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THE DESILVA TEAM · NORTHERN NEW JERSEY

Montclair: schools and commute

How school placement actually works, and what the timetables say

INSIDE

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First edition · November 11, 2026

Montclair Township, Essex County

Market evidence

12 months of closings, October 2025 through September 2026

247 closed single-family sales

Source

GSMLS closed sales, aggregates only

Tax figures: NJ Division of Taxation

1 Schools, and how placement actually works

Montclair does not work like most New Jersey districts. It runs a magnet system built on family choice, which means a house does not come with a school attached.

Montclair Public Schools has operated a choice-based magnet system since 1977, adopted as a voluntary desegregation plan. The district states two goals for it: maintaining racial balance across its schools, and giving families a choice of school theme. Families apply through the district rather than being assigned by street address.

For a buyer, that is the thing to understand before choosing a street: unlike a town with fixed attendance zones, buying on a particular block does not secure a particular elementary or middle school. Placement depends on the application, available seats and the district's balance rules. Montclair High School is the exception — it is the township's only public high school, so it is not a school of choice.

The elementary magnet themes

The district's magnet elementary schools are organized around themes, which is what families choose between: science and technology, university studies, environmental studies, the arts, and global studies. Which school carries which theme, and which have seats in a given grade, should be confirmed with the district for the year you are enrolling.

VERIFIED FACT — THEME LIST; THIS GUIDE DOES NOT MAP THEMES TO SCHOOLS *checked November 11, 2026* Montclair Public Schools, magnet system FAQ (theme list)

The seven elementary schools

Bradford
https://bradford.montclairps.org/

Charles H. Bullock
https://chb.montclairps.org/

Edgemont Montessori
https://edgemont.montclairps.org/

Hillside
https://hillside.montclairps.org/

Nishuane
https://nishuane.montclairps.org/

Northeast
https://northeast.montclairps.org/

Watchung
https://watchung.montclairps.org/

Those are the seven elementary schools the district currently lists, checked November 11, 2026. Grade spans and which theme each one carries should come from the school's own page or the district office rather than from this guide — and remember that a nearby school is not an assigned school here.

One dated performance snapshot

Spring 2025 NJSLA mathematics, share of students meeting or exceeding expectations — grade 3: district 73.0% against the state's 49.7%; grade 4: district 66.4% against 46.7%; grade 5: district 64.6% against 44.2%.

OFFICIAL DISTRICT RECORD — SPRING 2025 TESTING, PUBLISHED FEBRUARY 2026 *checked November 11, 2026* Montclair Public Schools, Board of Education workshop packet of February 9, 2026, slide "Spring 2025 Math NJSLA Data Recap"

Read those three rows for exactly what they are. They are district-wide mathematics results for three grades from Spring 2025 testing, presented in a February 2026 board packet. The slide does not give the number of students tested or the participation rate, so those denominators are not known from this source. They are not an individual school's results, not a ranking, not the 2026 assessment, and not a prediction for any particular child.

LIMITATION *checked November 11, 2026* Limitations of the cited slide, as published

For results by individual school, by subject and by grade, including participation and subgroup detail, use the state's own School Performance Reports rather than a summary slide.

WHERE TO GO NEXT *checked November 11, 2026* NJ Department of Education, School Performance Reports

District structure, as currently published

The district's current school navigation lists Buzz Aldrin and Glenfield as its middle schools, plus Montclair Early Learning Academy for early grades.

VERIFIED FACT *checked November 11, 2026* Montclair Public Schools, district site school list

Montclair High School is the township's only public high school, and for that reason is not a school of choice.

VERIFIED FACT *checked November 11, 2026* Montclair Public Schools, magnet system FAQ

Montclair Early Learning Academy operates as its own school with its own site and calendar; its published calendar shows a back-to-school night on September 10, 2026.

VERIFIED FACT *checked November 11, 2026* Montclair Early Learning Academy

A transfer between schools after placement runs through a separate Freedom of Choice Application. The district's magnet FAQ describes filing it with the Central Office by May 1, and says transfers are granted only where space exists and balance can be maintained. That FAQ page carries no date, so treat the deadline as the shape of the process rather than as this year's calendar — confirm the applicable year's transfer window with the district.

PROCESS, FROM AN UNDATED PAGE — CONFIRM THE CURRENT WINDOW *checked November 11, 2026* Montclair Public Schools, magnet system FAQ (undated page)

Two legacy district pages are out of date — use the current school list

The district's current navigation lists Buzz Aldrin and Glenfield as its middle schools, plus Montclair Early Learning Academy. Two older district pages have not caught up with it: the magnet FAQ still describes three middle school magnets, and the feeder-pattern page still shows a feeder running to Renaissance, which reporting dated March 18, 2026 describes as closed and reassigned to pre-K use.

The current school list is the one to work from; it is the legacy pages that are stale. We are not reproducing the feeder graphic as an assignment map. The practical consequence is a rule rather than a fact about any school: in Montclair, the reliable answer about which school a child will attend comes from the district office, for that child's grade and that school year. A listing description, a reputation or a published feeder chart is not an answer.

Montclair Public Schools, current school list · Montclair Public Schools, school feeder pattern page (graphic; shows a stale feeder) · Montclair Public Schools, magnet system FAQ (undated; states three middle magnets) · Montclair Public Schools, board reports

Verifying enrollment for a specific address and child

The district's registration page sets out the process. These are the steps it describes, in order.

1. Complete the district's online registration application.
2. Prepare the documents the district requires: proof of the child's age, proof of residency, and the required medical records.
3. Expect a follow-up phone appointment with the district as part of registration.
4. Ask the district directly which school the child would attend for the specific grade and the specific school year. Do not infer it from a feeder chart, a nearby school, or a listing's description.
5. If a particular school matters to the decision, ask the district about current seat availability in that grade before the house decision is final, and ask how the Freedom of Choice transfer process would apply.

The district's 2026-27 tour and registration link resolves to a downloadable document rather than a web page, and its contents are not verified here.

Montclair Public Schools, registration

No composite score

This guide gives the district's structure, how placement works, and one dated performance snapshot with its limits stated. It does not reduce those to a single school-quality number or rank Montclair's schools against each other or another town's. The worksheet at the end lets you weigh schools against commute and budget using your own priorities.

2 Getting to Manhattan

Six stations inside the township, a rail trip that currently ends in Hoboken, and a bus that runs straight to Port Authority.

Weekday service is mid-cutover on this edition's date

NJ Transit is running Portal Bridge Cutover schedules on the Montclair-Boonton Line from October 11 through November 14, 2026, with new timetables effective November 15, 2026. This guide was written on November 11, 2026, inside the temporary period.

On the temporary weekday timetable the line's eastern terminal is Hoboken — which is in New Jersey, not Manhattan — and Manhattan is reached from there by PATH to World Trade Center or 33rd Street. That weekday timetable has no New York Penn Station column at all. The weekday timetable effective November 15 restores one, with direct Midtown Direct service. So a Montclair weekday commute described as "one seat to Penn Station" is not what is operating as this edition is written, and is what is scheduled from November 15.

This applies to weekdays. Weekend service works differently in both periods — see below.

NJ Transit, rail timetables index · NJ Transit, Portal Bridge cutover advisory · Montclair-Boonton weekday timetable, effective 10/11/26 to 11/14/26 only · Montclair-Boonton weekday timetable, effective November 15, 2026

The stations

Six Montclair-Boonton Line stations sit inside Montclair Township, in timetable order toward Hoboken: Montclair Heights, Mountain Avenue, Upper Montclair, Watchung Avenue, Walnut Street and Bay Street. Montclair State University station is the next stop up the line and carries the university's name, but it is in Little Falls — a useful nearby option, not a township station. In the other direction, Glen Ridge and Bloomfield are in their own municipalities.

VERIFIED FACT — THE TIMETABLE ESTABLISHES THE STOP ORDER, THE MUNICIPAL SOURCES ESTABLISH WHICH TOWN EACH STOP IS IN

checked November 11, 2026 Township of Montclair, Getting to Montclair by Train or Bus; NJ Transit station page for Montclair State University

Which station a house is near changes the ride length materially. On the timetable effective November 15, train 6206 is scheduled to leave Upper Montclair at 6:47 a.m. and Bay Street at 6:57 a.m., reaching New York Penn Station at 7:32 a.m. — a scheduled 45 minutes from Upper Montclair and 35 from Bay Street on that train.

VERIFIED FACT — ONE TRAIN, NOT A RANGE *checked November 11, 2026* Montclair-Boonton weekday timetable effective November 15, 2026, train 6206; cells independently verified against the rendered timetable page

Later peak trains run longer. On the same timetable, train 6210 leaves Upper Montclair at 7:25 a.m. and Bay Street at 7:35 a.m., reaching New York Penn Station at 8:18 a.m. — a scheduled 53 minutes from Upper Montclair and 43 from Bay Street.

VERIFIED FACT — ONE TRAIN, NOT A RANGE *checked November 11, 2026* Montclair-Boonton weekday timetable effective November 15, 2026, train 6210; cells independently verified against the rendered timetable page

Under the temporary cutover schedule the trip is a transfer, not a direct ride. Train 6206 on the 10/11–11/14 timetable leaves Bay Street at 7:09 a.m. and reaches Hoboken at 7:41 a.m.; the timetable's connecting PATH service departs 7:48 a.m. and reaches 33rd Street at 8:03 a.m. — 54 scheduled minutes from Bay Street to 33rd Street, including the transfer.

VERIFIED FACT — ONE TRAIN, NOT A RANGE *checked November 11, 2026* Montclair-Boonton weekday timetable effective 10/11/26 to 11/14/26, train 6206 with the timetable's PATH connection; cells independently verified against the rendered timetable page

Scheduled station-to-terminal is not door-to-door

Every figure above is a scheduled time from a station platform to a terminal, read off an official timetable. It is not a measured journey and it is not a door-to-door commute.

A real morning also includes getting to the station, parking or being dropped off, waiting for the train, the walk or subway ride from the terminal to the office, and whatever the day's operations do to the schedule. Those minutes are specific to an address and a destination, and they are the part worth working through before choosing a street. Nothing here is a statement about on-time performance or reliability.

The bus, and the backup

NJ Transit's own alternate-service plan for the Montclair-Boonton Line names bus route 101 from Montclair to Port Authority Bus Terminal. That makes 101 the practical backup when rail service is disrupted, and a direct option to Midtown that does not involve a transfer at Hoboken.

VERIFIED FACT *checked November 11, 2026* NJ Transit, Montclair-Boonton Line alternate service plan

Route 101 runs weekdays only — the timetable states no Saturday or Sunday service. Its Montclair stops include Park Street at Bloomfield Avenue and, at Upper Montclair railroad station, Bellevue Plaza on Bellevue Avenue, so for parts of the township the bus stop is closer than the train station. As one scheduled example, a 6:42 a.m. departure from Upper Montclair is timetabled into Port Authority at 7:27 a.m. — 45 scheduled minutes, not a measured or door-to-door time.

VERIFIED FACT — ISSUE DATE READ FROM THE TIMETABLE ITSELF *checked November 11, 2026* NJ Transit, route 101 timetable and map, issue marked T0101 - 7/26

Weekends are a different railroad

On weekends, regular Montclair-Boonton service stops at Bay Street only within Montclair. The five other township stations are not served by the regular weekend trains, so a weekend trip from Upper Montclair or Watchung Avenue means getting to Bay Street first. This is the single most useful weekend fact for choosing a street.

VERIFIED FACT *checked November 11, 2026* NJ Transit, Montclair-Boonton weekend timetables (10/11–11/14 and effective November 15, 2026)

Weekend trains run to Hoboken. New York Penn Station is reached by changing at Newark Broad Street, not by a direct train. On the current weekend timetable a Bay Street 8:31 a.m. departure reaches Newark Broad Street at 8:44, where the connecting train leaves at 8:50 and arrives Penn at 9:13. On the timetable effective November 15 the same pattern holds — for example Bay Street 7:00 to Broad Street 7:13, connecting 7:16 and arriving Penn 7:39.

VERIFIED FACT — SCHEDULED CONNECTIONS, NOT DOOR-TO-DOOR OR RELIABILITY *checked November 11, 2026* NJ Transit, Montclair-Boonton weekend timetables, current and effective November 15, 2026

One reading trap on the timetable effective November 15: the columns printed in brown are extra holiday service for November 27, 2026, January 18, 2027 and February 15, 2027 only, and those do include the upper Montclair stations. They are not normal weekend service and should not be read as such.

VERIFIED FACT *checked November 11, 2026* NJ Transit, Montclair-Boonton weekend timetable effective November 15, 2026

Checking a commute properly

What to do rather than trusting a town-level average.

1. Name the actual Manhattan destination and the arrival time that matters, then read the timetable backwards from it.
2. Check the timetable that will be in effect when the move happens, not the one in effect today — on this edition's date those are two different documents.
3. Check the return trip as well as the morning. Evening frequency and the last usable train often decide whether a commute is livable.
4. Check weekend and off-peak service separately, on the weekend timetable rather than the weekday one — and remember that regular weekend trains serve Bay Street only.
5. Walk or drive from the specific house to the specific station at the specific hour. Station access, parking availability and the local street pattern vary block by block.
6. Have a backup in mind: bus 101 to Port Authority, a different Montclair station, the PATH route via Hoboken, or driving to a Morris & Essex Line station. A single-point commute is fragile.

Station parking and permits

Montclair's Mayor and Council adopted parking ordinance changes published May 28, 2026, with meter changes effective July 6, 2026 and permit changes starting with July billing. The Bay Street 24-hour monthly permit rose from $100 to $125; surface commuter permits from $60 to $70; noncommuter permits from $50 to $60. An early-bird daily rate of $8 applies with entry and exit time restrictions.

VERIFIED FACT — MUNICIPAL SOURCE, DATED *checked November 11, 2026* Township of Montclair, Parking Update: Ordinances Adopted by Mayor & Council

NJ Transit's own station pages appear to carry older Montclair parking prices than the township's adopted ordinance. Where the two disagree, the township's dated update is the better source for a fee.

OBSERVATION *checked November 11, 2026* Comparison of the township parking update against NJ Transit station pages

A published permit price is not evidence that a permit is obtainable. Availability, waiting lists and eligibility are separate questions for the Township Parking Utility, and they should be asked before a commute plan depends on parking at a particular station.

CAVEAT *checked November 11, 2026* Township of Montclair, Parking Utility

3 Comparison worksheet

There is no overall Montclair score here — a composite number hides the trade-off it claims to resolve. State your own priorities instead, and read the underlying facts against them.

Fill in the middle column. The right column is what this guide can tell you, and where it cannot, it says so.

FACTOR	YOUR PRIORITY	WHAT THIS GUIDE ESTABLISHES
Budget	*The price you can actually pay, from a written pre-approval*	Closed-sale bands with sales counts, median sale, days to contract and the gap to first ask, in the first section. Price per square foot is not available.
Commute	*Your Manhattan destination and the arrival time that matters*	Six township stations, with verified scheduled station-to-terminal examples on both the temporary and the November 15 timetables. Door-to-door time and reliability are not established here.
Housing type	*Size, age and condition you are willing to take on*	Bedroom and style mix with medians, and a median year built, from the closed-sale record. Condition is property-specific.
Schools	*What you need from a school, and for which grades*	District structure and the choice-based placement process, plus district-wide Spring 2025 mathematics results for grades 3 to 5. Tested-student counts and participation rates are unknown from the cited slide. No composite quality score. Placement for a specific grade and year must come from the district. GAP
Taxes and carrying cost	*The monthly figure you can sustain, not just the purchase price*	Certified ratio, general and effective rates, the township's published 2026 components, and a historical illustration using the verified 2025 rate. The illustration is not a forecast or a 2026 budget. A specific parcel's bill comes from its own record.
Property risk	*How much diligence and deferred maintenance you can absorb*	The records to pull are listed. Whether any specific house has them is not knowable from this guide. GAP
Everyday logistics	*What you need within walking distance*	Official township and library sources. Deliberately not a list of venues and hours, which would be stale on arrival. GAP

Where the right column says something is not established, that is the honest state of the evidence rather than an omission. Those are the questions worth asking a person.

Evidence and sources

Where the market figures come from, and the terms they are published under.

Dataset	GSMLS closed single-family export, Montclair Township, closings 2024-10-25 through 2026-10-24, pulled 2026-10-25
MLS	GSMLS
Records in scope	494 of 494 rows in the export
Export checksum (SHA-256)	d3757d42bb067d6115f259ca1bf23096773ca6a76c582f80e0d6d43bf2ebcabb
Checksum matches the recorded one	yes
Pull date	October 25, 2026
Recorded search covers	October 25, 2024 to October 24, 2026
Headline period	12 months of closings, October 2025 through September 2026
Coverage rule	A window is evidence only when the recorded search covers it entirely. Observed close dates never establish coverage.

Definitions used throughout

sale to original ask
: closed sale price ÷ the first asking price the home was listed at

sale to final ask
: closed sale price ÷ the last asking price before it went under contract

above ask
: strictly above; at-or-above is a different measure

days to contract
: pending date − list date on the closed listing, where list ≤ pending ≤ close

contract to close
: close date − pending date

sample floor
: a median is published only when its own denominator is at least 10

bands
: cut on closed sale price, so a band describes what a budget actually bought

Style codes

The export abbreviates style names. This guide displays the full word and records the mapping here: Bi-Level = Bi-level, Contemp = Contemporary, CustHome = Custom home, MultiFloor = Multi-floor, SplitLevel = Split level, Victrian = Victorian.

NOTE: This representation is based in whole or in part on data supplied by the Garden State Multiple Listing Service, L.L.C. ("GSMLS"). GSMLS does not guarantee nor is in any way responsible for its accuracy. Data maintained by GSMLS may not reflect all real estate activity in the market

Every figure carries its own source and date where it appears. Market figures come from a GSMLS closed-sale export; tax figures from the NJ Division of Taxation's certified tables; transit figures from NJ Transit timetables; school and municipal facts from the district's and township's own pages. Where two official sources disagree, this guide says so rather than choosing silently.

Glen Ridge is a separate municipality with its own borough government, school district and tax rate. Its station is the next stop down the line from Bay Street, but no figure in this guide describes it. Both towns are covered together on our Montclair & Glen Ridge page.

What to do next

This guide is the part that can be written down. The rest depends on your house, your numbers and your timing.

If schools are deciding the move

Confirm placement with the district for your child's grade and the year you are enrolling. A nearby school is not an assigned school here. See section 1, “Schools, and how placement actually works”.

If the commute is deciding the move

Check the timetable that will be in effect when you move, the return trip, and the weekend pattern — they are three different answers. See section 2, “Getting to Manhattan”.

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