

Superintendent's Report



October 16, 2019

Student & Staff Recognition

Prior to this meeting, we held a special reception to recognize the many people who volunteer in a wide variety of ways in our school district. We truly appreciate their giving of their time, talent and treasure to help our students. It is so important for children to know that there are adults outside their family circle who care about them and want them to succeed. On behalf of all of us, I want to extend a big “thank you” to all of our volunteers! If anyone is interested in volunteering in our schools, they should contact Ms. Terry Corallo, Chief of Staff, for more information.

Fall Team Captains – Athletics Recognition

Tonight we are recognizing our fall sports team captains. Please join me as we call up our student athletes from volleyball, soccer, tennis, cross-country, football and fall cheer.

Teaneck Library Strategic Plan Development

Our Teaneck Library is currently involved in their own strategic planning process. They have formed a committee that consists of representatives from the Board of Trustees (including Ms. Corallo), staff, and Friends of the Library. This is a critical process for ensuring continuous improvement within our town Library, and as they strive to meet the changing needs of the Teaneck community.

I have invited Mr. Allen McGinley, Teaneck Public Library Director, to say a few words about this process and in particular, the launch of their community survey.

Schools Climate Transformation Grant

I am pleased to report that our district has been awarded a \$3.3 million School Climate Transformation federal grant (approximately \$670,000 per year over the five-year grant term). Dr. Lottie Watson, Teaneck High School Dean, submitted the grant application; and as the first year of implementation includes the current school year, a resolution to accept this grant is on tonight’s Board agenda.

As you know, a major goal of our five-year Strategic Plan is to create equitable and inclusive learning opportunities for all students - which will include adopting a district-wide strategy for addressing student behaviors in conjunction with our code of conduct. *The Teaneck Public Schools Climate Transformation Grant Project’s* goals seek to develop, implement, and expand systems of support, and technical assistance to its schools for improving school climate and culture using evidence-based strategies. The School Climate Transformation Grants initiative builds on the development and testing of evidence-based multi-tiered decision-making frameworks, such as Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). These funds would enable LEAs to develop and adopt, or expand to more schools, a multi-tiered decision-making framework that guides the selection, integration, and implementation of the best evidence-based behavioral practices for improving school climate and behavioral outcomes for all students.

We are extremely appreciative to have been selected for this generous grant; and I would like to thank our elected officials at the Federal, State and local levels for being so supportive of our district goals.

Superintendent's Video on the Vaping Crisis

On Monday (October 14), I released a special public service announcement for our parents and students on vaping. Vaping, and all of its potential harmful consequences, has become the focus of daily media reports. It also has the attention of the New Jersey Department of Health & Human Services. Most recently, Governor Murphy's Electronic Smoking Device Task Force, a real-time response to a national outbreak of teen lung illness, has called for the banning of flavored vaping products. However, the problem goes well beyond this; and I wanted to share some important facts while adding my personal perspective on this critical health matter. I hope our parents and students take a few moments to listen to my video message, which can be found on our website or the district Facebook page.

<https://youtu.be/3tZ4AoSXXJg>

District Strategic Plan Town Hall Events

Over this past month, I am have been hosting Strategic Plan Town Hall events at each of our district schools. Our final event is tomorrow evening (October 17) at 7 pm in the Lowell Elementary library. If you have not yet had a chance to attend any of these events, I invite you to attend this one – even if your child does not attend Lowell. NOTE: The full Five-Year District Strategic Plan is posted on our website.

District Office Moves

The Central Registration and Community Education offices have officially moved to their new temporary location inside Thomas Jefferson Middle School. Walk-ins are welcome using the Salem Street entrance – or call 201-833-5512 for information, or to make a registration appointment. The Community Education office can be reached at 201-833-5514.

Superintendent's Advisory Committees

If you have not yet submitted your application for one of my six Superintendent Advisory Committees – Students, Faculty, Beyond Diversity, Faith-based, Special Education Parent Committee, and Student Code of Conduct Review – please do so by the end of this week. Committee chairs will be reviewing all applications over the next week or so. The committee expectations and applications are available on our district website: <http://www.teaneckschools.org/SuperintendentSteeringCommittees.aspx>

Student Liaisons to the Board

It is with great pleasure that I introduce to you this evening our five high school seniors who will be attending and participating in our Regular Board meetings this year: Sharlene Guiracochoa, Yasmine Halmane, Eitan Hiller, Nuri Khan and Nyahti Monroe.

Curriculum & Instruction*Business Department:*

On October 4, volunteers from Ernst & Young (EY), a big four accounting firm, visited Teaneck High School and worked hands on with our Introduction to Business students. EY, in partnership with Junior Achievement, provided a spectacular day for students. Students worked closely with the volunteers on team building and entrepreneurship activities. Our students learned about and modeled the skills needed to be successful in the business world and engaged in discussions about workplace challenges in our ever-changing business atmosphere.

Professional Development Update:

On October 7, the elementary and secondary teachers participated in a half-day professional development focused on the principles of learning. These principles include productive struggle, socializing intelligence, using talk to improve comprehension and academically rigorous tasks. Our teachers took time to think through how the respective principles might be utilized with their students to support academic achievement. Both administrators and teachers will continue the discussion regarding these two principles in both faculty and department meetings in the upcoming weeks. We are looking forward to another productive session on December 9, 2019.

Guidance & Counseling:

- 504 Professional Development: On October 7, the school counselors from every building, nurses and FORUM Staff members participated in a professional development regarding the updated 504 Manual. Participants were encouraged to provide feedback for the final draft. In addition, they completed a survey that will be utilized for future professional development topics.
- Senior Parent Night: On October 14, there was an evening program for senior students and parents discussing all aspects of the college admissions process. The School Counseling Department provided information regarding college applications, SAT and ACT testing information, college essays, teacher letters of recommendations, as well as all materials needed for college applications. Students and parents had the opportunity to ask questions.
- PSATs: On October 16, all sophomores and juniors will have the opportunity to take the PSAT, a college admissions exam.
- College Visits to THS in October: Manhattan College, Sarah Lawrence College, Bloomfield College, Drexel University, Iona College, Parisian Beauty Academy, University of Rochester, Lincoln Technical Institute, University of New Haven, The College of New Jersey, American College and representatives from the Marines.
- Upcoming Events:
 - October 21: Financial Aid Night
 - October 28: Beacon College- Navigator Prep Transition to College Program presentation
 - October 29: "Pink Out" to support Breast Cancer Awareness. All staff and students in the district are encouraged to wear pink.
 - October 30: College Fair

Special Services

Programmatic Updates

On Monday October 7, the Special Education Department facilitated a S.P.I.R.E Intensive Reading workshop for LLD 1-8 and replacement 1-8 special education teachers.

Child Study Team Best Practices/Your Legal Questions Answered

Members of the Child Study Teams participated in Q&A session with Carolyn R. Chaudry, attorney from Scarinci and Hollenbeck on special education law and New Jersey policies and procedures related to special education.

Intervention and Referral Services Committee Training

The Department of Special Services will be providing an Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) One Day Team Training on October 16, 2019. This training is designed to provide school building I&RS teams with basic information, materials and skills to help them fulfill the regulatory requirements for the planning, development, implementation and maintenance of programs of I&RS (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8).

IEP Writing and Compliance

The Special Education is seeking to increase efficacy in the IEP writing progress by retooling Child Study Team and special education teachers on writing legally compliant IEPs. On November 4, 2019, the department will facilitate a training on Frontline IEP to provide an efficient means to monitor IEPs, track, and schedule meetings, including producing correspondence.

Community Relations & Volunteer Services

The district hosted Governor Phil Murphy's Town Hall event on September 25 at the Teaneck High School. Over 350 people attended and the Governor took several questions from the audience. Thank you to all of the staff and students involved in helping to make this an outstanding event!

This evening, we recognized our many school district volunteers with a special appreciation event. From our PTO leaders to our in-school volunteers and our partner organizations, we are so grateful for their support of our schools and our children.

Celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month – Attached is a list of activities and events that took place at each of our district schools during this past month.

Community Education – We need to hire a few more S.A.C.C. staff members to help support our afterschool care program. If you are interested, please contact Claire Drootin at 201-833-5514.

Prior to next month's Board meeting (November 13), we will be recognizing our "Exceptional Achievers" on the 2019 NJSLA (formerly PARCC). The students being recognized achieved the highest level "5" (exceeding grade level expectations) on the 2019 NJSLA State Assessment in **both** English Language Arts (ELA) and Math...and/or they achieved a perfect score on one or more state assessments.

Technology

Our 1:1 Chromebook deployment has been successful and we are now officially "1:1" in our high school and middle schools. The middle school students keep the Chromebooks in school and the high school students can take the Chromebooks home. This initiative will provide students with the tools necessary

to take advantage of uninterrupted 24/7 learning resources through our online learning environment. If a TPS family does not have internet at home, please contact the Teaneck High School main office to inquire about free "hotspots" now available for students through a partnership with T-Mobile.

We have rebuilt our server room at Eugene Field to ensure it can remain online during renovations. We have consolidated any legacy systems, simplified any overbuilt servers, and removed unnecessary equipment. Operations and Maintenance department upgraded the electrical systems and tied in the generator to ensure that our technology systems remain online all times. We would like to thank you for your patience and cooperation during our planned outages.

Bryant Elementary School

Recent and upcoming activities/events at Bryant include:

Bryant School had a successful "Week of Respect" comprised of classroom activities and school spirit celebrations. Bryant students wore blue to support National Stomp Out Bullying Day. Kindergarten students also participated in the Bergen County Safe Kids International Walk to School day sponsored and coordinated by FedEx and Hackensack Hospital. Representatives from this event included the Teaneck Police Department, Teaneck Fire Department, Local Ambulance Corps, State Farm and Fios News 1. Bryant School was featured in the Fios News 1 piece around pedestrian safety. Kindergarten students also had a visit from Chuck E Cheese and watched a video about bully prevention.

All preschool staff participated in a two-day professional development on the implementation of Teaching Strategies/Gold Student Assessment System. Our preschool students also had a visit from our Teaneck Fire Department where they toured a fire truck, rescue vehicle and water tender truck and learned about fire prevention.

School Safety Month activities will continue this week; and all students are encouraged to wear Red for Respect for their October 17 assembly. The kindergarten classes will go on a pumpkin-picking trip to Wightman Farms in Morristown, NJ on Friday, October 18.

Hawthorne Elementary School

Recent and upcoming activities/events at Hawthorne School are as follows:

- On October 4, Hawthorne School ushered in the "Week of Respect" with a respect dance, which included all staff and students on our school lawn. Other activities included daily clothing themes such as, dress up as a super hero to show that it is super to accept differences and wearing pajamas to put bullying to bed.
- The first Student of the Month ceremony on held Thursday, October 10. Family members and staff were in attendance to recognize the Student of the Month recipients for demonstrating the character trait of "helpfulness".
- The book fair will take place in the Hawthorne media center during the week of October 14.
- On Thursday, October 17, Principal Pitt will be presenting the "State of the School address" known as "Hawthorne Happenings" at 6:30pm. The presentation will include information about school initiatives, clubs, and test scores. Hawthorne Happenings will be followed by Family Fun Night, sponsored by the PTA.
- "School Violence Awareness" will be recognized by daily themes during the week of October 21.
- On Thursday, October 31, staff have the option of dressing up as a historical figure to provide some "edutainment" for our students.

Lowell Elementary School

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Lowell include:

- Character Education Week concluded with a session for the school's 4th graders on bullying
- October 14 – Hispanic Heritage Assembly with Songs & Poetry & Dancing
- October 16 & 17 Professional Development with IFL – ELA KG, 1st & 2nd and Math 3rd & 4th
- October 24 – Kindergarten Family Bingo Night 6:30 – 7:30 pm
- October 25 - Trip to Demarest Farms
- October 28 – 31 - PTO Book Fair - Library
- October 29 – PTO/Title 1 Literacy and Math Meeting 6:30 pm & Parent Night at Book Fair.

Whittier Elementary School

Recent and upcoming events/activities at Whittier include:

- Grade level town hall meetings held on September 27 to review the pillars of PBIS at Whittier: "Be Respectful, Be Responsible, Be Safe" - and what that looks like on the bus, recess and lunch room. At these meetings, 27 students who participated in the Summer Reading Challenge were recognized and received various rewards ranging from five-dollar Bee's Bucks to gift certificates to Barnes and Nobles. Their summer reading challenge projects are currently displayed outside the Main Office.
- The Week of Respect was observed with activities focused on preventing harassment, intimidation and bullying and reinforcing the message of respect for themselves, others and the school community. This year's theme was "Follow the Golden Rule." During the morning announcements, selected students read quotes, poetry and/or other literary pieces reinforcing this year's theme and every day of the week had a specific theme/message. The week will end with our annual Respect Dance and Peace Walk.
- The Teaneck Fire Department visited Whittier as part of Fire Prevention Week. Fire department members spoke with the students about fire safety and had an opportunity to learn about the fire department's equipment and the job of a firefighter.
- Whittier School will hold its annual Vocabulary parade on October 31. Students will chose a word and dress up as that word. A parade will take place around the school. The students "words" will be announced and the entire school, students and staff, will participate in the Monster Mash.

Benjamin Franklin Middle School

Recent and upcoming activities/events at BFMS include:

- A focus on the District's new mission, vision, and values have become a part of the school's morning exercises; also provided to all classrooms and on display in the school lobby.
- In order to the build the work needed to succeed as a school, our committees have been hard at work recruiting new people to bring a level of energy to complement our work. The following committees have begun to meet:
 - School Improvement Panel (SciP)
 - Safety & Security
 - Hispanic Heritage Month
 - I & RS
 - Food Advisory Committee
 - Sunshine
- The full rollout of HEROK12 has begun to reduce tardiness at the school and at the same time applaud the exemplary work of our learners. Students are now "tracked" for On Task Behavior,

- Class Participation, Credit for Completing HW Assignments, Random Act of Kindness, BFMS Student Leader, Tardy to School (unexcused), Tardy to Class, and On Time to Class. The data shows upward trends On- Task Behavior, Class Participation, and Credit for completing HW Assignments. Tardiness, as indicated above continues on a downward trend to date.
- Special thanks to the Hispanic Heritage Month Committee for organizing daily events. We would also like to thank our School Counseling Office for Organizing a Week of Respect with activities that engaged learners at every possible level while teaching the importance of the respect inside and outside of the school.
- Introduction to the Institute for Learning (IFL) has been spearheaded by many – especially the 5th grade Math teachers and Interventionist.
- September's Student of the Month Ceremony was held on October 11
- Events in the coming days/weeks:
 - Hispanic Heritage Month Assembly October 15 10:30 am
 - Multicultural Dinner - October 22 at 6:30 pm
 - National Junior Honor Society Induction Ceremony - October 24 at 6:30 pm

Thomas Jefferson Middle School

Recent activities/events at TJMS include:

- Back to School Night on September 24 was well attended.
- The annual Awards Ceremony to honor grades 5, 6 and 7 Honor Roll and Principal's Honor Roll students for the 2018/2019 school year was held on October 14. This year's grade 6, 7 and 8 students will receive trophies or plaques in recognition of this academic achievement last year.
- Afternoon and evening parent/teacher conferences will be held on Wednesday, October 30.
- Students will be running the Mile Run during all physical education classes between October 14 – 18. All students and staff are encouraged to participate.
- The first BQMT Meeting was held this morning.

Teaneck High School

Recent and upcoming activities/events at THS include:

- October:
 - In conjunction with the Week of Respect, October's school theme is "Acceptance and Responsibility".
 - Students will participate in the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Walk as members of various civic organizations.
 - Teaneck High School athletes are wearing pink as part of their uniforms in support of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.
 - THS was the host site for the League of Women Voters Board Candidate Debate.
 - The Empower Peers Inspire Change (EPIC) Conference was held in the Media Center. Students from Englewood and Garfield participated in the conference
- November:
 - Distinguished Alumni Meeting will be held to discuss the next round of inductees.
 - TIFF will show a short at two assemblies on November 15, 2019
 - THS staff are hosting several upcoming events, workshops and conferences on "College Access for Parents", "When Students Lead" and "Are You Ready".

Human Resource Management

Staff Vacancy Updates – see attached document