

June 16, 2020

Dear Parents, Guardians and Students,

After meeting with the CHS Administrative Team, teacher leaders and our lead counselor on Friday, June 5, 2020, I have made the decision to make all traditional summer assignments optional for the 2020 summer break. In past years, teachers would assign mandatory assignments as prerequisite work for their courses, and novels would be assigned for summer reading. The work would be assessed and graded. This will not occur during this year's summer break. Our students have dealt with historic levels of stress during the Covid-19 pandemic closure, the senseless killing of George Floyd and the societal unrest related to institutional racism in our nation. Our students need to relax, spend time with friends and family, and recharge for the fall.

I am allowing teachers to post optional assignments for students. These assignments will not be assessed for grades and/or extra credit. Teachers who are posting assignments will contact students via email and their Google classroom pages, or list assignments on departmental pages. These assignments are not mandatory.

The Central HS Administrative Team and Faculty are requesting our entire school community read the following:

1. English Department: James Baldwin's essay "The American Dream and the American Negro" published in 1965 (Article can be found via Google search)

Link to video: <https://avplayer.lib.berkeley.edu/Video-Public-MRC/b22146014>

2. Social Studies Department: The American Nightmare by Ibram X. Kendi : <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/06/american-nightmare/612457/>
3. Additional Reading: NPR, The Enduring Lyricism Of W.E.B. Du Bois' 'The Souls Of Black Folk', 2-23-2018 (Link to article below)

<https://www.npr.org/2018/02/23/588103943/the-enduring-lyricism-of-w-e-b-du-bois-the-souls-of-black-folk>

The reason we selected these three readings and are asking for our entire community to read them is so that when we return to Central High School next year we will be able to have a focused conversation about race and institutionalized racism in our nation. We want to make our community stronger and develop a foundation, as we deal with a 6 month hiatus from traditional school. The stress and anxiety that all members of our school community have suffered during the past few months has been to an extreme level. We need to heal and support one another. Our goal is for the voices of our community to be heard and create a better learning environment for all while making real world connections.

Be well and stay safe.

Timothy J. McKenna
President of Central High School

