

# *Superintendent's Report*



February 12, 2020

## **Eugene Field Plans & New Building Name**

For the 2020-2021 school year, the former Eugene Field building will be brought back online to serve the Kindergarten students of Teaneck. This facility will house 9 classrooms, which will service approximately 180 students, the majority of our K population. Shifting the Kindergarten classes from Bryant School to the new location will allow for the expansion of our Pre-K program in district.

Currently, Bryant houses 12 General Education Pre-K classes and 5 Preschool Disabled classes, servicing approximately 225 students. With the K move, there will be an additional 6 classroom spaces available at Bryant for Pre-K students. This will allow the district to provide a high quality Pre-K program to approximately 70% of our projected universe.

Additionally, after receiving nearly 100 nominations for the new name of the existing Eugene Field building, the Board's Naming Committee hosted a Community Forum on Monday, February 3 at the Teaneck High School Student Center. The event was well attended by the community and we heard from approximately 20 speakers advocating on behalf of one of the six finalists. The Naming Committee will bring their recommendation to the Board for a final vote at the March Board Meeting.

## **Mental Health Services Pilot**

On January 30, we officially announced that the pilot of an in-school mental health program for elementary and middle school students – and their families – which will run from February 17 – June 15. My announcement was shared via a video message sent to all district families and it can be viewed on our website or our YouTube channel - [https://youtu.be/PIR1g5\\_PpEo](https://youtu.be/PIR1g5_PpEo). Additionally, we now have the attached flyer that we will be promoting to all elementary and middle school families. This initiative has been funded through our recent School Climate Transformation Grant and it is our hope that by providing these services, it will help to normalize mental health and the use of mental health services. If interested, parents should contact their child's School Counselor for a referral for services. We will monitor interest and usage of these services before deciding our go-forward approach beyond this school year.

## **District Strategic Plan Update**

In our continued efforts to share the mission, vision and the key objectives of our five-year district Strategic Plan with all stakeholders, I am currently conducting Town Hall events with our teaching staff. I have completed two of the seven events (which take place at each school location immediately after school) and I appreciated the questions and feedback received. Although not mandatory, I encourage our teachers to attend any of the remaining meetings (including one at a different school if the date works better for you). The full schedule is attached.

## **NJSLA Preparation**

The New Jersey Student Learning Assessments for English Language Arts and Mathematics (NJSLA-ELA/Math) measures the extent to which students are on track to being college or career ready in each of the two respective areas. This year's testing window for all assessments is April 20 - May 29, 2020. Please note that NJSLA Science Administration is now included in this timeframe. NJSLA-Science test

grades 5, 8 and 11. Our Child Study Teams are currently reviewing any IEP's for any accommodations needed. The Technology team have been taking the necessary steps to have the district's Chromebooks ready for testing. Parent, Student and Teacher Information Guides have been received and will be distributed.

### **Pre-k Expansion & 2020-2021 Applications**

Applications for the 2020-2021 pre-k program are now available and **must be returned to our Central Registration office by Tuesday, February 18, 2020**. While we continue to expand the number of children who we can serve with full-day, free preschool, *applications do not guarantee placement*. To be eligible, your child must be 3 or 4 years of age by October 1, 2020. For an application or more details, please see the attached flyer or visit our Central Registration Office (located inside Thomas Jefferson Middle School) or call 201-833-5512.

### **Student Liaisons to the Board**

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

### **Curriculum & Instruction**

Business - Dr. Marisa King, Supervisor of Social Studies, Business and Practical Arts, is in the process of updating and renovating four classroom spaces at Teaneck High School. These classrooms will create a 21<sup>st</sup> century learning environment that fosters personal growth, collaboration, communication and leadership skills for students taking business courses.

Financial Literacy - Students in grades seven and eight will receive instruction in personal finance on "Financial Fridays." During these Friday sessions, students will come to understand education and career goals based on their growing skills and areas of personal interest. Students will learn about budgeting, financial choices, use of credit and risks associated with financial spending.

Technology - Students from the 3D Printing and Modeling course offered at Teaneck High School are putting the finishing touches on completing the assembly of the IMADE 3D Printer Kits. Through this hands-on building process, the students are learning the function of all the components in a 3D Printer as well as the coding involved in the firmware that controls the mechanical functions of these devices.

### *Department of School Counseling*

National School Counselors Week - Celebrated February 3 -7. This week, sponsored by The American School Counseling Association (ASCA), highlights the tremendous impact school counselors have on helping students achieve school success and plan for a career. This year's theme was, "School Counselors: Helping Build Better Humans." Announcements were made every day to recognize the contribution of school counselors. In addition, there were daily themes for the National School Counseling Week Photo Challenge. As part of this celebration, lunch was provided to the school counselors to thank them for the very important work that they do

### Upcoming Programs and Events

Bloomfield College Merit Scholarships Information Session - February 13. Please join the Teaneck School Counseling Department and Bloomfield College Office of Admission for an Information Session in the THS Media Center. Bloomfield College has partnered with our district to provide opportunities for our students to achieve a higher education and

- life-changing experiences. The Bloomfield College Merit Scholarships are exclusive scholarships offered to Teaneck High School students only. There are three different scholarship categories being offered and up to 25 scholarships available.
- Junior Parent Night - February 19, 7pm in the THS Student Center. A panel discussion with college admissions representatives will take place.
- College and Career Awareness Month - Districtwide initiative to expose our k – 12 students via programs such as “March Madness Door Decorating” and Career Exploration.
- NCAA Information Session- “Life of an Athlete: Before, During and After” - March 18, 7 pm in the THS Student Center. A panel discussion with NCAA coaches, academic advisors, and former athletes to discuss NCAA compliance and more.

FDU Weekend STEM Programs: Through our continued partnership with FDU, Teaneck students have and will continue to participate in the following free programs on campus:

- Middle School Program - Girls Exploring The Gildart Haase School of Computer Sciences and Engineering is launching a Girls Exploring Engineering (GEE) Program as part of the FDU STEM Academy that will once again provide our 8<sup>th</sup> grade girls the opportunity to get involved in the field of engineering.
- High School Programs include:

Technical Enrichment and Outreach Program (TEOP) - Students get introductory engineering lectures plus guided hands-on experience in working with various technology oriented kits, projects, and computer activities. Basic engineering and scientific concepts and principles and mathematics (keyed to the hands-on projects) would be introduced in the lectures. This innovative enrichment program provides exposure to, and experience with, pre-engineering and engineering technology activities.

META (Mathematics Enrichment Through Applications: Technical Enrichment Outreach Program) -These instructional workshops consist of an introduction to basic mathematical principles given by one of the three workshop instructors followed by both individual and group project work.

Computing and Security Enrichment Outreach Program (CSEOP) - This session will introduce cybersecurity to aspiring college bound students. CSEOP will emphasize five major area concentrations of particular relevance and interest for budding cybersecurity technologists: Inside Computers and Networking, Criminal Justice and Cyber Crime, Programming using Alice (Java), Image Processing and Steganography, Cryptography and Cybersecurity.

Communication: The Guidance Department is now on social media. Follow us @TeaneckGuidance on Instagram and Facebook for all things School Counseling.

**Special Services***Writing Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance - 01/06/2020*

On Monday January 6, 2020, special education high school teachers, participated in a professional development session on writing legally compliant present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) with Shellian Mirander, Assistant Director of Special Education.

Teachers examined the following components:

- Guide to Writing PLAAFPs
- PLAAFP Component Chart
- PLAAFP Checklist and Rubric

*SEPAG Committee Meeting*

The Teaneck SEPAG Committee met on Tuesday, January 21. Committee members discussed the School Climate Transformation Grant, initiatives in the Special Education Department and commenced planning for a SEPAG parent event. The next SEPAG meeting will be Tuesday, February 18.

*Dynamic Learning Maps (DLM) Training for Test Administrator*

The Department of Special Education facilitated the required test administrator training for new and returning teachers participating in 2019-2020 DLM testing. The DLM Test administration window is April 1 to May 29, 2020.

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

- Black History Month began on February 1 and we successfully completed our second annual Black History Month Community Calendar of Events. This calendar features 29 events from 13 community organizations and was released in a printed, poster format and a JPEG format for online posting. Thank you to all who contributed to this year's community calendar.
- Women's History Month begins March 1 and planning is underway for our second annual Women's History Month Community Calendar of Events which will release by February 26.
- Teaneck Public Schools and the Township of Teaneck have partnered to host a special "125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Township" Gala in November 2020. More details will be coming soon.
- In our continued effort to streamline the operations of our Community Education area, we are currently working with the Business Office and our Technology Department to move our paper forms and current payment procedures to an online environment (whereby credit card payments will be accepted for our camp and aftercare programs). As part of this process, we had our legal counsel review all of our existing forms to ensure we are in compliance.

*Volunteer Program*

Since revamping our volunteer program this past summer, we have placed 11 new volunteers to date who are now working with our students in a variety of ways. Another six volunteers are in the pipeline. Additionally, our "Leading Through Lessons" partnership with Arbor Terrace Teaneck (whereby our middle school students visit with some of the residents of this senior- living community to discuss specific topics) will continue with a Women's History Month theme in late March.

### *Special Events*

- Our district will be hosting a Budget Community Forum on Thursday, February 20 at the Teaneck High School. Please see the attached flyer for more details.

### **Technology**

The Technology department is currently working on several projects and initiatives. The first initiative is to streamline the onboarding process with human resources. We have been setting up all of the forms into an online platform, preparing accounts, and starting to set up the application. Another initiative is beginning to streamline the online forms and payments for the district's Camp K. We will then move on to doing the same for the district's before and after-care program (S.A.C.C.).

We also had 22 Promethean interactive boards installed in Hawthorne Elementary, Thomas Jefferson Middle School, and Benjamin Franklin Middle School. Later this month, we will also have another set of boards installed in Teaneck High School and Whittier Elementary School.

### **Bryant School**

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Bryant include:

- Parent/Teacher conferences were held on February 6 with high parent participation.
- Kindness bag supplies collection underway. Bags will be packed on February 18 and distributed to the homeless shelter by month's end.
- Black History Month assembly/concert will take place on Wednesday, February 26 - entitled "We are the Change We Seek".
- We will celebrate the 100th Day of School (February 12) with a PTO Coin Drive. The class that collects the most will win a pizza party.
- J-Has-Heart Anti Bullying assembly for kindergarten will be taking place on March 17.
- Pre-K Tools of the Mind training will take place on March 18.
- Plans are being made to celebrate Read Across America. If anyone would like to volunteer, please contact Bryant School.

### **Hawthorne Elementary School**

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Hawthorne include:

- The MLK essay contest is underway for our 4th grade students. This year's theme connects leadership and the anniversary of Teaneck.
- In honor of Black History Month, a synopsis of the accomplishments of African American people will be highlighted throughout the month during morning announcements. Misty Copeland, Nyeeam Hudson, Skai Jackson, Ava Duvernay, and Robert Smith were spotlighted.
- On Tuesday, February 4, we held a ceremony to induct 14 of our 4th grade students into the National Elementary Honor Society. The students pledged to uphold the pillars of scholarship, responsibility, service, and leadership.
- Our Student of the Month ceremony is being held on February 12 to honor 16 students as January nominees for demonstrating the character trait of resilience.
- Parent Teacher conferences will be held on Thursday, February 13.
- Second grade students will be hosting a publishing party on Thursday, February 20. The 1st grade students will be hosting a family day on Friday, February 21.

- The Hawthorne living museum event will be on Tuesday, February 25 at 6:30pm. Students will bring book characters to life, as they get into character for some worthwhile “edutainment”.
- Our Black History Month assembly for 3rd and 4th graders, which consists of student performances, will be on Friday, February 28.

### **Lowell Elementary School**

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Lowell include:

- February 3: PTO Smencil Gram Orders begin
- February 4: Math Competition by Grades (K-4) – Coordinated by Math Coaches
- February 7: MD Class Trip to Museum Natural History at 9am
- February 12: Math Competition by Grades (K-4) – Coordinated by Math Coaches
- February 14: PTO Smencil Grams are being delivered to students
- February 14: Kindergarten Friendship Day at 2:00pm
- February 21: Math Competition by Grades (K-4) – Coordinated by Math Coaches
- February 21: MD Class Trip to Bergen Town Center at 9:30am
- February 25: MD Class Trip to Bergen PAC at 9:00am
- February 27: MLK Concert
  - Grades K-2 and Ms. Dibona’s Class from 9:25-10:05am
  - Grades 3-4, Ms. Sgambati and Ms. Finizio’s Class from 10:20-11:00am

### **Whittier Elementary School**

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Whittier include:

- Whittier School is participating in an all-school book club called One School, One Book. Each student received a copy of the same book – the World According to Humphrey by Betty G. Birney. Parents have been asked to read the book together at home. Parents and students can also access read aloud through Ms. Martinez’s e-board. In school, students are invited to answer daily trivia questions to encourage and reward attentive listening. The aim of the program is to create a Community of Readers at Whittier School
- Black History Month is being honored by reading poems, quotes and biographies of prominent Black Americans.
- The first week in February is National School Counselor Week. Every day Ms. Coston provides students with tips for their social and emotional well-being.
- We are participating in the national Great Kindness Challenge. The challenge kicked off the week of January 27 with activities to promote kindness, such as town hall meetings, the Great Kindness Challenge checklist, etc. Every week there will be activities to encourage kindness. Every Friday we will have Kindness Spirit Days.
- The monthly PTO Meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 25 in the school library.
- The PTO is holding its first Let’s Talk Meeting on Tuesday, February 11 at 7:00 pm,
- Family Stem Night will be held on Tuesday, February 25 at 6:30 pm.
- Parent Teacher Conferences will be held on Thursday, February 13.

**Benjamin Franklin Middle School**

Recent and upcoming activities/events at BFMS include:

- The Launch of our BFast Program – The success of the BFAST Program (Title 1) continues with a current enrollment of over 125 students in grades 5-8. In addition to the 14 staff members, we have successfully signed up nearly 30 student tutors to assist these teachers with supporting the academic needs of the learners in the program. The Robotics program of BFAST has boast an enrollment of nearly 25 students every Wednesday and the attendance have been consistent.
- On January 20, 30 students attended a “Day of Service” with Principal Terrence Williams to commemorate the work of Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. This event occurred at Bergen Community College and the students created stuffed animals for orphans, drafted letters for troops, crafted blankets for troops and also packaged hygiene kits for troops.
- Students from Benjamin Franklin Middle School (BFMS) joined their peers from Thomas Jefferson Middle School to participate in an Event at Arbor Terrace where they shared in conversations with the residence there about travel, culture, and expanding their mind beyond the classroom. This event was prominently featured in *The Record* on Sunday, January 26.
- We kicked off Black History Month with an array of amazing displays in the lobby of the school, an art gallery that will run all month, significant quotes by prominent leaders, viewing of “Eyes on the Prize” in the school lobby, as well weekly activities on Wednesday to engage all learners in activities associated with Black Culture.
- On Wednesday, February 5, the school launched “Water Shed Wednesdays” which is a partnership between BFMS, Teaneck Creek Conservancy, NEEF, Samsung, Montclair State University, Hackensack River Keeper, Bergen County Department of Parks, and NJ Center for Water & Technology.
- All are welcome to attend the following events:
  - February 25, 7 pm -Night at the Museum – at BFMS
  - February 27, 9 am -Tribute to the Elders – at BFMS

**Thomas Jefferson Middle School**

Recent activities/events at TJMS include:

- The final round of our Spelling Bee was held on January 21. The Thomas Jefferson Middle School (TJMS) winner is Niah Aldave, who will be moving on to the Bergen County Spelling Bee in March.
- The National Junior Honor Society held their Induction Ceremony on January 29. Thirty-three 8th graders were inducted.
- Our PTA sponsored Talent Show was held on January 30. Twelve groups performed, including our vocal music teacher, Ms. Neff, who performed with one of our students.
- Ilan Blaiberg, a 7th grade student at TJMS, won the school-level competition of the 2020 National Geographic Bee, in which over 500 students participated. Ilan has taken an online qualifying test, and we are waiting to see if he will move on to the State Bee and a chance to win a \$50,000 college scholarship. Only the top 100 scorers in the State of New Jersey will qualify.

**Teaneck High School**

Recent and upcoming activities/events at THS include:

- The February 3 faculty meeting was focused on how to recognize behaviors that inhibit student behaviors. The information was adapted from the Positive Peer Culture program, (Horvath & Bendtro).

- The Black Youth Organization's (BYO) Black History Month Performance, "Let's Rewind" took place on February 7. Club advisor Christine Mayers previewed the show to the student body on Thursday February 6
- The Terpsys' will present "Motown Revue, The Beat of the Generation" on Saturday, February 15 at 8 pm and Sunday, February 16 at 3 pm.
- Teachers will begin to make student course requests for the 2020-2021 school year the first week of March.
- Junior Parent Night - February 19, 7pm in the THS Student Center. There will be a panel discussion with college admissions representatives.
- NCAA Information Session - "Life of an Athlete: Before, During and After" - March 18 at 7 pm in the THS Student Center. A panel discussion with NCAA coaches, academic advisors, former athletes and more.

**Human Resource Management**

*Staff Vacancy Updates – see attached document*