



Morris Hills High School



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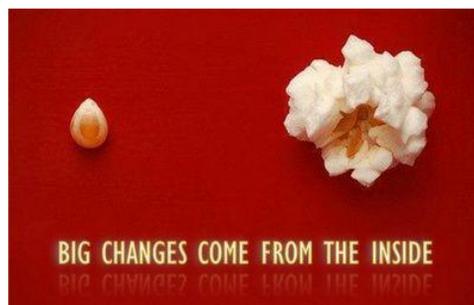
August 2022

Dear Colleagues, Parents and Guardians, and Students,

I have never been able to quite figure out just how the beginning of a new academic year presents itself so suddenly, reminding us that summer is rapidly winding down and September is rapidly winding up. It never seems to fail that the re-opening of school abruptly appears, full of sound and fury, as students, parents, teachers, and the entire school community re-group and begin anew. As your Principal, I once again welcome you all to the 2022 – 2023 school year, anticipating a playing field of partnership which fulfills the goals and dreams to which we all connect in our own special way. Toward that end, I extend to you my deepest gratitude for your ongoing support and your consistent enthusiasm in advancing the mission of Morris Hills High School.

As your building Principal, it has been my practice to offer a school-wide theme to serve as the fulcrum to our initiatives and the anchor to our actions as a school community. In the past, wherever possible, I have suggested school-wide themes that connect directly to our district's summer reading experience, in an attempt to underscore the message of that read and bring it home in a style that rings true for all students. Although this year's summer read is a bit different in approach, requiring students to make a free choice reading selection ("Pop Into A Great Book"), there is still linkage as you will see. Great books prompt us to consider messages, to think about characters, to contemplate, to reflect, to look inside the pages and beyond the story. Great books enlighten us, inspire us, often change us, and always help us better understand ourselves and even life itself. The experience matters; and for that reason, reading is a gift that often causes us to "POP" as human beings.

And that brings me to this year's school-wide theme: *"Big Changes Come From the Inside. Your Turn to POP is Now."* Consider the graphic below, for that is where the inspiration comes from:



What resonates for me is the very nature of popcorn, something most of us enjoy eating without giving the experience much thought. Yet, a bowl of popcorn is quite complex.

Although it is usually prepared in the same, singular pot, in the same heat, in the same oil, the kernels do not always pop at the same time or in the same configuration - some pop early, some pop late, and some do not pop at all. It all depends on the kernel. The kernel determines the outcome. And so, it is with each of us. Do we elect to grow, to develop, to give of ourselves, to put forth effort, to commit, to reach out to others, to reach within and ask the very best of ourselves? Only we can determine our outcomes based on what we are willing to do and how we are willing to live.

Against that background, may our school-wide theme offer each of us the challenge to always look within. Hopefully, all levels of school life – in the classroom, on the playing fields, within student activities, and in the community – will provide the inspiration and motivation to encourage all stakeholders to “POP,” recognizing that “BIG CHANGES COME FROM THE INSIDE.”

If we agree that healthy change requires us to reach, then Robert Browning is on to something when he reminds us of a great truth and suggests this: “Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?” We all have wide-open opportunities in this new school year to reach and make some changes, however large or small; and in the long distance run of life, looking within, reaching, grasping, and responding to what we see, hear, and feel within, inevitably makes us better human beings, and sometimes even makes us “POP.” For when all is said and done, reaching prompts change and change is the catalyst to real growth.

I challenge all of you, as I challenge myself, wherever you meet this academic year come September, to continue to reach and to continue to grow. As I said to the graduating Class of 2022 on Commencement morning, keep building on all you have given, on all you have accomplished, and on all you have dared to dream. Dare again. Dream bigger and larger. Fortunately, we live in a time where there is so much left to do – so much to solve, to fix, to change, and to influence. Find those new mountains to climb as Scarlet Knights and “POP.”

One of the joys of a new academic year is opening our doors to the new staff members joining our professional family. Our current staff is always anxiously awaiting to support new colleagues in professional collaboration; and that is how we grow at Morris Hills High School. Joining the team this September are the following:

- April Aquaviva - Special Education Staff Assistant
- Kimberly Bory - Teacher of Science
- Samora Brice - Teacher of Art
- Moises Diaz - Head Custodian
- Brett Izsa - Teacher of Music
- Hector Mendoza - Teacher of ESL
- Esmeralda Sanchez - Administrative Assistant
- Marilyn Sawicki - Teacher of Technology

I am very pleased to announce that our own Mrs. Stefana Niemo will replace Mrs. Tanya Stevenson in the Instructional Coaching Model, and our own Mrs. Lara Carlson will now serve as our Math Interventionist. We are very fortunate to share the expertise, enthusiasm, and experience of these highly professional and passionate colleagues. We all wish them much success in their new role.

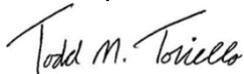
Since partnership is central to successful school systems, I encourage all parents and guardians to make every effort to attend our fall Back to School Nights (September 20th A - L and September 28th M - Z) and meet these new professionals personally. Moreover, I call upon all students to extend a warm welcome in your classrooms and define for our new staff the quality of the student body in our exceptional high school.

Campus improvements and facilities management are an ongoing priority and shall always remain so. It is no accident that most people are hard pressed to believe that Morris Hills High School opened its doors in 1953. Commitment to maintaining facilities for sixty-nine years continues to be a district priority. We are grateful and appreciative to our Board of Education and Central Office for embracing that priority. Central to this summer's attention are the following: annual painting and cleaning of the building – outside and inside; installation of new flooring in several classrooms and hallways; new bench honoring the Class of 2022; additional MH flags around the campus; creation of a literary center in the library; new furniture and signage in the faculty room; installation of new uninvents and boiler system; installation of a new lighting board in the auditorium; installation of a new handicap ramp at the front entrance of the school; upgrades in the cafeteria serving area and kitchen area.

Yes, summer has been very busy, indicative of a school that never sleeps and never stops looking at new ways to build upon prior successes. I, and all of your administrators, enthusiastically look forward to the curtain going up on the 2022 - 2023 school year and beginning a new year with you in partnership. May each of us find deep personal and professional satisfaction in the “changes we make from within,” and may those changes help us all to “POP” in fulfilling ways, regardless of roles – administrators, teachers, parents, guardians, and students. Thank you for all you do to make Morris Hills High School the special place it is. Your presence and your actions define the reason why.

Enjoy the remaining days of summer with your families and loved ones. Stay safe and healthy as we return to “The Hill” and begin once again to influence each other's worlds and forge another new beginning. May each of us find our popcorn and arrive at the conclusion of this academic year, look back, and say to ourselves and to each other – it was an extraordinary run, 2022 - 2023.

In the Spirit of Partnership,



Todd M. Toriello, Ed.D.
Principal