

# *Superintendent's Report*



April 24, 2019

## **Student Recognition**

Prior to the start of tonight's meeting, we recognized 18 student athletes who have either been named spring team captains, or who achieved outstanding athletic accomplishments (winter sports) as an individual or as a team. We also recognized the Girls Bowling Coach and the Girls Fencing Team Coach for being named as Bergen County Coaches of the Year.

## **District Strategic Plan**

I am pleased to announce that we have now completed all building-based focus group sessions, three Town Hall meetings, a special presentation made at the March 26 Town Council meeting (presented by our Supervisor of Community Relations), and our community-wide online survey. The community-wide survey closed on Friday, April 12, and we are happy to report that we received 382 responses. Students, teachers, community members, parents and families provided incredibly rich information which is currently being analyzed for trends and patterns. The survey information, alongside the perceptions garnered from both our town hall meetings and building-based focus groups, will be used to determine our current strengths and challenges.

I would like to thank both the Darul Islah and Temple Emeth communities for their warm welcome and inviting spaces. The Strategic Planning team was able to speak to a number of community members at both locations, and we received a wealth of information from all participants. Additionally, I would like to formally thank the following Teaneck Board of Education administrators who volunteered their time to lead small groups during our town hall meetings:

- Ms. Melissa Simmons, School Business Administrator
- Ms. Terry Corallo, Supervisor of Community Relations
- Ms. Margot Mack, Assistant Principal of Teaneck High School
- Ms. Angela Davis, Principal of Thomas Jefferson Middle School
- Mr. Pedro Valdes, Principal of Whittier Elementary School
- Ms. Nina Odatalla, Assistant Principal of Thomas Jefferson Middle School
- Mr. Mohammed Saleh, Director of Technology
- Dr. Marisa King, Supervisor of Business and Practical Arts
- Mr. Tunde Adedoyin, Manager of Human Resources and Compliance
- Ms. Trina Moschella, Supervisor of Mathematics and Science

On April 30, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee will be working collaboratively to create the district's new mission and vision using the data that we have received thus far. Please continue to check the website for additional information regarding our progress.

## **2019-2020 Budget Forums**

The district hosted the second of two special budget community forums on March 26 at Teaneck High School from 7 pm – 8 pm. Tonight is the district's official Budget Hearing for the 2019-2020 school year.

**NJSLA/PARCC Video Message**

With State testing set to begin when we return from spring break, I taped a special two-minute video message to parents. The video focuses on the why the test is important, what parents can do to help prepare their children for the actual testing days, and invites everyone to our June Board meeting where I will be presenting the five-year District Strategic Plan. The video was sent out via email to all parents, and posted on our website and Facebook page. It has over 340 views.

**Pre-K Grant for 2019-2020**

Teaneck Public Schools has received additional Preschool Education Expansion Aid (PEEA) funding for the 2019-2020 school year that will allow our district to continue with the mission to expand our Pre-K program. We completed the preschool application process (deadline April 5) and received over 200 preschool applications for 2019-2020. In order to accommodate as many preschool children as possible, we are exploring a third preschool location with an outside provider (targeted to open in September).

**Superintendent's Advisory Committees**

The six committees (Student, Faculty, Beyond Diversity, SEPAC, Faith-based and Student Code of Conduct Review) all provided summary reports of their work-to-date to be included in our Strategic Plan development. We continue to post the committee meeting notes 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 annual Foundation Training Fair will be held on Thursday, April 25, 2019, from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm at Teaneck High School in the Cheryl Miller Porter Student Center. This event will allow the non-tenured teachers to highlight their work toward approving student achievement through instructional best practices.

*Performing Arts:* The Teaneck High School Theater Department will collaborate with Black Box Studios to host "From Page to Stage", an evening of original theatrical pieces written, performed and directed by THS students. The event will take place on Wednesday, May 8, 2019, at 7:00 pm at Black Box PAC, 200 Walraven Drive, Teaneck.

Thomas Jefferson Middle School and Benjamin Franklin Middle School will each present an end-of-year dance and drama performance. The BFMS performance will be on Wednesday, May 29, 2019, at 6:30 pm in the BFMS auditorium. The TJMS performance will be on May 16, 2019, at 7:00 pm in the TJMS auditorium.

*Technology:* Students and members of the Teaneck High School technology staff participated in the New Jersey Makers' Day at Teaneck Public Library on March 24th. An article acknowledging Teaneck High School's participation can be found at: <https://patch.com/new-jersey/teaneck/making-smiles-teaneck-library>

The Teaneck High School Robotics Club students participated in the Panasonic Creative Design Challenge on Tuesday, April 16 at the New Jersey Institute of Technology (NJIT) in Newark, NJ. They placed second in the competition.

### *Early Childhood*

Our preschools participated in NAEYC's Week of the Young Child (April 8 – 12). The daily themes were Music Monday, Tasty Tuesday, Work Together Wednesday, Artsy Thursday and Family Friday. Pictures from this event were shared on the district's Facebook page. NOTE: NAEYC = National Association for the Education of Young Children.

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

The Supervisor of Community Relations & Volunteer Services has recently attended the following events: The Community Chest Summit (over 30 northern Bergen non-profit organizations), BergenPAC "Chasing the Dragon" assembly (about use of opioids), Taste of Teaneck (sponsored by The Teaneck Rotary), Rodda Center Senior Community meeting (to discuss our volunteer services program) and spring high school sporting events (volleyball and baseball).

Notable current projects include:

- Superintendent Video messages – the first of three video messages focused on upcoming NJSLA/PARCC testing.
- Teacher of the Year Reception – the district will host a special reception on June 12 (prior to the Workshop meeting) for the 11 TTEA members who we submitted for the 2019 Governor Teacher of the Year Awards. The reception will take place at the high school (the Board meeting will be moved to the high school too).
- Camp K Position Vacancies – we promoted job openings for director, assistant director, specialists and camp counselors. Interviews for the director position took place on April 22.
- Spring Registration for Pre-K and Kindergarten
  - 2019-2020 (all full day Pre-K at both locations). Applications were available online and at BOE office and needed to be submitted by April 5. We will begin notifications of acceptance/placement and then begin the registration process in late May/early June timeframe for two to three locations.
  - Kindergarten registration is currently underway and will continue through May 10. Flyers were created and posted in multiple vehicles (including listing in Suburbanite for two weeks in a row).

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**

We now have parent internet resources on our website. The link can be found on the parent page or the technology department page of the website. These free online resources can help parents understand internet safety and digital citizenship for the students. There are some videos and articles that help explain how children can stay safe on the internet.

The internet is an essential part of a school not just for operations but for education as well. In recent events of internet outages, we decided to purchase a secondary internet provider. Having a secondary

internet connection will create true business continuity and will provide a more reliable service to our faculty and staff. We will continue to create redundancies and failovers in the technology infrastructure to ensure continuous internet experience.

NJSLA testing began this week and we would like to remind all parents/guardians that electronic devices including smart watches and cell phones are not allowed. We encourage students to bring their headphones, but they must be wired headphones and must plug into the testing device.

### **Bryant Elementary School**

Recent and upcoming activities/events at Bryant include:

- On April 4, several kindergarten and Pre K classes held their first ever Engineers' Science Fair. Students studied the engineer's role in designing and making inventions to solve problems. Students had to create bridges and crossings to get their Gingerbread Boy across a river. The students had a chance to share their learning with parents and guests at the Engineers fair. Each student answered questions about how their problem was solved. The activity also featured a science experiment (an exploding volcano) with our preschool and kindergarten students who wore protective eyewear and lab coats.
- Bryant School is currently celebrating Autism Awareness Month. During the week of April 22, the school will promote autism awareness – concluding the week with an Autism Walk (Friday, April 26) and assembly complete with a drummer and parents walking in support of AA.
- Our preschool was featured on Instagram at @toolsofthemind! The students were engaged in their medical/ hospital theme and made the Tools of the Mind national IG page.

### **Hawthorne Elementary School**

Recent and upcoming activities/events at Hawthorne include:

- During the first week of April, grades K – 4 had their walking field trips to the Teaneck Greenhouse. Everyone enjoyed learning about agriculture and making purchases for their home gardens.
- On April 3, the first grade class held an Art Exhibition at the One River School in Englewood. The art on display was created during the first grade field trip to One River School in Allendale. Parents, students, and staff attended.
- Also on April 3, the school held its "Let's Move More" walking event. Students and staff took a nice, long walk around Fycke, Lucy, Lindberg, and then down Glenwood. Members of the Teaneck Police Department gave us an escort while one officer led the way on foot, playing bagpipes.
- Family Paint Night was held on April 4 and attended by over 30 parents. Ms. Meller, Art Teacher, led the night's program.
- School Librarian Day was celebrated with a breakfast for Ms. Rosegren to show the school's appreciation for all she does for their students and staff. In addition, the third grade class went on their field trip to the Maritime Aquarium in Norwalk, CT.

On April 11, the school celebrated literature by holding "Poem in Your Pocket Day". Students and staff carried copies of their favorite poems in their pockets and did readings at random times to anyone who would listen. It was awesome to see students excited about sharing

- poetry throughout our school. Mr. Jennette visited almost every classroom and shared his poems.
- The third grade held their Living Museum event on April 12. Students conducted research on a famous person, created a tri-fold presentation board, and dressed up like that person. The cafeteria transformed into a living museum wherein each student presented to parents (48 attended) and visiting grade level classes. It was a successful and fun learning experience for all!
- On April 24, the school will celebrate Administrative Professionals Day with a breakfast for Ms. Santamaria and Ms. Jenner to show our appreciation for all they do for our students, staff, and parents.
- Also on April 24 from 7 – 8 pm, the school will hold its fifth parent engagement event entitled, "Cyberbullying and the Dangers of Gaming". Ms. Brantley, Guidance Outreach, will be the presenter.
- Friday, 4/26/19, 1:30 pm, Duct Tape the Principal to the Wall – 4th grade fundraising event

### **Lowell Elementary School**

Recent activities and upcoming events at Lowell include:

- Second Graders visited the Newark Museum as part of their Field Trip event.
- NEHS Induction – parents, grandparents, staff, and administration were present to congratulate the fourth grade students on their accomplishment.
- The school distributed its monthly newsletter (the Lowell Ledger) to parents and staff.
- During the month of April, Lowell Elementary Declares a Penny War. The PTO sponsors this event and asks for spare change toward a great cause. All proceeds from the Penny War fundraiser will go to end of the year activities for the entire school.
- At the April 23 PTO meeting, the school held a special presentation of a donated Garden Tower by Marla Hodge. Parents, students and staff learned how to grow fresh, nutrient-rich food virtually anywhere, year-round without soil.
- Lowell school needs a Logo! During the Spring Break, students were challenged by the PTO to be creative, bright and colorful in creating a logo for their school. All entries are due by Friday, April 26 to their teachers. Students will vote on the winner.
- On April 25, the SUEZ Water Company will visit the school and give a presentation to the first and second grade students.
- April 30 will be Book Fair Family Night from 6:30 – 8:30 pm.
- Also on April 30, the third grade will present their annual Invention Convention to students, parents and staff.

### **Whittier Elementary School**

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Whittier include:

- Whittier School's fourth grade students visited the New York Historical Society where students gained an insight into slavery in our area and learned ways in which blacks, both enslaved and free, helped build and influence the New York metropolitan area into what it is today.
- The Girls Scouts of Northern New Jersey will be offering a STEAM program for girls in Grades 1, 2 and 3 at Whittier School beginning Friday, April 26. The program will offer the opportunity to explore robotics, coding, embroidery, astronomy and other STEAM topics.
- NJSLA testing will begin for Grades 3 and 4 on Tuesday, April 30, and run through May 14.

- George Street Playhouse is working with Whittier School students in Grades 2 and 3. Grade level teachers collaborate to identify an area of focus and the George Street Playhouse artists work with students to create a performance on the subject matter. Grade 2 students are focusing on continent-specific folk tales that connect with the grade level social study curriculum. Grade 3 teachers are currently finalizing a topic.
- First grade students will be taking a trip to the New York Botanical Gardens on May 16. The trip aligns with their study of a plant's structure, function, growth and sustainability. Students will have the opportunity to participate in planting plants and will learn the importance of plants in our ecosystem and how they survive in their natural habitat.
- The PTO will hold its monthly meeting on April 23 in the Whittier Library.

### **Benjamin Franklin Middle School**

Recent and upcoming activities/events at BFMS include:

- During the week of March 25, BFMS was immersed in March madness and Math madness. After school, students participated in basketball competitions such as: the three point contest, the three on three tournament, and the knockout tournament. The culminating event was an entertaining staff v. students game. Although the students put on quite a demonstration of resilience, the BFMS staff were victorious. In addition, students participated in math contests throughout the week. Each grade level boasted a winner on each day. All winners were invited to participate in the halftime contest during the staff v. students game.
- On April 3, the National Coalition of 100 Black Women facilitated a hands-on STEM workshop for a group of our 8th grade girls.
- On April 4, there was a 6th grade to 7th grade transition program for parents. The session included a presentation from the grade level assistant principal, Marina Williams and the grade level guidance counselor, Eve Klein.
- We were treated to a chamber music concert by our band, jazz band, and orchestra on the evening of April 11.
- The Student of the Month ceremony was held on April 12. The character trait of the month was good decision making.
- NJSLA testing will take place from April 24 through May 9th.

### **Thomas Jefferson Middle School**

Recent and upcoming activities/events at TJMS include:

- On April 1, grades 5 – 8 began their Kastle Creations Fundraiser. Assemblies were held during recess. The fundraiser ended on Tuesday, April 23.
- The fifth and sixth grade dance was held on April 4. It was well-attended and everyone seemed to have a great time.
- The school's grade 8 "Big Picture" was taken on Friday, April 5 in the gym.
- On Tuesday, April 9, the Bergen County K -9 Unit presented a demo lesson to our eighth grade Forensic students. Students learned the job duties of a K-9 partner. The officers began the presentation with a PowerPoint showing students how K-9 partners are able to find various substances and missing people. The officers brought in their K-9, Sandy, to demonstrate how she sits on command when certain substances are found. The officers, using a protective sleeve, demonstrated how Sandy protects her partners. At the end of the presentation, Sandy allowed the students to pet her.

- Our April BQMT Meeting was held on Wednesday, April 10.
- Friday, April 12 was Circuit Day – a behavior reward in which 7th and 8th grade students have the opportunity to participate in fun activities with their friends. During periods 6 and 7, students and their chosen team of nine friends (10 in total), will take part in activities which require skill, reasoning, and most of all, the ability to have fun!
- Our April PTO Meeting was held on Tuesday, April 23 in the Media Center.
- Our fifth grade students will be going on a field trip to Meadowlands Environment Center on Friday, April 26.
- On Saturday, April 27, the PTO will sponsor a movie event, Avengers End Game, at Teaneck Cinema at 9:30 a.m.
- NJSLA testing is scheduled to take place April 29 – May 3.

### **Teaneck High School**

Recent and upcoming activities/events at THS include:

- Teaneck High School's Chapter of the National Honor Society inducted 60 new members on April 11. The ceremony included students reading original works and giving speeches on the four pillars of the National Honor Society; leadership, scholarship, service and character. Congratulations to all of the inductees and their families.
- On April 16, the Teaneck High School Robotics team, coached by Mr. Rolando Monserrat and Mrs. Sharon Bellin, took home the second place trophy at the Panasonic Design Challenge at NJIT.
- HEAL (Helping Each Other Achieve Longevity) is having their Women's History Month Show on April 26 in the Auditorium at 6:30. The show was originally scheduled for March 21st but was rescheduled. The night will be dedicated to celebrating the strength of women and women's empowerment. There will be poetry reading, music and dance.
- The Teaneck High School Chorus will hold their Spring Choral Concert on Sunday, April 28 at 3:00 PM in the Auditorium.
- The annual Holocaust Commemoration hosted by the Teaneck Jewish Community Council will be held at Teaneck High School on Wednesday, May 1 at 7:00 PM in the auditorium.

### **Human Resource Management**

*Staff Vacancy Updates – see attached document*