Technology & Staffing

Today we hosted Jim Dunnigan, technology consultant, at our parent coffee. If you have been following the tech updates in my Pup Press articles, you may remember that Jim has been working with the TM staff to complete a Technology Readiness Profile. He presented his recommendations to parents this morning. Here are the highlights:

- Thurgood Marshall Staff are very receptive to learning more about how technology can enhance our teaching.
- Professional development for teachers in integrating technology into the curriculum and using iPads for instructional purposes should be a top priority.
- iPads are not ideal for the work that intermediate grades do. Laptops would work more efficiently to save and share work.
- Our Computer Lab would benefit from more attention – because no one staff member is assigned to this area, it has become somewhat of a storehouse for outdated or broken equipment (we have been working on this since Jim’s report!).
- Standardized testing interferes with our use of iPad Carts and the Computer Lab from mid-April to early June.
- Students need more opportunities to use technology to research, create, communicate and share digital information and to learn basic productivity tools.
- Students with limited access to technology at home need more opportunities at school.

We will keep you posted as we begin working to implement Jim’s suggestions into our practice at school.

Staffing Updates

We have begun our hiring cycle for next fall. I will keep you updated on anticipated staffing changes. A number of you have asked about which teachers will be teaching particular grades next year. While I know that it’s nice to plan on having a particular teacher, we do sometimes have changes around the end of the year and on occasion, even a change during the summer. That being said, I will put out our anticipated staffing line-up near the end of the year after we have most or all positions filled.

We learned this week that we will be saying good-bye to a few of our current staff members. Meg Horrigan, beloved resource room teacher, will be retiring at the end of this year. Meg has worked in education for over 44 years and has been an integral part of the Thurgood Marshall community. Shirley Swarts and Kim Naze, both kindergarten teachers, have also let me know that they will be moving over to Fairmont Park Elementary next year. We wish them well in their new endeavors.

In addition to the staff listed above, currently we are hiring a 2nd-grade Gen Ed teacher and a .5 Technology Integration PCP teacher. Sarah Gese is joining our 4th-grade team and will teach an HCC class. (Mindy Huss will remain in 2nd grade).

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GiveBIG Goal of $5,000 Aims to Help Staff Gain New Writing/Reading Teaching Skills

Thirteen Thurgood Marshall teachers have been accepted to the prestigious Columbia Teachers College Reading and Writing Summer Institutes. In July, these teachers will travel to Columbia University in New York City to participate in an intensive five-day course to study literacy teaching methods and plan curriculum that will help our students set ambitious goals and do their best work in reading and writing about what they've read. They will return to Thurgood Marshall next fall with tools and best practices to share with their fellow educators, spreading the impact of this special training across our entire school.

Thurgood Marshall teachers who have already participated in Teachers College Summer Institutes know the value this special training has for our students' learning:

"In 2006, in my sixth year as a teacher, my teaching was completely transformed when I attended Columbia Teachers College Reading and Writing Summer Institutes. At TC, I learned how to empower children to read and write like their lives depend on it—because they do. I learned how to explicitly teach the skills students need, and to give them the freedom to love the work they do. I truly believe that my past and continuing work with TC has a positive, dramatic impact on every decision I make as a teacher, and consequently, on every student I teach."

- Marcie Von Beck, 5th-grade teacher at Thurgood Marshall

When the PTA Board learned about the chance to support our teachers headed to the Teachers College Summer Institutes, we felt it was important enough to ask our school community for help one last time.

If you still need a reason to give, consider this: All gifts made through the GiveBIG website on May 5 will help Thurgood Marshall earn matching dollars from the Seattle Foundation.

How to make your tax-deductible gift:

GiveBIG on May 5 and help TM earn matching dollars from The Seattle Foundation. Donations must be made at the Foundation website (www.seattlefoundation.org) to be eligible for matching.

Or, give any time in May by check payable to Thurgood Marshall PTA or online at www.tmlink.org.

Show your support for Thurgood Marshall and our wonderful teachers by GivingBIG on May 5!

Move-a-thon Volunteers Needed

Get ready to move! The Move-a-Thon is May 29. Art teacher Ms. Zirngible and staff need help with preparing materials to give out to classes and need many volunteers to help the day of the event.

If you are interested in volunteering, please contact Jen Ellis at jenniferellis.206@gmail.com.

Chess Team Wins 5th Place at State Tourney

The TM Chess team put on another great performance at the 2015 State Elementary Chess Championships in Spokane April 25.

Our team of Graham and Kyle Cobden, Darien Cole, Sylvianne Gross, Cameron Kono, Andrew Nakamoto, Nicholas Ng and Kallen Young brought home the 5th-place trophy in the Grades 4-6 team category as well as many individual trophies!

Graham took the 9th out of 168 4th-graders (only loss was to the eventual champion). Andrew was 24th out of 146 5th-graders, with his only loss coming to the 5th-place finisher. Nicholas Ng (6th-grader competing for his “alma mater”) was 22nd out of 107. Kallen (28th in Grade 4 Division) “won” a draw with a foe rated 400 points higher, and his loss was to the No. 3 finisher. Kyle was a 3-point winner, placing 40th out of 147 3rd-graders.

875 pre-qualified kids from 149 elementary schools across the state attended the championships. Go Chess Bull Pups!

Come Get That Hoodie at Lost & Found!

Our lost and found is overflowing! Please remind your student to check for any coats, lunchboxes, etc. that may be missing! Items left in the lost and found will be donated at the end of the year.

Parenting Book Club Continuing

It’s not too late to join the Parent Book Discussion Group! We now have two options:

1) Participate in person on Tuesdays (5/5-6/9) from 9:30-11 am at the YMCA next to school, OR
2) Participate remotely with our private Facebook discussion group.

Books are $29 and are available from the Front Office with a check made out to the Thurgood Marshall PTA. Next week we will be focusing on Chapter 2. If you want to join, please email Meghan Kaloper at mharris@seattleschools.org Thanks!

Do You Enjoy Working With Art?

There are many beautiful pieces of art ready to be prepared and hung for Thurgood Marshall’s first Arts Showcase Week from 5/21-5/28.

If you can help mount or hang art, please contact Jen Ellis at jenniferellis.206@gmail.com.

On Friday, May Day gatherings and marches are scheduled for morning and afternoon locations near Thurgood Marshall. Please check news media or traffic-alert sources if you are planning to drop off or pick up your child.

Have an article for Pup Press? Send it to Dana Armstrong at pup-press@mail.com. If your submission is not acknowledged within 24 hours, please call or text 206-419-5523.
Dear Families,

Staff Appreciation Week is next week (May 4-8). This is a time when children, parents and families of our school say THANK YOU to our teachers and staff.

Many families have volunteered to pitch in. Sign up at http://bit.ly/ThankTMstaff. If you would like to help make this week special for our teachers and staff, here are some ideas!

- **Monday 5/4:** Send a handful of flowers or a special note for your child’s classroom teacher. We’ve attached some thank you notes if you would like to use them.

- **Tuesday, 5/5:** GiveBIG to help our teachers! GiveBIG is a citywide day of giving sponsored by the Seattle Foundation. Our goal is to raise an additional $5,000 through GiveBIG to help send 13 Thurgood Marshall teachers to the prestigious Columbia Teachers College Reading and Writing Institutes this summer. Go to www.seattlefoundation.org and search for “Thurgood Marshall PTA” to give.

- **Wednesday, 5/6: Staff Breakfast:** Drop off a favorite breakfast food (pastries, fruit, egg dish, etc.) in the staff lounge before 9:30 am for a breakfast buffet.

- **Friday, 5/8: Staff Luncheon:** Bring a favorite dish for a lunch buffet to the staff lounge before 11 am.

*Thank you for helping us make this week special for our teachers!*

Questions? Contact Coordinator Heather Bauer at hdbauer@gmail.com or 206-250-5574.
Thank you!

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