



MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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JONATHAN PONDS, ED. D.

Superintendent of Schools

August 14, 2020

Dear Families, Caregivers, and Staff,

With today's update I will expand on information shared during my Town Hall message and describe in more detail our work plans going forward. I am also including a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document with questions we have been receiving throughout this remote time period.

Additionally, I will be answering your questions that you are sending to reopening@mpsdnj.us. For anyone that was unable to access my Town Hall message, see both [my statement](#) and the [video](#) posted on our website. Please understand that all of our decisions are based on the wellbeing, health, and safety of our students, staff, and community. We appreciate your patience and flexibility during this rapidly changing time.

Ventilation

The district review of standards and guidelines set forth by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) with respect to the proper operation of all HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning) systems throughout the district is complete. We must remediate our facilities to limit the potential spread of the COVID-19 virus. Our engineering professionals have made recommendations to remediate the situation to provide the proper ventilation needed in this COVID-19 climate. Although our schools are adequately ventilated for a typical school year, as I said last evening, this is not a typical time. Some of the steps we will be implementing are purchasing recommended filters where appropriate and applicable, servicing our ventilating systems and increasing air circulation in the school buildings.

As I monitor the remediation work, I will keep you updated as our goal is to bring back students for in-person instruction as soon as it is safe to do so. Our focus is on health and safety, and classroom spaces occupied by students and staff will be designed for proper ventilation, airflow, and social distancing.

K-2 Instruction

Now that we are opening school in a fully remote mode, K-2 students will have a total of 4 hours of live instruction that will consist of 2.5 hours for core subjects with their actual teacher and 1.5 hours of related arts as well as independent work and teacher office hours. We are considering a new platform for virtual instruction that has proven to be engaging for the early learner. More information will be available next week. Our focus is to provide a rich and rigorous experience for our youngest learners.

Special Education

We will have multiple teams performing testing next week. Our estimate is that all Pre-K initial evaluations will be completed by the end of next week. We will continue testing throughout the rest of the summer.

Assignment to the Mounties or Bulldogs

Although we are opening school using the fully virtual model, we will still ask you to complete a survey regarding your choice of 100% virtual or hybrid, to plan for the time when we can offer partial in-person instruction. This survey will be sent through the Parent Access portal during the week of August 17 and assignments will be made during the week of August 24..

Food Service

Meal service for the remainder of the summer will continue at Toni's Kitchen as well as home deliveries. Plans are being developed for the new school year and a survey will be forthcoming on methods of distribution of meals to families who qualify and have an approved Free and Reduced Meals application. Please visit our website to complete the 2020-2021 Free and Reduced Meals application, which must be filed on an annual basis.

Fall Sports

Based on the current environment, fall sports are still a go. We are following the NJSIAA guidelines as well as recommendations from our school physician.

Technology

We want to emphasize that students/families that require a device will have one as well as access to the Internet. If you currently need a device please complete the parent access survey by Monday, August 17 at 11:59 PM. Dates and times will be set up during the week of August 24th to pick up requested devices. We are in the process of working with Comcast to provide low-cost WiFi Internet access for those with NO Internet connectivity.

To enhance teaching and learning in a remote environment, technology will include the incorporation of Google GSUITE Tools and Google Classroom. Google Meet and Zoom will both be made readily available to use during live instruction. The Departments of Equity, Curriculum and Instruction and Technology continue to collaborate with district stakeholders for selecting grade appropriate, curriculum-driven technology resources.

We are aware that there are more questions concerning instruction, schedules, and start times. This information will be available in my next update. Please remember to check out the [FAQ document](#) which is posted on the COVID-19 update page and my Superintendent's communication page. We are continuing to evaluate the needs and resources required by students and staff to provide high-quality instruction in a safe environment.

Sincerely,
Dr. Jonathan Ponds
Superintendent