

Flemington-Raritan Regional School District
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Dear Parents,

While this week had many successes in virtual learning, we also experienced challenges. Connectivity was an issue on certain days for some families in our community due to corporate Zoom learning platforms and Comcast overload. Our technology team addressed the problems as quickly as possible using technology support from Zoom and Comcast. Thank you for your patience. I know that there were challenges that families faced this week with schedules, remote learning, and technology.

I received many parent emails expressing the challenges of remote learning, connectivity issues, childcare, and screen time. As a mother of four children, I understand the challenges that remote learning puts on a family. Please continue to direct your frustrations to me and be kind to your principals and teachers who are working incredibly hard to create a safe and welcoming start to the school year. This week they worked extremely hard to prepare for the first days of instruction and upcoming Back-to-School Nights, which are scheduled just around the corner.

Another challenge the District faced this week as a result of COVID-19 was a positive case of a staff member. This week we learned that a Flemington-Raritan Regional School District staff member, who was present in one of our buildings, tested positive for COVID-19. In this situation, we follow precise procedures with our partners at the Hunterdon County Department of Health. The COVID-19 pandemic is a serious, on-going public health emergency, which is why we must continue to reinforce safety guidelines.

After learning of the positive COVID-19 case of a colleague in our schools, our school nurse quickly coordinated closely with public health officials and followed CDC, state, and local health department guidance to ensure our school community's health and safety. Our District protocols were put into place to protect our colleagues using contact tracing to notify those that were in close contact with the individual while in school. All procedures adhered to applicable federal and state laws and regulations regarding privacy and the confidentiality of records to protect the individual's rights. Our buildings are regularly cleaned by our custodial staff and any potentially affected spaces will be deep cleaned in preparation for all schools to be open to staff on Monday.

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As a reminder, contact tracing is the process used to identify those who come into contact with people who have tested positive for many contagious diseases, including COVID-19. Contact tracing is used by health departments to prevent the spread of infectious diseases. In general, contact tracing involves identifying people who have an infectious disease (cases) and their contacts (people who may have been exposed) and working with them to interrupt disease transmission. For COVID-19, this includes asking cases to isolate and contacts to quarantine at home voluntarily.

Contact tracing for COVID-19 typically involves:

- A. Interviewing people with COVID-19 to identify everyone with whom they had close contact during the time they may have been infectious;
- B. Notifying contacts of their potential exposure;
- C. Referring contacts for testing;
- D. Monitoring contacts for signs and symptoms of COVID-19; and
- E. Connecting contacts with services they might need during the self-quarantine period.

To prevent the further spread of disease, COVID-19 contacts are encouraged to stay home and maintain social distance (at least 6 feet) from others until 14 days after their last exposure to a person with COVID-19. Contacts should monitor themselves by checking their temperature twice daily and watching for symptoms of COVID-19.

As a reminder, symptoms of COVID 19 include:

- A. A fever of 100° F or greater;
- B. Cough;
- C. Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing;
- D. Chills;
- E. Repeated shaking with chills;
- F. Muscle pain;
- G. Headache;
- H. Sore throat;
- I. New loss of taste or smell;
- J. Fatigue;
- K. Congestion or runny nose;
- L. Nausea or vomiting;
- M. Diarrhea

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District has been challenged to reopen schools to all students and staff. We can all agree that the best place for students to learn is in school taught by caring, highly qualified educators and surrounded by their

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peers. Conversations and planning continued this week with many to bring students back to campus.

I am pleased to report that personal protective equipment has been received and delivered to schools. Hand sanitizer, adult masks, N95 masks, adult reusable face shields, pediatric reusable face shields, vinyl gloves, plexiglass dividers, pediatric masks, PPE gowns, and electrostatic sprayers have all arrived. Hunterdon County transmission rates continue to be low, with the risk of exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19 also remaining low. Our [regional information from the New Jersey Department of Health](#) has not increased from yellow (moderate) to orange (high) or very high (red). Staff accommodations and leave requests are being addressed. Building walkthroughs will be conducted next week with members of the Flemington-Raritan Education Association, administration, and the facilities team to address any remaining concerns about campus facilities.

As always, we continue to place student and staff safety at the top of our priority list. Next week I expect to share details and dates for students to return to a limited model of remote learning and a blend of in-person learning for groups of students in a hybrid schedule. We are preparing for our neediest special education students to return to campuses on September 21st. Our *Returning with Confidence: A School Reopening Preparedness Plan* set a goal for November 2 to return to a limited model of remote learning and a blend of in-person instruction for specific groups of students. The planning taking place has sights set on students returning to campus ahead of schedule. I am hopeful to share more information with families very soon.

I wish your families to be happy and healthy and to have a restful, relaxing weekend. I know that this was a very busy week for you and your children. It continues to be my honor to serve the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kari McGann
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