - 29
 - Join the THS Counseling Department for a week long Virtual College Fair, as we host schools from all across the country including local colleges and universities, HBCUs, Ivy Leagues and trade schools.
 - 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"
 - Grade specific workshops
- Mental Health Initiative- Plans are currently being made to provide support for students and families in grades k-8. Details are forthcoming
- Communication -
 - "THS Connections" Newsletter - THS Counseling Department will publish a monthly newsletter to share information with students and families. The first edition was sent to families on October 8.
 - YouTube Channel- All webinars will be posted for viewing: (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDw7prx6aDcxJmeyAo5sgQw>)
 - Follow @TeaneckSchoolCounseling on Instagram and Facebook

Special Services

Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) Leadership Team Update - Leadership Retreat

The overall goal of the Teaneck Public School District MTSS/I&RS program is to provide students who are struggling to meet the demands of the English Language Arts, mathematics curricula, and social-emotional challenges with targeted research-based interventions to meet their individual learning and or social-emotional needs. During the leadership retreat, the department of special education provided the team with an update and plan on NJ State Regulations on Response to Intervention (RTI), appropriate instructions, screenings, written notifications to parents/guardians and much more.

18-21 Postgraduate Virtual Meet & Greet - 9/1/2020

A virtual Meet & Greet was held for our 18-21 postgraduate students, parents, and staff. The focus of this meeting was on the South Bergen Jointure Commission partnership – including a virtual tour of the Lodi Campus.

Behavioral Disabilities Virtual Lunch Meet & Greet - 9/4/2020

To assist our students in the behavioral disabilities grade 5-6 program transition to the 2020-2021 school year, a virtual lunch meeting was facilitated for students, parents, teachers, school counselors, related services providers and administrators. We addressed the following:

- Introduction of Teaneck Public Schools and South Bergen Jointure Commission Administration and Staff
- Program Overview/Partnership
- Remote Learning via Teaneck Public Schools Remote Learning Plan

Special Education Teachers and Paraprofessional Supporting Students Remotely PD - 9/2/ - 9/4/2020

PD sessions were held for elementary, middle, and high school special education teachers and paraprofessionals on the following topics:

- Verbal de-escalation and crisis prevention strategies during remote instruction;
- Paraprofessional expectations during virtual learning;
- Instructional supports;
- Coordinating with the classroom teacher to ensure staff and paras are using approved curriculum materials and content;
- Maintaining confidentiality and professionalism during virtual instruction.

IEP Direct Training for all special education teachers, child study team members, and related services providers - 9/2/2020 - 9/4/2020

To ensure all new and returning teachers, child study team case managers, and related services providers are equipped with the skills and knowledge to maintain IEP compliance, the department facilitated training sessions for all special education teachers, child study team case managers, and related services providers across the district on topics ranging from navigating the IEP Direct platform to compliance reports.

IEP Best Practices - The Little Blue Book PD - 9/9/2020

To continually evaluate and refine the effective practices of our special education staff, the department facilitated an interactive PD session that provided practical guidance on a wide range of topics including “Details and mandates of Initials and Re-evaluations” to “Consent & Student Records”. We also focused on the IEP best practices and the nuances of remote learning.

Special Education Parent Advisory Group (SEPAG) Committee Meeting - 09/22/2020

The mission of the Teaneck Special Education Parental Advisory Group (SEPAG) is to facilitate proactive collaboration and honest communication among parents, students, staff, the Teaneck Board of Education, and the community. To that end, we continue to develop and sustain a supportive partnership to ensure the delivery of appropriate services for our students with special needs. The Teaneck SEPAG Committee met virtually on Tuesday, September 22, 2020, to discuss the following:

- Security grant - what means for our kids? Drill training for staff to get to know our kids.
- Clubs and sports opportunities for special education students during virtual learning.
- Virtual therapy- what's working/what's not?

- Parent workshops this year - building a calendar of events
- Planned improvements for the continued virtual learning environment - smaller classes, 1:1 aides at the students' home.
- How can we help ensure special education students have the assistive technology they need at home (touch screens, larger screens, etc.) during virtual learning?

Upcoming Programs/Events

- I&RS Training for Committee Members - Building-based I&RS committee members will be guiding I&RS teams on the I&RS process, timelines, and implementation of the *HIPstervention* program.
- The Little Blue Book for Respective Disciplines - Follow up sessions on IEP best practices with Little Blue Book for Speech therapists, LDTs, Psychologists, and Social Workers will be scheduled with each discipline team in the upcoming weeks.

Communications, Community Relations & Volunteer Services

Internal & External Communications Plan

Per Ms. Corallo's June 2020 Board presentation of the district's go-forward Internal & External Communications Plan, she has been working on several components of the Plan including:

- New Brand Initiative – a new district logo featuring the District's Strategic Plan Vision Statement (The Teaneck Advantage: Educational Excellence for All) has been created and implemented; other key components of the Brand Identity Guidelines are nearly finalized (e.g. business cards, form headers, email signatures, PowerPoint templates, etc.)
- District Website Redesign – A survey went out to all parents/guardians seeking their input on the current website home page and parent section. Over 500 parents responded to the survey and parent focus groups will be held the week of October 26. The information gathered will be used to begin the redesign phase of these two core sections. Per Phase I of the Plan, these are expected to launch by spring 2021. Phase II includes the Board, Staff and Student sections.

Special Events

- Theodora Smiley Lacey Grand Opening - held on September 17 and featured Mrs. Lacey as our honoree and guest speaker. The day began with a motorcade down Teaneck Road where the community cheered for Mrs. Lacey prior to the official ceremony. Due to the pandemic, specific health and safety guidelines were closely followed. Other guest speakers included the Bergen Chapter of the NAACP, the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and many town, county and state elected officials. The event received media coverage on ABC NY, News 12, The Record and more. This school is now officially open for the district's kindergarten population.
- New District Office Grand Opening – a small ribbon-cutting ceremony will be held on October 22. The new District office is officially open for business.

Community Education's Drop-in & SACC Programs

The District has created and launched its "Drop-in Program" – a free service that we are offering for limited number of families in need (e.g. McKinney Vento or essential workers). The purpose of this program is for participating students to follow their set school schedule under adult supervision (as their parents are not able to be home with them to monitor their remote/virtual learning.) The children have been placed at either Bryant or Whittier School and bring their Chromebooks to take part in their virtual

classroom instruction (with their teacher). These children are provided with breakfast and lunch - and they have recess per their school schedules. After this program concludes at 3 pm, the rooms are fully sanitized and we begin the SACC afterschool care program (at Bryant only) – which is a “paid for” service available to all district families. We are currently reviewing options for the second marking period but this will depend upon the district’s go-forward “Return to School” plan. More information will be forthcoming.

Technology

During the summer months as well as the start of the school year, the Technology Department has worked diligently on getting the district ready for remote learning. In August and September, we had our Chrome Depot open for distribution where we provided Chromebooks to all grades PreK to 12. We will continue to provide support to our staff and students during remote learning through the Chrome Depot. Monthly schedules are posted on the district website. Parents/guardians and students, if you experience any tech difficulties please email techhelp@teaneckschools.org and a member of the Technology Department will assist you.

Now that students and teachers have become accustomed to more online resources and tools we have increased the bandwidth to continue to provide high-quality internet access ready to be used when students and teachers return to school.

The Technology Department facilitated a number of professional development opportunities for families and staff. In August, we provided training sessions for our parents to learn about Google Classroom and other Google tools that are being used for remote learning. Additionally, we facilitated training for all staff prior to the opening of school. The training provided a number of tools and resources for our faculty and staff to use to enhance the remote learning experience.

October is Cyber Security Awareness Month and we would like to share some resources with you to keep your family safe while using the internet at home. Please find the resources below.

https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/NCSAM_YourDigitalHome_2020.pdf
<https://www.commonsensemedia.org/>

Bryant School

Bryant School

- Over 160 Take-Home kits were distributed at Bryant School. Kits included manipulatives, markers, watercolor paint, kid-scissors, construction paper, Tools of the Mind visual cues. It was thrilling for Brant's administrators and staff to see the smiling faces of prek kids, buckled in their car seats when parents retrieved the kits.
- Over 170 parents responded to the Remote Learning survey. Faculty is factoring the responses into their adjustments to the remote instructional approach to ensure that children and families are supported in their learning needs.
- The Teaneck Early Childhood Council (TECAC) Meeting will hold their first meeting of the 2020-21 school year this month. The TECAC provides opportunities for local stakeholders to participate in providing high quality early childhood educational experiences.

Theodora Smiley Lacey School

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Lacey include:

- Successful distribution of education kits to all kindergarten students. Over 180 kits created to include Go Math Book, Counting Frame, Lapboard, 30 Katie Counting Cubes, and a comprehensive work packet. Kits were distributed to K students across the district including Hawthorne, Whittier and Lowell students.
- Virtual Back-to-School night held on October 1 included videos and presentations from all teaching and support staff.
- Week of Respect virtual assemblies held week of October 5 included J-Has Hart and The NED show. Although held virtually, students were thoroughly engaged.
- Lacey Spirit Wear Store closed on October 5. Items from this fundraiser to be delivered by October 30.
- Virtual Parent/Teacher conferences to begin on October 15 through October 22.
- Virtual Hispanic Heritage Month presentation to be uploaded to Lacey site and web page by Wednesday, October 14.
- School Safety Week to take place October 19-23. Friday, October 23 is Wear RED for Respect day, virtual assembly to be held.

Hawthorne Elementary School

- The Hawthorne School staff commenced the school year with an affirmation of our Core Beliefs. Those beliefs are as follows: (1) Don't worry, be happy; (2) I'll be there for you; (3) We can do hard things together; (4) We believe that all students should feel safe and a sense of belonging in school and their classroom community.
- Thanks to the amazing Hawthorne PTA, all students received a whiteboard kit with their respective school supplies and workbooks.
- The Week of Respect was celebrated during the week of October 5. Daily themes included our scholars showing that their future was bright in neon colors and demonstrating their differences in their superhero gear. The Week of Respect culminated with an interactive presentation by the NED Show about mindset for all students.
- Our online fall book fair, sponsored by the Hawthorne PTA, is taking place from Monday, October 12 through Sunday, October 25.
- Parent Teacher Conferences will occur on Thursday, October 15. Hawthorne teachers have also availed themselves on other days for conferences, should a parent or guardian request an alternate date.
- We will be commemorating School Violence Awareness Week with special daily themes during the week of October 19. That week will culminate with our students and staff participating in the annual respect dance.
- Picture day will take place on Monday, November 2 and Monday, November 9.

Lowell Elementary School

- 10/1/2020: Virtual Pre-Recorded Back to School Night, 7 pm
- 10/5-10/9: Lowell School Week of Respect - The week reminds us to be kind and serve as good citizens inside and outside of Lowell School. Information is also posted on the Lowell School Website.

- 10/5: Pajama Day: Feel cared for and comfy and to do the same
- 10/6: Hat/Cap Day: Remind you of good thoughts
- 10/6: Box Top for Education Kick-Off - Information on how to participate was sent out via email by our Box Top Coordinator. The information is also available on the Lowell School Website
- 10/7: Special Socks Day: Walk on the best path
- 10/8: Tie a Ribbon, String, or Wear a Band on Your Wrist Day: Signifies Friendship
- 10/9: Wear Something Blue Day: Symbolize Respect and Kindness
- 10/13: End of Annual PTO Cherrydale Fundraiser - PTO Fundraiser started on 9/23 and ran online. Parents were sent information via email on how to participate.
- 10/15: Parent-Teacher Conferences - Parent Sign-up Sheets will be posted online within the Homeroom Teacher's Google Classroom
Afternoon: 2:00pm - 5:00pm; Evening: 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
- 10/19/-10/30: PTO Virtual Scholastic Book Fair - The Scholastic Book Fair will take place online. Information will be sent out to parents/guardians
- 10/27: Monthly PTO Meeting Online 6:30 pm - Reminders will be sent out to parents and guardians via email.
- 10/29/2020: Jumpstart Read for the Record Day - Lowell School will be participating in Jumpstart's Read for the Record Day. Lowell School, via Ms. Sandvig, has signed up to pledge to read the same book to students on the same day. The book is Evelyn Del Rey is Moving Away by Meg Medina.
- 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

- Interim Principal LoGiudice held a virtual town hall for the families of Whittier School on August 27. After introducing himself to the Whittier family, Mr. LoGiudice provided pertinent information for the opening of school in a virtual setting.
- Whittier School distributed educational resources to students on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday (9/21, 9/22 and 9/23). Teachers, school specialists and staff volunteered to assist in the distribution. Students were excited to meet their new teachers and speak with their former teachers in person. All safety guidelines were followed.
- Whittier School's virtual Back to School Night was held on Thursday, October 1. Teachers, staff and our PTO have prepared virtual messages for parents.
- The Whittier School PTO held its first meeting on Tuesday, September 22. The next meeting will be on October 27. The PTO arranged for all students at Whittier School to receive Scholastic Magazine electronically.
- Dannette Coston, Whittier School Guidance Counselor, will host her Lunch Bunch meetings again this year. These get-togethers will occur by grade level beginning September 21. Lunch bunch meetings give students the chance to connect with old friends, make new friends and/or discuss things that are on their minds.
- The Whittier PTO hosted its Fall Virtual Scholastic Book Fair from September 21 - October 4.
- Whittier School held its Week of Respect from October 5 through October 10. The theme for this year was "Blooming with Respect". During the week Whittier school students participated

in virtual activities that foster a positive school climate and reinforce the message of “respect” for themselves, respect for others and respect for the school community.

Benjamin Franklin Middle School

- We welcomed new staff members in Jokeldy Hernandez (PE/Health), Samantha Singer (PE/Health), Clexy Fernandez (Spanish), Joseph Murphy (ESL), and Joseph Hochgesang (Music). We will also bid farewell to our Media Specialist, Hena Mehta who officially retired October 1.
- Benjamin Franklin Middle School began the year with a new group of Parent Leader to guide our Parent Teacher Organization. The organization produced enough facemasks for our incoming 5th grade population that we distributed during resource distribution days.
- The renovation at BFMS provided each hall and about all classrooms with LED lighting. Additionally, the Media Center received new AC Units as well as new LED lighting.
- During Resource Distribution, we serviced about 90% of our students who came to the school to secure their learning tools.
- The school have received an additional eight (8) 3D Printers -bringing the building total to 11 to support our STEM/STEAM program.
- Mr. Tauriello, BFMS Math Teacher was selected by the New Jersey Department of Education to present PD on Virtual Learning related to “Asynchronous Learning” for Digital Escape Rooms
- Mr. Tauriello was selected by the DOE for Virtual Learning Professional Development. If you scroll down to "Asynchronous Learning" he is a presenter for Digital Escape Rooms.
- Student, Yvai Sanchez was recognized for logging 80 community service hours for her work with the Summer Virtual Medical Mentor Program. This exemplary service award will be shared with our students as they seek opportunities to complete the required codes.

Thomas Jefferson Middle School

- September 15 - October 15 is Hispanic Heritage Month. TJMS has incorporated virtual morning announcements, classroom activities and lessons dedicated to this month.
- September 15 - Our PTA held their first meeting of the school year at 7pm via Zoom. The PTA also purchased white boards for teachers and each 5th grade student.
- September 22-25 - books and resources were distributed to our students and families.
- September 29 - Virtual Back to School Night at 7pm.

Teaneck High School

- The school welcomed its new administration - Pedro H. Valdes III, Interim Principal and Justin O’Neill, Assistant Principal
- Athletics returned including Varsity football, Girls soccer, Cross Country and Tennis
- Select Clubs will also be returning in the near future
- Backpacks were given out by Zeta Phi Beta
- Breakfast and Lunch are distributed on Tuesday and Friday’s; Chromebook Depot is available on Tuesday and Friday’s
- THS administered the August make up SAT on 9/26/20 and the regularly scheduled administration on 10/3/20. We will be hosting the November SAT as well.
- SAT Prep Course through Horizon Education
 - Seniors prep for November 7 test
 - Juniors prep for March 13 test

- Book distribution took place and students were able to pick up both books and supplies needed for their classes
- Class meetings were held for each class with their administrator and dean
- Back to School Night, September 30, was a success. Parents navigated the platform with their students' assistance.
- Parent Teacher Conferences (October 10-27) will be held virtually and scheduled through Skyward.

Human Resource Management –

Staff Vacancy Updates – see attached document