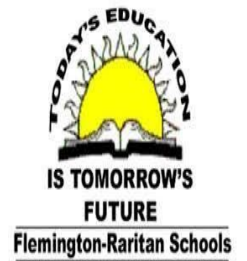


Flemington-Raritan Regional School District
Dr. Kari McGann
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April 3, 2020

Dear Flemington-Raritan Regional School District Families,

This letter arrives at your home in a continuation of weekly updates from the District related to changes that have occurred due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Please watch for an update every Friday in your inbox. This week's update includes information about the COVID-19 pandemic, grading practices, and the instructional technology tool, Zoom.

Our schools continue to follow the governor's stay-at-home orders due to the pandemic. All schools are closed except for essential employees. Essential employees include members of our maintenance team, three members of our Maschio's food services team, myself, a few members of our technology team, our custodians, and the Business Administrator. All other employees are already working successfully from home and should continue to do so.

The health and safety of our employees, staff, students, and community remain our highest priorities. We should all anticipate that the situation will remain fluid for some time. Please check the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District website for information about the status of operations, our facilities, grounds, and student learning.

Update on the Technology Tool Zoom:

The pandemic has forced millions of people to rely on technology to communicate, work, learn, and socialize. Many of our educators are using Zoom to communicate and stay in contact with students, colleagues, friends, and family members. "Zoom-bombing," according to the [Ars Technica website](#), is "the phenomenon of trolls intruding on other people's meetings for the sole purpose of harassing attendees." This intrusive behavior of others has required additional security features and upgraded settings for users.

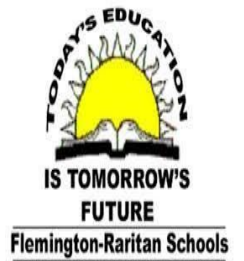
Video conferencing has become an invaluable tool for virtual learning. Although there are no reports of issues with unauthorized participants joining the virtual classroom in our District, we are acutely aware of the issue. As always, our top priority is the well-being of our children, and as such, changes have been made to prevent such disruptions to our virtual classes.

For example, the settings are automatically set to require all zoom participants to be entered into a waiting room. Teachers must manually unlock each individual attendee's video to allow the participant to enter the room. This allows teachers to manage all visitors and participants. They can easily block unwelcome visitors from coming into the Zoom room. Teachers have also disabled the ability for users to join before the host. To protect against zoom-bombing, the Board of Education meeting on Monday, April 6, 2020, will have only audio enabled for attendees, while video *and* audio will be enabled for the Board of Education members.

Grading Practices:

Our new learning environment has necessitated several adaptations. One of those is in the way student learning is assessed. The District believes that assessment continues to be an invaluable tool for informing instruction, and that feedback to students and parents is a priority.

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The [March newsletter to parents](#) provided information to the community about grading practices put in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. Some important additions were added to the information first reported in the newsletter. The additions are highlighted below in bold.

Grading practices and reporting of student learning adaptations during home instruction are outlined below:

The District will not issue Quarter 3 report cards for grades 2, 3 and 4.

All students will be issued a Quarter 4/Trimester 3 report card as previously scheduled **in June**.

All grade K-8 report cards will be modified to provide teachers with the option of "Not Graded."

The mark of "Not Graded" is not a negative mark. In essence, it merely indicates that for reasons associated with the school closure or health crisis that there was insufficient evidence that the child had met the given standard (K-4) or course requirements (5-8).

In grades 5-8, teachers will choose from the following marks in place of numerical grades:

- o Not Graded
- o Partially Met Expectations
- o Met Expectations
- o Exceeded Expectations

In grades 5-8, teachers will not calculate "final" cumulative grades. The Genesis parent portal remains open for grades 5-8 to provide information about assignment completion and student progress; however, teachers may add new descriptors that better reflect student progress during remote instruction.

As we continue to forge ahead into much of what feels unknown, there is a great sense of security knowing that we have come together to support each other as a community. Our community continues to make a difference in the lives of others through our commitment to each other's health, safety, and well-being.

Like many of you, Flemington-Raritan Regional School District is confronting complex and difficult decisions. Keeping our community safe and continuing your child(ren)'s education remain our priorities. My thoughts and best wishes continue to be with you all. Continue to care for yourselves and each other. I am grateful for your support of the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kari McGann".

Dr. Kari McGann
Superintendent of Schools
Flemington-Raritan Regional School District