Thurston Middle School Update

Aim High • Work Hard • Help Someone Else • Do the Right Thing

November 13, 2009

Dear Thurston Parents/Guardians,

It is Friday the 13th, so there were bound to be a few things that went haywire when we printed out **report cards** today. You may notice that your child's core classes are listed, but some arts classes are missing. We are working to address the issue and anticipate sending home new copies early next week.

I would like to encourage you to take some time this weekend to sit down with your child and go over his or her report card. Recognition of successes, along with encouragement and support to address areas of weakness, are key steps in helping children become responsible and independent students. If you or your child have questions about a grade or comments in a particular class, please encourage your son or daughter to speak with the teacher and then follow up with an email or phone call. Email addresses for all staff members are located on the Thurston web site under "Our Staff." Email is the best way to contact your child's teacher, but you can also leave a message with our secretary and the teacher will return your call. For questions or concerns about your child's overall academic progress please contact his or her team leader or guidance counselor.

Along with report cards today, you should have received a packet related to the **H1N1 vaccine clinic** we will be holding here at Thurston in near future. I want to take a quick moment to highlight the **Friday, November 20 due date for consent forms** (that is next Friday). It is extremely important that forms are turned in by the deadline, so they can be carefully reviewed prior to the clinic. If you have any questions about the vaccine or the clinic, please contact Thurston's school nurse Terri Sweeney via email at tsweeney@westwood.k12.ma.us).

On the topic of **student health**, although we are seeing some signs of improvement in the overall health of our student population, I want to encourage everyone to continue to be vigilant. **Children who are sick**—either with a fever or with other symptoms that will not allow them to participate in classes in a meaningful way—**need to stay at home**. On my end, I have asked staff to make sure that students who are absent due to illness are not overwhelmed by the workload when they return to school. We certainly don't want kids who are worn down by illness to come back only to be worn down further by makeup work. If you have questions or concerns about how to help your child get back on track (without getting sick again), please contact his or her team leader or guidance counselor.

Finally, I want to extend a thank you to all the **PTO members** who attend the **general meeting yesterday** evening. We have a truly fantastic **PTO board** this year who have been working very hard with the committee chairs to promote home-school communication and support our students' academic and co-curricular interests. 8th grade science teacher **Pat Coleman** also deserves a special thank you for a great presentation on the fall science challenge projects.

Enjoy the weekend,

Allison Borchers, Principal
Thurston Middle School
(781) 326-7500 x2398

School Announcements

Applying to Private School?
It is around this time of year that some families begin investigating private schools. If your child will be applying to an independent school, please consult our **TMS Private School Application Guidelines** and be sure to note the mailing and timeline requirements.

Jeff Wolfsberg, Speaker on Teen Drug and Alcohol Abuse, Visiting WHS
Jeff Wolfsberg will be speaking to students and parents at Westwood High School on Monday, November 23. He will present two assemblies for students during the day and will speak to parents in the high school auditorium at 7:30 Monday night. Mr. Wolfsberg is a highly regarded leader in the world of school-based drug education and early intervention. In the last twelve years he has worked with more than 1,500 of the world's finest independent secondary schools, colleges, and universities in enhancing their response to underage drinking, alcohol misuse, and teen drug use. Research points to parental involvement as being the single most important factor in an adolescent's relationship to alcohol and other drugs. Drug-free kids cite parental influence as the #1 reason for their choice not to drink and use other drugs. School-based prevention efforts are strongly reinforced by parental involvement on many levels. The focus of the parent presentation is to provide opportunities for dialogue, interaction, and sharing experiences. It provides basic information on adolescent development as it relates to the initiation of substance use and dependency. Parents learn accurate and up-to date information about underage drinking and other drug trends, and strategies to support children in choosing a drug-free lifestyle. Jeff is widely published and has presented on TV and National Public Radio. He is also the author and narrator of the two-disc instructional audio program *"Mom, Did You Ever Try Drugs? Answers to the Most-Asked Questions about Parenting, Alcohol and Other Drugs"*. The event is being presented by Westwood High School, Westwood Youth & Family Services and Westwood Cares. Funds for the evening are being provided by Westwood High School, The Dedham Institute for Savings, and The Cooperative Bank.

Thurston Homework Posted Online
The **TMS Teams Wikispace** has arrived! This new web space is designed to help students (and their parents) keep track of homework as well as projects, tests and quizzes. *Please note that teachers still expect students to use their Thurston agenda books to record daily homework and plan for long-range assignments and assessments.* The wiki, which is maintained by student volunteers, is designed as a "back up" system to help when a student is absent or forgets her/his agenda book. The wiki is linked to our web site (look under the "Our Staff" menu, go to "Teams," and then click on the "TMS Teams Wikispace") or you may go directly to the wiki at: http://tmsteams.westwood.wikispaces.net/.

MIT's Splash 2009 Program
What: A weekend in which students can take multiple classes on a huge variety of subjects.
When: The weekend before Thanksgiving.
Who: Students in grades 7-12
Cost: $30
Registration: Splash 2009 student registration will open **Nov. 3rd at 8 pm EST.**

One weekend in November, thousands of students of all types flood to MIT just for ESP's Splash program to learn anything they want. From fractal fun to Hungarian history to aircraft analysis, Splash participants are introduced to a huge variety of topics by over 400 classes taught by teachers from the MIT community. Want to take a class on Egyptian mythology? Origami? Chemical sensors? All are possible. Over the course of 20 hours during Splash, you can get your feet wet with a short introduction to any number of subjects—things you always wanted to learn, or topics you never knew existed. Or you can dive head first into an in-depth seminar or intensive workshop. The whole thing happens over the course of two intense days on the MIT campus, with classes taught by MIT students and community members.

Dates: November 21-22, 2009
Student Registration: Students will be able to register for unlimited classes starting ***Wednesday, November 4***, at 8:00 PM. Online registration will close November 18.
Catalog: https://esp.mit.edu/learn/Splash/2009/catalog
Cost: $30 for the entire program, financial aid is available
Class Locations: MIT campus

Calendar of Events

Important dates and upcoming events:

Wed	**11/18**	1:10 Early Dismissal
		1:15-3:30 Parent-Teacher Conferences
Thu	**11/19**	7:30 School Committee Meeting (WHS Little Theatre)
Fri	**11/20**	Thurston Math League #2
Mon	**11/23**	7:30 Jeffrey Wolfsberg @ WHS
Wed	**11/25**	11:10 Early Dismissal for Thanksgiving Break
Thu	**11/26**	No School—Thanksgiving Break
Fri	**11/27**	No School—Thanksgiving Break
Mon	**11/30**	No School—All Day Teacher Professional Development

Thurston Middle School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, religion, or sexual orientation.