Dear Parents,
Welcome to Thoreau School!

At Thoreau we want all students to feel that they belong and that they are Scholars. This is Thoreau’s equity statement written on a banner that hangs on the front of our school. We want anyone who drives/walks by or enters Thoreau to know what our equity statement says. As we begin the 2018-2019 school year, we want our equity statement to be front and center of how we plan for the school year.

Decision making for the year also revolved around using research-based strategies, staff collaboration and data decision making. We use data as evidence of student growth and development and also as a means to make improvements. Literacy and Math are the two focus areas of instruction at Thoreau. Each classroom spends 120 minutes each day learning about literacy and 75 minutes each day learning math. Our SIP (School Improvement Plan) focuses on improving student learning in these two areas. This focus means that we take our students where they are and move them forward in their learning. Be assured that we have one of the hardest working groups of educators in Madison! We invite you to join us as partners in this work because we believe that learning will improve even more when parents are involved.

Thoreau has a very diverse student population. In fact, we have 21 different home languages spoken by students at Thoreau and diversity is one of the many strengths at Thoreau. We use this strength to teach students how their language differs and how it is the same as other students’ languages and to learn the cultures and beliefs of all our students.

Thoreau is also a school with many fun activities! We have Sparkle Day, a Talent Show, school dance, book bowls and field trips. Our related arts classes in Music, REACH, Art, Physical Education and LMC provide a well-rounded curriculum for all students. With three different areas for outdoor recess, students have a variety of outdoor fun. As we continuously evolve to meet the needs of a diverse school population and community, your input is welcomed. We are looking forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Kathy Costello
Principal

**Telephone**
OFFICE: (608) 204-6940
FAX: (608) 204-0519
ATTENDANCE / SAFE ARRIVAL: (608) 204-6946
HEALTH OFFICE: (608) 204-6944
SOCIAL WORKER OFFICE: (608) 204-6972

**Address**
3870 Nakoma Rd
Madison, WI 53711

**Web address**
https://thoreau.madison.k12.wi.us
facebook.com/MMSDThoreau

**School Hours**
Mondays 8:30 a.m. - 1:55 p.m. (Early release)
Tuesdays-Fridays 8:30 a.m. - 3:27 p.m.
About our school
Thoreau is a wonderfully diverse learning community that provides inclusive schooling for all. Our staff is energetic, child-centered and provides a safe, supportive learning environment for all students. We are committed to providing an excellent academic program within a culturally relevant curriculum.

In addition to three separate areas for recess, the school grounds hosts two Rain Gardens, a vegetable garden, butterfly garden, a variety of fruit trees and an outdoor classroom. Before school each day, a rolling book cart makes its rounds with books that are translated into the major languages our students speak and students can check out these books daily.

Thoreau’s PTO is seen as servant leaders, making sure all students are able to do and have the same experiences. They oversee our book sale, school picnic, ice cream social and school dance. This year they formed a run titled The Tico Trot to raise funds to improve our front playground.

School mission statement
Henry David Thoreau Elementary School, celebrating the diversity of our learning community in harmony with each other and the environment, will provide and challenge each child, with an education needed to become a life-long learner and a competent, responsible world citizen, through a partnership of families, staff, and community within a multicultural and inclusive curriculum.

We believe…

• It is important for students, parents and staff to work cooperatively toward respecting and valuing themselves and each other, in a collaborative school culture.
• All students can learn and they deserve the best possible opportunity to do so in an environment where diversity is embraced.
• We can help all students develop the skills to function in the adult world, to become life-long learners and to become contributing members of a global society.
• Positive self-esteem is important to learning.
• All children deserve a physically and psychologically safe environment in which to learn.
• Instructional decisions should be made on the basis of children’s needs, interests and abilities. The system should be flexible to support engagement, relationship, and learning for all.
• Open communication among students, staff and parents is important.
• We have a responsibility to promote the value of education.
Key Policies and Guidelines

Child Care/After-school Information
Wisconsin Youth Company
Thoreau’s Before and After School On-Site Provider

Office: 276-9782 Call for enrollment/billing questions or emergencies during program hours.
Message Center: 276-9898 Call when child will be absent.
Thoreau Program: 445-8038 Call during program hours.
Fax: 276-4050

Field Trips
Teachers frequently plan field trips and excursions to provide students with educational experiences, which are extensions of the classroom. These trips are essential to the educational program, and all students are expected to participate. Parents/legal guardians will receive written notification in advance about field trips and should take care to sign all forms and send money to school if requested. Scholarship money is available if payment of field trip fees creates a hardship for a student’s family. In such cases parents/legal guardians should contact their child’s teacher or the school office.

Parent teacher conferences
In November and April, parent conferences will be held. Your child’s teacher will show you the body of evidence she has collected on your student’s learning at these conferences. Conferences are fifteen minutes in length.

School Improvement Planning
Parents will have numerous opportunities to see the School Improvement Plan (SIP) over the course of the school year. Please know that parents can make suggestions for the SIP. To make suggestions, please contact the principal at 204-6940.

Behavior
At Thoreau, we pride ourselves on teaching positive behavior, as well as increasing the understanding and skills to implement practices that build trust and community in our school. Students are taught positive behaviors and practice these behaviors.

Picking up your child during the school day
To ensure the safety of your child, please send a note in advance to your child’s teacher or the office. We require parents to come into our office and sign out the student. We will call the classroom to have the student sent down to the office to meet the parents. Please remember anyone picking up a student must be authorized and listed in Infinite Campus. Once school is in session, no non-school staff (including parents) will be allowed to go to a classroom unaccompanied and pick up a child.

Find more information in the district policy guide, found at www.mmsd.org/policy-guide.