



Flemington-Raritan Regional School District Parent & Community Newsletter



August, 2021 Edition 1

Editor In Chief: Dr. Kari McGann, Superintendent of Schools kmcgann@frsd.k12.nj.us

Co-Editor: Mrs. Laura Bruhn, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent lbruhn@frsd.k12.nj.us

AUGUST GREETINGS

Hello, parents! We are preparing for an exciting start to the school year. The district has been preparing for the 2021-2022 school year taking care of all the necessary items that are required for a smooth opening of schools. The summer is a busy place in our schools -- hiring staff, ordering materials, preparing building schedules, revising curriculum, completing referendum projects, focusing on best practices in teaching through professional development sessions, attending learning institutes, and cleaning and tidying up for the students' return on September 8th. We look forward to seeing all students returning for a full day of school on Wednesday, September 8th. Students' second full day of school is on Thursday, September 9th with the third full day of school on Friday, September 10th. On Monday, September 6th, schools are closed for Labor Day. On Tuesday, September 7th, schools are closed for Rosh Hashanah. Important dates appear on our district web site, linked here: <https://www.frsd.k12.nj.us/>.

I am so proud to serve as your Superintendent of Schools and humbled by my opportunity to work with the Flemington-Raritan community to help support every student, every day, at every opportunity. As a leader that values building partnerships for the success of students I welcome family/school partnerships for successful schools and for the success of students. To assist in building partnerships together I have set up a schedule of Superintendent Talk-a-Latte Chats. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic these Superintendent Roundtable meetings were held regularly. I look forward to reinstating these important opportunities to foster partnerships.

The sessions are designed to have an open dialogue with parents, staff, students, and community members about issues that are important and on-the-mind of Flemington-Raritan residents. Please mark your calendar; the first session will be held on **Monday, August 31, from 6-7:30 p.m.** in the cafeteria of J.P. Case Middle School. Parents can register to attend a session using the links that appear on this [flyer](#). A reminder to register will be shared three weeks prior to each scheduled session.

It has been a pleasure to come to work each day at my relocated office at J.P. Case Middle School. The referendum work at five of the six schools has necessitated closing the school doors and relocating office staff to J.P. Case Middle School. With the exception of Copper Hill Elementary School, all other schools have been relocated to J.P. Case Middle

School for the summer and have enjoyed being together and reconnecting, strengthening our togetherness. I look forward to seeing our students again on September 8th for full day, in-person instruction. It is the children who are at the heart of everything we do.



SUPERINTENDENT ROUNDTABLE TALK-A-LATTE CHATS

Date	Time	Location
August 31	6-7:30 p.m.	J.P. Case Cafeteria
October 12	6-7:30 p.m.	Barley Sheaf Cafeteria
December 1	6-7:30 p.m.	Reading-Fleming Cafeteria
February 2	6-7:30 p.m.	Robert Hunter Cafeteria
April 7	6-7:30 p.m.	Desmares Cafeteria
May 31	6-7:30 p.m.	Copper Hill Cafeteria

*To support our families whose native language is not English, translators will be provided at meetings that are scheduled for Robert Hunter Elementary and Francis A. Desmares Elementary Schools. Parents can register to attend a session using the links that appear on this [flyer](#).



WHAT WILL OUR SCHOOLS LOOK LIKE IN SEPTEMBER 2021?

The District has put together a Frequently Asked Questions document to support families in their quest for answers regarding the re-entry into our schools post COVID-19 pandemic. [You can find that document here.](#)

Our utmost responsibility is to keep our students, staff, and faculty safe and strong in all areas; mentally safe and strong, physically safe and strong, and academically safe and strong.

Key points from the FAQ document are below:

- Stand-alone desks *are not* spaced six feet apart; they are spaced three feet apart, as per Board policy.
- Masks are required to be worn by students, staff, faculty, and visitors per Executive Order 251 in all indoor portions of school premises, except in certain circumstances. See the full order [here](#).
- Mask breaks will be utilized throughout the day for all students.
- Air scrubbers and dehumidifiers *are* in place in all schools.
- Partitions are not in place in classrooms, but may be utilized at times when three feet cannot be maintained, such as during small group instruction.
- Ventilation systems are almost complete and in place, due to the 2018 referendum funding.
- Windows can be opened and fans can be turned on to increase circulation of outdoor air.
- Exhaust fans in restroom facilities are operating at full capacity when the building is occupied.
- Health and hygiene team members have been rehired for the 2021-2022 school year to perform disinfection of frequently high-touched areas around the school such as door handles, desks, light switches, faucets, telephones, handrails, drinking fountains, etc.
- Students who arrive to school or who become sick during the day will be immediately separated from others and sent home with instructions and guidance on how to follow-up with their healthcare provider.
- The District will *not* institute a daily COVID screener, but a one-time COVID pledge to keep students home from school if sick or with two or more COVID-19 symptoms.
- Students will have extra time built into their schedule to wash and dry their hands in accessible sinks with soap and water and a way to dry their hands with paper towels and hand dryers.
- When weather permits, outdoor seating areas will be utilized for lunches, breaks, and meetings.
- Students will be reminded to avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth.

COVID-19 MASK FATIGUE AND FRUSTRATION

As I am sure you are aware, the requirement for masking in school was recently imposed by Governor Murphy through Executive Order 251, which requires all students, staff, and visitors to wear masks when indoors on school premises.

Governor Murphy is generally empowered to issue Executive Orders. Specific to the COVID-19 pandemic, our Legislature has specifically granted the Governor the authority to issue orders related to recommendations of the CDC to prevent or limit the transmission of COVID-19. See N.J.S.A. 26:13-36.

I am aware that parents have strong feelings on both sides of this issue, and that the fatigue and frustration of the last eighteen months have taken a toll on everyone. However, as a

District we are obligated to follow the law and will continue to abide by any laws applicable to public schools in New Jersey.

We hope that when COVID-19 case numbers begin to decrease, Governor Murphy will rescind Executive Order 251.

We anticipate that some students may struggle with masking, and we are fully prepared to meet their needs. Students will be given regular mask breaks, and we will have additional masks on hand for students who need a fresh mask during the day.

Although the ongoing pandemic has changed some of our conditions for learning, we are mindful of how far we have come since last year at this time. We are so excited to be welcoming all our students back for full time in-person learning, and grateful that our mitigation strategies allow us to do this safely.

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT



NAMI, National Alliance on Mental Illness, is a not-for-profit organization that focuses on bringing people together for mental health support. The [NAMI website](#) provides information and resources dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. According to NAMI, 1 in 5 Americans lives with a mental health condition.

NAMI provides support so that people do not feel alone. There are support services and treatment options that may help if you know someone who is struggling. Hunterdon County has a local county-based nonprofit group. NAMI Hunterdon is a part of the state and national NAMI network and “seeks to improve the quality of mental health treatment, residential, and support services that will benefit persons with mental illness and their families.” You can find information at the website [NAMI Hunterdon](#).

This month I attended the virtual conference for NAMI. The keynote speaker was Michelle Williams, Grammy Award-winning singer and former Destiny’s Child member. Michelle Williams spoke about her mental health journey alongside Dr. Christine M. Crawford, NAMI’s Associate Medical Director. Other workshops offered provided information about ways to amplify youth and young adult voices. Strategies were suggested to support stronger communities and building networks of support for families. If you or someone one you know has a mental illness, is struggling emotionally, or has concerns about their mental health, there are ways to get help. To learn more visit the website [National Institute of Mental Health](#). Our guidance counselors are able to meet with students individually and in small groups. Please reach out and/or use these resources to find help for you, a friend, a family member, or your child.

One of the sessions I enjoyed the most was a group discussion on creating youth voice for mental illness. A NAMI Youth Ambassador facilitated a conversation about the state of youth

mental health—and what we can do to help—during the pandemic and beyond. You can find information [here](#) if you have someone in your family that is interested in becoming a NAMI Young Adult Advocate.

Each school in our district has many ways for parents to be involved in their child’s education, whether it is tied to emotional-mental health, academics, or physical health. Please reach out to your child’s teacher in the upcoming school year or the building principal to find out ways in which you might learn about your child’s education or an upcoming event to attend.

REFERENDUM PROGRESS

The heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) installation at Barley Sheaf Elementary School, Robert Hunter Elementary School, Francis A. Desmares Elementary School, and Reading-Fleming Intermediate School is in progress. Unit ventilators are being installed in our schools. We are waiting on a



final delivery of unit ventilators so that the final phase of installation can occur at RFIS.



The District has continued to monitor indoor air quality in our schools. The District has implemented mold-prevention procedures and deployed the appropriate equipment to prevent concerns with mold. We continue to monitor air quality to ensure a safe and healthy environment for our students and staff. Air scrubbers and dehumidifiers are in place in all schools. Room partitions are not in place in classrooms to allow maximum air flow. Temperature readings are taken daily in buildings as a data point for indication of potential issues.



BOARD MEMBER VACANCY

Board of Education member Dr. Marianne Kenny has announced her resignation from the board due to personal

reasons. We are grateful to Dr. Kenny for her volunteer service to our schools and for her contributions to the Board of Education. We thank her and we wish her well.

As a result, our Board of Education seeks candidates to fill the vacant seat representing Raritan Township. The term of the appointment expires December 31, 2022. To become a member of the Board, an applicant must be able to read and write; hold U.S. citizenship and one year's residency in Raritan Township; have no interest in any contract with or claim against the Board; not hold office as mayor or member of any municipal governing body within the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District; be registered to vote in Raritan Township and not be disqualified as a voter under N.J.S.A. 19:4-1; and satisfy a criminal history background check pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:12-1.

Candidates should email a resume and cover letter to: Flemington-Raritan Regional School District Board of Education, Mrs. Linda Benz, 50 Court Street, Flemington, NJ 08822 or via email to lbenez@frsd.k12.nj.us. The deadline for submitting a resume and cover letter is Friday, August 27, 2021, at 4 p.m. The Board anticipates interviewing candidates on September 8, 2021, beginning at 6 p.m.



SCHOOL START & END TIMES

School hours for the 2021-2022 school year are outlined below:

Grades K-4 Elementary Schools

Regular Day:

Grades K-4	8:55 a.m.-3:35 p.m.
Preschool - Half Day AM	8:55 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
Preschool – Half Day PM	11:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
Preschool - Full Day	8:55 a.m.-2 p.m.

Scheduled Early Dismissal:

Grades K-4	8:55 a.m.-1:20 p.m.
Preschool - Half Day AM	8:55 a.m.-10:25 a.m.
Preschool - Half Day PM	10:25 a.m.-12 p.m.
Preschool - Full Day	8:55 a.m.-12 p.m.

Unscheduled Early Dismissal:

Grades K-4	8:55 a.m.-1:20 p.m.
Preschool - Half Day AM	8:55 a.m.-10:25 a.m.
Preschool – Half Day PM	Cancelled
Preschool - Full Day	8:55 a.m.-12 p.m.

Delayed Opening:

Grades K-4	10:25 a.m.-3:35 p.m.
Preschool - Half Day AM	Cancelled
Preschool – Half Day PM	11:30 a.m.-2 p.m.
Preschool - Full Day	10:25 a.m. -2 p.m.

Reading-Fleming Intermediate School:

Regular Day:

Homeroom Begins	8:17 a.m.
Walkers/1st Bus Dismissal	2:55 p.m.
2nd Bus Dismissal	3:00 p.m.

Scheduled and Unscheduled Early Dismissal:

(Lunch not served)

Homeroom Begins	8:17 a.m.
Walkers/1st Bus Dismissal	12:40 p.m.
2nd Bus Dismissal	12:45 p.m.

Delayed Opening:

Homeroom Begins	9:47 a.m.
Dismissal	same as regular sessions

J.P. Case Middle School:

Regular Day:

Homeroom	8:15 a.m.
1st Bus Dismissal	2:54 p.m.
2nd Bus Dismissal	3:00 p.m.
Walkers' Dismissal	3:05 p.m.

Scheduled and Unscheduled Early Dismissal:

(Lunch not served)

Homeroom	8:15 a.m.
1st Bus Dismissal	12:44 p.m.
2nd Bus Dismissal	12:47 p.m.
Walkers' Dismissal	12:50 p.m.

Delayed Opening:

Homeroom	9:50 a.m.
Dismissal	same as regular sessions

DISTRICT PLAYGROUNDS & COURTYARDS

It was determined that district-wide playgrounds and courtyards were in need of weed control after exhausting previous efforts of weedeating to control the spread of weeds on our playground loose-fill surfaces.

Facilities members identified the presence of Milk Thistle that can cause an allergic reaction, including a severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction (anaphylaxis). An allergic reaction is more common in people who are allergic to other plants in the Asteraceae family, such as ragweed, daisies, marigolds, and chrysanthemums.

Another type of weed that was growing on our playground surfaces was identified as Thistle. Thistles are a noxious weed and while not particularly poisonous they are harmful if touched or swallowed. Poison Ivy was removed in one location by a member of our Maintenance Team and the



individual contracted a rash all over his arms, legs, neck, and body. *(He's on the mend!)*

Lastly, the height of the weeds promotes the presence of deer ticks which may transmit Lyme Disease. The office of Buildings and Grounds routinely monitors all locations and only

applies Roundup (herbicide) when absolutely necessary and according to all state and local regulations. Herbicide applications are planned and require IPM postings 72 hours prior to treatment and left for 72 hours after treatment to safely inform the community of the application. The application of herbicides



is carefully administered by a trained, licensed professional.

Roundup Pro is considered a low impact herbicide as defined by the NJ Department of Environmental Protection and Enforcement.



- <https://www.environmentalscience.bayer.co.uk/-/media/prfunitiedkingdom/product-labels-pdf/eia-roundup-provantage.ashx>
- <https://www.nj.gov/dep/enforcement/pcp/ipm-lowimpact.htm>
- <https://www.epa.gov/ingredients-used-pesticide-products/glyphosate>

The active Ingredient in Round Up Pro is glyphosate. The EPA found that Glyphosate has no risk of concerns to human health.