

Superintendent's Report



January 15, 2020

Student Recognition Ceremony

Prior to tonight's meeting, we recognized our winter sports Team Captains and a group of middle and high school students who successfully completed fall Fairleigh Dickinson University (FDU) STEM programs. Our students continue to demonstrate exceptional leadership skills in and out of the classroom. I am extremely proud of them; and I truly enjoy having the opportunity to recognize their successes at these meetings.

Teaneck High School Open House

Middle school students, parents and guardians please take note that we will be hosting a Teaneck High School Open House event on Thursday, January 23 from 6:30 pm – 8:00 pm. I strongly encourage you to attend this event where you will learn more about the many educational programs and extracurricular activities that are now available to our students.

Eugene Field Renovations & Naming Nomination Process

In December, I provided an update on the "Eugene Field" building renovations and announced that we were taking nominations (through January 3) to officially re-name this new early childhood. We received nearly 100 nomination forms and the Board's Community Relations Committee has begun reviewing the nominations. The Board Naming Committee will be hosting a Community Forum on Monday, February 3 at the Teaneck High School Student Center. This event will provide the community with one final opportunity to voice their opinions on the finalists. Event flyers that will include the finalists' names will be going out by end of next week.

Schools Climate Transformation Grant

In continuation with the planning phase of this grant, our grant consultant, Dr. Howie Knoff is meeting this week with our school staff. The sessions planned include a "value-added" approach to integrating the Intervention & Referral Services and Child Study Team/special education eligibility and service delivery process. Additionally, training for the "Discipline Committee" - a representative from every grade level (K-8), School Resource Officer, Counselors and Deans – will also take place. This Committee will discuss how to develop the behavioral matrices (expanded Student Code of Conduct) in each school.

In addition, as I mentioned at the Reorganization Meeting on January 2, beginning in February we will be piloting an in-school mental health program for elementary and middle school students for the remainder of this school year. I will be issuing a video on this by end of this month and it will provide more information on how our students and their families can take advantage of this beneficial program.

District Strategic Plan Update

My Executive Team met last week to review the solid progress being made on all of the Action Plans related to our five priority areas of our District Strategic Plan (available on our website:

<https://www.teaneckschools.org/PriorityActionPlans.aspx>)

I will be conducting Town Hall events with our teachers during the month of February. These events will take place immediately after school – at each school – and attendance is voluntary. Still, I encourage our teachers to attend (even if it is held at a different school because the date works better for you). This will be their opportunity to learn more about our five-year plan and to share their thoughts. A flyer with all of the February dates and locations will be released soon.

Pre-k Expansion & 2020-2021 Applications

As discussed in previous Board meetings, through our existing Preschool Education Expansion Aid grant, the district has opened two pre-k classrooms at AUCC today. These classes will serve our general education and special education inclusion students.

Now as we look towards next year, please note that applications for the 2020-2021 pre-k program will be available **beginning Monday, February 3 and must be returned to our Central Registration office by Tuesday, February 18, 2020**. While we continue to expand the number of children who we can serve with full-day, free preschool, *applications do not guarantee placement*. To be eligible, your child must be 3 or 4 years of age before October 1, 2020. For an application or more details, please visit our Central Registration Office (located inside Thomas Jefferson Middle School) or call 201-833-5512.

TOPS 5k Race/Color Run

The 3rd Annual TOPS (Teaneck Organization for Public Schools) 5k Race & Color Run will take place on Sunday, May 31. We are hoping to see another strong turnout and are encouraging everyone to register early! *See flyer attached*. Additionally, TOPS held a contest to create this year's promotional flyer and the winner was our 9th grade student, Matthew Gutierrez, who received a \$100 prize from TOPS and earned him \$75 for a pizza party sponsored by the TTEA (Teaneck Township Educators Association). Congrats Matthew!

Student Liaisons to the Board

Updates from Sharlene Guiracochoa, Yasmine Halmane, Eitan Hiller, Nuri Khan and Nyahti Monroe.

Curriculum & Instruction

Seal of Biliteracy

Mr. Ortiz, Supervisor of World Language, has been working with our bilingual seniors to begin the assessment process of the New Jersey DOE Seal of Biliteracy. Students who graduate with this seal are recognized for their ability to speak and read in two languages. Last year, we graduated eleven seniors with this seal, and we are looking forward to graduating even more students from the class of 2020!

School Counseling Department

- Opportunities Expo (January 9) - THS hosted its inaugural Opportunities Expo that featured over 40 representatives providing information regarding volunteering, mentorship, scholarship, employment and vocational opportunities. It was a collaboration with Rhona Vega, founder of Parent Materz.
- Instant Decision Day (January 16) – 22 colleges and universities admissions officers will be onsite for students to apply and receive acceptances. A full list is available on the THS website (an increase of 8 schools more than last year)

- High School Open House (January 23) – THS Open House will highlight the academic programs, including AP Course, TEAMS, the dual enrollment opportunities with FDU athletic and extracurricular activities. The event will also include a tour of the high school.
- Junior Parent Night (January 29) – This event will focus on providing information for post-secondary planning.

Special Services

Inclusion Do's, Don'ts and Do Better Half-Day Professional Development –

On December 9, special education teachers, and general education inclusion teachers across the district participated in a half-day professional development with Toby Karten, Inclusion Consultant on building on the strengths of students with special needs. These five key areas were identified as the crux of creating an inclusive classroom:

1. Positive Attitude
2. Evidenced-Based Practices
3. Specially Designed Instruction
4. Collaborative Practices
5. Administrative Support

Executive Functioning with Beyond Book Smart – December 9

“Strengthening Your Special Needs Students’ EXECUTIVE FUNCTION SKILLS: Strategies for Organizing Tasks, Time, Materials, and Behavior.”

Special education teachers, CST members, and paras throughout the district participated in this half-day workshop. Practice ideas and strategies included:

1. Practical Strategies to Address Executive Function Weaknesses that Prevent Students from Finding Success in School
2. Strategies to Help Your Students Improve in Key Executive Function Areas
3. Practical Ideas for Your Late, Lost and Unprepared Students
4. Executive Function Skills to Increase Student Success in Reading, Writing and Math
5. How Executive Function Skills Impact Student Behavior and What You Can Do About it.

SEPAG Committee Meeting

The Teaneck SEPAG Committee met on Tuesday, December 17. Committee members were given updates on initiatives in the Special Education Department and discussed roles for committee members. The next SEPAG meeting will be Tuesday, January 21.

Community Relations & Volunteer Services

Strategic Plan Priority 3: Communication & Community Partnerships

Thank you to all of the students, staff and parents who participated in our online Communications Survey. We received very useful feedback that we will use as we develop our go-forward Internal & External Communications Plan. NOTE: The specific survey results have been shared with our Executive team and the Board’s Community Relations Committee. They will be presented to the full Board and will be referenced in the final plan.

Volunteer Program

As noted last month, this Friday will kick-off our new "Leading Through Lessons" partnership with Arbor Terrace Teaneck. Our middle school students will be visiting with some of the residents of this senior-living community to discuss specific topics. The theme of this first event is focused on traveling abroad. The Arbor Terrace residents have selected China, Costa Rica and Turkmenistan/Uzbekistan as places they have visited and want to share their experiences with our students. The next gathering will take place at the end of March with a "Women's History Month" theme.

Special Events

- Black History Month begins February 1 and planning is underway for our second annual Black History Month Community Calendar of Events. This calendar will release by the end of the month.
- Early Learning Center Naming Community Forum – will take place on Monday, February 3.

Technology

The Technology department is now back in house. We had three members joined the department, Roy Butler, Joshua Small, and Anthony Vallar on January 2. The final member of the department will begin in February and our team will be complete.

During the Winter/Holiday break, the department continued to improve our systems. During our scheduled maintenance, we were able to add extra layers of redundancy to our network to make sure internet services remain online. We understand that the internet is an essential resource to all of our students and we will continue to provide them with ubiquitous, uninterrupted technology services. This is also part of our strategic plan to ensure our staff and students with a reliable and secure infrastructure.

Bryant School

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Bryant include:

- Our Bundle of for Kindness coat drive yielded over 200 gently worn coats. Bryant School families, who were in need of a new coat, were provided an opportunity to pick out a coat for themselves or a loved one. The remainder of the coats (over 150) were donated to the Oasis Women's Shelter in Paterson.
- The Preschool Winter Wonderland event held the evening of December 11 was a huge success. Many students and their families came out to participate in hands-on activities and learning stations with our preschool staff.
- On December 17, our kindergarten students put on a wonderful production of The Bryant Express for families and district staff. The performance included original songs and celebrated the many different cultures of our community.
- The PTO raised over \$3,000 in our David's Cookies Fundraiser. This was the first time conducting this fundraiser and it was found to be quick and easy, with lots of popularity. We are looking forward to doing a future fundraiser with this vendor.
- Our next F.L.I.P.S meeting took place on January 14 - Topic: Literacy.
- Upcoming events: MLK Service Learning Project (Kindness Bags), MLK Kindergarten Assembly (February 26), Lunar New Year, 100th Day of School, and other school spirit activities.

Hawthorne Elementary School

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Hawthorne include:

- PTA meeting was held on January 2.
- January 3 was Hawthorne school spirit day tomorrow. Students and staff wore red to show their Hawthorne pride.
- On January 8, students and staff wore their pajamas to school and participated in a “stop everything and read” event.
- Recipients of December's Student of the Month will be honored at a ceremony on January 13. December's character trait was compassion.
- January 14 is picture retake day and the day that all clubs will be photographed for the yearbook. On January 14 and January 15, Kindergarten and first grade students will participate in live readings of “Noko the Knight” with the author.
- The MLK essay contest for 4th grade students will begin on January 15. This year, the theme of the essay incorporates Teaneck's 125th anniversary.
- 4th grade students will be going to Sterling Hill mine on January 23.
- On January 31, 1st grade classes will welcome our families for their monthly family day.

Lowell Elementary School

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Lowell include:

- January 2: Raz Kids Reading Contest Due (Assigned during Winter Break)
- January 3: Trip to Stop and Shop
- January 8: Math Competition by Grades (K-4) – Coordinated by Math Coaches
- January 10: Trip to Bowler City
- January 13: Greg Tang's New Year's Math Challenge Completion Ceremony (Assessment given during winter break, all students who have completed assessment correctly receive a certificate and medal)
- January 16 & 27: Math Competition by Grades (K-4) – Coordinated by Math Coaches
- January 24: Trip to Liberty Science Center at 9:00am
- January 28 PTO Meeting at 6:30pm

Whittier Elementary School

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Whittier include:

- Whittier School's Winter/Spring 2020 Title 1 After the Bell Math and Literacy Program is underway for more than 85 students in Grades 2-4. The program runs every Tuesday and Thursday through April.
- In conjunction with Fairleigh Dickinson University's Athletic Office, a school-wide field trip to an FDU women's basketball game was held on Wednesday, January 8. Students earned their admission ticket by exemplifying behaviors that create a safe and effective learning environment. The trip was deemed a huge success by parents, staff and students.
- The monthly PTO Meeting will be held on Tuesday, January 28 in the school library
- Whittier School will participate in a “One School, One Book” activity and will kick it off with a school wide assembly program on January 28. On Thursday, January 30 at 6:30 pm, Whittier will host a Family Literacy Night. Families are invited to participate in a fun night of activities where the focus is on reading and writing.

- The Whittier School PTO is planning a Read-a-Thon fundraiser. This project will help raise funds for school programs/activities while encouraging students to read. Students will agree to read any book(s) they like for 10-30 minutes a day for ten days.
- No Name Calling Week is January 21 through January 24. Various activities/assemblies will take place to promote kindness in action and eliminate bullying in schools.

Benjamin Franklin Middle School

Recent and upcoming activities/events at BFMS include:

- The Launch of our BFast Program (BeFore/AfterSchool Tutorial Program) took place on January 7 with over 100 students registered. This Title 1 program provides critical support to all students at BFMS and will operate in the am and pm.
- Our Boys' Basketball Team took 1st Place in the Little Ferry Tournament. However, more important than this momentous win is an email received from a reading teacher at Little Ferry Memorial Middle School. The email stated:
 - *My name is Josephine Ciocia. I am a teacher in the Little Ferry Public Schools who witnessed a good deed one of your basketball players did yesterday. One of our younger students did not have enough money to enter the gym for the tournament. This young man, I believe his name was Eric, was standing nearby and offered the child the money needed to gain admittance. I was the teacher volunteer at the entrance. I was so impressed! I did mention it to the coach, but I really wanted you to know as well. So often, we hear about the not so nice things our students do! Shouldn't we know when our students do great things?! As it turns out, the child was able to return the snacks he bought and get the money needed. Mr. Williams, you must have some pretty great students there in Teaneck! You must be proud!!*
 - This student has been recognized by the school as his actions demonstrate the character, brilliance, and that our "Excellence for All" extends beyond the borders of Teaneck.
- Our Girls' Basketball Team also took 3rd Place in the Little Ferry Tournament.

Thomas Jefferson Middle School

Recent activities/events at TJMS include:

- The TJMS Winter Concert was held on December 19. Our choral and instrumental students performed, and the concert was very well attended.
- The TJ Achievers Club held a presentation on December 23 at which male members of the community, including Superintendent Irving, shared a book relevant to a good life with the TJ male students. The students shared books they have read, and everyone left a little wiser.
- Bergen PAC returned to Teaneck on January 8 to present their "Chasing the Dragon" program (about the opioid crisis) to our 8th grade students. .
- The National Junior Honor Society will have their Induction Ceremony on January 29 at 7:00 pm.
- Our PTA sponsored Talent Show will be held on January 30 at 7:00 pm. Many students auditioned for the show, and there will be 12 groups performing that evening.

Teaneck High School

Recent and upcoming activities/events at THS include:

- Principal's Honor Roll - 153 Students (Bumper Stickers and letter were mailed home).
- Gold Honor Roll - 205 Students
- Silver Honor Roll - 221 Students
- The inaugural "Opportunity Expo" (on January 9) featured over 40 vendors/organizations and was attended by 500 students.
- The Bowling Team won the New York Team Championship
- The Junior Varsity Girls Basketball Team won the North Jersey Holiday Jam Fest
- On January 17 at 5:30 pm, THS will be hosting MLK weekend Teen Summit that is being sponsored by the NAACP
- Teaneck High School will host an Open House on Thursday, January 23 from 6:30 - 8 pm. Incoming 9th graders have been invited to attend the Open House with their parents. There will be a PowerPoint presentation in the auditorium, a Student Ambassador led tour and representatives from clubs and teams.
- The Black Youth Organization) of Teaneck High School presents its 13th annual Black History Month Show, titled "Let's Rewind" on Friday, February 7 at 6 pm (Students \$5 & Adults \$10). All proceeds will go to the African American Studies Scholarship of Teaneck High School. There will be a preview show for the students on Thursday, February 6.
- R U Ready Civic's Fair Wednesday & Thursday, February 12 & 13 @ 11:30am
- We are starting an initiative with Crayola to recycle all types of markers. Markers will be collected and sent to Crayola to be recycled.

Human Resource Management

Staff Vacancy Updates – see attached document