

Flemington-Raritan Regional School District
 Dr. Kari McGann
 Superintendent of Schools
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March 5, 2021

Dear Flemington-Raritan Regional School District Parents and Community Members,

Using local and State health data we have been making plans and having discussions with Board Members, building administrators, FREA Leadership, and local health officials to open our doors wider for students to return to school. On March 1, 2021, the Board of Education revised Policy 1648 to include wording from the American Academy of Pediatrics and allow social distancing between seating to be three (3) feet. This allows more students to return to in-person learning for instruction five days a week. The revised Board-approved policy is [linked here](#). The revised Board policy reduces the spacing between student desks to at least three (3) feet and ideally six (6) feet instead of requiring six feet. Our schools have aimed to return students to in-person learning while simultaneously providing parents the option to have their child learn remotely.

For the past four weeks, the COVID-19 report delineates our Central West region in the “yellow.” This week’s [COVID-19 reports](#) the Central West region case rate (proportion of the population of daily new COVID-19 cases for every 100,000 people) went up slightly as did the Percent CLI (the presence of coronavirus diagnosis codes from emergency department data), but the percent positivity rate (percentage of total positive COVID-19 PCR tests out all tests performed) decreased.

You may be asking, “*What will we do if our region moves into the orange?*” We will not go back to a Cohort A and Cohort B alternating weekly hybrid schedule unless there are serious local issues in our community with community spread. If we return to an “orange” level and see an increase in cases and we remain in an “orange” status for several weeks, we may need to consider more serious alterations in order to adjust to the community spread, but bouncing back and forth between hybrid and a five-day in-person schedule does not allow for a consistent instructional program. There are adjustments we can make without having to fully disrupt our educational program. These may include but are not limited to the elimination of in-person to only virtual participation for sports at the middle school level or the possible discontinuation of lunch in our elementary buildings if either of these was deemed to be a factor in the increase in community spread. Other alterations may be necessary depending on the seriousness of the local case rate, percent CLI, and percent positivity rate.

The revision of Policy 1648 means that our cohort schedule will be the following.

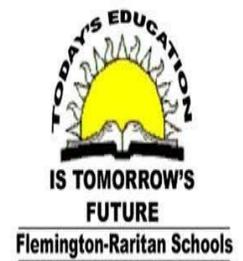
Date	Cohort A	Cohort B
March 8-12	In-Person	Remote Learning
March 15-19	Remote Learning	In-Person
March 22-26	Cohorts A & B combine for five days a week instruction on an early dismissal schedule.	
<i>~Parents who selected all-virtual instruction for their child will continue with all-remote learning.~</i>		

Preschool Information

For our youngest learners in our preschool programs, beginning on March 23rd, preschoolers will return to a longer day format. We are grateful for our preschool teachers, transportation, and the leadership at Copper Hill Elementary School and the Special Services Department for their problem-solving and creative thinking.

Each day our preschool students participate in a beginning-of-the-day, instructional, group meeting with social distancing in place; make-believe play; a large group literacy instructional lesson; physical development activities; small group instruction focused on mathematics and science concepts; and an end-of-the-day activity. We are excited to

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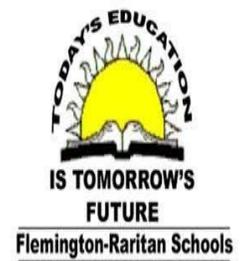
share that the program hours are modified as follows:

- Preschool morning program: 9:00 - 11:30 a.m.
- Preschool afternoon program: 12:00 - 2:30 p.m.
- Preschool full day program: 9:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

The entire Flemington-Raritan Regional School District team is working together to ensure a smooth transition for students. Thank you! Our schools are an important infrastructure of our community. We provide a safe, supportive learning environment for students. Here's what we are all busy achieving:

- Our Building Administrators are finalizing student and faculty schedules for the transition while office staff is providing support and communicating with families.
- Our Business Office is approving purchase orders for equipment and expediting delivery. This week we received the dividers that will be placed on students' desks. We already received additional face shields, enough for every faculty and staff member that would like to have an additional layer of facial protection.
- Our Curriculum Department, together with our technology team, has partnered with Comcast as well as technology representatives to increase bandwidth, purchase additional monitors and webcams, and has prepared Frequently Asked Questions documents for staff and parents. The document for parents is [linked here](#) and attached. It was sent earlier today from our Curriculum Department through our School Messenger system. On March 8, I will recommend to the Board of Education the purchase of microphones and sound equipment, as well as additional technology to support simulcasting/live streaming in our classrooms.
- Our Special Services Department is actively supporting our preschool students and families, holding annual reviews, and preparing for related services, including accommodations and modifications to instruction, speech-language services, occupational therapy, physical therapy, and counseling. This week we were able to finalize the details to extend the day for our youngest learners in preschool.
- Our school nurses are planning for an increase in daily health screening forms as we anticipate welcoming back more students. They continue all contact tracing protocols and are in communication with County Health Department officials. We have posted the Lead Nurse opening and are eager to fill this vital position.
- Our school counselors are preparing to help families with relevant resources and information to help students with their transition. Our guidance counselors are planning for spaces for students to feel relaxed and supported if they are feeling a bit anxious or to engage in mindfulness activities, as well as creating resources to welcome students back to school.
- Our District Pandemic Response team met on Thursday afternoon to review protocols and procedures for safe and healthy conditions for learning. They are supporting the planning, management, and decision-making related to bringing more students back for in-person learning.
- The Superintendent's Office and our Human Resources team continue to address the needs of faculty and staff, including FMLA requests due to medical needs, substitute coverage, and communication.
- Our buildings and grounds crew continue to meet the needs of our referendum goals. To date, windows have been delivered and are being installed at Reading-Fleming Intermediate School. Twenty-four new doors have been installed. Circuitry panels are being upgraded for additional circuiting capacity for future technology upgrades. Barley Sheaf School has new key-cores (the part of the door handle that is the "core" where the key is inserted) at all locations and HVAC units have shipped.
- Our custodial team, contracted through Pritchard, is moving desks, measuring classroom spaces, and working with building principals to have the appropriate space and furniture ready for students.

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- Our food services provider, contracted through Maschio's, is calculating meals and ordering additional food.
- The Transportation Department is preparing for students' needs in transportation. Parents should not expect six-foot distancing to be in place on all school busses. Students are expected to wear a face mask and will be spaced apart to the greatest extent possible. Assigned seating is required on all school buses to assist in any contact tracing that may be necessary.
- Our Board of Education Members continue to provide service to our community through their commitment to committee meetings, Board of Education meetings, and support for the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District.

COVID-19 Update

The District received notice of a positive COVID-19 case of a Copper Hill School student who was last in the building on March 4 and of a staff member who was last on campus on March 4. Our District nurses continue to follow all contact tracing guidelines from the Department of Health. We will continue to work with public health officials to keep the community spread low and the virus under control.

Required Travel Quarantine- Travel Plans Are Discouraged

The milder weather is a happy reminder that spring break is just a few weeks away. At this time, the [NJ Department of Health](#) guidance is that non-essential out-of-state travel is discouraged, regardless of a person's vaccination status. Travelers must continue to follow quarantining recommendations after travel. Unless there is a change in this guidance, all students and staff who travel to any U.S. state or territory beyond the immediate region (New York, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and Delaware) must quarantine. See the link above for specific information on the number of days to quarantine and speak with your healthcare provider or one of our school nurses. Please contact your child's school principal if your child has been required to quarantine due to exposure or travel out of New Jersey. Students that must quarantine will utilize simulcasting/live streaming support during their quarantine.

Substitutes Needed

Now more than ever, our district is in need of substitute teachers as we work to open doors wider for students while continuing to provide all-remote instruction to families that choose a virtual learning model. If you are interested in substituting in the District, [please click here for more information](#).

Upcoming Webinars offered through our Partner in Education, Effective Schools Solutions:

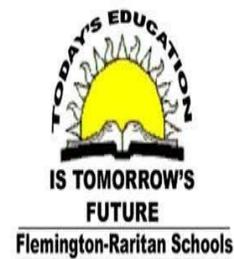
- **MAR 9th @ 3:30 pm -Emotional Regulation and Acceptance in Uncertain Times**

More than ever, our ability to cope with the challenges of our day-to-day lives depends on our ability to regulate our emotional responses to our experiences. In this presentation, participants will explore the role of acceptance in understanding our reactions, managing negative and overwhelming emotions, and increasing positive experiences to reduce our emotional vulnerability and suffering. Strategies and content are applicable to students, as well as for personal growth. [Register today!](#)

- **MAR 23RD @ 3:30 pm - Emotion Regulation, Trauma, and a Year of COVID-19**

It is common for survivors of trauma to experience "anniversary reactions." Next month marks the one-year anniversary of the onset of COVID-19 in the U.S. Many people may experience a "trauma anniversary" and display symptoms such as increased anxiety, depression, trouble sleeping, loss of appetite, nightmares, irritable outbursts, or even relive past events. This workshop will help participants to be able to identify trauma-related responses in

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themselves and others, as well as some recommendations for how to proactively mitigate trauma anniversary responses. [Register today!](#)

Additional Parent Resources:

Below are resources families may find useful:

- [Flemington Raritan Quality Time as a Family Presentation PDF](#)
- [Flemington Raritan Quality Time as a Family ZOOM Video Recording](#)

In addition, *Solutions* features important topics related to children's mental health, including tips for parents and caregivers. Click these links here: [English Translation](#) and [Spanish Translation](#).

My best to all our families for a wonderful weekend.

Sincerely,

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

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