



# MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

22 VALLEY ROAD ~ MONTCLAIR, NEW JERSEY 07042

WWW.MONTCLAIR.K12.NJ.US

**KENDRA V. JOHNSON, J.D., ED. D.**

*Superintendent of School*

March 11, 2019

Dear Montclair Families/Caregivers and Staff,

In an effort to share the process I use when determining weather-related school closings, I prepared this communication so we are all fully normed as a school community.

During the winter months and oftentimes extending through March, the process for determining how best to respond to inclement weather is complex, multi-leveled, and based on numerous kinds of information. For instance, I, along with my facilities team, check weather reports, road conditions, news reports for traffic concerns/accidents (especially with teens who are driving), and of course, neighboring towns and districts. Our Facilities Director even confers with the Township's Public Works Department about its planned storm response and the ability to plow and salt roads. All of these factors are considered in the decision-making process with the most important factor always being the safety of our students and staff.

The process that leads to whether schools will be closed, delayed in opening, or dismissed early begins the night before a storm warning and again by 4:00 AM the day of the predicted weather-related situation. We must consider that while our students live in town, many of our staff do not. Therefore, it is not only the streets and sidewalks of Montclair for which we are concerned, but also the extended communities from which our staff travel to and from Montclair.

These are critical decisions, and they are not made lightly. I understand that as parents/guardians an unexpected school closure or delay is frustrating and affects childcare and other arrangements. That is why every effort is made to decide early, sometimes the night before when we won't be certain if a prediction will become a reality. Please know that not everyone will be happy with our decisions; however, we do keep everyone in mind when making them. Efforts are made to get same day notifications disseminated through email, text and phone; posted to our website; added to our district phone line; and sent to the media outlets by 5:00 AM. And as I said above, the deciding factor for these decisions is always the safety of everyone.

This year we have used two snow days, three delayed openings and one early dismissal. Delayed openings, when it is safe to do so, are the best option because they do not impact the district's allotment of three built-in snow days. This is particularly noteworthy this year, as our

*Telephone: 973.509.4000 ~ Fax: 973.509.0586 ~ Email: [kjohnson@montclair.k12.nj.us](mailto:kjohnson@montclair.k12.nj.us)*

high school must recoup two lost instructional days and one of those days is slated for May 24, cancelling the originally scheduled vacation day for the Memorial Day weekend (Montclair High School staff and students only). As these high school students and staff have worked so hard and have been brilliantly resilient in making the best of their facility difficulties, I am hopeful that they can be “gifted back” May 24 as our third “snow day.” In other words, if we do not use any more snow days, the high school can use May 24 as a snow day and be off with all of the other schools as originally planned.

Please know I’ve listened and heard your feedback and hope that I’ve clarified the decision-making process and its nuances, unique challenges and complexity in this communication.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kendra Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dr. Kendra V. Johnson  
Superintendent

Cc: Montclair Board of Education