

Superintendent's Report

May 20, 2020

COVID-19 Update – Events & Activities

On Friday, May 15, I issued a communication regarding the district's plans pertaining to special events that would normally take place in June and over the summer. These included:

8th Grade Moving Up/High School Graduation

For the safety of all, Teaneck Public Schools will host these ceremonies via a virtual webinar (which will include easy-to-use desktop and mobile-friendly interfaces for graduates to upload their personal content – and for our seniors, to wear their cap and gown). These virtual ceremonies will feature personalized video messages from each student to share with their family and friends, and to have as a keepsake. Further, the high school ceremony will include customary speeches from senior class leaders, the valedictorian & salutatorian, and school and district leadership.

Our Virtual Graduation Ceremonies will be held on Monday, June 22, 2020. The schedule is as follows:

- Thomas Jefferson Middle School – 10 am start
- Benjamin Franklin Middle School – 1 pm start
- Teaneck High School – 5 pm start

NOTE: These schools will be sending out more specific information about logging on to these ceremonies; and as we get closer to this date, we will also post this information on our district website.

Camp K

Unfortunately, as we now look toward this summer, we have made the difficult decision to cancel our summer camp program (Camp K). I realize that cancelling this program is a disappointment for our children and their parents; but with strict limitations on large gatherings as well as trip availability, we need to choose health and safety first.

June Virtual Celebrations

Although other in-person school and district events have been cancelled through the end of June, I hope you will join us during our June 10 and June 17 virtual Board meetings where we will be recognizing several students and staff.

June 10: Recent staff retirees and our Teaneck Apple Award winners for those who went above and beyond during this pandemic

June 17: Governor's Educators of the Year and several high school senior accomplishments including our Class of 2020 Valedictorian & Salutatorian, and our Student Liaisons to the Board

Personal Belonging Collection Schedule

We have developed a detailed plan to enable our students and staff to retrieve any belongings – whether in a locker or classroom – over the next few weeks. Our high school students and staff will go first in this process (in May), followed by our middle and elementary schools during the first two weeks of June. Specific details have been sent by the school principals – including how we will conduct this process in a safe and orderly manner. The schedule is also posted on our district website under “Our Latest News”.

Community Mobile COVID-19 Testing in Teaneck

Bergen New Bridge Medical Center, in partnership with the County of Bergen, announce Community Mobile COVID-19 testing for those with or without symptoms on Wednesday, May 20, 2020 in the parking lot of the Richard Rodda Center located at 250 Colonial Court.

Testing for residents will take place from 10:00 AM to 3:30 PM. This is a Saliva COVID-19 test. Do not eat, drink, smoke or chew gum 30 minutes before arrival. COVID-19 Antibody testing is available for Bergen County First Responders, Health Care Workers, and Bergen County Community Members who had a prior COVID-19 positive diagnostic test and who bring a copy of their test results. Antibody testing is limited to 100 tests per day.

Mobile testing is available on a first-come first-serve basis and is free of charge to the patient, regardless of health insurance status. In case of inclement weather, visit www.co.bergen.nj.us for updates. Please direct any questions to Township Manger Dean Kazinci at 201-837-1600 ext. 1001. (*see attached flyer*)

Extended Learning Counseling Check-In" Survey

In an effort to gather information to better support our school community, Mrs. Golding-Cooper, Director of Guidance created the "Extended Learning Counseling Check-In" survey. Parents/guardians are asked to complete a brief survey regarding how their child(ren) have adjusted to remote learning and how we can better support them. The information will be utilized to assess topics that need to be addressed with families and if there are families requesting individual follow up by a counselor, including referral to the Mental Health Initiative for grades prek-8. The survey will close on Tuesday, May 26.

Link to the survey Extended Learning Counseling Check-In:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf9505SsfUR9blEITw3utclqpwbKLWe_9Qq7DZleX_IIF3R1Q/viewform

Summer Bridge Program

In light of the health-related closure, the district is in the planning phase of creating a districtwide Summer Bridge program. The vision of the program is to provide an enrichment opportunity for all students to ensure that our learners are ready, poised and prepared to begin the 2020-2021 school year. Current ideas include the use of personalized learning platforms whereby children can sign on and receive differentiated instruction based on their current knowledge. Additional ideas include the incorporation of STEM projects or units that will serve as the centerpiece of interdisciplinary units at the elementary level. The vision is to support learners in incoming first through incoming twelfth grade during 20 days in July where students will participate in relevant, meaningful learning experiences that will prepare them for success in the upcoming school year.

May 22 & May 25

Friday is the celebration of Eid al-Fitr, which represents the end of Ramadan. I would like to extend my best wishes to all who are celebrating this special day and remind everyone that our schools are closed for this event (Friday, May 22). Additionally, it is Memorial Day weekend and our district will be closed on Monday, May 25. It's the unofficial start of summer but please enjoy these special events safely. We are a strong community and we will continue to get through this together. I want to encourage everyone to follow our district Facebook page (@TeaneckPublicSchoolDistrict) and our district website (www.teaneckschools.org).

Curriculum & Instruction*Google Classroom Update*

The district is continuing with our virtual instruction via Google classroom. As administrators visit different virtual classes, we are happy to report that teachers are utilizing the Google Meets feature as a method for providing "live" instruction. In addition, we are finding that the Google Classroom is incredibly helpful for designing collaborative lessons and for increasing communication among teachers and classmates. Fun projects include: Yoga lessons from the physical education department, art projects that can be shared among peers, science experiments taking place among classes and music lessons where students can create new songs alongside their friends and teachers. As we enter the month of May, we look forward to the wonderful end-of-year projects that our students will produce!

Curriculum Writing and Instructional Pacing

As the department reviews this past year, we are diligently planning for our summer work and possible projects for September and October. In doing so, we are currently evaluating our present curriculum documents and determining next steps. These next steps include possible pacing updates for the 2020-2021 instructional calendars. We are also thinking about ways we might improve instruction by tinkering with applications like Flipgrid, Padlet, Screencastify or Loom. The possibilities are endless, and the department is eager to build upon the good work that has taken place this year.

School Counseling Department

- Support Services Survey- In an effort to gather information to better support our school community, Mrs. Golding-Cooper, Director of Guidance created the "Extended Learning Counseling Check-In" survey. Parents/guardians are asked to complete a brief survey regarding how their child(ren) have adjusted to remote learning and how we can better support them. The information will be utilized to assess topics that need to be addressed with families and if there are families requesting individual follow up by a counselor, including referral to the Mental Health Initiative for grades prek-8. Distribution of the survey began on May 15 via emails by the principals as well as posting on the district and school websites. The survey will close on Tuesday, May 26.
- Thursday Webinars- Beginning Thursday, May 16 thru Thursday, June 11, the School Counseling Department is hosting evening webinars:
 - Thursday, May 16- "What's Next - Planning for College" - College admissions representatives provided valuable information for current seniors and juniors as they navigate their post-secondary plans. Parents and students had the opportunity to submit questions prior to the webinar as well as ask questions during the event. Seton Hall University, Kean University, Montclair State University, Rutgers University, UMass Lowell, Ramapo College, Bloomfield College and Fairleigh Dickinson University were in attendance. The webinar was recorded and posted on the School Counseling page.
 - Thursday, May 21 - "Coping during COVID-19" Mental Health Initiative Clinicians will host an informative webinar on strategies for coping with mental health and wellness.
 - Thursday, June 4 - "All I Need to Know I Learned in Elementary School"- The Elementary School Outreach Workers will host a webinar to share helpful tips to support our young learners
 - Thursday, June 11- "Stuck in the Middle- Tips to Survive Middle School"- The Middle School Counselors will host a webinar on transitioning to middle school.

Other Upcoming Events:

- "NCAA Webinar"- Date - TBA. In collaboration with the Teaneck High School Athletic Department, a webinar for our student athletes on preparing for collegiate athletics.
- Celebrating our Seniors- In collaboration with Mr. Thompson, seniors that have submitted their intended college commitment for the fall will be recognized on the electronic sign on Queen Ann Road. Seniors must complete the "Plans After Graduation" form. They can contact their counselors for the form.
- Communication- Follow @TeaneckSchoolCounseling on Instagram and Facebook for all things School Counseling

Special Services*Special Education BOE Committee Meeting - 4/23/20*

The Special Education Department held its first Board of Education Special Education Committee meeting on Thursday, April 23, 2020. Board of Education members Clara Williams, Gerald Reiner, Denise Sanders, and Sarah Rappoport joined Dr. Irving and the special education administration in a vibrant discussion about virtual learning and the impact on students with special needs, components of the special education strategic plan and the department's accomplishments for the 2019-2020 school year.

Upcoming Programs/Events

- The Special Education Department and Teaneck Special Education Parent Advisory Group (SEPAG) Presents: A virtual Workshop on Navigating Special Education and Partnering with Your Home District 5/19/20
- In our continued effort to support our special education students and parents, the Special Education Department and SEPAG will be facilitating an interactive workshop to empower parents and caregivers of children with different abilities. Guest speaker Dr. Harold Tarriff, former Director of Special Services, Psychologist & Education Consultant will walk parents through the prerequisite procedures and the knowledge needed to be co-equal partners with school professionals charged with meeting the unique needs of classified students. Parents/guardians were emailed the flyer and directions on how to RSVP.

Special Education BOE Committee Meeting - 5/28/20

The monthly Special Education BOE Committee meeting will be held Thursday, May 28, 2020.

Community Relations & Volunteer Services*Community Relations & Programs*

As Dr. Irving noted above, our June Board meetings will feature a number of special virtual recognition ceremonies. This will include:

- **The Teaneck Apple Awards** – On June 10, we will recognize those who went "above and beyond" during the pandemic to keep our district moving forward and/or to help our children to learn and develop in creative and fun ways. This recognition ceremony will take place during the June 10 virtual Board Workshop Meeting which will begin at 7 pm.

Internal & External Communications Plan

Per the District's Strategic Plan (Priority 3 – Communication & Community Partnerships), Ms. Corallo, Chief of Staff/Director of Community Relations will be presenting the district's go-forward Internal & External Communications Plan to the full Board during the June 17 Board meeting.

Camp K & SACC

Due to the current situation concerning COVID-19, Camp K has been canceled for summer 2020. We look forward to bringing the program back in summer 2021.

We are working diligently on a plan for our before and afterschool care program (SACC) for fall 2020 and beyond. The final decision on this will depend upon school openings and the ability to safely social distance. More information will be forthcoming.

Technology

The Technology Department has continued to support families with our Chromedepot. Our Chromedepot is open from 11 am to 1 pm at the Teaneck High School Cranford side parking lot. We can distribute and swap devices for any families having issues with their Chromebooks, as well as provide hotspots for any families that are having issues with internet/Wi-Fi at home. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) and students can email techhelp@teaneckschools.org if they have any technical issues and someone from the technology department will assist them.

The district has also purchased 1,500 Chromebook in anticipation of the continued support or additional distribution of devices for the upcoming school year. These devices will replace any devices that are out of warranty or unable to be repaired. The Technology Department continues to support all families in our effort to make sure all students are able to access our online learning platforms.

The Technology Department has also started to prepare the new building for internet and network connectivity. We are working with a number of vendors to ensure that the building has all classroom technologies, interactive flat panels, and Wi-Fi.

Bryant School & Theodora Smiley Lacey School

Bryant School

- Bryant held a virtual zoo visit which our PTO hosted in collaboration with the Barn Hill Preserve, DE
- Bryant completed our 2019-2020 Yearbook which is going to press 5/20
- Media Specialist held their second Read- Aloud (Llama Llama at home)
- Week 9/10 Extended Learning Plans have been posted
- Closeout schedules for teachers have been finalized

Theodora Smiley Lacey School

- Lacey school walls (2nd floor) are being primed for their first coat paint
- Classroom furniture orders have be processed
- Technology orders have been processed

Hawthorne Elementary School

- The Hawthorne School In celebration of Teacher Appreciation Week, a donation of \$150 was sent to the Helping Hands Food Pantry, in Teaneck, in honor of Hawthorne School Teachers. The donation was a combined effort from Ms. Pitt - Principal, Ms. Brantley - Guidance/Outreach, Ms. Rosegren - Media Center Specialist, Ms. Jenner, and Ms. Santamaria - Administrative Assistants.

- The Hawthorne staff contributed to a touching video in which they showcased personal photos or videos sharing a resounding message to our students..."We Miss You".
- On June 2, the 4th grade choir will be virtually participating in the American Young Voices concert under the leadership of Julianne Boyle. The concert was originally scheduled to be held at the Prudential Center.

Lowell Elementary School

- Grade 4 is having a virtual dance party Wednesday, May 20
- Each week we are celebrating students who complete 4 lessons on Zearn Math
- Grade 3 and 4 held digital field trips to Philadelphia Zoo and Museum of Natural History
- Grade 4 is having a virtual writing celebration
- Grade 1 is having Thursday dance celebrations
- We are reviewing surveys for Summer Enrichment and future Town Hall meetings

Whittier Elementary School

- The members of Whittier School's National Honor Society introduced NEHS Read Alouds. Student members record themselves reading a book. Each week a new video is posted on the Whittier website for students to enjoy listening to a good book.
- The Whittier PTO honored the hard work and dedication of our teachers by producing and sending a video of students thanking staff members. The video can be viewed on the Whittier website.
- Principal Valdes held a second Town Hall meeting on April 28 to provide information and answer parent questions and concerns.
- Congratulations to Karen Simpson and Iris Hernandez --recipients of Teaneck Public Schools' Governor's Educator of the Year Award for 2020 recognizing their dedication and outstanding work.
- Outreach Counselor Dannette Coston introduced "Lunch Bunch" for students to gather virtually and enjoy lunch together. She introduces topics and facilitates conversations.
- The Whittier PTO will hold a virtual meeting on May 26 at 6:30 PM. Details to join the meeting are available on the Whittier website.

Benjamin Franklin Middle School

- The National Environment Education Foundation (NEEF) in Washington, DC kicked off National Environmental Education Week, the largest celebration of environment education, on April 20, with a 6-part video series. The series, entitled, "Greening STEM in Action," featured students, staff, and local partnerships with Teaneck Creek Conservancy, Samsung, County of Bergen - Department of Parks, Hackensack Riverkeeper, and others as they worked with learner to discover inquiry-based learning through research at the watersheds in the Teaneck area.
- Teacher Appreciation Week was celebrated from May 4 – 8, with daily acknowledgements for each grade level. The week ended with a video presentation as well a gift card for each teacher from the BFPTO. The video featured recordings of our students and parents congratulating and thanking teachers for their work this academic year and during our global pandemic.

- This month, “Workshop Wednesdays” was launched to provide students with a series of speakers to share their professional experiences with the students and staff of BFMS. The initial meeting featured alumni from Teaneck High School who played basketball and also a professional dancer who was also raised in Teaneck. The last workshop featured Jabari Hall who spoke with students about coping with our new way of life.
- BFMS Instrument Pick Up/Delivery was completed on May 14 with over 50 instruments picked up and or delivered at Teaneck High School.
- The school will host its monthly Student of the Month ceremony is scheduled for May 21, 2020 at 12:00 pm. The event will be held virtually and will honor students for their academic excellence during the 3rd marking period.
- The Office of Operations and Management began working on the construction of a garden at Benjamin Franklin Middle School. The garden will be used to support the biodiversity class and other initiatives in our science program.

Thomas Jefferson Middle School

- Progress reports for TJ students will be available online as of Friday, May 15.
- TJ teachers will be allowed to enter the building for two hours each to pack up their classrooms Monday - Thursday, May 18 - 21.
- The budget meeting for TJ staff was held on Tuesday, May 19.
- Grades 5 and 6 students have been asked to complete the Middle School Encore Survey. Grade 7 and 8 students have been asked to complete the High School Pathway Survey.

Teaneck High School

- THS' Valedictorian Yasmine Halman and Salutatorian Dina Scott were featured on CNN's Class of 2020 Special Report – a two-hour special held on May 14.
- The THS School Student, Parent and Teacher surveys will continue to be distributed and analyzed to adjust the distance-learning environment to better serve our students.
- On Friday's in May the THS football field light will be turned on, with the scoreboard displaying 2020, from 8:20 pm for 20 minutes and 20 seconds in support and show of Love for the Class of 2020. Most of the districts in Bergen County are participating in this show of Love.
- Approval was given to purchase yearbooks for the entire Senior Class. The major fundraisers to offset the cost of the yearbook were cancelled due to COVID-19.
- THS teachers, staff members and administration voluntarily meet on Thursday's at 3:15 pm via Google Meets to discuss how to best serve our students.
- Senior advisors and other staff members are planning virtual ceremonies that will be created in-house to celebrate the Class of 2020 and their achievements.
- The School Counseling department distributed a survey to ascertain how our students are coping during this stressful time.
- Spirit week photos and videos are posted daily to the #TeaneckHighSchoolToday Instagram page. The spirit categories are created by Dean Cipriano.
- The Cranford Ave. parking lot is continued to be used to distribute lunches and Chromebooks. Students will begin to pick-up their belongings starting on Monday May 18, in the Cranford Ave parking lot.

Human Resource Management

Staff Vacancy Updates – see attached document