



Morris Hills High School



520 West Main Street • Rockaway, NJ 07866-3799
Todd M. Toriello, Ed. D. • Principal • 973-664-2301

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Dear Parents/Guardians & Students,

It feels like only yesterday that I sat in my office one August morning composing my opening of school letter to all of you, welcoming the beginning of a new school year. To realize I sit in that same seat today, reflecting on an entire semester of school life, feels somewhat surreal. Where the months go I know not; but I am grateful to be doing the journey with you.

As I reflect over the past five months of school, I believe it is safe to say that everyone is asking the same questions: When will we ever get back to normal? When will our great hallways be filled with all of our Scarlet Knights? When will mask wearing and social distancing be a thing of the past? When will we see brighter and better days? Our days and weeks continue to be occupied with uncertainty, anxiety, and uneasiness. The days continue to be long. The nights continue to be restless; and the unknown continues to occupy every minute of our lives, especially now as the COVID-19 vaccine has hit center stage. I know I long for the softer, more certain days of the past.

During the first semester of implementing our hybrid learning model, you have shown your true colors as students, as parents, and as community members. You have shown everyone that you all bleed the red and the white. And over the past five months, you have shown everyone why **WE ARE MORRIS HILLS STRONG!** As we move into the heart of winter and continue to navigate these uncharted waters as a team of Scarlet Knights, I challenge you, as I challenge myself, to continue to have hope – hope for a better tomorrow, hope for a better future, hope for continued strength, hope for continued resolve, hope for continued love, hope for continued health and well-being, and hope that as the Morris Hills High School family, we return to some normalcy come this spring.

As your Principal, I am beyond proud of your efforts this academic year. You have risen to every challenge as true Scarlet Knights. I have seen the focus. I have seen the preparation. I have seen the drive. I have seen the determination. I have seen the passion. I have seen the work ethic. I have seen the grit. I have seen the love and the partnership. In doing so, you have defined yourselves as individuals worthy of the highest respect. Has it been easy? No. Has it been without challenges? No. Has it been without loss? No. But as author Robert H. Schuller reminds us, “Tough times never last, but tough people do.” You all have shown what tough looks like.

As we march on towards the second semester and spring, continue to trust the process and trust the journey. Remember this, Morris Hills High School: It is not about the destination; it is about the journey. While we do this journey together as a team of Scarlet Knights, I challenge you to keep putting one foot in front of the other, and in the process, continue to grow as individuals every day. In the words of Dr. Martin Luther King: "If you can't fly, then run. If you can't run, then walk. If you can't walk, then crawl. But whatever you do, you have to keep moving." On days when you see or hear only darkness as this very real pandemic continues to rage on, consider also the optimism and the hope of Dr. King: "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy." Let's stand tall, Morris Hills High School. Our journey continues together.

May you and your loved ones stay well, stay healthy, and stay safe.

In the Spirit of Partnership,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd M. Toriello". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Todd M. Toriello, Ed.D.
Principal