

Sunday, August 22, 2021



Dear Ellington Community,

I hope you enjoy the last few days of summer break and find ways to stay healthy, relaxed, and safe. I often stepback and reflect and still cannot believe we are living through what feels like a never-ending pandemic. I am truly grateful that you are a part of our trailblazing learning community. We welcome you back to in-person learning with positive energy, dedication, and the pursuit of excellence in education. I believe in the mission and power of our Co-Founders Peggy Cooper Cafritz and Mike Malone. I assure you that we will have a robust and exciting school year ahead with performances, productions, academic competitions, and engaging school activities!



Despite all the challenges that we have faced over the past year and a half, all signs point towards another incredible and productive school year. Our administration and faculty have been tirelessly preparing for the return of your students to our building. We're back and ready to welcome you with both old faces and new. There are a few new additions to our staff and we have had to say goodbye to a few as well but we bring to you a solid team of educators that we are fortunate to have.

To our new incoming students and families, welcome to the Ellington family! You will soon find out that we go the distance for every one of our students and do everything in our power to bring you world-class college preparation and pre-professional arts education. We know that almost half of our students have never taken a single class inside our building so we want you to know that you will be walking into the sacred ground where many have come before you and have turned desire and passion into excellence and have achieved many great things.

Our team has been working around the clock to get you registered, scheduled, preparing rooms, doing deep cleans and deep dives into lesson planning. Our Parent Teacher Organization, SHADE is ready and excited to recruit more parents, guardians, and volunteers to help support all students' educational journeys. We are a truly mission-driven organization and through our mission, our goal is to nurture, inspire, ensure, and prepare each student to be global artists citizens while developing responsible, caring, and high-achieving students. At Ellington, our CREED is as follows: Commitment, Responsibility, Empowerment, Empathy and Dignity.

I encourage you to download the school app "Duke Ellington School of the Arts" in your phone's App Store brought to you by Progressive Office - and please allow for push notifications as that is our direct and immediate method of communication in the event of an emergency.

Please review some important updates to our program and community - also note that as we continue to receive guidance from DCPS, DC Health and the CDC our policies and procedures are subject to change:

First Week Schedule

We are starting the new year on Monday, August 30, 2021, with all students in grades 9-12. Our daily schedule is 8:30 a.m. - 4:55 p.m. Please make every effort to report on time every day. Breakfast and lunch are provided for free for all students. The building will be open for students at 7:15 a.m. Students will receive the bell schedule during Orientation and see it reflected in Aspen.

On Monday the 30th we will have Orientation where we will review school climate and culture and school safety protocols and procedures. Students will go on tours and receive hard copies of their schedules and other important information. In the first week, students will hear from their teachers about classroom expectations and school supplies.

COVID-19 Updates (Jevelle Branch, jevelle.branch@k12.dc.gov)

While we are returning to work and school 100% in person, we are still following CDC Guidelines and mandates from DCPS and DC Health. Here are a few bullet points:

- All persons entering our doors must wear a face mask. We will have masks for anyone who is out of compliance with this mandate from the Mayor's Office.
- All persons must adhere to directional signage throughout the building, use the sanitizing stations, and be mindful of each other. There are no more than 25 students in an academic classroom and students will be spaced 3/6 feet apart. Spacing in the arts departments will vary by department.
- Weekly COVID-19 Testing: If you would like your student to be a part of the weekly 10% of students who are tested for free, please complete the permission slip form and return it to our Director of Operations & Collaborative Projects Jevelle Branch (jevelle.branch@k12.dc.gov). *Below* are the forms for Asymptomatic and Symptomatic testing.
- We will have on-site Patient Care Technicians (PCTs) that will be checking students and staff into the building daily. They will also monitor the Isolation Room for any individual that presents any illness symptoms.
- Adults will continue to physically distance themselves from each other and students. Students, when possible please practice physical/social distancing.
- All faculty and staff will be following the DCPS Chancellor's mandate to be fully vaccinated by September 19, 2021, or partake in weekly COVID-19 testing and return negative results to ensure everyone in our community is safe.
- REMEMBER the ASK ASK LOOK POLICY:

1) ASK: Parents or guardians should ask about and/or inspect their child for the following symptoms consistent with COVID-19: Fever (subjective or 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit) or chills; Cough; Congestion, runny nose; Sore throat; Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing; Diarrhea; Nausea or vomiting; Fatigue; Headache; Muscle or body aches; New loss of taste or smell; or otherwise feeling unwell.

Please note: if the symptoms are related to a chronic medical condition, and the healthcare provider has submitted written or verbal documentation that the symptoms are not COVID-19, the student should not be excluded on the basis of those symptoms.

2) ASK: Parents or guardians should ask and note whether their child has been in close contact with a person who has COVID-19.

3) LOOK: Parents or guardians should inspect their child for signs of illness which could include flushed cheeks, rapid breathing or difficulty breathing (without recent physical activity), fatigue, or extreme fussiness.

Determination related to staying home or going to school: If the answer is “yes” to any of the above, the student should stay home. The family should contact the child’s healthcare provider to determine if testing is needed. The student may not return to school until they meet the criteria to do so, as articulated.

Course Schedules (Donna Hayden, donna.hayden@k12.dc.gov)

A tremendous time was spent in developing student schedules and determining student placement. Careful consideration was taken from students, families, and staff to determine a rigorous program on both the academic and arts side. Student schedules will be populated in Aspen on Friday, August 27, 2021. For more information, please check the Counseling Checklist *below*.

Technology Needs

As part of the DCPS Technology Initiative, all students will be provided with a laptop all four years at Ellington. Beginning Week 1, all incoming students must meet with our IT Support to request a device. Returning students who need a device will be able to loan one out as well. All students please bring your laptop or computer device every day the first week of school.

Title IX

As part of our commitment to creating a safe environment for all of our students, we are continuing with the efforts from last year to train all faculty, staff, students, and parents on Title IX policies and regulations. We have made staff changes and realignments to ensure that reporting and a student-centered approach are always the priority. We now have a Certified Title IX Investigator, Dean of Students, and Title IX Coordinator who will be available for any questions or concerns. Additionally, as a reminder, all adults in the building are Mandated Reporters and are required to immediately report any Title IX incident, especially sexual assault and misconduct. Students can report anonymously through our school app or to any adult in the building.

Back to School Night

Back to School Night will be held in person on Thursday, September 16, 2021, from 6:00 p.m - 7:00 p.m. See flyer below.

Ellington Express

Each Sunday evening we send out our school newsletter entitled the “Ellington Express”. It’s our way of communicating about student life and culture, updates from administration, opportunities for students, resources for families, and student highlights and achievements. For any questions about the Ellington Express, please contact communications@ellingtonarts.org. You can also find regular updates on our website at ellingtonschool.org.

Thank you to everyone who is working diligently to prepare for a successful new school year. Your commitment to our program, our mission, and our students remains celebrated and inspiring. As I enter my ninth year at Ellington and fifth year as Principal, please know that I am always accessible to you. So stop by and say hello or send me an email at sandi.logan@k12.dc.gov. Together we can make a difference in the lives of our students, our community, and our world.

Respectfully,

Sandi M. Logan
Head of School and Principal

MUST-READ ATTACHMENTS:

[Counseling Checklist](#)

[DCPS Student Responsible Use Agreement](#)

[Dr. Buckley - New Science Chair](#)

[Penny Hollis - Interim Chair, Literary Media & Communications](#)

[Consent Form #1 - Symptomatic Covid Testing](#)

[Consent Form #2 - Asymptomatic Covid Testing](#)

[Back to School Night Flyer](#)