

WILL THOREAU'S BOUNDARIES BE REDRAWN?

IMPORTANT REDISTRICTING INFORMATION IS ATTACHED.

November 14, 2005

Dear Thoreau Families,

Attached is a quick newsletter to update you on the progress of the Redistricting Task Force. There is also a more detailed list of Task Force Ideas posted on the PTO Bulletin Board outside the school office. (It is dated 11/10/05).

One thing to point out is that it appears as though Allied Drive students will be moved to schools in the Memorial Attendance area. Which means we will most likely lose our Allied Drive students who attend Thoreau. This has NOT been an issue widely discussed with the task force, but an issue that has been decided at the District level.

Many of the ideas of the task force could have devastating affect on the Thoreau School community. In some of the ideas, only approximately 175 of the students who currently attend Thoreau, would remain at Thoreau. **If at all possible, please attend the Public Forum tomorrow evening at Leopold Elementary School at 7pm** to voice your opinion about these ideas. At this point, they are only ideas.

We will be posting newsletters and flyers in all Thoreau communities today. Please feel free to share this information with anyone you think may be interested.

Sincerely,
Al Parker, Erin Weiss and Gina Hodgson

IMPORTANT REDISTRICTING INFORMATION!

Memorial and West Attendance Area Demographics and Long Range Facility Needs Task Force

The Madison Metropolitan School District's Long Range Planning Committee has put together a Task Force to study the overcrowding issue at Madison's West Side Elementary Schools. The Task Force will meet through December in order to recommend up to three options to the Board of Education Long Range Planning Committee regarding the use of schools in the Memorial and West Areas. The Task Force is comprised of representatives from each Memorial and West Area schools plus at large representatives, the Student Member of the Board of Education, principals and central office staff.

Issues

The Memorial and West Task Force will address these issues:

- Elementary schools in the Memorial and West attendance areas that have overcrowded student populations
- Projected growth of the elementary schools in the Memorial and West Attendance Areas
- Disparity of the income of parents whose children attend elementary schools in the Memorial and West Attendance Areas

Communication

Task Force members have reported on their conversations and meetings with school principals, PTOs, neighborhood associations, and small group of parents. Some have spoken with school staff and written articles for newsletters. The Task Force members currently have a list of working ideas and will have specific options to report in late November.

The first Public Forum for Thoreau and Cherokee (joint with Leopold) is scheduled for November 15th at 7:00pm. The purpose of the forum is to share task force ideas and receive feedback from the communities surrounding Thoreau, Cherokee and Leopold.

The second Public Forum for the Thoreau, Cherokee and Leopold communities is scheduled for December 1st at 7:00pm at Cherokee Middle School. The purpose of this forum will be to receive public feedback on the proposed boundary change options. These options may have an affect on your neighborhood and it's schools.

Below is a list of ideas that were generated in the past two weeks. If you would like additional information please contact the Task Force representative from your neighborhood school. **PTO Co-Presidents Erin Weiss (232-9906, erin.weiss@hotmail.com) and Gina Hodgson (218-9240, reginahodgson@hotmail.com) have been attending the meetings as alternates for Thoreau, and they are also available for questions.**

Task Force Representatives

Thoreau Representative Al Parker 288-0214, adg04@sbcglobal.net

Cherokee Representative Arlene Silveira 516-8981, arlenesilv@aol.com

Task Force Ideas (as of November 13, 2005) – For a more detailed description of each Task Force Idea, contact Al Parker, Gina Hodgson or Erin Weiss or read it on the Thoreau PTO Bulletin Board outside the school office.

1. Everything presented below is an idea. None of the ideas presented are currently preferred over another idea. It's possible that none of these ideas will be implemented as a final proposed solution. It's possible that some of these ideas may be included in a final proposed solution and it's also feasible that some of these ideas will be altered

and offered as a proposed final solution.

2. The task force will make recommendations to the school board. The school board may adopt those recommendations, make alterations to those recommendations, or chose their own solution. The final decision on a course of action to take is the school board's sole authority.
3. The following items will not be part of any final recommendation made to the school board: year-round schooling, and additions to Randall, Crestwood, Franklin, or Thoreau elementary schools. These four sites are not able to accommodate additions or another on-site building for a variety of reasons.
4. The task force has had lengthy discussions about the possibility that the final proposed recommendations to the BOE may include implementing the final proposed solutions in stages. For example, boundary changes may need to be implemented next fall with the possibility that additions and or new buildings will be built in the near future to ease overcrowding and better serve students.
5. The task force has also discussed the need to clearly lay out second, third, fourth options, etc. Especially in the event that a final recommendation to the BOE includes a referendum. If a referendum is part of the task force's final recommendations, there must be a contingency plan in place in the event that the referendum fails.
6. The task force has discussed the fact that it is highly likely that any final recommendation is likely to include some re-drawing of current boundaries.
7. Ideas discussed that potentially effect Thoreau students include all of the following: pairing with Leopold, redistricting of some Thoreau students into the Lincoln-Midvale attendance area, redistricting of some Thoreau students into the Van Hise attendance area, redrawing of boundaries that includes Thoreau absorbing students from Leopold, Chavez, and Lincoln in some combination.
8. Re-opening Hoyt school has been discussed as an idea.
9. Sending some students from the West Side to Lapham-Marquette has been discussed as an idea.
10. Building a new school at the recently purchased Hawks Landing site has been discussed as an idea.
11. Allied Drive will most likely not attend Thoreau under ANY redistricting options next year. This is not a decision of the Task Force, but more of a directive from the district in order to ensure that Allied students have the opportunity to attend school in the Memorial High School attendance area, rather than attending several different schools.