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Dear Flemington-Raritan Parents and Community,

We will continue to do all we can to ensure a safe school year. Strong masking and vaccination protocols, in tandem with other safety measures, are our best consolidated tool for keeping our schools open for full-time, in-person instruction. That is our united effort. The district supports measures that help to ensure the health and safety of our students, staff, and faculty in our united effort to keep students in school for full day, in-person learning.

Governor Phil Murphy announced his administration's plans to help school districts comply with the recently issued Executive Order 253 requiring all school district staff to be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 or be subject to regular testing for the virus. To assist school districts with this new requirement, the Murphy Administration will be utilizing funding provided through the federal American Rescue Plan, enacted earlier this year, to implement a free testing program that all school districts have the ability to take advantage of. The vaccination or testing requirement for all public school districts, charter schools, parochial schools, and private school employees goes into effect on October 18.

In our effort to continue to support safe, in-person learning we are partnering with the New Jersey Department of Health (NJDOH). Using federal funding, the New Jersey Department of Health is offering COVID-19 screening testing support to K-12 local education agencies (LEAs) and non-public schools (e.g., private, independent, parochial, or charter schools) for testing. Today, we received confirmation from the Department of Health to confirm receipt of our request to opt into the vendor testing option in the state school screening testing program. Today's email from the New Jersey Department of Health informed us that additional details are forthcoming. We have been told that the testing of students, with parental consent, may also be conducted under this program to assist families with testing services.

Executive Order (EO) 253 requires all public school districts, charter schools, parochial schools, and private school employees to be fully vaccinated or submit to COVID-19 testing at a minimum of one or two times per week. The order requires all public, private, and parochial preschool programs, and elementary and secondary schools, including charter and renaissance schools ("covered settings"), to maintain a policy that requires all covered workers to either provide adequate proof to the covered setting that they have been fully vaccinated or submit to COVID-19 testing at minimum one to two times weekly. This requirement shall take effect on October 18, 2021, at which time any covered workers that have not provided adequate proof that they are fully vaccinated must submit to a minimum of weekly or twice weekly testing on an ongoing basis until fully vaccinated.

In the Executive Order, staff is defined as all K-12 school employees who will be on-site at schools in the 2021-2022 school year. This includes, but is not limited to, teachers, environmental and building service workers, substitute teachers, bus drivers, cafeteria workers, athletic coaches, or other adults in PreK-12 school buildings who regularly interact with students and have a contractual relationship with the school.

According to the Executive Order, "For purposes of this Order, "covered workers" shall include all individuals employed by the covered setting, both full and part-time, including, but not limited to, administrators, teachers, educational support professionals, individuals providing food, custodial, and administrative support services, substitute

Flemington-Raritan Regional School District Dr. Kari McGann

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teachers, whether employed directly by a covered setting or otherwise contracted, contractors, providers, and any other individuals performing work in covered settings whose job duties require them to make regular visits to such covered settings, including volunteers. Covered workers do not include individuals who visit the covered setting only to provide one-time or limited duration repairs, services, or construction."

A regular presence is defined as a presence that is part of a regular procedure, such as volunteers who are scheduled to be in buildings routinely, rather than a single occasion such as an individual who enters once to share information with staff on a specific occasion or parents attending at a Back-to-School event. The Board of Education can put stricter mandates in place with policies approved by the Board of Education. A policy cannot lessen, only strengthen, the requirements as directed by an Executive Order.

EO 253 requires all public, private, and parochial preschool programs, and elementary and secondary schools, including charter and renaissance schools ("covered settings") to maintain a policy regarding proof of vaccination or testing. The Board of Education and the Superintendent's Office continue to use information from The Road Forward and the New Jersey Department of Health Recommendations for K-12 Schools as reference documents. Additional information, as approved by the Board of Education, will continue to be shared through the District's s'more newsletters, the Superintendent's monthly newsletter, and letters from the Superintendent's Office.

We had two terrific Back-to-School Nights the past two nights, first at J.P. Case and last night at RFIS. As I moved between spaces where parents were gathered in J.P. Case on Monday night and RFIS on Tuesday night, I heard teachers speaking to parents, connecting with them about the importance of our return to in-person learning. Thank you to all the parents who attended J.P. Case and RFIS's in-person Back-to-School nights. Parents who attended followed the safety parameters put in place to keep everyone safe.

To keep everyone safe, when parents are attending functions at school, safety practices must be upheld. Masks must be worn when in the building. Social distancing must be maintained. We ask that only one parent per child attend Back-to-School Night except for in special circumstances. Please communicate with your building administrators for special situations that require more than one parent. One parent attending Open House allows the district to maintain social distancing in classrooms and in the school. We are looking forward to our elementary school Back-to-School Nights on Thursday night.

We continue to focus our efforts to keep students and staff healthy and maintain in-person learning in the Flemington-Raritan Regional School District.

My best to our families and community,

Dr. Kari McGann Superintendent of Schools