



Flemington-Raritan School District Parent Newsletter

May 2019, Edition 9

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MAY GREETINGS



photo of Chase's writing to share with Mrs. Gabruk and to wish her a safe and a fabulous trip to China.



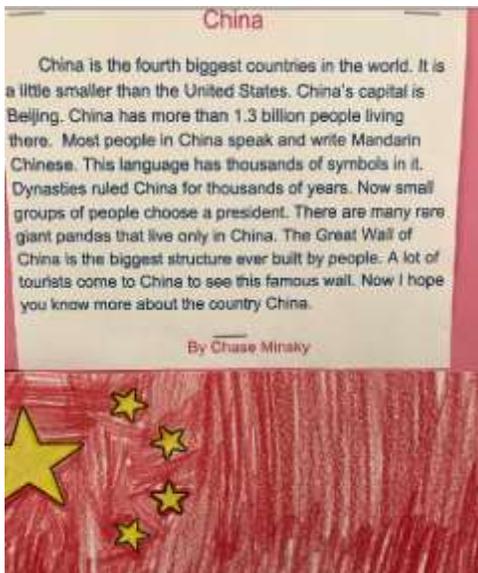
ROBERT HUNTER PRINCIPAL SEARCH

你好 or Nǐ hǎo!

One of our building administrators will be traveling over 6,500 miles to Wenzhou, China in just a few days! As part of our STEM

Ecosystem grant Flemington-Raritan Regional School District was selected to send a delegate to China to participate in the Zhejiang-New Jersey Sister Schools Program and to participate in the June 1 STEM Forum at Wenzhou

Kean University (WKU) in Wenzhou. I am proud to announce to our community that Mrs. Karen Gabruk, Principal of Barley Sheaf Elementary School, will represent Flemington-Raritan Regional School District in the STEM Forum at Wenzhou Kean University. Wenzhou Kean University is covering the international travel to Beijing, as well as the domestic travel to Wenzhou, along with accommodations and meals in Wenzhou for Mrs. Gabruk. Mrs. Gabruk was also invited to participate in Wenzhou Kean University graduation ceremonies on June 2 as part of our STEM Ecosystem partnership.



The Robert Hunter Elementary School Principal Hiring Committee has 12 members, including the Superintendent of Schools. Committee members will recommend to the Superintendent a Robert Hunter Elementary School Principal with an anticipated start date of July 1, 2019. Committee members include:

- Colleen Ewing, Flemington-Raritan Education Association Representation and Robert Hunter School 1st-grade teacher with experience in kindergarten;
- Lori Carlucci, Robert Hunter School 2019 Educator of the Year Representative and 2nd-grade teacher;
- Jennifer Smits, Robert Hunter School 3rd-grade teacher;
- Kristen Litchfield, Robert Hunter School Literacy Coach;
- Sarah Fontanez, Robert Hunter School Guidance Counselor;
- Karen Gabruk, Barley Sheaf Elementary School Principal;
- Carol Howell, Francis A. Desmares Elementary School Principal;
- Michele Cook, Language Arts Supervisor;
- Daniel Bland, Assistant Superintendent;
- Allison Pelletier, Robert Hunter School PTO Vice President, 2019-2020 school year; and
- Lori Castronuovo, Robert Hunter School PTO President, 2019-2020 school year.

The committee members have a very important job in that they are the individuals that are tasked with closely analyzing all the attributes and qualities of the next leader of Robert Hunter Elementary School. They have an ethical obligation to remain confidential about the names and qualifications of candidates. They have been guided that the information regarding committee members' deliberations are all strictly confidential. Once the successful candidate is Board-approved then members may share, in broad terms and without attribution, the reasons the committee members recommended the candidate.

Copper Hill student, Chase Minsky, recently researched about the country of China. He shared his knowledge with his class at Copper Hill School. While visiting Copper Hill I snapped a

The district had a very strong interest of applicants which speaks to the respect of the district and the reputation we have with others. Prior to the interview a survey was shared with the Robert Hunter School community including staff, teachers, and parents. This happened in early April to gather input about the traits and challenges that stakeholders felt needed to be addressed by the building principal. Thank you to those of you that took the time to share your valuable input. I personally reviewed all 55 narrative responses and noticed recurring themes, as well as all of the responders' answer choices. Some of our applicants were not chosen to interview based on the feedback provided by stakeholders.

There were 119 applicants for the position, with the top candidates moving to the first round of interviews which occurred in early May. A second round of interviews is scheduled for late May. I will keep our community up-to-date on decisions that are made about this important leadership position in our district.

SUPERVISOR OF PUPIL PERSONNEL SERVICES & SPECIAL EDUCATION HIRING COMMITTEE

In addition to the Robert Hunter Principal search the district seeks to hire a Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services and Special Education. The Hiring Committee has 15 members, including the current Interim Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Dr. Kathy Giordanella, and the new Director of Pupil Services, Mr. Jeff Presley. Committee members will recommend to the Superintendent two candidates for the Supervisor of Pupil Personnel Services and Special Education position. Interviews are scheduled for May 29. Committee members include the following:

- Ms. Maria Yurecko, LDT-C
 - Mrs. Kristen Wolff, Supervisor of Math/Science
 - Ms. Susan Vala, Flemington-Raritan Regional School District Education Association Representative & regular education teacher
 - Mr. Andrew Midgley, CST/Psychologist
 - Ms. Joanne Hoffmann, Speech Therapist
 - Ms. Katelyn Moscaritolo, Special Education Teacher
 - Ms. Vanessa Ahmed, Principal of Copper Hill Elementary School
 - Mr. Jesse Lockett, Assistant Principal of Copper Hill Elementary School
 - Mr. Jeff Presley, Director of Pupil Services (as of July 1, 2019)
 - Dr. Kathy Giordanella, Interim Director of Pupil Services
- The district is finalizing two parent representatives for the committee.

INDOOR AIR QUALITY SPRING UPDATE



To provide clear communication with staff, parents and community members, I am writing to share information with our stakeholders about indoor air quality in the Flemington-Raritan Regional Schools and the latest measures being taken to ensure moisture and

humidity levels are regulated in our district. As communicated in the March Superintendent's Newsletter on pages three and four, which can be found [here](#), the district is taking proactive measures to combat any mold, mildew, and moisture in our schools. On September 11, 2018, at the Board of Education meeting, I provided the public with the District's Indoor Air Quality Remediation Efforts. You can find that link [here](#). Indoor air quality issues were first discovered on August 13, 2018. The District successfully remediated all six buildings within three weeks, but couldn't avoid a two-day delay in the opening of school. The district partnered with microbiologist Dr. Wei Tang, Ph.D., and professional cleaning services from Serve Pro, as well as an outside professional consultant from R.K. Occupational and Environmental Analysis professional, a certified Indoor Environmental Quality expert.



As the weather begins to get warmer we have set procedures in place to keep the buildings dry and humidity levels at appropriate ranges. In light of all that has been learned throughout the

state this past summer, the District is working closely with consultants to implement additional proactive measures to address air quality concerns. This will include air quality testing in areas where the environmentalist recommends testing and the use of industrial-sized HEPA air scrubbers and industrial dehumidifiers, as well as a consultation with the environmentalist. Should areas cause concern or evidence of growth occur the following procedures are in place:

1. Building Principal is notified;
2. Facilities team is notified;
3. Superintendent is notified;
4. Areas are cleaned with special Maslin cloths;
5. Porous items that cannot be cleaned are discarded;
6. Replacement of uni-vent filters, when needed;
7. Classroom temperatures set at 75 degrees to avoid humidity buildup;
8. Windows kept closed on days when the humidity is above 85%;
9. Professional cleaning, if advised by the environmentalist;
10. Monthly summertime consult and building walkthroughs with environmentalist(s);
11. Dehumidifiers in place in all buildings;
12. HEPA air scrubbers used when needed;
13. HVAC monitoring in schools that have air conditioning;
14. Purchase of humidity monitors for use in the spring.

The district is in constant contact and collaboration with experts in the area of quality indoor air. We are taking the necessary steps to remediate any situations that are brought to the attention of building principals. The Superintendent's

Office has been planning ahead to ensure we do not have issues with indoor air quality, as we did last summer, and has finalized an Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) action plan. This will be shared with members of the Board of Education next week and members of the Wellness Committee and District Safety Committees in June.

The heat, district wide, has been turned off with the exception of the previous day this week where it was a little cooler than we typically see this time of year. We continue to bring in outside air through the ventilators, as is required by the State of New Jersey. We are working to be sure that all systems are working properly. At this time teachers may open their windows if they so choose. We have not set any limitations on opening the windows. The Maintenance Department has been strategically placing dehumidifiers throughout the district. We understand they are noisy and produce heat, but this is the direct line of defense against unusual fungi growth. Currently these dehumidifiers are operating only at night.

Teachers have been told by my office to report any concerns they have with their classrooms to their building Principals. They will contact the Maintenance Department to investigate those concerns and the Maintenance Department in turn communicates this to me. If we feel the need to request changes to our current procedures, or if any other facility restrictions are needed, we will communicate those concerns with teachers. The Maintenance Department and custodial staff are taking other steps to increase air circulation inside the building.

As a reminder, mold and mildew are all around us; inside and outside our homes and our buildings. We cannot eliminate all mold. As referenced in the report by Mike McGuiness, Occupational & Environmental Analysis in the Copper Hill Elementary School Information report, there are no specific standards or accepted exposure levels to differentiate between "safe" or "unsafe" exposure levels. "Given these limitations, we advise our clients to keep their buildings clean, and most importantly, dry." ([Reference, Initial Information- Copper Hill Elementary School 8/20/18](#))

The health, comfort, and learning environment of students and staff are important aspects of the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District's mission. The Flemington-Raritan Regional School District is strongly committed to the health and comfort of our students and staff, as well the environmental quality in the school. It is important for all that our schools provide a safe, comfortable, and productive environment for our students and staff so that we achieve our core mission—educating students. Our district follows the guidelines by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to prevent as many indoor air quality problems (IAQ) as possible and respond to any IAQ issues that may arise. For more information visit the EPA link [here](#).

SUPERINTENDENT'S ADVISORY COMMITTEE **THANK YOU FOR VOLUNTEERING!**

Board policy states, *"The success of the school system depends, to a large extent, on open channels of communication between the school community and the community at large."* For this committee, the Superintendent sought to bring community



members together, including staff members, in a committee to serve in a liaison capacity between the community and the school district. The committee meets together for the first meeting on Wednesday, June 5. At the June 5 meeting the committee will be tasked with reviewing data generated from the district survey and engaging in visionary discussions about what the community desires for facility upgrades and how the community and district can best support the vision.

The committee will also serve as a vehicle for encouraging meaningful exchange among parents, community members, staff, and Board Members on facility upgrades and student, staff, and campus safety. Future committee meetings will focus parents, staff, students, and community members on upgrades that are necessary for our school facilities and decisions about student, staff, and campus safety.

Members were selected based on the need to represent a wide range of community interests and backgrounds. The goal was for the committee to consist of at least three parent representatives from each school, one of whom represents the PTO executive committee, and two members of the community who do not have children in the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District; one from Flemington Borough and one from Raritan Township, as well as staff representation from K-5 and 6-8.

Forty-one members of our community expressed their interest in serving on the Superintendent's Advisory Committee. The committee will sub-divide into an advisory committee and three sub-committees 1) District Security; 2) Facility Upgrades; and 3) School and District Culture for Success.

THE IMPORTANCE OF VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS & CREATIVITY

Art plays an important role in the educational and social development of students. New Jersey's Visual and Performing Arts Standards found [here](#) speak to the importance of creativity as a driving force in the 21st century global economy. According to a 2007 report by the National Center on Education and the Economy, tomorrow's employers are looking for creative and innovative



people. The Flemington-Raritan Regional School District recognizes the importance of fostering creativity in our students and providing opportunities for students to be innovative. New Jersey's student learning standards detail learning in visual arts, dance, music, and theatre. Student learning is focused on creating, performing, and responding and this month there is a wide variety of concerts and art shows throughout the district that highlight students' visual and performing arts strengths. A visit to any one of our schools will demonstrate our students' understanding of the elements of art in dance, music, theatre, and visual art. From pre-school through grade eight students have opportunities to be exposed to and have opportunities in content knowledge and skill development in the arts.

Recently during school visits I couldn't help but stop and gaze at the beautiful art work by our students. Art teacher Melissa Griffis, from Copper Hill School, shared with me the technique that students used to create the beautiful flower inspired artwork. Katherine Dribbon, from Barley Sheaf School, shared with me the techniques students used to create the colorful emus.

Our eighth graders' trimester three artwork is on display in the hallways at J. P. Case. J.P. Case art teacher, Ms. Sewell, focuses students' attention on multiple techniques to create breathtaking artwork.



Our performing arts classes also continue to inspire creativity. Students in the J.P. Case Middle School Symphony Orchestra achieved an "Excellent" rating this past weekend at the Hershey Park Music in the Park Competition. Similarly,

the J.P. Case Jazz Band, Tigerettes, and Chorale all shined in their performances and achieved "Superior" ratings, the highest rating available, at the competition, too.

Congratulations to all of our art and music students!

SOCIAL MEDIA SUPERVISION; STREET DRUGS AVAILABLE ON SOCIAL MEDIA

From Snapchat to Instagram to Twitter to a whole host of other social media Internet tools managing all that kids have access to these days can be a full time job. As a mother of four children ranging in ages from 12 to 19 my husband and I have many conversations with our children about wise choices regarding social media. While we do not monitor every posting of our older children we do take the time to talk with

them about what they post and the postings of people and friends they follow.

One night at the dinner table I asked my son, a senior at a local public high school, if he had seen any postings on social media

advertising the sale of drugs or alcohol. I asked because I read a blog titled, Tech Talk Tuesdays, which had an article about drugs on social media.



Delaney Ruston, MD, wrote on April 22, 2019, that last month in Marin County, California, police arrested a person who was selling drugs. This drug arrest was different than other arrests because the person was selling drugs using Snapchat. Read more below and at the link [here](#).

"Last month in Marin County, California, police arrested a person who was selling drugs. What makes this arrest different than most other drug busts is that this person was selling drugs on Snapchat. Yes. The same Snapchat our youth use to send selfies to their friends. It's happening on Instagram too. Dealers use code words, hashtags, emojis and display actual pictures of what they have to offer.

"Drugs on social media is incredibly prevalent," says Josie Sanguinetti, School Resource Officer for the Marin County Sheriff's Department. "I've seen as young as 10 and obviously as old as 18 and many adults. And drugs do not discriminate. Every high school and some middle schools in the county have been touched by this." One San Rafael Police Department narcotics officer told my co-producer that he could find marijuana, Xanax, prescription painkillers and Molly (MDMA) within an hour of searching on social media. Simple searches with hashtags like #weed4sale, #oxy or #painpills will pull up story after story (that is IG or Snapchat stories) with pictures of drugs and cash and emojis such as the Christmas tree, fire, and \$\$ that mean it's for sale. Requests are left in the comments or you can direct message the dealer. With the right language, you can receive a response. Often dealers will request the conversation about price, quality and delivery details be had on encrypted messaging apps like Kik or What's App. Deals are done either electronically with payment through apps like Venmo and PayPal and product is then mailed to the buyer or delivered in person and paid for in cash. Although Instagram and Snapchat have made some efforts to ban certain hashtags and search terms, they are not able to flag all posts. "We're not yet sophisticated enough to tease apart every post to see if it's trying to sell someone illegal drugs or they are taking Xanax cause they are stressed out," Facebook's Vice President for Global Marketing Solutions, Carolyn Everson,

told the [Washington Post](#) in September of last year. "Obviously, there is some stuff that gets through that is totally against our policy, and we're getting better at it."

After the Washington Post article was published, Facebook (who owns Instagram) released a [blog post](#) with steps they are taking to combat the sale of drugs on their platforms. "We've made progress in the fight against illicit drug sales on our platforms, but we have more to do. We're committed to making sure we do everything we can to prevent this kind of abuse," Monika Bickert, the company's Vice President of Global Policy Management, said in the post.

For this Tech Talk Tuesday start a conversation with your family about drugs available on social media and what to do. Here are some questions to get you started:

- *Have you seen drugs advertised on social media?*
- *Have you ever heard of someone getting caught for posting drugs on social media?*
- *What ways are drugs or alcohol displayed in photos by people you know, or don't know, and what are some of the risks of such posts?"*

TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK & NATIONAL SCHOOL NURSES DAY CELEBRATIONS

As the month of May marked Teacher Appreciation Week special celebrations were held district-wide to honor our hardworking educators who are dedicated to our students and schools. Our generous PTOs hosted special breakfasts and luncheons for staff members and our Board of Education and I teamed up with our Flemington-Raritan Education Foundation to provide every teacher with a copy of one of my favorite books, [Rain Reign](#).



[Reign](#). Each staff member in our district also received a postcard showcasing a student's work of art. We thank Robert Hunter School 3rd-grade student Sabrina Kandil for her sharing her mixed media piece, entitled "Collapsing City." In addition, the Flemington-Raritan



Education Foundation also held its annual Thank-A-Teacher Campaign. Our district is so fortunate to have outstanding educators serving every student, every day at every opportunity as well as PTOs and a Foundation that volunteers

countless hours to support our staff members and our schools. Thank you!

In addition, May is also a time to honor and celebrate our school nurses. On May 6, our Board of Education proudly recognized our schools nurses and acknowledged their accomplishments and achievements. The nurses shared a presentation highlighting a day in the life of a school nurse. You can view our school nurses' presentation [here](#).



UPCOMING DATES & REMINDERS

Although the school year is winding down, we are as busy as ever! Please take a moment to review the following dates and reminders:

- May 21 – Superintendent's Roundtable Session, 9:30 a.m., Barley Sheaf School
- May 22 – Spring Concerts at Barley Sheaf, Copper Hill, Francis A. Desmares, Robert Hunter
- May 24 – School Open; B-Day and Day 2
- May 27 – School Closed/Memorial Day
- May 28 – Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m. J.P. Case Middle School (*Tuesday*)
- May 29 – J.P. Case Band & Jazz Ensemble Concert
- June 5 – J.P. Case Vocal Music Concert
- June 10 – Board of Education Meeting, 7 p.m. J.P. Case Middle School – Retiree Recognition & Reception; please join us!
- June 11 – Superintendent's Roundtable Session, 6 p.m., Robert Hunter School
- June 11 – Superintendent's Roundtable Session, 9:30 a.m., Francis A. Desmares School
- June 21 – Last Day & 8th-Grade Promotion!

FLEMINGTON-RARITAN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT 2019-2020 STUDENT CALENDAR

September 2	Labor Day	School Closed for Students & Staff
September 3	Staff Development Day – First Day for Staff	School Closed for Students only
September 4	Staff Development Day	School Closed for Students only
September 5	First Day for Students	
September 18	Open House – Reading-Fleming Intermediate School	Early Dismissal – Gr. 5-6 only
September 19	Open House – Elementary Schools	Early Dismissal – Gr. K-4 only
September 25	Open House – J.P. Case Middle School	Early Dismissal – Gr. 7-8 only
September 30	Rosh Hashanah	School Closed for Students & Staff
October 9	Yom Kippur	School Closed for Students & Staff
October 15	Staff Development Day	Early Dismissal for Students
October 18	Interims Available on Parent Portal – J.P. Case/RFIS	
November 5	Election Day/Staff Development Day	School Closed for Students only
November 7-8	NJEA Teacher Conference	School Closed for Students & Staff
November 13	Elementary Marking Period #1 Ends	
November 20	Elementary Report Cards (Gr.3-4) available on the Parent Portal	
November 20,21, 25,26	Elementary Parent/Teacher Conferences <i>11/20, Evening; 11/21, Afternoon; 11/25, Evening; 11/26, Afternoon</i>	Early Dismissal, Gr. K-4 only
November 27	Thanksgiving Recess begins	Early Dismissal
November 28-29	Thanksgiving Recess	School Closed for Students & Staff
December 2	5-8 Parent/Teacher Conferences: <i>RFIS-3:15-5:45 p.m.; JPC – 5:30-8 p.m.</i>	Regular Day – Grades K-8
December 3	5-8 Parent/Teacher Conferences: <i>RFIS- 1:30-4:30 p.m.; JPC-5:30-8 p.m.</i>	Early Dismissal – RFIS & JPC
December 4	5-8 Parent/Teacher Conferences: <i>JPC-1:30-4 p.m.; RFIS-5:30-8 p.m.</i>	Early Dismissal – RFIS & JPC
December 5	5-8 Parent/Teacher Conferences: <i>JPC-2:30-5 p.m.; RFIS-5:30-8 p.m.</i>	Early Dismissal – RFIS & JPC
December 6	5-8 Parent/Teacher Conferences: <i>RFIS- 1:30-4:30 p.m. ; JPC-1:30-4 p.m.</i> RFIS/JPC Trimester 1 Ends	Early Dismissal – RFIS & JPC
December 20	Winter Break Recess begins	Early Dismissal
Dec. 23 – Jan. 1	Winter Recess	School Closed for Students & Staff
January 2	Classes Resume	
January 20	Martin Luther King Day	School Closed for Students & Staff
January 28	Staff Development Day	Early Dismissal for Students
January 30	Interims Available on Parent Portal – J.P. Case/RFIS Elementary Marking Period #2 Ends	
February 6	Elementary Report Cards (K-4) available on the Parent Portal	
February 14	Staff Development Day	School Closed for Students only
February 17	President’s Day	School Closed for Students & Staff
February 24	Kindergarten Registration at Robert Hunter School - Snow Date: March 2	
February 25	Kindergarten Registration at Copper Hill School - Snow Date: March 3	
February 26	Kindergarten Registration at Francis A. Desmares School - Snow Date: March 4	
February 27	Kindergarten Registration at Barley Sheaf School - Snow Date: March 5	
March 9	Staff Development Day (Contingency Day #4 – If needed, it will be an Early Dismissal Day for students and an extended PD day for staff.)	School Closed for Students only
March 17	RFIS/JPC Trimester 2 Ends	
April 7	Elementary Marking Period #3 Ends	
April 9	Contingency Day #3	School Closed for Students & Staff
April 10-17	Spring Recess	School Closed for Students & Staff
April 20	Contingency Day #2	School Closed for Students & Staff
April 24	Elementary Report Cards (Gr. 2-4) available on the Parent Portal	
May 8	Interims Available on Parent Portal – J.P. Case/RFIS	
May 22	Contingency Day #1	School Closed for Students & Staff
May 25	Memorial Day	School Closed for Students & Staff
June 22		Early Dismissal
June 23	Last Day of School - Report Cards Go Home/Parent Portal	Early Dismissal

Contingency Days: *Four days have been allotted for emergency school closings as needed. If school is closed due to an emergency, days will be made up using the contingency days in the following order: May 22, April 20, April 9 and March 9. If March 9 is used as a make-up day, it will be an early dismissal day for students and an extended PD day for staff. If additional days are required, the following days will be reinstated: April 17, 16, 15, 14, and 13.