



# Flemington-Raritan Regional School District Parent Newsletter



September, 2018 Edition 2

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## BACK-TO-SCHOOL GREETINGS

Hello, families! I hope this newsletter finds you all well and enjoying the back-to-school excitement. We were so excited to welcome students and staff back to school on September 11. Our faculty returned on September 4 and September 5 and attended a welcome breakfast provided by donations from Maschio's, our food services provider. Teachers participated in opening day sessions and meetings with colleagues and administrative team members to prepare for students. Many of our teachers spent an extraordinary amount of time preparing their rooms for students' arrival- even through the weekend and on the days the district was closed. The dedication of our staff was truly noteworthy.

We used two contingency snow days on our district calendar; 4/29 and 5/24. Both of these days are now regular school days; April 29 is a school day for the September 6 closure day and May 24 is a school day for the September 7 closure day. We have one contingency snow day still remaining on our calendar; March 11. If the district needs to use a snow day March 11 becomes an early dismissal day for students and a half professional day for staff. Please plan accordingly so that students are in school.

## INDOOR AIR QUALITY UPDATE

At the September 11 Board of Education meeting I provided to the Board of Education and members of the audience a report on the Indoor Air Quality Remediation Effort. The Board of Education presentation can be found at the link [here](#). I encourage you to take a look at the slides and information. I provided a calendar to demonstrate a timeline and photos to help demonstrate the efforts the district has taken to ensure health and safety.

While this week's weather continues to be unusually humid, between 96% and 97% humidity on Monday and Tuesday, we have industrial-sized dehumidifiers in the buildings. We also continue to use HEPA industrial-sized air filters in all of our buildings with the exception of J.P. Case, which at this time hasn't been recommended by our environmentalist.



**Francis A. Desmares-** Test results returned on Tuesday for the remaining rooms at Francis A. Desmares. Out of the four rooms that remained to be fully cleared (Rooms 2, 3, 4 and 6)

by the environmentalist, room 6 is now completely cleared. The other three rooms will continue to be air scrubbed to reduce the spore count and will have additional cleaning by our professional cleaning company, ServePro. Rooms 2, 3, & 4 will be re-tested on Monday 9/24.

**Robert Hunter-** Robert Hunter had two classrooms; room 111 and 125, the art room (101) that were being re-cleaned. ServePro cleaning was completed by the end of the day on Wednesday, 9/19 and re-testing was scheduled for the same day. I'm happy to report that room 111 and 125 and the art room are reopened and cleared by the environmentalist!



The library is continuing to be professionally remediated with a completion date that hasn't been determined yet. Unfortunately, the library at Robert Hunter has significant issues with moisture and requires a great deal of remediation. It is under negative air pressure. The rest of Robert Hunter is all cleared for students and staff!

**Barley Sheaf-** Barley Sheaf had six classrooms last week that were closed and remained off limits. Tuesday's test results cleared all but two rooms! We are so happy to welcome our staff and students in their classrooms. The library at Barley Sheaf continues to be professionally cleaned and remediated. The final two rooms (Rooms 24 and 28) and the faculty room still show slightly higher ranges than outside so we will continue to air scrub these locations. Re-testing is occurring on Monday, 9/24. The art room was tested on Wednesday, 9/19. The library is being cleaned next week with testing estimated to occur on Monday, 9/24.



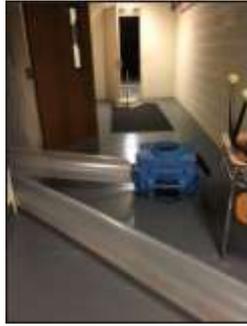
**Copper Hill-** Copper Hill Elementary School has no areas of concern but continued monitoring takes place daily. The district uses our environmentalist's guidance to re-test areas that show significant evidence of unusual fungi growth.

**J.P. Case-** J.P. Case Middle School has no areas to remediate.

**RFIS-** All classrooms at RFIS with unusual fungal populations have been successfully remediated with the exception of rooms 17 and 24 and the basement area outside the lower gym. These areas are under isolation and contained

with negative air pressure to preclude pollutant transport from one area to the other areas. Rooms 17 and 24 will be addressed November 5-9 and the basement will be addressed October 22 or sooner, if possible.

All schools have been cleared for all students and staff. As I receive reports from our environmentalist I will post these reports on-line for your review.



## **THE BOOKMOBILE IS VISITING!**



Our media specialist at Barley Sheaf Elementary School, Mr. Greg Slomczewski, organized with the Hunterdon County Library to bring the bookmobile to Barley Sheaf and Robert Hunter Elementary Schools. Thank-you, Mr. Slomczewski, for your dedication to students and to grow the love of reading! Once again another member of our staff shows dedication to our students and staff. Thank-you, Greg, for your extra effort to assist students.

The Bookmobile will visit each school once a week with Barley Elementary School starting next week on Wednesdays. Robert Hunter Elementary School students will have a visit from the Bookmobile on Thursdays, each week. The visits will be from 9:30 to 12:30 on respective days. The Bookmobile will not be able to visit at Robert Hunter on 9/27 or Barley Sheaf on 10/3 due to previously scheduled commitments.

In order to avoid complications with students and individual library cards, the Hunterdon County Library agreed to have all checkouts go through a single school account. Everyone gets to check out a book--YES! Please thank your Hunterdon County Library staff next time you are in the library. We are so grateful for their support.

Details:

- Hunterdon County Library librarians will supplement the bookmobile's collection with additional, and appropriate materials for the visit days.
- Students will be limited to one book due to availability of materials, space on the bookmobile,

keeping track of all materials, coming back every week, etc.).

- Students may only get another book in subsequent weeks if they have returned the previous week's book.
- Each school is responsible for all books so please help your child return their books each week and take care of these precious treasures.

A teacher and/or the librarian will be present with all students (Hunterdon County Library librarians will not be present, only drivers and circulation help).



Figure 1 <https://www.istockphoto.com/illustrations/fungal-mold?sort=mostpopular&mediatype=illustration&phrase=fungal%20mold>

**Using a Google Form, please take the time to fill out the short, five question survey about indoor air quality remediation efforts. Find the link [here](#) to take the four question survey.**



### **HOMEWORK SURVIVAL TIPS FOR PARENTS**

Now that the school year has begun, regular homework has likely become a part of your child's life. There are strategies listed that may help you to have a peaceful household when your child sits down to complete his/her homework. I hope you find these useful!

#### **Set a Regular Homework Time**

- Meals and bedtime are at regular intervals, and giving

homework the same consideration gives it equal importance.

- Tune into your child's body clock. Many children need "down time" when they get home from school and won't be able to put forth their best effort on homework until they've had a break. Some children are worn out by 7:00 and won't be able to concentrate on challenging work if it comes too late in the evening.
- Ease the transition to homework. Gentle reminders like, "You have 10 more minutes before you need to sit down for homework," will get your child mentally ready for stopping their play.
- Limit conflicting activities during the school week. If extra-curricular activities leave inadequate time for homework, you are modeling for your child that homework holds a lower priority than those activities.

### Choose an Appropriate Location

- Limit distractions.
- Minimize interruptions.
- Have supplies readily available – technology, crayons, number lines, manipulatives, paper, etc.
- Keep noise levels low.
- Supply an appropriate amount of supervision.

### Responses for "I don't want to do my homework now!"

- Give children a choice in when they will do their homework – and then hold them to their choice.
- Work in 10 or 20 minute spurts.
- Encourage a "brain break". A ten-minute break to have chocolate milk or some pretzels can do wonders for a child's mood and attention.
- Allow children to choose which subject to do first.

### How Parents Can Set a Good Example

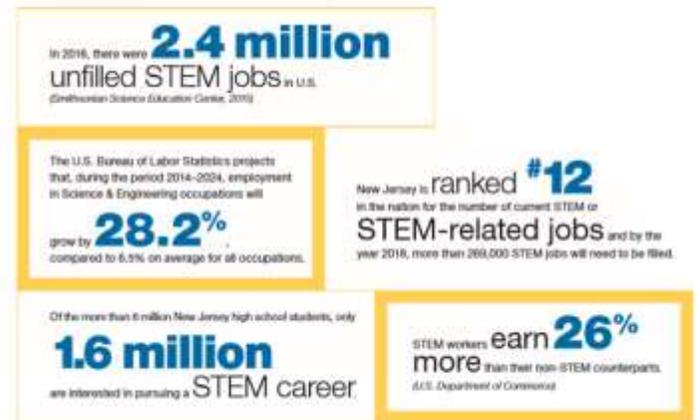
- Parents should "linger" in the homework area to monitor, guide, and give encouragement.
- Pay bills or write letters while your child works on homework.
- Do homework of your own.

Finally, remember that children put in a 7-hour school day and are focused, well-behaved, and responsible for nearly all of that time. (Really!) They are worn out at the end of the day and need some support and nurturing to put forth their best effort and thinking on homework. Our ultimate goal for homework should be to encourage self-motivation, self-discipline, responsibility, and a love learning. It is probably unrealistic for us to expect our children to LOVE homework. Most of us have homework associated with our jobs and I don't know anyone who comes in the door at 6:00 at night thinking, "Hooray! I have homework tonight!" Above all, DO check with your child's teachers if you sense that your child is having a difficult time with homework, learning concepts, etc. They appreciate and value your input.

## SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, MATH (STEM) STATISTICS

As a national leader in STEM and a member of the LEAD STEM cohort 2, I share with our community some statistics. See more about LEAD STEM and the unique leadership opportunity that has the potential to bring promising innovation and STEM opportunities to our region.

This past week members of our administration team met with leaders at The College of New Jersey to begin to discuss the ways in which our two organizations could assist each other to provide STEM opportunities for all students.



### SUPERINTENDENT ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS

The Superintendent Roundtable discussions are an open forum for community discussion on topics that are on the minds of our community members. The September Roundtable topics from the meeting at Copper Hill were the following:

1. Indoor air quality
2. The district school calendar
3. Teaching Assistants
4. Student Academic Performance
5. Solar Panels

Dates alternate between school locations and evening and morning times in order to try to accommodate community members' schedules.

Month	Location	AM/PM	CONFIRMED Date/Time
August	RFIS Auditorium	(pm)	Mon. 8/20 6-7:30 p.m.
September	Copper Hill Band Room	(am)	Wed. 9/12 9:30-11 a.m.
October	Barley Sheaf Library	(pm)	Wed. 10/17 6-7:30 p.m.
November	JP Case B-132	(am)	Mon. 11/19 9:30-11 a.m.
December	FAD Library	(pm)	Mon. 12/10 6-7:30 p.m.
January	Robert Hunter Library	(am)	Tue. 1/15 9:30-11 a.m.
February	Copper Hill band room	(pm)	Tues. 2/12 6-7:30 p.m.
March	RFIS Café Annex	(am)	Wed. 3/13 9-10:30 a.m.
April	JP Case Library	(pm)	Tues. 4/16 6-7:30 p.m.
May	Barley Sheaf Library	(am)	Tues. 5/21 9:30-11 a.m.
June	FAD Faculty Room	(am)	Thurs. 6/13 9:30-11 a.m.
June	Robert Hunter Library	(pm)	Tues. 6/11 6-7:30 p.m.

\*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.

## SCREENAGERS

(Photo and article retrieved from Delaney Ruston, MD, Screenagers' Filmmaker. See Dr. Ruston's link [here](#) for more information about tips for reducing screen time, social media, and more.)



"Video games today are so different than the one I played growing up—Pong. I can remember struggling with the black cords to connect it to my

TV and then playing the slow, methodical game. What is Pong, your kids ask? You can show it to them [here](#). And, I can tell you that watching other people play Pong was never much fun. But now playing video games has become a spectator sport."

"eSports, defined as competitive tournaments of video gaming, often by professionals, is popping up in arenas and gaming stadiums around the country. Just like baseball stadiums, people come out in huge numbers to watch live gaming. Several universities have even added eSports programs where gamers compete against other college teams

in games like League of Legends and Overwatch and some even offer scholarships for top players."

"Two weeks ago in Seattle, where I live, it was so wonderful to see thousands of people come out to watch the Special Olympics. To my surprise, video gaming was included as an official sport. And, according to [The New York Times](#), the International Olympic Committee is considering adding eSports to the 2024 Olympics."

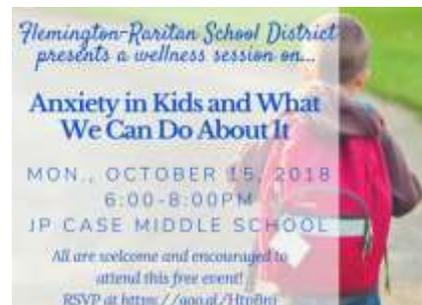
"I have heard from many kids and teens about how much they enjoy watching other people play video games. The most popular gamers live-stream their gameplay to millions of viewers on YouTube channels. Kids have told me various reasons why they watch others play including getting insights into how to get better and getting to "know" certain players. Meanwhile, parents are often frustrated with the bad language that can be sprouted out incessantly by many of these YouTube players."

The author, Dr. Delaney Ruston, writes a blog is to help spark a discussion about why youth (and adults) might like watching video games. The author talks about why people enjoy watching, and also guides us to discuss how many hours a week makes sense to play. The author encourages us to read her blog piece "[Why 3 hours is too much](#)" where she talks to 3 experts who work with families around curbing excessive video game use."

Some questions you can consider asking your child that might spark a healthy conversation in your home:

- Do you enjoy watching other people play video games? If so, what are the many reasons?
- Do you think video gaming should be included in the Olympics?
- Do you think there is a difference between watching say a baseball game or watching people play video games?
- How much time do you think is too much time watching someone e-gaming?

With four children of my own; one in college, two in high school, and a fourth in an intermediate school, reducing screen time is often on my mind. Our family purchased a tool to help monitor and control screen time. There are many available to families that are "smart tools" so that parents can filter content, put on time limits for screens, and set a bedtime for every family member.



My October issue will feature mindfulness and what parents can do to help reduce stress in kids. Mark your calendar for a special session on 10/15.

## FLEMINGTON-RARITAN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 2018-2019 STUDENT CALENDAR (Revised: 8/30/18)

September 3	Labor Day	School Closed for Students & Staff
September 4	Staff Development Day – First Day for Staff	School Closed for Students only
September 5	Staff Development Day	School Closed for Students only
September 10	Rosh Hashanah	School Closed for Students & Staff
<b>September 11</b>	<b>First Day for Students</b>	
September 12	Open House – Reading-Fleming Intermediate School	Early Dismissal – Gr. 5-6 only
September 19	Yom Kippur	School Closed for Students & Staff
September 20	Open House – Elementary Schools	Early Dismissal – Gr. K-4 only
September 26	Open House – J.P. Case Middle School	Early Dismissal – Gr. 7-8 only
October 16	Staff Development Day	Early Dismissal for Students
October 19	Interims Available on Parent Portal – J.P. Case/RFIS	
November 6	Election Day/Staff Development Day	School Closed for Students only
November 8-9	NJEA Teacher Conference	School Closed for Students & Staff
November 14	Elementary Marking Period #1 Ends	
November 14, 15 19, 20	Elementary Parent/Teacher Conferences <i>11/14, Afternoon; 11/15, Evening; 11/19, Evening; 11/20, Afternoon</i>	Early Dismissal, Gr. K-4 only
November 21	Elementary Report Cards (Gr.3-4) available on the Parent Portal	
November 21	Thanksgiving Recess begins	Early Dismissal
November 22-23	Thanksgiving Recess	School Closed for Students & Staff
November 26	5-8 Parent/Teacher Conferences: <i>RFIS-3:15-5:15 p.m.; JPC – 5:30-8 p.m.</i>	Regular Day – Grades K-8
November 27	5-8 Parent/Teacher Conferences: <i>RFIS- 1:30-4:30 p.m.; JPC-5:30-8 p.m.</i>	Early Dismissal – RFIS & JPC
November 28	5-8 Parent/Teacher Conferences: <i>JPC-1:30-4 p.m.; RFIS-5:30-8 p.m.</i>	Early Dismissal – RFIS & JPC
November 29	5-8 Parent/Teacher Conferences: <i>JPC-2:30-5 p.m.; RFIS-5:30-8 p.m.</i>	Early Dismissal – RFIS & JPC
November 30	5-8 Parent/Teacher Conferences: <i>RFIS- 1:30-4:30 p.m. ; JPC-1:30-4 p.m.</i>	Early Dismissal – RFIS & JPC
December 7	RFIS/JPC Trimester Ends	
December 21	Winter Break Recess begins	Early Dismissal
Dec. 24 – Jan. 1	Winter Recess	School Closed for Students & Staff
January 2	Classes Resume	
January 21	Martin Luther King Day	School Closed for Students & Staff
January 29	Staff Development Day	Early Dismissal for Students
January 30	Interims Available on Parent Portal – J.P. Case/RFIS	
January 30	Elementary Marking Period #2 Ends	
February 6	Elementary Report Cards (K-4) available on the Parent Portal	
February 15	Staff Development Day	School Closed for Students only
February 18	President's Day	School Closed for Students & Staff
February 25	Kindergarten Registration at Robert Hunter School - Snow Date: March 4	
February 26	Kindergarten Registration at Copper Hill School - Snow Date: March 5	
February 27	Kindergarten Registration at Francis A. Desmares School - Snow Date: March 6	
February 28	Kindergarten Registration at Barley Sheaf School - Snow Date: March 7	
March 11	Staff Development Day & Contingency Snow Day #3 – <i>If the District needs to use this day as a 3<sup>rd</sup> make up snow day, March 11 becomes an early dismissal day for students and a half professional development day for staff.</i>	School Closed for Students only
March 18	RFIS/JPC Trimester Ends	
April 8	Elementary Marking Period #3 Ends	
April 15	Elementary Report Cards (Gr. 2-4) available on the Parent Portal	
April 19-26	Spring Recess	School Closed for Students & Staff
<b>April 29</b>	<b>School Open – Make Up Day #1 for September 6 Closure - Day A/1</b>	<b>Regular Day – Grades K-8</b>
May 8	Interims Available on Parent Portal – J.P. Case/RFIS	
<b>May 24</b>	<b>School Open – Make Up Day #2 for September 7 Closure – Day B/2</b>	<b>Regular Day – Grades K-8</b>
May 27	Memorial Day	School Closed for Students & Staff
June 20		Early Dismissal
June 21	Last Day of School - Report Cards Go Home/Parent Portal	Early Dismissal

Contingency Snow Days: Three snow days are built into the calendar in the following order: 4/29, 5/24 and 3/11. If more than three days are needed, the year will be extended as follows: 4/26, 4/25, 4/24, 4/23, 4/22 – a determination will be made if these days are regular days or early dismissal days for students and staff.

