



MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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JONATHAN PONDS, ED. D.

Superintendent of Schools

October 9, 2020

Dear Families, Caregivers and Staff,

We have heard from many families and all have varying opinions about returning to school or remaining remote. There is no one-size-fits-all for a learning environment during this pandemic. What I can say is that we have structured two models that will meet the needs of those families who want their children to return to the classroom and those wishing to stay fully remote. The hybrid plan is for those students who will be returning to in-person classes for a half day with the remainder of the day remote. For our fully remote learners we will continue with live instruction and work to enhance our engagement with students.

Please note that my communications are posted on the [district website](#). These communications along with other parts of the website can be translated into your preferred language. To change the language, click in the top bar of the website above the blue logo using the arrows next to the word "Language."



Special Education - ABA Plan

Our ABA students are scheduled to return for in-person learning on October 15 at the Charles H. Bullock School. We are mandated by the New Jersey Department of Education to provide an in-person model. Our facility and safety plan at Bullock has been reviewed by the Montclair Department of Health and our internal medical team as we take the safety of our students and staff seriously. All parents/guardians of students in our ABA program have been called by case workers and administration to review the plans and ascertain whether or not they wish their children to return to school.

Hybrid Plan

Parents can expect to receive the reopening hybrid plan early next week along with a survey asking if they want to remain totally remote or return to school. The hybrid plan encompasses both in-person

and remote learning. This plan will contain details regarding schedules, start and end times, academics, and all safety protocols. We are on target for reopening in-person for the week of November 1. Please be sure to carefully review the plan before completing the survey so that you may make an informed decision about your children's continuation of learning. Your responses to the survey will allow us to plan effectively for students who will remain fully remote and those who will attend school following the hybrid plan.

We are mandated by the New Jersey Department of Education to provide an in-person model. Be assured that all decisions regarding the return of students to the classroom are made in consultation with our district medical team.

Health and Wellness

Our school nurse at Northeast, Patricia Lozito, organized a flu shot clinic for staff this past Wednesday. Fifty-four staff members, including me, braved the wind and rolled up our sleeves to get the shot.

Children and Masks

When it comes to teaching your child how to effectively put on and take off a face mask, a few pointers can go a long way. As we get closer to our return for in-person learning, take a moment to walk your children through the following steps to keep them and others safe.

1. Have your children **wash their hands** before they pick up their mask. This will prevent germs from getting on the mask and near your child's eyes, nose and mouth.
2. Once your children's hands are clean, have them **grab the mask by its ear loops or ties** and put it on without touching the part that covers their mouth and nose. The mask should fit snugly.
3. Some children may be tempted to play or fidget with their mask. Remind them that while they're wearing a mask **it's important not to touch it**. The outside of the mask could have germs on it.
4. When it's time for your children to take off their mask, have them use the ear loops or ties to remove it. Then, still holding the mask by its ear loops or ties, **show them how to fold the mask in half** with the inside parts touching each other and set it on a napkin or tissue to keep it clean.
5. After the mask is off, remind your children to **clean their hands**.

You may want to watch this quick [video](#) with your younger children which shows the five steps above.

English Language Learners - Technology Support

The district is offering in-person, outdoor technology support for families of English Language Learners next week. For details see the flyers in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). Please be sure to bring your child's device with you.

Facilities

We are making excellent progress in terms of remediation to our HVAC systems and schools will be ready for a November 1 reopening. Currently the Charles H. Bullock School meets the requirements set forth in the Centers for Disease Control with respect to ventilation. Both internal buildings and grounds staff and outside contractors are repairing and installing necessary parts and equipment to address our

air systems throughout the district. Air purification systems are being installed where necessary to increase air flow.

At our next Board Meeting, October 19, our engineering firm, EI Associates, and our Buildings and Grounds Director, Anthony Bispo, will present on the progress of our facilities throughout the district.

Technology

In my last update I mentioned the schools that would have Safe Check walkthrough temperature monitoring kiosks and omitted Bradford because it was not yet installed. Today I am happy to announce that not only is Bradford included but we have ordered two more kiosks, one each for Edgemont and Renaissance. Now all the schools in the district will be equipped with these devices. These units are capable of reading up to 70 staff and student temperatures per minute.

We continue to distribute devices and hot spots to our students and families in need. Anyone who is having technical difficulty should contact our Technology Support Line at 301-259-1510, Monday through Friday from 8 am to 3 pm.

Devices are distributed from Hillside School every Tuesday during the hours of 9 am to 12 pm. Please place your technology request with your children's school.

When students return for in-person learning and need transportation, we will have a new, expanded service ready for our high school students. The district announced it will offer expanded busing to Montclair High School students who reside between 2.25 miles and 2.5 miles away from the school at its October 7 Board of Education meeting. The district will be revising its current busing policy which only allows for students who live 2.5 miles away to be eligible for transportation.

Families have been appealing to the district to add additional service, citing an inequity among residential areas in the township. Despite not meeting the minimum distance requirement for busing, the south end is still close to an hour-long walk to the High School. Through the efforts of the transportation subcommittee, New Jersey Transit, and our transportation department, we were able to restructure routes for more efficiency and meet the 2.25 parameter at no additional cost to the district and its families.

Sincerely,
Dr. Jonathan Ponds
Superintendent

All Kids can Learn ~ All Kids are Special