

August 27, 2024



Dear Families,

Welcome to the 2024-2025 school year, and 7th grade! I've met many of you already, but as a reminder, I am James Aitken the 7th grade Dean. I have been a dean at Dwight-Englewood since 2011, both as 8th Dean and 7th grade Dean. I grew up in the Boston area and attended Colorado College as an undergrad. I also earned advanced degrees in education from Simmons College, University of Northern Colorado and Southern New Hampshire University. Most of my professional career has been spent working with Middle School students as a teacher, administrator, coach and also a camp counselor and director. I love the variety my job offers and I love the energy and playfulness I still see everyday with 7th graders. I am very excited to be working with you and of course your child this school year.

For your knowledge, we have 26 new students and families joining the 7th grade class. I know I speak for all of us when I say welcome to our community!

Start of School Resources: Here are some details as we begin the school year. In case you haven't been to this [MS Start of School 2024 links/resources site](https://startofschool.d-e.org/middle-school-start-of-school-page/) 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/>

Scheduled School Closures Calendar 2024-2025 (PDF): Click [here](#) to view/download. This information is current as of July 16, 2024. Important: please note these dates are subject to change. For the most current calendar information visit d-e.org/calendar.

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

Day One, Tuesday, September 3:

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 7th grade teachers will be waiting to meet them and direct them to the grade meeting and activities in the large Myrna B. Sherman (MBS) Gymnasium. If your child is new to D-E or is a buddy for a new student, they should meet up as arranged before heading to the MBS Gym.

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. New students will get their Levenger on the first day of school.

Returning Student Buddies: If your child is a buddy, be sure they connect with their new student again this week and remind them to meet their new student buddy in the morning. Please see the email from Mr. Samedy.

Parent Orientation: Parent Orientation will be on **Monday, September 9 @ 6:30 pm**. This night is for *new* parents. More information and an invitation to follow.

Sports and Activities: Sports will begin on **Monday, September 9**. 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. Look for an email from the athletics department with a link for pre-season sign-ups, and see the athletic page of the website for details.

Picture Day is on Monday, **September 16**. More details to come. For an Order Form (PDF) click [here](#).

Back to School Night: Back to School Night is **September 19 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.

7th Grade Overnight Trip: The 7th grade overnight trip is coming soon! The dates of the trip are **September 26-27**. We have tweaked the trip a bit this year. Students will be traveling to the Delaware Water Gap area for some exciting activities. We will visit a wolf preserve, a high ropes course, a mining museum, along with some river rafting, a waterfall hike and even some bowling in addition to other activities. It should be a fantastic experience where students get the opportunity to bond and form connections, challenge themselves, learn new things and have fun. More paperwork and information will be coming soon!

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**.

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 don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns (contact info below). I can't wait to see/meet your children and you. It's going to be a wonderful year!

James Aitken
7th Grade Dean
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