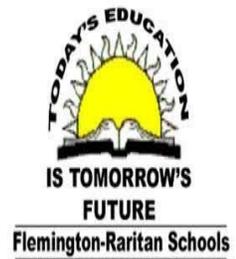


Flemington-Raritan Regional School District
Dr. Kari McGann
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August 16, 2020

Dear Flemington-Raritan Parents and Community,

Our Board of Education will hold an emergency meeting on Tuesday, August 18, at 7 p.m. At Tuesday night's meeting, after weighing the evidence, it is anticipated that the Board of Education will announce that our District will select to prioritize the health and safety of students, staff, and faculty by implementing an all virtual remote learning academy beginning on September 8, 2020, through the last week in October.

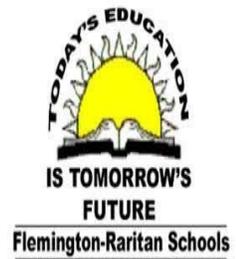
Since March, we have all navigated the tumultuous waters that the COVID-19 pandemic continues to create. Throughout, the health and safety of our students and staff have been our top priority. As we face the start of a new school year, health and safety must remain our top priority. Despite our meticulous efforts to follow all social distancing guidelines and recommendations from the CDC, American Academy of Pediatrics, and the New Jersey Department of Education, the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District's reopening plan will adjust to reflect an all virtual remote learning academy model for all students. Rather than put employees, children, and their respective families at risk, opting for a virtual all remote learning academy is the safest option we have to reduce the spread of the virus in our community.

Once reviewed by the Executive County Superintendent's Office, our students will begin school on September 8 in the virtual remote learning academy with the expectation that the virtual remote learning academy will continue through the last week in October. We will reevaluate every 30 days and monitor the national and local resurgence of infection and the likelihood of exposure on our student population, professional staff, and community. I will continue to communicate frequently with the Hunterdon County Health Department, local municipal leaders, and the New Jersey Department of Education. As conditions become safe and appropriate, we will grow in our capacity to move to other phases of in-person instruction. I will provide periodic updates to the Department of Education and our community to demonstrate that the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District is actively engaged in good faith efforts towards the resumption of in-person instruction.

Since the release of the additional guidance last week from the NJ Department of Health, members of the Board of Education and the Superintendent have been closely reviewing the details regarding the safe reopening of schools. We see that New Jersey is still in the moderate zone for the spread of the coronavirus disease. With this level of COVID-19 still in our communities, we must know with complete confidence that our students, staff, and faculty can return to school safely.

Governor Murphy's daily briefing on Wednesday of last week communicated his firm stance that schools should reopen in September. The Flemington-Raritan Regional School District faculty, staff, and Board of Education also believe that the best place for students to learn is surrounded by other students and taught by highly-educated teachers who love being with children. We must be united as a community of parents,

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students, teachers, administrators, and Board of Education members to successfully meet the needs of our students, academically, socially, and emotionally while focusing on the health and safety of all.

The Governor's announcement was followed up with Executive Order #175, which clearly outlines the steps districts must take if they are unable to address the minimum standards outlined in The Road Back. I have been closely monitoring the changing situation from around the state with school closures. I have concerns about the distribution of PPE and hand gel in time for the opening of our school doors. Executive Order #175 requires a plan to ensure that indoor facilities have adequate ventilation. I am concerned about buildings with no air conditioning and proper ventilation in all buildings, which will add to the discomfort of wearing a mask all day.

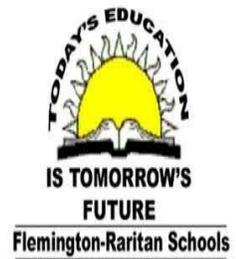
In addition to these challenges, the district was working through accommodation requests from employees to use the new federal law that became effective on April 1, 2020. The Federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) requires covered employers to provide emergency paid sick leave to certain employees to care for themselves or a family member due to coronavirus illness, symptoms, quarantine, or school/childcare closure. The FMLA has also been amended to provide job-protected emergency paid leave to employees who are unable to work because their child does not have school or child care, due to coronavirus. As school districts have closed throughout New Jersey and Pennsylvania, accommodation requests continued to be a challenge to the district.

We recognize that this is a deeply emotional topic for our community. We realize that just two weeks ago, two-thirds of our families selected to send their children back to school for a hybrid instructional schedule. The other one-third chose an all virtual remote learning academy. Every day I received emails from parents expressing their concern for safety and health standards and asking permission and guidance to change from hybrid to all virtual for their child(ren). Some in our community will welcome the change from offering a hybrid model to only offering an all virtual remote only option, while others will not. We understand that there are challenges with childcare and work challenges that families will face. We will continue to work with the Hunterdon County YMCA to do our best to support families in these trying times.

The months of March through June taught us many lessons in virtual classroom teaching. Most importantly, students need to see their teachers in-person every day. In addition, the following will be instrumental for success.

- Students need to connect with their teachers and other students to facilitate positive mental health.
- Our structures of virtual instruction must include real-time interaction between students and teachers.
- Attendance is critical for academic and social-emotional success and balance.
- Consistency of scheduled instruction is important for home/school connections to allow families to balance work schedules and school instruction.

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- All students need access to technology and the Internet every day.
- Balanced, healthy meals must be provided to students, even when schools are closed.
- Our instruction must continue to be rigorous with a variety of formats to maintain student engagement and interest in learning.
- Social-emotional learning must be planned for and carried out to build connections between students to safeguard students' emotional and social well-being and balance.

The Board of Education is committed to working together with faculty, staff, and parents to continue to deliver the excellent education that Flemington-Raritan Regional School District is known to provide. At the August 24 Board of Education meeting, more details will be released to share information about how the district will ensure that students can succeed in an all virtual remote learning academy environment.

As always, I appreciate your patience and support as we navigate the ever-changing scene of dealing with the pandemic and reopening schools.

With best wishes for your continued safety and good health,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kari McGann". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Dr. Kari McGann