Thurston Middle School Update

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

May 26, 2012

Dear Thurston Families,

I missed last week's update, so I am sending out a jam-packed edition this week. It has been a busy time at Thurston!

First off, I want to take a moment to recognize our **band, chorus and strings students** for wonderful performences at this year's **Great East Music Festival**. I received word yesterday that the strings and band students earned "Silver" awards, and the chorus earned a "Gold" this year. Congratulations to all our performers and to directors **Allison Sanders** (Thurston Band), **Diana Legere** (Thurston Chorus) and **Mona Rashad** (Prodigy Strings).

In other music-related news, our music department received a significant **grant** from the **Westwood Educational Foundation** that will be used to purchase **iPads for our music programs**. There are a wide variety of instrumental, appreciation and compostion applications now available, and students will have the chance to explore these in their music classes next year. Thank you to WEF for supporting the addition of this exciting technology to our music education programs!

On Wednesday evening, Thurston 8th graders **Robert Dwan** and **Elizabeth James** were recognized at the 13th annual **New England League of Middle Schools Scholar Leader Dinner**. The Scholar Leader award gives participating middle schools the chance to recognize two 8th grade students--one male and one female--for their academic achievement and character. Scholar Leaders are selected by their teachers for demonstrating academic achievement, providing service to classmates and their school, being a positive role model for peers, and demonstrating integrity, honesty, self-discipline and courage. This year marks the 11th year that Thurston has participated in the program. Congratulations to Robert, Libby and their families!

Course recommendation information was sent home to all 6th and 7th grade families this past week. Please make sure to review your child's course information carefully and to contact me by **Friday, June 8** with any questions, concerns or requests related to your child's schedule for next year. **We do not keep schedule request information from year to year**, so if there is something you want to share with us that will help me and Mr. Bernazzani create a strong schedule for your child, make sure to contact us. We consider all requests carefully and make a concerted effort to accommodate them, provided we can do so while maintaining team structure, balanced class sizes and program integrity.

Our **PTO summer reading book sale** has begun! Book sale forms were distributed to students in grades 5, and 7 and are available on our web site in the Forms and Publications section. Books will also be on sale at our June band and chorus concerts.

Summer reading requirements this year are as follows:

Grade 6 (one required)
All students read *When You Reach Me* by Rebecca Stead

In addition, the following are recommended reading options:
Sammy Keyes and the Hotel Thief, by Wendelin Van Draanen

Among the Hidden, by Margaret Peterson Haddix

Grade 7 (two required)
Students read a minimum of two books.
All students read *Hoot* by Carl Hiaasen
AND
At least one of the titles on the list of "100 Books to Read in Middle School"

Grade 8 (two required)
All students read *Dead End in Norvelt,* by Jack Gantos (only available in hardcover)
AND
Students should also read at least one of the following:
Beanball, by Gene Fehler
All of the Above, by Shelley Pearsall
My Mother the Cheerleader by Robert Sharenow

The **2012 "100 Books to Read in Middle School"** list is now available online in the forms and publications section of our web site.

Speaking of books, the **last date to check out books** from the **Thurston Library** was **Friday, May 25**. **All materials will be due on June 1.** If your child still has books or audio books checked out from the library, please remind him or her to return all items as soon as possible. Thank you for your help!

On Thursday evening, Thurston staff members and PTO representatives were on hand to greet parents at our **5th Grade Parents Night**. The slideshow from the evening's presentation and other important handouts have been posted online (Forms and Publications) and are available in the front office. Thank you to all the parents of incoming students who attended! It was wonderful to meet you and we look forward to seeing your students the week after next, when 5th grade classes visit Thurston.

Thank you also to everyone who participated in or volunteered at our **Annual Fun Run on Sunday, May 18**. It was a great day for running (or walking) and we had some terrific performances from Thurston students and staff members. In next week's bulletin, I'll be publishing the names of all the Thurston participants who beat me. (The list is way too long to fit in this week's edition.) Special thanks go to **Linda and Mark Walter**, Thurston parents and event organizers!

Runners, linemen, volleyball players--**all 8th graders planning to tryout for a fall sport at Westwood High School** must attend a **mandatory pre-season meeting** on **Monday, June 4th from 6-7:30pm**. Students are required to attend this meeting in the **HS gymnasium with a parent**. Students will get information on starting dates, eligibility, registration requirements and more. They will have a chance to view the required concussion video, ask questions, meet with Fall Coaches and hear from the new Westwood Athletic Director, Matt Gillis. Please mark your calendars for this important meeting so your child does not miss out on participating in Fall Sports at WHS.

8th graders interested in attending the upcoming **Red Sox** game on **June 7th** (versus the Orioles)—there are just a few tickets left! Don't miss out on this terrific opportunity to visit Fenway with your classmates. See Mr. Bernazzani for details.

I have some great news from our food services department. We have successfully completed the transition to **Nutrikids**. **Balance alerts were emailed** to everyone on **May 7th** and an audio call went out on the 14th asking everyone to register at mynutrikids.com. **As of May 21, 2012 negative balances are no longer allowed.** Students with negative balances will be given an alternative lunch and will not be allowed to purchase a la carte items on account. Anyone struggling to pay the balance of their account, please call the **Food Service Office (x1301).** All calls are confidential. The food services office can set up a payment plan or submit a Free & Reduced Lunch Application.

The goal is to have all parents register their children so you will have the ability to monitor their accounts and avoid balances going negative. A little over a third of the students have been registered to date system-wide; our goal is 100 percent. Please register whenever you have a chance. You can view 30 days' worth of meal/a la carte transactions, set up a low balance email alert and view payments made. There is no cost to register. Payment online at a minimal cost is preferred but not required; checks may still be sent in payable to the Westwood Food Service.

Registering is key. We have received very positive feedback already from parents who love having access to their accounts 24/7. Another email balance alert will be sent to everyone shortly, and alerts will go out once a month starting in September. Families without email addresses can call food services directly (x1301) and for print outs of your student's purchase history and paper billing if needed. Finally, I'd like to remind everyone that our **spring PTO meeting** has been rescheduled to this coming Tuesday, **May 29th at 7:30 PM in Thurston's Cafeteria Annex**. Please come and join our PTO officers and the administrative team for some exciting updates. The ChromeBook initiative, changes in next year's schedule, and news about the semi-formal and other fun-filled events will all be on the agenda. Thurston guidance counselor Austin Bushey will also be sharing some great information and facilitating conversation about student cell phone use.

Have a great weekend! For those staying in town, don't miss the chance to see **Westwood's Memorial Day Parade**. **Thurston Middle School band students** will join the celebration in memory of those who served their country.

All the best,

Allison F. Borchers, Principal
(781) 326-7500 x2398
aborchers@westwood.k12.ma.us

FROM THE PTO...

NEXT PTO MEETING: ***WATCH FOR A VERY INFORMATIVE AGENDA COMING SOON!***
Tuesday, MAY 29, 2012 - 7:30 pm
You will not want to miss this!
Our last meeting of the year and we are ending in fantastic fashion!

EIGHTH GRADE SEMI-FORMAL:
Friday, JUNE 8, 2012 - 7:00-10:00 PM
There are still many ways to help with the Eighth Grade Semi-Formal!
Any way you can help is greatly appreciated, set-up, break down, food donations...
Please refer to the WHS Class of 2016 emails for specifics and to sign up!

SAVE THESE DATES...
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WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR HELPING US GIVE THURSTON, AND OUR CHILDREN, 24 NEW MICROSCOPES AND CHROMEBOOKS FOR TWO FULL CLASSROOMS THIS SCHOOL YEAR!

AN ADDITIONAL 24 MICROSCOPES WILL BE GIVEN IN SEPTEMBER, AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR.
None of this would be possible without our outstanding Thurston families' support!

Joanne Ouellette, Jennifer Zonderman, Kelly Harrington, Bill Kearns

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School Announcements

5th Annual Westwood PMC Kids Ride
The town of Westwood is hosting the **5th annual PMC Kids Ride on Sunday, June 10th** at the Martha Jones School. Over 500 kids of all ages are expected to Ride and raise money for the Jimmy Fund at Dana Farber. This event is a great opportunity for kids to help in the fight against cancer and show support to local families who courageously battle this horrible disease. Registration is done online and kids and adults are encouraged to participate as riders or volunteers. For more information, go to kids.pmc.org/westwood

Westwood High School Boys Basketball Coaches Summer Basketball Clinic
Westwood Basketball Association is pleased to announce Coach St. Martin and Coach Normant's summer basketball clinic for players **entering grades 4th – 9th grades**. This clinic will be held **August 13th – 16th from 9:00am – 2:00pm at Westwood High School**. The cost is $175.00 per player payable to Westwood Basketball Association and includes a basketball and a WHS Camp t-shirt. Additional children's cost will be $150 per player. This program is run by WHS coaches and with assistance of current WHS basketball players. Registration is online at **www.westwoodbasketball.org** or contact Steve St. Martin at westwoodhoops@gmail.com for more information.

Looking to Get Rid of an Old Laptop?
Laptops For Kidz is a program that makes computers accessible to children who may not have access to one. Local businesses and individuals can donate computers to help students in need. If you have a Windows laptop that is "functional" and is equipped with a Pentium 4 or better processor that you are willing to donate, please contact Whitney Goodwin at 781.326.7500 x3312. In turn, we will permanently remove all data on the hard drive, protecting everyone's security, and reconfigure the machine with up-to-date software. This computer will then be placed in the hand of a Westwood student.

Teen Center Dance Volunteer Opportunity
Westwood Youth and Family Services is looking for a parent (or two) to volunteer to coordinate the Teen Center dances for middle school students. Minimal time is needed. It is a great opportunity to meet the kids!! If you are interested please contact Denise Nagle at denisenagle5@gmail.com for more information.

Canned Goods Collection
Thurston 8th graders **Bridget Doherty** and **Mary Cote** are **collecting canned goods** for **three great causes**. First, the cans will be used to **anchor the luminaries** that line the track in the **Relay for Life of Greater Norwood 2012**. After the relay, the cans will be donated to restock the **Westwood Food Pantry**. Finally, the **"boxtop" labels** will be removed from the cans and given to the **Sheehan School** boxtop collection. Collection boxes will be located near building entrances. I'll be providing updates throughout March and April as the girls work toward their **goal of collecting 2,000 cans**.

Calendar of Events

Important dates and upcoming events:

Mon	**5/28**		Memorial Day—No School
		10:00 AM	Westwood Memorial Day Parade
Tue	**5/29**	7:30 PM	PTO General Meeting (Cafeteria Annex)
Thu	**5/30**		Grade 7 Science Field Trip (Canobie Lake Park)
Fri	**6/1**	7:00 PM – 9:30	Grade 6 Social
Wed	**6/6**	1:10 PM	Early Dismissal
		7:00 PM	Band Concert (WHS Auditorium)
Thu	**6/7**	7:05 PM	Grade 8 Red Sox Game II
Fri	**6/8**		Grade 8 Boston Field Trips
		7:00 PM – 10:00 PM	Grade 8 Semi-Formal
Mon	**6/11**		Grade 6 Greek Olympics
Tue	**6/12**	7:00 PM	Chorus Concert
Wed	**6/13**	1:10	Early Dismissal
Thu	**6/14**	11:45	Grade 6 Variety Show
		1:00	Grade 7 & 8 Variety Show
Fri	**6/15**		Grade 8 Class Day
Mon	**6/18**		Last Day of School 2011-2012!
		8:30	Grade 8 Promotion (WHS Auditorium)
			Dismissal

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