

Kaitlin Menz

What CELA means to me

I have had a great experience at CELA, but good things come to an end and it is our time now to start a new chapter; one that will open up new opportunities and prepare me to be independent leader. CELA has both prepared me to be successful in high school and throughout life and taught me the importance of leadership that will bring out the best in me. I would always pass CELA and see the beautiful school and think about how I wanted to go there to grow, learn, succeed. Coming here this year I feel has helped me to accomplish that goal. High school can be intimidating, scary, overwhelming yet exciting because it is a different atmosphere with different people and you're one step closer to going off to college. With the help of the teachers here, I have been introduced to content and tools that will help me to make that needed smooth transition into high school.

I started here in the middle of the pandemic shutdown meaning everyone was doing virtual school for many months. I was nervous. Coming into a new school isn't always easy, especially if you can't meet everyone in person. Instead you meet over a video chat with everyone on your screen in a little box. I was right away greeted with open arms and warm welcomes from both the teachers and the interaction over video with my classmates. I knew right away CELA was the right fit for me if I wanted to continue to pursue a successful life and education. After school was done and summer came, I was ecstatic to hear we would be able to be in school in person for this year. However, it wouldn't be the same. Wearing masks, socially distancing, and staying in the same classrooms all day become the new

normal but throughout this year I have begun to realize that you should never take anything for granted. Value the time with your families, spend time with your friends, and take advantage of everything you have in that moment or time because things can change, for good or bad, but those are the things that matter the most.

I have made important friendships, learned important life lessons, and practiced important leaderships skills that will make a big impact on me others. CELA has made me realize the importance of being on top of learning and a good advocate for both myself and others. I have grown in my confidence in learning and speaking up which has helped me to be more open and okay with making a mistake.

The engagement and commitment of the teachers and willingness to help has helped my weak spots to grow stronger, my confidence to build, and my stamina to rise. I feel like I came in not knowing much and I have learned a wealth of valuable knowledge this year that will help so much to get me through the high school years. I know it is hard, saying our final goodbyes, but we will never let go of those long-lasting memories and important friendships. It was CELAs job to help us become successful and they have done just that by paving a pathway of opportunities. Now it is time to take one of those paths. It is our time now to allow this chapter to start. We are all prepared and able to follow the ways we are taking and the opportunities we are given. It is time to say goodbye, and look at the new opportunities and challenges this new chapter brings.