



MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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Superintendent of Schools

July 31, 2020

Dear Families, Caregivers, and Staff,

I write to you this week to expand on points you raised since my last update and provide some new information.

Instruction

As you know we are committed to providing a 100% remote option as well as a Hybrid model that consists of both remote and in-person instruction. Improvements to our remote practice include:

- Standardizing the virtual platform used across all grades in all schools
- Providing live instruction
- Maximizing Instructional minutes in core classes to ensure rigorous, meaningful instruction
- Incorporating time for interventions/support and social emotional check-ins
- Including related arts/electives in instruction, either remotely or in-person

Parent University

We are designing video instruction and virtual meetings for parents with our educational teams to assist parents with the skills needed to successfully help children with their learning. We will include best practice ideas for how to encourage your children, materials that explain what your children should be able to do at a given level, and supportive resources for social and emotional aspects of this experience. We realize that these times are not easy, and we are here to support you and want you to know how to navigate the system to get the help you need. Therefore, this *Parent University* tool will be an online resource with a wealth of supportive materials but will also feature a section to explain how to contact us for further assistance.

Outdoor Spaces

Many of you have asked about using outdoor spaces for teaching and learning. We are exploring this possibility as we, too, feel it can help with social distancing and provide a healthy dose of fresh air while the weather permits.

Health and Safety

All guidelines as set forth by the Center for Disease Control, the Montclair Health Department, and our school physician will be followed. While we return for in-person instruction, the traditional environment will be different due to our enhanced safety and health protocols. These protocols are necessary steps to maintain the health and safety of everyone in our buildings.

Ventilation: We are examining all classrooms to ensure that we meet ventilation requirements to facilitate moving air.

Temperature Checks: Temperatures will be taken upon entering the building. If children exhibit temperatures of 100.4 degrees or more, they will be isolated until their parents/guardians can pick them up.

Masks: Wearing masks is MANDATORY by everyone in the school and must be worn at all times, including in hallways, during class, extracurricular activities, and on school buses. Disposable masks will be supplied by the school district if needed. If a mask is forgotten or lost, a disposable one will be provided for the day. Teachers will work with students in grades K - 3 to provide designated times and specific areas when masks may be removed for snack. Students or staff with a medical issue and a note from their doctor that states they cannot wear a mask, will be granted permission to wear a face shield.

Hand Sanitizer: Students will use hand sanitizer upon entering school and it will be provided in every classroom. Hand-washing breaks will be built in throughout the day and hand soap and paper towels will be available at every sink.

Classroom structure: Every classroom will be designed to maximize space and six feet of social distance between each student. Administrators, in conjunction with the school nurse, will create site-based procedures for restroom usage to allow for social distancing.

Cleaning Products: Custodial staff will disinfect using proper cleaning procedures according to product labeling and manufacturers recommendations.

Transportation

Please encourage your children to stay socially distant at the bus stops. The state guidelines do not call for reduced bus capacity; however, we will make every effort to keep students socially distant. Students will be required to use hand sanitizer upon entering and exiting the bus and must be wearing a mask. We are also planning to take students' temperatures before they board the bus. Busses will be cleaned twice per day, and high touch areas will be wiped down.

Grouping Students for Mounties and Bulldogs Scheduling

All children from the same family (siblings) will go to school on the same day. Families can be moved between groups based upon scheduling needs in particular buildings. We cannot accept requests for grouping beyond siblings.

K-2 In-Person Plan

By Friday of next week we will report details about increased days and hours of in-person instruction time for our K-2 students. We are working on logistics with respect to transportation and adequate social distancing.

Special Education Students

All students in Pre-K through Grade 12 will be tested/evaluated including initial testing and re-evaluations as needed and required by NJ Title 6A of the NJ Administrative Code. The Charles H. Bullock School will be the primary site for testing. Additionally, Pre-K students will be tested in the Pre-K Child Study Team office at Hillside and the Developmental Learning Center (DLC). All safety and sanitizing protocols will be closely followed and monitored.

Students who are in self-contained classes will attend school three to four hours per day five days per week. Pre-K students will attend school five days per week for three hours each day. All other Special Education students who receive services; such as, In-Class Support/Resource Room, will adhere to the

general education schedule to the greatest extent possible.

Students who receive related services (OT/PT, Speech and Counseling) will receive services outside whenever possible or in appropriate spaces to ensure that social distancing requirements are met.

Registration and Enrollment Update

During the next week, in an effort to ensure accurate district enrollment, you will receive email/text/phone communication reminders pertaining to any changes in your address, whether within district or out-of-district. The communication will give you specific instructions on what actions are needed, in either case. This is an annual communication, being sent electronically because of COVID-19.

Start of School for Students/Staff

We have included four days of professional development for teachers at the beginning of September on September 2, 3, 8, and 9. The first days of school for students are as follows:

- September 10 - first day for all students choosing 100% remote
- September 10 - Mounties in-person and Bulldogs remote
- September 11 - Bulldogs in-person and Mounties remote
- Hybrid Schedule for students begins the week of September 14
 - Mounties - Monday and Tuesday for in-person/Thursday and Friday remote
 - Bulldogs - Thursday and Friday for in-person/Monday and Tuesday remote

As you review this information, you may have more questions. We encourage you to email us as we will continue to adjust our plans to refine our protocols. Finally, another survey will be sent at the end of next week to gather information about how many children we can expect to see onsite, use of transportation, instructional questions and more.

Thank you for partnering with us as we work to make this a safe, healthy, and educationally bright experience for all.

Sincerely,
Dr. Jonathan Ponds
Superintendent