

Mr. Barge's Instructional Tip of the Week!

Reading the Room



I hope that everyone had a restful spring break. This week, we return to not only the last week of the second marking period but also the last week of April. As we rapidly approach the final weeks of the school year, it's important to be mindful that most of our students will be taking standardized exams (Regents exams) for the first time in several years.

Just prior to the pandemic, we were working with a group of students who served on a social emotional advisory board and they provided some feedback that is even more relevant today than a few years ago. The students stated that they, along with many of their peers, were stressed and overwhelmed by AP exams and Regents exams and while they never really expressed that to their teachers, they felt as though they never really had opportunities or strategies to discuss and/or deal with the stress. In a recent conversation with student government, they shared that students are expressing that even though “things feel more normal” this semester, they are still feeling overwhelmed (based on the findings from a recent survey that they conducted – over 800 students participated in the survey).

As we end the second marking period and begin the final one, please remember our emphasis on “knowing every student well.” A big part of that is “reading the room” especially as we get closer to the end of the school year and students are processing the fact that they will be sitting for high stakes examinations that are required for graduation (several hundred will be taking AP exams as well). Please remember to monitor the stress levels of students and implement some of the social emotional check-in strategies shared with you. For those who have been trained in restorative practices, please implement some circles over these next few weeks. Certainly, please connect with students' guidance counselors if need be. Additionally, please connect with the many resources that are available to you for suggestions and strategies:

- Michelle Lieberman – Mindfulness Coordinator
- Rachel Porter – Restorative Practice Coordinator
- Assistant Principals – Mr. Williams and well as your APs can connect with our CBOs, Social Workers, and Guidance Counselors for additional supports and suggestions.

Additionally, please continue to take care of yourselves during the final stretch of the school year. Continue to “Find Your 15!” and make self-care a part of your daily routines. I know how hard you all are working in providing the **CARE** that students need, and I greatly appreciate all that you do for our students each and every day.

... because at Edward R. Murrow High School, we **CARE** about our students!