

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 9

January 11, 2018

MESSAGE FROM MR. AZIMI

Dear Thoreau Community:

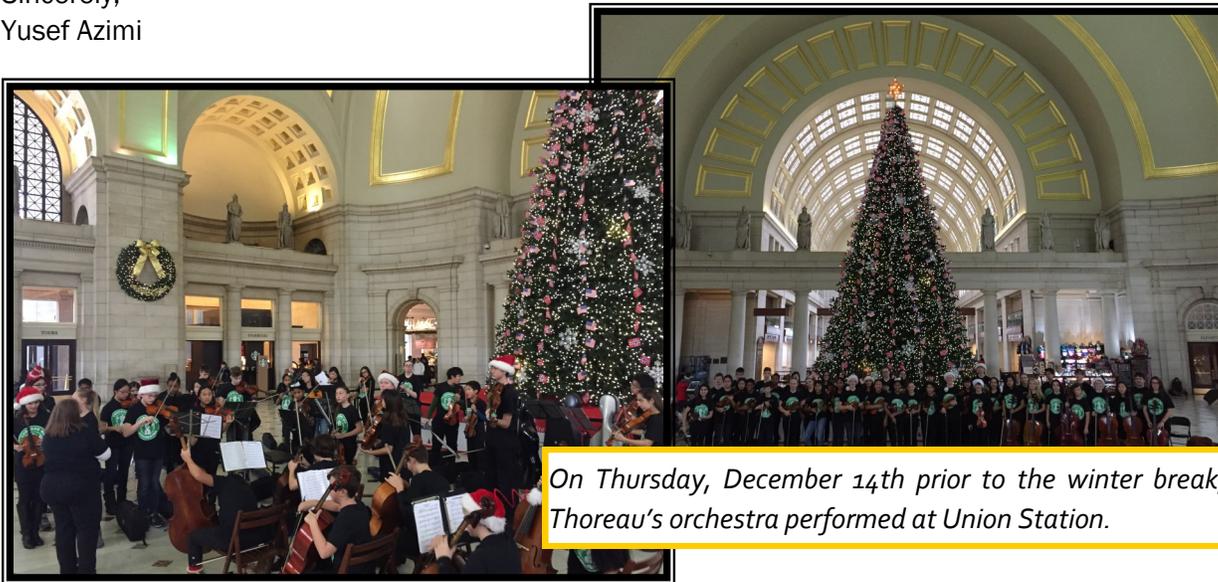
Happy New Year! I wish our entire school community all the best in 2018 and happiness and prosperity to all of you. Right before the winter break, the Fairfax County School Board approved the 2018-2019 school calendar. With all of the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, I wanted to make sure this did not slip by you. After considering multiple options, the School Board decided to pick the option that most resembled the current calendar with a few tweaks here and there. There was deliberation of starting the school year even earlier in August 2018 and ending earlier in June 2019, yet in the end the vote was to start school on Tuesday, August 28, 2018, and end the year on Thursday, June 13, 2019.

A few items of note include:

- Thanksgiving break is for three (3) full days this year instead of the 2.5 days it was previously.
- There is no student early release anymore on end-of-quarter (QE) days.
- There are several early release (ER) days spread throughout the year for the purpose of teacher professional development. Student dismissal at Thoreau on these ER days will be at 11:15 AM.

The 2018-2019 FCPS school calendar can be viewed in its entirety by clicking [here](#). In the meantime, we still have plenty of learning and teaching to do with our students in the current year. Once again, have a blessed 2018.

Sincerely,
Yusef Azimi



On Thursday, December 14th prior to the winter break, Thoreau's orchestra performed at Union Station.

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IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES

Monday, January 15th - Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday

Thursday, January 25th - End of 2nd Quarter, Two-Hour Early Release

Friday, January 26th and Monday, January 29th - Teacher Workdays (Student Holidays)



Project Neighbors

Project Neighbors is an annual holiday event where our business partner, Navy Federal Credit Union, adopts Thoreau families for the holidays. Everything from household items to computers and bikes are given as gifts. It is truly unbelievable to be in the room when the employees are filling the staging area with gifts for delivery. Thoreau Student Services enjoys the opportunity to help behind the scenes with this endeavor. This year, 46 Thoreau families were adopted and able to benefit from this generosity. We are incredibly lucky to have this partnership with NFCU.



Holiday Technology and Digital Citizenship

If you purchased a device for your child this holiday season, FCPS wants to help you support your child in the online world. If the device is internet-enabled, please consider the following tips and resources:

Educate yourself and your child. Digital citizenship is a learning process and your child will need sustained support from parents and teachers. Visit bit.ly/fairfaxdigcit for a fun and interactive parent-child course that can help your family start conversations about navigating the online world.

Establish rules and expectations.

Have you thought about the rules you want to establish with your child for setting up accounts, and the privacy settings you expect your child to use? What are your expectations and how will you monitor your child's online activities? Not sure where to start? Try these [tip sheets](#), [media agreements](#), and [device contracts](#).

Help your child monitor and manage his/her screen time. It's easy to spend hours on a device, especially when it's new. Use these [guidelines](#) and [strategies](#) to help your child learn to monitor and manage his/her screen time.

Discuss privacy settings and accounts. Teach your child to protect his/her personal information and model the use of privacy settings. Discuss why these settings are important and teach him/her how to make privacy setting choices for every app and service he/she uses. This [resource](#) can help you get started.

Give your child action steps. Discuss potential situations that may arise before they happen and give your child action steps. Does he/she know what to do if cyberbullied, harassed, or if someone sends him/her something he/she doesn't want to see? Every difficult situation is an opportunity to help prepare him/her for life beyond your home. These [short parent advice videos](#), which can be filtered by topic and age, can help you identify action steps you can share with your child.

Teach your child to assess risks and make good choices. Online communication is public and permanent. Talk with your child regularly and remind him/her that what he/she does online can impact future opportunities. Your child's online reputation can also affect his/her relationships in the face to face world.

Upcoming Family Life Education (FLE) Lessons

The FLE program for students in grades seven and eight is taught by health and physical education teachers. Building on information learned in late elementary school, students continue their study of basic anatomy and physiology as well as the physical, psychological, and social changes that occur during adolescence. Students are taught that abstinence from sexual activity is the only way to guarantee the prevention of pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections. The emotional and social health unit includes instruction on abuse, internet predation, and healthy dating relationships.

Our Thoreau 7th and 8th grade health and P.E. teachers will be teaching the FLE unit during the week of January 16th. Parents/guardians may choose to opt their child out of all or part of the FLE program. Students who opt out are provided with age-appropriate, non-punitive alternate health instruction, and every effort is made to foster respect for family choices. If you wish to opt your child out of all or part of FLE for this school year, opt out forms are available online for grades 7 and 8 [here](#). Please complete the opt-out and return it to your child's teacher prior to FLE instruction.

Notes from Thoreau, Madison and Marshall Student Services Important Dates for Rising 9th Grade Students



Madison High School
Curriculum/Information Night
Wednesday, January 17th @ 6:30 PM
Details can be found [here](#).



Marshall High School
Curriculum/Information Night
Wednesday, February 7th @ 5:00 PM

IB Diploma Program Information Night
Wednesday, February 14th @ 7:00 PM

Curriculum Night and Activities for Rising 7th Grade Students

Thoreau Middle School
Curriculum Night & Family Open House
Thursday, February 15th @ 6:00 PM
This event will be held at Thoreau



Thoreau Middle School
Thoreau Activity Fair
Tuesday, April 24th and Wednesday, April 25th
10:00 AM–12:00 PM
Students are transported to Thoreau from their feeder elementary schools for this event.

Advanced Academic Programs (AAP) Level IV Referrals

Parents or guardians of seventh grade students may initiate the full-time AAP Level IV screening process by completing and submitting an [Advanced Academic Programs Level IV Referral Form](#) to Rebecca Aguilar, director of student services, no later than **Friday, January 12th**. No late referrals will be accepted.

AAP Level IV services are available to students in grades 3-8. Students may be found eligible for full-time placement in AAP Level IV Center classes through a central selection process and receive a highly

challenging instructional program in science, social studies and English.

Multiple criteria are reviewed by a central selection committee to determine eligibility for all FCPS advanced academic services. More information about AAP services available at the middle school level may be found [here](#).

If you have any questions, you can contact Thoreau's director of student services, Rebecca Aguilar, at rjaguilar1@fcps.edu.



Updates from Thoreau Theatre

Tech Theatre Arts Appreciation will be a brand new course for rising 8th graders. Technical Theatre Arts Appreciation is a new FCPS elective that is a semester long course. Students will be introduced to concepts and skills of technical elements, design, and construction of theatre. Learning subjects include: light design, sound design, costume design, set design, makeup design, directing, and stage combat. Course selection is opening this month. Students in this course will be eligible for the annual Advanced Theatre Arts field trip to NYC and Broadway! Talk to your Thoreau counselor for more details!

Tech Theatre Appreciation

8th Graders

Learn how to:

- ★ Stage Light Design
- ★ Stage Sound Design
- ★ Costume Design
- ★ Scenery Design
- ★ Stage Makeup Design
- ★ Stage Combat

Students will also be eligible for the New York Field Trip

2018-2019 New Semester Elective Available



Thoreau's talented theatre students



T-SHIRT DESIGN Contest



HELP US DESIGN OUR LITTLE MERMAID SHIRT!

The Theatre Department needs YOUR help to design our spring musical shirt!

Win a \$10 gift card and receive a free shirt and concession item!

Little Mermaid T-Shirt Design Contest—

The Theatre Department is hosting a Little Mermaid T-Shirt design contest open to all students! Help us design our Spring Musical shirt! The winner will receive a \$10.00 Target Gift Card, a Little Mermaid T-Shirt, and one free concession item at the Musical! Go to www.thoreaumsdrama.com for contest rules. Submissions are due by Friday, February 2nd.



Volunteer - Little Mermaid rehearsals begin this week! Our musical relies on active parental involvement. There are always things for adults to help with big or small such as selling candy at concessions or donating items. Get involved! The following link will show you how to sign up.

<http://www.thoreaumsdrama.com/parent-volunteers>



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News/Noteworthy

Thoreau Yearbook - The yearbook committee is trying to break a purchasing record of 600 copies purchased by January 30th. To date we have sold 400 copies. We encourage every family to purchase a yearbook so that memories of these two years at Thoreau will be preserved forever. Purchases can be made at www.yearbookforever.com or www.myschoolbucks.com. Contact Ms. BenZion with questions at gbenzion@fcps.edu.

Community Program - Vienna's Club Phoenix invites you to attend a program on Wednesday, January 31st titled *Teen Self Awareness and Suicide Prevention*. Find more details [here](#).

Crosstown Hoops - It's that time of the year again! We are starting to prepare for our annual Crosstown Hoops basketball games versus Kilmer. The games will take place in the evening on Friday, April 6th, at Madison HS. There will be 4 games: 7th grade girls, 7th grade boys, 8th grade girls, 8th grade boys. Details about tryouts and practices can be found [here](#).

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

Thoreau Website:
www.fcps.edu/ThoreauMS

PTA Website:
www.ThoreauPTA.org

PTA NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our next PTA meeting will be Tuesday, January 23rd at 7:00 PM in Eagle Hall. The agenda includes a brief business meeting. We will also be hosting Generation Code to discuss **Parenting in the Digital Age**. Generation Code helps parents think through the best ways to build kids' tech skills. Covered topics include setting appropriate limits and encouraging productive screen time, using technology to encourage curiosity, resourcefulness, and grit, and building skills and habits that drive STEM interest and success.

Volunteers Needed - Volunteers are needed for the **Thoreau School Store**. The linked schedule runs through March. <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0949aeaa2da64-thoreau>. The School Store provides a service to the students and raises funds for the school so your help is greatly appreciated. Huge thanks to school store chairs **Tana Keeffe** and **Negin Dehn** for all of their efforts!

Thoreau Spelling Bee - The PTA invites all students to be a part of the first-ever Thoreau Spelling Bee! Improve vocabulary, build verbal confidence and join a new school tradition! The event will be held on Wednesday, February 21st, from 6:30 PM–8:30 PM in Eagle Hall. Registration opened Tuesday, January 9th and will end on Friday, February 16th. Students must be registered in order to participate and here is the link to register: <http://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0d4eaca7238-speller>. Paper registration forms are also available in the main office. Word study lists, rules and a program FAQ will be provided by email with confirmation of registration. The champion of the Thoreau Spelling Bee will compete with other regional school champions on Sunday, March 18th in the Fairfax County Spelling Bee. Please contact parent **Eliza Morss** at eliza.morss@gmail.com with questions. The Thoreau Spelling Bee is sponsored by your PTA and is part of the Fairfax County Spelling Bee Program. "Bee" the first to participate!

Dining for Dollars - Our next Dining for Dollars event is at **Church Street Pizza** (703-939-1155). The event runs all day on **Monday, January 22nd**. No flier is needed. A bucket at the register will be labelled "Thoreau Dining For Dollars" for your receipts. This applies to dine-in and carry-out, but not deliveries. Huge thanks to parent **Michelle Alonso** for organizing our Dining for Dollars events!

Sincerely,

Beth Eachus, PTA President, President@ThoreauPTA.org