

MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

22 VALLEY ROAD ~ MONTCLAIR, NEW JERSEY 07042

WWW.MONTCLAIR.K12.NJ.US

PHONE: 973-509-4020 FAX: 973-509-0586



Superintendent of Schools

Jonathan Ponds, Ed.D.

Montclair Public Schools Partners with Ginkgo Bioworks to Provide Pooled COVID-19 Testing

(Montclair, N.J., May 4, 2021) – Montclair Public Schools has partnered with [Ginkgo Bioworks](http://GinkgoBioworks.com) Inc. (“Ginkgo”), the organism company, to provide pooled SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) testing. This week, second grade students in the elementary schools will be the first to engage in this testing.

As school districts across the nation work hard to reopen and stay open, [regular testing remains critical](#) to ensure the health of students, teachers and staff and create a safe environment for learning. Pooled classroom testing, which combines swabs from all consenting individuals in a classroom and runs them as a single test, is an effective way to easily test many people at once with fewer resources. [Concentric by Ginkgo](#)’s pooled testing program, which is used by schools in hundreds of communities across the country, is cost-effective and straightforward for schools to implement, as Ginkgo provides all the training and testing materials necessary as well as lab and data processing services. Students and school administrators alike have described the testing process as simple and painless.

Montclair Public Schools will engage pooled testing as one of many strategies which form a robust and multifaceted coronavirus response. These strategies include health attestations, deep cleaning, social distancing, contact tracing, handwashing, ventilation and other facility enhancements. Together, these layered prevention strategies accord with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s K-12 School [Operational Strategy](#), and recommendations from public health officials.

“I am pleased that the District can provide another measure to help keep our schools open and support the safety of our students and teachers,” said Superintendent Jonathan Ponds.

The goal of [Concentric by Ginkgo](#), the public health and biosecurity effort at Ginkgo, is to provide easy, affordable pooled testing to every school in America. The program now supports more than 350,000 students within schools in over 15 states.

“As much as we are encouraged by the rapid progress of vaccine discovery and administration, we must remain vigilant. Using testing to curb potential outbreaks is an essential supporting strategy for an eventual return to normalcy,” said Matthew McKnight, Ginkgo Bioworks’ Chief Commercial Officer. “To keep schools open, we need low-cost, widespread testing so that we can quickly and easily test every student in America, every week. Pooled testing is a key tool that schools can leverage to give students, teachers and their families the peace of mind that they can return to in-person learning safely, and we’re proud to work with Montclair Public Schools to support that within their community.”

Ginkgo, which launched its pooled testing program in January, previously announced it had been selected to provide testing within other districts including [Baltimore Public Schools](#) and [Massachusetts K-12 schools](#) through a program with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Executive Office of Health and Human Services (EOHHS). Learn more about Concentric by Ginkgo and its ongoing COVID-19 response efforts [here](#).

About Ginkgo Bioworks, Inc.

Headquartered in Boston, Ginkgo uses the most advanced technology on the planet—biology—to grow better products. The company's cell programming platform is enabling the growth of biotechnology across diverse markets, from food to fragrance to pharmaceuticals. Ginkgo is also actively supporting a number of COVID-19 response efforts, including community testing, epidemiological tracing, vaccine development and therapeutics discovery. For more information, visit www.ginkgobioworks.com.

For More Information:

K12@ginkgobioworks.com

Media Contacts:

ginkgobioworks@missionnorth.com

press@ginkgobioworks.com

###