

Principal Update for September of 2010

Dear Parents, Students and Community Members,

Welcome to the 2010- 2011 School Year! DHS has had a fantastic start to the year due in large part to extraordinary students who attend DHS and the incredible staff that teach for DHS! School began on Saturday August 24th with new students continuing to enroll through the month of August. DHS's student population is over 500 students; this is approximately 30 more students enrolled than at the end of the 2009-2010 school year. Interestingly, over 330 students have applied for admission to DHS since February of 2010...the word is out that DHS is a high achieving school with an excellent student body and a highly competent staff. With the initiation of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program in the 2011-2012 school year, DHS student enrollment will continue to increase in size to an expected 50 more students for next school year. We just keep getting bigger by offering robust student programs!

With such an increase in student population on the DHS campus, Mr. Butler, DHS Assistant Principal, and I had to develop and initiate changes to successfully accommodate this enrollment growth in order to preserve the campus's rich academic environment. One major change was running 2 lunch periods versus just 1 as in past years. Half the student body goes to lunch between 11:05 and 11:40 and the 2nd half of the student body's lunch period runs from 12:35 1:10. The lunch periods is designated by which content class students have for their 3rd period class. Mr. Butler is diligently monitoring the cafeteria to ensure that the quality of lunch services are consistent for both lunch periods. This split lunch creates smaller groupings of students in the lunchroom at one time (i.e. 250 students this year versus 470 last year). In addition this year students are able to remain in the cafeteria for their full lunch period unlike the 20+ minutes offered last year. Other than missing eating with some of their friends, I believe they have found the lunch period calmer, faster serving lines, quieter and more relaxing.

With our growth Mr. Butler and I felt that we must be respectful of our sister schools on the ISG Campus, DEMS and DBGS. Between the three schools, there are approximately 1300 to 1400 students on the ISG Campus with DHS having the largest student population. The three school share the cafeteria, library, Joffrey's area and physical education facilities. As DHS grew in student numbers last year, we realized that we were having a negative impact on DEMS's and DBGS's educational program in shared areas. Therefore Mr. Butler and I established Student Campus Boundaries that would allow our students to enjoy DHS while at the same time, not infringe on the educational classes of our sister schools. Those new boundaries are stated in the DHS 2010-2011 Student Planner which is located on the DHS website (www.DAHS.org).

DHS has also initiated a new class bell schedule. Last year our students had an 8 period rotating schedule with class meetings rotating equally over an 8 day period that had 5 classes per day for 67 minutes of class periods. This year DHS has implemented a simpler student schedule: students have 8 classes with 4 meeting on an "A" Day and 4 meeting in a "B" Day; classes are 80 minutes in length. A copy of the schedule including times, breaks and lunch is located in the Student Planner which can be found on the DHS website.

The DHS school day still runs from 7:50 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., but we have created some meeting times and breaks within that time schedule to better meet our student needs. Students are expected to be at school no later than 7:50 and have until 8:10 to attend club meetings, meet with a teacher for tutorial assistance, access the library or see a counselor; the change was prompted last year as staff identified the need for students to have more access to teacher assistance. In addition students have a 15 minute break in the morning and a 10 minute break in the afternoon between their class periods; this time allows students to access a teacher if needed, obtain food/beverage if desired or just move to their next class in a relaxed manner.

To learn more about DHS, please attend our **Back to School Night on Sunday, September 19th from 5 to 6 p.m in the Lower Gymnasium**. This night will have a different program than previous years. Because all students' course syllabi and course expectations will be accessible to their families via MOODLE (DHS/ISG Virtual Education Platform) by September 22nd, this night will only focus on school information, activity and athletic opportunities, WOW Week information and to informally meet the DHS staff. Mrs. Stapp, DHS 12th Grade Counselor, will be conducting a 12th Grade/Senior Parent Meeting from 6-7:30 p.m. in the Auditorium to provide parents with information concerning post high school educational opportunities, planning and assistance. I look forward to seeing you that night!

DHS has magnificent students and staff! Therefore, over the next few months I will utilize this communication to identify student and staff "Happenings" that showcase DHS and the accomplishments of both students and staff alike. If you have suggestion to informational items you would like addressed in these updates, please email at ddorn@isgdh.org and I will incorporate your idea into the publication and/or the DHS website.

Have a great day!

David