



Be Responsible ● Be Respectful ● Be Ready

December 20, 2017

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Please accept our heartiest wishes for a happy holiday season and a wonderful new year. As we approach the end of our first semester, we would like to reach out to you about our semester finals. For some of our students this will be the first time they will have to take a final exam perhaps in their entire academic careers, and this can lead to stress and anxiety for our students. Knowing that this assessment is 20% of their semester grade has a tendency to amp up even the most diligent, easy-goers. As part of our school's Vandal Pride commitment to see our students meet their full potential, we are taking steps to help students prepare for these assessments by providing tips and suggestions on how to study, manage time, and prepare for finals. As parents and educators, it has occurred to us that you, our students' caregivers, may also want a few suggestions and tips to aid your child as they approach this type of testing. Each student may need different levels of support, so these are merely suggestions, but it never hurts to be at least a little proactive when it comes to studying. Below are a few recommendations:

1. **Determine what is your student's weakest subject:** check their grades, and talk to them about where they struggle the most then spend a little extra time studying this subject.
2. **Have the student sit in a chair preferably out of his/her room:** this puts the student in the same posture as he/she will be when taking the test.
3. **Eliminate electronic distractions:** while it is recommended to listen to soothing music while studying, it is best to remove electronic devices that can be a distraction.
4. **Establish goals and take breaks:** it is important to give your student goals and breaks. Set a timer to study for 20-25 minutes and one for 10 minute breaks.
5. **Help your student get organized:** when studying for multiple tests it is best to only have out materials for one subject at a time, so get all papers related to each subject in order and place them together, but out of sight until time to study that subject. This will help



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keep their mind on the task at hand. Use highlighters and sticky notes to help color code subject material for even more organization. Using index cards for things like vocabulary terms may also be useful to organize terms.

- 6. Sleep well and eat before the test:** nothing can be more distracting than a growling belly and a sleepy mind, so encourage proteins instead of caffeine and put studying aside at an appropriate time, turn off electronics an hour before bed, and encourage them to get a good night's sleep.

While these suggestion may not guarantee that every student will receive an 'A' on their assessments, it will help them to be more prepared. More importantly, it will show them that you acknowledge his/her anxiety or stress and support his or her determination to seek academic success. It is only with your ongoing support that we can continue provide the best avenue for these kids' success. We appreciate your time and attention to these brief recommendations and hope that you may find some value in them.

Warmest Regards for a Happy Holiday,

*Vandalia Community High School Faculty and Staff*