

# MORRIS HILLS REGIONAL DISTRICT

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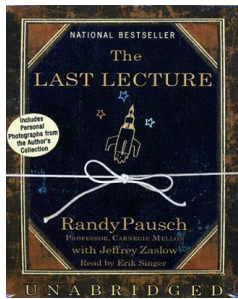
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## *“Making Every Day Count”*

April 5, 2011

Students and Parents/Guardians:



The Morris Hills Regional District’s Summer Reading Program is founded on the belief that encouraging students to read **year-round** is a key element in the development of lifelong learners. After a good deal of research and careful consideration, I am proud to introduce the new Morris Hills Regional District Summer Reading Program. In an effort to promote reading across the curriculum, and increase participation in a communal reading experience in our buildings and across the district, we will launch the first district-wide summer read, **mandatory** for all students attending Morris Hills High School and Morris Knolls High School.

With the support of the faculty, administration, local book stores, and public libraries, **all students entering grades 9-12 in September 2011 will be required to read the same book.** Teachers, administrators, and parents are all encouraged to join in as well.

This year’s district-wide selection will be biography/memoir **The Last Lecture, by Randy Pausch**. This title was chosen for its universal themes of gratitude, love, loyalty, work ethic, time, relationships and, “what matters in ‘Real’ life” among many more. Students will complete an assignment to be submitted to their English teachers on the first day of class equivalent to a quiz grade. The assignment will be the springboard for discussion upon return to school in September.

When students arrive in September, they will work with their English teachers and other participating teachers to build a community through discussion of these common themes through interdisciplinary activities and book chats. The answer to the following essential question is at the heart of the text:

***How does making every day count shape life’s journey?***

**Teachers will discuss summer reading assignments with students prior to leaving school in June. The school websites will house all expectations, assignments, and rubrics for the district-wide read, as well as any additional English courses with summer reading assignments.** Since students will be responsible for obtaining their own copies of the texts selected, the website will also include links for where to purchase the text(s) in stores and online to give the students every avenue to obtain a copy. Additionally, each school website will feature a study guide and tips for parents to help their students through the district read.

**Please be advised that there will be additional titles for Academy, Honors, IB, and AP students selected by teachers of the same course.** These students will also be required to complete an assignment for their additional read in preparation for a discussion and/or follow up assessment(s) in September. It will be the same assignment across the district. These assignments will also be posted on the websites. Local libraries and book stores will receive notification of our summer reading requirements so they may stock their shelves accordingly.

I appreciate your support as we begin this new initiative. In my opinion, it is long overdue; and it is my intention to introduce all of our students, not just the honors students, to good, modern literature in order to practice what we preach. Reading is important for all students, year round, regardless of age or placement. Reading builds vocabulary and keeps the brain thinking and functioning at an intellectual level, especially over those summer months. Finally, reading promotes lifelong learning and reading the same text among 3,000 individuals - students, faculty, administration, and parents alike - creates community and a common ground upon which to begin a new school year. Again, thank you for your trust and support. I am confident this will prove to be a worthwhile experience for everyone.

Respectfully,

*Jennifer Ward*

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***“Excellence in Education”***

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