



Welcome back to school from the Toms River Regional Schools Intermediate Science Department!

We are all looking forward to 2021 being a much better year than 2020, and it WILL be, thanks to Science! Scientists around the world have been working extremely hard so that we now have a vaccine that will help to heal people and prevent others from becoming ill from the Covid-19 Virus that has changed the way we view the world and live our lives.

Our students and faculty have become experts at utilizing technology tools to create new ways of teaching and learning, and this is definitely a positive change in spite of so much going on around us. These technology tools will belong to us as part of our skills for the present and the future as we move forward during this academic year.

The students have also seen a focus on a multitude of jobs and professions that utilize SCIENCE and evidence from SCIENTIFIC investigation and experimentation. Some of these students, as a result, may choose a career for their futures as adults in one of those fields, or as community helpers, first responders, health professionals, pharmaceutical developers and so on.

Our students, this 2<sup>nd</sup> marking period, are busy in 6<sup>th</sup> grade learning about weather, clouds (ask them about the kinds of clouds we see and which indicate stormy weather) and layers of the atmosphere, just to name some of their topics. Maybe some may be considering careers as meteorologists or astronauts to explore not just the world, but the space and atmosphere around us!

In 7<sup>th</sup> grade, students have been learning about Forces, Energy and Work and can tell you how much energy it takes to do some kinds of work by using special calculations. They have also been discussing different types of energy and what each is used for! Some may be so interested in these topics that they eventually pursue careers as electrical, chemical or mechanical engineers, to name just a few of the many engineering careers.

Our 8<sup>th</sup> graders are learning about the Periodic Table of the Elements, which many of us learned as well when we were in high school and college. They are learning how to look at it and understand the different parts of the Periodic Table without needing to memorize it. They are simultaneously learning a more important thing, something called BONDING, which happens between elements to make compounds, and also occurs between people as we make friends, whether for now or for life. They can think about what makes elements compatible or not likely to form a bond, just as they can figure out why someone would be a great match (or not) as a friend, a valuable life skill.

This year, Science Fair participation is not a requirement for the students, although some of the teachers are running a Science Fair Club for students who want to pursue that and enter their presentations virtually. One of our Science teachers, Katie Keller, was the recipient of the DuPont For Excellence in Teaching Award, which was presented to her by the President of the Delaware Valley Science Fairs for her efforts last year.

Best wishes to each of you and your families as we embark on the second half of this academic year, hopefully with the optimism that our schools will be the source of forming bonds and sharing school spirit and activities with each other. Happy New Year to all!