

MONTCLAIR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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Superintendent of Schools

Community Message SY 21-22 No. 20

Jonathan Ponds, Ed.D.

May 6, 2022

Dear Parents/Guardians and Staff,

Seeing the students enjoying the spring weather on the playgrounds is a delight, and besides the simple pleasures of spring weather, May brings us much to celebrate. We acknowledge our teachers this month and coming soon our nurses on May 11 for National School Nurse Day. May marks Jewish American Heritage Month, and we pay tribute to the generations of Jewish Americans who helped form the fabric of American history, culture and society. It is also Asian-American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Month. Our students will be engaging in activities such as assemblies, projects and more highlighting contributions of our AAPI community. We encourage families to learn about our [AAPI community](#) and attend one of the exciting [upcoming events](#) including the [Lantern Festival for Justice and Remembrance](#), May 20.

Cultural responsiveness is an integral part of our school district's philosophy. Recently, at Bradford, students were involved in creating a culturally responsive library.

All 25 applications for the community investment/bond referendum were submitted to the NJDOE this month. This is the first step in the official process before the investment is put before voters in November. The NJDOE will inform the district in 90 days or less as to how much state funding we will receive.

Recent COVID-19 Uptick

This past week, the High School, Buzz Aldrin Middle School and Hillside and Watchung Elementary Schools experienced an uptick in COVID-19 cases. When that happens, the school notifies the district lead nurse who in turn consults with the Montclair Health Department as recommended by the [New Jersey Health Department latest guidelines](#). In consultation with the Montclair Health Department, it is decided whether universal masking or masking in affected classrooms for a short-term, 10-day period, will be necessary. Both the High School and Buzz had full school, 10-day masking implemented and Watchung and Hillside each had one classroom masked this week. We are hopeful that with the warmer weather on the horizon, our students, staff and families will remain healthy.

Good News!

The Essex County Superintendents hosted their 34th Annual Academic Awards Banquet on May 4, and I am proud

to announce that Montclair High School seniors Caleb Levine and Tobia Ruth were honored for their prestigious accomplishment of having the top two GPAs in the Class of 2022.

The district extends congratulations to Charles H. Bullock School third grade teacher Stephanie Lavail, on being the recipient of the Fran Greb Memorial Award from Montclair State University's College of Education and Human Services. The award recognizes the outstanding contributions made by cooperating teachers or adjunct clinical faculty who have made a positive impact on early childhood/elementary pre-service teacher preparation.

Last November we entered a partnership with the Montclair PTA Council (PTAC) and the Montclair Education Association to promote an opportunity for our students to participate for the first time in the National PTA's Reflections Arts Program. It is so important to encourage students to express themselves through the arts. We look forward to continuing to support the PTAC's endeavors, especially with this program as it grows and expands. Thank you again to the PTAC for coordinating this contest and congratulations to all the students who participated.

Community Events

We are always happy to support community events and would like to share just some of the local happenings around Montclair this month. Mark your calendars!

Montclair High School Girls Lacrosse, May 7 – Cheer on the Mounties as they take on #1 seed West Essex in the Essex County Tournament Championship game at Verona High School tomorrow at 4:30 pm. There is a \$5.00 general admission fee for adults and \$2.00 for senior citizens and students.

[Succeed2gether's Montclair Literary Festival](#), **through May 9** – More than 70 local, national and international authors attending with over 30 book talks, panel discussions, children's events, creative writing readings, and workshops. All proceeds from the festival go to support Succeed2gether, a Montclair-based non-profit which offers free after-school tutoring and enrichment classes, summer classes, and a pathway to college.

[Montclair Scholarship Fund's Shop Local Montclair](#), **May 14** – Shop local at these retailers, and a portion of sales goes directly to Montclair Scholarship Fund to help support the MHS Class of 2022 recipients. 100% of donations fund scholarships for Montclair High School college-bound seniors with financial need.

[Nishuane's Community Mayfair](#), **May 14** – All are welcome at this fun event featuring bouncy houses, arts and crafts, games and delicious food from local favorites.

Enjoy the weekend and Happy Mother's Day!

Sincerely,
Dr. Jonathan Ponds
Superintendent