

MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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Superintendent of Schools

Weekly Community Message No. 19

Jonathan Ponds, Ed.D.

April 30, 2021

Dear Families, Caregivers and Staff,

Plans are on schedule for in-person/hybrid learning for Middle Schools to begin on May 10. We have been hearing from principals and families that everyone is eager to get back to the buildings.

As the calendar turns to May, we are set for better days, warmer weather, and celebrations. Tomorrow begins Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month. In 1978, a joint congressional resolution established Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week. The first 10 days of May were chosen to coincide with two important milestones in Asian/Pacific American history: the arrival in the United States of the first Japanese immigrants (May 7, 1843) and contributions of Chinese workers to the building of the transcontinental railroad, completed May 10, 1869. In 1992, Congress expanded the observance to a month-long celebration. Now, more than ever, we come together as one community, committed to inclusivity, to celebrate the vibrant and diverse traditions and contributions of Asians and Asian Americans. Here is just one resource for families to learn more and [engage in activities](#) that highlight these cultural contributions.

Next week is National Teacher Appreciation Week and May 12 is National School Nurse Day. This past year our teachers and nurses have risen to the challenges they faced in educating and supporting our students. Under the most difficult circumstances, they quickly adapted to the new normal, coming up with creative ways to provide instruction and engage with their learners and families. I am grateful to each and every member of our teaching and nursing staff for an unwavering commitment to the District. At the Board of Education meeting on May 17, we will honor this year's Governor's Educator of the Year recipients.

Please see District updates below:

Pooled Testing for PreK-5

Pooled testing is scheduled to begin the week of May 3 for students who have signed consent forms, starting with Grade 2. Every two weeks a grade will be added (3rd, 4th and 5th) until the end of the year. Your children will be shown an instructional [video](#) so that they know what to expect. Please remember only those who have signed consent forms in Genesis will be tested. Please feel free to share this video with your child at home.

Pooled Testing for Staff

A consent form for staff is available on the District's homepage. Please be sure to complete this form if you consent to participating in the program. The form has details for your reference and additional information can be found on the Ginkgo [website](#).

In-Person Learning for Middle Schools

The numbers of students that will be starting in-person/hybrid learning have grown to such an extent that we will now be implementing three rotation groups instead of two. Schedules will be available in Genesis on Monday, and your child will be assigned to a blue, orange or green rotation group. Principals will provide details about this scheduling in their communications.

Equity, Curriculum and Instruction

Thank you to all families who submitted the summer learning surveys for students entering grades 1-8. We are reviewing the data and registration information will be sent by the end of May. We are still compiling information related to summer enrichment for grades 9-12. We hope to provide those details to our High School families by May 14. Students needing High School credit recovery will be notified by the High School administration.

Food Service

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.

Important Information and Reminders from Nursing Services

Nurses have been delighted to welcome back our elementary school students. They have followed our safety protocols beautifully. It's exciting to see their sparkling eyes!

We want to remind all parents/caregivers to keep their children home if they have any symptoms of Covid-19. Please review the [Health Related Guidance Chart](#) on the website for details.

Medical Forms: Elementary, Middle and High School: Medication and medication forms, as well as Action Plans (doctor's orders) for health conditions, must be delivered to the nurse prior to your child's return in-person. Please contact your child's school as soon as possible to make arrangements.

Please note: There are no changes or grace periods to NJ Immunization Laws due to Covid-19. All immunizations must be up-to-date and submitted to your child's school nurse.

New Jersey Administrative Code requires all children entering Grade 6 in September 2021 be in compliance with the following vaccinations:

Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis Vaccine

All incoming 6th grade students who have had their 11th birthday, are required to have a booster dose of the Tdap vaccine prior to September 1, 2021.

Meningococcal Vaccine

All incoming 6th grade students who have had their 11th birthday, must have one dose of Meningococcal vaccine prior to September 1, 2021. Vaccines given prior to the 10th birthday will not be accepted.

Students with birthdates of August 1 - December 31 must submit documentation of receiving these immunizations within 30 days of their 11th birthday (Send to Middle School Nurse).

Failure to submit documentation of immunizations may result in exclusion from the first day of school in September 2021.

All documentation should be sent to your child's elementary school nurse as soon as your child has received booster shots. Please keep a copy of these immunizations for your records.

Community

MFEE is gearing up for its Amazing FundRACER 4.0: Clash of the Quaranteams on Sunday, May 23 at 1 pm. The Amazing FundRACER is a mini-version of the competition show *Amazing Race*. Funds raised from this community event benefit all 6,700 Montclair Public School students. This year, a portion of the proceeds will support MFEE's initiatives to address racial equity in our schools. Traditionally, 50 teams of two have competed in a fast-paced and fun-filled race across Montclair on foot and by bike. **This year, MFEE is opening the race to families or groups of up to six members.** Contestants will complete challenges at a series of undisclosed "Challenge Stations" to earn clues that point them to the next stop. Teams will be eliminated as the race progresses, building to a climactic final challenge between the top four teams and a heated sprint to the finish line. [Read more and register.](#)

Student Accolades

Congratulations to Montclair High School senior Jordan Diggs who has been selected to be a member of the esteemed National Society of High School Scholars. The Society recognizes top scholars who have demonstrated outstanding leadership, scholarship and community commitment. Jordan was

recognized for his hard work, sacrifice and commitment to achieving an exceptional level of academic excellence.

The Essex County Board of Commissioners, during their annual Essex County Celebrates Youth Event, honored Montclair High School senior Genesis Whitlock for her service and leadership in the Montclair community. Whitlock is a senior at Montclair High School and serves in a multitude of extracurricular capacities including President of the Montclair High School Student Coalition, President of the Montclair NAACP Youth Council, Student Activist Coordinator for Amnesty International, and is the first Student Representative on Montclair's Board of Education. [Read more.](#)

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.

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.

As we continue to transition to in-person learning, there will be adjustments and challenges along the way. Please know that we are doing our very best to listen to and address your concerns. I am thankful for the efforts of our administrators, staff and community that make it possible for our students to be back in school buildings and also supported remotely.

Sincerely,
Dr. Jonathan Ponds
Superintendent