



MS Class Dean Update



Dear 6th Grade Families,

I hope your child is enjoying the start of school! It has been a busy, exciting week, and there is more to come. The class is in good form, and their teachers and I are happy to be enjoying these opening days in their company. It was especially lovely to see them at recess on the very first day, inviting each other into games and even patiently explaining the rules of GagaBall to those who have not played before.

I have the sense most students are enjoying all the new discoveries, but we also know this can be an overwhelming time for young folks. They have made a good start into conquering locker locks and grasping the ins and outs of their schedules, but of course some wobbles are expected in these early days. The advisory team is on the front porch ready to help.

Please feel free to reach out to me, your child's advisor, or Mrs. Levitan if you have any concerns or want to share about your child's experience. Monday evening the 28th -- **Fall Parent Orientation** -- also is a great time to bring questions. I look forward to meeting with you all then and especially to your getting together as grade-level parents. This is a great opportunity to touch base with each other, welcome new acquaintances, and spend a little time with the parents of the classmates with whom your child is collaborating every day.

Dates of Interest

- **September 10th, Club Selection** -- During an activities-period advisory, students learned about the fall clubs that will meet during activities periods and signed up for their preferences (Tues. & Thurs. 2:40-3:25). All students are required to fill this time block with a club or sport. Those interested in participating in a sport instead of doing clubs in the fall had the opportunity to meet with coaches. Getting involved in clubs can create opportunities to make new friends (clubs include 6th, 7th and 8th graders all together) and discover new interests as well as build upon current passions. Students should see their club assignments on the myDE portals next week. Clubs start meeting the 15th.
- **September 14th, after school, Fall Sports and Try-Outs Start** -- If your child is interested, they should check their email and fill out the form sent by our athletic director earlier this week. Middle School is a great time to try something new! You may want to encourage your child to go out for a sport, even if just to see what it is like. Weekly practice/try-outs [schedules](#) are posted on the [athletics page](#) of the school website.
- **September 15th, Back To School Night** -- Look for an email invitation from the MS office.
- **September 16th, Picture Day** -- All students are photographed for the yearbook and ID cards. If you like, you can purchase copies of your child's "head shot" directly from the photo company. Look out for an email from support@imageconnection.com with proofs sometime after the day.
- **September 21, Yom Kippur** -- No School
- **September 22-25th -- Bridge Week** -- Look out for an E-mail from Mrs. M&M with more details.
- **September 28th, PARENT ORIENTATION, 6:30pm.** -- Check your email for an invitation from the middle school office. This event is for ALL parents of 6th grade students.

Around the Dinner Table...

- **Kind Communication and the "No Fly" Zone** -- We will soon have a class meeting with Mrs. Levitan and Ms Simone Henry Agblonon ("Ms. Henry") to start the year off right with MS norms and expectations for creating a safe community for all by choosing our words thoughtfully. Ask your child about the "no-fly" zone: identity-related/ sensitive topics about which students should be thoughtful and never

joke or tease. Feel free to reach out with any questions. Ms. Henry will also be speaking to parents at the fall parent orientation or an upcoming parent forum, and she leads regular sessions with 6th graders to support their development of skills to help them make positive contributions to their school community. It is exciting that they have this regular time with her in this program -- ask them what activities and understandings they explore together!

- **The Homework Planner** -- Students received their D-E paper planner this week! They will be encouraged to use it in every class that assigns homework as well as for planning ahead to finish projects and long-term assignments. You may want to help your child fill in the page about after-school commitments to help them with their time management.

Reminders

- **Contracts: Honor Code of Conduct, Acceptable Use, and Work Norms.** Please take the opportunity to discuss these documents and the values they reflect with your child. I also encourage you to explore the MS Student Handbook for more detail. We ask that, after you have reviewed and signed these documents with your child, they bring them back to their advisors. The understandings therein are foundational to our community practice.
- **Attendance** -- Mrs. Jones is our attendance coordinator for middle school. You can reach her at MSattendance@d-e.org or [201-227-3232](tel:201-227-3232). Please let her know if your child will be dropped off late, picked up early or unexpectedly absent by filling in a School Pass form or reaching out directly to her. If you are planning an absence in advance, please copy her on your e-mail to me.
- **MS Office/Day-Of Communications** -- Our office manager is Ms. Cebulski. You can reach her at [201-227-3230](tel:201-227-3230) or cebuld@d-e.org. She can help you get a message to your child should you have an unexpected, time-sensitive communication. While easy and tempting to do, please do NOT contact your child by text message or email during the school day. We will be working with students on how to manage their personal tech so it is not managing them. Asking them to keep phones and apple watches off and stowed during the day is part of that project. You can help by communicating urgent messages through the school rather than via cell, and/ or making it clear to your child that any texts you send are OK to look at after dismissal at 3:25. The teachers and I spend the day engaged with students and often do not get to email and phone messages right away, so Ms. Cebulski also can help with other time-sensitive questions. When we go on field trips, I keep in touch with her, so she has information about our progress throughout the trip as well.

Have a happy weekend,

Tasha Urbanowski
Sixth Grade Dean