

# MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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### Superintendent of Schools

*Weekly Community Message No. 18*

**Jonathan Ponds, Ed.D.**

April 23, 2021

Dear Families, Caregivers and Staff,

We are on schedule to open Middle Schools for in-person/hybrid learning on May 10. We will be sending information regarding the High School in a couple of weeks.

To our youngest learners, PreK-5, I am sending a big shout out for a job well done with mask wearing and following the safety protocols. They have shown that they are respectful of all the new rules and procedures, and I commend the parents, principals, teaching staff, and support staff for instilling the importance of following these procedures for the safety of all.

#### **Please see District updates below:**

##### **Pooled Testing for PreK-5**

A consent form for students is available in Genesis for pooled testing. Please be sure to complete this form if you wish to allow your child(ren) to take part in the program. The form has details for your reference and additional information can be found on the Ginkgo [website](#). Staff will receive consent forms for pooled testing through an *All Staff* email. We are working out the logistics and are scheduled to begin testing the first week of May.

##### **Equity, Curriculum and Instruction**

Dr. Kalisha Morgan, Assistant Superintendent for Equity, Curriculum and Instruction, gave a [presentation](#) at the April 19 Board of Education meeting regarding summer programming. These [summer opportunities](#) are valuable for not only instruction but also for building social emotional connections as students ease back into in-person teaching and learning.

##### **Food Service**

**Meal distribution will remain the same until May 10.** Meals will be available on Mondays and Thursdays for in-person students upon dismissal from the Elementary Schools. For those who are

remote, parents/guardians can pick up meals on Mondays and Thursdays for one hour at any Elementary School starting one hour after school dismissal time. For those parents/guardians who cannot pick up meals at an Elementary School during the afternoon hours, please pick up meals at the High School on Mondays and Thursdays from 4 to 6 PM. Once Middle Schools are in-person beginning May 10, meals will be available there at dismissal for those in person and for remote students one hour after dismissal. For those parents who cannot pick up meals at Middle Schools, the High School will have them from 4 to 6 PM.

### **Community**

Join the **MFEE Community Health Workers** for an interactive discussion regarding the latest information on COVID-19 vaccines at a virtual town hall on April 29 at 7:30 pm. Reverend Dr. Craig Dunn will serve as the host, and local medical professionals, Dr. Chris Pernel, Dr. Renee Baskerville, and Dr. Tyran Mincey, will serve as panelists. Advance [registration](#) required.

### **Student Accolades**

#### **Earth Day**

This week our schools participated in a [variety of activities to celebrate Earth Day](#). Even our young learners are conscious of the importance of saving the planet. The *North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority* recently held a contest for children to share ideas for the future of transportation, thinking of how to make it better for the environment. Both the winner and the runner up in the [Under 8 Age Group](#) are from Ms. D'Allegro's second grade class at Nishuane School. "We are so proud of Noah Akinymi and Milo Shneider who had such wonderful, innovative ideas for taking care of the Earth," said Principal Jill McLaughlin. Congratulations!

#### **Robotics**

Montclair Team 555 sponsored by the Josh and Judy Weston Foundation and the Picatinny Arsenal STEM office qualified for the highly competitive International FIRST Innovation Challenge presented by Qualcomm. Team 555 made it to the semifinals with its project REACH. The students of Team 555 worked closely with their coaches, their mentor from the Department of Defense at Picatinny Arsenal, and consulted experts in the field of mobility such as Dr. R. Cooper to design, develop and soon deploy a novel, electrically-operated omnidirectional indoor wheelchair to assist a local wounded warrior.

#### **End the Stigma Club at MHS**

I commend our Montclair High School students on a special project which clearly shows the care and empathy they have for our younger learners. The End the Stigma club recently visited the elementary schools to "Chalk the Walk," writing positive affirmations to welcome all students for week two of hybrid learning. The End the Stigma club is composed of about 70 sophomores and advised by art teacher Brienne Kvetkus. Watch them at work in [this video](#) and see the [story/photos](#).

### **First Annual NJIT eSTEM Competition**

Congratulations to a team of [Bullock fourth graders](#) on placing third in the first annual NJIT eSTEM engineering and design competition for elementary school students (third through fifth grades). We are proud of the hard work and dedication these students displayed in earning this achievement.

### **Le Grand Concours**

Preston Ward, Carla Impoco Duclos, Victory Adazie, Elinor Pittman, and Elise Crawford of Renaissance at Rand Middle School, have ranked nationally in the 86<sup>th</sup> annual event, *Le Grand Concours*. *Le Grand Concours* is a national competition sponsored by the American Association of Teachers of French. Students were evaluated for their written, oral and listening comprehension skills in French. We are so proud of our Renaissance students who participated for the first time.

### **REMINDERS**

#### **Technology**

Please remember to complete the daily COVID form prior to coming to school each day. Please contact our Manager of Information Systems through Genesis Parent Access should you require any assistance with the form.

We continue to distribute technology to our families every **Tuesday from 9 AM to 12 PM and from 1 to 3 PM** at Hillside School (Entrance B on Hillside Ave. side). Please contact your child(ren's) school so a work order can be placed. Once the work order is placed, someone from the Technology Office will reach out to you and coordinate a date and time for pickup.

#### **Montclair Scholarship Fund**

Meet the [Montclair Scholarship Fund](#) through a [documentary](#) produced by 2016 Montclair High School grad Zack Bermack. Please consider making a donation in conjunction with **National College Decision Day (May 1)** to support our students with rising tuition costs. All donations go directly to fund the scholarships.

#### **YMCA Before- and After-Care**

The YMCA is offering families of children in grades K-8 before- and after-care. Please [see the flyer](#) for details and registration information.

*This week I'd like to thank our administrative assistants and wish them a Happy Administrative Professionals Day for their dedication and service to the district. I am grateful for their tireless efforts, especially this past year and under the most difficult of circumstances. They hold us together, juggle a multitude of tasks and help us grow together as a team of professionals invested in the well-being of our students.*

*We are entering the second week in Ramadan, a holy month in the Islamic Calendar. Muslims (people who practice Islam) refrain from eating and drinking, from sunrise to sunset. For the hundreds of millions of Muslims around the world who observe Ramadan, the month is a time to focus on their faith and also perform generous acts of charity. People raise money and donate supplies to help others in need. Many fast to remind themselves about those in the world who don't have enough to eat, and to be grateful for their blessings while giving back to the community. After the last day of Ramadan, a three-day festival, the Holiday of Breaking Fasts (Eid Ul Fitr), is held. Families and friends gather together to make the holiday prayer and celebrate.*

Sincerely,  
Dr. Jonathan Ponds  
Superintendent