

THOREAU MATTERS



Thoreau Matters is published every two weeks by the Thoreau Administration and the PTA to inform the community of important information about school life at Thoreau Middle School.

Volume 5 Issue 1

August 31, 2017

WELCOME MESSAGE FROM MR. AZIMI

Dear Thoreau Community:

Welcome to the 2017-2018 school year. We have opened our doors by welcoming approximately 950 seventh and eighth graders as well as 19 new staff members. I am glad to have our returning families back and I extend a special welcome to the new families of our community. I am honored to serve as the principal of this fine school where students are respectful and eager to learn, our teachers and staff dedicate themselves to putting kids first, and our parents provide unwavering support. It may sound like a cliché, but Thoreau really is a special place.

I encourage you to become an avid reader of Thoreau Matters throughout the school year. This is the primary method by which I communicate school-wide news to the community. You can expect Thoreau Matters to be published every two weeks and we archive all of the issues on our website if you ever miss an issue and want to keep up with the news. Speaking of our website, I would encourage you to bookmark it as it is updated on a frequent basis so that you can rely on the latest dates and information; the address is www.fcps.edu/ThoreauMS. I hope that you will find both Thoreau Matters and our website to be two dependable and consistent ways in which to stay on top of news at Thoreau.

Finally, Back-to-School Night will be held on Wednesday, September 6th from 5:30PM–7:30PM. I cordially invite our parents/guardians to come that evening to have the opportunity to meet the wonderful teachers and staff who help make Thoreau a school of which we can be proud. I wish everyone a successful year!

Sincerely,
Yusef Azimi



IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

Labor Day Holiday - Monday, September 4th

Back-to-School Night - Wednesday, September 6th at 5:30PM-7:30PM

School Planning Day (Student Holiday) - Friday, September 22nd

First Day of After-School Programs and Late Buses - Monday, September 25th

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Attendance Information

It is important for all student absences to be reported to Thoreau. To report an absence or tardy, parents should call the attendance line at 703-846-8080 or email ThoreauMSAttendance@fcps.edu before 9:00AM. If a student does not arrive to Thoreau as expected, and we have not been notified of the absence by 9:00AM, parents will be contacted at 9:30AM through the Keep In Touch system by phone, text and email. An “unverified” absence will be considered unexcused if a call, handwritten note or email from a parent/guardian is not received by the school.

When it is necessary for a student to leave school before regular dismissal time, a parent should send a signed note or send an email to ThoreauMSAttendance@fcps.edu designating the desired time of departure. The student should bring his/her note to the Main Office when he/she arrives at school in the morning or a parent should send an email no later than 10:00AM the day of the early release. The student will receive a pink check-out pass for the designated pick-up time, will be excused from class, and will wait for pick-up in the Main Office. We require any parent picking up his/her child during the school day to personally come to the Main Office to do so and sign the child out.

Back-to-School Night (BTSN)

On Wednesday, September 6th from 5:30-7:30PM, parents are invited to BTSN to go through their own child’s schedule to meet the teachers. Each student will bring home a copy of his/her schedule on Tuesday, September 5th. A parent may access his/her child’s schedule in [SIS ParentVUE](#).

Please note that the program begins promptly at 5:30PM and parking is very limited at Thoreau. We highly recommend you carpool or walk, if possible.



After-School Program



Every Fairfax County middle school offers an after-school program. Students are highly encouraged to stay after-school to make-up work, obtain additional help, or participate in an after-school activity or club. Thoreau’s after-school program begins on Monday, September 25th.

Activity Sessions: Late buses will run on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. Students will need to sign-in for each after-school activity upon arrival at that activity. The after-school program is divided into sessions. Session 1 will run from 2:25-3:10PM, Session 2 from 3:20-4:05PM, and Session 3 at

4:10PM. Late buses depart Thoreau between 4:30PM and 5:00PM. Activities on Tuesdays and Fridays will require parent pick-up or students will need to live within walking distance of the school.

Bus Information: Route numbers and stops for late buses are different from regular route numbers and stops. Late bus schedules are posted in [Blackboard Parent View](#) and students can ask for help at the Main Office to identify their late bus route number and stop. Students may only ride their assigned late bus. A parent can help by ensuring that his/her child knows which late bus to ride to avoid confusion in the afternoon.

Parent Pick-Up: A parent picking up a child should meet him/her at Door 12. If a parent needs to pick-up a child before the end of after-school activities, please park and come to the Main Office.

Registration: Students must be supervised by an adult at all times after-school. They do not need to pre-register for most activities. Students should pay attention to the WEXL morning news show and Blackboard Thoreau Activities to see what clubs and programs are available. Questions can be directed to After-School Specialist [Shannon Campbell](#).

Thoreau Book Fair



It's time for Thoreau's *Wild West Saddle Up and Read Book Fair*! The fair will be held in our library from September 5th to 11th from 7:15AM until 2:30PM each weekday and from 7:15AM until 10:30AM on September

11th. It will also be open from 5:00PM to 8:30PM at Back-to-School-Night on September 6th. Students will have the opportunity to visit through their English classes, but are also free to come at other times during the day with teacher permission.

We also have an online fair that offers an even greater selection. The online fair closes on September 15th and items ordered will be delivered to Thoreau the following week. The online fair can be found [here](#). We accept cash, check (made payable to Thoreau MS) or credit cards and proceeds will go toward playaways for the library (books in MP3 format). Thank you for helping to support reading at Thoreau!



MySchoolBucks

Online payments for PE uniforms and student fees are available through MySchoolBucks School Store. This online payment service provides a quick and easy way to pay for school-related purchases. Go to www.MySchoolBucks.com to create an account, add a student and make purchases without convenience fees.

Thoreau Yearbook!

The Thoreau yearbook is the cheapest it will be all year - only \$30 through Tuesday, October 31st! Yearbooks can be purchased online through [MySchoolBucks](#). If you have questions, please contact Ms. Benzion, yearbook sponsor, at gbenzion@fcps.edu.



Family Life Education Instructional Program Information

Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) provides a comprehensive, sequential Family Life Education (FLE) program for students in grades K-12. Instruction is seen as a partnership among parents and guardians, the school, and the community in supporting the learning essential to the development of strong families, positive relationships, and a healthy community.

Parents/guardians may choose to opt their child out of all or part of the FLE program. Students who are opted out are provided with age-appropriate, nonpunitive alternative health instruction, and every effort is made to foster respect for family choices. If a parent wishes to opt his/her child out of all or part of FLE for this school year, the opt-out form can be found [here](#). The opt-out form should be completed and returned to Thoreau Student Services prior to FLE instruction.

Detailed grade-level program descriptions are available online [here](#). FLE grade-level specific lessons are available for parents online in [FCPS 24-7 \(Blackboard\) Parent View](#). Grade level-specific lessons are also available at the Fairfax County Regional Library in the City of Fairfax (this location does not have media). Grade level-specific lessons and media are also available for review at Thoreau's library. Due to copyright permissions, we are unable to stream media online.

Program questions may be addressed by contacting Elizabeth Payne, FCPS health & physical education coordinator, at etpayne@fcps.edu or 571-423-4553.



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News/Noteworthy

Transportation News - Extra riders on Thoreau buses are only allowed on buses #1 and #3. All other Thoreau buses are at capacity and are not able to accept additional riders.

Thoreau Breakfast - Eating a good breakfast is very important. Breakfast is available in Thoreau's cafeteria every day starting at 7:15AM for \$1.75!

PTA NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Please join us at the first PTA meeting on **Tuesday, September 19th at 9:30AM** in Eagle Hall to learn more about Thoreau, meet other families, talk with Principal Azimi and Director of Student Services Rebecca Aguilar, and vote on the 2017-2018 PTA budget.

The PTA at Thoreau strives to sponsor many projects and events that help provide a more enriching learning experience for all of our students. Joining the PTA is an opportunity to support all students, families and teachers within the Thoreau community. Visit www.thoreaupta.org to join online. In addition to membership dues, we are asking for a suggested annual donation of \$50 per family to support the projects and events that help provide a more enjoyable and enriching learning experience for our kids. This is called our "No-Fuss Fundraiser." It is not required, but any and all contributions are appreciated and used to support our kids, the teachers and staff. All donations are tax deductible.

Thoreau Courtyard Brick Fundraiser! Thoreau's expansion created a huge courtyard and we are planning an outdoor mosaic, sitting areas and walkways. As part of that effort, we launched a **Brick Fundraiser** for parents to recognize their Thoreau student, welcome their new student, or honor a teacher or staff member! Order forms can be found [here](#) or orders can be placed at pay4schoolstuff.com under your student's account. **Order deadline is next Wednesday, September 6th!**

Volunteers Needed! Back-to-School Night is a busy night for our Thoreau teachers and staff. Each year the PTA provides a quick "grab & go" dinner for teachers before the parents arrive. The PTA is ordering sandwiches and would like your help to complete the meal for BTSN on Wednesday, September 6th. Please sign up [here](#) to donate food and/or volunteer to prepare the grab & go dinner bags. Thank you to hospitality chairs **Gayle Schlueter, Nene Spivy, Margaret Herbold and Emily Korff!**

Volunteers are needed for the **Thoreau School Store**. Please see the [attached schedule](#) and sign-up [here](#) through December. The School Store provides a service to the students and raises funds for the school so your help is greatly appreciated. Huge thanks to chairs **Tana Keeffe and Negin Dehn** for all of their efforts!

Thanks to all that volunteered for the Thoreau Open House and donated or volunteered at the staff breakfast last week! It was very much appreciated by the staff and the entire Thoreau community!

Keep up to date with PTA eNews! Watch your email for next week's issue. For more information about Thoreau's PTA or to volunteer, please contact President Beth Eachus at president@thoreaupta.org.

Sincerely,
Beth Eachus
Thoreau PTA President

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Main Office: 703-846-8000
Attendance: 703-846-8080

Thoreau Website:
www.fcps.edu/ThoreauMS

PTA Website:
www.ThoreauPTA.org



Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology Information

Thoreau is having a TJHSST information session on Tuesday, September 5th at 2:30PM in Eagle Hall. Students and parents are welcome to attend.

The application window is from Monday, September 4th through Friday, September 29th.

More information about admission to TJHSST can be found [here](#).



Mr. Bingman, Health & PE Teacher

"I am excited to be at Thoreau because it is a great school with an awesome staff and a supportive community!"



Ms. Bolanos, Business & Information Technology Teacher

"I am excited to be at Thoreau to work with such a warm, friendly and supportive staff. Everyone has been so kind and helpful."



Ms. Cammarota, English Teacher

"I am excited to be at Thoreau because of the school's reputation for excellence, supportive community of administrators and teachers, and wonderful, dedicated students! Thoreau, in many ways, is my ideal place to work. I cannot wait to continue the journey of enriching and fostering students' talents in the study of English here at Thoreau!"



Ms. Chung, Testing Coordinator

"I am excited to be at Thoreau because the principal has the highest standard of work ethics and all the teachers and staff are just super supportive and caring! I can feel the sense of true welcoming as a member of the Thoreau Family."



Ms. Darvish, Math Teacher

"I am excited to be at Thoreau because Thoreau is a magical place and I feel honored to be a part of the family!"



Ms. Gibson, Social Studies Teacher

"I am excited to be at Thoreau because I'm coming home! I attended Thoreau as a middle school student and I am thrilled to be returning as a teacher. This will be my fourth year teaching, and I cannot wait to begin a new year of learning with my students!"



Ms. Davis, Learning Disabilities Teacher

"I am excited to be at Thoreau because the staff is so passionate about their work and they care about their students!"



Ms. Holoman, Science Teacher

"I am excited to be at Thoreau because it creates the opportunity for me to inspire students to find passion in the sciences through new and engaging ways."



Ms. Gabro, English Teacher

"I am excited to be at Thoreau because of the opportunity to work with a community of caring, dedicated, and supportive people in and outside of the school building toward educating and empowering a curious and driven student body."

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Mr. Isom, Spanish Teacher

"I am excited to be at Thoreau because I love to learn and the best way to learn is to teach. This is a great community and the students are very intelligent and polite. I really appreciate the warm welcome that I've received since arriving here. I'm eager to get to know everyone better and get into the flow of learning."



Mr. Katz, English Teacher

"I am excited to be at Thoreau to work with World-class Administrators Leading Devoted Educators in the Nobel Pursuit of Next-generation student Development."



Ms. Marks, Learning Disabilities Teacher

"I am excited to be at Thoreau because we've got the best kids!"



**Mr. Mikhail,
Technology Support Specialist**

"I am excited to be at Thoreau because I truly do feel at peace working in a school. I was in the central office of FCPS for the past year and I am excited to be back in a school! This will be my 6th year working full-time for FCPS and I am super excited to have school back in session."



Ms. McKendree, Health & PE Teacher

"I am excited to be at Thoreau because I have heard nothing but amazing things about its students, administration, staff and community. So far, each of these claims have proven themselves to be true. From day one I have felt welcomed, accepted and supported every step of the way by all of the people I have encountered. I am proud to be a part of the Golden Eagle Family and I can't wait to see where this school year takes us!!"



Ms. Oh, Math Teacher

"I am excited to be at Thoreau because the school is filled with passionate teachers and staff who all have a common goal for our students: to help all students learn and achieve success."



Mr. Monnin, Learning Disabilities Teacher

"I am excited to be at Thoreau because from what I've observed, the amazing teachers, active community, and innovative building helps students to learn in an unparalleled way."



Mr. Paz, Multiple Disabilities Teacher

"I am excited to be at Thoreau because I want to be a part of the community and support students."



Ms. Sliter, Math Teacher

"I am excited to be at Thoreau and be part of such a supportive and positive community."



Ms. Toomey, Math Teacher

"I am excited to be at Thoreau because the staff is so supportive and friendly. I am excited to work with and learn from my new colleagues!"