



HENRY DAVID THOREAU MIDDLE SCHOOL

"Home of the Golden Eagles"
2011/2012
ORIENTATION BOOKLET FOR NEW FAMILIES

THOREAU MIDDLE SCHOOL INFORMATION

Principal: Greg Hood
Assistant Principal, Grade 7: Mandy Freeman
Assistant Principal, Grade 8: Mike Parker
Director of Student Services: Christa Warden
Parent Liaison: Alexia Candamo

Thoreau Middle School
2505 Cedar Lane
Vienna, VA. 22180

Phone: (703) 846-8000
Fax: (703) 846-8097
Clinic: (703) 846-8010

Regular School Hours:
Monday to Friday.....7:50 am–2:45 pm

Attendance line: (703) 846-8080

School Website: www.fcps.edu/ThoreauMS/

OTHER SCHOOL INFORMATION RESOURCES

- **Thoreau Matters:** Twice per month, the school administration publishes a newsletter in conjunction with the PTA that contains information about what is happening at Thoreau, a calendar of upcoming events, and other information about the school. It is mailed home and posted on the Thoreau website: www.fcps.edu/ThoreauMS/.
- **Student Directory** of school staff & students, prepared by the PTA, is distributed in the fall. Each family receives one free copy and additional copies are available for purchase for a nominal fee.
- **TMS PTA Website:** www.ThoreauPTA.org
- **Blackboard:** www.fcps.blackboard.com Thoreau teachers use Blackboard (FCPS 24-7 Learning) for posting homework, class notes, and other communications. Parents can sign up for their own Blackboard accounts with access to their student's accounts.

FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS (FCPS) RESOURCES:

- www.fcps.edu: Website which includes:
 - **Keep in Touch**, (*this is highly recommended*) is an email service provided by Fairfax County Public Schools to efficiently distribute information. Sign up subscription is available to all families and can be personalized by the family. Information from the school and PTA is given including announcements, newsletters, upcoming events & emergency notifications.
 - Emergency and Inclement weather information
 - Monthly School Lunch Calendar and School Year Calendars
 - [FCPS 24-7 Learning](#) which includes **Blackboard**, an important tool for communication between the school and family. Update emergency information, access homework and classroom assignments, view class calendars, explore links to enrichment activities, and much more.
- **Family Gram:** Quarterly newsletter prepared by Fairfax County Public Schools.
- **School Lunch Menu:** distributed monthly by FCPS and is available online at www.fcps.edu.
- **Broadcast Medium:** Red Apple 21 (Cox Communications, Reston Comcast & Verizon cable customers only).

❖ ATTENDANCE AND TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURES

- Thoreau Middle School uses an **attendance line** (703-846-8080) for absences and tardiness. You must call this number and leave a message if a child is going to be absent or late. You can call any time, available 24 hrs, **day or night**.
 - Attendance will be taken in every class.
 - In order to ensure each child's safety, students may not arrive prior to 7:30 am. Students arriving between 7:30 am and 7:40 am will be directed to the cafeteria. Students are dismissed to their classes at 7:40 am and must be in their seats, prepared for the day by 7:50 a.m.
 - Students who arrive late to school must bring a written note to the school office from the parent/guardian explaining why the student is late. An attendance secretary will issue a pass that indicates whether the tardy is excused or unexcused.
 - If your child needs to leave school early for an appointment, the student should bring a note from the parent/guardian stating the reason and time of dismissal. This note must be presented to the attendance secretary before 9:00 am. Students will be issued a card to present to their teacher with the time they are to be dismissed from class. Parents/guardians must come into the school office and sign the student out. If students return to school, the parents must accompany the student to the office.
 - If your child is marked absent from school or from an individual class and the school has not been notified by the parents, the school office will contact the parents via phone or email.
- For student security, all **parent pick-up, volunteering and visitation** during school hours should be initiated through the office. Ring bell for entry at the front door and sign-in at the office.
- **Clinic:** Thoreau Middle School has an **on-site clinic** staffed by a clinician. If your child is using medication that must be taken during the school day, you must contact the clinician and follow the rules established by the Fairfax County School Board, including completion of the following form: <http://www.fcps.edu/DIT/forms/se63.pdf>. Students are NOT allowed to bring to school or take ANY medication without proper authorization. The clinic also provides hearing and vision screening for students. Please inform the school clinic (**703-846-8010**), if your child has a communicable illness.
- **Transportation:** A regular bus schedule will be posted in Blackboard in late August listing all stops and pick up times. Questions regarding bus schedules should be directed to FCPS Transportation at 703 249-7000.
- **Late Bus:** Late buses will correspond to the after school activities schedule. Since the late bus stops do not correspond to the regular bus stops, students are sometimes confused as to which late bus stop is closest to home. Please help your student identify his/her late bus stop. Late bus transportation is offered on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Please also note that late bus numbers are different from regular bus numbers and the stops will be different as well. Students are not allowed to leave the school property and return to take the late bus. Late bus information (times and stops) are posted in the front hallway.
- **Parking** around Thoreau Middle School can be challenging. Parents should use caution when dropping off students on the opposite side of Cedar Lane when the crossing guard is not present, as this is an extremely busy intersection.
- **Kiss-n-Ride** is located in the parking lot at the right side of the school for your child's safety at arrival and dismissal. When arriving at school for student pick-up or drop-off, please: enter the school grounds, keep to the right, follow the cones, and drive around the outer perimeter of the parking lot. Students may be dropped off/picked up at Door 9 at the side of the building. Please stay in line and follow through to the exit. Do not enter the bus loading lane in front of the school during arrival and dismissal time. The safety of the children during arrival & dismissal is one of the school's major concerns. Please be careful when dropping off & picking up your children; watch your speed & keep alert when driving in the area.
- **Dismissal:** All students are dismissed at 2:45 pm. Students are expected to ride their own bus home. Exceptions may be allowed in case of emergencies, provided notes by both parties are approved by the office. Students remaining after school for an after school activity are expected to be at the activity by 2:55 pm. If students are walkers, they are expected to proceed home in a timely manner. In the **case of emergency or school closings**, refer to www.fcps.edu for procedures. Please do not call the school office directly for general information in these circumstances.

THE SCHOOL DAY AT A GLANCE

Class Schedule: All students are scheduled for eight classes a day. See schedule to the right.

- **Course Selection:** All students are required to take a full year of English, math, science, social studies and health/physical education. In addition, students will select two periods of elective classes. These classes may be for two full year long classes (chorus, band, orchestra, language in 8th grade); a full year and two semester classes; or four semester classes. During course registration, students are given a list of all electives and asked to rank their preferences. All elective course offerings are subject to adequate enrollment and staffing, and students are not guaranteed their first choices. Students are informed of their second semester electives at the beginning of the second semester.

Home Room	7:50-7:55
First Period	7:55-8:42
Second Period	8:46-9:33
Third Period	9:37-10:24
Fourth Period (<i>Time to Soar</i>)	10:28-10:54
Fifth Period	10:58-12:12
A Lunch	10:54-11:24
B Lunch	11:20-11:50
C Lunch	11:46-12:16
Sixth Period	12:16-1:03
Seventh Period	1:07-1:54
Eighth Period	1:58-2:45

If parents feel that their child is misplaced in a class, they should contact their student's counselor.

- **School Counselors:**

- Tim Buckley (Timothy.Buckley@fcps.edu) Lion and Navigator Teams
- Joan Lee (JKLee@fcps.edu) Duck and Wildcat Teams
- Natalie Malone (Natalie.Malone@fcps.edu) Emeralds and Adventurer Teams

- **Time to Soar:** 4th period on the student schedule and is a 25 minute block of time where students can get help from a teacher, complete homework, read, conduct research in the library or have fun with their friends. During the first quarter of the school year, all students must remain in their classrooms or seek out help from another teacher. After the 1st quarter, students who maintain a grade of C or better in every class may choose to socialize with their friends, either in the cafeteria, library, courtyard or out on the blacktop.

- **Lunch:** Students may either bring a bag lunch or purchase a hot lunch in the cafeteria. The school cafeteria serves a complete lunch daily (\$2.75) as well as a variety of a la carte items. Note that each student is only allowed one lunch per day at \$2.75, if they should purchase a lunch for a friend, the second lunch will be \$3.65. Monthly menus, payment options and more information are posted on www.fcps.edu/fs/food. To purchase hot lunches, students may either bring cash or put money in a student account. Free or reduced lunches are available to qualifying students.

- In order for students to use the **school lunch prepayment account** you must see the cafeteria manager or enroll online at: www.myLunchMoney.com (fee charged for this service). Children will receive a unique number to use for meal purchases which is keyed into a pin pad device at checkout. Lunch attendants will stamp your child's hand or give a sticker to let you know when the balance is low and needs to be replenished.
- Parents can monitor their child's lunch spending at www.mylunchmoney.com or by speaking with the cafeteria manager.
- All students have lunch during fifth period (10:58am -12:12pm). Students are grouped into three different lunch periods (A, B, and C) and each has 30 minutes for lunch. A student's lunch period is determined by their 5th period class and their lunch period may change in the second semester. Students with A Lunch will have lunch and then their 5th period class. Students with B Lunch will have 22 minutes of their 5th Period Class, break for lunch, and then return to their 5th Period class for an additional 22 minutes of instruction. Students with Lunch C will have their complete 5th Period Class, and then proceed to lunch.

- Many classrooms have children with **food allergies**. As a general guideline, at all school celebrations/functions, food served to the class should be nut free (tree nuts and peanuts).

- **Physical Education:** Students will have (3) quarters of physical education & (1) quarter of health. During physical education, students are required to change into a PE uniform. PE uniforms (shirt & shorts) are purchased during the first week of school. Parent may also choose to purchase towel service for \$15.00 for the year, allowing their student the use of a clean towel every day. Please encourage students to bring home their PE uniforms each week to be laundered. If a student does not have a PE uniform at school, they may be offered a loaner uniform. Every Tuesday is Fitness Day in the PE Department and students are expected to participate in various timed running activities.

❖ HOW TO GET INVOLVED AS A STUDENT AT THOREAU

Opportunities through the School

- **After School Activities:** Various clubs may be conducted by volunteer parents and teachers. After School Activities will be publicized in September. Activities and late bus transportation are offered on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Students may also stay after school to work in the library or get extra help from a teacher. Please note that late bus numbers are different from regular bus numbers and the stops will be different as well. Students are not allowed to leave the school property and return to take the late bus. See the Thoreau website: www.fcps.edu/ThoreauMS for more a detailed list of clubs and activities.
- **Art Show** at Navy Federal. Student's art work is displayed at Navy Federal in May. Students work will also be on display at the Pyramid Art Show at Madison HS in March.
 - **Band:** School sponsored full year elective; activities are organized by the band instructor for students.
 - **Chorus:** School sponsored full year course or semester elective; activities are organized by the music teacher for students.
 - **Concerts** (*Winter and Spring*): Opportunity to showcase our school band, orchestra and chorus. Students may also perform at Navy Federal Credit Union during the school year.
 - **ESOL** (*English for Speakers of Other Languages*): Students who are limited English proficient (LEP) and need support are identified by the school for English instruction and services in order to achieve high academic standards.
 - **Orchestra:** School sponsored full year elective; activities are organized by the orchestra instructor for students.
 - **Reflections contest:** a PTA sponsored literature, visual artwork, photography and choreography contest, held in the Fall
- **SCA Student Council Association:** Participation in SCA is open to all students. Elections are held in the fall. All interested students may be a part of the SCA by filling out an application packet. The packet requires two teacher recommendations and a signed permission slip signed by a parent or guardian.

All students completing a packet are considered part of the SCA House. From within the SCA House, elections are held for the Executive Council. Students may run for President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. 7th Graders may run for Secretary and Vice President. 8th Graders may run for Treasurer and President.

 - SCA will meet every other Monday, during Time to Soar.
 - SCA-sponsored events may include:
 - **Dances.** SCA sponsors three afterschool dances a year. Dances start immediately after school and ending at 4:15 pm. Late buses are available for transportation home.
 - **School Spirit Events**, including Spirit Week
 - **Sales** of Thoreau sweatshirts and sweatpants in the fall.
 - **Community Service Projects** such as canned food drives & other charitable programs.
- **School Play or Musical:** Held in the spring to showcase the talents of our students. The Spring Musical has been a tradition at Thoreau for over a decade. Auditions take place before Winter Break, and rehearsals commence after students return. The musical is open to ALL students (they do not have to take a drama class to be considered). Time commitment varies with the size of the role of job. Performance dates are in mid- to late April.
- **Spring Track Meet** at Madison HS. A track meet that concludes the Track and Field unit in PE is held at Madison in early June. Students are selected to participate by the PE teachers.
- **WEXL:** WEXL is the student news show that runs every morning for 5 minutes before 1st period. Students run the technical side (TV monitors, cameras, sound board) and perform as anchors to deliver school announcements to the Thoreau staff and students. Anchors and crew are chosen at the end of the year for the following year, and only rising 8th graders are considered (so they can perform all through 8th grade the following year). They must audition in late spring, or be invited to participate based on performance in Speech/Drama class (anchors) and/or Computer Solutions (crew).
- **Yearbook:** A yearly publication that records the happenings in the school throughout the school year. A school yearbook is distributed at the end of each school year. Online order forms are available in the fall and yearbooks must be preordered and prepaid.

GENERAL ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR STUDENTS

- **Backpacks:** Students are required to leave their back packs and large handbags in their lockers during the school day to ensure the students can pass safely through the hallways.
- **Forgotten Items:** If a student forgets lunch, homework, gym clothes etc. and the parent wishes to bring these items into school, they should be left in the office to be picked up by the student between classes. Students should look in the office for such items if they believe such items will be brought in by parents.
- **Lockers:** Each student is assigned a hall locker and gym locker. Lockers are issued during the first week of school. Locker combinations should not be shared with other students. If students have problems with their lockers, they should go to the Office. The Office keeps a copy of all locker combinations. Locker combinations are changed during the summer so that only the student will know the combination.
- **Lost and Found:** Non-valuable items such as books, papers and clothing are located on the table by the new gym and the vending machines. Items of value, such as watches, calculators and watches will be kept in the Front Office. Unclaimed items are donated to charity on a quarterly basis. Phys Ed maintains a separate lost and found for items left in the gyms.
- **Report Cards** will be mailed home quarterly. Periodic and Interim progress reports may be e-mailed by the individual teachers. *Student Effort and Behavior Reports*, an informational tool to provide parents with feedback on how their child is performing in the areas of organization, homework, citizenship, and class participation, will be included with report cards in quarters 2, 3, and 4.
- **Community Service:** All Thoreau Students are encouraged to participate in community service activities. As part of the 8th grade Civics curriculum, students are required to log five community service hours per quarter. Students in the National Junior Honor Society (NJHS) must complete an additional two hours of community service in the 2nd through 4th quarters. Some opportunities around the school:
 - **Community Garden:** Whole Foods in Vienna is partnering with Thoreau Middle School to build and maintain a community garden.
 - **Landscaping Days:** Quarterly PTA sponsored events to beautify school grounds.
- **Professional Photographs:** Individual pictures of each student are taken in the spring and the fall. All students will be photographed in the fall for the yearbook, however, parents wishing to purchase photos must preorder and prepay. Spring photos will be sent home for parents to review before purchasing. Club photos are usually taken in the winter.
- **School Supplies:** A list of required school supplies is found on the Thoreau website: www.fcps.edu/ThoreauMS. Teachers may request additional items at the beginning & during the school year.
- **School Store:** The PTA runs a school store during Lunch. Items available for purchase vary, but can include gum, mints, school supplies & toiletries. The store is staffed by parent volunteers. Cash and checks accepted. Items are sold at regular retail prices & are considered a convenience service for the students, not fundraiser. School spirit wear can also be purchased here.
- **WEXL:** the closed circuit TV program, organized by the School, distributing information to students before and after school. Students volunteer to moderate the programs.

Individual Student Awards and Achievements

Thoreau Middle school offers many programs for students to excel, enhancing the school curriculum.

- **Celebration of Learning:** Students meet by grade level during Time to Soar to acknowledge students that have been recognized for Student of the Quarter, All A Honor Roll and All A/B Honor Roll:
 - **Student of the Quarter:** Teachers will select students per quarter for recognition based on academic achievements or notable citizenship. The Awards are presented after school and parents are invited to attend. Parents are notified via mail.
 - **All A/B Honor Roll:** Students earning All A/B Honor Roll are awarded with a certificate at Celebration of Learning.
 - **All A Honor Roll:** Students earning All A Honor Roll are awarded with a certificate at Celebration of Learning and are invited to a pizza lunch sponsored by Navy Federal.
- **End of Year Award Ceremony:** Award ceremonies are held by grade level in the morning during the last week of school. Each Teacher selects a student to be recognized for Outstanding Student and Outstanding Personal Achievement.

- **National Junior Honor Society:** Eighth grade students are eligible for membership in the National Junior Honor Society if they have achieved a minimum GPA set by the school administration. Students must complete an application in order to be accepted in the NJHS. Additional community service hours are required.
- **Thoreau Letters:** Near the end of the school year, students will have the opportunity to apply for a Thoreau Letter Award. The letter will be awarded based on participation and accomplishments in the following areas: academic recognition, extra-curricular activities, and service to the community. There are various types of activities and recognition that students may include on their Letter Award application, each having a value of 10 points. Seventh grade students must accumulate a total of 100 points to earn a small Thoreau Letter. Eighth grade students must accumulate a total of 200 points to earn a large Thoreau Letter. Thoreau letters will be given out at the end of the year award ceremonies.

FAMILIES / COMMUNITY GETS INVOLVED AT THOREAU

Opportunities for Families through the School

The Thoreau Middle School Parent Teacher Association offers a welcome to your family.

The TMS PTA works in partnership with the school and is dedicated to promoting the welfare of children at home, at school, and in the community. Our organization is made up of parents and staff who are committed to securing the best possible education for all of our children. We offer a wealth of information and resources to the new family.

Ways you can assist the school by getting involved with the TMS PTA:

- **Join:** One Stop Shop Membership forms are available at: <http://www.ThoreauPTA.org>. Click on Membership Tab.
- **Donate:** The PTA sponsors one fundraiser annually, a “No Fuss Fundraiser.” Parents are asked to make a donation to the PTA. A suggested amount is given, but any amount is welcome. Classroom supplies and computer equipment, monthly staff appreciation events, school events and programs are just some of the ways the students and school are enriched by your donation.
- **Attend Monthly Meetings:** Dates vary, please check the PTA website and register for Keep in Touch to be notified of PTA Meetings. All parents and teachers are welcome.
- **Check out Parent Education Seminars:** sponsored by the PTA, are provided several times during the school year. Please look for the schedule at www.ThoreauPTA.org and for reminders in Thoreau Matters. All parents and teachers are welcome.
- **Volunteer for PTA functions & events:** such as Hospitality Committee, Thoreau Matters, School Store, 7th Grade Dinner, 8th grade Dance, Reflections and Landscaping days. Check out the latest available opportunities at: <http://www.ThoreauPTA.org> and click on the Volunteering Tab to learn more or send an email to Volunteers@ThoreauPTA.org
- **Get the Spirit:** Purchase Spirit Clothing Sales (sportswear with our school’s logo) for you & your student and enjoy your time here. Check out the latest spirit wear at www.ThoreauPTA.org and click on the School Tab for more information.
- www.Pay4SchoolStuffOnline.com use our online payment system to pay for PTA related items. Go to www.thoreaupta.org and click on the Membership tab.
- **Corporate Matching & Dollars for Doers:** Could the hours you volunteer turn into free money for our school? Many companies support employee volunteerism by matching volunteer hours with corporate cash contributions, please check with your company’s Human Resources or Community Relations department to turn your valuable time into money that will directly benefit students at Thoreau Middle School. Questions, please contact the PTA Treasurer at Treasurer@ThoreauPTA.org
- **Ask Questions:** please feel free to contact any member of the PTA who will be glad to help you, or the PTA President at President@ThoreauPTA.org

Ways you can assist Thoreau MS:

- **Check out the Welcome Packet:** Available on-line in late-August, contains emergency care forms and other valuable information from the school, FCPS and the PTA.
- **Attend Back to School Night:** to be held on September 8, 2011 at 7:00 PM. It is a *parents-only event*. This event allows parents and guardians to meet their child's teachers and receive a brief overview of the curriculum for the year.
- **Attend Parent Teacher Mini Conferences:** to be held mid-November. Parents are invited to "touch base" with all teachers for a brief update on how their child is doing in class. Teachers will be seated at desks in both gyms. Upon arrival, parents should get in line to meet with their child's teachers. If additional time is needed to discuss specific concerns, please see your child's counselor to set up a meeting.
- **Read Thoreau Matters Newsletter** twice a month to keep connected.
- **Join the Thoreau PTA:** Membership dues and donations, together with our grocery and other shopping rewards pay for activities such as technology improvements, art, music and drama enrichment, school directory, parent education seminars, school grounds beautification, community garden, staff appreciation and recognition, teaching aids and supplies.
- **Shop with loyalty rewards:** yearly rebates based on proceeds from sales (including stores such as Giant, Safeway, Pottery Barn Kids or PBteen and QSP magazine subscriptions and renewals. Information is available at the [Thoreau PTA](#) website.

Last Update: August 9, 2011