



MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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KENDRA V. JOHNSON, J.D., ED. D.
Superintendent of Schools

June 17, 2019

Greetings Montclair Public Schools Families:

As we bring a textured school year to a close, I want to thank the staff, students, parents/guardians and community for coming together in very stressful and tense moments. We have been called to task to stand up and lead through some challenging situations. We have been called to task to reflect upon our actions and assess if they align with who we say we are. We have been called to task to speak truth and not fiction. Accordingly, please review the [2018-19 Montclair Public Schools Successes Document](#). While many can discuss a few textured events that occurred this year, how many can highlight with pride the many, I mean many, phenomenal successes of our students, staff and community? Therefore, I ask that you take some time to read about our wonderful accomplishments and join me in cheering on Montclair Public Schools staff and students.

To this end, please note:

Our amazing educational foundation, MFEE, is organizing its Annual Toast to the Teachers/Educators. Please continue to salute our teachers/educators by participating in the [MFEE Toasts](#).

As so many of our young people are struggling with social emotional problems, we need to keep developing and enhancing processes to assist them by building a strong network of resources and a strong team. This month, I will roll out a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) plan that will commence during the 2019-20 school year. With this work, we will have a host of branding efforts to promote awareness.

- Please see resources for parents/guardians regarding social emotional learning:
 - Screentime:
 - See the attached resource.

- Parent/Guardian Monitoring Options:
 - <https://www.common sense media.org/blog/parents-ultimate-guide-to-parental-controls>
 - <https://www.bark.us/>
- Trauma:
 - <https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthy living/trauma-and-teenagers-tips-for-parents>
- District Resources:
 - [Counseling Corner](#) on the District Website

As a reminder, school administrators are strongly discouraged from making decisions about classroom activities and changes in placement without first connecting parents/guardians with the teacher first. Specifically, if your children report questions about their classroom experience, please discuss with the teacher first. The administrators must ensure they are connecting individuals together who have first-hand information regarding questions.

- For context, school administrators are receiving classroom questions/concerns but parents/guardians have not attempted to address them directly with the teacher. It is important that we encourage and support effective problem-solving strategies.
- Please see the [visual](#) that illustrates how this process works.

Each middle school held class meetings with the Montclair High School Specialty Counselor and our School Resource Officer. The purpose of these conversations was to provide a high level overview of the following:

- The Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying (HIB) policy with an overview of the possible social ramifications of HIB violations.
 - On June 11, 2019, we organized the third HIB training for staff and second for parents/guardians. It is my understanding several parents/guardians who attended presented several personal questions and/or District-related questions.
 - The purpose of these trainings is to ensure the District and parents/guardians operate from the same understanding of the law. We want parents/guardians to know the same information as District staff so we are normed. To that end, we will hold another HIB training for parents/guardians on June 24, 2019 at Hillside School (7:00PM). The District Mental Health Coordinator and I will personally attend this to

ensure parents/guardians understand how HIB law is integrated into the current District HIB policy. Although we will not discuss any particular cases due to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), we will explain how the law and our District policy are aligned.

- The District social media policy with an overview of the possible social ramifications of social media violations.
 - It is absolutely critical that our students understand their responsibility when posting information online. There is social and legal responsibility and accountability regarding what is posted or shared.
- The District's cell phone expectation for middle school students is cell phones should be off and stored while students are in school. Therefore, I respectfully ask parents/guardians to call the school phone if attempting to reach your child during school hours.

In an effort to enhance our collective understanding of equity and social justice, please take a few moments to learn nine important facts about Juneteenth. See the [link](#) to a brief 2016 article.

Community feedback is requested to review two new resources for the Montclair Public Schools community.

- [Dyslexia Handbook](#)
 - Feedback [survey link](#)
- [504 Handbook](#)
 - Feedback [survey link](#)
- District-sponsored wellness efforts for Montclair Public Schools staff members include:
 - An optional after-school professional development on managing stress and living in the moment.
- All K-5 students received water safety training from the Montclair YMCA.
 - Attached is a water safety pledge for students to review with their parents/guardians. Students are encouraged to make the pledge and remain safe in the water (the pledge is for personal use and does not need to be returned to school officials).
- Summer Enrichment and Academic Learning Opportunities include:
 - [District sponsored – Academic](#)
 - [District sponsored – Enrichment](#)
 - [Various community opportunities](#)
- All Superintendent “all district” communications can be found on my [Communications and Collaborations webpage](#).

- As a reminder, attendance expectations are governed by New Jersey state law. Should you have questions, please review the link below. While we are very empathetic to textured situations that impact students' ability to attend school, we must enforce state expectations.
 - [New Jersey Department of Education \(NJDOE\) attendance overview website.](#)

Thank you for your partnership as we continue to work together for the benefit of each student of the Montclair Public School District.

Respectfully,



Kendra Johnson, J.D., Ed.D.

Superintendent

C: Montclair Public Schools staff