

Mission Hill School News

Letter from Mission Hill

Food Choice Dilemma at School

Dear Families, Staff, Students and Friends,

Staff and I have been working toward a simple goal; to provide healthy and delicious foods to our students in an environment that is conducive to an enjoyable meal. To reach this goal our staff, the food services department, facilities department and our students must work well together. Sometimes the mission and/or vision of each one of these groups that must work together are in conflict. For example, the cafeteria manager might order strawberry milk that kids love but staff and parents hate. Each of us has a responsibility and must do our part to have a great dining experience at school. It's part of our daily work.

REMINDERS

March

Sat. 3/31, 1-3 pm: BPS Steel Pan Festival, 55 Malcom X Boulevard

April

Boston street sweeping resumes!

Tue. 4/3, 6:30 @ MHS:

Conversation with City Coucillor Connolly about BPS assignment process

Wed. 4/4, 9:30 - 1:30: Schoolwide trip to Aviaation & Transportation Expo @ Logan Airport

Fri. 4/6: No school

Wed. 4/11: Science Fair

Thu. 4/12: Superintendent Johnson visits MHS

4/16-20: Vacation

A couple of weeks ago I was at the BPS State of the School Food meeting sampling a carrots and hummus packet that will be sold at our school as a snack item during lunch time. A few days later, I talked to our cafeteria manager about the new item. She was anxious about making hummus (yes, it would be made in our kitchen with fresh ingredients and the carrots are local!). She was skeptical about whether kids would buy it. With so many other snack options, would they choose carrots and hummus?

At school, children have more food options than you might imagine. There is classroom snack that is selected by the teacher and often prepared by combining simple ingredients for children in grades K-3. At lunch there are several lunch, snack and milk choices. Snack choices range from chips to frozen juices. Milk choices are plain, strawberry and chocolate. Water is always available. Added to the range of food and drink options provided at school are all the different lunches that kids bring from home. Despite our rule about no sharing, many trades do happen under our radar.

How does a child manage all these choices? They need our (staff and family) guidance. Mission Hill staff members are in conversation with the food services department to limit the snack offerings and to cut out strawberry flavored milk completely. Still, you and other adults need to teach children about making good choices. Snacks that are high in sugar may not be available in

school, but they are available in lots of other places.

In a week or so carrots and hummus will be sold during lunchtime. It's an option I plan to advertise in hopes that kids will choose it instead of chips or a cookie. Ask your child about what he or she is eating during the school day and communicate your thoughts and expectations about nutritious choices your child has the power to make.

~Ayla Gavins

From the Classrooms

5 to 7 year-olds

Room 203

“Et-zeh le ha-shooka. Tar-neh-gol katan ek-neh lee. Ha-tar-neh-gol koo-koo-koo-ree-koo-koo! Hoo yeh-za-mer ad or ha-bo-ker [I’m off to the market. I’ll bring home a little rooster. The rooster: Cok-a-doodle-doodle-doo! He’ll sing his happy song till sunrise].”

Our family culture presentations have finally begun. The first to present was Amishai’s family. We learned that Naama grew up in Israel and Bob grew up in the United States. After being taught a few words in Hebrew and seeing a how to read a book written in Hebrew, we listened to music composed by Bob and learned about a special holiday called Purim. As is customary, we all dressed up in costumes and delivered sweet treats called Hamantashen to the nurse and the office. We saw pictures of Amishai and his family in Israel and learned the silly song above called *I’m Off to the Market*.

Next to present was Laudys’ family. His mom, Kendy, spoke to us about the Dominican Republic. She shared various pictures of cultural costumes, food and beautiful scenery. As a treat we were able to see the process and sample some pork chops and rice seasoned and cooked solely by Laudys. The food was such a hit that while holding his plate for seconds Daniel said, “Laudys, you’ve got to give me the recipe for this.” So far, we have had a lot of fun learning about the differences in our families but most importantly,

we are learning about many things we have in common.

~Jada Brown,
& Jo-Ann Hawkesworth

Room 204

Continued from last week...

The children’s last step was to watch and write down what they had learned. We had a discussion about what kind of chart we should use to display our data. One of the students suggested making a calendar. Together we constructed a calendar. It has all the parts of a regular calendar; only this one has room for them to record when they water the plants and the measurements of the plants as they grow.

This whole entire project was run by the children’s ideas. I prompted the subject, but they led the learning. At one point I wondered if we needed to do an inquiry on the comparison of the grow lights and the window. When I heard their thoughts about what would happen I was really glad we went ahead with it. Many of the students thought the plants would grow more by the window. I asked them to explain their thinking. One student said, “The window is a lot bigger so they will get more sun.” She let me in and shared her thinking. Another student said, “Plants need sun to grow.”

Our conversation made me realize that even though we keep the grow lights on all the time, maybe the students were not aware of that. They leave and go home and the artificial lights stay on.

We have used grow labs to grow vegetables that we eat in the classroom, and to conduct inquiry.

In the next month five children from my class will be going to the Tobin school to work with another teacher who attended the training. The children will be going to Vanessa’s class to teach her students about planting seeds. We are excited about the collaboration and happy to have met at such a great event.

~Kathy Clunis D'Andrea

Room 205

The room is humming quietly. Small groups of children are huddled around board games, some with adults, some on their own, all focused on the shared experience of making something happen with the roll of dice or spin of a spinner. How long will it take spring to arrive? Which will balance: red, yellow or blue? What do we need to fill our boards with squares?

We have been playing games all year, but not in such a focused a way. Children are building perseverance, drawing on what they already know to do something new, and learning new things together to build new strategies. Playing new games reminds them to pull old ones off the shelf, too, and the ways they play those now are different from when they first encountered them months ago. The only choices in the morning right now are playing games and reading books. We give children a lot of choices at Mission Hill, often giving them opportunities to decide what to study and how and on what timeline. We rely on their interest and engagement to fuel their intellectual pursuits. Sometimes,

instead, there is good reason to limit choices, to push children to practice something that doesn't occur to them on their own.

~Melissa Tonachel
& Leia Baylor

7 to 9 Year-Olds

Room 201

In the first video, the camera frames my chin and the image wobbles back and forth from interviewers to interviewee. We are having a practice session on the rug, our very first attempt at a taped interview. *How do you like your job? What do you do for your job?* I play the obstinate interview subject, and the children try to reframe the questions to elicit more information about my job. The whole class takes turns asking questions and one brave volunteer wields a FlipCam for the first time.

This session on the rug is the first step on our way to interview workers in our neighborhood. Over the course of several days, teams have gone out in groups of three to practice by interviewing adults in the school. Back in the classroom, the whole group reviews the footage, pointing out when the interview subject is well-framed in the video and which questions bring out the most information.

In one video, we saw that the interviewee wasn't asked his name until the second to last question. We agreed that this type of information should be gathered at the beginning of an interview instead. Soon, we will take our

cameras out into the Mission Hill neighborhood, to meet the people who own and work at the businesses in our community.

~Emily Schubin,
Donna Winder & Lydia Krooss

Room 207

As we continue our World of Work study, we have moved forward in our how to get a job process. Inspecting and editing classroom job positions and beginning the many steps of applying for a job are among them. We have also continued our "Question of the Day" routine from Ancient China. This time around it is focused on jobs and is having children make conjectures by asking "What if there were no {insert a job title here}? Our intention is to have children not only think about different types of jobs that exist, but how these jobs affect them and the world around them. Their responses, as always, have been interesting, enlightening and informative. See for yourself!

What if there were no... Teachers?:

If we didn't have teachers we wouldn't learn nothing or move up. - *Jaylin*

If we did not have teachers we wouldn't get to know anything. - *Didi*

... Artists?:

If there were no artists we wouldn't know Jeanne. - *Dario*

The Mona Lisa would not be created. - *Devin*

Farmers?:

If there were no farmers we wouldn't have carrots or milk or bacon. - *Zachary*

If there were no farmers then

there would be no fruits. - *Amara*
...Police?:

If there were no police there would be more bad things. - *Theo*

Then there would be nobody in jail. - *Giselle*

...Video Game Makers?:

If there were no video game makers, there would be no fun in the house. - *Axel*

If there were no video game makers, then people would learn more. - *Mintou*

~Jenerra Williams
Amina Michel-Lord
& Jesse Begelfer

9 to 11 Year-Olds

Room 202

"Inventors are people who use their imagination to create an object that they think will help them in some way," wrote Asmani. Milla believes inventors are people who create things that "solve problems with an invention." Aneli wrote, "I think an inventor is someone that makes something purposefully." Marvin added, "What I know about inventors is that they create images of things that they imagine about. So then they want to invent." And James points out, "Did you know that if an inventor creates something it's an invention, but if somebody creates the same thing it's a copy?" As our class explores what it means to "invent" we are thinking about the motivations and thought process of inventors. How does someone come up with

a great idea and then take that idea all the way through to a purposeful object in the real world? When Phoebe wrote that an invention “is something that an inventor thought of that has a purpose...things that they think will help change peoples lives,” she was echoing a thought that many students have written and discussed. Many items from our daily lives have been recognized as important inventions – light bulbs, cars, telephones, pens, toothbrushes, books, and even schools! As we have been learning, few of these inventions are truly the product of one person, from one place and time.

We have also found that we have many questions, including some very important ones like why did inventors start inventing? And, who invented the very important things around us? But perhaps my favorite question so far has been, “who invented the word ‘invented’?”

~James McGovern

Room 206

No news this week

Grades 6, 7 8

Room 211

This week we explored the different types of service: direct service, indirect service, advocacy, and research. Then groups brainstormed ideas to put into each of these topics. It was excellent to hear kids ask questions, and explain why an idea would fit into a specific category. Once they

brainstormed ideas for each category they proposed an idea for a service project. This is what some of them said:

“I would like to advocate for hunger and homelessness because that is the kid of service the whole world would be able to see and understand, and then we would help more people. My idea is to make a commercial about homeless veterans. A lot of people who are homeless served in the army. Since they helped us I think we should help them.” – *Kierah*

“I want to do research on how to keep your pet healthy. This will help pet owners make better decisions for their pets.” – *Chris*

“I want to do direct service because getting to really work and see homeless people will give me more of a feel for them, and more ideas of ways in which we could help.” – *Maddy*

“I want to do direct service by planning a community clean up. I want to do this because it’s good for the environment.” – *Norah*

“I want to do indirect service because I like sending stuff like food and toys to people in need. I think I would be good at this job.” – *Jah’von*

“We could make flyers for people to donate to an animal shelter. I want to make people aware of what is happening at shelters and how they can help. It helps the animals be cared for even if you donate a small amount of money.” – *Siobhan*
~Sarah DeCruz

Room 209

I enjoyed hearing the voices of

Nakia’s students in last week’s newsletter. Here are selections from the 7th/8th grade week-in-review reflections.

“I didn’t really accomplish all my work this week. But I did accomplish a lot.” “This week wasn’t my best. I got sick and came to school the next day because I knew I had to work on my science fair and try not to miss out on math class. I really enjoy school but for some reason I think I don’t have much good days because I’m really stressed out with all the work that I have to do.” “This week I had fun in art. I am glad that I get to spend time with Joni (advisor). I am really happy about the weather.” “This week, I had a good time in math. I’m getting there to understanding how to solve for x. I’m also learning how to graph equations.” “This week I got more done than I thought I would. In science I got one and a half out of three circuits built. But now I have to re-do one of my designs for the series circuit.” “This week was all right. I participated in math and I made more tests of the lime battery. In art, we did more printing in different colors. I’m starting to understand how to solve the math equations. This weekend I need to finish my essay and math homework.” “I think I can concentrate more while reading and I think that’s cool.”

~Ann Ruggiero & Elsa Head

Room 208

As a science teacher, the sight of research in progress is so

gratifying. Seeing evidence of this type of learning reassures me that a student is making new discoveries, reflecting on what she sees, connecting it to scientific concepts she learned previously, and becoming more comfortable in the process of independent research. Opening up the door to my classroom the other day, I noticed something that made me smile (and pull out my camera). At our improvised grow-lab, which consists of a bank of 4-foot long fluorescent shop-lights zip-tied to a rolling steel cart, I saw plants growing in three different arrays representing different experiments, a data sheet with a pencil and calculator lying on top. In the background I saw beakers of Triops and Daphnia cultures with plastic pipettes next to them. I snapped a picture and entered the room. I continued to look around, admiring the evidence of work in progress that I too often take for granted; especially making note of the things that happen that are not a part of anyone's project – the explorations that happen in homeroom, at the end of the day, or between projects. Someone had a small solar panel on the windowsill connected to a voltmeter with alligator clips. Another student had been practicing curved cuts with the jigsaw to improve his skill with that tool. Someone else had lovingly arranged the cordless drill and sorted the drill bits and drivers. The dissecting microscope was out too; a group of students had been looking at tissue paper, their fingers,

pencils, and other everyday objects up close. A midi keyboard was connected to the computer by a student who had chosen to use recess to experiment with creating electronic music. Come by The Lab (Room 208) some time whether or not class is in session to see some wonderful ways in which our young people learn.

~Jacob Wheeler

Hot Topics

CAMPS: See Courtney for applications and details about these and other camps

Summer is Coming!

Boston Centers for Youth and Families Summer 2012 Guide is here. Stop by Courtney's Corner to pick up the guide, full of the city's summer opportunities. Don't forget, Courtney is your direct connection to all your camp needs – scholarships, transportation, and any other questions you might have. Stop by and see her now though, because camp registration is in full swing!

¡Ya viene el verano!

La guía de centros para la juventud y la familia de Boston 2012 ya está aquí. Pasen por la oficina de Courtney a recoger la guía que contiene grandes oportunidades para aprovechar el verano en la ciudad. No lo olviden, Courtney es su conexión directa con todo lo relacionado con campos de verano (becas, transporte, y cualquier otra pregunta que

puedan tener. Pasen pronto por su oficina, pues es el momento de registrarse a los campos!

Agassiz Village

Located in Poland, ME on a beautiful 400-acre lake-front property, kids ages 8-15 can enjoy affordable, fun and educational overnight summer camp opportunities that develop character, life-skills and self esteem. You can choose from one or two week sessions and there is financial aid available in addition to the already reduced rate for all campers. Bus transportation from Boston to Maine is FREE.

Sports Nut?

Camp Shriver will get you moving! A four week program for children 8-12, that runs July 9 – August 3, 8:30 – 2:30 M-F and after a \$25 registration fee is FREE. They accept equal numbers of children with and without intellectual and developmental disabilities. Breakfast and lunch provided and transportation to UMASS Boston from the campers' neighborhoods. DEADLINE APRIL 13th.

Courtney's Corner

Check out Courtney's Corner, outside Room 101, for information on various programs and resources for you and your family.

Rincón de Courtney

Mira la información que esta fuera en el "Rincón de Courtney" en salón 101 para información sobre varios programas y recursos para ti y tu familia.

MHS Website Updated!

The MHS website has recently been

re-formatted to reflect the needs of our families. Site changes include an interactive calendar of events, a new family resources page, a link for donations, and a blog, which will be updated regularly with news of happenings around school. The Mission Hill News will still be available as a downloadable PDF each week. Please visit www.missionhillschool.org to see the new format. While there you may also sign up to receive email updates for blog posts. Questions, suggestions, or concerns? Contact Dani Coleman: dcoleman@missionhillschool.org or 857-272-0571.



Research in progress from the Middle School

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