

# MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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### Superintendent of Schools

*Community Message SY 21-22 No. 5*

**Jonathan Ponds, Ed.D.**

October 8, 2021

Dear Parents, Caregivers and Staff,

October is full of fun, fall events. As I visit schools and attend activities, I am also taking note of the social emotional climate. Feeling safe and knowing you have people who support you can be pivotal in improving our climate, uplifting morale and even improving academic achievement. Building a socially stable environment takes time and planning, and this is a districtwide effort. Listen to the district's [latest podcast](#) with Assistant Superintendent for Equity, Curriculum and Instruction Kalisha Morgan, Nishuane Assistant Principal Jazmyn Allen, and Bradford Counselor Marcy Goff to learn how they are taking steps to create classrooms that are caring and inclusive, fostering positive relationships and connections, and intentionally embedding these practices into the academic curriculum.

This week our students enjoyed being out in the fresh air on [Bike and Walk to School Day](#), and they've been taking part in activities for the Week of Respect. We celebrate cultures from around the world this month too, including Filipino-American, Italian-American, Polish-American and Indigenous Peoples' Day on October 11. When we encourage all children to embrace the perspectives of all cultures, we enrich the learning experience for all.

### Pooled Testing Update

**Ginkgo Bioworks is a state-approved vendor.** We received an article today published in *Biospace* regarding them. Ginkgo Bioworks did pool testing with us last year, and we were pleased with the service. **Out of abundance of caution, we are going to pause our pool testing for next week.** I have been in contact with the company regarding the article, and they are writing us a response with regards to this. I will share their response with you as soon as it becomes available. We were excited to start pool testing next week, we have six nurses on board to help administer this testing when we begin. To reiterate, the pause is happening out of an abundance of caution.

**Reminder: Schools are closed on Monday, October 11.** Teachers and administrators will be taking part in professional development.

*Enjoy the weekend and cheer on our boys and girls varsity soccer teams playing at home Saturday in the quarterfinals of the Essex County Tournament. Go Mounties!*

Sincerely,  
Dr. Jonathan Ponds  
Superintendent