



MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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JONATHAN PONDS, Ed. D.
Superintendent of Schools

October 23, 2020

Dear Families, Caregivers and Staff,

Now that our questionnaire responses for choosing either hybrid or remote learning has closed, our administrators are busy analyzing the data for each school and preparing to fully support both options. We have about 60% of families choosing hybrid and 40% choosing remote. These preliminary numbers will allow us to have two cohorts, the Mounties and the Bulldogs.

Building walk-throughs are taking place ensuring that signage is posted on hallway walls and floors, desks are placed safely, and charging areas are ready for devices among a few of the physical procedures to ensure proper social distancing for a safe return. A summary of our ventilation repairs as reported at the Board Meeting this past Monday is below. After November 9 for PreK-5 and after November 23 for Grades 6-12, please remember that if you choose the hybrid model for your children and later decide that you wish to change them to remote, you may do so at any time by notifying your children's teachers and principal. Once you choose remote, if you want your children to switch, it can only be done at the end of a marking period.

Hybrid and Remote Teaching and Learning

As I mentioned last week, I had hoped to have a video ready to display what a hybrid classroom would look like. However, it is still under production and we are excited to get it to you next week. The video will simulate the experience that both the hybrid and remote student will have and how the teacher is able to move around the room still using a laptop and screen.

Live, synchronous instruction has been our biggest area of focus this fall and we will continue to implement it with integrity. Ongoing professional development to support our teachers and paraprofessionals is also paramount.

I am confident that we will execute a robust hybrid plan with no loss of integrity for the remote model. As in the case of all new systems, we will have an adjustment period; however, we are ready and eager to begin this in-person teaching and learning.

Addressing positive cases of COVID-19

While we are in the hybrid model, we will be addressing positive cases of COVID-19 on a case-by-case basis. We will follow all guidelines from the CDC, Montclair Health Department and our medical team with respect to contact tracing, notification, quarantine periods, and class and/or school closure. If someone is excluded from school because of COVID, we will require several factors to be met before allowing return, such as symptoms, quarantine time, and medical clearance note. The school nurse will be your point of contact should the need arise. As always your health and safety are of utmost importance.

Health and Wellness

Reminder: All routine, required medical forms must be on file with your child's school nurse prior to returning to in-person learning. These include immunization records, medication, and other pertinent health forms for the 20-21 school year. Students in K, Grade 6 and new to the district may not re-enter without up-to-date immunizations and physical exams. All forms are located on the [district website](#). Please call your child's school nurse with any questions.

The New Jersey Department of Health has released an easy-to-use health status checker and [health actions to protect you and your family](#).

With Halloween approaching, the state has provided [guidance for celebrating safely](#).

Facilities

As a summary of the information presented at the October 19 Board Meeting, work continues throughout the district to address the HVAC issues at all the schools. The focus of the effort right now is on the elementary schools. Please note that only rooms where ventilation systems are working properly will be used.

An additional 200 Envioklenz mobile air purifiers were approved by the Board and are on order, expected to be delivered in time for the planned November 9 opening of the elementary schools. Air purifiers will be provided in areas where there is either a) only reliance on natural ventilation or b) the mechanical ventilation is still in need of repair.

Bridging the gap between our short-term and long-term solutions, the Board also approved a proposal to move forward with a bipolar ionization strategy to further enhance the means to deliver outside air and proper ventilation to the classrooms and other spaces. Long-term, the strategy to introduce mechanical ventilation to all classrooms is currently in the works.

Food Service

Next week we will provide details about the grab and go meals that will be available once we start the hybrid plan.

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.

For up-to-date information, check the [COVID-19 page](#) on our website. The administrative team and I at Central Office and your Principals welcome your feedback.

Sincerely,
Dr. Jonathan Ponds
Superintendent

All Kids can Learn ~ All Kids are Special