



## Montclair Public Schools

*Office of the Superintendent*

May 21, 2020

### **COVID-19 Notification No. 18**

***Reminder: District Closed May 22 and May 25 in observance of Memorial Day***

Dear Families, Caregivers, and Staff,

#### **Memorial Day**

Memorial Day is a sacred day of the year. We must remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice to protect our country and our unique democratic processes. Both of my uncles served in World War II and volunteered their service. Fortunately, they returned with injuries but alive. I worked in VA hospitals, monthly over a six-year period, working with veterans, mostly those who survived the Vietnam War. They told me how many of their friends were not so lucky.

My grandfather's older brother was killed in the Spanish American War. During my second year of teaching, one of my students, who I taught my first year as a teacher, died in Vietnam one year out of high school.

My experience is not unique. I am sure every member of the Montclair community has a family member or friend lost in the numerous conflicts.

**I ask that you take some time over this long weekend to pause and remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice, and also thank living veterans and those currently in harm's way.**

This is especially important this year, since most of the Memorial Day events are canceled.

#### **Expansion of Coronavirus Testing Sites**

Essex County Executive Joseph N. DiVincenzo, Jr. announced that Essex County is expanding its COVID-19 testing initiative to include satellite testing sites throughout the County in addition to continuing to operate its drive through testing center in Weequahic Park. The satellite sites will offer saliva tests and will begin on Thursday, May 21<sup>st</sup>; the Weequahic Park site will continue to offer nasal swab testing. The tests are by appointment only and are being offered to Essex County residents free of charge. To make an appointment, please visit [www.EssexCovid.org](http://www.EssexCovid.org) or call 973-324-9950.

#### **Crisis Counseling**

New Jerseyans feeling the emotional and mental toll of COVID-19 can get support from a special helpline. NJ Mental Health Cares, the state's behavioral health information and referral service, is offering this free, emotional support helpline, **1-866-202-HELP (4357)**, available from 8 am to 8 pm, seven days a week in English and Spanish with live, trained staff. The Mental Health Cares Helpline includes Operation Call Back. Helpline callers are given the opportunity to receive a call back from counselors to receive more crisis counseling services. Visit [Mental Health Association of NJ Hope and Healing Crisis Counseling](http://MentalHealthAssociationofNJ.org) for more information.

Please also remember to contact the school counselors and nurses with emotional issues. Also, your teachers and principals are sources who can be called upon.

### **Food Service**

Please be advised that beginning Tuesday, May 26, Pomptonian will, once again, be offering breakfast/lunch meal distribution at expanded sites.

These sites, **in addition** to Toni's Kitchen (no change to current schedule at Toni's) will be Nishuane, Hillside, Glenfield, and Montclair High School from 11 am to 1 pm, on Mondays and Thursdays. This week due to Memorial Day, there is no service on Monday but rather we will provide breakfast/lunch on Tuesday, May 26 from 11 am to 1 pm and again on Thursday. Toni's Kitchen is providing meals for the holiday weekend on Thursday, May 21.

If you received a survey from us, please know we are in the process of gathering the results, and if needed, we will contact you directly based on your responses.

### **MHS Virtual Graduation**

Yesterday plans were locked down for a virtual graduation. Specifics will be coming out early next week and posted on our website.

Many are disappointed we will not have the traditional graduation ceremony and supporting events. I share your disappointment. My hope is graduation will still be meaningful for our wonderful graduates, families and friends.

We are also working on a few surprises with the Township to help our graduates remember the day.

Please stay tuned!

### **Internet Essentials**

Comcast has announced it will be adjusting Internet Essentials to meet the needs of low-income families during the COVID-19 crisis. The company is putting in place two substantial program enhancements:

It will be easier for low-income families who live in a Comcast service area to sign up by offering new customers 60 days of complimentary Internet Essentials service, which is normally available to all qualified low-income households for \$9.95/month. Also, Internet speeds for the Internet Essentials service will increase from 15/2 Mbps to 25/3 Mbps for all new and existing customers, which will continue going forward. Please visit [www.internetessentials.com](http://www.internetessentials.com) if you are interested in learning more. This is also on the district website.

*Finally, I want to wish you a happy, safe, and healthy Memorial Day weekend. Soon we will be sending you a survey for your input on remote learning, and as we gain your feedback, we will be working to improve services and enhance your experience. The landscape is continually changing and your children's educational opportunities are our priority.*

*Just a reminder there will be no online instruction as the district is closed this Friday and Monday in honor of Memorial Day.*

*Enjoy!*

*Stay well, stay safe and stay connected. We are all in this together, and we will all get through this together!*

***Thank you, Dr. Nathan Parker***