

Superintendent's Report

March 17, 2021



District Strategic Plan Update

This evening, I will be presenting an update on our five-year District Strategic Plan and I hope that you will agree, we are making great progress despite the pandemic. This presentation has been posted on our District website under “District Strategic Plan” and “Board Presentations”.

COVID-19 Protocols, Staff Vaccinations, & Week After Spring Break

On March 1, we completed the re-opening of all grades as we welcomed back our High School students and staff. Throughout the past two months, COVID cases have continued to be a challenge for our in-person educational flow. This is why when the Governor made an announcement a week ago - that all preschool through grade 12 teachers, support staff, and childcare workers would be added to the eligibility list for COVID-19 vaccinations – it came as such great news. We acted very quickly have partnered with Holy Name Medical Center to get as many of our staff members vaccinated *THIS WEEK* at The Richard Rodda Center here in Teaneck.

That brings me to my second point - which is how we plan to proceed for the final three months of this school year, and potentially add more “in-person” school days. Our spring break will take place from April 2 - April 9 - with my promise for no homework assigned during this timeframe. While this is one way to enjoy the break, I am sure that many of our families and staff are also looking to take advantage of much-needed time away from home. With that in mind, I want to ensure that upon our return, we do not have a surge in COVID cases. I believe the best course of action is to remain virtual (synchronous instruction) for that following week (April 12 - 16) and I made this announcement in my communication to all TPS families and staff on March 12. I added that after that time, I am exploring the possibility of having our schools open for more in-person instruction for the balance of this school year. I hope to release more information about this by the end of this month.

Until then, please know that we have updated our COVID-19 protocols, and you can find that information here: <https://www.teaneckschools.org/Downloads/TPS%20COVID-19%20Response%20Guidance%20-%20March%202021.pdf>

We are also working on specific summer programs and other support services to help “bridge the gap” due to this pandemic. The Board and our community will hear more about this next month.

Preschool Applications Available

I want to remind everyone that there’s still time to sign-up your 3 or 4 year old child for our 2021-2022 preschool. Being able to offer free, full-day preschool is a source of great pride in our district; and I hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity for your child or please share with other families that you know who may be interested. Outdoor informational events are being planned for Tuesday, March 30 and during the week of spring break. More information can be found under the *Curriculum & Instruction* part of this report. For a preschool application (which needs to be submitted by April 16), visit our website: <https://www.teaneckschools.org/GradesPK3PK4andKindergarten.aspx>
NOTE: Parents of children already in one of our preschool locations do not need to reapply.

Women's History Month & March Madness

March is well known for St. Patrick's Day – Happy St. Patrick's Day, by the way. It is also Women's History Month and March Madness. Our district is celebrating both events in special ways. You will find our website slideshow and Facebook Cover photo promoting some significant accomplishments for women in this past year alone. Many century long glass ceilings are being shattered! For a list of Women's History Month events and activities in our area, please visit our website:

<https://www.teaneckschools.org/protected/ArticleView.aspx?iid=6YI2YG0&dasi=4GBPB>

Next, although the NCAA Men's March Madness tournament officially begins this weekend, for Teaneck Public Schools it began on March 1. Teaneck staff were invited to share their college experiences and yours truly was among those featured. You can see my video on our District YouTube page:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BDGH5bX3pm4&t=21s>

COVID-19 Testing

During the month of March, the district is once again offering free COVID-19 Testing for TPS staff, students & TPS families (from 2 pm to 6 pm). Registration is required – see the "Our Latest News" section on the homepage of our website:

<https://www.teaneckschools.org/protected/ArticleView.aspx?iid=6YIIG02&dasi=4GBPB>

Curriculum & Instruction*Project-Based Learning*

On March 22, the district will host our final 3-hour professional development session of the year. This last session will focus on project-based learning opportunities for all students.

All learning sessions will focus on seven key areas:

1. A challenging problem or question
2. Sustained inquiry
3. Authenticity
4. Student voice and choice
5. Reflection
6. Revision
7. Public product

With these critical steps in mind, teachers will close out the 2021 school year with authentic learning tasks for students, which will be both engaging and innovative. We look forward to sharing exemplars with the community in the very near future.

Department of Early Childhood Education

Community Pre-School Enrollment Event - Come and join the pre-kindergarten leadership team as we enroll and register new pre-school families for the 2021-2022 school year! We have set aside two dates where pre-kindergarten staff members will be available to answer any questions about our pre-kindergarten programs and offer assistance with completing the pre-kindergarten application.

- Spanish translation services will be available. (Una persona de habla Español estará disponible para ayudar.)

- The district's preschool program is completely free of charge and provides our youngest learners with a high-quality education that will set them on the path for academic success! With much excitement, we are looking forward to meeting families in the weeks to come.
 - Community Registration Event:
 - Date: Tuesday, March 30; Time: 4:00 PM - 6: 00 PM; Location: Bryant School Parking Lot, 1 E. Tryon Ave.
 - Community Registration Event:
 - Date: Wednesday, April 7, 2021; Time: 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM; Location: Bryant School Parking Lot, 1 E. Tryon Ave.
 - For questions, please contact Mrs. Lisa Zucker, Supervisor of Early Childhood Education at 201-347-3480 ext. 104 or email: lzucker@teaneckschools.org

School Counseling Department

- The Mental Health Initiative - Students and families in grades k-8 have access to licensed mental health clinicians. Telehealth sessions are conducted utilizing Google Meets. Parents can access these services by contacting their child's counselor. Spanish-speaking counselors are available.
- Parent Night Webinar Events: Mental Health Services Program
 - Thursday, March 18 (6-7pm) - "Managing COVID Fatigue within the Family"
 - Thursday, April 15 (6-7pm) - "More to come on Spanish-Speaking Webinar"
 - 15 de Abril de 2021 - "Más por venir en seminario web en Espanol"
 - Thursday, May 20 - "Mindfulness and Stress Reduction" -- Meeting joining information and time is forthcoming.
 - Thursday, June 10 - "Curbside with a Clinician" (chat with a Clinician about concerns) - - Meeting joining information and time is forthcoming.
- College & Career
 - March Madness- College & Career Exploration Month
 - Tuesday's Speakers Series-Every Tuesday throughout the month of March The Teaneck High School Counseling Department has invited dynamic career professionals to virtually meet to share about their career field with our students. The goal is to expose our students to a variety of careers and post-secondary pathways.
 - Rep Your College - Staff were asked to submit videos. Videos were compiled and posted on THS Counseling YouTube channel
 - College/University Rep visits have begun. Students must sign up via Naviance
- Upcoming events
 - Virtual Instant Decision Day on Wednesday, April 21, 2021
 - Virtual College Fair on Tuesday, April 27, 2021.
- Communication
 - Please visit the School Counseling Department website for information and resources
 - "THS Connections" Newsletter - THS Counseling Department a monthly newsletter is available on the school website "School Counseling" tab.
 - YouTube Channel- All webinars will be posted for viewing.
(<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDw7prx6aDcxJmeyAo5sgQw>)
 - Follow @TeaneckSchoolCounseling on Instagram and Facebook

Special Services

- The Special Education BOE Committee met on Tuesday, February 9. The following agenda items were addressed:
 - Review of the Special Education Audit - Updates on the items from the audit.
 - From these findings in the Special Education program what progress has the district made to address the findings?
 - What are the concrete plans and Classes to address the student needs in our district?
 - How are the in-support programs monitoring the progress of our mainstream special education students and what is the success rate of the service?
 - Plans to bring our students back in the district from the SBJC.
- The Special Education Parent Advisory Group (SEPAG) held their monthly meeting on Tuesday, February 23. The following items were discussed:
 - Supporting HS juniors & seniors with college application process and job training
 - Update on reopening: Any plans to have kids with IEPs/504s return 4 days per week for the next marking period?
 - Provide insight on the budget process, allocating resources, and establishing priorities for special education for the new school year.
 - Is there any expectation of missed related services to be made up during these unannounced/unexplained/unnecessary 1/2 day snow days? If school is already virtual because of snow, why the half day?
 - Since we are at the midpoint of the school year, can we review our mission statement, goals, and objectives for the year?

Communications, Community Relations & Volunteer Services*District Website Redesign*

The redesign of our district website is well underway. Two design concepts were shared with our full Leadership Team and PTO/PTA leaders to vote on which design they liked best. The winning design is now moving forward and we are on target for a full launch at the start of the new school year (September 2021).

Women's History Month

As the District did for February's Black History Month, a special Women's History Month slideshow and events section are running throughout the month of March on the district website:

<https://www.teaneckschools.org/protected/ArticleView.aspx?iid=6YI2YG0&dasi=4GBPB>

These events, along with a new WHM cover photo, are also on the district's Facebook page. If you do not currently follow the District's Facebook page, then join our 1100 community members and "Like Us" @TeaneckPublicSchoolDistrict.

Community Education

Summer Camp/Camp K – The District intends to proceed with "Camp K" this summer – but under a modified program for kinder through grade 6. Camp will begin a week later than usual to ensure everyone (including campers) are COVID-19 tested. Unfortunately, we will not have an "Explorers Program" this year due to pandemic limitations. This evening, there are three positions on the Board agenda, as these three roles will begin immediately planning for the summer camp program. Job

postings also went up for other specialist and lifeguard positions. If you know anyone interested, please have him or her go to:

<https://www.applitrack.com/teaneck/onlineapp/default.aspx?Category=Community+Education>
or contact Claire Drootin at cdrootin@teaneckschools.org. This year's camp program is currently scheduled for June 28 – August 6. More information will be coming out next month.

Technology Department

Over the last few weeks, the Technology Department has started working on preparing the recently purchased district laptops for all staff. The Technology staff is working through the setup process to ensure that the devices are configured properly and prepared for the September deployment.

In collaboration with Guidance and Curriculum & Instruction, the Technology Department has started to prepare for NJSLA testing. Throughout the last month, the New Jersey Department of Education has delayed testing until further notice and we are to receive additional information in the coming weeks. Parents and students, please continue to email any technical issues to techhelp@teaneckschools.org.

The Technology Department has created a guide to assist with any issues with a Chromebook at home. There are tips and tricks as well as frequently asked questions available to help you with day-to-day issues that may occur. Please visit the Technology Department webpage for additional guides and information including our Chrome Depot Schedule.

Bryant School

- With spring in the air, the school has enjoyed time spent playing and learning together in the fresh air!
- March is National Reading Month, and Bryant school has had a wonderful time, celebrating our love of reading in many ways!
- During Read Across America Day, classrooms participated in special read alouds, and many welcomed family members to read books to the class that represent their heritage and cultures.
- Bryant school hosted the live virtual event, "Bryant Bedtime Stories & Songs". Dr. Irving, Board President Sebastian Rodriguez, and Supervisor Liza Zucker read to the children. Bryant parents Jon and Andrea played guitar and sang to the delight of our families and friends!
- The live event kicked off Bryant school's first ever Virtual Book Fair. Organized by the Bryant school PTA, the book fair provided an opportunity to enrich our home and classroom libraries.
- With "Show Me You Love Reading!" family, friends, and community members contribute Video Read Alouds of their favorite children's books to the Bryant Video Library.
- The school is looking forward to March 23 – when Thomas Jefferson Middle School students will join our virtual classrooms to read to our preschoolers.
- Bryant has embraced Dental Health! More than 100 families logged-in to our Colgate Live virtual dental assembly. Children learned about dental care, healthy snacks, and enjoyed seeing so many friends in the Google Meet.
- Coming in April: Our outdoor School Picture day is in the works. Families can look forward to their yearly school portrait, provided in a socially distanced manner.
- Our school-wide Red-Slider Turtle Habitat project is being spearheaded by Pre-k teacher Brittany Butler. With STEM-based lesson plans, special read aloud, and community building events, we

- are excited to support the development of this wonderful learning and community building resource.
- Transitioning to and from preschool plans are underway. Along with our kindergarten colleagues, virtual tours, live orientation sessions, and summer learning supports are all in the works for the spring.

Theodora Lacey School

- Lacey Media Center has passed Township inspection and are looking forward to utilizing this space in the coming weeks.
- The Lacey gym floor renovation project is currently underway and almost complete.
- Donation of 75 weekend snack packs received from the Center for Food Action were distributed to Lacey students.
- Women's History Month - Highlighted Theodora Smiley Lacey and other influential women.
- Collected 75 kindness bags through our Spread the Love community service project. Donations will go to Hackensack Homeless Shelter.
- Helping Drew Anti-Bullying Virtual Assembly will be taking place on March 24.

Hawthorne Elementary School

- The Hawthorne School staff was visited by a national consultant, Shauna King, for a virtual workshop regarding brain powered engagement strategies on March 1.
- On March 2, Principal Pitt had the pleasure of doing read alouds in multiple classes in honor of Read Across America Day.
- Hawthorne's 4th grade students also participated in the MLK essay contest. Students wrote about their vision of social justice and how they can make the world a better place.
- The Hawthorne students were treated to read alouds from their peers from Thomas Jefferson Middle School on March 9.
- In preparation for the PTA sponsored Hawthorne School Virtual Talent Show, our students auditioned for a panel representative of parents and school staff. The Talent Show will be taking place on Thursday, March 25.

Lowell Elementary School

- Lowell School is celebrating Women's History Month by crafting lessons with historical significance and representation throughout the curriculum in a variety of subjects.
- Thirty-two students were named "Zearn Superstars" for the Month of February. The students were awarded with a free slice of pizza from Victor's! Zearn Superstars are students who complete four or more lessons per week! Zearn math lessons are conducted every day and provide data points from those lessons to continuously improve our curriculum.
- Twenty-five students who participated in the Greg Tang Valentine's Math Challenge were awarded with certificates.
- Students in grades 2-4 who have completed Reading Level 3 in Fast ForWord have been using Reading Assistant Plus to develop their oral reading fluency and strengthen their comprehension.
- Beginning on March 15, Lowell School will be restarting the partnership with Bergen Volunteers for the Bergen Reads Reading Buddies program. Reading buddies will be reading with some of our students weekly in a remote setting.

- 3.01.2021 - 03.05.2021: Celebration of Dr. Seuss Spirit Week
 - Wear your Favorite Hat
 - Wear something red and white
 - Wear your mis-matched clothes
 - Wear something green
 - Wear your PJ and bring your favorite stuffed animal
- 3.12.2021: Mental Health Half Day - No Homework Weekend
- 3.23.2021: Monthly PTO Meeting: 6:30pm
- 3.25.2021: PTO Family Dinner Night Fundraiser @ Moe's Southwest Grill
- 3.30.2021: Lowell will celebrate Read Across America with Thomas Jefferson's 7th and 8th graders who will be reading to some of our classes.

Whittier Elementary School

- Whittier School is pleased to announce that Phase 2 of the reopening plan was a great success. Students in grades 1 - 4 joined self-contained and kindergarten students for hybrid in-person instruction.
- Whittier School celebrated Read Across America with two school-wide programs:
 - One Book, One School - Following up on the success of this program last year, we have brought Humphrey back with the next book in the series: Friendship According to Humphrey. Recorded read alouds will be posted for students to watch. The trivia question challenge will also continue; students can participate by answering questions in the posted google classroom.
 - Read Baby Read - Mr. Johnson has invited students to participate in the Read Baby Read Challenge. Students will use the flip grid to find their favorite book, read their favorite excerpt from the book and then explain why they think we should read that book.
- Whittier School is celebrating Women's History Month. Students will view and discuss videos of women who have made contributions to American history throughout the month. Students are encouraged to prepare videos as well. The videos can include a few fun facts, art work, poems, a thought or experience about women.
- Through the generosity of the TTEA and NJEA, Whittier School hosted a virtual Family Math night on March 11. Families participated in a variety of fun math projects. Activity packets and event codes were sent home to families during the last resource pick up.
- Whittier school is also celebrating Music in Our Schools Month for the month of March. Throughout the month, there will be activities and celebrations including daily posts in the stream where Ms. Taylor will post music challenges, quotes from musicians, introductions to new music of performers, etc. Students and staff can also use Flipgrid to create a video telling more about themselves musically--what they listen to, how they use music, and more.
- The PTO Meeting was held on Tuesday, March 16 at 6:30 pm via ZOOM. The Whittier PTO is hosting a PPE drive in March to help any Whittier families in need.
- Whittier School Picture Day(s) will take place March 23, 25 and 26. Picture day will take place over three days in order to maintain proper social distancing guidelines. Hybrid students will have their picture during the school day while remote students will be able to have their picture taken in the evenings.

Benjamin Franklin Middle School

- Benjamin Franklin Middle School entered its 4th week since our Phase II reopening of February 8. They are in our 11th week since Phase I and are seeing the impact of in-person instruction at the school. The Pandemic Response Team continue to work to ensure the safety of all students and staff at the school. The students who have returned for Hybrid A and Hybrid B have joined with Hybrid C students. Our second phase of reopening is going well.
- Benjamin Franklin Middle School kicked off Women's History Month with a calendar of events to acknowledge the achievements and contributions of women around the globe. The information is located on the school's website.
- The Benjamin Franklin Middle School Black History Month completed its final program on March 3 which was a Virtual African Dance class.
- On March 3, the monthly BFMS Student of the Month Ceremony was held to honor students displaying exemplary work during the month of February.
- On March 10, eleven students were acknowledged at the Board of Education meeting for their participation and completion of the renowned W.E.B. DuBois Role Model for Manhood Program at Princeton University. These students are Josiah Ware, Dylan Studivant, James Quinines, Alexander Tomlinson, Aadil Ahmed, Josiah Larbi, Kamren Butler, Trevor Wu, Zubair Abbasi, William (Isaiah) Lee.
- On March 12, Benjamin Franklin Middle School bid farewell to Assistant Principal, Mr. David Deubel, who transitioned to Lowell Elementary School as Interim Administrator.
- The school welcomed opportunities for students (Hybrid A & B) who need additional academic support to attend 4 days per week.
- Benjamin Franklin Middle School held three days of textbook distribution for our 5-8 grade students to provide instructional support for the MP3 and MP4.

Thomas Jefferson Middle School

- TJMS celebrates Black History Month with different activities, lessons and announcements.
- February 18 - Parent Teacher Conferences from 2-5pm & 6-9pm.
- TJMS Picture Day was held at our gymnasium on March 1. Our staff and students "smiled" from a distance- away.
- Parents received information from the district to be able to opt into hybrid instruction for the fourth marking period. Parents are encouraged to transition students into our HYBRID option.
- TJMS celebrated Read Across America Day on March 2. Ms. Connors, Ms. Iappelli, Mr. McMillan and Ms. Roberts planned several activities to celebrate and encourage reading. Many of our upperclassmen have been guest readers in the elementary school classrooms throughout the month. Teachers encouraged students to use Wednesday afternoons to Drop Everything And Read.
- On March 10, Progress Reports were made available to parents so they are able to see their child's academic standing for the midpoint of the 3rd marking period.
- Staff and Students appreciated the half-day session for Mental Health Day on March 12.
- TJMS 7th grader Emanuel Keshi participated in the local spelling bee on March 16 at 5pm. Parents and friends were encouraged to support and watch the Bee live: <https://www.facebook.com/Virtual-North-Jersey-Spelling-Bee-2021-105522554936891>
- PTA meeting was held via Zoom on March 16 at 7pm.
- TJMS Staff will attend Professional Development training on March 22.
- The National Junior Honor Society will have their Induction Ceremony on March 31 at 7:00 p.m.

Teaneck High School

- Teaneck High School welcomed over 100 students back to the building on Monday, March 1.
- The FORUM hosted virtual workshops for all students on February 24 and February 25 from 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm “Redefine Yourself - Strategies for launching a Successful Job Search Campaign” and “Interviewing Skills - Increasing the Chances of Getting the Position you want by Presenting a Professional, Prepared & Confident You!”
- The FORUM is partnering with The National Association of Women Judges (NAWJ) as they present the annual “Color of Justice” virtual program on Saturday, April 17 at 10:00am.
- The NJ COJ will provide students an opportunity to apply for mentorships with judges and attorneys.
- BQMT met on Monday, March 8, 2021 at 6:00pm.
- PTSO met on Monday, March 8, 2021 at 7:00pm
- Bergen Community College held a College Prospect Night on March 4 from 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
- The FORUM and Lakeland Bank are presenting “Budgeting for Teens” Wednesday, March 17
- Winter sports seasons are wrapping up. Our Girls Basketball Team won the Big North League Championship.
- Girls Volleyball and Wrestling began on March 1.

Human Resource Management –

Staff Vacancy Updates – see attached document



VACANCIES as of 03.15.2021

DISTRICT



SACC Coordinator Part-Time



General Mechanic



*Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services



*Instructional Supervisor – Curriculum & Instruction



Groundsman 1



*Messenger - Operations & Maintenance

TEANECK HIGH



Mathematics Teacher

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN



Library Media Specialist

THOMAS JEFFERSON



*Grade 5 Teacher



*Physical Education Teacher



Special Education Teacher

LOWELL



*Outreach Worker

THEODORA SMILEY LACEY



*English as a Second Language (ESL) Teacher