



MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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JONATHAN PONDS, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

October 16, 2020

Dear Families, Caregivers and Staff,

I hope you have had a chance to review the [Return to School Plan](#) and evaluate which mode of instruction will be best for your family, either fully remote or hybrid. Many of you have emailed questions, and my administrative team and I are working to get you answers. Please note that we are extending the time for submitting the hybrid versus remote survey to October 22. If you choose hybrid and later decide you wish your child to return to remote, you may do so by notifying the principal and your child's teacher at any time. However, switching from remote to hybrid will only be allowed at the end of a marking period. Due to the feedback we received on our early November in-person start, we are going to begin our hybrid instruction on November 9 for Grades PreK - 5. We will monitor our progress and provided the health concerns remain stable, approximately two weeks later, we will bring in Grades 6 - 12. This will meet the return-to-school mandate.

Hybrid and Remote Teaching and Learning

Please note that school start times are not changing. All students will begin classes at their schools' regularly scheduled time and will have live instruction for four hours. Snack times will be incorporated during this four-hour block as well as needed breaks. Regarding devices in schools, although children will sometimes use their devices in the in-person classroom, they will have more flexibility with screen time as they can look towards their teacher in the room and away from the screen and still benefit from the lesson. Having laptops in the in-person classroom is to limit the sharing of instructional materials.

Fully remote students will be getting the same instruction as the hybrid, in-person students with the same teachers. The integrity of the remote learning will not change and teachers will be actively engaged with their in-class students as well as their remote students. Like all new systems, there will be a learning curve with this; however, I am confident that our teachers will provide an engaging learning environment and we will continually adjust and adapt when necessary. A video displaying the classroom setup showing actual teaching and learning will be released next week.

As remote and in-person students will be attending the same classes at the same time, this structure provides all students the opportunity to experience a classroom with their peers. Afternoons for both hybrid and remote students will be more flexible with time for related arts, asynchronous learning, and small-group instruction. Each school principal will be able to answer questions regarding specific scheduling in their buildings.

Special Education - ABA Plan

We welcomed ABA students to Bullock School on Thursday and Friday. Families and students reported having a positive experience. We are delighted to be able to return our most vulnerable learners to an in-person environment.

Health and Wellness

Our certified school nurses have been in their offices since the first day of school in September. They are preparing for a safe and welcoming re-entry for students and staff members. If your child's school nurse has not yet reached out to your family, please feel free to call with any questions or concerns.

Required Medical Forms for Re-entry

All routine, required medical forms must be on file with your child's school nurse prior to re-entry. These include immunization records, medication, and other pertinent health forms for the 20-21 school year.

Parents of students in K, Grade 6 and new to the school district, please note that students may not re-enter without up-to-date immunizations and physical examinations.

All forms are located on the district [website](#). Please call your child's school nurse with any questions.

Influenza vaccinations (flu shots) are recommended for all students and staff.

Facilities

Our engineering firm, El Associates, and our Director of Buildings and Grounds, Anthony Bispo, will be presenting at the Board Meeting this Monday, October 19 at 7:30 pm. Please refer to our website for information on how to attend the virtual meeting. They will provide an update on remediation to our current HVAC system and how we are utilizing both mechanical and natural ventilation for our return to school. As stated in previous updates, we have short- and long-term solutions. We are doing all we can to mitigate the potential risk of virus transmission. We have our facility and safety information in our [Restart and Reopening Plan](#) that we submitted to the state. Please know that our goal is to return all staff and students to the safest educational environment.

Technology

We continue to distribute devices and hot spots to our students and families in need. Anyone who is having technical difficulty should contact our Technology Support Line at 301-259-1510, Monday through Friday from 8 am to 3 pm.

Devices are distributed from Hillside School every Tuesday during the hours of 9 am to 12 pm. Please place your technology request with your children's school.

Thank you for your inquiries regarding the Return to School Plan. While we can't always respond immediately, please be assured we are considering and addressing all of your questions and concerns as we fine-tune our plans. Please note that COVID-related information is posted to our [website](#). We will continue to provide weekly updates and appreciate your patience.

Sincerely,
Dr. Jonathan Ponds
Superintendent

All Kids can Learn ~ All Kids are Special