

January 9, 2022

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

All schools will be open for full-day, in-person learning tomorrow, January 10, 2022, and for the predicted future. J.P. Case Middle School, Reading-Fleming Intermediate School, and all four elementary schools (Barley Sheaf, Copper Hill, Francis A. Desmares, and Robert Hunter) will be open for full-day, in-person instruction. Parents should expect full-day, in-person instruction each day unless they receive alternative communication from the District.

Parents, please take note: the required contact tracing and mandatory quarantine rules from the New Jersey Department of Health make keeping our school doors open every day for in-person learning a challenge. Parents should have backup plans in place in the event that a school, classroom, or grade level needs to pivot to all virtual learning. We recognize the burden this places on our families. In the event of a change to virtual learning, communication will be delivered as soon as possible.

The District will only close schools for in-person learning under the most pressing circumstances, and we immediately and aggressively work to bring students back to face-to-face learning as soon as possible. We are monitoring the mandatory quarantine rate of our staff and faculty carefully. When we cannot staff our buildings to provide student supervision or we cannot complete contact tracing due to COVID-19, a shift to virtual learning will be necessary. The District is committed to returning all students to in-person instruction as quickly as possible. While the situation remains challenging, we want to assure you that we continue to place a high value on in-person learning for our students while at the same time committed to the health and safety of all.

We do want to make note of the safety precautions in place to keep our schools open for full-day, in-person learning as we face pandemic challenges and an increase in COVID-19 activity in our region. While our region is in the “red” or “very high” activity rate, we have put the following mitigation factors into place. The first two listed immediately below will be maintained even when our region’s COVID-19 high activity decreases.

Additional safety precautions put in place:

- A job description for a full-time position to assist with mandatory COVID-19 responsibilities was approved by the Board of Education. The District is aggressively recruiting personnel and seeking outside partners to assist with contact tracing and other COVID-19 responsibilities;
- An additional floating nurse has been posted for hire which will make eight full-time nurse positions in the District. The District is aggressively recruiting personnel;
- Where possible, social distancing was increased from 3 feet to 6 feet, especially at meals and snacks; (All schools made adjustments to put more distance in place during meals.)
- No outside visitors are allowed in the schools except when legally required;
- Limits in athletics with only one fan per athlete allowed at all indoor athletic events;
- No indoor assemblies;
- No field trips to outside facilities; and

- Use of District facilities is not permitted by outside users who are not school affiliated.

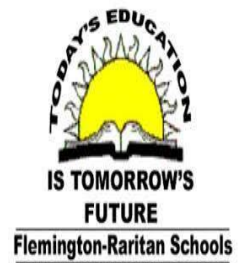
Mitigation factors that continue to be in place:

- Masks continued to be required indoors. The indoor mask mandate continues to be in effect until further notice and is a requirement under the Governor's emergency order;
- We continue to follow protocols to isolate and quarantine students and members of our faculty and staff who are sick with COVID-19 or who have come into close contact with someone who is infected. (Note: The CDC has extended its recent quarantine guidance (reducing isolation to 5 days) to schools. See [this page](#). The NJDOH has not yet followed suit. I will communicate as soon as more information is provided. For now, we must maintain the New Jersey Department of Health guidelines which have requirements of isolation of ten days.)
- We follow established protocols to notify members of our community of confirmed COVID-19 cases. Case information that does not compromise confidentiality is posted on our district's website.
- We also have an emphasis on sanitizing high-touch areas across our schools as this has become standard operating procedure. Most cleaning is done during the overnight hours. Health and Hygiene employees work during the day, as do our Pritchard Custodial Services personnel.
- Health and Hygiene hourly rates were increased to attract more applicants to these positions which continue to have openings;
- Ventilation was improved with HVAC and higher-rated filters installed. Our fresh air exchange rate is at least 3 times or more an hour in all spaces. Air filters are changed at least three times per year. Thanks to the passing of the 2018 HVAC and Safety Improvements Referendum, our new unit ventilators have not one, but two air filters filtering both outside and return air of the spaces serviced. Unit ventilators are supplying filtered air to all our buildings.
- Vaccinations and weekly testing continue for all staff and faculty that are unvaccinated or have chosen not to disclose their vaccination status or have opted in for the weekly testing. (At this time the District cannot increase the quantity of testing nor open optional testing availability to students due to the shortcomings of the state-appointed testing partner.)
- We continue to encourage vaccinations and boosters for COVID-19. Vaccination is the most effective way to reduce your own risk and risk to others. Students, faculty, and staff are encouraged to get vaccinated.

The District continues to assess COVID-19 cases and symptomatic close contacts and their potential effect on our ability to offer in-person learning. The district is prohibited from offering a choice for remote learning as an instructional model since Governor Murphy ended Executive Order 175. By Governor's Order, virtual instruction can only be used as a result of a COVID quarantine or COVID closure. If your child is quarantined for COVID-19 or exposed to COVID-19 they may utilize virtual instruction.

Please monitor your child's health. Seek medical advice from a medical professional if you or your child experience COVID-19 symptoms, or if your child comes into contact with an individual who has tested positive

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for COVID-19. Contact your child's school if your child has been exposed to COVID-19 or has symptoms. If you have given fever-reducing medication or if your child is symptomatic with COVID-19 symptoms, do not send your child to school. If it is confirmed that a symptomatic child is present in school, the district may need to send multiple students and the teacher(s) home to quarantine. When children come to school that are sick or exposed at home it creates contact tracing requirements which may hinder our ability to continue to offer in-person learning.

COVID-19 has the following symptoms: fever (temperature of 100.4 or greater) or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, a new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion, or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. If children experience any of these symptoms, they must stay home from school. If you have any questions about symptoms or any other concerns for you or your child, please consult your physician or one of our school nurses. Please remember to remind your child to regularly wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.

Thank you for your partnership and patience during these challenging times.

Sincerely,

Dr. Kari McGann
Superintendent of Schools