



MS Class Dean Update

Dear 8th Grade Families,

The SEEK trips are a memory, the weather is cooler, and it is officially fall. A reminder that the school year is a marathon, not a sprint, and we all need to pace ourselves and take care of ourselves to do our best learning and growing! Some updates below.

In the MESH Classes

- **English** -Students have completed the first unit, "The Danger of a Single Story." Students referenced their anchor text, Piecing Me Together, along with mentor texts "Fish Cheeks" and "The Danger of a Single Story," to explore these essential questions: "How and why are single stories dangerous?" and "How do limited narratives impact our perceptions?" Next week, they will begin our poetry unit. Students will begin by writing identity poems for the upcoming Middle School Poetry Connections event, then explore their poetry anthologies. Students have been actively engaged in daily reading, writing, comprehension, and speaking and listening tasks. They are also continuing to build their stamina in writing composition.
- **History** -Classes are currently in the second unit of History, Equality and the Fourteenth Amendment. In the opening unit, Free Speech and the First Amendment, students evaluated constitutional language, application, and landmark Supreme Court rulings. By participating in Moot Court cases for Texas v. Johnson and Tinker v. Des Moines, students gained insight into judicial decision-making and the craft of majority and dissenting opinions. Each student synthesized their learning into structured TEA/ICE paragraphs, defending a clear position with evidence and detailed analysis. The current focus centers on the inception of the Fourteenth Amendment and its profound influence on post-Reconstruction America.
- **Science** - Students have been working through Module I. For the last two weeks, class has covered Lesson 2 in the textbook. Students discussed kinetic and potential energy and how to calculate them using their respective formulas. They also learned about the relationship between KE and mass vs KE and speed. Students graphed these to observe the relationships, as well. Outside of the textbook, classes explored the "Energy Skate Park" PhET simulation to understand how these concepts apply in a real-world setting. Finally, classes discussed Conservation of Energy and how energy in a system follows this law.
- **Math** -. *College Prep* -Students are on chapter 3 of the textbook, which is called Linear and Nonlinear Functions. So far they have learned to write equations in standard form, identify intercepts algebraically, from a graph, and from a table, and explain what those intercepts mean in context. The class will be finishing this chapter with calculating rate of change and slope, and writing and graphing equations in slope-intercept form.

Advanced Math students have finished reviewing forms of linear equations (slope-intercept, standard, and point-slope) and have begun using them to model real-world problems, including choosing which form is the most appropriate given the information presented to them. Classes are also extending these concepts into systems of equations and determining the contextual importance of rate of change, intercepts, and the intersections of equations. Students are also exploring linear inequalities.

Hyper Math is wrapping up quadratic functions and beginning to use quadratics as an entry point to Geometry concepts such as distances on the coordinate plane, midpoints, perpendicular bisectors, and congruence. Additionally, students are engaging in challenging problems that involve distance, rate, time, the Pythagorean Theorem, and coordinate plane geometry. Students continue to explore and use radicals, quadratics, and systems of equations in the problem sets.

Transition to the Upper School

Student events

- **October 29: Tour and Town Hall with Ms. Choi**-In groups, students will get a tour of the Upper School campus by Upper School student ambassadors. They will also hear directly from the principal, Julie Choi, about some aspects of the program. This will happen during the school day.
- **November 5: Upper School Student Panel**-Upper school students who matriculated from our middle school will speak to the entire grade and students will be given an opportunity to ask questions about all aspects of the program. We will then break off into smaller groups to continue the conversation.

Parent/Guardian events

- **November 4 and November 19: Upper School Tour and Chat** (for parents) 9-11 am
- **November 12-Upper School Academic Experience-remote** (for parents) 6:30-8 pm

Please reach out to Mr. Samedy with any questions about these events: [\(201\) 227-3105](tel:2012273105) and samedn@d-e.org

Dates of Interest

- **October 30th - Halloween at D-E:** On this day, students are permitted to wear costumes to school if they wish! Please see the guidelines below. Please do not allow students to bring candy to school. Our PA will provide an optional treat for students that day. I have compiled a list of dietary restrictions from our overnight trip, but please reach out if you have any particular concerns.
- **November 5th-6th - Parent Teacher Conferences:** Parent-Teacher Conferences begin on the afternoon of November 5th. Students have an early dismissal that day at 12:00 PM. Please look for an email from Mr. Davis announcing when you can sign up for times using the "Pick-a-Time" link on your resource page.

- **November 13th - Fall Interim Semester Grades Released:** On this date, you should expect to find initial semester grades for students on the parent portal. As will be communicated to students, these grades are a “barometer” of performance midway through the semester.
 - **November 21st-29th - School Closed for Thanksgiving Break**
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Additional Notes

COOP Accounts: The COOP is now open to MS students for after-school purchases. However, they are not permitted to shop there during Activity Period, as there is not generally time for students to get a snack at the COOP and still make it to sports on time. (In order to purchase items at the COOP, your child needs their ID card and an account with “MyKidsSpending.com”. Please check your email for a message from MyKidsSpending.com with instructions for setting up that account.)

Halloween: Students are permitted to wear costumes on the 30th (we will be attending the LS costume parade as supportive spectators) as long as they will not distract from class or interfere with students’ participation in all regular school activities. Please note the following guidelines:

- **Cultural Sensitivity and Respect:** As we work to maintain an environment of belonging, please ensure that your child’s costume does not portray a stereotyped image of a given culture nor is offensive to any racial, ethnic or religious group, any people with disabilities or illnesses, or any other group of people. While students might choose to dress as a famous person or character whose identity is different than their own, please reinforce the importance of not using makeup to change a child’s skin color to match the person who they are dressing up to be. Students are often unaware of the long history of such instances that have caused harm and need our help in understanding why it can be insensitive.
 - **Safety and Appropriateness:** Weapons or gory images should not be a part of costumes as school.
 - **Masks and Inflatables:** Masks may not be worn in the buildings. Any inflatable costumes should not interfere with a student’s ability to move around or sit in class and should be removed after advisory. *If you are unsure about your child’s costume, please do not hesitate to reach out to me or Simone Henry (henrys@d-e.org), our Asst. Director of DEIB*
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Reminders

Planned Absences: If possible, please reach out to me at least a week in advance with any planned absences that might be on the horizon. This provides me plenty of time to set up your child with a planned absence form and check-in with their teachers about what they might miss!

MS Office/Day-Of Communications: If you need to get a message to your child during the school day, please reach out to Ms. Cebulski at 201-227-3230 or cebuld@d-e.org. Please do not ask your child to be

checking email during the school day for time-sensitive messages, as this conflicts with the Acceptable Use contract and puts kids in an awkward, distracted position. The teachers and I spend the day engaged with students and so often do not get to email and phone messages right away, so Ms. Cebulski also can help with other time-sensitive questions.

After School Study Hall has Started: Middle School students on campus after school and not in a supervised activity should report to Ms. Millien in the Middle School building and wait on the first floor for pick up (or the late bus.) *This is not optional.* If there is a game on campus that a student wants to go watch, that is great, but they still need to check in with Ms. Millien first. This program has taken place of students working on their own in the library.

Take care,

Ali Miller
Eighth Grade Dean