

# 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**

**Jonathan Ponds, Ed.D.**

September 24, 2021

Dear Families, Caregivers and Staff,

I've been visiting schools every day, and I see the power of in-person instruction. People feel good, students are smiling, staff is working together, and it is so important that we continue our multi-layered mitigating strategies to keep us in the schools.

In particular, please see below for further details.

### **Pooled Testing**

We will be testing once a week at every school. The results will come back within 48 hours. If a positive test is found, those students/staff in the pool will be notified and individualized COVID testing will be performed for them by Ginkgo Bioworks following all necessary safety protocols. At no time will students be intermingling during this individual testing period.

When a positive case is identified, we will follow our routine contact tracing and notifications will be done.

Please review a [general video](#) and one from [Baltimore City Schools](#) showing how testing works. **Health and safety are of paramount importance.**

### **Travel Guidance**

The [Road Forward](#) explains the CDC recommendations for traveling and subsequent quarantine:

*While there is no statewide travel advisory or mandate in place at this time, schools are encouraged to have a policy for exclusion for students and staff that is consistent with CDC COVID-19 travel recommendations. The CDC recommends that travel be delayed for those who are not fully vaccinated. If travel cannot be delayed, domestic and international travelers who are not fully vaccinated should get tested with a viral test 3-5 days after travel AND stay home and self-quarantine for a full 7 days after travel, even if they test negative. If testing is not completed post-travel, individuals should self-quarantine for 10 days. International travelers who are fully vaccinated should also get tested with a viral test 3-5 days after travel, self-monitor for symptoms, and isolate and get tested if symptoms develop. For those traveling to/from New Jersey, domestic travel is defined as lasting 24 hours or longer to states or U.S.*

*territories other than those connected to New Jersey, such as Pennsylvania, New York, and Delaware.*

**What does this travel guidance mean for you and how is the district handling it?**

If your children are not fully vaccinated, they should be tested within three to five days of return and quarantine for seven days, even with a negative test. Without a test, the quarantine period increases to 10 days.

As mentioned at my Town Hall in August, let's continue to partner and keep our students safe. Please follow the CDC recommendations and delay unessential travel. If you cannot delay travel for unforeseen circumstances; for instance, a funeral, we will provide virtual instruction during quarantine. If your travel does not meet a significant need, virtual learning will not be available. I know this is a strong statement, but during this global pandemic, I'm asking you to curtail non-essential travel to the greatest extent possible. We will look at holiday travel and advise you of our stance by the end of October.

**Notifications about COVID-19 Cases**

If there is a positive case of COVID in your school, the principal emails a letter to the entire school community, and if you are identified as a close contact, you will receive an additional letter. At this time we have only seen a very low number of cases, well under 10. You've been outstanding in helping us mitigate the virus!

**Special Education**

Our focus has been on evaluating students for compensatory education needs. All related service providers (OTs, PTs and SLPs) have finished reviewing their logs from last year and have determined the number of missed sessions to be made up during this school year. Baseline academic assessments are in progress. Once these assessments are complete, we will be reconvening IEP team meetings to coordinate a compensatory academic remediation plan that takes into account both the related services and the academic learning loss.

**Student Accomplishments**

Three Montclair High School students were [named semifinalists](#) in the 67th annual National Merit Scholarship Program: **Anna Bauer, Justin Kingsnorth** and **Caleb Levine**. These academically talented seniors have an opportunity to continue in the competition. Congratulations!

*Back to school nights are taking place virtually, and we hope that you take advantage of meeting teachers and hearing about the year; this year from the comfort of your homes.*

Sincerely,  
Dr. Jonathan Ponds  
Superintendent