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Montclair Group Calls For Families To Have Options for In-Person and Remote Schooling

Baristanet Staff January 19, 2021



Group says Montclair Public Schools, like Edgemont School, have been closed since March 2020.

The [Montclair Education Association](#) and the [New Jersey Education Association](#) have both called for the continuation of remote learning for Montclair Public Schools, citing safety concerns due to increasing COVID-19 cases.

Another group, called the Concerned Parents and Community Members of Montclair, NJ, is asking for schools to be open. In a [petition](#), the group calls for Montclair Schools Superintendent Dr. Jonathan Ponds, Montclair Board of Education members, Montclair Mayor Sean Spiller and Governor Phil. Murphy to offer Montclair families options for both in-person and remote schooling.

Keeping students and teachers safe. We support parents' decisions on whether the hybrid plan is right for them or whether they choose to remain virtual. This petition is in response to the letter campaign released by the MEA and NJEA on The Action Network on 1/17/21.

The return to hybrid date in Montclair has been moved so many times since August 2020 that parents have lost count. Children in Montclair have not attended school in-person since schools closed on March 16, 2020. Specific metrics have never been released regarding the rates of infection and case numbers that are deemed to be too high for beginning in-person instruction. In-person indoor winter sports have resumed already in the Montclair Public School buildings with a few more sports to resume practice soon. According to the American Academy of Pediatrics continues to advocate for in-person learning to be made available to children and shared in their statement on 1/5/2021 "Children absolutely need to return to in-school learning for their healthy development and well-being, and so safety in schools and in the community must be a priority," AAP President Lee Savio Beers, M.D., FAAP, said in this news release. "We know that some children are really suffering without the support of in-person classroom experiences or adequate technology at home." AAP elaborated that "the guidance presents new research findings that schools have not been a significant driver of SARS-CoV-2 transmission in their communities when they take safety precautions. Transmission has been especially low among younger children. Schools should use science and data to make decisions about conducting classes in person and provide layers of protection for students, teachers, and staff. Those include requiring everyone 2 years and older (with limited medical exceptions) to wear cloth face coverings, enforcing physical distancing and improving air circulation." The full AAP news release can be found at: <https://www.aappublications.org/news/2021/01/05/covid-school-safety-010521>

According to Dr. Ponds email update on 1/15/21 "We continue to prepare our staff and schools for a safe return to in-person, hybrid learning. our Engineering Consultants have inspected and approved all modifications to our ventilation systems."

The MEA letter incorrectly states that positive cases of Covid-19 in Montclair are increasing daily by triple digits. In fact, positive cases of Covid-19 in Montclair have increased by an average of 13 cases per day in the last week. During the month of December Montclair saw 338 new cases altogether and in January there have been 219 cases as of 1/17/21. Data can be found at: https://www.montclairnjusa.org/news/headlines/novel_coronavirus_news.

Please take a moment today to sign your name to this petition to send a message to Dr. Ponds and the Montclair Board of Education, to thank him and the BOE for putting our children's educational needs first. Please urge Dr. Ponds and the Board to stay the course and implement the hybrid education in Montclair schools as planned for 1/25/2021. Our children have waited long enough and their education, mental and physical health are suffering by indefinitely extending the virtual instruction plan until all teachers can be offered vaccination as requested by the Montclair Education Association.

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FACT:

The Montclair Education Association is the inclusive union representing more than 1,000 Montclair Public School District employees, including teachers, paraprofessionals, nurses, secretaries, operational aides, certified support staff, custodians, and buildings and grounds staff.

When we talk about a safe return it includes all of these individuals.

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1 COMMENT



sickntired January 19, 2021 At 10:30 am

Couldn't agree more! It needs to be about the children, not the teachers union.

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