



January, 2022 Edition 6

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

JANUARY GREETINGS

Hello, parents, families, and community members! I hope that the winter break allowed time for our students to be with families and friends, enjoying food and festivities.

During the 2021-2022 school year, as in previous years, I hold Superintendent Roundtable discussions. These sessions are designed to be open dialogues between my office and community members. The schedule is available on the website [here](#). The topics are about issues that are important and on-the-minds of our Flemington-Raritan residents. Since my first year as Superintendent in Flemington-Raritan these sessions have been held regularly, with the exception of when the entire state was shut down due to the pandemic. The goal is to build relations with parents and community members and to assist me to keep a pulse on the community.

As we come to the end of January a few reminders about upcoming dates:

- February 2nd Superintendent's Roundtable – at Robert Hunter Elementary School from 6 to 7:30 PM. Contact Laura Bruhn at lbruhn@frsd.k12.nj.us or register [here](#) to reserve your spot.
- Friday, February 18, is a Staff Development Day. Schools are closed for students.
- Monday, February 21, all schools will be closed in observance of Presidents Day.

EMERGENCY CLOSING/DELAYED OPENING PROCEDURES

In the event of inclement weather or other circumstances that would cause the closing of schools, a delayed opening, or an early school closing, communication with staff and families occurs in multiple and redundant ways.

Families and staff members receive notification via phone, email, and text using our School Messenger system. Please make sure your child's school has up-to-date contact information. The District posts delay, early dismissal, or closing information on the district website and our local Flemington-Raritan police are also notified of the district's plan.

On days when inclement weather is predicted, the decision to close school may be made the evening prior. If not, the decision-making process begins at 4:30 a.m. and includes research on weather conditions, assessment of site conditions for our schools, consultation with the township police, and a conference e-mail with regional superintendents of schools. A

decision will be made by approximately 5:30 a.m. and the communication process will be initiated.

Some important information: A "Delay" means a 90-minute delay for students and staff. Students report to their bus stops or arrive at school 90 minutes after normal time.

When a "Delay" is called, please continue to be alert for communications, as a "Delay" can evolve into a "School Closing."

For "Early Dismissals," kindergarten through grade four are dismissed at 1:20 p.m., Grades 5 and 6 are dismissed at 12:40 p.m., and J.P. Case is dismissed at 12:44 p.m.

If schools are closed, facilities are not available for use for after-school or evening activities by internal or external organizations; therefore, all after-school activities are canceled, with the exception of after-care occurring in schools. The after-care program leaders will make their own decisions about closing and early pick-up.

If schools are closed or there is an early dismissal on a Friday, please check the District website for the status of weekend activities.



ANNOUNCEMENT OF EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR HONOREES

Flemington-Raritan Regional School District is fortunate to have a sterling teaching staff in all of its schools. The district and New Jersey Department of Education participate in the New Jersey Teacher of the Year Program and the Governor's Teacher/Educational Service Professional Recognition Program. This program highlights educational innovation, student achievement, the rewards of teaching and important services outside the classroom environment that lead to student success. Further, it seeks to attract public attention to the positive aspects of our educational system.

The school district has engaged in a process that allows for one teacher from each school and one educational support professional or one paraprofessional to be honored for outstanding professionalism and student support. We are

happy to honor the following staff members with supportive comments from their colleagues and our Educator of the Year Committees.



Barley Sheaf School

Teacher – Cori Lango, Grade 4

Mrs. Cori Lango has served as a fourth grade teacher at Barley Sheaf Elementary School since 2009. Mrs. Lango is a devoted educator who consistently places student well-being at the forefront of her work as a teacher and member of the educational community. Mrs. Lango fosters an inclusive and welcoming classroom environment, working collaboratively with a special education colleague to skillfully meet the needs of a wide range of learners. Mrs. Lango is a passionate science educator and an active promoter of the Next Generation Science Standards, designing inquiry-based learning experiences that enable students to plan and carry out investigations, analyze and interpret data, construct explanations, and design solutions for real-world problems. Her expertise in technology-integration enables her to leverage technology to maximize student learning. Mrs. Lango’s impact as an educator reaches beyond her classroom walls. She initiated and leads a safety patrol program in our school, and partners with our PTO to offer the popular afterschool Lego Club enrichment program. During the summer, Mrs. Lango works with students across our district through our Title I Summer Support Skills Program. Finally, Mrs. Lango cares deeply about the health and well-being of her colleagues. She coordinates events such as yoga classes, healthy eating seminars, and fundraisers for Breast Cancer Awareness month, all of which help our school community stay both grounded and healthy. As one parent noted, “Teachers like Cori Lango build the foundation for the love of lifelong learning, and instill the importance of becoming a well-rounded individual. She celebrates every student’s differences, and challenges them to become their very best.”

Educational Services Professional – Shannon Croasdale, Speech-Language Pathologist

Ms. Shannon Croasdale has been the Speech-Language Pathologist at Barley Sheaf Elementary School since 2019. Ms. Croasdale is an innovative educator who works tirelessly to strengthen students’ communication and language skills and bolster their self-confidence. Her classroom is filled with interactive bulletin boards, 3-D models, mirrors, and countless tools to support student learning. As one teacher noted, “It is truly amazing to watch Ms. Croasdale and the relationship and bond she has formed with so many of her students.” Always striving to improve her professional practice, Ms. Croasdale actively seeks professional learning. Ms. Croasdale eagerly shares her learning with classroom teachers to ensure continuity of support across each student’s day. Ms.

Croasdale is a tireless advocate for students and for her profession. She is an active member of our school I&RS committee, brainstorming and implementing ideas for an action plan such as visual communication tools. Last May, during a challenging pandemic year, she worked with students and staff to create a video of students and staff using American Sign Language to sing “Rise Up” by Andra Day in recognition and celebration of all the different ways people communicate. Ms. Croasdale’s “can do” spirit and dedication to her profession are truly commendable.



Copper Hill School

Teacher – Reparata Skove, Health & Physical Education

Mrs. Skove is an amazing and dedicated educator, colleague, athlete, and coach. Mrs. Skove has taught Health and Physical Education for 35 years. During that time, we have watched her inspire, instruct, and create an environment of mutual respect among students, parents, staff, and administrators. Mrs. Skove has written and revised multiple curricula, researched and implemented the most recent instructional methods and strategies in education, and has served on countless district and school-wide committees. Her commitment goes beyond the classroom, as she volunteers to serve as a mentor, reading buddy, member of our security team, and any other opportunity where she can serve her school community. Mrs. Skove has left a positive impact on each and every person who has had the pleasure of working with her.

Educational Services Professional – Lisa Maslankowski, School Nurse

Mrs. Maslankowski works tirelessly to ensure that our students, staff, and families are healthy and safe. At Copper Hill School, Mrs. Maslankowski services students with unique disabilities and medically fragile students. Her nurturing and warm demeanor ensures that all students are treated with care. During the COVID pandemic, she exhibited true leadership and commitment to her profession, spending countless hours contact tracing, monitoring student illnesses, and guiding families through protocols and procedures. Mrs. Maslankowski uses every opportunity to educate our school community on best practices for health and wellness.



Francis A. Desmares School

Teacher – Nina Higgins, Grade 3

Ms. Higgins has been serving the Desmares school community for the last five years as a special education teacher. Ms. Higgins is a positive force and a champion for all students. She focuses on the needs of the “Whole Child,” ensuring that she creates an environment that is welcoming, supportive, and nurtures every student's needs and talents. She proactively and collaboratively plans her daily instruction utilizing the principles of UDL (Universal Design for Learning) in order to make learning accessible for all students. The students in her class not only feel valued but also experience success due to the many strategies that Ms. Higgins employs during her daily instruction. As a resource room teacher her duties extend into the larger class as she provides in-class support. Her ability to collaborate with other colleagues and advocate for students promotes the continued success of students as they transition from the small group setting to the larger group. The process is seamless due to her dedication and commitment to her students.

In addition to ensuring the success of her students, she is a resource and a collaborative, supporter of other staff members. She willingly shares her deep knowledge of differentiation and modification with her colleagues to help all students succeed. She dedicates time to work with her colleagues as they prepare lesson plans, grapple with meeting the needs of students, or simply need an extra hand. Her wealth of knowledge is derived from her constant pursuit to grow professionally. Ms. Higgins dedicates her personal time to her own professional development and seeks opportunities for growth. She is respected as an educational leader by her peers and her passion shines through every day.

Educational Services Professional – Jaclyn Accardi, Speech-Language Pathologist

Mrs. Accardi has served as the Speech Language Pathologist for the students at Francis A. Desmares School for the past seven years. During her tenure she achieved many goals embedded in student Individual Education Plans. Colleagues nominated Mrs. Accardi because she is such a true example of professionalism in action. This is often seen in Child Study Team meetings, parent meetings, IEP eligibility discussions, and by the rapport she develops with her students. Students demonstrate genuine excitement when they come to her room and feel the progress and success from speech sessions. Mrs. Accardi is a leader among the Child Study Teams and Speech Language Pathologist Team in our district. She has served as a leader on the Core CST, where a Special Education Handbook was developed. She also is the leader for Speech evaluations coordination in the summer. Mrs. Accardi assisted in spearheading the new Summer Supplemental Program to bridge the gaps where students demonstrated deficiencies in their speech as a result of the pandemic. Mrs. Accardi continues to seek resources and student materials to address the needs of our students who come from such diverse backgrounds, including those students where English is a second language.

Mrs. Accardi is a champion for all students and dedicates her time to her continuous professional growth. Mrs. Accardi has attended the following trainings to enhance her ability to support students: Professionals Serving Students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing through the NJ Department of Education, Strategies to Detect and Correct Misclassification of Multilingual Learners through TCNJ, NJSHA: New Jersey Speech-language Hearing Association Convention in Long Branch, NJ 2019. In addition to the above stated, Mrs. Accardi also serves as a mentor to new speech pathologists within our district and serves as a member of the Pandemic Response Team, and is a turn-key teacher leader for our new UDL initiative. Mrs. Accardi is the epitome of service, excellence, and leadership.



Robert Hunter School

Teacher –Margaret DeAngelis, Kindergarten

Mrs. DeAngelis is a patient educator who adapts her classroom to the needs of her kindergarten students. When you walk into her kindergarten classroom, you will find highly engaged students that enjoy being part of their learning community! Mrs. DeAngelis is a champion for her students, always being a support to students and parents alike. Mrs. DeAngelis is a collaborative educator that brings each lesson to life with enthusiasm, age appropriate challenges, and a genuine love of learning!

Educational Services Professional – Jeanne Whalen, Teacher Assistant

Mrs. Whalen is an educator that connects with her students, seamlessly assists within the classroom, and is an asset to our school. Mrs. Whalen has a strong skill set, is dependable, organized, and always has the greater good of the school at her core. Our school benefits from having Mrs. Whalen as a part of it!



Reading-Fleming Intermediate School

Teacher – Lori Koehler, Grade 6 Math

Mrs. Koehler is well known for her enthusiasm and energy, but also for being equally organized, flexible, professional, understanding, and of course, fun! Mrs. Koehler fosters a nurturing classroom environment that is well structured and

student centered. She always has a positive attitude and strives to create a meaningful relationship with each of her students in order to help them be the most successful student possible. Mrs. Koehler recognizes the importance of connecting with kids and that is the center of her work each day. Mrs. Koehler is enthusiastic about working with all students regardless of whether the work and learning comes easy, is a struggle, or anywhere in between. One of Mrs. Koehler's colleagues shared the following, "The students and I are lucky to start our day with a greeting from Mrs. Koehler. She is a fixture in the hallway and says hello to everyone who walks past. Mrs. Koehler has a positive attitude and a great sense of humor." Mrs. Koehler is described by her colleagues as being inspiring and trustworthy. Mrs. Koehler is truly an educator who cares about the well-being of both students and colleagues and advocates for their best interests.

Educational Services Professional – Claire Fox,
Teacher Assistant

Ms. Claire Fox is someone who truly cares about the well-being of each and every student. As shared by a colleague, Ms. Fox is the "definition of going above and beyond to make sure her students feel safe and supported in all aspects of their day." She is also very supportive and helpful to teachers, having an incredible amount of experience working with students. Ms. Fox collaborates with the teachers she works with, always being eager to help deliver lessons, scaffold information for students, or ask questions to support student learning. Ms. Fox is described as someone who is intelligent, thoughtful, and always listening, observing, and recognizing what both the teacher and the students need. Colleagues shared similar experiences with Ms. Fox, noting how "her ability to know exactly what I was going to do next and be prepared for it was uncanny. At times I was convinced that she could read my mind." Ms. Fox is described by her colleagues as extremely organized, friendly, supportive, helpful, and incredibly patient. She has an incredible way about her that "makes everyone around her feel valued, respected and cared for." Ms. Fox is an educator who goes above and beyond in the service of students.



J.P. Case Middle School

Teacher – Dawn Hlavsa-Suk, Grade 7 Social Studies

Mrs. Dawn Hlavsa-Suk has been selected as the J. P. Case Middle School Teacher of the Year for her outstanding representation of each of the critical attributes recognized by the Governor's Educator of the Year program. In her twenty-fourth year of education, Mrs. Hlavsa-Suk continues to challenge herself professionally and serves as a leader in our school community. Mrs. Hlavsa-Suk's professional toolbox is vast, and she consistently facilitates professional development workshops for our district. Her professional knowledge and

skill were clearly evident in the modifications she made to traditional instructional practices in order to show her colleagues how to successfully implement cooperative learning strategies within the confines of the required health and safety guidelines of the recent school years. Mrs. Hlavsa-Suk's leadership also extends to her work as a union leader, and her service in this regard is unmatched. Her colleagues trust and respect her, and she is a nurturing and supportive presence in the building. Perhaps most importantly, Mrs. Hlavsa-Suk is dedicated to the children she teaches. Her child-centric educational philosophy guides her to go above and beyond to ensure that her students find not only academic, but also social-emotional success. She is an invaluable member of our school community, and we are thrilled to support her nomination.

Educational Services Professional – Noreen Bradley,
School Nurse

Mrs. Noreen Bradley's service to the J.P. Case learning community over the last year has been unmatched. As our School Nurse, in a typical school year, Mrs. Bradley plays a significant role in ensuring the safety of our building of close to 900 staff and students. She collaborates with parents and teachers to ensure student's health needs meet district, county, and state guidelines. She works closely with our athletics department, and serves as a leader in her communication regarding player readiness and medical clearances. However, over the last year, her role has become even more indispensable, as she has provided consistent and comprehensive guidance and support to administration, teachers, and families, as we've navigated ever-changing health and safety guidelines in response to the pandemic. She is a beacon of knowledge and a consummate professional, and she consistently goes above and beyond to ensure student health and safety. Over the last few years, contact tracing and other aspects of her job have often required her to work long hours at night and on the weekends, but her commitment has been unwavering. Even on the most difficult days in her office, her approach with students is supportive, kind, and understanding, and has clearly been honed from her years of experience in a variety of professional settings. Mrs. Bradley is an incredible asset to our community, and a very deserving recipient of this award.



STRATEGIC PLANNING: POSTPONED A BIT

The District was forming a Strategic Planning Ad Hoc Committee. Strategic Planning is a process by which school districts identify strengths and challenges, define a vision, set objectives and goals, and establish action steps. More information will be provided in the February newsletter.

LEGISLATION FROM THE STATE OF NEW JERSEY

The State of New Jersey passed a law recently that benefits schools struggling with staff shortages. The new law passed by Governor Murphy allows teachers to temporarily fill critical need jobs in New Jersey schools. Law [S3685](#) applies to any retired teacher or professional staff member including a speech-language specialist or therapist teachers who have been retired for six months or more. They can now return to the classroom and fill much-needed positions. Previously this was not allowed due to retirement pension rules and regulations. Now they can be employed in the school district for the remainder of this current school year and next year. The proposed law does not list what critical need is defined as but leaves that up to the commissioner of Education to decide.

Another law was passed regarding information that must be shared with parents about school security drills. According to the law, school districts shall provide written notification to the parent or guardian of a student enrolled in the district following the completion of a school security drill, which notice shall be provided to the parent or guardian by no later than the end of the school day on which the school security drill is conducted. You can read about the new law here: <https://www.spsk.com/governor-murphy-signs-new-law-for-school-security-drills>

The New Jersey Department of Health continues to provide guidance to schools. I provided information to our community on January 11, 2022. You can find information [here](#) and [here](#).



SATURDAY SESSIONS AT PRINCETON PLASMA PHYSICS LABORATORY

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, during the winter, I made it a point to attend the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory Science Saturday Sessions at the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory in Princeton. These previously in-person activities are now virtual lectures that are still engaging to families, even though they are virtual.

The Saturday science sessions are a free series of talks geared toward high school students, but open to all. Five years ago, at my first visit, I sat between my then seventh grade son and my youngest daughter, who at the time was in fourth grade.

We listened to Dr. Koleman speak about plasma control for energy. The next time we attended, we listened to a session by Professor Jeff Schneider, a research professor at the Robotics Institute School of Computer Science at Carnegie Mellon University. He spoke about self-driving cars and how they are transforming our cities and lives.

This year my family is hopeful to make it to at least one of the sessions listed below. I highly recommend trying a virtual session with the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory to spend a Saturday morning talking with leading scientists about science. For more information visit [here](#). You must [register online](#) one time to get a link to attend all the lectures.

The complete schedule for the year is:

Jan. 29 at 9:30 a.m.: Elie Bou-Zeid, professor of civil and environmental engineering and director of the Program in Environmental Engineering and Water Resources, Princeton University, "New Technological Frontiers in Cities"

Feb. 5 at 9:30 a.m.: PPPL physicist Florian Laggner, "Diagnosing Fusion Plasmas: How to Perform Measurements in a 100 Million Degree Environment"

Feb. 12 at 9:30 a.m.: Janet Iawasa, Biochemistry Department, University of Utah School of Medicine, "Animating Molecular Machines"

Feb. 19 at 9:30 a.m.: No Science on Saturday due to U.S. Department of Energy Science Bowl

Feb. 26 at 9:30 a.m.: James Schroeder, Wheaton College Department of Physics and Engineering, "Answering a 40-year-old Riddle: Can Alfvén Waves Cause Auroras?"

March 5 at 9:30 a.m.: Travis Miles, Department of Marine and Coastal Sciences, Rutgers University, "Ocean Robotics for the New Blue Economy"

March 12 at 9:30 a.m.: Evdokiya Kostadinova, Auburn University Physics Department, "Feeling the Heat: Fusion Plasmas Used to Study Spacecraft Heat Shields"

ENROLLMENT TRENDS AND RESIDENTIAL CONSTRUCTION UPDATE #2

Mr. Bland, the Assistant Superintendent, and I wrote about the enrollment trends and residential construction in the [December newsletter](#). The community was informed about growing enrollment trends at the November 22 Board of Education meeting. Information that has been shared is also online [here](#). Housing developments in the northern section of our community will impact our district enrollment and school total enrollment.

There are seven new residential properties that are under approval, development, or study: 1) The Cain/Altra Townhomes, 2) Raritan Town Square Apartments, 3) Willow South Apartments; 4) Courthouse Square Apartments; 5) The Enclave Apartments; 6) Main Street Flemington Apartments; and 6) Liberty Village (An Flemington Borough Town Council ad hoc committee has been approved to study the possibility of [Liberty Village redevelopment](#).)

I'm not a golfer, but I just finished the book [Miracle on the 17th Green](#) and enjoyed it tremendously. A wonderful quote appears in the middle of the book: *"I made a pleasant discovery. You work hard at something eight hours a day, you get better. Not a lot better necessarily, but a little better, and that's just fine, because improving at golf, or anything else probably, is just a matter of making an endless series of tiny improvements."* -- James Patterson, [Miracle on the 17th Green](#)

As of January 24, 2022, our current enrollment is 3,073 students. We are the largest K-8 district in Hunterdon County and enroll more students in our six buildings than Hunterdon Central High School, as well as all other high schools in Hunterdon County. In the past three weeks, our total enrollment has grown by 19 students.

- J.P. Case Middle School: 680 students
- Reading-Fleming Intermediate School: 654 students
- Barley Sheaf Elementary School: 374 students
- Copper Hill Elementary School: 463 students
- Francis A. Desmares Elementary School: 486 students
- Robert Hunter Elementary School: 405 students
- Out of District students: 11 students

With all four new residential complexes being located in the northern half of the District, we are anticipating a total increase of 78-94 new students, with the largest projected impact being felt at Francis A. Desmares School.



To address growth, the district is evaluating all current elementary school attendance zones and projecting potential increases in enrollment. The rate of growth is not expected to be equally spread out across all four elementary schools with the current zoning. Therefore, changes in enrollment catchment areas may be necessary to accomplish these goals. These changes can help to alleviate crowding in some buildings while balancing class sizes, space and resources across all four elementary schools.



During an impromptu visit to my office, these Reading-Fleming Intermediate School students had a chance to view our Raritan Township Residential Developments map. They looked for their school and the street where they live on the map.

With a focus on supporting students and families through the transition, we continue to plan for program consistency, enrollment balance, and funding equity in staff among schools. The enrollment challenges and changes to rebalance capacity in our elementary schools will occur in September, 2022. The plan in process is evaluating the number of students in each catchment area and identifying residences on certain streets to be redistricted from Francis A. Desmares Elementary School to Barley Sheaf Elementary School. Careful analysis must be conducted to ensure that

Barley Sheaf Elementary School does not become overcrowded. This analysis includes examination of the number of students per residences on specific streets in the Barley Sheaf Elementary School area to potentially be redistricted to attend school at Robert Hunter Elementary School.

Consequently, the Robert Hunter Elementary School catchment areas must also be analyzed carefully to ensure this elementary school does not reach capacity and become overcrowded. The results of the Liberty Village study by the Flemington Borough Town Council ad hoc committee for the possibility of Liberty Village redevelopment is another consideration to carefully analyze as decisions are made.

Copper Hill Elementary School’s enrollment, capacity, and catchment area is also being analyzed in a comparison to our other elementary schools.

As per Board of Education policy, the District makes every effort to reassign children only once during their elementary school years. We recognize that the possibility of changing elementary schools can create worry over the anticipation of attending a new school. In the upcoming months the district will include a multitude of activities to ease the worry including but not limited to the following:

- Providing school and district newsletter information in the months preceding any redistricting;
- Host parent “question and answer” programs;
- Assign small groups of redistricted students to the same new homerooms the upcoming fall;
- Involve staff from both schools in the placement of students
- Discussion at Superintendent Talk-a-Latte Events
- Continued development of solutions through the Superintendent’s Equity Ad Hoc Committee.

If you are interested in joining the discussion and study through the Superintendent's Ad Hoc Committee on Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity, kindly contact Laura Bruhn at lbruhn@frsd.k12.nj.us. The Committee meets throughout the year under the direction and guidance of Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kari McGann.

Be sure to review our District's weekly Headlines & Virtual Backpack notices as these include important links and parent reminders, such as Kindergarten Registration information and the revised 2021-2022 District Calendar. You can view these [online here](#).