

# 8th Grade Welcome from Dean Ali Miller

Dear Families,

Hello and welcome to the 8th grade! I'm Ali Miller, the 8th grade Dean. I look forward to working with you and supporting your child and you throughout the school year. A little about me: I grew up in Bergen County, moved to Los Angeles after college, and moved back to New Jersey two years ago. I attended Ithaca College for undergrad and UCLA for graduate school. I have spent the majority of my career in education in middle school. Upon returning to New Jersey, I taught 8th grade Humanities at Bank Street School for Children and previously, I worked as both a teacher and an administrator for almost 20 years at an independent school in Los Angeles. I'm thrilled to be beginning my second year at D-E, especially since I have gotten to know so many of the current 8th grade students already.

We have 8 new students and families in our 8th grade class. Welcome! I know you will find this community as warm and welcoming as I have.

Here are some details as we begin the school year. In case you haven't been to this **links/resources** site already, I highly recommend it. It has almost everything you would need to know regarding the start of school: <https://startofschool.d-e.org/middle-school-start-of-school-page/>

In addition, please also check out the **school calendar**:

## [2023-2024-Key-Dates-School-Closure-Calendar-d13.pdf](#)

**Advisory:** Your child will be sent an email from their advisor on **Thursday**. *If your child doesn't receive it by Friday, please let me know.*

Class

### **Day One, 9/5:**

**Drop off and pick up:** Students arriving by car should be dropped off in front of the middle school building, where Mr. Davis and myself and some other 8th grade teachers will be waiting to meet them and direct them to the opening all-class meeting on the third floor porch. If your child is new to DE or is a buddy for a new student, they should meet up in the grove area in front of the MS building and go to the third floor porch in the middle school together.

Your child needs to bring a charged iPad, their levenger, writing utensils, and a water bottle. Chances are it will be warm that day so please make sure your child dresses in comfortable clothes they can be active in and shoes good for walking. If your child tends to get cold, it might be a good idea to have them bring a sweatshirt or sweater for when we are in the air-conditioned buildings.

**Returning Student Buddies:** If you are a buddy, be sure to connect with your new student again this coming week and remember to meet your new student buddy and bring them to the third floor porch in the middle school building.

**Parent Orientation:** Parent Orientation will be on **Tuesday, September 12th @ 7:00 pm**. This night is for *new* parents. More information and an invitation to follow.

**Sports and Activities:** Sports will begin on **Monday, September**

**18th.** We will have a sports and activities offerings assembly prior to that date so that kids can learn about various options and sign up for sports.

**Picture Day** is on September 18th. More details to come.

**Back to School Night:** Back to School Night will occur on the evening of **September 21 at 6:30pm** and is a program presented by the middle school teachers geared towards giving you insight into the day to day in the classrooms and our curriculum. You will receive an e-invitation closer to the date.

**SEEK Trips:** The 8th grade overnight trip is coming soon! The dates of the trip are **September 27-29** and students will be going to one of the following places: Washington, D.C., Burlington, VT, Boston or Montreal. We will work the first weeks of school to gather student preferences for this overnight trip.

NOTE: Your child will need either a birth certificate or a passport to go to Montreal. In addition, there is a document that must be notarized.

**Parent Forums:** Parent Forums are informal daytime gatherings. These are opportunities to catch up with other parents and hear from me, your PA reps or other school staff such as the learning specialist or school counselor about general topics or developmental challenges related to the 8th grade. The first 8th grade Parent Forum is **October 10th** at 8:30 am in Hulst House.

**Communication:** If you need to contact someone mid-day and get a message to your child or you need a same-day response to a question, please reach out to the middle school office manager, **Ms. Cebulski, at 201-227-3230**, or if it is attendance related, our MS attendance Coordinator, **Ms. Jones, at 201-227-3301 or via email at [msattendance@d-e.org](mailto:msattendance@d-e.org)**.

*While easy and tempting to do, please do NOT contact your child by text message. We will get your child the message they need. As we know, cell phones are a wonderful tool and a potent distraction. We will be working with the students on how to manage this technology so it's not managing them. (Also, as a reminder, Apple watches are not allowed during the school day.) By communicating with your child via the school, and not the cell phone, this will help in that endeavor.*

**To-Do's before the first day of school:** finish your math packet/Aleks, finish your summer reading books, pick up your iPad and set it up, complete Magnus forms, order books and set up a workstation at home for your child

As always, please reach out to me with any questions. My office number is 201-227-3236 and my email is [millea@d-e.org](mailto:millea@d-e.org). I can't wait to see/meet your children and you. It's going to be a wonderful year!

Warmly,

Ali Miller

8th Grade Dean

## **Dwight-Englewood School**

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