

Dear FLHS parents,

I wanted to piggy-back on Mr. Cummings email about some of our thoughts about how we are moving forward.

We still need students to stay “in the game.” I know having the week off may make it difficult to return (or maybe make everyone appreciate having school work to do!), but it will be very important that your kids and our students make the decision to stay engaged. We'll need your support with that.

One way to help is to understand the following points:

-Just like the College Board is approaching AP courses, teachers are rethinking what can be covered this year under the terms of distance learning. This may mean fewer topics, this may mean all the topics but less in depth, or it may mean shifting gears to focus on cementing what has been learned so far. It will vary by course.

-“Final Exams” as they happened in years’ past will not be happening this year. However, it is important to acknowledge and celebrate the learning that took place for the seven months we were IN school. Educational research is very clear that having an opportunity to revisit concepts and ideas and synthesize all that learning is critical to retaining and fully understanding it. To that end, teachers may design tasks that ask students to look back on their previous learning from the course. The scores on these “cumulative tasks” will NOT count 20% as the Final Exams would have counted. They will instead be a part of the full year’s worth of scores and thus have less impact on the overall grade.

Both of these points should help students see that making it to the end of the year – whether through distance learning or in person – will be manageable. But it will not be meaningful unless they stick with it. Their efforts will pay off, and they should feel some relief.

I know many students and parents are speculating about whether their grades will “count” and whether we’ll be using letter grades or offering a pass/fail option. As Bill Belichick often says, “we’ll make the decision that is best for the team.” To make the best decision, though, we need to know all the conditions we are facing. How long will be out? What are colleges going to say? Could it affect some students differently than others? (The answer is yes, by the way) Thank you for your patience on this. If anything, this is just another reason we need to keep kids engaged. No matter what the grades look like or how they are interpreted in the context of what is happening, they will “count” for something.

That all being said, we are very aware that these unprecedented times place a whole new kind of pressure on students. This is especially true as they are facing potential and real losses as well as feeling disconnected from their loved ones, friends and teachers. My heart aches for our seniors. If you feel your child is struggling to stay engaged or is in a situation that makes it impossible to work, please reach

out to your child's counselor or other members of their support team. We need to know. We want to help.

We will keep you updated with new information as we have it. Have a wonderful Passover and Easter holiday to those who celebrate.

Best wishes,
Greg Hatzis