



MS Class Dean Update



Dear 7th Grade Families,

Here we are, at the end of the first week of school! I hope your child has been enjoying it. The first week is filled with excitement and joy with new classes, new classmates, new teachers, and new experiences. It has been wonderful to see our new students being welcomed by returning students, and it is clear the students are all happy to be together. The first few days have been an important time of bonding for Advisory groups. For example, advisees collaborated to solve the Matching Game (with snacks to boot!) and the Flip the Tarp challenge (who knew trying to flip a tarp without one person touching the ground was so difficult!?). Groups were also engaged in an exercise called Lost at Sea, where students had to work together to choose items that would be most useful to them in a survival situation. All of these activities included reflective components where students thought about the importance of collaboration and the power of multiple voices and perspectives.

I think it is also important to note that the first days can also be a bit overwhelming for students as well. They need to navigate new classrooms, new social dynamics, and new expectations as they move into the next chapter of their middle school journey. Please know that there are plenty of adults on campus to support them

and you including advisors, Ms. Ariel Levitan, Middle School Counselor, or myself. Please review the information below, including some important details regarding our upcoming overnight trip to Philadelphia.

Dates of Interest

- **Sept. 10th - Activity Period Club Selections:** At the end of the school day, students learned about the fall clubs that will meet during Activity Period 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 My D-E portals next week. Clubs start meeting on the 15th.
- **Sept. 14th - First Day of Fall Athletics Tryouts:** 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.
- **Sept. 15th - Back to School Night:** Back-to-School Night on campus for parents only. Meet your child's teachers! Look for an upcoming e-mail invitation from the Middle School office with more details. The event runs from 6:30-9:00 PM.
- **Sept. 16th - Picture Day:** All students are photographed for the yearbook and ID cards. Information can be found here:  [8th: HighpointPhotoDayInfo2026.pdf](#)
- **Sept. 21st - Yom Kippur:** No school
- **Sept. 24th-25th - 7th Grade Overnight Trip:** This is our annual grade-level overnight trip, and this year we will be traveling to Philadelphia! The trip will be led in collaboration with Grand Classroom, the same school tour organization that helps to plan the 8th Grade SEEK Trips. See below for some important details:
 - Itinerary Overview
 - **Sept. 24th** - Students should plan to arrive on campus at 7:40 AM. That will give them plenty of time to check-in and board the buses. The buses will roll at approximately 8:00 AM. We arrive in Philadelphia at approximately 9:45 AM at our first stop, the Philadelphia Zoo. After this, we head to the historic district of Philadelphia. Students will experience the National Constitution Center, followed by a visit to Independence Hall. They will then have dinner at the famous Reading Terminal Market. In the evening, they will go on a Philadelphia "ghost tour". Please be assured that this tour is more historical than it is scary! We arrive at our hotel for check-in at approximately 8:30 PM. Students will have a chance to call home in the evening before heading to bed around 10:00 PM.
 - **Sept. 25th** - After having breakfast at the hotel, we head out at about 8:30 AM to visit the famous "Rocky Steps" at the Philadelphia Art Museum as well as the Azalea Garden and Schuylkill River Trail. This day is very STEM focused, with a trip to both the Franklin Institute and Drexel University's Academy of Natural Sciences. We depart Philadelphia at approximately 2:20 PM, with an estimated arrival of 4:45 PM.

- You can find a parent letter from Grand Classroom including a suggested packing list [HERE](#)
 - Hotel Rooming
 - At a class meeting on Sept. 10th, students were given the opportunity to fill out a survey related to the trip. Part of this survey asked them for some preferences for roommates. Students will be rooming with about 3 other students for this trip. Please know that we will do our best to accommodate student requests as much as possible, but nothing is guaranteed.
 - Forms to be Signed
 - At our class meeting on Sept. 10th, students were shown two forms they will need to bring home to be signed to go on the trip and are required by Grand Classroom. One form is a Medical Release and History Form, while the other is a Behavior Guidelines Contract. Students were given these forms during Advisory on Friday, and **they should be completed and returned no later than next Friday, Sept. 18th**. Thank you in advance for helping this process run smoothly.
 - Additional Details
 - All 7th grade Advisors attend the trip as chaperones. If your child is having a birthday on the trip, please let me know! If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to reach out to me. I will be back in touch about this with more details as we get closer!
 - **Sept. 28th - 7th Grade New Parent Orientation:** This evening event is designed for parents new to D-E with the goal of providing helpful information regarding policies, procedures, and other helpful tips for navigating the school. New families should be on the lookout for an invitation to this event.
 - **Oct. 5th - 7th Grade Parent Forum:** The first parent forum of the year will take place from 8:30-10:00 AM on campus. This is an in-person opportunity to meet other parents, discuss specific developmental issues, and meet key support people in your child's school experience. More details to follow.
 - **Oct. 9th - Professional Day for Faculty:** No school for students
 - **Oct. 12th - Indigenous Peoples' Day:** No school
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Reminders

Attendance: Mrs. Leslie Jones is our attendance coordinator for middle school. You can reach her at MSattendance@d-e.org or 201-227-3301. Please let her know if your child will be dropped off late, picked up early or unexpectedly absent by filling out the form on your SCHOOL PASS app or, if that is not possible, reaching out to her directly. In addition, please try to reach out to me with a week's notice for any possible planned absences for your child. The main purpose of this is to provide the student with ample time to check-in with teachers and get a sense of the work that they may need to make-up while away. As a general rule of

thumb, planned absences generally do not come with an extension on assignments except for certain special circumstances (ex: bereavement).

MS Office/Day-Of Communications: Our office manager is Ms. Diane Cebulski. You can reach her at 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. All students will be using a Yondr pouch for their cell phone and/or smartwatch. New students will get their Yondr pouch on the first day of school. Returning students should try to bring their Yondr pouch with them on the first day.

Check-In Meetings (Optional): Following the overnight trip later this month, I plan to offer optional check-in meetings through Google Meet for any interested parents. The purpose of these meetings are for me to learn more about your child and how I can best support both them and you this school year. Be on the lookout for more information about this following the trip!

That is all for now. I will be in touch again next week with a brief message as well. As always, please let me know if you have any questions.

Take care,

Matthew Schade
Seventh Grade Dean