

Superintendent's Report

February 10, 2021



Special Recognition

We have two special recognitions for this evening:

- 1.) Ms. 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.
- 2.) Dr. Antoinette Bush, science teacher at Thomas Jefferson Middle School, was chosen into the WMTR's 2021 Class of Teachers Who Rock! On January 22, her story was read on-air on the WDHA Morning Jolt and on WMTR's Morning Show. They have posted Dr. Bush's "Teachers Who Rock" story on their website: https://wmtram.com/winners_twr21/

School Re-Opening

I am pleased to announce that on Monday, February 8, we continued with our phased-in approach and welcomed back our middle school students and staff to their respective schools. This means we are now open for pre-k through grade 8, with only the high school pending.

As I have said in my communications over the past two weeks, COVID-19 transmission rates remain very high and will continue to remain high in the U.S. for the next few months. Although there is hope for greater vaccine availability by spring, if we want to keep our schools open, then we must do our part to follow safety guidelines - especially while present in our school and district buildings. We will continue to monitor our overall progress before making a decision regarding the return of our high school students and staff. However, I am cautiously optimistic that this will occur in the next few weeks. Additionally, if we all make sure to follow protocols and act responsibly, I am confident that we will be able to keep our schools open for the remainder of this school year.

Preschool Applications Available

Our Preschool Applications for the 2021-2022 school year will become available on Tuesday, February 16. It is strongly encouraged that these applications are downloaded, and once fully completed, submitted online. If you are interested in having your child attend one of our preschools this September, you will find more information here:

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

NOTE: Parents of children already in one of our preschool locations do not need to reapply.

COVID-19 Testing

During the month of February, 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*Institute for Learning: Language Arts*

On December 11, 2020, Teaneck held its first virtual learning session with the Institute for Learning. Teachers from kindergarten, first and second grade met with, Dr. Cheryl Sandora, the district's IFL trainer to kick off a series of professional development sessions which will focus on key components of high-quality ELA instruction (texts, tasks, and talk). During these sessions, teachers also work together to support student learning, and collectively they examine classroom artifacts that reflect high-quality ELA lessons. The continued emphasis of these sessions is to underscore the importance of maintaining high-quality instruction and moving literacy work forward regardless of the instructional platform.

English as Second Language

During the months of March through May, all English language learners will take the ACCESS for English Learners. This assessment is mandated by the New Jersey Department of Education and will be administered in-person. The ACCESS for English learners assesses the English language proficiency of our students in the areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening. The data rendered from this assessment is used to make instructional decisions for the upcoming school year. It will also provide us with a snapshot of the student's growth in his/her language acquisition. For more information, please visit: <https://wida.wisc.edu/assess/access>, to learn more about this assessment.

Computer Science

Curriculum & Instruction is proud to announce that four Teaneck High School students have applied and have been invited to take part in a level one spring semester computer science programming course at Fairleigh Dickinson University where they will learn the Python Programming Language. Upon successful completion of the course, the students will receive 3 college credits in Computer Science from Fairleigh Dickinson University's Gildart Haase School of Computer Sciences and Engineering (GHSCSE)

Teaneck High School is a STEM education School Partner of FDU's Gildart Haase School of Computer Sciences & Engineering and is one of five, active and strong, long-term, public school district partners, whose partnership ranges in duration from 5 to 16 years.

School Counseling Department

Ongoing Support Services: Elementary Outreach Workers, School Counselors, and F.O.R.U.M. staff are available via Google Meets. Our parents and students should email their counselor for more information.

The Mental Health Initiative: TPS 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, February 18 (6-7pm) - "Understanding Early Warnings in Children's Mental Health and When to Get Help". Meeting joining information is forthcoming.
- 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 Español"
- 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:

- Lincoln University - Instant Decision Day- February 1
- Juniors Small Group Meetings via Health Classes - February 8th, 9th, 11th & 12th

National School Counseling Week (Feb. 1 – 5): "School Counselors: All In for All Students". Focused the public's attention on the unique contributions of school counselors highlighting the tremendous impact school counselors can have in helping students achieve school success and plan for a career.

Upcoming events:

- Lincoln Technical Institute Virtual Open House: Wednesday, February 10 --1:00 pm
- FDU - Regional Center for Learning Disabilities; Monday, February 15 -- 10:00 am
 - Sign Up for Virtual Sessions
- Metro/Teaneck, email Barbara Byrnes: bbyrnes@fdu.edu
- Beacon College Virtual Visit: Tuesday, February 22 -- Time TBD (possible 7pm)
- FDU - Regional Center for Learning Disabilities: Wednesday, February 24 -- 10:00 am
 - Sign Up for Virtual Sessions
- Metro/Teaneck, email Barbara Byrnes: bbyrnes@fdu.edu
- HBCU Panel Discussion: Thursday, February 25 -- 7:30 - 9:00pm - in collaboration with The Coalition of 100 Black Women, we will host a virtual HBCU event
- "March Madness- College & Career Exploration Month": Districtwide initiative for our students from k-12

FORUM UPDATES:

Clubs

- The FORUM's Studio 2B and Connections clubs have been meeting virtually on a weekly basis. During weekly meetings, students check in and share how their week is going, discuss any concerns and play interactive games. The participants have stated that these meetings are a great way to socialize, bond and stay connected.
- Teaneck Senior Snow Program - Matches Teaneck senior citizens with students for the purpose of snow removal. Many senior citizens cannot safely remove the snow from their property after large storms.
- The Senior Snow Program provides them with an affordable, safe option and allows students to earn some money while helping their community. In the months of December and January, 28 students and 28 residents have participated in the program. Miss Witter coordinates the program and is going to be recognized by the Teaneck Town Council at an upcoming meeting for her work with the Senior Snow Program.

Upcoming events

- Wednesday, February 24 and Thursday, February 25 from 3 pm - 4 pm. The FORUM will be hosting the following virtual workshops for students, "Redefine Yourself - Strategies for Launching A Successful Job Search Campaign"

Special Services

- On Monday, January 11, 2021, the Special Education Department facilitated a department meeting session for high school special education teachers, CST and related services providers on Intervention strategies for hybrid/blended learning, identifying research-based resources to strengthen the TPS in-district special education programs, and updates to the 2021-2022 special education student projections.
- Special education administrative walk-throughs were conducted on Tuesday, January 19, 2021. We noticed the following instructional elements:
 - Meaningful instructional materials and resources were used to effectively engage students (virtually and in-person) in the learning process.
 - Special educators through their discussions and questions conveyed genuine enthusiasm for the concepts being taught. In parallel, students demonstrated a consistent commitment to its value.
- SBJC Program Update- STAR 18-21 Program at THS - 1/21/2021
 - Discussion on 20-21 data points/student progress
 - Program needs for 2021-2022
 - Transitioning the STAR 18-21 Program back to TPS
- SBJC Program Update- Behavioral Disabilities Program at TJMS 1/25/2021
 - Programming measure of success
 - Related Services (behavioral & counseling)
 - Program needs for 2021-2022

Communications, Community Relations & Volunteer Services

2021-2022 District Calendar – During last week's Board Workshop, the Board requested changes to the Calendar Review Committee's proposed 2021-2022 District calendar (which was on the Workshop agenda). NOTE: The committee was comprised of district staff, union leadership, and PTO/PTA leadership. A revised calendar has been included in tonight's agenda for the Board's approval.

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 all design components of our new brand identity are complete (logo, letterhead, PowerPoint templates, etc.), we have added all graphic files to an "internal-use only" website so that these files are easily accessible for our staff's use. This site will officially launch by Feb. 16. Only those with a "teaneckschools.org" email address will have access. Employees will be able to download and send files to appropriate vendors/contractors of the district.
- *District Website Redesign* – The new and improved redesign of our district website is underway and the Board's Community Relations Committee had the opportunity to review some potential design concepts on February 8. The full launch is scheduled for the new school year – September 2021. One of our top priorities is to make the new website mobile friendly.

Community Education

Camp K - Planning for our summer program is underway. Job postings went up last week for the camp's leadership roles. As the pandemic will still be with us through this summer, we are making appropriate modifications and planning to run this year's camp program currently scheduled for June 28 – August 6.

Technology Department

As we begin to reopen schools, the Technology Department continues to maintain and assist teachers, parents, and students with technology. We understand that technology is a core part of our educational process and in order to track and resolve issues we ask that teachers please continue to use the help desk to enter any technical concerns. The help desk assists the Technology Department in tracking issues and finding trends. Additionally, teachers will receive periodic updates on the ticket's progress and when a ticket is closed, there is a link to leave the department feedback.

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 you may have 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 page on www.teaneckschools.org for additional guides and information.

Bryant School

- Black History Month
 - Celebrate school-wide with Pre-K read-alouds that educate and celebrate Black History with age appropriate books.
 - Rosa Parks Day was commemorated on February 4 with a school-wide acknowledgement of this pioneering African American woman. Classroom activities included watching a brief video about Ms. Parks, and putting hands over hearts to remember kindness always.
- Kindness Month
 - Bryant celebrates with daily acts of kindness.
 - February 12th is Friendship Day - Faculty and students Wear Red, Pink or White to celebrate friendship.
 - Bryant faculty write notes to acknowledge each other with kind thoughts on their staff Kindness board.
- 100 Days
 - February 11th is the 100th day of school for the 2020-21 school year.
 - This year is momentous. It is the 100th day of school for a year like none other! We started all remote, and then transitioned to Hybrid learning.
 - Each class will celebrate with crafts and activities.
 - Every single parent, student, teacher, paraprofessional, and supporting staff member deserves a huge pat on the back for the perseverance, flexibility, and resourcefulness shown in achieving 100 Days!

Theodora Lacey School

- Reopening of Lacey School on January 25 was successful.
- Black History Month virtual lessons taking place via Library/Media special.
- Spread the Love community service project started February 1st. Donations are being collected the entire month of February.

- 100th day of school classroom celebrations taking place the week of February 8.
- Kindergarten teachers are working on the third installment of academic materials and resource kits for distribution to families.
- Donation of 75 weekend snack packs received from the Center for Food. Mrs. Brown, Guidance/Outreach, is coordinating distribution of snack packs in conjunction with kit distribution.
- Upcoming Women's History Month celebration will focus on important women in our history, with a special feature on Ms. Theodora Smiley Lacey.
- Lacey kitchen equipment delivered and installed by O&M.

Hawthorne Elementary School

- The Hawthorne staff was elated to see the familiar faces of our scholars, as we welcomed them back for in-person learning.
- Report cards were available for review on Friday, February 5.
- Parent/Teacher conferences will be held on Thursday, February 11. Parents/guardians were also able to meet with teachers on Monday, February 8.
- Our teachers and students will be working on assignments and projects to commemorate black history month. Teachers created a library of a plethora of resources for their classroom use, as well as for parents/guardians to share with their children.
- Hawthorne School's fourth graders will be participating in the annual MLK essay contest during the month of February. This year's theme is a focus on social justice and civic engagement.

Lowell Elementary School

- Lowell School will be celebrating Black History Month by administering lessons from the resources provided by the Curriculum and Instruction team. Lowell School will execute an abbreviated Annual MLK/Black History Month Celebration in the beginning of March for children to participate in and parents to view virtually.
- Thirty-Four students were named Zearn Superstars for the Month of January and were celebrated at the beginning of February. 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. Every student can love learning math — and through Zearn, every child can realize their potential.
- Students log into the Fast ForWord daily, providing us the opportunity to help target the root causes of reading difficulty to deliver lasting results that make better readers and lifelong learners. Our most recent weeks indicate that average attendance score on the platform is the highest it has been during the entire school year.
- Feb. 2: Skyward/Family Access Parent Portal open for Parent-Teacher Conference sign-ups
- Feb. 5: Second Marking Period Report Cards are available to Parents in Skyward/Family Access
- Feb. 8: Skyward/Family Access Parent Portal closes at Midnight for Parent-Teacher Conference sign-ups
- Feb 11: Lowell School Parent-Teacher Conferences 2pm-8pm
- Feb. 23: Lowell PTO Meeting - 6:30pm
- 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. Tuesdays & Thursdays: After School Tutoring.

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.
- Our second set of Parent-Teacher Conferences will take place virtually on Thursday, February 11. The afternoon session will run from 1:30 PM - 5:00 PM and the evening session will run from 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM. Conferences will be 12 minutes in length.
- Whittier School will celebrate Black History Month throughout February. Whittier School Counselor, Ms. Coston, and Media Center Specialist, Mr. Johnson, have selected students to record daily FlipGrid video reading quotes of notable black visionaries, authors, pioneers, etc. who had a cultural impact and helped shape history and reflect upon what these quotes mean to them. Videos will be shared with all teachers to post daily in their Google classrooms for students to view during morning announcements. In addition, Mr. Johnson will conduct read-alouds of biographies of great African Americans. Mr. Johnson will create an end of month slideshow with highlights from these activities as well as all of the other activities that staff have planned for their classes this month.
- Whittier School's Kindness Challenge is underway. The Kindness challenge is a bullying prevention program aimed at improving school climate and creating a culture of kindness. Every day students will be given a kindness challenge to perform. Students will record each daily completed challenge on their kindness calendar.
- The next Whittier virtual PTO Meeting via Zoom on February 23 at 6:30 PM. Meeting agendas and Zoom links can be found on the Whittier Elementary School website.

Benjamin Franklin Middle School

- Benjamin Franklin Middle School began the 2021 year preparing for the return to in-person instruction. The Pandemic Response Team continued to work and plan for a staff return of students and staff. The school successfully welcomed the return of our students (Hybrid A & B) and staff on February 8, 2021.
- The BFMS Black History Month Committee met and planned events to support Black History Month. Highlights include:
 - February 3: African Dance Class Taught by Mrs. Munguti -LET
 - February 4: Rosa Parks Day (Social Studies Classes)
 - February 10: Black History Month Kahoot at 1pm
 - February 17: Drama Presentation and Storytelling at 1pm
 - February 26: Special Guest Speaker
 - February 26: BYO Virtual Assemblies Benjamin Franklin Middle School Tribute to the Elders will spotlight selected individuals on the school's social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter)
- Benjamin Franklin Middle School will also hold a Black History Month Writing Contest for its learners.
- On January 6, 2021, the monthly BFMS Student of the Month Ceremony was held to honor students displaying exemplary work during the month of December.
- On January 7, BFMS hosted its annual National Junior Honor Society Induction Ceremony for the 2020-2021 academic year.

- An unprecedented 11 students were accepted to 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, the program started on January 23, 2021.

Thomas Jefferson Middle School

- January 20 - Final Round Spelling Bee (virtual evening event).
- January 27 - Members of the THS Peer Leadership organization conducted a virtual outreach session with TJ Ambassadors (TJMS leadership group). Topics discussed included the importance of communication, mental health, and transitional experience from middle school to high school.
- January 28 - PTA Virtual Talent Show at 7pm via Zoom.

Teaneck High School

- Billy Michal Student Leadership Award nominations due Friday, February 5 by 3:00pm
- Drivers Ed exams were given to Mr. McDonald's Driver Education classes. Mr. LoSchiavo's classes completed their exam in person the week of January 25, 2021. The remainder of the students will take the exam in February.
- THS held its monthly PTSO meeting on Monday, February 8, 2021 at 7:00 pm.
- BQMT meeting was held February 8, 2021 at 6:00pm.
- BYO to film Virtual Black History Show. Presentation available February 28, 2021.
- FORUM providing snow clearing to local residents by high school students.
- THS Flag Twirlers represented New Jersey in the Virtual Inauguration Parade.
- TEANECK HIGH SCHOOL EARNS COLLEGE BOARD AP COMPUTER SCIENCE FEMALE DIVERSITY AWARD. Recognized for Closing the Gender Gap in AP Computer Science Principles
- Parent Teacher Conferences Tuesday, February 23.
- HBCU Event Thursday, February 25 from 7:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Human Resource Management –

Staff Vacancy Updates – see attached document



VACANCIES as of 02.01.2021

DISTRICT



Coordinator of Payroll &
Employee Benefits



*Instructional Supervisor –
Curriculum & Instruction



General Mechanic



SACC Coordinator Part-Time



Lead Bus Driver



Groundsman 1

TEANECK HIGH



Mathematics Teacher

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN



Library Media Specialist

THOMAS JEFFERSON



*Grade 5 Teacher



*Physical Education Teacher

LOWELL



*Outreach Worker

THEODORA SMILEY LACEY



*English as a Second Language (ESL) Teacher