



# MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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**NATHAN N. PARKER, ED. D.**

*Interim Superintendent of Schools*

August 23, 2019

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students,

Welcome to the 2019-2020 school year! I would like to extend a special welcome to students and parents/guardians new to the Montclair school community. All schools will open for a full day of classes on Thursday, September 5, 2019.

I'd like to take a moment to introduce myself. I have worked in rural, urban, and suburban school districts. I hope to use these experiences to help guide the district during this period of transition. I am most passionate about my work in Orange where the graduation rate when I started my tenure was 50% and after five years, the graduation rate was over 72%. Performance on state tests jumped dramatically from less than 40% proficiency in 4<sup>th</sup> grade in mathematics to over 80% proficiency. During my last year in Orange one student was accepted to five Ivy League schools and one was accepted with a full scholarship to Wharton at the University of Pennsylvania. No one could remember when one student had been accepted into an Ivy League college or university.

I have recently seen clips from a series called *America to Me*. The series depicts, through the eyes of students and their interactions with staff, their experience in Oak Park, Illinois. Oak Park has a long history of valuing and emphasizing its diverse student population. As the documentary depicts, in spite of literally decades of work to eliminate the achievement gap and strengthen sensitivity to its diverse populations, it is still a work in progress.

I know how diligently Montclair has worked to meet the needs of all its students. I understand Montclair to be a model of best practices with involved students, parents, staff, and the broad community. It is my goal to involve key stakeholders in key decisions. I follow a systematic approach to the change process that encourages participation and a sense of involvement.

Please take a moment to read some highlights:

### **Talented New Staff**

Recruiting and selecting an outstanding, diverse staff throughout the year and during the summer has been a top priority. Please see the attached list of very talented staff members in our buildings and Central Office.

### **From the Equity, Curriculum, & Instruction Department**

The Equity, Curriculum and Instruction (ECI) team worked this summer with staff on creating and updating district curricula. This school year we are excited to introduce a new elementary math program called *GoMath!* which comes with

an online math tool for learning called Personal Math Trainer. ECI is working to update the [website](#) with information related to curriculum, instruction, resources, and assessment information.

### **Facilities Update**

As we inch closer to opening day, I want to reassure you I am very pleased to report that all students and staff will have access to ALL floors of the main building at Montclair High School (MHS). Students will be able to access lockers and classrooms on each floor and get back into the routines for which they are accustomed. I appreciate and applaud all who have worked so diligently to make this accessibility to the main building a reality for the students on opening day!

### **Technology Improvements**

We are pleased to announce the deployment of over 600 Chromebooks district-wide to support curricula initiatives in mathematics and science in our high school and middle schools. In addition, 20 interactive whiteboards have been installed in our elementary and middle schools to help support instruction. A new state-of-the-art computer lab has been installed in the high school annex. Lastly, upgrades have been integrated to our District firewall, content filter and antivirus software to help keep our network safer from outside threats.

As the year begins, please keep in mind the best way to get questions answered is to ask your child's teacher. Then, if needed, it is best to speak to the Principal. The District office staff and ultimately the Board of Education are here as well to assist you, but only after working with those professionals who interact with your child on a daily basis.

I look forward to working with you. My best wishes to our students and families as we kick off the new school year.

I will see you in September!

Sincerely,  
Dr. Nathan N. Parker  
Interim Superintendent  
Attachment: New Staff List 2019-20