Hearing Student Voices at Our School

The University of Washington’s training program for principals beautifully interweaves courses that will create a well-rounded principal candidate. “Shaping Culture/Leading Change” is a foundational course; as new principals, we must learn to study school culture in order to lead effectively. As interns we’re charged with developing a full understanding of our school sites by creating a “cultural portrait.” What are the goodn:meworks and the challenges here at Thurgood Marshall Elementary?” was the central question underpinning this 5-minute profile.

To place my finger on the pulse of TM I posed this question to a few staff, family members and – most importantly – students. Research shows that student voice often remains unheard when school-based decisions are made. Therefore, student interviewees figured largely in this TM portrait. My initial choice was to interview students in all of the PEACE Academy classrooms and then one General Education 5th-grade class and one HCC 5th-grade class (limited time prevented school-wide interviews). Ms. Miller’s Grade 4 class caught wind of the interviews and asked to be included. Principal May, eager to learn the students’ viewpoints, joined me for the final interview. Here are the students’ thoughts:

**Goodn:meworks**, from classes led by Ms. Dugan, Ms. Shaw, Ms. Humphreys, Ms. Egelhoff, Ms. von Beck and Ms. Miller:
- Challenges we face together as a whole school like the jog-a-thon.
- We have a really good instrumental music program.
- P.E! P.E! Mr. Shin! Mr. Shin!
- We help people have social skills.
- Paper . . . painting.
- We’re challenged. Not everything is super easy.
- 2,000 classes!
- Everybody has a voice.
- I will go to room 112 when I am taller.
- We have lots of space to play outdoors.
- Our kindergarten book buddies.
- The teachers! They’re good!
- I have friends here; I know almost everybody.
- Art classes.

**Challenges**, from students of Ms. Egelhoff, Ms. von Beck and Ms. Miller:
- Separation between HCC & other classes.
- The bathrooms could be cleaner.
- People run through soccer games at recess.
- Classes are kind of racially divided.
- Science & Social Studies are too short.
- More projects like in math. We wouldn’t socialize…
- More time for fitness; PE is shorter than last year.

I found the students’ responses so poignant. It was an honor to work with each class. As I braided photos, various interviews and data into my presentation, a new perspective on Thurgood Marshall emerged. From the students to the teachers and IAs, our leaders Katie and Sabrina, the BLT, the PTA, the Race and Equity team . . . we are all rowing in the same direction . . . working assiduously with courage, honesty and intelligence towards success for all of our 530 students. Thank you for the opportunity to learn with you in my internship year here.

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**EVENT CALENDAR**

**TODAY & TOMORROW, Dec. 3-4**
- Scholastic Book Fair, Library (See Page 2.)
- Dec. 7-11, Hour of Code Week: Grades 3-5 will use library period to participate in the national program teaching basic computer code.

**Friday, Dec. 18, Early Dismissal (2:40 pm)**
- Winter Break, Dec. 19-Jan. 3

**TUTU’S PANTRY**

Dec. 7-11: Grade 5’s turn to donate food.
See [www.tmlink.org](http://www.tmlink.org) for calendar updates.
Questions about the PTA: pta@tmlink.org

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A Thank You, from your PTA

As we get ready for the winter holidays and reflect on the first part of the school year, we want to say thank you to the amazing community of parent volunteers we have at Thurgood Marshall. Because of the hard work of many volunteers, we have hosted fantastic grade-level potlucks and a rocking Fall Dance. Volunteers have worked behind the scenes to support Tutu’s Pantry, Enrichment programming, Pup Press and bulletin board communications, Annual Giving Fund, Scholastic Book Fair, Hearing and Vision Testing, Picture Day, and the Day of Caring event.

Whether it is helping our teachers prepare homework assignments, reshelving books in the library, picking up after a potluck, buying items for Thanksgiving bags, or organizing first-day packet papers, this school would not be the same without the energy of our incredible volunteers.

Thank you and we wish you and your families a terrific holiday season!

–Casey Sommers & Jamie Fackler,
PTA Co-Presidents

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**Have You Taken the Annual Giving Fund Winter Challenge?**

Your donation will be doubled!
Raised so far: $6,738
See Page 2 for details.
Double Your Donation? Here’s How

Over the holiday, you and your family received a letter asking you to consider making a donation to our Annual Giving Fund (AGF). Unlike other schools, the AGF is the only way we fundraise for the PTA at Thurgood Marshall. No auctions, no bake sales or other fundraising programs!

Here’s a quick snapshot of what the PTA funds. When you make a gift to the AGF, no later what amount, you are helping every child at Thurgood Marshall.

And, thanks to nine generous families, we have established a Winter Challenge Match. Every donation up to $20,000 will be matched dollar for dollar by this group of donors, doubling your gift!

We are excited to announce we have raised $6,738 so far, which will be matched 1:1. Don’t miss your chance to have your gift matched. Give today! Donate at tmlink.org or send through kidmail, or by USPS: Thurgood Marshall PTA Annual Giving Fund, 2401 S. Irving St., Seattle 98144. Questions? Email giving@tmlink.org. Thanks for your generosity!

Where Your Dollars Go

- Teacher Salaries 50%
- PTA Operations 3%
- Student Enrichment Activities 12%
- Classroom Tutors and Recess Aides 12%
- Classroom and Opportunity Grants 11%
- School Supplies 6%
- Technology Initiative 4%
- Events and Celebrations 2%

Become Media Baron, Pancake Expert, more

Yes, we’re talking about volunteer needs. More listed at tmlink.org.

PUP PRESS EDITOR / CO-EDITOR: Help edit and/or design our school’s weekly newsletter! 2-6 hours per week.
Email Cliff: cliffm99@gmail.com.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST CO-LEADER: Help put on this joyous and simple community-building event. Email Kimbrele: berlee@zipcon.com.

ART DISPLAYS: Ms. Zirngible seeks 1-2 volunteers to keep a steady flow of artwork going up on the walls for display. 2x/month, flexibly scheduled.
Email: blzirngible@seattleschools.org

KINDERGARTEN HELPERS: Read to students, help with sight words, work on math, more. Prep materials, too. You need not have a child in K! Email Mrs. Tu or Ms. Kent: mltu@seattleschools.org or nrkent@seattleschools.org.

4th-grader Sofia Slack’s homage to Mondrian. Many artworks may be viewed in TM hallways.

Mondrian, Picasso and Perseverance in Art Room

It’s been a busy first trimester in Room 208. Students have been learning to make artistic choices about drawing, color mixing, and sculpting. We also spend a lot of time on how to turn mistakes into something beautiful. That helps develop perseverance and a growth mindset, both of which enhance learning in all subjects. We have studied Picasso, Mondrian, O’Keeffe, Star Wallowing Bull, Jackson Pollock, germs (Gross!), the underground lives of ants, and much more. The walls are filling up with art!

--Beth Zirngible, Art Teacher

Book Fair: Still Open!
The Scholastic Book Fair at TM is open 3:40-4:30 pm Thursday for parent/child shopping, and for students only on Friday 9:30-noon.
Send your student with cash or a pre-signed check. The Fair provides a large part of our Library’s budget for books and materials, so support us!

Your Shopping Can Benefit TM
Access Amazon.com from the tmlink.org link and 6% of your purchase will go to the PTA. That’s all you need to do!

Chess Team Has Right Moves

The TM Chess Bull Pups won 3rd place in the Grades 5-8 section at the Chessmates Fall Kickoff Nov. 21, and also did well at a tournament Nov. 27.
On Nov. 21, Graham Cobden and Forest Berg took 1st and 2nd place, respectively, in the Grade 5 division, and Kyle Cobden was 4th among 4th-graders. Rohan Kannan won 1.5 points, and Luke Vallejo-Cardenas, in his first tournament, won 1 important point for the team. (Wins count for 1 point, and a draw is half a point.)

With those results, Forest, Kyle and Graham qualified for the Washington State Scholastic Chess Championships in Tacoma on April 16, 2016.
On Nov. 27, Forest, Graham, Kyle, Mulan Kukreja, Parik Kukreja and Yatin Kukreja represented TM at the Thanksgiving Scholastic Tourney in Seattle. Forest won 4 points, Graham earned 3 and Kyle took 1 in the Grades 4-6 “open” section. Parik won 3 points in 4-6 “U800” section and qualified for the State Championships. Mulan, who entered a tourney for the first time, won 1 point in K-3 “U800” section. Yatin, a former TM student now in Grade 7 at Washington Middle School, earned 1 point in the 7-12 “open” section.

Go Chess Bull Pups!