



US Class Dean Update

February 13, 2026

To the families of the Class of 2028,

It's hard to believe that in the coming weeks, we'll be talking about scheduling for junior year! It's truly a privilege to have a front-row seat as the Class of 2028 continues to get to know themselves as learners and as people in the world at large. The classes get harder, the pressure feels more real, friend groups shift, and time keeps moving forward. Through all of it, however, the students continue to refine their skills, learn to speak up and speak out, and show themselves ready and capable of handling whatever challenges come their way. I am so proud to work with the Class of 2028, and that pride is, of course, due in large part to the work you do with them at home. I'm grateful that we have the opportunity to partner together in supporting these wonderful students.

As I mentioned previously, the upcoming spring season is a busy one, with PAW and scheduling conversations beginning at the end of this month. I will do my best to outline everything clearly, but as always, if you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me directly.

College Counseling Office

Each advisory has officially been paired with a college counselor! Those pairings can be found below for your quick reference:

Ms. Paola Gentry: Ms. Burak, Mr. Donnelly, Mr. McNeil Advisories

Mr. Kevin Parsons: Sr. Bautista, Mr. Cury, Ms. Garcia Advisories

Ms. Kelly Sutton-Skinner: Dr. Lerum, Ms. Quirk, Dr. Tokar Advisories

Ms. Tasha Toran: Dr. Easley-Houser, Ms. Hernandez, Ms. Nefdt Advisories

Mrs. Eileen Feikens: Mme. Pritchard's Advisory

In the coming weeks, each college counselor will visit their assigned advisories to formally introduce themselves and explain what students can expect from the process. Students will then have the opportunity to attend office hours during scheduling season to begin conversations about their future plans. While the full college process will become much more involved over the next two years, this

lower-pressure time is a valuable opportunity for students to begin thinking about how they want to work with their counselor in the years ahead.

Projects and Assessments Week (PAW)

PAW will be here before we know it! For new 2028 families (and as a refresher for those returning), instead of traditional “midterm” and “final” exam weeks in January and June, D-E designates the week before Spring Break as Projects and Assessments Week (PAW). During PAW, students meet with their teachers and classmates in their regular classrooms for approximately two hours each day to work on a large-scale project or assessment that contributes to their Semester Two grade. This year, the schedule has been adjusted slightly to include an Exam Block, outlined below:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Exam Block 8:10 - 9:40/10:25(ET)				
Morning Block 10:40-12:40	A	C	E	G
Afternoon Block 1:20-3:20	B	D	F	H

The Exam Block has been designed to allow for easier planning and organization for classes with multiple sections and teachers. In previous years, if all 10th graders taking IMM 2, for example, had an exam, teachers often created three to five different versions to ensure fairness across sections. The Exam Block eliminates that extra planning by allowing all students enrolled in the same course, regardless of section, to test at the same time. If a teacher uses the Exam Block for their course, they will not use their regular class block that day, and students will have that time back to use as they choose.

A full breakdown of how PAW works can be found in the [PAWrameters](#) (get it?). Students have access to the spreadsheet detailing how each of their teachers plans to use PAW for their class.

Scheduling & Curriculum Night

On Thursday, February 26, during our usual assembly time, we will hold a class meeting, and I will review with students the requirements for their 11th-grade year and the course options available to them. The following Monday, March 2, we will host Curriculum Night for families, where I will share the same information with you. The Course Guide will be released shortly after, on March 9, so that you can begin thinking about course requests. We will begin the scheduling process and individual conversations after Spring Break.

You can expect that scheduling conversations will be more involved than they were last year. The nature of the D-E program is that students have significantly more course options in 11th grade, so more time, effort, and energy will go into thoughtfully building their schedules. As always, students will have their advisors to help guide them through the process, and I will work closely with department chairs later on to ensure that schedules are appropriate and aligned with students' goals and other commitments.

Spring Parent Forum:

The Spring Parent Forum is currently scheduled for Wednesday, April 8, from 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. As always, I will send a recap afterward for anyone who is unable to attend.

Recap of Key Dates:

I mentioned a number of important dates above, so I wanted to put them all in one easy-to-find place so you can plan accordingly:

- **February 16** – School closed (Presidents Day)
- **February 17** – School closed (Lunar New Year)
- **February 26** – Scheduling class meeting with students
- **March 2** – Curriculum Night for parents (evening)
- **March 9** – Course of Study published
- **March 16–19** – PAW
- **March 20** – School closed (Eid)
- **March 23–April 3** – Spring Break
- **April 8** – 10th Grade Parent Forum (8:30 a.m.)

As I mentioned before, spring is going to be busy, but I am excited for all that is to come. I know this was a great deal of information, so please know that I am happy to schedule a call or meeting with you to discuss any of it further. I hope you are all able to find some time for rest and rejuvenation in the coming days!

Best regards,
Dylan Bryant
Dean, Class of 2028