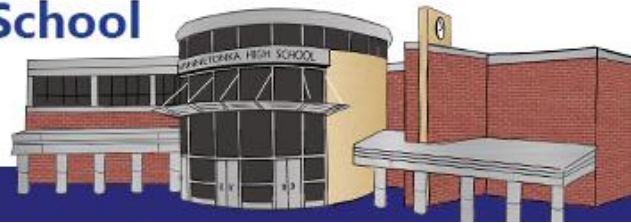




Minnetonka High School

Innovate. Inspire. Excel.



Dear Class of 2020,

We hope that you, the Class of 2020, are doing well in these strange times. Ever since we closed, seniors, you've been on my mind. Today, I wrote this letter jointly with Hayes Richman, your Student Government President, to share some insights. First, Hayes will share a few thoughts with you.

From Hayes Richman:

Hello, Fellow Seniors. Everyone always professes that your senior year in high school is one of the greatest of your life and up until this last week, that statement has rung true.

I strongly believe that our class is special and that we have made the most out of our last year in high school together so far. But now, we are in a situation that I could never have imagined and it seems as if our senior year is in jeopardy; trips have been cancelled, spring sports are in question, and we sit in our homes in quarantine away from each other.

It is by far one of the most absurd and disappointing things that we've lived through as a class. One thing I think we never realized was how lucky we are to attend Minnetonka High School. It's become pretty clear that we've taken for granted even the smallest things that school has to offer. From basic social interaction with friends to supporting each other on Einer Anderson Field and in the West Gym, it's easy to look back and realize how much we had by simply being allowed to go to school.

With that being said, what will define ourselves as a class is how we react to it. No other class of seniors in the entirety of Minnetonka High School's existence has had to deal with the severity of a global pandemic; this is insane. However, we need to come together as a class and, while the future remains uncertain, we must maintain hope and do our best to take back our senior year.

In many ways it seems like there is nothing we can do but wait, which to some extent is true. But what we can do is keep connecting with each other; Google Hangout, Zoom, and FaceTime allow us an opportunity to make up for what we are losing with the absence of school. Even the simplest text or game of 8-ball pool serves as a way that we can band together as seniors. All in all, what's happening right now is incredibly

unfortunate but we need to stick together as a class until it ends, which it will.

From Principal Erickson

Seniors, If you think back to September's class meeting in the East Gym, I had asked you to think about the year 2070--the year of your 50th HS reunion. I asked what small things you would do this year that someone would remember 50 years later. Now, just seven months later, I could list the many interactions that have exemplified your kindness, humor, energy, and genuine care toward others. It started when you welcomed the class of 2023 and made them feel valued and included, to the best Homecoming we've seen, and it has gone on through your passion displayed at all of our school events.

Now, as the leaders of the school, you have another moment before you that will define your class--one that we could not have predicted during that class meeting in September. I'm not the first one to state the obvious that this sudden change is not fair. Personally, it saddens me that this is your reality. That said, you are not a class that avoids a challenge, rather one that embraces challenge with grit and determination. You are strong, funny, smart, and driven to do well. You have led by setting the example whether it be on the field, on the stage, in classrooms or in the halls, and I believe you will continue to do so.

My challenge to you is... when you think of your reunion in 2070, how will you describe what you did to come together at this time, to define new traditions, and to still hold closely to what matters most--your relationships with each other? When you tell the story of this unexpected twist in your senior year, what will you say to how you have led our school? How will you have maintained relationships even when we were not physically together? How will you have demonstrated kindness and care toward yourself and toward others?

There is not an easy answer to any of these questions, and my faith in your ability to do this, to step up and to navigate this new challenge comes from the talent you've demonstrated since 9th grade. You are creative. You know how to look out for each other. You represent us well. You do the right thing. You are the best example of Tonka.

So much of what makes this hard is not knowing the path ahead. I understand that, and I'm in it with you. I want the same things you do. We have to take it day by day. So many of you have asked about what will happen to our milestone events yet this spring, and I simply don't have an answer yet. I remain hopeful and we must also wait to see how things unfold in the next few weeks. Again, not knowing is hard.

Seniors, know that our entire staff is with you and cares about you. I am in awe of who you are as people. I know we'll find a way to come together and celebrate who you have become and to send you off to your next adventure. I am proud of you.

From both Hayes and me: Continue to find virtual ways to connect, go for a walk, or watch an old episode of Beyond 140 and simply know that the legacy of the Class of 2020 is still being written.

Sincerely,

Jeff Erickson
Hayes Richman

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