

# MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

22 VALLEY ROAD ~ MONTCLAIR, NEW JERSEY 07042

[WWW.MONTCLAIR.K12.NJ.US](http://WWW.MONTCLAIR.K12.NJ.US)

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



---

### Superintendent of Schools

*Weekly Community Message No. 25*

**Jonathan Ponds, Ed.D.**

June 25, 2021

Dear Families, Caregivers and Staff,

We submitted the District's [Safe Return to School Plan](#) to the State on June 24. This is a living document that will change throughout the summer and is based on our **current** State and CDC guidelines. As you will see, this plan calls for a complete return to in-person teaching and learning, full-time, six-hour days, and five days a week. It is broad and general in scope and the District is in the process of creating a structured, tiered approach to formally provide a detailed roadmap for our September return. We are prepared to respond to the impacts that COVID-19 has had on our district, educators, students, and families. Our plan will be designed to ensure a safe return, maximize the benefits of teaching and learning for all students, maximize inclusion for our Special Education students, and incorporate feedback from the Township Task Force. The final plan will include any new health and safety guidelines in place in September.

To accomplish the task of designing a roadmap, the District is forming committees or focus groups that will be composed of teachers, administrators, parents, community members, and other stakeholders. These specialized focus groups will cover specific areas:

- Maintaining Health and Safety
  - Medical
  - Facilities
  - Contact Tracing/Pooled Testing
- Special Services
  - Appropriate accommodations for children with disabilities
- Ensuring Continuity of Services
  - Curriculum and Instruction
  - Professional Development

Social Emotional/Mental Health for students and staff  
Technology  
Food and Wrap Around Services

All of these areas, while having separate scopes and execution details, depend on one another, and the individual committee reports will be combined as a whole. We will provide updates throughout the summer.

### **Summer Food Service**

Breakfast and lunch meals are available throughout the summer at no cost. [See details.](#)

### **Good News**

Four Renaissance 7th graders (Sol Demefack, Hood and Noah Qaim-Maqami and Hunter Shelhorse) have qualified for the Math League Middle School National Championships, supervised by Mark Stulbaum. They will be competing this Saturday, June 26. They were top-scoring students in qualifying rounds who competed in the State Championship, held in March. They advanced to compete in the U.S. National Middle School Championship. Congratulations on this amazing accomplishment and best of luck in the Championship!

This past month was a busy one around the schools and District, and I encourage you to visit our [website homepage](#) to read about the latest exciting happenings including [Juneteenth celebrations](#), [Montclair High School graduation](#), [spring sports wrap up](#), and [Eid becoming an official district holiday](#).

### **2020-21 - Year in Review**

While we were dealing with the pandemic and our home and school lives were turned upside down, the District completed initiatives to enhance the academic and social emotional health of all students. I will present a report at the Board Retreat on July 14, a public meeting, outlining the year in review as well as looking forward. The report will also be posted to our website.

## **REMINDERS**

### **Toasts to the Teachers are Back!**

The Montclair Fund for Educational Excellence is bringing back its annual tradition of honoring teachers and staff members. This year's [Teacher Toasts](#), a time when families and staff gather to celebrate the end of another successful school year and thank our teachers, will feature two different ways to offer tributes. All funds raised will go right back to Montclair classrooms in the form of teacher grants awarded for innovative ideas.

### **Summer Camps**

The Montclair School District is once again offering [Summer Enrichment Camps](#). You will find many of your favorite camps and some new ones as well. We are excited about servicing the community by providing affordable

programs of excellence. Camps run for six weeks, June 28 - August 6 (Monday - Friday). Register online at [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com). We are looking forward to a healthy, happy, and safe summer!

Be sure to visit the [Digital Backpack](#) frequently for more summer opportunities and programs for children and families.

#### **Senior Families - Transfer Google Data**

Google has created a workflow that will allow you to easily transfer any emails in Gmail, documents you own in Google Drive, and documents in My Drive to your personal Gmail account. An [Account Help page](#) explains this process which takes about 10 minutes.

#### **Technology Office - Device Collection**

We will be collecting devices and hot spots from **June 28 through July 2 at Hillside School** entrance door A on Orange Road from **9 AM to 12 PM, 1 to 3 PM and 5 to 7 PM (Tuesday through Thursday only)**. **Please bring your child's device along with the charging cables.**

Please be advised that all **devices and hot spots that are not returned by the last collection date (July 2) will be turned off**. Once again, this excludes all summer school students.

Please utilize our **Technology Support Hotline (301-259-1510)** throughout next week if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you in advance for your cooperation and continued support.

*On behalf of the Board of Education and our District, I thank our families, staff, community members, and my administrative colleagues for your perseverance and strength through this most challenging year. We worked hard, and we have more to accomplish. Let's set our compass together at the true north of, "All kids can learn, and all kids are special," as I know we all are committed to offering the care and support our students need to ensure their success. As children head off to camps, summer school, or other activities, remember to purposely find time to relax and rejuvenate as you deserve it.*

*I will be providing updates on the work of the reopening committee during the summer as needed. For the summer, we will be moving away from these weekly communications to enhance our delivery of pertinent information.*

*Wishing you a joyful, healthy, and safe summer!*

Sincerely,  
Dr. Jonathan Ponds  
Superintendent