

# *Superintendent's Report*



November 13, 2019

## **Student & Staff Recognition**

Prior to this meeting, we held our “Exceptional Achievers” ceremony to recognize 89 students who achieved a “5” (exceeding expectations) on **both** the 2019 NJSLA ELA and Math assessments, **or** who achieved a **perfect score** on one or both of these assessments. I had noted last year that I wanted to see this become an annual celebration; and I want to commend these exceptional children, while thanking their parents, teachers and staff members for supporting them throughout the year. I also want to thank everyone who joined us this evening as we celebrated their outstanding accomplishments. For more information on this, please see the attached press release.

## **Schools Climate Transformation Grant**

We held our first meetings regarding the district’s new \$3.3 million School Climate Transformation federal grant (approximately \$650,000 per year over the five-year grant term). Dr. Lottie Watson, Teaneck High School Dean, will be the Project Director on this grant initiative. We will be working closely with our grant consultant, Dr. Howie Knoff, as we begin our planning year. A second round of planning meetings with Dr. Knoff will take place in early December.

## **District Strategic Plan Update**

Last Friday, the Board received all of the Action Plans related to our five priority areas of our new District Strategic Plan. These plans will be posted to the Strategic Plan section of our website by end of November. I will be meeting with the leads of each Action Plan throughout the year to monitor progress.

Additionally, I am hosting a special meeting with our Faith-based Community on November 19 at the Teaneck High School Media Center to discuss how these organizations can collaborate with us as we work towards achieving our Strategic Plan goals.

## **Middle School Ski Program**

Winter4Kids is a youth-focused, nonprofit organization that provides mentor-based, experiential learning and encourages kids to have fun while mastering Snowboarding, Nordic and Alpine skiing. Located in Vernon, NJ, NWAC provides enrolled students 24 hours (4 hours each session – over 6 weeks) safe and healthy outdoor activities, one-on-one mentorship, and nutritious meals.

We are pleased to announce that for the 2019-2020 ski season, Teaneck Public Schools has been awarded a grant of \$400 per participant and a club grant of \$3,000 to establish a ski activity club for our middle schools (this grant amount is based on up to 40 participants enrolling). Teaneck Public Schools participants will be responsible only for a rate of \$50 per participant towards the \$450 per participant rate of the program. The program will begin in January 2020 and we will host an Information Session on December 4 in the evening at each middle school (more information on times and location will follow). Moving forward, if all requirements are met, our district will be eligible to re-apply for this grant on a yearly basis (future participants costs will increase incrementally each year). It is my hope that through this program, we may be able to launch our own competitive ski team at the high school.

**Teaneck Library Strategic Plan Development**

Last month, we heard from Mr. Allen McGinley, Teaneck Public Library Director, regarding the Town Library's strategic planning process and the launch of their own community survey. The District is assisting in this process in several ways including promotion of the survey to our families via an email and our District Facebook page, and by helping them conduct small focus groups with our middle and high school students in early to mid-December. Ms. Corallo is also a member of their Strategic Planning Committee.

**Superintendent's Advisory Committees**

The 2019-2020 Superintendent Advisory Committees have been formed – Students, Faculty, Beyond Diversity, Faith-based, Special Education Parent Committee, and Student Code of Conduct Review. Committee chairs are reaching out to committee members for the first meetings. We will post the new committee lists and their meeting notes on our district website:

<http://www.teaneckschools.org/SuperintendentSteeringCommittees.aspx>

**Student Liaisons to the Board**

Last month, we introduced our five high school seniors who will be attending and participating in our Regular Board meetings this year: Sharlene Guiracocha, Yasmine Halmane, Eitan Hiller, Nuri Khan and Nyahiti Monroe. They will share updates with us each month.

**Curriculum & Instruction***School Counseling Department*

- Financial Aid Night- On October 22, 2019, fifty families attended an informative session presented by Doug Wilson, Compliance Officer at Kean University.
- College Fair- On Wednesday, October 30 2019, 43 Colleges and Universities, including Penn State, Pace University and Spelman College shared information with our school community. The event was a collaborative effort with the FORUM. The Teaneck High School Ambassadors served as hosts to over 150 student and parent attendees.
- Wednesday Parent Workshops- Monthly workshops hosted by the School Counseling Department in the THS media center from 5-7 pm. The goal is to assist parents and students with topics related to school counseling, college and career readiness. The first workshop will be held on Wednesday, November 13 will focus on the college application process including application essays, Common App, Naviance, etc.

*Institute for Learning*

- On November 21, the district will be participating in a learning lab for first grade language arts. First grade teachers will be observing lessons that focus on the strategy of "Questioning the Author" and working with complex text.
- On November 22, the third through fifth grade mathematics teachers will be participating in a full-day training, which will focus on reviewing and executing high-level mathematics tasks.

*Seal of Biliteracy*

The district will be participating in the Seal of Biliteracy process with the New Jersey Department of Education. As per the NJ Department of Education, students who participate in the Seal of Biliteracy

Program may be eligible for receiving a certificate and insignia, which will be fixed to the student's transcript, which highlights the student's standing as being biliterate and bilingual.

### **Special Services**

#### *Programmatic Updates - Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS)*

The I&RS committee members and building administrations had a follow-up meeting on November 1, 2019 to support building-level teams in understanding RTI and its relationship to I&RS, scope of services, program implementation, team practice and lateral committee articulation.

#### *IEP Compliance/ Legal Overview*

On Monday, October 7, 2019, special education teachers participated in professional development/Q&A session with Carolyn R. Chaudry, attorney from Scarinci and Hollenbeck on writing legally compliant IEPs that adhere to New Jersey special education law.

#### *Handle with Care for Paraprofessionals*

Special Education paraprofessionals were trained on how to manage children on the autism spectrum that are behaviorally challenged and need support in behavioral management, limit setting, verbal de-escalation and physical intervention. Training was provided by Ms. Iris Hernandez, BCBA.

#### *IEP Writing and Compliance*

On November 4, 2019, the Special Education Department facilitated a training on Frontline IEP to special education secretaries, child study team members, related service providers and special education teachers who are new to the district. The professional development was facilitated in an effort to stay compliant, provide an efficient means to monitor IEPs, track and schedule meetings, and producing correspondence to parents and guardians in a timely fashion.

#### *Upcoming Events*

- SEPAG Committee Meeting 11/19/2019
- PK-12 Articulation Meeting for MD Teachers 11/25/2019
- Inclusion Models PD 12/9/2019

### **Community Relations & Volunteer Services**

#### *Strategic Plan Priority 3: Communication & Community Partnerships*

One of the key goals tied to Priority 3 is the creation of an Internal & External Communications Plan. The development of this plan will begin with an audit of the current state of our school and district communications. To that end, we will be conducting an online survey of our students, staff and parents in mid to late November. The feedback received will then be used as we move into the development phase of our new go-forward communications plan (will be completed by June 2020).

#### *Teaneck in the News*

Teaneck's \$3.3 million School Climate Transformation Grant was recently featured on News 12 with an interview of Dr. Irving. The News 12 clip was posted on the District Facebook page and has over 4,000 views!

*Special Events*

- The celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month will continue on December 5 at Teaneck High School (7 pm start) with a show & fair entitled: "Aquí Estamos & Así Somos." This event will include a display of the combined talents of our students, community members and cultural organizations. Attendees will have the opportunity to experience rich Hispanic history through music, arts & crafts, cultural displays and food. All are welcomed to attend. Tickets can be purchased by contacting Teaneck High School.
- The annual Teaneck Film Festival (TIFF) will be held this weekend (November 14 – 17) and one of the many events taking place will feature former Teaneck High School student, Mr. Chris Brancato, the creator of the "Godfather of Harlem" series. After a special preview of the series (on Saturday, November 16), Mr. Brancato will participate in a talkback moderated by another former Teaneck High School student, Ms. Francine Weinberg-Graff (daughter of NJ Senator Loretta Weinberg).

**Technology**

The Technology department has successfully moved two applications to the cloud. We now have a working cloud-based iPad management software that allows the Technology team to control the iPads in the district and to push applications remotely. This will assist us in helping out district students who need applications without requiring the iPad to come back to the department. We have also moved our budget and personnel software to the cloud. Having this software in the cloud allows for more security and reliability. Cloud-based software and applications running in the cloud allow for high availability and will allow staff access to the software with minimal downtime. During this transition, we also changed the link to the district's payroll portal. The previous link was a set of arbitrary letters that were difficult to remember. The new weblink for employees to use is: [mypayroll.teaneckschools.org](http://mypayroll.teaneckschools.org). Moving forward, any new web-based applications will now have easy and meaningful web links or addresses to help staff easily remember them.

The Technology department has also been working with the O&M department on the ESIP program. We recently installed software that will monitor our power usage and consumption on all of the computers and devices on the network. Once the application has completed its analysis, we will be able to change the settings on our devices to improve our power usage without affecting any of the staff.

**Bryant School**

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Bryant include:

- Bryant School had a successful pumpkin patch where many parent volunteers helps students pick pumpkins on the front lawn of the school. Parents also came out for our annual fall Scholastic Book Fair Family night. Bryant School raised over \$3,000 at this event for our literacy and library program.
- Storybook Character Dress Up day was a huge success. Students dressed up as their favorite book character and paraded around the school.
- Our Families, Learning, Improving and Promoting Success (F.L.I.P.S) program was held on October 23. Parents came out for an evening of interactive learning. Our next F.L.I.P.S meeting will be held on December 11 with preschool being the main focus (Winter Wonderland Parent/Student Workshop).
- Two classes of "Making Magic" and "Making Airplanes" after school program (coordinated by Community Ed, and offered by Hobby Quest through the Puffin Foundation) have begun.

- Our Harvest of Kindness Food Drive kicked off on October 28. Students and staff have been bringing in non-perishable items to donate. The Harvest of Kindness Food drive will end on Monday, November 18. Donations will be packed up and sent to the Helping Hands Food Pantry here in Teaneck.
- Our December community/outreach program will be our Bundle Up for Kindness Coat/Clothing Drive. All district staff are invited to donate gently worn, laundered coats and warm clothing items to the Bryant School (adult and children sizes welcomed.)

### **Hawthorne Elementary School**

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Hawthorne include:

- On November 1, students and staff were dressed to impress for picture day.
- The Student of the Month ceremony was held on November 6, honoring students who were nominated for demonstrating the character trait of respect.
- On November 18, the school's new safety patrol members will be inducted at a ceremony.
- Family fun time on November 22 is an opportunity for our 1st grade parents/guardians to join our 1st grade classes for some fun and educational activities.
- Leadership opportunities are abound for our 4th graders. On November 26, selected students will receive peer mediator training. They will then begin their role as peer mediators.

### **Lowell Elementary School**

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Lowell include:

- November 3 – Math Contest for all Students who wanted to participate (grades K-4th)
- November 5 – PTO Sponsors Lowell Votes, Students and Staff cast their vote for the School Mascot. Options were Lowell Lions, Lowell Lightning or Lowell Leopards. Results were, Lowell Lions - 81, Lowell Lightning - 134 and Lowell Leopards - 129.
- November 26 – Mrs. Hernandez's Kindergarten Class have their Thanksgiving Baking Event at 9:30 am
- November 26 – PTO Meeting including a Pot Luck dinner and Movie Night for Students
- November 26 – 4th grade will host their Cultural Feast in the cafeteria from 11:30 am-12:40 pm.

### **Whittier Elementary School**

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Whittier include:

- Kindergarten students will visit Flat Rock Brook on November 6. They will participate in "What's the Weather?" -- a program that introduces students to the concepts of weather and ways to interpret signs of weather (clouds, wind, and rain) and discover how weather affects plants, animals and land.
- The PTO will be hosting a Fall Festival for all Whittier families on November 14 from 6:30 -8:00 pm in the Whittier Cafeteria. There will be music, food, arts and crafts and games for all. At this event, the PTO is also sponsoring the fundraiser "Duct Tape the Principal." Families are asked to donate a canned good for the local food pantry.
- Family Math Night will be held on November 19. The theme for the event is Nifty Numbers. Activities will be focused on getting students to think about and make sense of numbers. Through the support of the TTEA and PRIDE, we will have eight station families can visit.

Participating families will receive grade appropriate game kits to continue the fun and learning at home.

- Select students at each grade level will participate in Food Advisory Committee meetings that will assist Maschio's in better understanding the food preferences/aversions of the students so they can better serve their needs.

### **Benjamin Franklin Middle School**

Recent and upcoming activities/events at BFMS include:

- On October 31, the school participated in a "School-wide" clap out for Ms. Joan Lazar, Reading Specialist who retired from the Teaneck Public School district on October 31.
- Mindfulness Program – Inner Explorer began on November 4 for all classrooms
- On November 1, we celebrated and named our first BFMS Super Heroes of the Month. This honor is for students at each grade level who accumulated "Hero Points" for positive behavior throughout the school.
- On November 6, the school celebrated the accomplishments of eight students who were named BFMS Students of the Month.
- Events in the coming days/weeks:
  - November 14 - Family Literacy Night- Benjamin Franklin Middle School -6:30 pm Cafeteria
  - November 21 - School Pep Rally -Fall and Spring Sports -BFMS Gymnasium -2:15 pm; Sports Night --6-8pm
  - November 27 - World Language Day

### **Thomas Jefferson Middle School**

Recent activities/events at TJMS include:

- On Wednesday, November 6, Thomas Jefferson students and staff honored veterans from all branches of the military in a Veterans Day assembly. Approximately 20 veterans attended. The purpose of the assembly was to help our students to value our country and our freedom and to give thanks to our veterans for their service.
- The TJ Environmental/Activist Club received a Certificate of Commendation and a \$1,000 grant from the 2019 Bergen County Utility Authority Environmental Challenge.

### **Teaneck High School**

Recent and upcoming activities/events at THS include:

- October:
  - The Empower Peers Inspire Change (EPIC) Conference was held in the Media Center. Students from Englewood and Garfield participated in the conference. Mrs. A. Williams was our staff leader.
  - The PSAT was offered to all 10 and 11th grade students on October 16
  - Financial Aid Night - On October 22, 50 families attended an informative session presented by Doug Wilson, Compliance Officer at Kean University.
  - College Fair- On Wednesday, October 30, 43 colleges and universities, including Penn State, Pace University and Spelman College shared information with our school

community. The event was a collaborative effort with the FORUM. The THS Ambassadors served as hosts to over 150 student and parent attendees.

- November
  - Distinguished Alumni Meeting will be held in the principal's office to discuss the next round of inductees on November 12.
  - As part of the Teaneck International Film Festival, the high school will have the opportunity to view a "short" at two in-school assemblies on Friday, November 15.
  - November 26, the annual Homecoming Dance will be held at the Elan for 11th and 12th grade students.
  - Teaneck High School Theater Department Presents: "One Wife Too Many". Directed by TS Murphy, Assistant Direction by Elise Joyner, and Scenic Design by Emmanuel Viray. This comedy will be performed at Teaneck High School/Helen B. Hill Auditorium on Nov. 22 and 23 at 8pm; Nov. 24 at 3pm. General admission \$10.00, Students \$7.00.
  - Our pre-Thanksgiving Day Pep Rally and Barn Fire will be held on November 27
- December
  - Hispanic Heritage Celebration (Show & Fair) will take place on December 5 at 7 pm in the student center. R.E.A.L. has partnered with the district to add a special flare to this event.

### **Human Resource Management**

*Staff Vacancy Updates – see attached document*