

Liz Morrison — Opening of School Remarks
September 9, 2021

I have been thinking about this day for a long time. I envisioned all of you, the rest of the student body, the faculty, staff, and a number of special friends of the school sitting together under a large white tent celebrating the start of a new school year – the 130th for the Morristown and Beard Schools. Today is significant for us, because it is the 50th anniversary of the merger and the creation of the Morristown-Beard School. To recognize this incredible moment in our School's history, we are removing the hyphen to grammatically and figuratively be one school that has significant roots from both Morristown School and The Beard School.

As I start my tenure as the 7th Head of School – at Morristown Beard School, I feel fortunate that I get to already impart an important life lesson – always have a plan B! The pandemic made the planned gathering – the one I just referenced under the large tent, inappropriate, but that does not mean that we can't come together today in a different way and celebrate the start of a new beginning. It is a new beginning for all of us. Whether you are a lifer (have been here since 6th grade) or new like me, we get to create whatever year we want. I encourage you to dream big!

I want to share with you a recent favorite book of mine. It is about a boy, a mole, a fox, and a horse. I think the lessons imbedded in the story will be abundantly clear. Enjoy. (Reads *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox, and the Horse* by Charlie Mackesy)

At the end of the story – “Remember you matter, you are loved, and you bring to this world things no one else can.” I hope you find “home” at MBS this year.

In conclusion, I want to share with you a few things that really matter to me.

Mistakes

I actually believe in mistakes. That is how we learn. I think most mistakes that adolescents make have nothing to do with poor character. It is how you respond to mistakes that really matter to me and determines your character. Own your actions and take responsibility.

Hard Work

You should never expect something for nothing. There is incredible value to put your heart and soul into the work you complete and resisting the urge to take short cuts.

Participation

You always get more out of any experience, the more you put into it.

Kindness

Be kind and never tolerate meanness. You are all familiar with the poster that says:

In a world where you can be anything, be kind. I challenge you to live up to those words. Step up and fight for those who are being treated poorly, for those who are excluded, for those who are made fun of or laughed at.

Leave our community better than you found it.

And finally, remember that the end (of the year, the week, the semester, your high school career...) depends on the beginning. Come out the gate tomorrow ready to be the star that you are and have a strong beginning.

I am honored to be your Head of School and walk this journey with you.

Seniors: You have a special place in my heart as my first graduating class. I am counting on your leadership and love for the School. I have a journal for each of you to reflect on your year, take notes or use it any way you choose.

9th Grade: I had the opportunity to welcome you last week. I hope that you took my advice to heart and made new friends and opened yourselves to the opportunities that exist here.

6th Grade: your journey and mine start together. I can't wait to see what you do with the opportunities that await you. Grab them, embrace them, and never let the approval of your peers be your guide.