

ALICE DEAL MIDDLE SCHOOL

Think globally. Listen compassionately. Act inclusively.

PTA NEWSLETTER

September 2008

www.dealpta.org



Principal's Welcome Back Message

Welcome back for the 2008-2009 school year! We extend a special welcome to our new Vikings and their families.

We have successfully launched the new school year. Not only do we have students from all over Washington, DC, we also have students joining us from Florida, California, Missouri, Albania, Korea, Vietnam, and Peru, to name a few. It is this wonderful diversity in our students and families that makes Alice Deal Middle School such a special learning community.

By now I hope you have been able to see how we have expanded and modernized our school building. Our gym and cafeteria are brand new. We have already incorporated a new HVAC system and modernized classrooms on all four floors of the building. These new spaces have re-energized our teachers and students! We are all looking forward to August 2009, when the entire school is scheduled to be completed! Heery Construction, DCPS Facilities staff, Mr. Allen Lew, and Chancellor Rhee have been wonderful and responsive partners for us, and I expect that our strong working relationship will continue during this school year. I firmly believe that good teachers will be effective, whatever our physical surroundings, but it sure feels better to be in bright, comfortable spaces!!

Middle school is a time when students assume more responsibility for themselves. Below are three keys to success that can guide them as they become more and more self-sufficient:

- **Get to school on time!**

Students are welcomed into the building at 8:05 a.m. First period class starts promptly at 8:45 a.m. It is essential that students are in their seats with all of their learning materials at 8:45. You can imagine the importance of establishing a morning routine with your child so that they are

academically focused from the time they leave home in the morning. Students face same-day detention for arriving to school tardy. Please map out your family routine in the morning to ensure timely arrival at school.

- **Communicate, communicate, communicate!** Communicate with your child about school work. Ask them what they are learning and how they are learning it. Ask them direct and specific questions about class work and homework as you review their agenda book. Also, communicate directly with your child's teachers about questions or concerns. Share your hopes and dreams for your children. Give your teachers the opportunity to problem-solve with you for the benefit of your child. Each team has established an email address to make it even easier for parents and teacher to communicate. Also don't forget to communicate thanks and appreciation to your hard-working teachers and staff members!
- **Get involved and build community!** Our school keeps getting stronger! We grow and continue to improve when parents work together for the benefit of the total school. Get to know the parents of your child's friends, come to school events and get involved, and, if you know of good opportunities for students or teachers, share! At the very least, join the PTA. You teach your children a valuable life lesson when you model civic participation.

I look forward to another successful and enjoyable year! When you are in the building, please come by and introduce yourselves. I'm here to make Deal a successful journey for your child. See you at 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, September 25th, for Back-to-School Night!

Melissa M. Kim

Students at Deal Middle School Make Beautiful Music

Music at Alice Deal Middle School is very much alive. The Department of Music is proud to be the home of award-winning musical groups that provide cultivation for growing young musicians. It is the goal of the Department to help students find success by utilizing the skill of excellence. In order to fully understand being excellent, the concept of the 7 C's is applied: Commitment, Communication, Competence, Concentration, Confidence, Consideration, and Cooperation.

The Department sponsors the following groups: Concert Choir, Show Choir, Jazz Band, Concert Band, Beginning Band, and Drumline. Being a member of any one of these organizations offers the student the opportunity to travel, perform on campus, as well as off campus, attend workshops and seminars that are provided by outside organizations, take tours of historic sites and even experience music from an interdisciplinary viewpoint.

The Department of Music is open to any student at Deal who proves that he or she can be responsible and committed. We welcome you to come and join us in order to make some beautiful music together. Let's Go Vikings!

Stay Informed through the Music Department Web Group: The Department of Music has a web group that alerts parents and students of all activity in the department. All families involved with the department are encouraged to join the group. Vital information is sent out regularly and parents have been very satisfied and appreciative of the benefits of the group. If you are interested in joining, just send an email to roger.jackson@dc.gov.



Mr. Jackson

Challenge and Teamwork at Hemlock

The week of September 8, Deal seventh grade students traveled to Hemlock Overlook Educational Center in Clifton, Virginia for a program to promote trust, confidence, and team-building.

Deal strives to teach students to challenge themselves and to encourage others. At Hemlock, students face the challenge of being grouped with new faces and are not permitted to isolate themselves with their elementary school friends. The Hemlock trip brings students from different feeder schools together, so they can meet new friends. They learn to know and trust one another through a series of games like helping each other across the muddy peanut butter pit on a rope swing.



Riding a zip line 50 feet in the air can be a little nerve-wracking, but the Hemlock counselors teach Deal students to encourage one another to take calculated risks. In conquering the zip line we hope our seventh graders learn that no task is too big for Deal students, including Science Fair and National History Day projects!

The activities at Hemlock get the students out of their "comfort zone" and help them form new friendships. Once the students leave Hemlock they bring new collaborative and problem-solving skills back to the classroom and use them to master the seventh grade.

The Deal seventh grade faculty and students would like to thank the Deal PTA for funding the Hemlock experience every year.

Rob Geremia, Social Studies Teacher and Green Scholars Team Leader



From the PTA Presidents



Greetings from your PTA Co-Presidents and welcome to the 2008-9 school year, Alice Deal's second year as a middle

school. The Deal PTA is committed to fostering our strong school community, to facilitating regular school-home communication, and to financially supporting the efforts of Principal Kim and Deal's outstanding teachers and staff as they work to offer our children a rich and academically excellent middle school experience.

Join us. The PTA meetings take place the third Thursday of the month (we won't have an October or February meeting because of big PTA events that month) – we were so pleased to see over 100 parents at our meeting September 4, where parents had the chance to eat and drink refreshments and meet and talk with our new and current teachers. Parents also had the chance to ask Ms. Kim a range of questions about the curriculum, school rules and future plans for the ongoing construction. The Deal PTA can only be as effective as the volunteers who support it - we need all of you to join the PTA if you haven't done so already by mailing or delivering a completed membership envelope to the school, to come to our monthly meetings and other school events, and to give your time and your financial support when asked. Every Deal student benefits from the support of the PTA. In just these first few weeks of school, among the items and activities supported by Deal PTA volunteers and funds are the 7th Grade and new students' orientation, the purchase of agenda books for every Deal student, the 7th Grade team building trips to Hemlock Overlook, and new drums for the music department.

The school directory is coming. Thanks to hard work over the summer by Deal parents Dianne Torreson and Emily Myers working with Ms. Baxter in the Deal front office, this year we hope to have very complete directory listings available soon for families to check for accuracy. If you would like to run an ad in the school directory, or know someone who would, please contact one of us.

Deal is beautiful! It's not only Deal's new classrooms, cafeteria and gym that are beautiful and state of the art – the front entrance to school has been beautified with new plants and mulch thanks to the efforts of Greg Lalley, who organized the volunteers, Nadine Horenstein, who arranged for a truckload of plants to be donated, and the hard work of over 30 volunteers that included Deal students (current and future), parents, and grandparents.

Current and upcoming events. Don't forget to support our first fundraiser of the year by buying and selling giftwrap and other items at www.sallyfoster.com (Deal account number 507655). And be sure to mark your calendars to attend Deal's International Night on Thursday, October 16, from 7-9 pm, when we feast and celebrate the rich cultural diversity of our school, and our Fall Book Fair at Politics & Prose, Saturday and Sunday, November 8th & 9th, when 20 percent from your Book Fair purchases will be donated to Deal.

Don't hesitate to contact us or any member of the Executive Board – Vice-Presidents, Suzanne Greenfield, Maggie Mackey, Octavio Canas-Gustavo, Susan Ullman, Kim Ford, Alison Wylegala, Co-Treasurers, Beth Moten and Beryl Voigt, and Secretary Katrina Burt – if you have any questions or concerns about Deal or if you would like to volunteer.

Best regards,

Sally Greenberg (Sallyg@nclnet.org) and Ruth Ernst (melickernst@verizon.net)

Mark Your Calendars

Thursday Sept. 25

- Spanish French Spring Break Trips Meeting (5:30 to 6:30)

Thursday Sept. 25

- **BACK TO SCHOOL NIGHT (6:30 – 9:15)**

Thursday Oct. 2

- Family Math Night (6:30 – 8:00)

Friday Oct. 3

- NO SCHOOL/Parent-Teacher Conferences

Tuesday October 2

- National History Day Workshop (7:00)

A Continued Focus on Academics at Deal

Student academic success is a function of many different factors, not the least of which is a keen attention to the status of each and every student. Administrators organize, teachers plan and implement units, and the school staff ensures it all runs smoothly—but we are all here for your students to be academically successful. As the new academic advisor, my role is to keep us here at Deal mindful of that promise.

The first part of the “academic promise” is to create the right kind of learning environment for students: making sure the basics of the school are there. For many of our students, a well-crafted program of studies will provide the majority of their academic needs. They just want there to be great teachers with great ideas and a history of motivating students.

For other students, however, the basics aren’t enough. They need additional supports and options to make middle school as powerful an experience for them as it is for their peers. These are not unsuccessful students; indeed, they can be and often are wildly successful in school. But perhaps there are school structures in place that don’t match up with how they approach the world, or perhaps there is so much going on in their lives that school slips a

bit down the priority list. For them, schools need to offer more.

To meet this need, Deal has a two-pronged approach: gathering detailed, current information about every student’s academic profile; and ensuring that any student needs are appropriately addressed. Deal teachers have already evaluated student DCCAS performance data for placement purposes. Benchmark assessments, both District-wide (DCBAS) and school-generated (content pre-assessments) are providing critical early information; many students were reassigned based on data that indicated they were ready for more of a challenge. Deal has also restarted the ZAP (Zeroes Are not Permitted) program – a homework completion program taking place during lunch. Additionally, Deal will be offering an organization and academic management class. Stay tuned.

Feel free to contact me, James Albright, at jaalbrite@aol.com, if you have any questions about your son or daughter’s academic experience at Deal.

James Albright, Academic Advisor

Deal Students Participate in NHD Nationals



In June, almost a dozen Deal students participated in the National History Day national competition, held at the University of Maryland. Congratulations Vikings! This outstanding program gets kids engaged in history and research in ways that are powerful, rigorous and real. A twenty-one gun salute to Ms. Mostoller, a trustee of NHD, and her colleagues for making history a centerpiece of the Alice Deal experience!

Mary Lord

Debate Club News

The Debate Club has gotten off to an exciting start. About 30 kids poured into Mrs. Sweeney's room for the first meeting of the year. There was a nice mix of 7th and 8th graders with about 8 of last year's champions stepping into teaching roles with the newcomers. As soon as the topics and schedule are posted on DC Urban Debate League's website we will start researching. Meanwhile, the kids are having fun learning new skills of presenting and refuting arguments. At the initial meeting each student was asked to introduce him or her self and respond to "Why do you want to debate?" My favorite answer was just soooooo middle school "My Mother told me to go argue with somebody besides her!"

Mrs. Sweeney and Mr. Hughes

National History Day Workshop for Parents and Students

The Department of Social Studies invites all parents and students to attend a special workshop for National History Day on **Tuesday, October 7 from 7:00-8:00 p.m.** in the Deal cafeteria. Participants will meet with staff from the DC and National offices, see examples of student projects from previous years, and learn more about this national program. We have had national winners and students in the finals for many years, and we hope to replicate our successful record again in 2009!

The Deal PTA has generously purchased a contest rule book for every Deal student to use in preparation for projects that will be due in mid-February. This year's theme is "The Individual in History." Check out the National History Day website at www.nationalhistoryday.org to get a head start on topic selection and research. It is definitely not too early to begin your work on this annual Deal project.

Ms. Mostoller

Eighth Grade Trip to Jamestown and Colonial Williamsburg

The eighth grade class will travel to Jamestown and Colonial Williamsburg to study early American life on **Friday, October 17th**. Letters and permission slips were sent home to students on September 8 with details about the educational goals for this exciting field study from two of the country's most important historical sites. The full cost is \$70.00, a fee that includes transportation, entrance fees, and guided tours. This enriching study program incorporates IB modeled lessons in English, Math, and Science in addition to History. All eighth grade students are expected to participate, so families in need of some financial assistance are encouraged to make their requests in writing to Ms. Kim by September 26th.

Itineraries and a checklist of items to bring will be distributed to students the week before the trip. Checks and money orders should be made payable to Deal MS. Final payments are due on October 3.

Ms. Mostoller

MATHCOUNTS

Do you like math? Or do you like solving math and logic puzzles or exploring math problems? Do you enjoy using math manipulatives, calculators, geometry software, and the like? Or would you be interested in exploring math more deeply than you can in class? Would you like to compete against other students and other schools for trophies, fame, and other prizes? Or do you think you are just plain good at math?

If you answered "YES" to any of those questions, then we might have the club for you: MATHCOUNTS!

However, you DON'T have to believe you are a math super-star to participate in MATHCOUNTS. All you have to have is a willingness to explore math in a different way than is generally done in math class.

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Alice Deal a “candidate school” for International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program

“The school builds an understanding of, and support for, the programme throughout the school community.”

*IB Programme
Standards and
Practices*

The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program (IB MYP) is coming to Deal Middle School. The IB MYP is a highly acclaimed academic program adopted by schools around the world. The MYP comprehensively addresses the developmental needs, both academic and social, of the young adolescent through an intense focus on strong instructional practices, exciting and engaging student learning, and an eye towards creating the next generation of global citizens.

Last year, the Deal community submitted an application to the IB requesting formal consideration as an IB MYP school; during the summer DCPS received word that the initial application had been accepted. We are pursuing the authorization of the IB MYP for grades 6 through 8; it will be offered to all students who attend Deal. Beyond the justifiable excitement this notice generated, however, is the reality that our school and community have much to do to craft an IB MYP that reflects the nature of the students, the faculty, and the community.

As the new IB coordinator, it has been my pleasure to learn about the progress towards authorization already made by Deal and to get to know the students and staff. I have rarely seen a more enthusiastic faculty prepared for the rigors of

developing the IB MYP; many are well-trained and keen to get moving. The students are as delightful and inquisitive as middle-schoolers everywhere, but their desire to get involved in activities and to be challenged is a tribute to their high motivation. Frankly, a great staff and great students make the challenges of bringing in the MYP more of a journey rather than a struggle.

Several questions have already arisen concerning the IB MYP. What value does it bring to Deal that is not already here? Is the effort involved worth it? What changes will it bring for our students, their teachers, and our community? Healthy schools continually revisit these questions. When authorized and fully implemented, we believe that the IB MYP will provide the best education possible for our children, combining the strongest instructional practices with great attention to the type of learner each student is. The IB’s focus is on preparing students, at all grade levels, to be committed and caring individuals who can lead our world as we go forward.

So let’s keep the ball rolling. Deal will host an **IB Parent night on October 21st, 2008, starting at 6:30 in our new cafeteria.** Plan on attending to hear what the IB MYP is, how our effort to get authorized is progressing, and what you should start to see in your student’s work. My goal for that session is to move the community from interest and excitement towards greater depths of understanding. I hope you can join us.

James Albright, IB Coordinator

MATHCOUNTS (Continued from page 5)

MATHCOUNTS meets twice a week after school, on Monday and Wednesday afternoons, in Mr. Brandenburg’s classroom – room 105, from 3:25 to 4:45 PM. We also meet during Bell 2 activity periods, in the same location.

Please stop by room 105 to pick up a permission slip.

Mr. Brandenburg

Academic Team News

The ESL Department and Team United Nations Situated on the third floor of the school building, the ESL Department has a diverse group of students. It is no exaggeration to say that the Department is a mini United Nations. So far this year, we have students speaking at least 12 languages, hailing from: Vietnam, South Korea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Slovakia, Ukraine, China, Poland, Egypt, the Philippines, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Puerto Rico, and Uruguay. Like their American peers, ESL students have many interests outside school. They love sports and they like to make friends, too. Once you get to know them, you will find their experiences fascinating and that you have a lot in common with them. At the start of this new school year, we in the ESL Department would like to wish everyone a successful school year!
Mr. Mark Winn-Ritzenberg and Ms. Jihong Wang, Team United Nations

Green Scholars GREEN WEDNESDAYS!! Team Green Scholars 7B are pumping up our Wednesdays by wearing our favorite shaded of green. Every Wednesday, we encourage our team members to “Go Green” and wear clothing and apparel that shows off our team color. Other teams are welcome to participate.
Ms. Mason, Green Team

Olympians Visit Newseum On September 10th, eighth grade Olympians visited one of Washington’s newest museum attractions – The Newseum. Students participated in a course entitled “You Can’t Say That in School” and quickly became acquainted with the First Amendment and the five freedoms it grants: (1) freedom of speech, (2) freedom to petition, (3) freedom of assembly, (4) freedom of the press, and (5) freedom of religion. Working in groups, students examined case studies regarding student rights such as whether a student has the right to wear clothing portraying the Confederate Flag. As a result of their visit, students discovered that rights and rules are often in conflict, especially in school. Students, however, realized that safety and well-being ultimately come before First Amendment right in institutions of education.
Harlan Kinzer

SALLY FOSTER UPDATE

Don't forget to order from the Sally Foster catalog!

The Deal PTA earns 50 percent profit on Sally Foster sales. Every roll of gift wrap sold, every gift purchased, every box of chocolate helps Deal and its students. As a thank you to our students and families, the number one selling homeroom class will receive a pizza or taco lunch party, sponsored by the Deal PTA.

There are 58 distinctive gift wrap patterns for all occasions or holidays. The all-in-one catalog features great items, including delicious chocolates, an order form and Spanish translation. It's easy to use.

Don't want to hassle with the catalog? Order online, through the link at www.DealPTA.org. Orders are sent via UPS directly to the customer. **Any online orders more than \$70.00 will be shipped for free!** Remember to include Deal's account number, 507655, to receive credit. Orders will be collected on Back to School Night and during homeroom on Monday, September 29. Pick up of catalog orders is slated for October 24.

If you have any questions, contact Anita Seline, at amseline@aol.com or 237-5505.

Who's Who in the Front Office



If you call or visit Deal, the first person to greet you is probably **Patricia Edwards** (shown at left). As front desk clerk, Ms. Edwards answers the phone, greets visitors, hands out bus token forms, and fills in wherever she is needed. A Washington native who has worked more than 20 years at Deal, Ms. Edwards frequently runs into former Deal students around town.

Many of you may have dealt with **Tiffany Lindler** (shown at right) this summer when you filled out your residency verification forms. Ms. Lindler is the school's registrar and just completed two years at Deal. In addition to residency verification, she handles daily attendance issues and is the textbook clerk.



If you want to schedule a meeting with Ms. Kim, **Rosalyn Baxter** (shown at left) is the one to call. Ms. Baxter is the school's administrative assistant, and handles Ms. Kim's schedule, grade and report card recordkeeping, student registration, and attendance problems. Ms. Baxter is in her third year at Deal.



Almost all financial matters fall under the purview of **Margo Streeter** (shown at right). As Deal's business manager, all procurements, personnel papers and school lunch applications must pass through her hands. In her 24th year at Deal, Ms. Streeter is also the person to see to get the pink student ID cards that are necessary to get monthly Metro passes.



Many thanks to the friendly and hardworking Deal front office staff!

Beth Allaben

Seventh Grade Orientation

Students were welcomed to Deal by Mr. Dacoba, 7th grade teachers and staff on August 22. The PTA sponsored a pizza lunch in Deal's beautiful new cafeteria. Deal welcomes seventh grade students and families!

