

Superintendent's Report



December 11, 2019

Eugene Field Renovations & Naming Nomination Process

On December 4, I issued an update on the "Eugene Field" building renovations. My letter (see attached) also included information on the nomination process to officially re-name this new early childhood facility (**online nominations are due by January 3, 2020**). Anyone interested in submitting a name for consideration should review the Board Policy criteria:

<https://www.straussesmay.com/seportal/Public/DistrictPolicy.aspx?policyid=7250&search=school+naming&id=7da42070a501409683bdce41bdcbaaff> and then submit a nomination form via the following link: <https://forms.gle/xaWuhekTgdsWa4jZ7>.

The Board will also host a Community Forum on the renaming in January (Date TBD).

Schools Climate Transformation Grant

Dr. Lottie Watson, Teaneck High School Dean, is officially the Project Director on this grant initiative. She will be working closely with our grant consultant, Dr. Howie Knoff. Meetings between our grant consultant and our school and district leadership are taking place this week as we begin the "planning phase" of our \$3.3 million (over five years) School Climate Transformation Grant.

District Strategic Plan Update

Please note that the Action Plans related to our five priority areas of our new District Strategic Plan can be found on the district's website: <https://www.teaneckschools.org/PriorityActionPlans.aspx>

I hosted a special meeting with our Faith-based community leaders on November 19 and will be conducting Town Hall events with our teachers during the month of January. Ongoing communications of this plan, its goals, and our progress towards these goals, is essential – especially as we head into the budget planning season.

Middle School Ski Program

Last month I announced a special grant award from Winter4Kids, a youth-focused, nonprofit organization that provides mentor-based, experiential learning and encourages kids to have fun while mastering Snowboarding, Nordic and Alpine skiing. 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 had a very strong turn-out at our Information Sessions on December 4th and I am excited to have this program begin in January and hopefully continue in the years to come. NOTE: Teaneck Public Schools participants will be responsible only for a rate of \$50 per participant towards the \$450 per participant rate of the program. It is my hope that through this program, we may be able to launch our own competitive ski team at the high school.

Superintendent's Advisory Committees

The 2019-2020 Superintendent Advisory Committees – Students, Faculty, Beyond Diversity, Faith-based, Special Education Parent Committee, and Student Code of Conduct Review – have begun meeting. Please follow their year-long work on our district website:

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

Student Liaisons to the Board

Updates from Sharlene Guiracochoa, Yasmine Halmane, Eitan Hiller, Nuri Khan and Nyahiti Monroe.

Curriculum & Instruction

The Institute for Learning - Learning Walk

Administrators participated in learning walks on December 4, 2019 alongside Mr. Glen Nolly, from The Institute for Learning. During this time, middle school and high school administrators visited classrooms to observe the wonderful work that is being done with our students. Administrators observed students as they spoke with students about content and learning. Observers participated in rich conversations regarding curriculum and instruction, which led to deeper thinking about teacher feedback and practice.

The Institute for Learning - Professional Development

On December 17, 2019, the kindergarten, first and second grade teams will participate in a session with Ms. Cheryl Sandora where we will continue our learning regarding high-quality ELA instruction. These sessions will include conversations regarding complex texts and cognitively demanding tasks. On December 17, 2019, teachers will use complexity rubrics to determine the different types of texts that are engaging, rich and complex for use in the classroom.

School Counseling Department

Wednesday Parent Workshops- The first workshop was held on Wednesday, November 13, which focused on the college application process including application essays, Common App, Naviance, etc. Parent feedback was positive with the recommendation to move the time to enable greater participation. The next workshop will be held on Wednesday, December 11, 6:30pm-8:30pm in the THS Media Center. The topic is "Paying for College" and is a collaboration with Rhona Vega, founder of Parent Materz.

Special Services*Frontline IEP Training*

On November 4, special education teachers, child study team members, related service providers and special education secretaries were trained on navigating the **IEP Direct** platform. 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.

- IEP Direct Training for SPED Secretaries 10:00 am -12:00 am [THS College and Career Center](#)
- IEP Direct Training for CST and RSP 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm [THS College and Career Center](#)
- IEP Direct for New Special Education Teachers 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm [THS College and Career Center](#)

SEPAG Committee Meeting

The Teaneck SEPAG Committee held their first meeting on November 19. Committee members were given updates on initiatives in the Special Education Department. Additionally, committee members explored exemplar SEPAG mission statements and shared their ideas on what the Teaneck SEPAG Mission Statement should entail. Additional agenda items included:

- SEPAG Goals
- SEPAG By-laws
- How do we get input from students of special needs?
- How do we have special needs students included in SEPAG meetings?
- District-wide Special Services Survey for Feedback (glows/grows)

Handle with Care for Teachers – November 25

Special education teachers who service students with multiple disabilities (MD) and behavioral disabilities (BD) were trained on how to manage children on the autism spectrum and students who 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.

Google Part II with Mohammed Saleh for CST and RSP – November 25

- Create, import, or add content
- Share and collaborate
- Print and download
- Access your calendar, notes, and tasks

Upcoming Events

- Executive Functioning with Beyond Book Smart – December 9
- PK-12 Program Articulation Continuum – December 9
- Inclusion Models – December 9
- Nursing PD Charting Office Visits and Kindergarten Charts Audit – December 9
- SEPAG Committee Meeting – December 17
- Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Training – January 6,

Community Relations & Volunteer Services

Strategic Plan Priority 3: Communication & Community Partnerships

As noted last month, the first phase of creating an Internal & External Communications Plan is to conduct an audit on the current state of our school and district communications. Through an online survey of our students, staff and parents (very strong participation from each stakeholder group), we now have valuable information that will be used in the development of our new go-forward communications plan (will be completed by June 2020). NOTE: The survey results will be shared with our Executive team, principals, and the Board's Community Relations Committee. They will also be referenced in the final plan.

Volunteer Program

Teaneck Public Schools welcomes in-school volunteers; and our efforts this year have been focused on matching the talents and goals of our volunteers with the specific needs identified by our school principals. Our volunteer program has been featured in the latest Age-Friendly Teaneck newsletter. Additionally, we are very excited to announce our partnership with Arbor Terrace Teaneck. Starting in January, our middle school students will be visiting with the residents of this senior-living community to discuss specific topics. For more information, see the attached press release on this "Leading Through Lessons" initiative.

Teaneck in the News

Teaneck's \$3.3 million School Climate Transformation Grant was recently featured in The Suburbanite (November 14, 2019). They also featured our recognition ceremony of our NJSLA Exceptional Achievers (November 21, 2019).

Special Events

- The Hispanic Heritage show "Aquí Estamos & Así Somos" event date has changed to December 19 from 1:30 – 3:00 pm at the Teaneck High School. Attendees will have the opportunity to experience rich Hispanic history through music, arts & crafts, cultural displays and food. Tickets can be purchased by contacting Teaneck High School.

Technology

The Technology department is on the tail end of its transition back to a full in-house department. Two members joined the district back in July; and now the remaining four members will be starting in January 2020. In addition to hiring the remaining positions for the department, we will be migrating our network monitoring and cloud-based backup to another company.

Bryant School

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Bryant include:

- Bryant School's Harvest of Kindness Food Drive was successful. Students, staff and families filled over 10 boxes of non-perishable items which were all donated to the Helping Hands Food Pantry in Teaneck.
- Bundle Up for Kindness Coat/Clothing Drive started on December 2. Donations of gently used coats and clothing are being collected and will be offered to families in need within the district and to the Oasis Women's Shelter in Paterson. We invite all district staff to donate gently worn, laundered coats and warm clothing items to the Bryant School (adult and children sized welcomed).
- On December 10, our kindergarten classes will participate in a Culture of Compassion assembly as part of our bully prevention and character education program.
- Our Early Childhood Department will host a Winter Wonderland event on the evening of December 11 @ 6PM. All preschool students and families are invited to attend to learn about the Tools of the Mind curriculum.
- Bryant School kindergarten students have been practicing for their winter production and musical "The Bryant Express". The show will take place on December 17 at 9:30 am for families and district administration.
- The Bryant PTO began a David's Cookies fundraiser on December 4th; orders are due by December 13.
- Kindergarten classes will take their annual field trip to see The Nutcracker at Bergen Academies on Friday, December 13.

Hawthorne Elementary School

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Hawthorne include:

- On December 5, the second grade students shared their hard work at a publishing party. Parents/guardians, other grade level students, and faculty were invited to attend.
- Hackensack University Medical Center will be visiting the kindergarten, first and second grade students to share information about playground and bike safety on Thursday, December 11.
- The kindergarten, first and second grade students will host their winter concert on Friday, December 13 at 9:15am. We cannot wait to see them shine!

Lowell Elementary School

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Lowell include:

- December 2 – 18: PTO Can Drive Collection
- December 2: Winter Classroom Door Decoration Contest Begins
- December 4: Thomas Jefferson's Staff Member, Delores Connors – Reads her book to students "I Don't Want to Go!"
- December 6: Trip to Teaneck Cinemas
- December 11 – 13: PTO Holiday Shop is Open
- December 12: Mrs. Hernandez's Kindergarten Class have their Craft Night from 6:30-7:30pm
- December 13: Trip to see the Nutcracker at 9:00 am
- December 20: Second grade will be having a Holiday Feast in the Cafeteria from 1:30-3:30 pm

Whittier Elementary School

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Whittier include:

- Whittier School will hold its National Honor Society Induction on December 11 at 6:30 pm in the library. Nine fourth grade students were chosen for participation in this special program for their outstanding academic achievement, responsibility, leadership and service.
- On December 13, KPMG and the Teaneck High School Heroes Group will come to Whittier School to work with students on grade appropriate lessons and activities related to finances.
- Whittier School will hold its annual Winter Concert on Friday, December 20. Under the direction of Ms. Christine Taylor, the students will perform choral, musical and instrumental numbers (K-2 at 9am, Grades 3-4 at 10 am).
- Our monthly PTO meeting will be held on December 17 at 6:30 pm in the library.
- The Puffin Foundations' Hobby Quest Aviation and Magic programs are underway at Whittier School. Classes meet on Monday and Wednesday afternoons.
- In an effort to promote Whittier School's PBIS (Positive Behavior Intervention and Support) core beliefs and continued partnership with Fairleigh Dickinson University's women's basketball and men's soccer teams, Whittier School will be featured guests at a FDU women's Basketball game on January 8.

Benjamin Franklin Middle School

Recent and upcoming activities/events at BFMS include:

- On October 31, the November/December provide opportunities for us to build capacity in our staff, students, and parents at many overlapping junctures. We continue to promote cultural competence and support events to strengthen our academic program at Benjamin Franklin Middle School. Attached are some programs and pictures that have highlighted. We revamped our breakfast program to increase student participation.
- November 9 - Four of our young ladies were awarded certificates and graduated from the GEE Girls Graduation at Farleigh Dickerson University, Teaneck, New Jersey to support engineering.
- November 13 – the school held a BFPTO Urban Air Fund Raiser and NJSLA Student Recognition
- November 14 - Literacy Night to support literary for our students and families.
- November 21 – Sports Night to build community between school and community.
- November 27 – World Language Day featuring food, language activities, and dancing to support the diversity at the school.
- December Events:
 - December 2 – HERO K12 Super Hero of the Month recognition at Pep Rally
 - December 6 – Student of the Month Ceremony
 - December 6 - BFast Program - Before/After School Tutorial (Title 1 Program that will provide academic support for student in the am and pm) began taking applications.
 - December 17 – Winter Concert @ 6:30 pm - BFMS Auditorium

Thomas Jefferson Middle School

Recent activities/events at TJMS include:

- On Thanksgiving Day, Ms. Davis's annual Thanksgiving Dinner was held at Thomas Jefferson Middle School. Over 150 people attended from 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. Many people donated food and volunteered their services to cook, set up and serve the dinner.
- One of our school counselor's, Ms. Martino, is collecting funds for the holidays for our students in need. She will use the funds to purchase gifts for the families of six students identified by the staff.
- Auditions will be held on December 12 for our PTA sponsored Talent Show. The Talent Show will be held on January 23 in the Thomas Jefferson auditorium.
- A Winter Concert will be held on December 19 at 7 pm.

Teaneck High School

Recent and upcoming activities/events at THS include:

- November
 - Our pre-Thanksgiving Day Pep Rally and Barn Fire was held on November 27
 - At the HBCU College Fair on November 22, 26 students were accepted to 15 different HBCU's.
- December
 - Hispanic Heritage Celebration (Show & Fair) will take place on December 19 at 1:30 pm
 - Orchestra Concert will be held on December 10 at 8pm in the THS Auditorium
 - Parent Workshop, Wednesday December 11 at 6:30pm. The topic will be "How to Pay for College". Ms. Rhona Vega from Parent Matterz is the invited guest speaker.
 - The Madrigal's performed at the Paramus Tree Lighting Ceremony.
- January
 - On January 9, THS will host an "Opportunities Expo" with Parents Matterz to inform students about internship, mentorship and leadership development opportunities that are available to them.
 - THS will host an Open House on January 23, 2020 at 6pm.
 - In conjunction with the NAACP, THS will host a discussion about the School –to-Prison Pipeline and the Prison Industrial Complex as part of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. celebrations.

Human Resource Management

Staff Vacancy Updates – see attached document