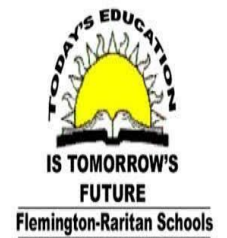


Flemington-Raritan Regional School District  
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October 30, 2020

Dear Flemington-Raritan Regional School District Parents and Community Members,

This past summer, our schools re-opening task forces worked diligently to develop schedules that put the safety of students, staff, and faculty first. Schools are densely populated, have lots of surfaces and materials to touch, and many opportunities for students to interact with one another. So, when the federal and state governments issued requirements for schools to ensure six feet of social distancing between all persons, limit the number of opportunities for students to share the same space and same materials, and to reduce co-mingling of newly created student pods to the greatest extent possible – we had to rethink every aspect of the school day and curriculum delivery. As our community considered how to safely re-open our K-8 school buildings and in-person services, we followed the [CDC guidelines for mitigation strategies](#) that K-12 school administrators were advised to use to help protect students, teachers, and staff and slow the spread of COVID-19. The job of four re-opening task forces was to recommend to the Superintendent the guiding principles to keep in mind to prioritize the reopening of schools as safely and as quickly as possible given the many known and established benefits of in-person learning.

In order to provide social distancing, it was decided that *the safest option* was to divide every class into two cohorts. In order to reduce the risk of contagion caused by people sharing the same space and materials, it was decided that rotating classes/pods every week was *the safest option*. It allowed the weekend to be used to decontaminate surfaces and materials naturally. It was also decided that sharing space/materials in certain subject areas was inevitable such as in art, computers, and music, so *the safest option* was only to allow these subjects to be taught virtually. In addition to limiting shared items, it was decided that music, orchestra, chorus, and band needed to be taught virtually to limit aerosol transmission.

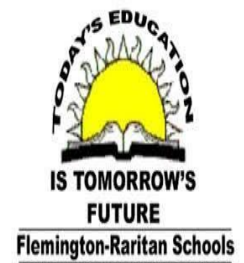
In order to reduce the risk of commingling students and complicating contact tracing, it was determined that not allowing large-scale changing of classes was *the safest option*. So, in grades 5-8, a decision was to have math (which is leveled) and world language taught virtually. Currently our math teachers in grades 5-8 are teaching both cohorts, and students are receiving five days of consecutive instruction during a single week. The challenge is that there are five days with live math instruction from a math teacher, and then the next week, the students only have math through links, choice boards, and follow-up homework. Parents have contacted the Board of Education and the Superintendent to share that this has not been an optimal instruction situation.

At the Board's request, the Superintendent has researched a 2-1-2 schedule and a 2-3 schedule, as well as simultaneous/simulcast techniques as possible solutions. Re-opening task force committees have presented the pros and cons of learning schedules. While there are positives that work, there are also challenges. If we have in-person instruction, then we must have cohorts to accommodate social distancing. That's the reality. If parents decide to opt their child in for in-person learning or opt-out of in-person learning for all remote, as they are allowed to do per NJDOE guidance, we may have to change the schedule to accommodate more students in person or more students virtually.

I ask that everyone recognize that no solution is ideal for the problems we face, and although a change may resolve some, we likely are trading one set of problems for another set of problems. All in all, with the schedule and decisions that are made, we must remain focused on three priorities:

1. Safety of our students, staff, and faculty must be at the highest level of attention.
2. Providing education to students with highly trained, certified educators.

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3. Creating opportunities for students, staff, and faculty to remain connected in order to positively influence social-emotional well-being.

To involve families in the decision making process and gain feedback about what is working and areas of improvement, I will be asking parents to complete a survey next week. Your feedback will help us to understand your comfort level with in-person learning and all-remote schedules. As always, the main consideration in our decision making is to keep our students and staff safe.

**County COVID-19 Update:** The Department of Health’s regional classification system moved Hunterdon County from green (low risk of spread of COVID-19) to yellow (moderate risk of spread). When we are yellow, the Department of Health’s guidelines require students who experience concerning symptoms, and who do not secure a negative COVID-19 test, to remain on remote instruction for 10 days rather than return 24 hours after their symptoms have resolved. You can review this guidance here:

[https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/RecommendationsForLocalHealthDepts\\_K12Schools.pdf](https://www.nj.gov/health/cd/documents/topics/NCOV/RecommendationsForLocalHealthDepts_K12Schools.pdf).

**Schedule Reminder:** Here’s a glance at the district’s upcoming schedule:

| Date                | Grades | Cohort A        | Cohort B        |
|---------------------|--------|-----------------|-----------------|
| November 2* & 4*    | K-8    | Remote Learning | In-Person       |
| Week of November 9  | K-8    | In-Person       | Remote Learning |
| Week of November 16 | K-8    | Remote Learning | In-Person       |
| November 23-25**    | K-8    | In-Person       | Remote Learning |

\* School closed for in-person *and* virtual students on Nov. 3 (Election Day/Staff PD Day) and Nov. 5-6 (NJEA Convention).

\*\* School closed for all students and staff on Nov. 26 and 27 for Thanksgiving Break.

\*\*\* Parents who selected all-virtual instruction for their child will continue with all-remote learning. \*\*\*

**Parent Communication Drill**

On Monday, November 2, I will be sending a SchoolMessenger automated phone, email and text message to all parents stating, “This is a test of our emergency communication systems.” Please do not be alarmed by this call; this is only a test of our communication system.

**Health Screening Reminder:**

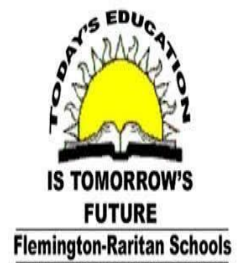
Please complete the daily screening **each morning** prior to your child(ren) reporting to school for in-person learning. If a child arrives at school without a completed form, a parent will be contacted and the child will not be permitted to begin in-person learning. Instructions are noted below:

1. Log into the [Parent Portal](#); an alert will pop up, indicating that the Daily COVID Form is required.
2. Click on the “Daily COVID Form” to begin.
3. Answer all questions honestly and thoroughly.

**Ventilation:**

The CDC recommends increased outdoor air ventilation when weather conditions allow by opening windows and doors and using fans to increase the effectiveness of open windows. As the weather turns cooler, please encourage

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your children to dress for the cooler weather and bring a sweater or sweatshirt to school. Our teachers are encouraged to continue to allow the windows to be open to allow fresh outdoor air inside the classroom, weather permitting.

**Travel:**

Please contact your child's school principal if your child has been required to quarantine due to exposure or travel out of New Jersey to a state that is on New Jersey's list of quarantined states. The State of New Jersey issues a travel advisory for people traveling to our state or returning to New Jersey after having visited a location with a significant spread of COVID-19. The travel advisory requires a 14-day quarantine period upon returning to New Jersey. For the most up-to-date listing of those locations, please refer to the State's [FAQ website](#).

**Gatherings:**

As our region experiences an increase in the number of positive cases, it is critical that we continue to adhere to safety guidelines and minimize exposure. We know that indoor gatherings and large events are most risky. If you will be attending an event:

- Prioritize attending outdoor activities over indoor activities and stay within your local area as much as possible.
- Bring supplies to help you and others stay healthy-- for example, masks, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, and drinking water.
- Maintain a distance of at least six feet or more from people who don't live in your household. Be particularly mindful in areas where it may be harder to keep this distance, such as check-in areas, parking lots, and entry/exit.
- Select seating or determine where to stand based on the ability to keep six feet of space from people who don't live in your household, including if you will be eating and drinking.
- Arrive at the event early or at off-peak times to avoid crowding and congested areas.
- Avoid using restrooms facilities or concession stands at high traffic times, such as intermission and half-time.
- Wear a mask when interacting with other people to minimize the risk of transmitting the virus.
- Avoid self-serve food or drink options, such as buffets, salad bars, and drink stations. Use grab-and-go meal options, if available.
- Use disposable food service items including utensils and dishes, if available.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer immediately before eating food or after touching any common surfaces like hand railings, payment kiosks, door handles, and toilets.

**Policy for requests to transition from in-person learning to fully remote or vice-versa:**

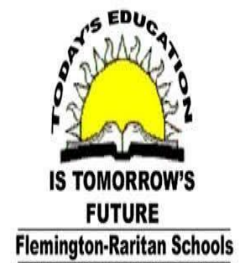
❖ Transition to remote learning:

According to BOE policy 1648.02, a parent may request a student receive full-time remote learning from the school district by submitting a written request to the Principal of the school building their child would attend. The written request shall be provided to the Principal at least 15 business days before the end of the trimester. Schedule changes for the winter trimester must be received by the building principal by November 11 and schedule changes for the spring semester must be received by February 22, unless otherwise specified, before the student is eligible to commence full-time remote learning. The student may only begin full-time remote learning within 15 business days after receiving written approval of the Principal or designee.

❖ Transition to in-person learning:

Transitions to in-person learning will occur at the beginning of the new trimester. The Flemington-Raritan Regional School District must comply with the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), state, and local recommendations to maintain health protocols and safety standards (e.g., six foot distancing between students seating arrangements and

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masks while on campus). A parent may request their student transition from full-time remote learning to in-person services, if in-person services are being provided, by submitting a written request to the Principal of the building the student will attend. The request must be submitted at least 15 business days before the end of the trimester (schedule changes for the winter trimester must be received by November 11, 2020, and schedule changes for the spring trimester must be received by February 22, 2021, unless otherwise specified, before the student is eligible for in-person services.

Please continue to make healthy choices that will keep your family and our school community healthy and safe. My best to all of our families and my hope that you are all happy, safe, and healthy.

Wishing you well,

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

Dr. Kari McGann  
Superintendent of Schools