

Superintendent's Report

January 20, 2021



Special Recognition

January is School Board Recognition Month. At our Reorganization Meeting earlier this month, we welcomed three new Board members, Mr. Harold Clark, Mr. Damien Cooper, and Ms. Danielle Gee. The Board then selected Mr. Sebastian Rodriguez as the new Board President and Ms. Linda Burns as the new Vice President. Tonight, we recognize all nine members of our Board for their steadfast commitment to the children of Teaneck and the many hours they serve our district – all voluntarily. Let us celebrate all they do for Teaneck Public Schools with a special Board proclamation this evening.

Next, I am very excited to announce that our Teaneck High School Flag Twirlers & Drumline will be representing the State of New Jersey in the Presidential Inaugural "Parade Across America." The event was livestreamed today at <https://BidenInaugural.org/watch> . For full details, see the attached press release:

<https://www.teaneckschools.org/Downloads/Presidential%20Inauguration%20Parade%20Across%20America%20Press%20Release%20Jan%202021.pdf>

Many media entities have already covered this wonderful news. Please review our District YouTube page for some examples: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeSMF_Tq1Zidy8kY4ql0e3g . We will recognize these students and staff advisors at one of our February Board meetings.

School Re-Opening

Per our commitment to our families, on January 11, we re-opened our schools (first time this school year), for our preschool, kindergarten and special education students and staff. We are looking forward to welcoming all other students and staff. The opening had some minor issues that were mostly resolved by "Day Two". However, over the course of the week, the number of COVID cases did rise and we needed to send out several communications including one that resulted in closing down Theodora Lacey School for in-person learning until January 25. We take the health and safety of all very seriously so it is very important that everyone follow these guidelines (which I highlighted in my January 11 letter to parents):

- Your child should come to school with a mask, hand sanitizer, and most importantly, their Chromebook AND their charger. We highly recommend that Chromebooks be charged at home every night.
- Before your child comes to school, you must complete the Daily Wellness Check Form that will be emailed to you every morning at 5 am from Teaneck Schools. If you do not complete this form, your child will be seated in a Waiting Room at the school until this is completed by you.
- If you are aware that your child has recently tested positive or has come into direct contact with someone who has recently tested positive, then you must report this to your school principal and follow directions provided before sending your child to school.
- Please review our student-created Public Service Announcement videos on making sure everyone follows COVID-19 Safety guidelines. These age-appropriate videos can be found on the District's YouTube page – https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCeSMF_Tq1Zidy8kY4ql0e3g
- For any other questions regarding COVID-19 protocols, please refer to our Frequently Asked Questions document that is on our website under the COVID Resources tab: <https://www.teaneckschools.org/COVID-19Resources.aspx>

COVID-19 Testing

Back by popular demand, the district has once again offered free COVID-19 Testing for TPS staff, students & TPS families during the month of January. Last chance for this month is January 27 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>

New Student Desk Donation

Habitat for Humanity is donating up to 20 desks for students to use at home. We will be working with our Principals in order to gather names of students and parents that are willing to go and pick-up the donated desks and take pictures with the students and families. These desks will be given out in February 2021.

Upcoming Presentations

By the end of February, the Board will receive the District’s Gifted & Talented recommendations and an update on Year One implementation of our District Strategic Plan. The 2021-2022 initial Budget Presentation will also take place.

Curriculum & Instruction

2020-2021 Teacher Nominations for the Harvard Case Study Program

Mrs. Christine Mayers and Mr. Michael Moldovan, Teaneck High School History Teachers, were nominated to participate in the 2021 Harvard Case Study Workshop on Civics Education. The Teaneck League of Women Voters is spearheading this initiative, and will be submitting their names on behalf of the Teaneck Board of Education. Mrs. Nicole Cooper was a participant last year, and the strategies learned benefitted the Teaneck High School students. Her experience was shared with the Board during the workshop meeting in September of 2020.

English as Second Language

The English as a Second Language team held its first family night of the year on December 15, 2020. The virtual meeting included close to 40 family members, and the following information was shared:

The district’s go-forward plan for hybrid learning;

Supports in place for English learners;

Translation tools for Teaneck families; and

Possible places to visit for Teaneck families.

Focus for Learning

Administrators in Curriculum and Instruction have been working to support in-district teachers with hybrid learning and blended learning strategies. These strategies included working with both in-person and remote learners via Google Meet, use of the Hovercam, and strategies for promoting high-level student engagement through sharpened discussion protocols and educational technology: Padlet, Flippity and FlipGrid.

Special Services

- On December 4, 2020, the Special Education Department facilitated a follow up professional development opportunity for speech therapists on The Little Blue Book to provide practical guidance on CST mandates of Initials/re-evaluations, mediation, due process, and SEMI reporting compliance.
- The Special Education Department facilitated a department professional development session for special education teachers, CST and related services providers on Connecting to our Learners/Building Relationships, Competencies, and Communities on December 11, 2020.
- The special education administration, in conjunction with SBJC, hosted a Transitioning to In Person Instruction lunch session for parents and students of the 18-21 STAR program on December 17, 2020.
- *Upcoming Events*
 - On Tuesday, January 19, 2021, the Department of Special Services, Teaneck SEPAG, and CarePlus will be hosting a virtual parent workshop- Guidance for Understanding and Helping Youth with Emotional Well-Being and Coping During COVID-19.

Communications, Community Relations & Volunteer Services

2021-2022 District Calendar – Planning for next year’s District calendar is underway. A committee of district staff, union leadership, and PTO/PTA leadership met on January 14 to discuss a draft version. The final calendar will be sent for Board approval in February.

Internal & External Communications Plan

Below is an update with regard to the district’s approved Internal & External Communications Plan <https://www.teaneckschools.org/InternalExternalCommunications.aspx> :

- *New Brand Initiative* – Now that the new Brand Guidelines are complete, we are adding all graphic files to an “internal-use only” website so that these files are easily accessible for our staff’s use. This site should be available by the end of January.
- *District Website Redesign* – A vendor meeting took place last week to begin the redesign of our district website, and the school websites. This is scheduled to launch for the new school year – September 2021. One of our top priorities is to make the new website mobile friendly.
- *School Mobile Apps* – We are working with our vendor to proceed with this for the upcoming school year. More details will be coming soon.

Community Education Programs

HobbyQuest - Teaneck Public Schools is once again offering two special afterschool programs that are run by Hobby Quest, and financially supported by the Puffin Foundation:

- The Aviation Program – Reinforces Next Generation Science standards and 21st-century skills in a project-based learning environment. Students will be taught the basic principles of flight by creating a model airplane (which they get to keep).
- The Magic Performance Art Program – Reinforces a child’s self-esteem and self-confidence in a creative environment. Students will learn the art of public speaking and storytelling while understanding the principles of performing a magic trick.

Registration ended January 19 and it looks like we will have about 100 participants.

SACC - We are still exploring the possibility of an afterschool/SACC program. We want to ensure a smooth return to schools before we commit to providing this service during this school year

Technology Department

Over the last few weeks, the Technology Department has worked diligently to prepare classrooms to return to in-person instruction. As staff return to their schools/classrooms, our team is actively engaged in supporting instruction. Please continue to use the help desk (helpdesk.teaneckschools.org) to enter a trouble ticket for any technical issues.

Additionally, the department has begun working on a plan to purchase and distribute teacher laptops. We understand the many issues that have occurred while using the district Chromebooks and have determined purchasing devices that are more robust would alleviate this issue. Tonight, the Board will vote on the purchase of new Dell Latitude 3310 Laptops for all instructional staff.

Bryant School

- "Safety First" was the refrain heard all around Bryant school during the first week of Hybrid learning. 105 students were welcomed for in-person school during the week of January 11. We are happy to report that all children arrived and departed safely; and all classes were supported by duly certified staff and paraprofessionals. Everyone was extremely helpful, with an-all-hands-on-deck attitude from the Secretaries, Teachers, and Paraprofessionals, to the Lunch Aides, Child Study Team Members, Custodial staff, and of course Nursing!
- Parents were very patient and understanding as we implemented newly revised routines to ensure that children entered with completed wellness forms, while maintaining a safe environment.
- Grab & Go Meals were provided to 49 families, with many opting to receive take-home meals for the days not in school and the weekend.

Theodora Lacey School

- Held a successful virtual town hall meeting on December 2020
- All staff participated in HIB training in December 2020
- Phase 2 renovations of the media center/library and gym/cafeteria are currently underway
- Lacey classrooms were set up and ready to receive students on January 11, 2021.
- Students returned to in-person learning on January 11. Cohort A had successful attendance.
- Lacey students participating in a Virtual Dr. Martin Luther King Library lesson week of January 18.
- Lacey preparing to re-open on January 25, 2021.

Hawthorne Elementary School

- The Hawthorne PTA was instrumental in helping Hawthorne School staff execute a holiday drive, known as Hawthorne Cares. The Hawthorne School community was able to raise \$750 to purchase gift cards for twenty-five of our students during this holiday season.
- Students are the heart of every school building. The Hawthorne School family has been working diligently to welcome our students back for in-person learning. We are looking forward to seeing our students' faces at Hawthorne School in the coming weeks.

Lowell Elementary School

- Tuesdays & Thursdays: After School Tutoring
- January 11: In-Person learning for Kindergarten and Self-Contained MD/LLD Classes began
- Delivery of Lowell School Outdoor Benches Secured by the Lowell PTO from the Center of Prevention and Counseling Outdoor Classroom Grant
- January 19: Grades 1-4 Teachers return in-building to teach remote from inside their classrooms
- January 20: Lowell School Faculty Meeting - REOPENING OF LOWELL SCHOOL
- January 25: Welcome Back Grades 1-4 COHORT A
- January 26: Lowell PTO Meeting - 6:30pm
- January 28: Welcome Back Grades 1-4 COHORT B
- As a reminder, we are continuously asking our parents to utilize the District Website and Lowell School Webpage. We continue to update it with the latest information as well as provide links to parent resources.

Whittier Elementary School

- Whittier School is excited that Phase One of the reopening is underway for our self-contained and Kindergarten students. 30 students were welcomed by staff on Monday, January 11. Phase 2 will begin on January 25, 2021 for all remaining students who selected Hybrid Instruction.
- The Whittier PTO has counted the results and the school mascot as selected by our students is the Whittier Wolves -- receiving 38.6% of the overall vote. All third and fourth grade students can now participate in designing what the mascot will look like. Submissions will be due by the end of January and staff and students will vote for their top choice.
- Whittier School will celebrate No Name Calling Week from January 19 through January 22. Students -- both virtual and in person -- will participate in activities and presentations to end name-calling and bullying in school.
- The next virtual Whittier PTO meeting will be held on January 26, 2021 at 6:30 PM,

Benjamin Franklin Middle School

- On December 1, 2020, administrative staff and other staff members who support teaching (MET, LET) were offered opportunities to attend, "Supporting Your Teachers Where They Are" which was facilitated by Doug Lemov via the Teaching Channel. While the offering was at 5pm, we were proud to see many staff members join in on this free webinar.
- The Benjamin Franklin Middle School Pandemic Response Team assembled virtually to meet to further detail our plan for reopening. This occurred on December 2, 2020 and we mapped out our school to ensure the safety of our learners.
- The BFMS Parent Teacher Organization met on December 8, 2020 to discuss a plan for keeping our parents involved, albeit virtually. We also held our BFMS Honor Roll Ceremony this same

- evening - awarding learners for their academic performance during the first marking period.
- We celebrated our BFMS Students of the Month on December 9, 2020 upon the recommendations from staff members. This celebration was held virtually and was well attended by families, staff members, and administration.
- Doug Lemov, renowned author of Teach Like a Champion offered a virtual webinar entitled "Leading with Care, Community, and Continuity." This webinar was offered to staff members free of charge and supported our needs as we continue to work virtually.
- Benjamin Franklin Middle School continued to support our learners during our "W.I.N. Periods" - an acronym for What I Need, and this allows students seek additional support in selected content areas. This new schedule began on November 30, 2020 and has continued into the New Year.
- As we prepared to holiday break the Benjamin Franklin Middle School community distributed 64 gifts cards to our most vulnerable families as they began their break.

Thomas Jefferson Middle School

- TJMS acknowledged National Human Rights Month by incorporating some great resources within classes.
- December 17 - TJMS Winter Choral concert hosted by Ms. Neff via: Zoom
- December 18- TJMS chorus students caroled on Harlem and Salem streets for TJ neighbors.
- December 21-Virtual TEAMS presentation was held for our 8th grade students.

Teaneck High School

- Prepared building for the return of Special Ed Classes on January 11 and the rest of the student body on January 25.
- Students in the STARS program and the MD Classes returned to THS on January 11 to resume live in person instruction.
- THS held its monthly PTSO meeting on Monday, January 11, 2021 at 7:00 pm.
- BQMT meeting also held Monday, January 11, 2021 at 8:00pm
- Students are getting ready for Winter Athletics
- Breakfast and Lunch are distributed on various days in January, full schedule on the Teaneck Schools website
- Chromebook Depot is available on various days in January, full schedule on the Teaneck Schools website.
- Math Adventures and Word Play (MAWP) will host a workshop focusing on The College Application Process on Saturday, January 23, 2021 at 11:00 am. The meeting will be held through a Zoom meeting.
- The FORUM in conjunction with The Teaneck Public Library and Age-Friendly Teaneck is in the process of creating a volunteer program to help seniors learn about technology.
- Students were able to take their senior portraits/class photos in a socially distant matter.

Human Resource Management –

Staff Vacancy Updates – see attached document

**TEANECK BOARD OF EDUCATION
HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**



VACANCIES as of 01.19.21

DISTRICT

General Mechanic

Groundsman 1

MIDDLE SCHOOL

Library Media Specialist