US Class Dean Update

Dear 9th grade families,

Not too long ago I was walking up to my classroom in the STEM building, and I noticed what you see in this image: a whole bunch of 9th graders chatting together, having found a place in the STEM building. It caught my eye because they were talking together, hanging out in a comfortable place, and there was a whole group of them together. It's telling how 9th grade is doing - they are finding their way. They are making new friends. They are getting used to their schedules, their classes, and the new level of independence. They are scheduling meetings with their teachers, reaching out for help, reflecting on their study habits and learning how to adapt them if necessary.
In this newsletter you'll find an update of ongoing and upcoming activities.



Clothing + food drive

The yearly **Thanksgiving Drive** is in full swing. Kickstarted during Spirit Week through the Coin Wars, the drive continues all the way to the Thanksgiving break. We collect **new and gently used winter clothing** and **food items.** The drive will benefit the **Center for Food Action** in Englewood. Focus food items for 9th graders are:

- **Tomato sauce**
- **Pasta**
- **Rice**

Please give generously, and send food and/or clothing to school with your child. Advisors will collect them. Students who bring diapers or baby formula will be entered into a raffle.

Comments

Students will review their comments this week on **Thursday 11/12** with their advisors. Later that day, they will receive their grades. **Grades and comments will be released to families** by 4:00 PM on **Friday 11/13.** If you are looking for inspiration as to how to talk to your child about their comments, here are two questions that I shared during the Parent Forum, and that I always find helpful:

1. What is a strength that your teacher is highlighting? What is something that you are doing well?
2. What is a growth area your teacher indicates for you? How can we work on this together?

Teachers put much thought and time into writing comments. From my experience, supportive communication about comments at home can make a tremendous difference. Comments are also a good starting point for the upcoming Family-Teacher conferences.

Family-Teacher conferences

Family-Teacher conferences are scheduled for **Thursday 12/10 from 4:15 - 7:15 PM and Friday 12/11 from 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM.** You can sign up through the 'Pick-a-Time' app, that you will find on the myDE parent portal. You will receive an email from the school when sign-ups open; usually after the Thanksgiving Break. For those of you new to the school: the conferences happen in the small and large gym. You sign up for a window of time, and you can arrive at any time during that window. Your students' teachers will all be sitting behind a table, where you will meet with them. Aim to keep your conversations to around 10 minutes to allow for other parents to also meet with your teacher.

Interesting things happening or about to happen

The **Fall play** is debuting on **Thursday 11/12.** We just saw a preview, and it is looking fantastic! More information and the QR code to purchase tickets can be found here . Performances are:

- **Thursday 11/12 at 4 PM**
- **Friday 11/13 at 7 PM**
- **Saturday 11/14 at 2 PM**
- **Saturday 11/14 at 7 PM**

This year's **Leggett-Umpleby lecture** is on Tuesday 11/17 at **7 PM in Hajjar Auditorium.** The 'lecturer' is yours truly, and the topic is water through the lenses of science, (mostly Abrahamic)

religions and cultures (origin stories). Hence the title: H_2O: from **H**ydrogen Bonds to **H**oly waters to **O**rigin stories. Admission is free!

Students will have some fun activities next week, during the regular school day. This includes the **annual Turkey Bowl and a Thanksgiving assembly.**

Phones and APs

One of the topics we discussed during the Parent Forum was phones. It appears that several parents are in favor of phone policies that are stricter than our current phone policies. You've asked me how you could let this be made known to the school. I shared this question with our team, and we suggest that you start communicating this with the PA grade-level reps. If it turns out that parents across all grades share the desire for stricter policies, the grade-level reps can communicate with the PA executive board, and from there it can be shared with the school administration.

As you may have seen earlier this week, the School has made a public announcement regarding the future of AP courses at D-E. All information that is currently public can be found here with a shorter, at-a-glance summary here. If you are interested you are welcome to join an on-campus conversation specifically designated for parents of current 8th and 9th graders on **November 30 at 8:30 AM**

9th Grade Workshops

This week students finished the last of a series of 3 workshops:

- Tech Literacy
- D-E Culture and Community
- Student Support & Interim Grades/Comments.

The student support team has generously offered to share their slides.

Upcoming Breaks

Thanksgiving break: Monday 11/23 - Friday 11/27
Family-Teacher conferences (no school for students): Friday 12/11
Winter Break: Monday 12/21 - Friday 1/1, 2027

Have a wonderful rest of your day!

Petra van't Slot