

Thurston Elementary School Parent Guide



2019-2020

Welcome to the Thurston Parent Guide

We hope you find this guide to be a handy reference for information about our school events, programs and clubs, and how you can participate through the many volunteer opportunities available.

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Ann Arbor Public Schools Elementary School Calendar

September 3	First Day of School
September 25	Early Release Day
October 2	Student Count Day
October 23	Early Release Day
November 5	No School – Election Day
November 27-29	No School – Thanksgiving Break
December 2	School Resumes
December 23- January 3	No School – Winter Break
January 6	School Resumes
January 20	No School – MLK Day
February 12	Student Count Day
February 25	Early Release Day
March 10	No School - Election Day
March 30- April 3	No School – Spring Break

April 6	School Resumes
April 10	No School (Easter Weekend)
May 5	No School – Election Day
May 20	Early Release Day
May 25	No School – Memorial Day
June 12	End of School Year – Half Day

For additional details on the AAPS School Calendar visit <https://www.a2schools.org/Page/12004>

Thurston PTO



Thurston PTO

Thurston's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is a group of parents, teachers, and staff with the common goal of providing a bridge between the school and community, as well as the initiation of school improvement efforts. The PTO is also responsible for planning school fundraisers and school-wide events.

Each year the PTO provides funding for field trips, classroom supplies, extra-curricular programs and clubs, literacy resources, curriculum enhancements, building beautification, and much more.

President

Allison Jeter

Oversees activities of the entire PTO. Recruits and designates chairs for Thurston events, assists with PTO budget, runs and sets agenda for PTO meetings.

Vice President

Mary Manthey

Works closely with the PTO President, and assumes role in the event of absence. Helps oversee building relationships, and reviews PTO Bylaws.

Secretary

Nadine Wong

Responsible for recording and distributing PTO meeting minutes. Communicates meeting-related information to Thurston community when needed.

Treasurer(s)

Jon Svoboda and Bruce Fields

Receives and disburses PTO funds. Manages PTO books and bank accounts using web-based software program. Organizes and reports yearly tax information.

Fundraising Chair(s)

Kelly Delp and Kelly Williams

Coordinates fundraising strategies and is responsible for supporting major fundraising programs. Assists in the development of fundraising goals and soliciting funds.

Members at Large

Diane McIntyre

Facilitate communication. Serve as liaisons between the PTO and the general membership.

Representative to the PTOC Council

Position Currently Available

Acts as the Thurston representative at district-wide PTO Council meetings.

Safe Routes to School Chair

Alisa Cox

Oversees the activities of the Safe Routes to School Committee.

Teacher Representative(s)

Eve Wright and Ann Gooding-Geidner

Thurston Community Players President

Praveena Ramaswami

Organizes the annual theatrical production of an original musical comedy involving Thurston parents, teachers, and students.

Thurston Nature Center Chair

Elizabeth Morehead

Responsible for the stewardship and conservation of the Thurston Nature Center including the organization of volunteer efforts.

Additional Positions and Coordinators

Box Tops	PTO Thrift Shop Liaison
Community Service Club	Room Parent Coordinator
Fun Run Committee	Scrip Cards Coordinator
Gardening Club	Teacher/Staff Appreciation
Green Schools	Thurston Directory
Grocery Cards	Thurston Sign
Little Caesar's Pizza Kits	Walk to School
Newsletter	Webmaster
Parent Guide	Yearbook

For a full listing of PTO positions visit <https://www.a2schools.org/Page/9358>

Thurston Events



August

Welcome Back Meet & Greet

This back to school kickoff is a celebration of the upcoming school year. On this evening, families are presented with back to school packets which includes the long-awaited classroom placement. This event provides students with the opportunity to meet their new teacher and classmates before the new school year begins.

September

Picture Day

All students will have their pictures taken for the yearbook and class photo. There is no charge for students to take pictures. If you choose to order pictures however, there are a variety of packages available for purchase.

Curriculum Night

During this event parents will have an opportunity to learn about their child's grade level curriculum, as well as classroom activities for the school year. Teachers will give a brief presentation, distribute educational resources, and answer questions. Parents will also sign up for the first parent-teacher conference of the school year.

Coffee Club

Looking to connect with fellow parents, enjoy some coffee, and keep up to date on current school activities? Come join the PTO the Friday morning after the monthly PTO meeting for an informal gathering before the school day begins. Keep an eye on the newsletter for announcements of upcoming Coffee Club dates, times, and locations.

Black Tie Blue Jeans Fundraiser

An evening of fun, food, and bidding. BTBJ is a chance for Thurston adults to gather together to enjoy good company, good atmosphere, and good food while supporting Thurston PTO efforts.

Both silent and live auctions will offer wonderful and unique local items, and one-of-a-kind experiences for you and your family. Get a sitter for this off-site event and come enjoy an evening out while you have fun with the adults you'll be volunteering, interacting, and planning play dates with throughout the year!

October

International Walk to School Day

On this day we encourage as many students as possible to walk or bike to school (parents, too!). If you live outside the Thurston area but would still like to participate, you can drive to one of the neighborhood remote locations which provide a short walk to school.

Fun Run

The Fun Run is one of the school's main fundraisers of the year. On the day of the event the kids will be running (or walking, or skipping, or jogging) to their favorite songs as they traverse a course set up on the school grounds. Prior to the event, students collect pledges for their run. The proceeds are used by the Thurston PTO to fund budget items such as providing field trip transportation, teacher grants, building beautification, and other school programs.

All students participate in the fun of the run regardless of pledges received. There are also incentives for participation given to individuals and classrooms through the pledge process. The event occurs during the school day. All parents and relatives are encouraged to come and cheer for their child's grade.

OHMHA Fall Festival

This neighborhood festival is organized by the Orchard Hills/Maplewood Homeowners Association (OHMHA). While not officially a Thurston event, many Thurston families participate in this celebration that takes place by the Thurston Nature Center (TNC) near the Orchard Hills Athletic Club (OHAC) Pool. This event hosts wildlife demonstrations and musical entertainment including performances by the Thurston school choirs. Activities, games and refreshments are available.

Halloween Parade

On Halloween, students are welcome to bring costumes to school and participate in an all-school parade. The costumes must be non-scary. No make-up is allowed, and the costume must be able to be worn over the child's clothes. Parents are invited to line the route outside and take pictures. If families object to their children's participation, there will be an alternate activity in the library.

November

Fall Teacher and Staff Appreciation Event

To celebrate the wonderful job that our teachers and staff do, a few PTO sponsored special events are planned for early November. Stay tuned to the newsletter for announcements on how you can participate in showing your thanks and gratitude.

Turkey Trot

The Turkey Trot is an event geared towards health and wellness (and fun!) Prior to Thanksgiving break, all of the school kids are invited to walk/run/stroll around a one mile course through the neighborhood. To keep it fun and upbeat, they will be following a giant turkey (a celebrity parent dressed up as a turkey). Parents and relatives are invited to cheer on the turkey trotters during this school day event.

December

All-School Ice Skating Field Trip

In recognition of all of the dedication and generosity that goes into making Thurston such a fantastic school, all students are invited to ice skating at a school-wide field trip to the Ice Cube. Parents are encouraged to sign up for a volunteer slot to help make this fun and exciting event a success.

January

Science Fair

Students display and present a science experiment/ project on a display board in their classroom during this evening event. While 3rd through 5th grade are required to participate, grades K through 2 are welcome to participate as well. This event is in conjunction with the Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Expo, an expo of student demonstrations/ experiments to showcase their STEM expertise.

February

NAAPID

National African American Parent Involvement Day (NAAPID) is a national observance day with the goal of creating a more conducive learning environment for African-American students from kindergarten through college. NAAPID is the creation of the late Mr. Joseph Dulin, an insightful Ann Arbor, Michigan principal, who believed in encouraging parents to visibly demonstrate support of their children's education on this day. At Thurston, we value the parent involvement made by all of our families. The goals of NAAPID are pertinent to every family, as the Thurston community is strong and filled with involvement, activism, and support.

Winter Carnival

Thurston families enjoy an indoor carnival in the evening with activities, games, and prizes. Classrooms throughout the school are converted into game/activity rooms, and students have the opportunity to play games and win prizes. Some of the fun activities include a balloon artist, a cake walk (where students can win a cake or baked treat), face painting, raffles and food for sale.

New Book Sale

The Scholastic Book Fair is traditionally held on the same night as the Carnival. Working together with our Media Specialist, we will transform our library into a lively bookstore. The prices are the same as you would pay at the store and a percentage of sales are used to purchase library books. The books for sale are handpicked by the school librarian for children up through 5th grade.

Talent Show

Students are invited to audition and showcase their talents in this all-school event. Together with our music teacher, our principal Ms. Natasha York, selects featured acts for the show. There are several rehearsals the week of the performance, and acts are strictly held to two minutes. Performances typically take place during the school day. Parents are welcome to attend. In the past, students have danced, performed skits, magic tricks, jokes, played instruments, jumped rope, done gymnastics, and even demonstrated the Chinese yoyo.

March

The Thurston Play

This annual, original musical is a more than 40-year old tradition that started with a group of musical, comedy-minded Thurston parents. Now dubbed the Thurston Community Players, each year this group of volunteers comes up with the plot for a play, writes

a script, selects songs and writes lyrics, and choreographs dance numbers. A typical cast for a show runs to well over 100 actors ranging in age from 5 to past 75; many more people work backstage and in other production areas.

Auditions are low-stress; everyone who auditions gets a part as long as they are willing to work hard, be team players, and have fun. Auditions are held in October. Rehearsals begin in January. Performances take place in March over the course of three nights at the Clague Middle School auditorium. For more information please visit their website <https://www.thurstonplayers.org/>

April

Earth Week

During this exciting week, many “green” activities will happen at Thurston! Each grade is assigned a special project to complete. Past projects include making a butterfly trail that moves through eight different habitats in our own backyard, studying the water quality of the Thurston Pond, collecting and identifying invertebrates in the Thurston Pond and then discussing how this reflects the health of the water, and identifying trees in the nature center and computing how much water each species absorbs in a year.

May

International Night

Thurston’s International Night is a school year favorite! It is a great celebration of the many countries, heritages and cultures at Thurston.

The program begins in the multi-purpose room (MPR) where everyone gathers to watch the eagerly anticipated performances from all over the world. During this time, students showcase their culture, and amazingly choreographed routines on stage. Performers take great pride in sharing their heritage and are often viewed as celebrities of the night.

The next phase of the program includes a journey across the world, as families have the opportunity to visit classrooms, each representing a different country. Most rooms are filled with native artifacts, display boards, traditional music, and delicious foods to eat. Students receive “passports” which are stamped after they answer a question about each country. These passports are a great way to engage the children, and also make fantastic souvenirs. Wonderful aromas permeate the hallways with foods from all over the world, so do come hungry! This event is always completely FREE to attend.

Volunteers do many things from making food that originates from their native country, setting up displays about their cultural heritage, to helping students perform dances, musical numbers, or other arts related to their native country. Everyone is welcome!

Spring Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week

Thurston has the most dedicated and caring teachers and staff around. In an effort to show appreciation, a week full of activities and events are planned to celebrate all of their hard work. Families work together to donate meals, snacks, and classroom supplies for the teachers. To spread the much-deserved love, letters of gratitude and drawings are always encouraged.

Bike Rodeo

Join us as we transform the school parking lot into a bike rodeo for all of the kids. Fun bike-related activities take place throughout the evening. The Ann Arbor police are there to teach the kids the

rules of the road and lead kids around a skills and safety course. Mechanics from local bike shops are also on hand to give your bike a quick tune up.

Science Olympiad

Students in 2nd through 5th grades compete against 30+ schools throughout Washtenaw County in fun science events. With more than 2,500 participants each year, the Washtenaw Elementary Science Olympiad (WESO) is the largest elementary Science Olympiad in the country, and has been steadily growing since its inception more than fifteen years ago.

The Olympiad takes place at Pioneer High School where, on the day of the event, student teams compete in their chosen subject. Subjects are coached by parent volunteers, and vary from year to year, but recent examples include: pasta bridges, gravity racer, photon pun, and circuit wizardry. The event concludes with a medal ceremony.

Students learn that science can be fun, exciting, and challenging, and that the team spirit and good sportsmanship they develop can serve to be beneficial throughout their lives. For more information please visit their website <https://wesoscience.org/>

Field Day

Every spring we have a Field Day for the students during the school day. Field Day is a great opportunity for students to enjoy teamwork and fun outdoor games. All students participate in fun events such as, tug-of-war, slip-n-slide, soccer relay, water balloon toss, etc. Our physical education teacher plans and organizes the events.

June

Snow Cone Social

Enjoy an evening outdoors where students can participate in a variety of games and activities, face painting, bubbles, hand-made snow cones, and a delicious assortment of food from locally owned businesses. The Snow Cone Social is a great time for parents to connect with other families and reflect on the school year. All games and activities are free; snow cones and other food are available for purchase.

Used Book Sale

The used book sale is held on the same night as the Snow Cone Social. It fills the entire MPR with books of all genres, for all ages. Books are donated by Thurston families, as well as members of the community. Families and community members look forward to sifting through the plethora of reasonably priced books. Students are traditionally given a free book coupon and have the opportunity to select a book before the sale opens to the public.

End of School Year Clap Out

The last day of school is an exciting time for students and parents. Each year on the last day school, students are greeted by cheering families outside the building after half-day dismissal. Families and friends are encouraged to congratulate students and take pictures with classmates and teachers. Details on the last day dismissal procedures are given during the last weeks of school.

Thurston Programs



Coffee with the Principal

Coffee with the Principal is an informal gathering to hang out with one or both of the school principals, Ms. York and Ms. Callahan. Invite a friend, enjoy some coffee, meet other families. This event serves as an excellent opportunity to hear from the principals about topics they are excited to share, and also for parents to discuss issues near and dear to them. This community-building meeting takes place in the MPR periodically during the school year. Keep an eye on the newsletter for announcements of upcoming event dates.

Disability Awareness Workshop

The Disability Awareness Workshop is a one-day program to teach 4th graders an empathetic understanding of physical, developmental, and learning disabilities. This hands-on activity-based program is designed to help students understand how difficult and complex daily living can be for individuals with “Diverse Abilities”. The workshop helps to build a culture of understanding that is invaluable, with the goal to learn, through experience, that all individuals deserve respect no matter how they may look, act, walk, or talk.

Holiday Wish List Program

Each year during the holiday season the Thurston community helps Thurston families in need. This is a wonderful way to give back, and recipient families are always extremely grateful for the gifts. Volunteers are needed to help organize and wrap gifts. Please check the Heron Happenings newsletter in late fall for more details.

Project Lead the Way

Project Lead the Way (PLTW) is the country’s leading provider of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) programs. This world-class curriculum helps students develop skills essential to the global economy. Using the project-based curriculum, our PK through 5th grade students will identify problems, and design science experiments to find solutions.

Thurston Pantry

The Thurston Pantry is an in-school pantry solely run and operated by dedicated parents and the Community Service Club. Thanks to the generosity of the entire community, families in need are provided with goods throughout the school-year. Thurston families are asked to consider donating non- perishable foods, toiletries, cleaning supplies, and home/ school supplies to this cause.

Donation bins are located in the main hallway, and are accepted anytime throughout the school-year. Monetary donations are also appreciated, and will be used to purchase additional goods for the pantry. Please visit <http://www.thurstoncsc.org/thurston-pantry.html> for more information about this wonderful cause!

School Clubs



Academic Games

Academic Games is a series of games designed to test student's knowledge in various subjects. Thurston 4th and 5th grade students will have the opportunity to enhance their problem solving and team building skills while playing fun games. Students are admitted on a first-come, first-served basis. Each student who is accepted will be asked to pay a fee for startup cost of purchasing additional games and printing. Academic Games meets weekly, and parents are strongly encouraged to volunteer. For more information email thurstonag@gmail.com

Chess Club

Chess Club is a FREE club held one morning per week in the Thurston library. Students play friendly games of chess with their classmates in a low-stress environment. Anyone can participate, including children who do not know how to play chess. Although there is no instruction at the club, some parents know how to play and will help your child. There is no sign-up, nor are there snacks, and you can come anytime. Helpers and chess playing parents are always welcome. Check out the Thurston newsletter for dates and time for this popular club. If you are interested in Chess CLASSES, you can sign up and pay for these through the Rec and Ed Department. Many of our "clubbers" do enroll in Red and Ed's chess classes, but are not required to.

Coding Club

Coding Club is offered to upper elementary students once they complete the coding module in PLTW. Interested students can sign up to work in an unstructured environment, to work on coding projects. This group meets during lunch recess once a week.

Community Service Club

The Community Service Club provides students with the opportunity to do service projects for the school and community. Students meet once a month during lunch/recess hour to work on specific projects

and initiatives. In 2016, students launched the Thurston Pantry. This in-school pantry provides goods to families in need at the school. Other projects include a shoe drive, Operation Gratitude, Project Keep Warm, Thurston's Buddy Bench, and more. These students take great pride in making a difference and being seen by their peers as leaders.

The Community Service Club is offered to grades with a volunteer parent coordinator who helps plan and execute age-appropriate community service projects during lunch hour. Participants hold fundraisers throughout the school year to raise money for various charities and supplies for future projects. Students may be asked to bring in project-related supplies. For more information, visit www.thurstoncsc.org.

Fifth Grade Choir

Our music teacher organizes a Fifth Grade Choir every year. It is open to all fifth grade students. They meet once a week during lunch recess and perform several times throughout the year, including once at a Board of Education meeting at the downtown library in the fall. Thurston is the only elementary school in town to have a fifth grade choir. Please contact the music teacher for more information.

Girls on the Run

Girls on the Run is a non-profit organization that envisions a world where every girl knows and activates her limitless potential and is free to boldly pursue her dreams. This ten-week program is designed for girls in 3rd through 5th grades. Lessons are led by trained volunteer coaches who guide and mentor the girls through an uplifting curriculum that focuses on life-long skills to improve emotional and physical health. The program culminates in a non-competitive 5k which gives the girls a chance to shine and an overwhelming sense of accomplishment. For more information please visit <https://www.girlsontherunsemi.org/>

Green Schools

Thurston’s Green School has a reputation for doing exemplary work, earning us “Evergreen” status—the highest “green” award possible! The students on the Green Team lead school-wide efforts to reduce, reuse, and recycle. They help in many ways, including: making the lunchroom a waste-free place by showing peers where/how to compost and recycle; by planting, watering, weeding and harvesting in Thurston’s garden; helping with recycling/ composting at school events; and collecting compost/ recyclables from other parts of the school. Each student on the Green Team has a job that they do weekly or more regularly, and jobs may be rotated throughout the year. Being a part of the team is a great way for your child to learn responsibility and help the environment at the same time.

Robotics Club

The Robotics Club motivates students to learn different science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) concepts through a fun and exciting robotics based curriculum. Through working in groups, Thurston 5th grade students will have the opportunity to enhance their problem solving, and team building skills. In addition, they learn important life skills including presentation skills, leadership skills, and self-assurance. Each student who is accepted will be asked to pay a fee for startup costs. Robotics club meets weekly, and parents are strongly encouraged to volunteer.

Safety Patrol

Thurston’s Safety Patrol is conducted under the auspices of AAA of Michigan. Our patrol is composed of volunteer students from the 4th and 5th grades. Safeties serve every other week in pairs or groups of three to cross students at intersections, assist in our parking lot, put up and take down our flag, etc. A meeting is held during the first week of school to inform students of the responsibilities of serving on the Safety Patrol and to invite volunteers to participate.

Student Council

Student Council is an extracurricular activity for individuals interested in student and school affairs. Representatives will either be selected by a teacher, or nominated by their class. Elected officials will meet monthly to plan and organize school events and fundraisers. Information about student council will be available through your child's classroom teacher.

Volunteer Opportunities



Art Room Volunteers

Throughout the year the art teachers may request assistance during art class for students in grades K-1. Volunteer tasks may include distributing supplies, collecting projects, or assisting with cleanup. Please contact the art teacher for more information.

Lunch Room Volunteers

Thurston has an amazing team of dedicated lunch supervisors. The lunch supervisor team is made up of parents, college students, and members of the community. Because of the short lunch/ recess time allotment, and large number of attendees, additional support is always encouraged. Parent volunteers are crucial in assisting with this daily operation, and are always welcomed.

Volunteer duties include; monitoring students on the playground (sun or snow), keeping a close eye on playground dynamics, assisting with line formation, and returning students to designated classrooms.

PTO (Parent Teacher Organization)

Thurston's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is a group of parents, teachers, and staff with the common goal of providing a bridge between the school and community, as well as the initiation of school improvement efforts. The PTO is also responsible for planning school fundraisers and school-wide events. Volunteers are always needed for our many activities and events throughout the year.

The PTO meets monthly in Thurston's Library to discuss relevant topics, goals, and the appropriation of funds. Everyone is welcome to attend. Dinner and childcare are always provided.

Each year, the PTO provides funding for field trips, classroom supplies, extra-curricular programs and clubs, literacy resources, curriculum enhancements, building beautification, and much more.

This would not be possible without the contributions and support of our Thurston Community. Please visit our website for more information <https://www.a2schools.org/domain/388>

Room Parent

This role is perfect for someone who would like to help in the classroom and/ or know more about what is happening around the school. Room parents play a key role in keeping classroom families connected to each other and the larger Thurston Elementary community. Each classroom has one or more room parents. Roles and responsibilities are tailored to suit the needs of each class. These may include organizing class celebrations, recruiting volunteers for field trips, and communicating social/ school-wide information to parents.

Safe Routes to School Committee

The Safe Routes to School Committee is dedicated to advancing safe walking, driving, and bicycling to and from school to improve the health and wellbeing of all kids and families. The committee schedules activities throughout the year to help educate our students and increase student safety awareness. For more information about joining the committee or volunteering to assist with student arrival and dismissal in the school parking lot please visit <https://www.a2schools.org/domain/3475>

School Improvement Team

The School Improvement Team (SIT) is a group made up of parents, teachers, and the principal, whose primary focus is the social and academic climate of Thurston. State law mandates School Improvement Teams. The primary objective of the group is to facilitate the development of Thurston's School Improvement Plan (SIP). Thurston staff determines the specific strategies used to accomplish the goals. The SIP establishes and evaluates long-range (3-5 years) educational goals and objectives for the schools.

Thurston Nature Center Committee

The Thurston Nature Center (TNC) is located adjacent to Thurston Elementary School, and is home to many species of wildlife and various habitats which include wetlands, an oak savannah, prairies, forest, and the Thurston Pond. The TNC committee consists of a group of parent and community volunteers who are dedicated to providing unique learning experiences about the natural world. Committee meetings are held monthly. All are welcome. For more information please visit their website <https://thurstonnaturecenter.info/>

Used Book Sale Committee

Do you love books and reading? Have you been looking for volunteer opportunities at Thurston but haven't found your niche yet? Do you have time weekday mornings in the spring to help sort books for the Used Book Sale? If you answered yes to any of these questions, then joining the Thurston Used Book Sale Committee might be for you! Look for information on this volunteer opportunity in the newsletter in the weeks before this spring event.

*For more information on how you can volunteer at Thurston visit <https://www.a2schools.org/domain/388>

Thurston Dictionary



Ann Arbor PTO Thrift Shop

The Ann Arbor PTO Thrift Shop is your source for unique, gently-used treasures with all proceeds donated to Ann Arbor Public Schools and its students. The Ann Arbor PTO Thrift Shop has contributed money towards Thurston field trips, functions, fundraisers, and causes. Families are asked to support this shop whenever possible. Visit their website for more information at <http://www.a2ptothriftshop.org/>

Box Tops

Box Tops are an easy way to help raise money for our school. Thurston receives 10¢ for every one collected. A Box Top is a small square found on many products such as General Mills, Ziploc, and Lysol products. Students and families are encouraged to collect and submit the Box Tops to the school. Box Tops have been used to purchase document cameras, soccer goals, and books for the library. Please visit the website to find a complete list of participating products on The Box Tops for Education website at www.btfe.com

Buddy Bench

The Community Service Club designed and launched Thurston's Buddy Bench in 2015. The Buddy Bench's aim is to reduce loneliness, and foster friendships on the playground.

Thurston's playground policy is for everyone to be inclusive, so students interested in joining a group to play with are always encouraged to approach and join. Playground dynamics however may be a challenge for some students, and finding a group of friends to join may be intimidating. Students who are having difficulty finding a playmate can use the bench as an indicator to others on the playground. Students are encouraged to extend an invitation to those occupying the bench.

Recess staff may also alert students to extend an invitation to students using the bench. The Buddy Bench is also a nice spot for

students interested in sitting and relaxing during recess. There is a Buddy Bench on each playground. For more information about the Buddy Bench, please visit the official website: <http://buddybench.org/>

Bus Lane

This lane is ONLY for buses during drop-off and pick-up. Cars are never allowed in this lane during this time. “Safeties” (children who are part of the safety patrol), will be present to monitor this lane, and cones are set up to make sure no cars get through.

Cottages

The modular units (also known as “cottages”) were recently installed to accommodate the growing population at the school. The units are located directly behind the school near the 3/4/5 playground.

Drop-Off/Pick-Up Lane

This refers to the middle lane in the school parking lot. This lane is for dropping off and picking up ONLY. You are never to leave your car unattended and running. Please keep all our children and staff safe by observing this one rule.

Green

Being “green” is a term widely used at Thurston. Green describes being more environmentally conscious as an effort to help preserve the planet and its natural systems and resources. Thurston takes great pride in being a Green School, and has initiated many efforts such as composting, recycling and education. Families are strongly encouraged to recycle at Thurston. Green Schools representatives are normally on standby to answer questions about recycling, composting and waste disposal.

Heron Happenings

The Heron Happenings is Thurston's weekly newsletter. The newsletter is emailed weekly, and is filled with important dates, school updates, and events. The newsletter is also available at <https://www.a2schools.org/Page/10646>

Heron Huddle

The Heron Huddle is a weekly roundup and meeting for all students at Thurston. The huddle usually takes place on Monday mornings, and provides students with updates, school news, school policies, and upcoming events. During this time, each of the specials teachers will acknowledge and award an exceptional class with a trophy for the week. Throughout the year, classes or grades will give performances or present work during the Heron Huddle. The huddle is usually narrated by 1-3 students, and each grade will be represented during the school year. Parents are always welcome to attend.

Late Slip

Students who arrive late to school should report to the main office and get a late slip. The late slip serves as a hallway pass as the student proceeds to his/her classroom. Students should give the late slip to their teacher upon entry into the classroom.

Luigi

Luigi the cat is an honorary member of the Thurston community. Luigi is usually found hanging near the school yard watching the children play. He is adored by many, so if you see a nice black cat hanging out, please say hello. Luigi's orange friend Mario is also a regular.

MPR

The Multi-Purpose Room (MPR) serves as the lunchroom, auditorium, and common meeting place for most of Thurston's events. The MPR is located next to the school's gymnasium.

OHAC

Orchard Hills Athletic Club (OHAC) is a nice affordable place for swimming fun. Membership includes the use of OHAC (2300 Yorktown), and Dolfin Pool (2050 Prairie). The pools offer a variety of amenities, and are a great way to stay connected with school and neighborhood friends. The pools regularly hold social events including potlucks, cookouts, parties, twilight swim, and much more. OHAC offers several other programs including swimming lessons, adult swim, and water polo. Each year, many Thurston students join the swim, dive, and synchro teams. For membership information, please visit the website at <https://www.ohacpool.org/>

Playgrounds

The PreK/K Playground is for students in preschool, young 5s, and kindergarten. This playground includes a swing set, sand box, and a play structure. It is also the home of the school's garden where students work with Mr. Frank to plant seasonal fruits and vegetables. The PreK/K playground is located on the left side of the school, and includes a gated play area for students in preschool.

The 1/2 Playground is designated for 1st and 2nd grade students. It includes the spider web, a new blue play structure, and a swing set. This playground is located on the right side of the school and is adjacent to Ardenne Drive.

The 3/4/5 Playground is for 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade students. It includes a brand-new multi-color play structure and basketball courts. The courts are the prime spot for jump rope and hopscotch. This playground is located directly behind the school.

PTO Website

Thurston's PTO's website includes information about the officers, community concerns, as well as PTO meeting minutes. Parents are encouraged to regularly visit the website to stay up to date with PTO news and events <https://www.a2schools.org/domain/388>

Rec & Ed Department

Rec & Ed offers a variety of affordable recreational and enrichment opportunities to the local community. Students can join school sports teams such as soccer, basketball, or baseball, and compete with other schools throughout the district. Rec & Ed also offers enrichment classes and programs at Thurston afterschool. View upcoming sessions at: <http://www.a2schools.org/reced>

School Messenger

Important school-related news and updates may be communicated via school messenger. This designated email/ telephone alert system notifies parents of the latest news such as school closings and events.

Scrip Cards

Gift cards referred to as scrip cards are available for a variety of popular retailers/ restaurants (Target, Meijer, Amazon, etc.). Scrip cards can be purchased at face value, and the PTO receives a small percentage of each card purchased.

Specials

Specials is the term often used when referring to classes outside a student's homeroom. Examples include art class, gym class, library, or music.

Spirit Wear

Are you looking for something to wear to showcase your Thurston school pride? Thurston spirit wear orders can be made at intervals during the school year. The selection varies, but includes items like t-shirts, pull-over hoodies, zip-up hoodies, and fleece jackets, all with the school name and logo for you to proudly display. Details to follow in the newsletter.

STEM

STEM education incorporates skills of science, technology, engineering, and math to help prepare students to meet the challenges of the global society through innovation and problem solving. Thurston offers a wide variety of programs to enhance student's STEM expertise.

Student Directory

The Student Directory is a widely utilized resource for many parents. From coordinating playdates and parties, to emailing families, the directory is a go-to guide for many families. Information on how to sign up and how to access the online directory will be made available in the weekly newsletter. Printed copies will be available for a small fee.

TNC/Thurston Pond

The TNC (Thurston Nature Center) includes the Thurston Pond as well as surrounding habitats adjacent to the school grounds. The area is enjoyed by many people in the community, and school classes have used the nature center as part of Ann Arbor Public Schools' Environmental Education Program for decades.

*All events, programs, and dates listed in this booklet are subject to change. Please be sure to check the school newsletter, website and emails periodically.

