

Finishing Strong: Navigating these last weeks of school well

We all feel it coming* Summer break is close – yet there is often much to do in these remaining weeks of school before it arrives. Following are some tips to help you navigate these final weeks of the school year.

Routine: First and foremost, as much as you might be tempted to get off track or throw the routine out with summer break near, resist the urge. Keeping routine now is as important as ever to stay on track and finish strong.

Plan ahead: Map out your remaining assignments, projects, and/or final exams. Study early and avoid cramming (you retain and recall less when you cram vs. spread out study sessions over days). Plan the remaining weeks of school according to what you have to accomplish and consider how much time each task will take. Break large tasks/assignments/projects into smaller parts as it will help make the work more manageable. Stick to your plan as best you can to succeed in the various tasks!

Taking breaks: With all the talk of routines and planning, also remember to take breaks. Breaks allow you to come back to your work with improved focus, clarity, and energy. For example, if you're working a couple hours on an assignment, take a 15-minute break after working 45 minutes and repeat. While the most effective amount of work and break time varies from person to person, knowing how long you can work before taking a break will help you maximize your productivity. If you skip breaks, you might become fatigued and less focused. If your break is too long, you might find it harder to get back to work. Regardless of the time intervals, both work and breaks contribute to effective outcomes!

Communication and support: If you're struggling to stay focused or work effectively, ask for help (family, friends, teachers, school staff, or other trusted adults). Seeking support is key to walking through challenges and gaining tools to overcome future adversity. We all need support and when we seek it (or give it) we increase positive chemicals in our bodies and brains that help reduce stress and increase connections with others.

Sleep: Its restorative aspects improve both mental and physical health! Lack of sleep (amount or quality) negatively affects learning, memory, and coping ability. Strive for 7-8 hours of sleep each night. While that amount can be challenging for teenagers to achieve, quality of sleep is also important. Things like devices near where you sleep and spending time on them before bed or during the night or too much light impact our body's ability to release melatonin – the hormone that brings sleepiness in response to evening conditions such as darkness.

Walking through hard things: Anxiety or feeling nervous can cause us to avoid the things that seem hard (preparing for final exams, communicating or asking for help when we are struggling). The best thing we can do in those times is walk through the hard thing. It not only relieves feelings of worry or anxiety but boosts our confidence as we face and overcome adversity.

Teachers and the staff at school are here to support you! We want you to succeed and can help with support and tools strategies along the way. Please know I am a resource for you not just as it relates to academics but to social and emotional wellness too. Please stop by anytime!

Wishing you a great finish to this school year,

Mrs. Wehrman, CP School Counselor