



US Class Dean Update

October 2026

Dear 9th grade families,

I am writing to you on a grey and rainy Friday. Even the students comment on it when they stop by my office for a snack. And I'd like to start this memo with a note of gratitude. Gratitude for rain, and the ways in which this kind of weather reminds me of the rhythms of the seasons. And in case you find yourself in need of some reading - here goes the 9th grade Dean's memo! This edition includes a letter of the Dean of Student Life about all things Spirit Week!

The Coop

The Coop opened a few weeks ago. It is our version of a café: a place where students can buy a drink and a snack and hang out. The Coop is staffed by parent volunteers. In their October Newsletter, the PA is inviting volunteers. If creating a happy space where kids can have some downtime is something that calls your name, please reach out to the PA. Students need to bring their ID in order to make a purchase. Parents can either fund their children's account, or pay the bill afterwards. Please remind your kids to clean up after themselves.

9th grade workshops

Wednesday October 7 marked the first of a three-part series of 9th grade workshops. This is a program we piloted last year, designed to ease our newest high schoolers through their transition into D-E. The series looks as follows:

Wednesday Oct. 6	How to prioritize emails, and how to organize your Google Drive
Friday Oct. 30	DE Culture and Community
Tuesday Nov. 10	Student Support at DE and Interim grades + comments

The workshops run during advisory and the adjacent x-block.

Notes of academic concern

Tests and quizzes are happening across the board now, and some of you have received your first notes of academic concern. This is standard practice, and a way for us to keep parents informed. Per practice, I am usually included in those emails, as are department chairs. Notes of concern are always a good place to start a conversation with your student about their study habits, and about whether or not they may need some extra help. Especially 9th graders will often need some encouragement and nudging before they take the initiative to reach out to their teacher. All teachers offer their students moments for extra help. In the beginning of 9th grade teachers will sometimes take the initiative, but we all encourage students to take agency and take the initiative to reach out. On the home-school communication note - **comments** will come out on **November 12**. They will be released to students first, who have a chance to reflect on them with their advisors. Shortly after that they will be released to parents so that the conversation can continue at home.

Prevention Ed workshops

During Oct. 28-30 [Prevention Ed](#) will return to school to work with all 9th graders. Prevention Ed is a global substance use prevention organization. We have worked with them for a few years now. They are well-versed in the latest trends when it comes to anything related to substance use, but also for example online gambling. They will host an all-school assembly, and they will work with all 9th graders in either their seminar class, or their health & wellness class. Each time they visit our school, they also offer drop-in hours during which students can speak about private concerns.

Upcoming Parent Forum

The PA representatives and I have prepared a list of topics that we think will be relevant to the current stage of your child's journey in the upper school - from Camp Mason pictures to reading comments to academic integrity. There will also be time for questions. The first 9th grade forum is on **November 2, 8:30 - 10:00 am in Hajjar Auditorium**. I am looking forward to seeing many of you there.

Spirit Week

Next week, October 19-23 is **Spirit Week**. This week is filled with competitions, games, and general fun activities that celebrate school spirit. Below is a note from Ms. Murphy, the Dean of Student Life, with all the information, including how to dress up (or down, depending on your perspective) each day.

[A Note from the Dean of Student Life:](#)

Next week, we have Spirit Week and Homecoming next week!

Our **all-school Spirit Week** will follow, featuring a fun-filled week of community bonding, including games, competitions, and lots of D-E Bulldog pride. During this week, we will focus on our community both on and off campus. Beyond our dress-up days, Upper School students will learn about the work of the Center for Food Action, a local nonprofit that provides emergency food and homelessness-prevention aid to low-income families. Our Coin Wars during the week will support this cause, leading up to our annual All-School Thanksgiving Drive next month.

We will have a **Homecoming Game at 4 pm** on Solomon Field. Our Boys' and Girls' Varsity Soccer Team will play against Dwight-Morrow High School and Pioneer Academy, respectively. Students will walk from campus to Solomon Field in an event called The March to Solomon! They will leave at 3:30 pm and walk along North Woodland to attend the homecoming soccer game. The game will run until about 6:00 pm.

Afterward, we have the **Homecoming Dance** this Friday, October 23rd, in the STEM Center. Tickets are still available and will be on sale until the day before the dance. [Here's a link to purchase tickets](#). If your student plans to stay for both events (which we really hope they do!), they should bring their outfits to school for the dance if they don't live nearby.

Here's a preview of the Spirit Week dress-up days and activities in the Upper School:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	Pajama Day	Students Dress as Teachers	Jersey Day	Denim Day	D-E Spirit Day

Community Times	<i>School Meeting</i> (Kickoff Game with Deans) Lunch: Soccer and halftime games on Leggett Field	<i>Advisory</i> Lunch: Soccer and halftime games on Leggett Field	<i>Advisory</i> Lunch: Soccer Final and halftime games on Leggett Field	<i>Spirit Week Assembly at 9:50 AM</i>	<i>Advisory</i> Lunch: Final Game on Leggett Field <i>Assembly at 2:35: Closing Ceremony in the Gym 🏆</i> Homecoming Game at 4pm Homecoming Dance at 7pm
-----------------	---	--	--	--	--

We're excited to see everyone display their school spirit and creativity! As students plan their outfits for each theme day, please remember:

- All clothing must be appropriate for school.
- Be thoughtful and considerate of our diverse school community—choose outfits that reflect the spirit of the day respectfully and inclusively.
- Consider how your outfit might affect and be perceived by your peers, and aim to foster a fun, welcoming environment for everyone.
- Outfits that don't meet these standards may result in a point deduction from your class total or disciplinary action.

Let's make it a fantastic week full of joy, spirit, and mutual respect!

Thank you for making it all the way to the end!

Wishing you a restful weekend,

Petra van't Slot