

Flemington-Raritan School District Parent & Community Newsletter



October, 2019 Edition 3 of the 2019-2020 School Year

Editor in Chief: Kari McGann, Superintendent of Schools kmcgann@frsd.k12.nj.us

HAPPY FALL!

Hello, Parents and Community Members! The month of October is a special time in our schools. Our youngest students in grades pre-kindergarten through grade four celebrate Halloween with parades and class parties. Students in grades 5-8 are also in the Halloween spirit, but without holiday parades. Staff and faculty join in the fun with theme-filled costumes. The Francis A. Desmares Elementary School front office was transformed into a circus tent with Mr. Masessa as the strongman and Mrs. Howell as the ringmaster! Throughout the district, learning was combined with fun and experiences that were enjoyable for the very young and the young at heart. Thank you to all the parents that helped make this day so unique for our students.



APPROVED HOUSING PROJECTS IN OUR COMMUNITY

Raritan Township has approved housing developments in the north end of Raritan Township near Francis A. Desmares Elementary School. One of the housing developments is in the final stages of development and almost



complete. Formerly described as "The Village at Health Quest," the housing area now named "The Pavilion at Raritan" is located at 2 HealthQuest Blvd., behind HealthQuest on Route 31. The development was approved in 2016 by the Raritan Township Committee. You can read more about it [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

At its meeting on October 28th, the Board of Education approved my recommendation to secure the services of Dr. Richard S. Grip's Statistical Forecasting to complete a full demographer's report. He has completed demographic studies for more than 125 school districts, including New York City Schools. His report will provide projections by elementary school, birth rate data in local zones, detailed housing analysis, among other information. See a full description [here](#) of the demographer's services on slides 28-30 from the October 28 Board of Education presentation. The district has seen an upward trend this year in enrollment. We have increased by 50 students since July 2018. We expect this trend to continue.

Parents and community members that are interested in the information gleaned from the report should join the Superintendent's Equity Advisory Committee. Contact Ms. Laura Bruhn at lbruhn@frsd.k12.nj.us to inquire.

REFERENDUM NOVEMBER 5, 2019 FLEMINGTON-RARITAN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

On Tuesday, November 5th, our community will go to the polls to vote on the Safety, Security, Structure & Indoor Air Quality Referendum. Over the past two months, I have been speaking with members of our community about the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District's \$42,063,000, two-question bond referendum. I have presented to the public and the Board of Education many times about the two-question referendum that will go to the voters of the Flemington-Raritan community on Election Day, November 5, 2019. You can find the presentations [here](#).

The referendum asks voters to approve a two-question bond referendum. Read more [here](#) and [here](#).

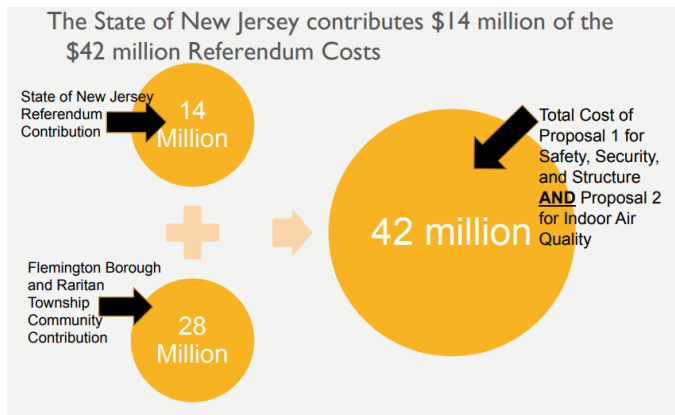
As a reminder, the referendum has two questions for which the voters will be asked to approve; 1) safety, security, and external updates to the structure of our buildings and 2) indoor air quality – air conditioning and dehumidification in all buildings where air conditioning is not already present, for a total cost of \$42,063,000 for both referendum items.

The State of New Jersey is currently offering facility aid funding, which will capture approximately 40% of all project costs. The District applied for and received approval for State funding, a contribution of \$14 million.

Question 1: Safety, security, and external updates to our facilities include security upgrades and improvements, including cameras, equipment, an upgraded telephone communication system, and door and alarm upgrades. It also includes site improvements, including parking lot upgrades, sidewalk, curb and fencing improvements, and drainage improvements. Roof replacements and repairs for all buildings, except for at J.P. Case. Window replacements and external building repairs at all other buildings.

Question 2: Indoor air quality is to provide indoor air quality upgrades, including air conditioning (HVAC) and humidity control systems at all schools, except for J.P. Case Middle School. J.P. Case Middle School already has air conditioning. Copper Hill Elementary School has air conditioning, too, and only needs a dehumidification system.

The cost for both referendum items is \$42 million, \$14 million, which will be funded by the State of New Jersey.



It is important to note that question two, installing air conditioning and dehumidification, cannot be approved by the voters without the approval of question one; safety, security, and external structure updates.

The reason is simple: Question two is contingent upon the approval of question one because the rooftops of our elementary and intermediate school buildings, RH, FAD, BS, and RFIS, cannot support air conditioning with the rooftops in their current state. Copper Hill only needs a dehumidification system. The building has air conditioning already. Rooftops and some windows must be repaired and replaced before a rooftop air conditioning system can be placed in any of our elementary buildings or at our intermediate school. Without a rooftop that can support an air-conditioning system and

windows that control the airflow, an air-conditioning system will not be feasible, nor energy efficient.

Please remember to vote on November 5, 2019. The schools will be closed that day in honor of Election Day. Later that week, on Thursday, November 7 and Friday, November 8, schools will be closed again for the statewide New Jersey Education Association's yearly conference in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

If you are traveling that week, please remember to turn in a Vote by Mail ballot. You can download a vote by mail ballot [here](#) and mail it to Hunterdon County Clerk, Hall of Records, or drop it off at the Hunterdon County Clerk's Office on 71 Main Street in Flemington, NJ. The Clerk's office will process the application while you wait and you can choose to vote at that time or mail the ballot later.

All ballots MUST be postmarked no later than Election Day and received by the Board of Elections by the close of business on the Thursday following the Election. You may appear in person through 3 PM on the Monday before the election. If you have any questions, call Mary H. Melfi at (908) 788-1214.

OFFICER MIKE AND OFFICER HARRY JOIN THE DISTRICT AS CLASS III SLEO OFFICERS TO PROVIDE SAFETY AND SECURITY IN THE DISTRICT

Class III officers are retired police officers that traditionally serve in schools to provide safety and security to staff, students, and building security. At the October 2 Board of Education meeting, the Board of Education approved the Memorandum of Understanding between Flemington Borough and the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District, thus providing the final step to bring Officer Mike Fitzpatrick and Officer Harry Hults as members of our Flemington-Raritan district team.



The Borough of Flemington, in cooperation with the Flemington Borough Police Department, approved a Memorandum of Understanding with FRSD to employ a Class III SLEO officer. Flemington Borough Police Chief, Jerry Rotella, and I, along with another officer of the Flemington Borough Police Force, interviewed two candidates for a Class III Officer position. I expect our final candidate to be sworn in at the Flemington Borough Council's November 18th meeting and begin with us in Flemington-Raritan shortly thereafter.

Parents should expect to see Officer Harry, Officer Mike or our new Class III Officer, Officer Craig, at any of our schools in the district.



THE SECOND ANNUAL HUNTERDON COUNTY SCHOOL SAFETY SUMMIT

Student and staff safety is a top priority for the District. The District has

two district safety specialists, Mr. Peter Sibilias, Vice Principal at J.P. Case Middle School, and Mr. Jesse Lockett, Vice Principal at Copper Hill Elementary School. Both faculty members attend specialized training to hold the title of District Safety Specialists. Mr. Sibilias and Mr. Lockett both serve as chairpersons on the District Security Committee and assist the Superintendent in decision making on safety and security in the District.

In collaboration with Mr. Sibilias and Mr. Lockett, the District will hold the second annual Hunterdon School Safety Summit next month. Last year's summit featured guest speakers Lt. Kevin Burd, from the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office and Dr. Thomas Gambino and Mr. Robert Sensi, both from the New Jersey Department of School Preparedness and Emergency Planning. All three of these special guests will join us again on November 19th from 5:30 to 7:30 PM.

I am excited to share that this year's Hunterdon School Safety Summit will feature a keynote speaker Lisa Hamp, a survivor from the Virginia Tech school shooting on April 16, 2007. With her classmates, Lisa built a barricade to prevent the shooter from entering their classroom. She will share her experience from during and after the shooting, as well as lessons learned from the Virginia Tech tragedy to first responders, mental health professionals, educators, and community leaders.

Lisa Hamp's work has been featured in the Washington Post, Huffington Post, Campus Safety Magazine, Domestic Preparedness Journal, and many other prominent news outlets. She works with the Koshka Foundation to improve prevention and response to active threats and recovery after the crisis. Ms. Hamp is a member of the Association of Threat Assessment Professionals and has a Bachelor's degree in Mathematics from Virginia Tech, a Master's degree in Operations Research from George Mason University, and a Master's degree in Economics from John Hopkins University.

School Districts from throughout Hunterdon County have joined together to bring Lisa to our community. A financial partnership from almost all the Hunterdon County School Districts, along with a donation from the Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office, will support Lisa's speaker fee to provide a night of learning about safety and security for our community.

If this event's focus interests you as a parent or community member click [here](#) to reserve your tickets. If you have questions, contact Laura Bruhn at lbruhn@frsd.k12.nj.us. It is sure to be a well-attended event.

SUPERINTENDENT RIDES THE BUS DAY

On Halloween, October 31, I rode afternoon bus #711 from Barley Sheaf Elementary School with driver Ms. Sandy. I talked with Barley Sheaf students about their favorite things at Barley Sheaf and things that could get better. Students on the bus shared that they love their teachers. One student told me that her favorite subject is math; another student said his favorite thing at Barley Sheaf was going to recess. When I asked students, "What can I do to help school be better at Barley Sheaf," students told me that they need more water fountains with cold water because it's so hot in school and they need more swings on the playground.



It is a pleasure for me to be able to wish students a great afternoon as they get off the bus and wave good-bye to them at the end of the school day.

Students receive a sticker that reads, "The Superintendent Rode My Bus Today" and an FRSD pencil. Thank you to Ms. Sandy and our Hunterdon Central/FRSD Joint Transportation Services for helping to coordinate my monthly bus rides. My next bus ride is scheduled for Tuesday, November 19th. Maybe I'll be on your child's bus!

SUPPORTING EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN OUR STUDENTS

Social and emotional health and well-being are critical to overall health. Our schools support the social and emotional health of our students, staff, and faculty. Guidance counselors provide support for students through counseling, small group discussions, and one-on-one sessions.

The entire school district has procedures in place to assist students who face challenges at home and school. Guidance counselors, school social workers, special education teachers, school psychologists, school nurses, behaviorists, building principals, and assistant principals are just a sample of the faculty experts and staff members in our schools to support students and care about their well-being.

These procedures include positive behavioral interventions and supports and mindfulness into classroom curriculums. Our school climates support students, parents/guardians, faculty, and staff to work together to create safe and supportive schools. Please reach out to any of our faculty members if you need support for your child's emotional health.