



MORRIS HILLS REGIONAL DISTRICT

SUPERINTENDENT of SCHOOLS
James J. Jencarelli 973.664.2291

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION
Nisha Zoeller, D. Litt. 973.664.2293

BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR
& BOARD SECRETARY
Joann Gilman Auricchio 973.664.2281

SUPERVISOR OF
HUMAN RESOURCES
Peter Lazzaro 973.664.2297

June 8, 2020

Dear Morris Hills Regional District Community,

We sincerely hope that this letter finds you healthy and safe during these unprecedented times. As we continue to adhere to state mandates of school closures and social distancing, we would like to update you about the decisions we have made regarding our Commencement Exercises. Please know that these decisions were not made lightly. Again, they have been some of the most difficult ones that we have made during our time as educators. We truly sympathize with all of our students, especially our seniors, who are missing out on so many important and memorable experiences. The following decisions have been made in consultation with local and state agencies. They were made in the best interest of our students' continued health, safety, and well-being:

- The Virtual Commencement Ceremony for Morris Knolls High School and Morris Hills High School will take place on **June 23, 2020 at 10:00 AM**. All students, parents, and guardians of the Class of 2020 will be able to view the ceremony by accessing the link that will be provided to you. Additionally, the link will be posted on the webpages of both Morris Knolls High School and Morris Hills High School in order for all members of the Morris Hills Regional District community and out-of-town family and friends to view.
- Morris Knolls High School and Morris Hills High School will conduct a "Drive-by" Diploma Distribution Ceremony on **Saturday, June 27, 2020 at 9:00 AM** on both campuses. We will be providing further details in the near future about this ceremony after our plan is approved by the New Jersey Department of Education. All social distancing guidelines and protocols will be followed.
- Beginning on **Monday, June 29, 2020 through Wednesday July 1, 2020**, Morris Knolls High School and Morris Hills High School will be setting up a small staging area for students and parents/guardians to come to the schools throughout the day to take photos of graduating seniors. All participants must obey social distancing orders and guidelines. Group photos are not permitted. We will provide the photo locations in the near future.

On May 27, 2020, Governor Murphy announced that school districts may hold in-person graduation ceremonies as long as the planned ceremony complies with applicable requirements for gatherings, including those addressing social distancing. At this time, outside gatherings may have no more than twenty-five people present ([COVID-19 Update: New Jersey Commencement Ceremonies](#)).

- **AT THIS TIME, NO DECISION HAS BEEN MADE WITH REGARD TO THE IN-PERSON GRADUATION CEREMONY.** As we receive more guidance from the Governor's Office and the Department of Education, we will continue to explore the possibility of conducting an in-person graduation ceremony on **Wednesday, July 15, 2020 at 10:00 AM**. In order for this to happen, the Governor would need to significantly increase the number of people allowed to be present for an outside

gathering. Please note, this ceremony could be for the graduates only and may require more than one ceremony based on the number of individuals who are allowed to be present at a public gathering. Based upon the survey results, the July 15, 2020 graduation date, was supported by an overwhelming majority of parents/guardians in the Morris Hills Regional District. This in-person ceremony would be in addition to the virtual commencement ceremony planned for June 23, 2020.

Again, please know that these decisions were not made lightly. They were made with the best interest of our students' continued health, safety, and well-being.

Thank you for your continued support.

Sincerely,

James J. Jencarelli, Jr. Superintendent of Schools
Ryan MacNaughton, Principal of Morris Knolls High School
Todd M. Toriello, Ed.D., Principal of Morris Hills High School