

Flemington-Raritan Regional School District  
Ms. Kari McGann  
Superintendent of Schools  
50 Court Street, Flemington, New Jersey 08822-1300  
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TO: Flemington-Raritan Regional School District Parents/Guardians & Community  
FROM: Kari McGann, Superintendent of Schools  
DATE: March 12, 2020  
RE: **Early Dismissal for Students – March 13 and March 16, 2020**

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to be an evolving situation across the world and our country and concern continues to grow locally as an increased number of confirmed cases are being reported in New Jersey and across the nation every day. The health and safety of our students, faculty, and staff is our top priority.

**With this in mind, the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District will hold an early dismissal on Friday, March 13 and Monday, March 16, 2020, to prepare for electronic, virtual school should the District need to close to students and staff as a result of the Coronavirus.**

On Friday, March 13, students will bring home paper-based instructional materials (e.g. “just-right books,” novels, guided reading texts, Math Expressions, math textbooks, science books, etc.) just in case the weekend requires decisions that necessitate a school closing. If possible, please send your child(ren) into school on Friday with a plastic or reusable bag to bring home supplies and materials that may not fit in their backpack.

The YMCA after-care program will operate on March 13 and March 16 at Barley Sheaf School, Copper Hill School, Francis A. Desmares School, Robert Hunter School and Reading-Fleming Intermediate School from afternoon dismissal through 6 p.m. Please note, Reading-Fleming Intermediate School does not serve lunch on early dismissal days; therefore, if you have a child attending the RFIS after-care program, please be sure to pack a lunch on both early dismissal days.

The Flemington-Raritan Regional School District is actively monitoring the New Jersey Department of Health, the Hunterdon County Health Department, and the Center for Disease Control for situational updates. We are in regular contact with our district physician and our district school nurses. The guidance provided here is based upon current knowledge of COVID-19. It is important to note that the District has a response plan for pandemic outbreaks, which contains guidelines on monitoring attendance and illness for staff and students, as well as a plan of care for anyone who becomes ill.

At this time, out of an abundance of caution for our school nurses, if a child becomes sick at school and fever is confirmed or respiratory illness is suspected, the child will be asked to wear a disposable face mask and be sent home. In these instances, parents will be instructed to contact their healthcare provider for further instructions. Triage procedures are in place to separate sick and well students.

School nurse offices and classrooms continue to be cleaned daily in buildings where students are experiencing high levels of the common flu. Tracking attendance has allowed us to focus extra attention on classrooms of high absenteeism so that these areas can be disinfected at night. Each

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evening, our cleaning staff is extra vigilant about disinfecting desks, doorknobs, school bus seats, phones, and all public areas.

Even with these precautionary measures in place, we realize that a school or district closure might become necessary. While I am hopeful this will not occur it is important that we plan and prepare in the event that it does happen.

Our leadership team has reviewed various situations in enacting preparedness plans should the coronavirus affect Hunterdon County. We believe the continuation of learning and the physical and emotional health of our students and staff is very important. In the event of a shut-down, the faculty will do their very best to facilitate student learning and support students in this uncharted territory through virtual, electronic instruction. This is a complicated issue, requiring coordination among our six schools, Curriculum Department, Information Services, Student Services, and Nutritional Services. Recommendations for extended learning opportunities will be shared. The recommendations will be designed to keep students in learning mode while at home.

We realize that a school closure brings various challenges, so we have compiled a list of questions and answers that are designed to help you prepare you and your child.

#### **How can we extend learning if the school is closed?**

Our goal will be for students to take advantage of many technology resources that are available for students. We will ask teachers to provide activities in the event of a prolonged absence using the communication tools that you have used this year. Electronic learning will take the place of regular classroom instruction with the intent to support student learning. Assignments are intended to reinforce or extend learning while at home. Parents will be asked to help by encouraging their child's participation in learning while at home for an extended time period if our schools are forced to close. Teacher Assistants will be asked to support instruction through "check-ins" with students.

#### **What if my student doesn't have a computing device or internet connection?**

Students can use personally-owned devices (phones, laptops, desktops, etc.) or district-issued iPads, upon request.

In grades pre-K-1, with our focus on literacy, we are encouraging students to read and be read to as much as possible. Additional learning opportunities will be available for students using the support of electronic learning facilitated by your child's teacher(s).

Students in grades K-2 are not issued home devices - with the exception of kindergarten students who have English as a Second Language (ESL) and port-of-entry ESL students. The primary medium for instructional delivery with Pre-K-2 students will be video recordings made available through the FRSD website.

Students in grades 3 and 4 will take home their Chromebook device daily, beginning tomorrow, March 13.

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Students in grades 5-8 should continue to bring home their Chromebook device daily.

**How will my child receive grades?**

Students may receive 1:1 feedback about reading choices, assignments, etc. through phone conversations with the teacher, audio/video recorded feedback, or written feedback. Assignments will be submitted by students via e-mail, text message, photograph, or through other means yet to be determined.

**What about the number of days the state requires for school to be in session?**

The provision of 180 school days for students is being addressed by the New Jersey Department of Education. According to the March 5 Department of Education briefing, *"Any day in which students impacted by a public health-related closure have access to home instruction services provided consistent with the guidance in this memo will count as a day in which the Board of Education has provided public school facilities toward its compliance with the 180-day requirement in accordance with N.J.S.A 18A:7F-9."* The provision of electronic, virtual home instruction is guided by our New Jersey code. The District developed electronic, virtual home instruction to meet the needs of students. Our District Virtual Learning Plan was submitted to the County Executive Superintendent's Office on Wednesday, March 11, 2020.

**What about families who need childcare in the event of a shut-down?**

We ask that all families start to make contingency plans for childcare in the event of an unprecedented shut-down of school.

**My family is concerned about the coronavirus. How can we discuss this topic together?**

BrainPop, one of our district's educational technology resources, developed [this video](#) that provides a great way of sharing information about the virus with children in a calm, factual manner. It's a great resource for adults too.

**Is there a central location where I can view resources about coronavirus?**

We are keeping our district website updated with important information including the CDC guidance and resources for households. As it states, the best advice for the prevention of any respiratory virus continues to be simple, common-sense preventative actions that apply to everyone:

- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available.
- Cover coughs or sneezes with your elbow or tissue that is immediately placed in the trash.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Clean and disinfect surfaces frequently, including countertops, light switches, cell phones, remotes, and other frequently touched items.
- If your child is sick and running a fever, defined as a temperature greater than or equal to 100-degrees Fahrenheit, please keep them out of school until they are fever-free for 24 hours without using fever-reducing medications.

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Through the District's comprehensive preparation, children will have multiple options to access their education. Those options include but are not limited to paper packets, project-based learning, and digital content. Our guiding principles are the following:

- a. Instruction should reflect the understanding that students will be experiencing heightened emotional concerns as a result of greater isolation, reduced opportunities for socialization, and fears for their own well-being and the well-being of their family and friends.
- b. Instruction must follow the District's scope and sequence with any exceptions implemented for the entire grade-level and overseen by the appropriate supervisor.
- c. To the extent possible, learning and teaching should continue without interruption and rely on as many familiar teachers, strategies and resources as possible.
- d. Daily lessons should provide opportunities for student interaction and collaboration to the extent possible.
- e. Daily lessons should include the use of timely and relevant feedback through the most personal means possible.
- f. Daily lessons should provide basic instruction on universal precautions in the context of the home and school.
- g. Teachers will modify instruction in accordance with student IEPs.
- h. Teachers will accommodate instruction for students according to Section 504 Plans.

We will continue to update you as new information becomes available. I will continue to update you as new information becomes available. I know that the situation has heightened everyone's sense of nervousness. As a mother of four, the spouse of a member of our armed services, and your Superintendent, I share your concerns. I will do my very best to keep you all informed and continue to be transparent with the decisions that require my attention. Please continue to be vigilant to check your e-mail, follow me on Twitter @karimcgann, follow the District on Facebook @flemrarschools and check the District website at [www.frsd.k12.nj.us](http://www.frsd.k12.nj.us) for information.

Sincerely,

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

Kari McGann  
Superintendent of Schools