

My Dear Bel Aire Students,

Welcome back to Distance Learning. I hope you all had some fun and relaxing times during Spring Break. I wanted to reach out to each of you and let you know how much I miss seeing you at school and to reassure you that just because we don't get to see each other, I haven't forgotten about you. I think about you every day and wonder how you are managing to deal with these challenging times.

It is very easy to think about what we are all missing, but I wanted to share some of my thoughts about how we can best deal with this big change in our lives. I know how sometimes, maybe often, kids think that older people don't really understand them, but for most of us, this is a brand new situation and we are all learning. One thing about being older is that we have experienced challenging and even scary world events that we've had to learn to deal with. I certainly have in my long life. What I've learned is how important it is to keep a positive attitude and hopefulness, and to find the opportunities and things to be grateful for even when life seems pretty tough.

I've also learned that we can put these events in what I call a "memory bank." A bank is where we save money and we can take it out when we need it. A memory bank is a place where we can store our memories and when it's useful to think about how we handled things, we can go in the bank. Many years from now, when you might be facing a difficult time, you can go in your memory bank and can say to yourself, "when I was 8 or 9 or 10 or 11 I had to deal with this virus that made me stay home from school and away from my friends for several months, but I found a way to get through it and be stronger, so I know I can get through this new challenge."

So, what opportunities does this shelter in place offer? We can still learn, not only what our teachers are providing us, but we have time to learn anything we want. We can improve our art skills, build and create new things, we can read about anything we want, we can maybe learn a new language, or a new musical instrument, we can even learn how to talk with friends comfortably on the phone. We can learn to take care of ourselves at home, fix things, cook new recipes, learn to sew – all things that will make us more independent young adults. When we're bored, we can use our imaginations to invent new games and come up with new ideas. Creativity happens when we have time to think. And we can certainly find ways to enjoy time with our families, playing games, watching movies, and, of course, playing with pets.

Finally, it is very important to be grateful for what we have – parents who love us and want us to be safe and healthy, teachers who care so much about us that they are working so hard to make sure we keep learning, a governor of California and a Marin

School Superintendent that so want to keep us safe that they are making rules that seem very strict, and not popular, but are necessary for all of us.

As I said before, I really do miss all of you. I would love it if you wanted to reach out to me, just to say "hi" and let me know how you're handling your home time. I bet many of you have some really good suggestions for others about fun things to do. Of course, if you have some worries and concerns, you are more than welcome to contact me to talk privately. If you want to contact me, you or your parents just email me at agold@reedschools.org and we can set up a time to talk or even Facetime. We will all get through this together. I continue to care for all of you.

Dr. Gold