

Superintendent's Report



February 13, 2019

Superintendent's Advisory Committees

The six committees (Student, Faculty, Beyond Diversity, SEPAC, Faith-based and Student Code of Conduct Review) continue to host their respective committee meetings and the most recent round of meeting notes can be found on our website:

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

District Strategic Plan

I am pleased to report that we are making significant progress in the “gathering of information” stage of our District Strategic Plan development. The Steering Committee met again on January 30 and all members will support current initiatives that are underway including the final stages towards releasing our online survey and the upcoming Town Hall meetings. The Committee will reconvene on March 12. Focus groups with key staff and stakeholders (including former Board trustees) will begin this month and run through early April. The online survey will be released in early March. Also in an effort to make contributing to this process as convenient as possible, we have selected four locations for our Strategic Plan Town Hall meetings. The first two meetings will take place at Teaneck High School (February 20 and March 4) from 6 pm to 7 pm. The third and fourth events will take place at Temple Emeth (on March 26) and Darul Islah (on April 2) from 5 pm to 6 pm. The latter two events require online registration for security purposes. The flyer (available in English and Spanish) includes a live link that immediately goes to the registration page. The flyer has been posted on Facebook and on our website, and sent to our schools for distribution and posting. Lastly, an email from me is being sent to the entire community inviting participation in the survey and the upcoming town hall meetings.

2019-2020 Budget Forums

As per our Board Budget Planning Calendar, the district will host two special budget forums on February 19 at The Rodda Center and on March 26 at Teaneck High School. Both events are from 7 pm – 8 pm and will provide the Teaneck community with additional opportunities to participate in the budget development process for the 2019-2020 school year. The event flyer (available in English & Spanish) were distributed on our Facebook page and posted on our website. Additionally, I sent home a phone call message inviting all to participate in this process and posted a letter from me (stating the same) on our website.

Black History Month & Women's History Month Calendar of Events

Last month, I mentioned that we were collaborating with many organizations in an effort to develop a community calendar of events focused on Black History Month. I know that you have all seen the beautiful poster that was created and issued in late January for display in our schools, and a wide range of town and faith-based facilities. We have received extremely positive feedback on this collaborative effort and as promised, we are currently working on creating something similar to celebrate Women's History Month in March. Submissions for the Women's History Month Calendar are due to Ms. Corallo today and the posters will be available by February 26. Holocaust Remembrance Day is May 2, 2019. We will plan accordingly for this and for the upcoming Jewish American Heritage Month and Asian

Pacific American Heritage Month (which are all in May). National Hispanic Heritage Month is from Sept. 15- Oct 15, 2019.

Recent Student Recognition

Several of our student athletes have had tremendous success either individually or as a team. We will recognize these outstanding accomplishments at next month's Board meeting.

College Partnerships

The follow-up meeting scheduled with President Mercer of Ramapo College was postponed due to the snow day.

Student Liaisons to the Board

Updates from Saima Jamal, Vernon Johnson, Stephanie Menendez, and William MacIntosh.

Curriculum & Instruction

The Technology Department submitted an Advanced Computer Science grant (BOE approved November 7, 2018) to the New Jersey Department of Education. On January 30, 2019, Governor Murphy announced that Teaneck was one of 29 districts whose grant application was accepted. Although the amount of the grant has not yet been disclosed, this grant will assist in expanding our computer science education program.

After successfully taking part in the Preliminary Challenge, the Teaneck High School Robotics Team (which consists of 3 seniors, Saima Jamal, Itai Epstein and William Milun) was officially invited to move on to the 2019 Panasonic Creative Design Challenge Robotics Competition finals! The second half of this competition will include: an oral presentation at the Panasonic Headquarters to a committee of Panasonic engineers and executives (on 3/13/19); a written report detailing the design process that the team has gone through to complete their design (due on 3/22/19); submission of a design logbook detailing every time that they have met, design drawings and recording of all the details of their design since the start of their design process on November 1st 2018 (due on 3/22/19); and participation in the Final Challenge on 4/16/19. Points from each of the previously stated components are tallied up and the team with the highest points will be awarded first place. This year the THS Robotics Team is defending their 2018 first place position. Mrs. Sharon Bellin and Mr. Rolando Monserrat advise the Teaneck High School Robotics Team.

At Whittier School this past summer, the second grade students started a unit on recycling. In order to extend that program into the school year, the second graders in the TAG Technology classes completed online research on recycling and the Buddy Bench. The students were responsible for creating a Google Slides Presentation to share with the other students at Whittier and to encourage the school community to participate in their recycling project. Their goal is to recycle 750 plastic gallon containers. The Buddy Bench is a place for kids to sit at during recess usually when they are feeling out of sorts and/or need a buddy to play and talk with.

The eighth grade Biodiversity students at BFMS have developed a campaign to promote interest in the Teaneck Creek Conservancy. They shared their work with Lowell, Whittier and Hawthorne elementary

students on February 5. Their presentation was roughly 30 minutes and included a talk accompanied by Google Slides, a short skit and a short video. The students also provided posters of the wildlife found in the creek that can be displayed in hallways or classrooms. This was a great opportunity for the middle school students to have an authentic audience for their work and to raise awareness about the environmental benefits of the Teaneck Creek.

Athletics

The middle schools' basketball programs are showing improvement and having success. Benjamin Franklin's boys' team has only lost two games this year. Thomas Jefferson's girls' team is undefeated. The girls' fencing team won the Bergen County Title and are headed for the State tournament. The girls' bowling team is undefeated in the regular season. They have won the Bergen County Title and the State Sectional title. The team will be competing in the State Meet of Champions and as individuals will compete during the week of 2/11/19. The boys' bowling team placed second in the State Sectional Tournament and will also be heading to the State Championship Tournament during the week of 2/11/19. The girls' basketball team has earned the top seed in the Bergen Invitational Tournament, and won their first round game handily. The boys' basketball team earned the fifth seed in the Bergen County Jamboree and beat Mahwah in their first round game. The indoor track team has had great success in the conference and county. The team will continue competing as a team and individuals in state competition. The wrestling team reached the state sectionals and are headed for the district tournament.

Community Relations & Volunteer Services

Teaneck's newest volunteers are already making a difference at their respective schools. Mr. Frank Ottochian, a retired Teaneck teacher, is working with our TJMS Environmental Club on a "Peace Project" – artwork that delivers a great message. Mr. Wallace Lee is a welcome addition to the pre-k program at Christ Episcopal Church; and Ms. Susan Forman is enjoying her time helping students with Math at the high school. Other volunteers are assisting with afterschool activities as well as reading and mentoring programs.

Now that the Black History Month Community Calendar is complete, we are working on the March Women's History Month calendar of events. Additionally, several special events will take place during the month of February and March regarding the development of the district's Strategic Plan and the 2019-2020 district budget. Details for these events can be found on the district website and all are welcome to attend.

The recent visit from the NJ Schools Development Authority (SDA) was well-attended by SDA staff and local elected officials. Our guests received a tour of the district office, Bryant Elementary, both middle schools, and the Teaneck High School.

The 2019-2020 School and District Calendars have been created and are on tonight's Board agenda for approval.

Bryant Elementary School

Recent and upcoming activities/events at Bryant include:

- Bryant celebrated the Chinese/Lunar New Year with several classroom and school-wide events. They included a teaching hallway with lanterns and dragon scales made by their students. The library sent a Traveling book through the school to create a common understanding of the holidays and its traditions. They culminated with a whole school assembly including the PTO who provided red envelopes with money in them for each student.
- Parent Conferences were held at Bryant and Christ Church. Report cards were distributed for the new Pre- school students.
- Bryant held a successful pancake fundraiser at Applebee's in Hackensack, NJ. Over 70 people came and enjoyed a special breakfast served by Bryant staff members.
- This month they will celebrate the 100th day of school with a day filled with fun activities and culminate the month with a special MLK /Black History assembly (February 27, 2019) at 9:15 and 10:15am. During the assembly, the Outreach counselor and Bryant School Ambassadors will highlight their ongoing MLK service Project that services homeless families in our communities with toiletries for their temporary housing situations.

Hawthorne Elementary School

Recent and upcoming activities/events at Hawthorne include:

- Hawthorne class, grade, and school Spelling Bees will be conducted February 11 – 21.
- In line with our Title I Parent Engagement/Parent involvement goal, the school's fourth event will be on February 19. The event will focus on grades K – 2 and the topic will be Math Strategies.
- Mr. Jennette has submitted a carryover fund amendment to the Title I Grant.

Lowell Elementary School

Recent activities and upcoming events at Lowell include:

- The eighth grade Suburban Biodiversity class at BF developed an advertising campaign to promote interest in the Teaneck Creek Conservancy. The eighth grade shared their work with the third and fourth graders at Lowell.
- The National Honor Society is a group of fourth graders recognized for academic excellence and demonstrated responsibility within & outside the class. Students enjoy helping their community. They come together as a group to brainstorm and plan ways to improve the community and make a difference.
- In February, students at Lowell, led by Physical Education department, are participating in the American Heart Association's "Kids Heart Challenge". Last year Lowell raised \$7179.63 – setting a district record.
- The school celebrated Black History Month by honoring our country's African American patriots and heroes. There were two performances of our Martin Luther King Concert on January 31.
- The creation of the "Lowell Ledger" – the school's newsletter for the principals' perspective, monthly message from their PTO and other character education information regarding early growth mindsets.
- PTO Book Drive – gently used books to donate to students and teachers in our school community.

- PTO Heart Heroes Family Night - Students guided their families through their fitness routine and saw a special video presentation from the American Heart Association. Ms. Ryerson, from PE, led the event.
- Mr. Green will be reading books to classes in honor of the celebration of Black History and Women's History Month. There will also be posters and quotes from various leaders showcased throughout the building.

Whittier Elementary School

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Whittier include:

- Whittier School hosted its Second Literacy Night on Thursday, January 17. The evening's reading, writing and science activities celebrated the works of Roald Dahl. The event was a great success.
- Town Hall Meetings were held for No Name Calling week (Jan 21-25). Students met by grade level to discuss utilizing more kind words in their interactions with their peers, families, teachers, etc. and how words can hurt and heal.
- Chess Club is well underway and the students are enjoying learning and playing the game.
- On Tuesday, February 5 the TAG student of Benjamin Franklin Middle School came to meet with second, third and fourth grade students to share an environmental project they recently undertook involving saving the earth's resources, recycling, etc. Special focus was on the Teaneck Creek Conservancy.
- Parent Teacher Conferences will be held on Tuesday February 12. Whittier School classes will also celebrate the 100th day of School on February 12. Each grade level will do grade appropriate projects to recognize the day.
- The PTO Spring Book Fair will take place from Monday, February 25 through Friday, March 1. The PTO will hold its monthly meeting on Tuesday, February 26 at 6:30 PM in the school library.
- Whittier School will hold its Second Family Math Night on February 28 at 6:30 PM in the school cafeteria.

Benjamin Franklin Middle School

Recent and upcoming activities/events at BFMS include:

- On February 8, BFMS celebrated several students for exhibiting the character trait of compassion during our Student of the Month ceremony.
- BFMS language arts teachers have partnered with language arts teachers from BFMS in Ridgewood to work on a yearlong collaborative project, which involves students from both schools, known as the Harkness Project. On February 12, Ridgewood teachers and administration will be visiting the school to observe our students in action.
- Parent/teacher conferences will be taking place on February 21 from 2pm to 5pm and 6:30pm to 9:00pm.
- On February 22, the school will welcome THS's Black Youth Organization to perform excerpts from their Black History program.
- The winter dance, which is sponsored by the BFMS PTO, will be on February 27.
- The BFMS math department is hosting a math night on February 28. Parents are encouraged to come out to learn about the math resources and how family-oriented math games can support student achievement.

Thomas Jefferson Middle School

Recent and upcoming activities/events at TJMS include:

- Thomas Jefferson Middle School is participating in Project Cicero, which is collecting and donating new and very gently used hardcover and paperback books to children in under-resourced schools in northern New Jersey.
- Math Club meetings began this month. Fifth and sixth graders meet on Wednesdays, 3:20-4:00 p.m. Students are having a great deal of fun working with math games and manipulatives. The school is working towards participating in upcoming competitions.
- Bridge Club meetings began on February 4 and 16 students are currently participating. Thomas Jefferson used to be ranked #1 in the State of New Jersey in Bridge. They look forward to gaining that ranking once again.
- Volleyball Club has begun meeting on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, 7:15 – 8:00 a.m. Thirty students are participating.
- Thomas Jefferson Middle School will be naming its Media Center, “The Leola Weaver Maddox Media Center.” The Gathering, Dedication and Unveiling Ceremony will take place from 1:00-3:00 p.m. on February 15 in the Thomas Jefferson Middle School auditorium.
- The Physical Education Department is hosting the American Heart Challenge, formerly known as Jump Rope for Heart or Hoops for Heart, during the week of February 5 – 11 to raise money for the American Heart Association.
- The Scholastic Book Fair will take place February 19 – 22 in the Media Center.
- TJMS’ Teachers vs. Students basketball game will take place on February 22 after school.
- Teaneck families have been invited to discuss an excerpt from Richard Wright’s *Black Boy* and enjoy a delicious soul food tasting on February 26 at 6:00 p.m. One of TJ’s teachers who is a reading coach, Delores Connors, will host the book talk in the Media Center at 6:00 p.m. The discussion theme is Fight, Flight or Submission.
- Their Black History Program will take place in the auditorium 12:20 – 2:20 p.m. and in the evening at 7:00 p.m.
- Thomas Jefferson Middle School will be participating in Pennies for Patients to help find a cure for blood cancer. The collection is over a two-week period from February 11 to February 22. This will be done as a classroom fundraiser, where each student has their own individual box along with a classroom box to combine all coins, cash, and checks collected from the students in your respective homerooms. The homeroom with the largest amount collected will receive an Olive Garden Pasta party.

Teaneck High School

Recent and upcoming activities/events at THS include:

- Each morning during the month of February, a Black History fact is read and every Friday in February the Black National Anthem “Lift Every Voice” is sung during morning announcements.
- The National Black Lives Matter week was observed from February 4 – 8.
- Ms. Laqui, Mr. Murphy and Mr. Holland organized several activities for the student body and faculty. There was a community gathering from February 8 from 3-5 in the Media Center to end the week.
- The Black Youth Organization hosted their annual show featuring spiritual songs, poetry, dances and spoken word. There was a preview of the show during the day for all students. The evening show was on Friday, February 8 at 6 pm.

- The Terpischoceans will perform their annual show on Saturday, February 16 at 8:00 and on Sunday, February 17 at 6:00 PM. This year's show is entitled "Revolutions".
- The National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Bergen/Passaic Chapter is hosting the 2nd Annual HBCU panel discussion about the HBCU experience. Teaneck High School alumni who have graduated from various HBCUs will be on the panel. This event will be open to all Teaneck students and will be held in the Student Center on February 21.

Human Resource Management

Staff Vacancy Updates – see attached document