

January 26, 2022

Dear Flemington-Raritan Regional School District Parents,

The Flemington-Raritan Regional School District takes student safety very seriously and recognizes its responsibility to provide for the safety and security in each school building in the district. We follow District [Policy 8420 Emergency and Crisis Situations](#) and [Regulation Emergency and Non-Fire Evacuation Plan](#) to guide actions, standard responses, and accountability of students during a crisis. We consult with law enforcement agencies, health and social services provider agencies, emergency management planners, and school and community resources in the development of school safety and security and for a debrief after emergencies or community drills. We also use [Policy 3280 Liability for Pupil Welfare](#) to guide actions to protect the well-being of students, especially during emergencies.

This morning, a Reading-Fleming Intermediate School staff member discovered smoke and smoldering paper in a metal garbage container in a student bathroom and used a fire extinguisher to ensure there was no danger. Following the use of the fire extinguisher, a smoky haze could be seen in the hallway outside the bathroom. All potential threats and potential emergencies were quickly assessed. With the small fire contained and extinguished, it was quickly determined that there was no threat to student safety that required a complete evacuation of RFIS. The fire department was called and remained on-site for safety checks, consultation, and an investigation. The building administrators, the Class III Officer, members of the facilities team, and the Superintendent assessed the situation and consulted with local law enforcement and fire department officials.

The light haze of smoke and the smell of burning paper towels did not activate our fire alarm system which caused concern for the fire department personnel. To comply with the fire department's directive, an investigation was required of fire alarms and smoke detectors by the District's contracted fire alarm protection company. Until the investigation could be fully completed, it was determined that students needed to be dismissed from school on an early dismissal schedule.

Tests of the entire fire alarm system were conducted this afternoon by an external contracted fire alarm safety company to comply with county and state requirements. After testing was completed, we learned that the level of smoke caused by this incident did not and should not have triggered the alarm system. All fire alarms and smoke detector systems passed. Paperwork to prove regulations were in compliance was shared with the local fire department. Our local fire department has provided the approval that all systems are in compliance. Reading-Fleming Intermediate School will be open for a full day of school tomorrow, January 27, as scheduled.

The Reading-Fleming Intermediate School staff and faculty and district-level administrators responded quickly, remained calm, and followed procedures to keep students, staff, and faculty safe. Thank you to our RFIS parents who had to respond to the unexpected call for an early release. Additionally, thank you to our first responders who worked collaboratively with our school for a positive outcome.

Today was a reminder that in cold weather, students should always be prepared with warm clothing in the event of a fire drill or other school emergency that may necessitate a building evacuation. Fortunately, Reading-Fleming Intermediate School students did not have to evacuate today, but we are reminded of the importance for families to have a child care plan in case of emergency closings or early dismissals.

Today was another example of how our District must comply with directives from our State and local governments and safety officials. While we may find them an inconvenience at times, such as in the case of an unplanned early

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dismissal, or uncomfortable, as in the requirement of the continuation of wearing face coverings due to Government Executive Orders, compliance with State directives are required in all public schools. The Board of Education and the Superintendent must remain mindful of the District's duty of providing care to students and staff that requires us to take necessary precautions to ensure the safety of all.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kari McGann". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "K" and "M".

Dr. Kari McGann  
Superintendent of Schools