

January 11, 2021

Dear GEC Community:

As we begin Term 3, I want to welcome everyone back to our virtual learning environment and address the events that unfolded in our own District this past week with the attacks on the Capitol building. Last week, we witnessed continued unrest in our city and division in our country. The attack on the Capitol was a horrific incident that brought forth many personal questions about safety, personal security, and equality. I recognize each of us are processing the emotions that surfaced from this event in different ways and that each of us will need the time and space to process last week. I can see, hear, and feel the heaviness that many members of our community are facing. You should know that GEC is a space for you to bring up any concerns, questions, and lean on each other for the support you need.

On Thursday, I attended classes, and to no surprise found a culture of safety and support in our GEC spaces. I heard many of you share your thoughts and responses to the events over the last few days and insight around solutions and questions about where we go from here. I am always inspired by our community's resilience and determination for a path forward.

Thankfully, our GEC building did not have any damage. To ensure the safety of staff and students, we postponed all on-site activities (testing and IT support) last week. We are re-opening the building this week for IT support and testing. We continue to work in partnership with our building security to ensure we are ahead of all safety concerns.

This school year has us facing new challenges each day that sometimes create a sense of the unknown. With the impact of COVID-19 still very much a reality as well as the events of the last few days, we understand that our community needs time and space to process. We understand the need to remain focused on health and safety while also continuing our education journey. It is important to take the time you need, and we are here to support you and each other.

The GEC is a community united in the belief that education is critical and creating a community of inclusivity and support is what allows us to achieve our goals. We **stand** against racism, injustice, and hate. We **stand** as one unifying force knowing that each person's life is valuable and so is each person's family member and friends.



Thank you for being part of our community and coming together to forge ahead and navigate these challenging times together. As we take the next steps into our Term 3, I encourage everyone to share ideas about how we should continue to move ahead. Throughout this term, you will be able to participate in student and staff support groups to process and share your thoughts. You are always welcome to contact me or any GEC team member with any extra support you need or any ideas you might have.

As your School Director, I will lead with empathy and understanding as we walk alongside one another during these times and the times ahead. Please continue to stay healthy and safe. It is a privilege and an honor to be part of this community.

Sincerely,

Dr. Chelsea Kirk
School Director

Cc: Catherine Meloy
Colleen Paletta
GEC Leadership Team