

MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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Superintendent of Schools

Weekly Community Message No. 9

Jonathan Ponds, Ed.D.

February 12, 2021

Dear Families, Caregivers and Staff,

Spirits are high despite the wintery, snowy storms. I have seen principals' newsletters and there are many fun activities happening throughout the district. Bullock is hosting a virtual family dance party with a DJ and glow sticks, and schools are hosting Zoom Valentine's Day crafting events, just to name a few.

And, I'm so pleased that our amazing teachers continue to find ways to provide our students with opportunities to express themselves and their art. This week, I am sharing how Glenfield teachers have put together [7th and 8th grade CI movement exploration](#) and [7th and 8th grade advanced intermediate](#) virtual dance showcases. This work demonstrates creativity, commitment and grit. Additionally, Buzz's first virtual winter dance showcase, "Dancing Together While Apart," premieres tonight at 7 PM on [YouTube](#). I hope you enjoy these works.

Last week, the district engaged in its first Black Lives Matter in School Week of Action. On Friday, Feb. 5, the week culminated with educators around the district wearing black or Black Lives Matter shirts. All schools participated in various activities. At Nishuane students learned to be little activists. [Read more](#) and watch Nishuane's [compilation video](#) of highlights, pictures of artwork and music.

While our students continue to rise to the virtual learning challenge, we at Central Office continue to prepare for a safe return to in-person learning. Every day Personnel Director Damen Cooper and I visit three schools and check the buildings with head custodians. We open windows, check ventilation, inspect dampers, and look at classroom set ups in order to be certain that we maintain all the protocols put in place to ensure we are ready to open.

Please see some district updates below:

Update on Delayed In-Person Instruction

The Court did not order the temporary injunction requested by the Montclair Public School District required to immediately reopen schools to in-person instruction. The Montclair Education Association was ordered by the court to respond by March 1. The district is to reply by March 5. The matter is scheduled to be heard in-person by the Court on March 9. The district intends to proceed accordingly. We continue our mediation and open dialogue with the Montclair Education Association even though this is a legal matter.

Chinese New Year

Mandarin teachers planned celebrations and lessons to commemorate today, Feb. 12, the beginning of Chinese New Year, Year of the Ox. Nishuane is having a family festival tonight and Hillside is infusing Chinese New Year traditions and customs into some social emotional lessons. At the high school students are working on photo essays, and performing musical pieces based on a 1000-yr old poem. We will feature pictures on the website later next week. Celebrating cultures from around the world is very important to us.

Registration

Registration for the 2021-22 school year will begin on February 15. For more information on documents required to register, please visit our [website](#). All registration events will remain virtual for the 2021-22 school year.

Parents registering students for NEXT school year should register online and pick one of the available appointment dates. In our secure registration portal, four required documents which include your child's birth certificate, proof of residency (a current lease or your closing documents), any school records you have for your child, medical records and physical examination will need to be uploaded.

When the online registration forms have been filled out and all required records are uploaded, a prompt will ask you to select an appointment date and time to finalize your registration. At the selected time you will receive a call from the Registration Office to complete the process.

Principal Appointments

The candidate for Edgemont principal will be recommended to the Board at its February 17 meeting. We continue with the Bradford principal search. The district recognizes the important role of a principal in providing leadership, especially instructional leadership, for the school community, and we look forward to welcoming our new leaders.

Technology

The Technology Department is asking all families who are using personal devices to utilize their Google Chrome Browser when participating in virtual learning. Our district has invested in many online tools

and various applications that work best with the Chrome browser. Please call our Technology Support Line, **301-259-1510**, should you require any assistance. Lastly, please contact your child's building administrator if you are in need of a device.

A Message from the Montclair Scholarship Fund (MSF)

The **Montclair Scholarship Fund (MSF)** awards scholarships to MHS college-bound seniors with financial need. After dreaming big for four years, students find themselves priced out of the higher education opportunities they have worked so hard to achieve. The MSF expects to receive an increased number of applications for scholarships in the wake of the economic strife of the pandemic. If you are able, your contribution to the fund would be incredibly valuable as it helps to fund a need-based scholarship for our most vulnerable and deserving students. Donations may be made online at www.montclairscholarshipfund.org. No amount is too small.

Community Tutoring

Succeed2gether is holding a virtual information session to share details about its current and upcoming free programs, including one-on-one tutoring sessions, after-school enrichment programs, parent workshops, and college essay writing program. For questions or more information email info@succeed2gether.org or call 973-746-0553. [Register](#) to join the Zoom.

Reminder: If you or a family member needs to be tested for COVID-19, the YMCA is offering [free COVID testing](#) at its Park St. facility.

The district will be closed Monday, February 15, for Presidents' Day. Enjoy your long weekend!

Sincerely,
Dr. Jonathan Ponds
Superintendent

