

Superintendent's Report



March 13, 2019

Recent Student Recognition

Tonight we are recognizing six middle school students who recently completed the Mu Boule/W.E.B. DuBois "Role Models for Manhood" program that took place at Rutgers' Newark Campus for five Saturdays in January and February. This program aims to develop young men; and we are pleased to have had three students from Benjamin Franklin and three from Thomas Jefferson who benefited from our first participation in this annual event. The students are here tonight to encourage other middle school students to participate in the future.

Additionally, I mentioned last month that several of our student athletes have had tremendous success either individually or as a team. Last week, Ms. Erin Emery (senior), was added to this list with her historic win in the first ever Women's State Wrestling Championship. We will recognize these outstanding accomplishments immediately prior to the April 24 Regular Board meeting.

District Strategic Plan

The community wide survey was released on Friday, March 8. To date, the district has received 223 responses - 12 of which are in Spanish. The survey is open to all who live in the community, including students, community members, business owners and families. Currently, twenty-one (21) students have responded, three (3) teachers, seven (7) administrators, one hundred seventy-nine (179) families, nine (9) community members and four (4) respondents who work within the community.

We also launched our building-based focus group sessions. Our first meeting took place at Teaneck High School on Monday, March 11. The consultants led staff members through a series of activities to determine strengths and opportunities for improvement. One hundred and seventeen (117) staff members participated, including teachers, child study team members, deans, counselors and educational support professionals. The district will continue to meet with staff members throughout the months of March and April to ensure that all district employees have an opportunity to participate in this important process.

Due to the inclement weather, we added another Town Hall meeting to replace the one that was cancelled. On April 8, we will host a town hall meeting from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM at Teaneck High School. The other two Town Hall events are still scheduled 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. An updated flyer is now available (in English and Spanish) and includes a live link that immediately goes to the registration page. This flyer is available on our website and was shared on our Facebook page. All are encouraged to attend.

2019-2020 Budget Forums

The district hosted the first of two special budget community forums. The second forum is scheduled for March 26 at Teaneck High School from 7 pm – 8 pm. We are working hard to be as inclusive as possible in order to provide the Teaneck community with many 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. We have already promoted these forums broadly and will continue to issue reminders as the second forum date approaches.

Pre-K Grant for 2019-2020

In February, The Teaneck Public Schools applied for the state funded Preschool Education Expansion Aid (PEEA). We are anticipating receipt of \$1.4 million in funding, which will allow our district to continue with the mission to expand our Pre-K program. These funds will allow us to continue to serve students, ages 3 and 4, with a high quality preschool education.

Women's History Month & Jewish American Heritage Month Calendar of Events

We released our second Community Calendar of Events – this time focused on Women's History Month. This month's calendar features 17 events that will take place during the month of March. We continue to receive extremely positive feedback on this collaborative effort and are already working on the next calendar for May focused on Jewish American Heritage Month. The planning meeting for this will take place on Wednesday, March 27th, and any organization planning a related event for the month of May are welcome to attend.

Interfaith/Intercultural Basketball Event (Project RPSCT)

The inaugural Project RSPCT (Recreational Sports Promoting Cultural Tolerance) event took place on Sunday, March 3. The district and other community leaders were thanked for helping to organize and launch this project. The organizers (from various interfaith and intercultural groups) noted that the event was very successful and all of the participants "enjoyed, gained new perspectives, and will hopefully plant seeds of friendships that will transcend race, religion, and ethnicities".

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>

Student Liaisons to the Board

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

Curriculum & Instruction

Professional Development: The Office of Curriculum & Instruction has planned the professional development sessions to be held on Monday, March 18. There will be thirty-three sessions for teachers and staff; all focused on improving instruction and student outcomes.

Teaneck Academically Gifted: The Elementary TAG teachers participated in a STEAM workshop at Ramapo College. This opportunity has helped them begin to implement a STEAM unit within the 3rd and 4th grade TAG Math curriculum. It has been a wonderful addition to the classroom as they see how creative the students can be in their problem solving and designing abilities. The 4th grade Literacy Seminar encouraged students to study history, theme and figurative language through the lens of Civil

Rights Music. They focused on multiple versions of three songs: "A Change is Gonna Come", "Oh, Freedom", and "Lift Every Voice and Sing." Students participated in shared inquiry discussions reflecting on how the interpretation of a song can affect its deeper meanings. The National Elementary Honor Society students interviewed staff members about times that they were the recipients of "Random Acts of Kindness" and how those acts influenced their own actions. The interviews were recorded for posterity! The Whittier School second grade TAG students were successful in recycling 750 plastic gallon containers. Due to their success, the Whittier PTO funded the purchase of a Whittier School Buddy Bench for their playground. It is made completely from 750 plastic gallon-sized containers.

Technology: As reported previously, the New Jersey Department of Education informed the district that our advanced computer science grant application was accepted and we would be notified regarding the amount of money we would be receiving. We have learned that the district will be receiving \$85,209 to improve our computer science program! Technology teachers have received a free access trial to Lynda.com, an online library of training courses. Teachers can take courses in STEM, website design, computer design, robotics, computer science, animation, and other technological areas, to augment their current knowledge and grow professionally.

Community Relations & Volunteer Services

The Supervisor of Community Relations & Volunteer Services will be making a presentation this evening to provide an update on her respective areas of responsibility – this will include updates on the Central Registration and Community Education departments.

In an effort to continue our community relations outreach, the Supervisor has recently met with several organizations: Taub Foundation, Bergen Volunteer Center, Holy Name Medical Center and Age-Friendly Teaneck. She is also assisting with a special "exploration" project to offer Jewish education at one of our elementary schools via an afterschool program that would begin September 2019. An online survey will be sent out to gauge interest before proceeding.

Notable current projects include:

- Student artwork on display at Teaneck Public Library (March 2019) - Students were asked to interpret what a Garden to Nurture Human Understanding means to them. The Garden to Nurture Human Understanding is a collective project of the Enslaved African Memorial, the Holocaust Memorial Committees and the Township Library. Stop by the library lobby area to see the works of art from our high school and middle school students.
- Puffin Foundation/Hobby Quest Afterschool Program – registration ends today and sessions will begin late March
- Camp K Open House on March 20 – announcements sent out via email and on website
- Spring Registration for Pre-K and Kindergarten
 - 2019-2020 (all full day Pre-K at both locations). Will have specific timeframes for applications (starts March 25) and in-district registration. Applications available online and at BOE office. Goal to have most placements completed by June 2019.
 - Kindergarten registration will also have specific timeframe for registration at Central Registration Office

Finally, we are pleased with the recent print and TV coverage of senior, Erin Emery (State Wrestling Champion) who appeared on local CBS and NBC stations. The new TTEA contract and TJMS' renaming of their Media Center after Ms. Leola Maddox also received prominent print coverage.

Technology

The 1:1 Chromebook initiative in the high school and middle schools is complete. We now have deployed 2400 Chromebooks to all three schools. The older Chromebooks are being prepared to be sent to the elementary schools in preparation for NJSLA testing. We are currently working on schedules and assignments for each school to fully test on Chromebooks without a need to move devices from building to building. WIDA testing is currently taking place at the high school with no technical issues.

There were four Smart Boards installed and setup at Thomas Jefferson in rooms 109, 114A, 114C, and 114D. There are also twelve new projectors scheduled to be installed in the High School, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin.

Be on the lookout for our digital citizenship page on our website. This page will include resources for parents and students to learn how to safely use technology and the internet.

Bryant Elementary School

Recent and upcoming activities/events at Bryant include:

- Bryant School celebrated Read Across America with a host of activities inside the classroom and out. The students culminated the celebration of Reading and Dr. Seuss birthday with a Vocabulary parade.
- In the coming weeks, our ESL after school program will begin with a focus on STEM and reading strategies.
- We will also be hosting school professional development in the area of Writing (K) through demo lessons that will be unpacked on the March 18 /PD day. This will be led by an outside consultant in collaboration with our Literacy and K teachers.
- On March 19, the entire Preschool staff of teachers and paras will engage in Part 3 of Tools of the Mind Training in Merchanville, NJ.
- Bryant teachers also shared data and strategies after reviewing mid-year student data in reading, math and writing to ensure student end- of the year goals were on track to being met.

Hawthorne Elementary School

Recent and upcoming activities/events at Hawthorne include:

- The Hawthorne School Spelling Bee Champion (Kristela Saraci, 3rd grade, Ms. Nunez's class) will be representing Hawthorne School on March 14 at the North Jersey Spelling Bee at Bergen Community College at 6:30 pm
- Grades K – 3 will be visited by our friends from SUEZ Water. Presentations will include "Water – The Incredible Journey" and "The Water Cycle in a Bag".
- March 8 ends a week of Read Across America and School Spirit. Students and staff took part in the following activities: Pajama Day, the Principal's Read Aloud, Wear a T-Shirt with a Positive Message, Sport a Wacky Hairstyle, Dress for a Party - any kind of party, and Wear Stripes or Red and White.
- The Hawthorne Book Fair will be held March 11 – March 15.

- During the last week of March, all classes will make a trip to our friends at The Teaneck Greenhouse for informative presentations and hands-on activities.
- Camp K will hold their Open House at Hawthorne school on Wednesday, March 20, 7 pm.
- The PTA will hold its Family Fun Night on March 14 between 7 pm and 9 pm in the Hawthorne gymnasium.
- On March 27, the 1st grade will go on a field trip to the One River Art School in Allendale. Students will take part in a gallery, art scavenger hunt, and then go hands-on to make prints via a two-step design process. The prints will then be part of an exhibition in April (date TBD) at One River Art's Englewood location.
- On March 28, the 2nd grade will go on a field trip to the Raritan Valley Planetarium for a day of learning fun!
- In line with our Title I Parent Engagement/Parent involvement goal, our fifth event will be on Thursday, March 28, 7 – 8 pm. The event will focus on grades K – 4 and the topic will be Kinesthetic Learning - a "movement" learning style in which knowledge is processed as students carry out physical activities, rather than listening to a lecture or watching demonstrations.

Lowell Elementary School

On March 8, Mr. Green, Lowell School principal, received a certificate from the National Association of Education Progress (NAEP) for the participation of Lowell School's fourth graders in the NAEP assessment. NAEP is considered the gold standard of tests and was established in 1969. The results from NAEP assessments are used to compare educational achievement across states and among large urban districts. The NAEP data obtained from the testing of Lowell students will be used toward determining how well students are performing and the degree of progress being made toward closing the achievement gap.

Other recent activities and upcoming events at Lowell include:

- Celebrated Read Across America Week, invited guest to read in the classroom, and daily observances with students and staff dressing accordingly to certain book titles.
- Distribution to parents and staff the monthly newsletter, the Lowell Ledger.
- Started the International Chess Club.
- Administered the NAEP test.
- PTO organized pizza lunches for students on half days.
- PTO fundraiser "Wear Green for St. Patrick's Day"
- Introduction of after school program, Hobby Quest.

Whittier Elementary School

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Whittier include:

- Whittier School On Friday, March 1, the Liberty Science Center visited with Whittier's second grade students to present a hands-on program all about matter, in conjunction with the current science curriculum.
- In honor of Read Across America, Cora Taylor, Chief Warrant Officer from the Bergen County Sheriff's Department visited Whittier School and read to all grades.

- Whittier School held its annual Martin Luther King, Jr. celebration on Thursday, March 7 with musical/skit performances by all grade levels. Third grade students created a Living Museum in which students dressed as and presented biographical information of a notable African American.
- Parent-Teacher conferences were held on March 7 (rescheduled from February 12).
- On February 28, QTECH visited Whittier School and met with select staff to discuss how their products could fit into Whittier's curriculum for a future STEAM program. Third grade students will be taking a field trip to the Mobile Food Lab in Lyndhurst this month to investigate how environment effects traits in living organisms.
- The Suez Water company will present a program "When I Think of Water" to Kindergarten and First Grade students on Wednesday, March 13. This visit was arranged through the district's C&I Department.
- Hobby Quest, in association with the Puffin Foundation, will offer two programs – Aviators and Magicians—beginning the end of March. The monthly PTO meeting will be held on Tuesday, March 26.
- The Chess Club at Whittier was such a success that a second session will be added beginning March 29.

Benjamin Franklin Middle School

Recent and upcoming activities/events at BFMS include:

- BFMS has had two charitable drives over the last few weeks. We conducted a clothing drive for the "Never alone again foundation". In addition, we have a sneaker drive in support of the organization, "got sneakers", which takes place through March 31.
- BFMS students have been busy on the collegiate circuit. On Tuesday, March 5, seventh grade students visited Montclair University to view a play and partake in a campus tour. The play, performed by TheaterWorksUSA, is called Freedom Train. On March 6 and March 7, our eighth grade students visited William Paterson University for campus tours.
- On Thursday, March 7, the talents and skills of BFMS students were on full display at the Night at the Museum: A Celebration of Black History. BFMS transformed into exhibits filled with artwork, artifacts, and presentations highlighting black history. In addition, many students put on grand performances as living legends.
- The annual BFMS v. TJMS basketball games (girls and boys) were held on Friday, March 8 at THS. We posted pictures "live" from the game on our district Facebook page.
- BFMS will be hosting a Spanish day, in celebration of Latino/a/x and Hispanic heritage, on Monday, March 18. We look forward to the wonderful presentations, performances, knowledge, and food, which will be shared during the event.
- Our faculty and students will be participating in March Madness during the week of March 19-22. Events will include a 3-point contest, 3 on 3 tournament, and knockout tournament. The week will conclude with a staff versus students' basketball game.
- Transition night for sixth grade students and families will take place on Thursday, March 21. This event will provide more insight regarding what students and families can expect in seventh grade. In addition, students are provided opportunities to experience seventh grade classes.
- In honor of Makers day, students will be invited to engage in makerspace activities throughout the day on Friday, March 22.
- The American Heart Challenge will take place on March 26-March 27.
- Our annual Talent Show, sponsored by the Student Council, will take place on Thursday, March 28.

Thomas Jefferson Middle School

Recent and upcoming activities/events at TJMS include:

- March 4 – 8, the Thomas Jefferson Middle School PTO is sponsoring Penny Wars. Each grade had a labeled water jug in the main office. Students brought in the coins they have collected at the beginning and end of each day or during their recess periods. The grade collecting the most money will win a pizza party and discounted tickets to see the Avengers movie in April.
- The Thomas Jefferson/BF Basketball Game took place at Teaneck High school on Friday, March 8. The girls will play at 4:00 p.m. and the boys will play at 5:30 p.m.
- March 11 – 15 is Spirit Week.
 - Monday is Twin Day. Students and staff will dress as twins.
 - Tuesday – Student and staff will celebrate National Reading Month and the birthday of Dr. Seuss by wearing red, white and blue or dressing like their favorite Dr. Seuss character or their favorite book character.
 - Wednesday is Crazy Creative Day. Students and staff will wear mismatched, inside out, upside down, and wacky wild clothes.
 - Thursday is Dress to Impress Day and our Tape-Up Ms. Odatalla Challenge. Students will be able to pay to tape Ms. Odatalla up to a wall.
 - Friday is St. Patrick's Wear Green Day. Students and staff will wear green or their Thomas Jefferson Middle School gear.
- The Thomas Jefferson Middle School Spelling Bee for grades 5 – 8, hosted by the PTO, will be held after school in the auditorium on Wednesday, March 13.
- Our Student of the Month Ceremony will be held in the Media Center on Thursday, March 14, at 7:45 a.m. to celebrate the Students of the Month for December (Compassion), January (Trustworthiness) and February (Citizenship).
- The Drama Club presentation, Black History Showcase: The Living Museum will take place on Thursday, March 14, at 7:00 p.m. There will also be two dress rehearsal assemblies during the school day at 1:20 p.m. for grades 5 and 6 and at 2:25 p.m. for grades 7 and 8.
- Heroes and Cool Kids will meet on Friday, March 15 in the sixth grade classrooms and the auditorium.
- Our March PTO meeting will take place on Tuesday, March 19, at 7:00 p.m. in the Media Center.
- PTO sponsored Family Game Night will be on Thursday, March 28, 6:00-8:00 p.m. in the cafeteria.

Teaneck High School

Recent and upcoming activities/events at THS include:

- Project Graduation hosted a Prom Expo on Friday, March 8 at 6:30 in the Student Center.
- The National Hispanic Institute will be here on Tuesday, March 12 at 6:30 in the Student Center to speak to parents of eligible Latinx students regarding summer programs available to them.
- The third annual "Adopt –A-School" Education Symposium at Teaneck High School will be held on March 16 from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM in the Student Center. The event is sponsored by the National Coalition of Black Women, Bergen/Passaic Chapter. Workshop topics will include Teenage Stress, Paying for College, Middle School vs. High School, and Social Media/Cyber Bullying among others. The event is free and open to Middle School and High School students and parents.

- HEAL (Helping Each Other Achieve Longevity) is having a Women's History Month Show on March 21 in the Student Center at 6:30. The night will be dedicated to celebrating the strength of women and women's empowerment. There will be poetry reading, music and dance.
- Our spring musical production of Annie will be held on March 29, March 30, and March 31.
- We are pleased to announce the addition of our middle school students from TJ and BF who will play the roles of various orphans. The lead role of Annie will be played by freshman Olivia Sloan. There will be a preview on March 29 for students.

Human Resource Management

Staff Vacancy Updates – see attached document