

WESTERN PLACER UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

600 Sixth St, Suite 400, Lincoln CA 95648
Ph: (916) 645-6350 • Fax: (916) 645-6356

Board of Trustees: Paul Long
Brian Haley
Paul Carras
Kris Wyatt
Damian Armitage

Superintendent: Scott Leaman

Dear GEMS Students and Families,

As the school counselor at GEMS, I wanted to take an opportunity to reach out to you during this challenging time to assure you that I am, as well as our entire GEMS staff are still here for you. Although we miss seeing our students everyday, and interacting with them in ways that are familiar to us, like many of you, we are finding new ways to connect, support and help. To this end, some of us are using Google meet, Google classroom, Schoology and email to help stay connected.

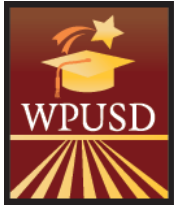
GRADES

As many of you may know by now, grades will not be negatively impacted as a result of this break from school. Students' grades can only go up from the Quarter 3 grades that are currently in Power School. **Grades CAN still go up based on work completed during the closure, but they cannot go down.** Therefore, this is a great opportunity for students to improve their grades. Especially students who had less than desirable grades at the quarter.

BEING SUCCESSFUL WITH AT HOME LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

While working and studying from home may seem exciting and cool at first, it can be challenging to be productive at home. Here are several productivity tips to make the most of your working hours.

- **Establish a Routine:** While doing school work when you feel like it seems great, a lack of routine can be the enemy of productivity. Set hours for yourself to focus on important tasks. Remember to maintain a school-life balance. School and work shouldn't dominate your life. Have a time when you turn your computer off and focus on things you enjoy.
- **Take Breaks:** If you are used to being at school all day, moving from class to class, and chatting with friends in between classes, you might not realize how draining sitting in front of a computer all day is. Make sure to give yourself breaks. Get up, take a walk around the house, get a glass of water, or pet your dog. Mindful breaks will make your working hours more productive.
- **Designate A Place To Work:** Using your bed as a desk is not productive. If possible, set up a desk and make it the spot where you get work done. If you do not have a desk, a kitchen table will do. While you work, try and minimize distractions around your house.
- **Get Ready For Your Day:** Similar to laying in bed, wearing pajamas can decrease your productivity. There is no need to dress up fancy, but getting up and changing into real clothes sets the tone for the day. Similarly, getting up in time to eat breakfast, brush your teeth, and wake up will all help get you in the right frame of mind.
- **Over Communicate:** Communication is critical when doing online work and online school. When you are in an in-person math class and don't get a problem, the teacher may notice your furrowed brow. That won't happen online. You must learn to advocate for yourself and communicate that you are struggling and need assistance. It is important to communicate what you do throughout the day, the progress you make, and any questions



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you may have. Please email or message teachers. They are there to help you and will get back to as soon as they can.

STAYING CONNECTED

Feeling socially connected, supported, and able to express yourself is important. As social distancing is put into place, we encourage all students to stay connected with friends, family, teachers, and counselors. Practice social distancing NOT social isolation. Let's continue to be creative and engage with others to stay connected and most importantly, take care of our own well-being.

[Rooted in Love, A Call to Action Video for students](#)
[Helping Teens With Social Distancing](#)
[Making Social Distancing Easier for P](#)

MENTAL HEALTH

This has been the craziest year.

[Mental Health Resources](#)
[Feelings of Grief](#)
[Work, School, Mental Health](#)

Lastly, as we move into additional weeks of our closure, rest assured we are here for you. We are only an email or a phone call away. Please don't hesitate. Stay well.

Sincerely,

GEMS School Counselor
Tom Kelley, tkelley@wpusd.org