Thurston Middle School Update

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

October 16, 2010

Dear Thurston Families,

Progress reports were distributed to students yesterday. Please take a few minutes to review your child's progress report with him or her. For families new to Thurston, we have developed a Progress Report Primer, a guide to interpreting comments and communicating questions or concerns. The latest version of the Progress Report Primer is available in the Forms and Publications section of our web site.

Our **School Site Council** met on Thursday for our first meeting of the year. A list of Site Council Members and Meeting Dates can be found on our web site. Meeting minutes, once approved, will be available on the web site as well.

Picture Day is next Thursday (October 21), and order forms were distributed Friday along with progress reports. Pictures are taken during our music and physical education classes. We have some extra forms in the office, just in case!

Thurston is once again participating in an annual **Halloween Costume Drive** organized by the Ouellette Family. All donations go to support the Department of Children and Families. Please bring donations of new and gently used costumes to the office.

Have a great weekend!

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

PTO News

Thank You Thurston Families

We would like to thank our Thurston families. Our PTO membership has now reached 81%! The PTO funds many activities for our students at Thurston. We thank the families who have sent back their memberships and help us continue to support these wonderful programs. We ask those who have not yet done so, to please consider sending back your membership, it is not too late. Please help us reach our goal of 100% participation!

Thank You also to...

Katie Wheeler for your tremendous work on the Teacher Appreciation Dinner.

Linda DiMaria and **Michelle Haney** for your incredible work on the Magazine Drive.

Claire Gotti and **Elizabeth Phillips** for agreeing to co-chair the 8th Grade Dance.

We appreciate all of the help our parents and families give us throughout the school year, thank you!

Westwood Merchandise For Sale At THURSTON

Students will have a chance to view the apparel on Tuesday, October 19th.
All orders are due one week from that date. Apparel will not be available again until spring. THE DEADLINE TO ORDER THIS FALL LINE IS: TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2010. Simply complete the **online order form** and attach it to a check payable to: THURSTON PTO, for the total amount of the merchandise. Send the form and check in an envelope marked 'merchandise' to school with your child.

These items will no longer be available after October 26, 2010, so please do not delay!

Orders will arrive within three weeks of the deadline and be sent home in your child's backpack unless otherwise specified. If these items are gifts, please specify that on your order form, and you will be contacted when your order is ready.

Any questions regarding the fall merchandise, please contact Joanne Ouellette, jbomarketing@comcast.net or 781-320-0036.

First PTO Meeting of the New School Year

Our first PTO Meeting will be **November 16th at 7:30**. Please save the date, more details later.

School Announcements

Homework Update

Last year at Thurston, a committee of faculty members spent some time studying the problem of how we can help make sure that all students are completing homework assignments consistently. One key strategy that emerged was the idea of an **immediate response** to missing work. This year, I've asked all teachers to do the following:

- Call or email home to notify parents **the first time** a student misses a homework assignment.
- Contact the team leader **the second time** a students misses and assignment. The team leader will then assess the situation and take appropriate steps to help. This might include calling home to check in with parents, arranging for extra x-block support, or recommending the child for an after-school homework program.
- Let me or Mr. Bernazzani know **the third time** a child misses a homework assignment. We, in turn, will meet with children, contact parents and work with teams to respond appropriately.

Almost every student misses an assignment or two sometime during the year. Our goal is not to alarm parents or cause undue stress for students but to **communicate quickly and effectively** in order to keep students on track and encourage strong work habits.

What can parents do to help? The following homework and study strategies have proven effective for many students:

Time

- ❒ **take a break** after school to snack, exercise or socialize before starting work
- ❒ **start with the toughest** or most complicated assignments
- ❒ **use a timer**—breaks and changes in subject every so often can help

Place

- ❒ **avoid working in front of the TV**
- ❒ find some **good light** and a **comfortable chair**
- ❒ **change your location** periodically

Resources

- ❒ **use your assignment notebook**
- ❒ **get organized**—gather all your supplies and materials before you begin
- ❒ **snacks are good** before or during HW time
- ❒ **check in** with parents, siblings, friends and teachers when you get stuck

A recent *New York Times* article ("Forget What You Know About Good Study Habits" by Benedict Carey, September 6, 2010) challenges the effectiveness of traditional study advice (e.g., set up a quiet location, focus on one thing at a time, practice a skill over and over until you get it). Researchers have found instead that periodically changing your study location improves learning, as does mixing up different types of related problem or ideas. They also note that multiple, shorter study sessions and practice tests are more helpful than long, drawn out cram-sessions. For more information and the full text, go to: http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/07/health/views/07mind.html.

Riding the Bus

I have a quick reminder for parents of students who take the **bus**: for safety reasons, students are not allowed to ride buses other than their assigned buses. Many of our buses are at or near capacity, and the addition of extra passengers could pose a safety risk. Starting next week, bus drivers and the bus coordinator will be checking bus passes periodically to make sure all students are on the correct bus.

Sports Schedules

Football, Volleyball, Field Hockey and Cross Country are off and running! To access schedules for all Thurston Middle School sports teams, go to http://www.highschoolsports.net/team/Westwood-High-School-Westwood-MA/ and choose the appropriate team form the pull down list. **Go Bulldogs!**

Calendar of Events

Important dates and upcoming events:

Mon	**10/18**	2:30 WOSC Meeting
Tu	**10/19**	
Wed	**10/20**	1:10 Early Dismissal
Thu	**10/21**	7:30 School Committee Meeting (WHS Little Theatre)

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