To my new AP Research Students (and their parents):

I think it is necessary to address how NTI will impact your summer assignment before you access the actual assignment. I have no inside information about when or how the beginning of the school year will unfold; however, I know we are still struggling with the consequences of the pandemic as well as the social unrest due to racial injustice. I realize that these uncertain times often lead to uncertain circumstances that are out of your control; consequently, NTI requires flexibility—on my part and your part. Yet, I also know the standards and deadlines established by the College Board are not necessarily flexible.

What I say in this letter is designed to help set the tone for our class for the upcoming year. Speak to former students to get an idea about the class and how I operate as a teacher; they will tell you that building a collaborative community of scholars is essential to our success. Your willingness and ability to understand and embrace the ideas in this letter will help ensure your individual success.

So before you actually read the summer assignment, please take the time to process the ideas in this letter. It includes the different aspects to consider as you prepare for the beginning of school next year as an AP Research student. I have chunked it into sections and used bullets to make it easier to access the information.

Your Goals as an AP Research Student:
- Why did you sign up to take this class?
- What do you want to get out of this class?
- How intrinsically motivated are you to be successful in a largely self-directed course?
- If you are going to be successful, you need to do a little soul searching. This includes your ability to answer these questions as honestly and specifically as possible.

Class Expectations:
We will cover each of these in greater depth once school starts; however, you may notice that they overlap and are interconnected.
- Academic Integrity [do your own work & practice ethical research practices]
- Kindness [to yourself (includes your mental & physical health), to your peers, to me, to all others]
- Respect [for yourself (includes your mental & physical health), for your peers, for me, for academic standards and integrity]
- Responsibility [for your own actions, learning, success, growth]
- Reflection [assessing your strengths & weaknesses, setting goals, making a plan for improvement]
- Growth mindset [not a fixed mindset]
- The Seven P’s [Preparedness, Promptness, Positive Mental Attitude, Participation, Politeness, Perseverance, Production]

This Assignment is not about the Grade:
- This is about learning.
- This is about diagnosing the skills and project ideas you bring to the table; think of this like a diagnostic test.
- This is about preparation and gathering resources.
- This is about highlighting and practicing your skills.
- This is about keeping your brain sharp, especially your problem-solving and critical thinking skills.
- This is about beginning to understand the requirements & expectations of the College Board.
- This is about meeting long-term goals—a marathon not a sprint—to help you earn a passing AP score for your 5,000-word paper and 20-minute presentation that are due in April.
Communication is Key:
- I cannot help you unless you ask for help.
- I need to know before a deadline that you are struggling, how you are struggling, and why you are struggling.
- We will then need to work together to devise a plan to help you be successful.
- Email me as soon as any problems, issues, or questions arise.
- Make your email messages concise and specific.
- If you think it will be too hard to express your problems, issues, or questions in writing, send me an email to request a face-to-face Google Meet.
- Check your school email regularly. You have to get in the habit of using a professional email address; currently, that is your JCPS email.
- Join my Google Classroom now with your JCPS email address because this simplifies things when I share resources. Set it up to receive notifications when I make a post. Join Code: nzxjx5m
- I will share a couple of model summer assignments written by former students in Google Classroom over the summer to help you.
- Because it is summer, realize it may take me more than 24 hours to get back to you.

Letters of recommendation for next year:
- You are building a relationship with me because you may need me to write you a letter of recommendation at the beginning of your senior year.
- You are showing me your character: your work ethic, your grit, your intrinsic motivation, your intellectual curiosity, your motivation, your focus. . .
- You are illustrating to me that you are more interested in learning and growth than merely a grade.
- You are proving to me that you would be a desirable student for your dream college or any other school you may want to attend after high school.

The Reasons You Really Need to Complete this Assignment before School Starts & Do Your Best Work:
- You need to complete this with your best effort in order to get ahead and to be prepared for the challenges of meeting standards, expectations, requirements, & deadlines, especially the final College Board deadline.
- You will be required to do this work anyway. More specifically, you have to get approval from me for your project and you will have a 25-source annotated bibliography due in the middle of October.
- You need to complete this with your best effort in order to receive feedback from me in a timely fashion on whether you are meeting my standards & expectations, whether your project is feasible and meets the requirements & expectations of the College Board, or whether you will need to completely change your topic.
- You need to complete this with your best effort in order to prevent increased stress levels when school starts.
- If you do not complete it over the summer before school starts, you will be required to complete it when you also have other assignments for this class and all of your other classes.
- You need to complete this with your best effort to help ensure that you will ultimately be successful with your AP Research project (i.e. earn the AP score you desire).

Whew! That was a lot, wasn’t it?

Take a deep breath. Exhale. Reflect on what you just read, how it makes you feel, and what questions it generated. Then reread the letter to answer some of those questions. Share this letter with your parents to gain their support.

I bet you could make a list of things you learned about me as a teacher and a person from reading this letter, perhaps both good and bad. Know that I am here to support you and my main goal is to help you be successful
and grow. This class is going to be a challenge; yet, if you are willing to put in the hard work, then I am willing to put in the hard work. Also, you will most likely be rewarded for your—perhaps Herculean—efforts.

The best evidence to support this claim is the most recent scores for my AP Research students:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>My students</th>
<th>KY</th>
<th>Global Average</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>11%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 &amp; above</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>88.3%</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You are now ready to look at the actual assignment and do quality work.

Good Luck,

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