

# Flemington-Raritan School District Parent & Community Newsletter



August, 2019 Edition 1 of the 2019-2020 School Year

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## GREETINGS!

The District has been preparing for the 2019-2020 school year taking care of all the necessary steps that are required for a smooth opening of our schools. Flemington-Raritan has new staff members that were hired, materials were ordered, schedules prepared to provide students with access to the best curriculum. Our teachers have been busy attending learning institutes and preparing their classrooms for the return of students on September 5.

We look forward to seeing all students returning for a full day of school on Thursday, September 5. Students' second full day of school is on Friday, September 6. A link to the 2019-2020 school calendar is [here](#).

As a learning community, we are ready for all our learners to enter the doorways of our schools. The buildings and grounds team members, along with our custodial services members have been busy in all our facilities cleaning, polishing, repairing, and making your classrooms ready for the return of students. We have closely monitored the indoor air quality at all our schools using digital hygrometers to calculate the air humidity and surface and air temperatures. Dehumidifiers were strategically placed in all buildings throughout the district, with industrial-sized dehumidifiers in the hallways and individual-sized dehumidifiers in some classrooms. As Superintendent, I walked the halls and went in and out of classrooms all summer checking on dehumidifiers and the temperature. Our facilities manager and business administrator were in contact with me daily about our facilities and monitored our buildings closely. The pro-active measures we took this summer kept the humidity levels constant and the moisture at appropriate levels. The noise level of the industrial-sized dehumidifiers was unpleasant, and at times annoying, but our buildings were dry.



The campuses on all of our six campuses look great! The outdoor learning center at Copper Hill Elementary School is beautiful with colorful chairs and tables and a gazebo. Francis A. Desmares has fun ocean-themed sensory pathways on the floor for students to enjoy. J.P. Case Middle School's athletic shed was brought in by tractor-trailer and placed in just the right spot to provide additional storage for the golf cart and an area for concession. Barley Sheaf Elementary has been planning with a Boy Scout from a local troop to build benches in the courtyard, and Robert Hunter will soon be building an outdoor learning center

While summertime can be a busy time for many, I hope the summer also provided some relaxation for families. The summer is an ideal time to spend some extra time with family and friends relaxing.

At my home, our family cherished time together during August, visiting family and friends, celebrating milestones and sharing memories. However, last week, our family dynamics changed a bit; we dropped off our oldest son at college, and our oldest daughter left a week prior. Our family of six is down to just four. It's a little quieter, and my grocery bill has gone down, but I miss the banter of siblings jostling for the television remote and bartering for who was in charge of taking out the garbage or removing the dishes from the dinner table. Our family dog, a Border Collie named Mollie, has seemed the most lost without the older two kids. She walks between the bedroom of my oldest son and the room my two daughters shared looking for them, wandering around the edges of their beds and sniffing their shoes left lying on the floor of their closets. I stand at the doorway, watching her, lost in memories about how it seemed like just yesterday that my oldest daughter and oldest son were little and heading off to kindergarten for the first time. Those are cherished memories that I have the honor to re-live when I watch our youngest learners enter the doors of our elementary buildings for their first day of kindergarten.



I am so proud to be a member of the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District team, and I cannot wait to see our students back and busy in classrooms.



REFERENDUM TO VOTERS ON ELECTION DAY  
NOVEMBER 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019

This past Monday night, at the August 26 Board of Education meeting, I presented to the Board of Education a public

presentation on a two-question referendum to go to the voters of the Flemington-Raritan community on Election Day, November 5, 2019. You can find that presentation [here](#).

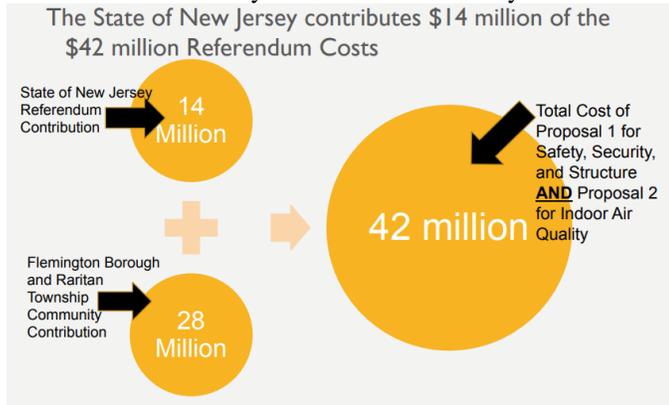
The referendum has two questions for which the voters will be asked to approve; 1) safety, security, and external updates to the structure of our buildings and 2) indoor air quality – air conditioning and dehumidification in all buildings where air conditioning is not already present, for a total cost of \$42,063,000 for both referendum items.

The State of New Jersey is currently offering facility aid funding, which will capture approximately 40% of all project costs. The District applied for and received approval for State funding, a contribution of \$14 million.

**Question 1:** Safety, security, and external updates to our facilities include security upgrades and improvements including cameras, equipment, an upgraded telephone communication system, and door and alarm upgrades. It also includes site improvements including parking lot upgrades, sidewalk, curb and fencing improvements, and drainage improvements. Roof replacements and repairs for all buildings, except for at J.P. Case. Window replacements and external building repairs at all other buildings.

**Question 2:** Indoor air quality is to provide indoor air quality upgrades, including air conditioning (HVAC) and humidity control systems at all schools, except for J.P. Case Middle School. J.P. Case Middle School already has air conditioning. Copper Hill Elementary School has air conditioning too and only needs a dehumidification system.

The cost for both referendum items is \$42 million; \$14 million which will be funded by the State of New Jersey.



It is important to note that question two; installing air conditioning and dehumidification, cannot be approved by the voters without the approval of question one; safety, security, and external structure updates.

The reason is simple: Question two is contingent upon the approval of question one because the rooftops of our elementary and intermediate school buildings, RH, FAD, BS, and RFIS, cannot support air conditioning with the rooftops in their current state. Copper Hill only needs a dehumidification system. The building has air conditioning already. Rooftops and some windows must be repaired and replaced before a rooftop air conditioning system can be placed in any of our

elementary buildings or at our intermediate school. Without a rooftop that can support an air-conditioning system and windows that control the airflow, an air-conditioning system will not be feasible, nor energy efficient.

There are multiple upcoming information events about the referendum. You will see me, a member of the Central Office team, or a Board of Education Member at Back-to-School and Open House events on September 18 at RFIS and on September 19 at our elementary schools and September 25 at J.P. Case Middle School. All events will have opportunities for information to be shared with parents and community members and provide a way for parents to share information with me. A canary-colored "Referendum 2019 Fact Card" will be handed out at these events and other upcoming events to get the word out to the community.

The Referendum 2019 Fact Card will have a perforated edge; one part for parents to keep and take home and another part to hand back to me with thoughts, feedback, and ideas. Parents and community members are encouraged to vote on Election Day.

### **UPCOMING DATES FOR REFERENDUM INFORMATION SESSIONS:**

- September 9<sup>th</sup>**- Board of Education meeting at J.P. Case Middle School at 7 PM
- September 11<sup>th</sup>**- Superintendent's Advisory Committee at Reading-Fleming Intermediate School 5 PM-6:30 PM
- September 18<sup>th</sup>**- Reading-Fleming Intermediate School Open House
- September 19<sup>th</sup>**- Elementary Buildings Open Houses
- September 25<sup>th</sup>**- J.P. Case Open House

### **CLASS III SLEO OFFICERS TO PROVIDE SAFETY AND SECURITY IN THE DISTRICT**

On March 6, 2019, I shared with the FRSD community that I spoke with members of the Raritan Township Committee to consider ways to support the development and implementation of a plan for school district security to protect the school community's investment in school buildings, facilities, staff, and our children. You can find that letter [here](#).



Specifically, I asked the Raritan Township Committee to modify the number of police officers so as to allow the employment of Class III special law enforcement officers (SLEOs) to serve in the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District community. Class III officers are retired police officers that traditionally serve in schools to provide safety and security to staff, students, and building security. At the August 20, 2019, Raritan Township meeting, the council approved a memorandum of understanding with Flemington-Raritan Regional School District to hire Class III SLEO officers. The Board of Education approved the agreement at the meeting this past Monday night. The District is working in collaboration with the Chief of Police of Raritan Township to hire SLEO officers to begin serving in the district this school year.