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A LOOK BACK AT OUR YEAR...

As June began this week, our District is preparing for the end of this unpredictable, unprecedented and unimaginable school year. As 2019-2020 was far from normal, this school year may be considered one of the most memorable in the District's long-standing history. Let's not forget our fall success when our parents and community members stepped up and approved a multi-million dollar referendum. Your support shows how you all value education and believe in the importance of investing in our schools. When the pandemic hit, our teachers, administrators, and staff members were called to action, to follow an unwritten playbook where the rules are continually changing. We all answered this call with resounding commitment as we rallied together in a crisis to support the health, safety, and welfare of our families. We fed our community's children, connected families virtually, and developed and delivered remote learning programs to meet our students' needs. We achieved these feats with one eye focused on the present and the other envisioning the future. This pandemic didn't paralyze us; instead, our collective efforts propelled the District forward through every stage of this global health crisis. Not only will this year be memorable, but it may certainly be Flemington-Raritan's Finest Hour.



JOINING THE VOICE OF OTHERS

As a school district that embraces diversity and is committed to creating equitable opportunities for all of our students, I share the feelings that so many have as we view the images in our news over the past week.



I have been in touch with the Chief of the Raritan Police Department, Chief Payne, and the Chief of the Flemington Borough Police Department, Chief Jerry Rotella, as well as Mayor Betsy Driver of Flemington Borough and Mayor Jeff Kuhl of Raritan Township to express my support for our police departments, but also to share the feelings of anger and sorrow at the death of George Floyd.

I want to take this occasion to share that racism and discrimination have no place on the campuses of Flemington-

Raritan Regional Schools. Our schools are committed to maintaining a safe environment for everyone who works and goes to school here. Our Class III Officers are trained in the best practices to keep our schools safe and respond to the needs of safety and security with kids in mind. The safety of our staff, faculty, students, and our community is not the job of one individual. Anyone who sees someone on our campuses that is in danger or is experiencing racial discrimination of any kind should report it. Our District has a way to report such incidents that can be used. Our district website has an Affirmative Action link. You can find that link [here](#).

The Board's affirmative action program recognizes and values the diversity of persons and groups within society and promotes the acceptance of persons of diverse backgrounds regardless of race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, religion, disability, or socioeconomic status. The affirmative action program promotes equal educational opportunity. It fosters a learning environment that is free from all forms of prejudice, discrimination, and harassment based upon race, creed, color, national origin, ancestry, age, marital status, affectional or sexual orientation, gender, gender identity or expression, religion, disability, or socioeconomic status in the policies, programs, and practices of the Board of Education.

BLUEPRINT FOR REOPENING SCHOOLS

According to the [New Jersey Department of Education](#), there are over 580 school districts, more than 2,500 schools, and over 115,000 teachers. Clear guidance on how to prepare for the opening of schools in September is vital for success to bring students, teachers, and support staff back to school with confidence.

The closing of schools for the remainder of the school year provided the answer to the question we all had, "Will schools reopen this school year?" but left other unanswered questions. The Flemington-Raritan Regional School District team needed to plan how to close up classrooms, return student items that were left behind, distribute yearbooks, deliver caps and gowns to 8th graders and medications to students, along with a whole host of other procedures.

School districts around the country are turning to experts to advise on how to open school doors in September. *Education Week*, a professional resource for educators, continues to provide information and guidance for educators during remote learning. Another document for educators, *American Enterprise Institute*, produced a report with key points families and communities need to consider to be ready to reopen as

soon as public health officials signal it is safe. You can find the *American Enterprise Institute* link [here](#). The report references the guidance from the White House on opening up America again.

There are suggestions in these two documents and others that the District is considering and referring to as we make our plans. It is highly likely we will need to adjust our day-to-day operations to adhere to public health guidance. The significant areas that will need to be addressed are:

1. Meal service
2. Classroom spaces
3. Class schedules
4. Cleanliness of buildings and school busses
5. Transportation
6. Physical distancing
7. Social and emotional support for our students (and staff).

These are just a few items that will require a new way of doing business. I am confident that Flemington-Raritan Regional School District will blaze a path forward to a new way of learning should social distancing require our ingenuity to continue to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conversations continue with the Hunterdon County Health Department and guidance by Director Karen DeMarco guided closing our school doors, but not yet on opening. This week the State of Maryland released a draft for the reopening of schools. The link [here](#) provides schools in Maryland a blueprint for planning. The New Jersey School Boards Association published a report titled, [Searching for a 'New Normal' in New Jersey's Public Schools](#).



Remote learning cannot replace students' experiences with their teachers, administrators, and support staff. The District is developing scheduling models and calendar considerations that can be used to fit the needs of our community. Models that are being investigated consist of one-day rotations; two-day rotations; A/B week; face-to-face and distance-learning are examples of hybrid models. The Superintendent, in collaboration with the Assistant Superintendent, has been working together to plan for the eventual reopening of schools. The health, safety, and wellness of students, families, educators, and staff must be a priority.

Next month I will reach out to the community through the newsletter to ask for community members who are interested in serving on a reopening of school committee to participate in planning, researching, and developing guidance. Watch for the June newsletter released in mid-June.

In addition, the District has taken steps to use the CARES Act money, federal money appropriated to schools, to secure the purchase of digital forehead thermometers for each school. The brand of thermometers selected was recommended by the

district physician, Dr. Elizabeth Raleigh, and our school nurses. We are working with a hand gel distributor to purchase touchless hand gel stations for locations at each classroom in every school, as well as mobile hand gel stations that can be moved throughout the school or outside to bus arrival stations and parent drop off. The Flemington-Raritan Regional School District expects challenges in many realms with the opening of our school doors, financial challenges are one of many. The public health and the health of our staff, students, and faculty are paramount.

We are preparing our building so that you and your child(ren) can return with confidence in the fall.

The New Jersey Department of Education has asked for parent input on coming back to school in September. The survey information is distributed by the New Jersey Department of Education. The link to the English survey is [here](#). A link to the Spanish survey is [here](#).



FACILITIES, OPERATIONS AND REFERENDUM PROGRESS

Referendum work continues despite school closures. Due to the closing of schools, we have moved forward quicker than initially planned with roof work at Barley Sheaf, Robert Hunter, and Copper Hill Elementary Schools. The closure of schools for the remainder of the school year allowed the roofing company, Pravco, to begin.

Sonitrol and Data Comm are working together to install our 21st-century communication system in all buildings. The New Jersey Department of Education Safety and Security Office and our Raritan Township Police Department were consulted on the location of new classroom phones that provide 21st-century communication capabilities to our police departments and between schools and classrooms within each building. A member of the technology department, a member of the facilities team, one of our Class III Officers, and one of our District Safety Specialists (Mr. Lockett and Mr. Sibilja) joined our Class III Officers to walk buildings to discuss phone placement.

Paul Graebener, the Senior Project Manager for our referendum work, has been meeting with construction personnel for the electrical and roofing work that is part of the referendum. Electrical work is to begin at Robert Hunter, Barley Sheaf, and Francis A Desmares Elementary Schools. There is excellent progress at Barley Sheaf Elementary School on the roof work. The flopped and flat areas on the Barley Sheaf Elementary School roof have been receiving extra attention. The electrician has begun delivery of materials at BS, RH, FAD, and RFIS for the electrical upgrades.



The community can find more pictures of our referendum work on our district website [linked here](#).

END OF YEAR CELEBRATIONS

The governor released the Governor's Executive Order (E.O.) #148, "Increasing Capacity Limit on Outdoor Gatherings." Public health experts continue to identify outdoor environments that present a reduced risk of transmission as compared to indoor environments. All gatherings must adhere to the rules listed in the Executive Order (E.O.) #148.



A summary of the Governor's Executive Order (E.O.) #148: All ceremonies must take place outdoors and must not be planned as an indoor ceremony. E.O. #148 increased the attendees at an outdoor gathering from 10 to 25 people. However, the increase to 25 people must also include those that are managing the ceremony. Executive Order Additional guidance requires that all outdoor ceremonies may only occur on or after July 6th and may not occur on July 7th because of the 2020 Primary Election.

Additional guidelines and recommendations were released on May 27th by the Department of Education and then revised the briefing on May 28th. In the briefing, critical factors are to be considered for all commencement ceremonies. These factors include posting signage discouraging anyone from attending if they are experiencing symptoms, as well as the suggestion that institutions should conduct temperature screenings with non-contact thermometers of everyone entering the venue. Any person with a temperature of 100.4°F should be excluded from the event. These restrictions, among others, present significant challenges for the District. The District has 394 8th graders enrolled.

Acknowledging our students for their hard work, dedication, and achievements is always one of the proudest moments for J.P. Case and the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District. To say that we are saddened by the way this pandemic has affected our students and community would be an understatement. As always, when working with children and the community at large, safety is paramount. Following Governor Murphy's guidelines, school districts are to work in consultation with municipal officials, such as the Office of Emergency Management and local law enforcement, first responders, and health officials to ensure the safety and well-being of our community.

As such, our plans moving forward meet the Hunterdon County Health Department's approval and are within the guidelines set forth by Governor Murphy's Executive Order #142. The New Jersey Department of Education recently stated that "we recommended that districts take full advantage of virtual ceremonies, which are the safest alternative graduation ceremony at this time" (NJDOE, "Guiding The Education Community Through The COVID-19 Pandemic, May 28th, 2020, <https://www.nj.gov/education/covid19/boardops/commencement.shtml>).

Although clinical research has provided us with significant information about COVID-19, virologists, epidemiologists, and our local government agree that there is still much to be learned. When organizing large events for younger children, we are erring on the side of caution in an attempt to keep our students and community members healthy and safe.



MARVELOUS MATHEMATICIANS

Once again, our spectacular students earned top scores in annual math competitions. I'd like to formally acknowledge and congratulate the following students who earned top scores, as of February, in the Continental Math League:

Grade 3

- Henry Arnold, Barley Sheaf School
- Leo Han, Copper Hill School
- Finn Lee, Francis A. Desmares School

Grade 5

- Hunter Keeth, Reading-Fleming Intermediate School

In addition, Reading-Fleming Intermediate School is proud to announce that the school ranked 25th out of 113 schools competing in this year's New Jersey Math League.

Top scoring 6th-grade students are:

- Chris Doyle
- Kyle Easley
- Wyatt Kovacs
- Paola Montes
- Jared Morano
- Owen Petersen



The J.P. Case Middle School, 7th Grade Algebra students, tied for 10th place out of the 108 schools in the state who participated in the New Jersey Mathematics League Competition. J.P. Case ranked first in Hunterdon/Warren counties.

J.P. Case's top-scoring students are:

- Mason Irani
- Ann Kallacheril
- Austin Keeth
- Dylan Salita, tied for highest score at J.P. Case
- Cole Sladowsky
- Nishant Vellanki
- Ian Weitz
- Alex Zatuchney, tied for highest score at J.P. Case

I am so proud of the tremendous efforts of our math students. I commend and applaud all of our district math teachers for the outstanding service and support of their students, especially elementary G&T Math Teachers Dr. Karen Amundsen and Michele Tonge; Reading-Fleming math teachers Carri Strunk, Melissa Baden, Lori Koehler, and Elizabeth Soccolich; J.P. Case math teachers Nadine Ciasulli and Carly Hering; and District Math/Science Supervisor Kristen Wolff. Bravo!

The J. P. Case Promotion Committee was asked to create a video experience that recognizes our students' accomplishments, celebrates student relationships, highlights students from the class, and celebrates student life from this school year. Our goal is to celebrate our students in a different but safe and meaningful way. The committee has done phenomenal work, and we are excited to have our community view the J. P. Case Virtual Promotion Ceremony on June 23rd.

The committee, along with the J.P. Case building principal, continues to plan for ways to recognize students and 8th-grade promotion. Exciting details are to be released very soon!

STUDENT SHOUT OUTS!

The District invites families of kindergarten, 4th, 6th, and 8th grade students to submit a photo or video congratulating their child on his or her milestone year. This is one special way the



District can help to celebrate kindergarten graduates, 4th and 6th grade move-up transitions, and 8th grade promotion. These photos and video messages will be posted on the District Facebook page through the last day of school. Parents

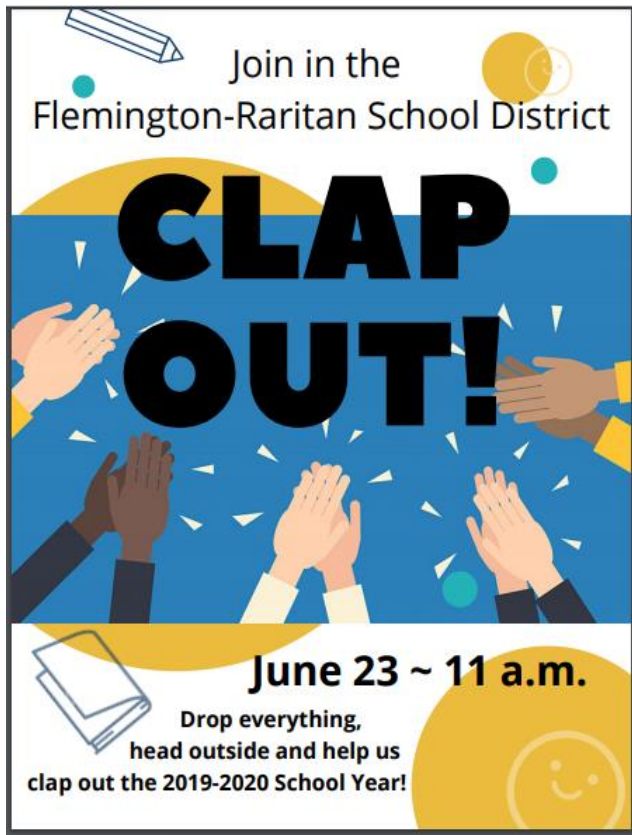
may include their child's first name only and grade. The name of the school may be omitted by the parent to ensure the security and privacy of student information. Photos and videos can be e-mailed to lbruhn@frsd.k12.nj.us.

RETURN OF MATERIALS

Let me begin by thanking you for your support and patience during the past several months of virtual learning. As we wind down the school year, we want to return items your child may have left in his or her desk or locker. We also need to collect materials loaned to your child so that we can begin to prepare for next year. A schedule to



allow for parents to pick up students' materials that were left behind in school buildings on March 13th has been developed and will be shared with parents by individual school principals. The schedule for each school will allow for an organized drop off system. Please understand that to stay on schedule and provide for the safety/health of your family and our staff we will not be able to address individual concerns or needs at this time. We urge you to contact your child's teacher via e-mail with these concerns or questions. We appreciate your cooperation and assistance in this process.



JOIN IN THE DISTRICT-WIDE CLAP OUT
JUNE 23, 11 AM

Our district invites our students, families, staff members and the entire community to drop everything and help us clap out the end of the 2019-2020 school year. On June 23, at 11 a.m., drop everything, head outside to your porch, patio, driveway, balcony, front yard or even on your doorstep as we collectively clap to mark the dismissal of all students on their last day of school. This is just one more way we can come together to celebrate the hard work, dedication and effort of all of our students, parents, teachers, and employees. Mark your calendar, and come on out to the CLAP OUT! Let us hear you!



FOURTH OF JULY FIREWORKS SHOW
CANCELLED BY THE BOROUGH

Flemington Borough announced on May 28th that the fireworks have been canceled. The message on Facebook announced: *On today's Facebook Live, we made the sad announcement that the annual July 3rd fireworks will be canceled this year. We waited as long as we could to make the decision but, given the uncertainty with everything, we felt it*

best to cancel rather than postpone. This decision was made with both public safety and financial considerations in mind. We will see you next year for an even better show.

Usually, the fireworks celebration is held at Reading Fleming Intermediate School. Sadly, this year, the Flemington Borough canceled the event.

PRIMARY ELECTION LOCATION

Pursuant to Executive Order 144 issued May 15, 2020, the schools will not be used as polling locations for the July 7, 2020 Primary Election. Per the Order, the majority of voting will be conducted by a Vote-By-Mail Ballot. However, it is required that each municipality has one polling location to facilitate audio voting by machine for any voter unable to complete a paper ballot without assistance due to disability. The polling location for Raritan Township will be the Municipal Building, and therefore, the use of any school facility will not be needed at this time.



VIRTUAL PARENT SERIES

In partnership with High Focus Centers, our district is proud to offer a virtual parent workshop series. To view the flyer on our Virtual Backpack, [please click here](#).

