

Mission Hill School News

Letter from Child Street

Communication

Dear Mission Hill School Families, Friends, Students and Staff,

Our staff strives to make connections between home and school easy by having a variety of ways to communicate. Your child(ren)'s success at school is connected to how well we communicate with one another. We will send you a weekly newsletter with writing from each classroom, dates for family events and other newsworthy topics. At Curriculum Night you'll hear about other ways information will be shared.

Below is a list of staff members you may wish to contact during the school year. You can contact any of us by phone at 617-635-6384 or by email using the person's first initial and last name @missionhillschool.org. (e.g., agavins@missionhillschool.org). You should not hesitate to contact the school if something regarding your child, or the school in general, is on your mind. It is always better to reach out. Mission Hill staff will do the same. However, please remember that teachers are with children during the day. If there is an emergency please tell Joni, our secretary, so we can act quickly. Otherwise, allow 48 hours for a response to you. Please avoid last minute calls to change after school/dismissal plans whenever necessary. Such changes should be communicated in advance by way of a note or morning phone call.

Georgie Marks, school nurse- Contact her if your child is receiving any medication, has any health issue, or injury.

Courtney Bruno, City Connects- Courtney connects families to resources such as counseling, food, clothing and summer camp information for children.

Dani Coleman, External Affairs- Dani manages our school website, arranges and hosts school visits and tours, establishes and maintains community partnerships.

Helen Russell, Apprentice Learning- Runs School to Community Initiative for grades 7 and 8.

Letta Neely, Extended Day Director and student support- Runs before and after school programming and supports student learning in classrooms.

Ann Adams, Library Coordinator- Manages library book circulation, updates our book collection, organizes the book fair and runs book groups.

Gina Stefanini, Learning Coach- Supports students on IEPs and other students with learning hurdles.

Geri Bargar, Special Education Coordinator- Coordinates IEP meetings, secures needed forms and files regarding student evaluations.

Joel Webb, English as a Second Language- Supports students who are not native English speakers.

Anne Trecker, Occupational Therapist- Supports children challenged by sensory integration and perceptual development.

Aubrey Rubin, Speech Therapist- Supports students who are challenged by speech production and/or articulation.

Jeanne Rachko, Art Teacher- Provides weekly art instruction to all children.

Betsy Caruso, Student Support- Publishes weekly newsletter, coordinates music program and provides classroom support.

Amina Michel Lord, Family Engagement- Connects families to school and supports/leads students during the day and in the after school program.

Joni Davies, secretary- Manages the main office.

Ayla Gavins, principal- E-mail or call if other routes for communication regarding your child have failed. Issues concerning your child should be shared with your child's teacher first.

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From the Classrooms

3 and 4 year-olds

Room 108

How wonderful it is to be back at Mission Hill School! You can find me in Room 108 where I am learning every day from our new three-year-olds. I have spent the last few years coaching Head Start teachers, and have been immersed in the preschool world. It is a dream come true to teach three-year-olds at Mission Hill. I look forward to reconnecting with everyone and meeting many new friends.

Our opening theme is called "At Home At School: Building Relationships and Making Connections". The heart of the first few weeks will be working to help your child feel safe and happy at school. Our home visits were a big part of this. Thank you to everyone for opening your doors and helping to make the visits so successful.

We also have an open door at school. If you have time in your schedule to spend an hour or more with us, please let me know. We love having parents help in many different ways (reading stories, making art, helping the children prepare our family-style snack, etc). Just email, send a note, or call if you want to schedule a visit.

Donna Winder is our fearless paraprofessional – I am thrilled to be working with her again. I am also happy to introduce Angel Nasseh, who is our new full-time aide. Stop by and say hi!

~Geraldyn McLaughlin
& Donna Winder

Kindergarten 1 & 2

Room 106

Dear families and friends,

The school year is off to an amazing start. We are all getting to know our new locations. We have been enjoying the weather. We have been spending time in the play yard outside the kindergarten classrooms. Children have been riding bikes, playing restaurant, and exploring water play.

The students are also figuring out the big new building they inhabit. We spend most of our time on the first floor. We have had many visitors. Gina and Christine come often to learn with us and Robert comes by each day to say hi.

As the year moves on we will spend more time interacting with the school. We will have Friday share together, building buddies, and art.

I am excited about our new journey and look forward to growing with you all.

~Kathy D'Andrea

Room 107

It has been two months since we had our final gathering at Alleghany Street. The moments were bittersweet as we mentally, physically and emotionally prepared for charting a new path for the life of our community. Going away to the Farm School to end our old year and returning in August to begin this new one provided us the opportunity to rekindle old relationships and build new lasting ones. While hesitant to embrace the new school, as I entered the doorway and witnessed

the school's transformation, I felt at home within minutes and was confident that our students would as well.

As the doors opened last Thursday and we welcomed both new and returning families, my suppositions were confirmed. While the furniture was scant, our students were still excited, parents were happy to see us and staff jumped right back into the swing of things. It felt as though we had not left Roxbury. While it will take some getting used to our new surroundings, I realized that Mission Hill is not defined by its location. Rather, the staff that holds the values, principles and purpose of meaningful education close to their hearts defines it. So, here's to another great year of exploring, investigating and learning at Mission Hill.

~Jada Brown
& JoAnn Hawkesworth

Room 109

Over the first weeks of school, one of a teacher's most important jobs is to get to know the students, and to create a community of learners where each child feels safe to explore, make mistakes, and learn new things. One of the ways that we do that is to help each child feel known and that he or she belongs. In our class, each child chose a unique fabric pattern. Upon arrival Thursday morning, the children looked around the room. They found their patterns on their cubbies and on their take-home folders, two powerful symbols of the intersection of home and

school. Their patterns showed where they would sit on the rug. Each child found a pillow that was sewn of his or her fabric. A beautiful banner made of all the patterns hangs prominently on the wall, a symbol of our community.

Another way that we create community is to share our hopes and dreams for the year. Luki and Sophia would like to learn to read. Jakob hopes to “just play with trains.” Dillon, James, and Joy hope to create art. Olivia wishes to “play with Zora all day!” Dashawn would like “to create the whole stuff in the world... to play everything to see if it’s boring and not.” Zora dreams of “discovering everything.”

For me, it all came full circle when James put his new pillow on his head. “It’s a graduation hat!” he informed us proudly. The trend caught on; soon the whole class was donning “graduation hats.” As I gathered the class to snap this photo, I had a glimpse of these kindergarteners in twelve years or so, in cap and gown, ready for new learning and adventures; one of my hopes and dreams.

~Jenny Goldstein



Grades One & Two

Room 204

“Let his passion steer his learning.” This is part of a conversation I had with a friend of mine. He asked me what he could do to get his child more interested in reading. When I thought about our conversation later, I realized how passionate I was in my response and asked myself why. The answer came easily – because I love being a teacher. Twelve years later, I am still letting my passion steer my own learning. This year will be one of learning indeed as I’m off on the new adventure of teaching first grade!

“Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire.” This quote by fellow poet, William Butler Yeats, is exactly why I love teaching. It is my chance to light a fire. I don’t just want to fill your children with information and facts all year. I want to light fires—fires of curiosity, of wondering, of excitement, and fires of passion.

We have begun what will be an incredible journey. I am looking forward to getting to know all your children better and building a community that is passionate

about learning. It is my hope that many fires will be lit!

Anyone got a match?

~Jenerra Williams
& Amina Michel-Lord

Room 205

Mission Hill School is an extraordinary, one-of-a-kind learning community. I feel very fortunate to be part of this close-knit family where EVERYONE learns and grows together, and nobody gets left behind.

When I decided that teaching would be my life-long career, I wanted to be one of the best teachers who had one of the best classrooms that every child would love. As a beginning teacher with limited experience, I am not always confident in my ability to provide the best learning environment for my students, and at times, I doubted myself.

This is why Mission Hill School is extraordinary and one of a kind: they see it in me and they believe in me. Everyone in this community has been loving and supportive in building up my confidence as a competent teacher. I am green, but I can provide my students with a welcoming classroom environment that excites curiosity and imagination—where children can feel free and safe to explore their world.

My experience with my students for the past several days has been wonderful, and I look forward to learning and growing with your children!

~Brenda Lau

Room 217

Welcome to the school year and to Room 217! We are thrilled to be beginning a new season of learning with many new friends and in a new space. The room is spare; this gives us an opportunity to explore slowly and to create our learning space with great intention. Where should we put the balance beams so that children can practice on them while respecting the work happening around them? Where is the best place for materials for writing, math, building? What do we want the reading corner to look and feel like? What do we want on the walls? As furniture, rugs, and other materials arrive, the identity of our environment will evolve; so too will the identity of our group:

Aahmonyea, Blossom, Brianna, Chrisvely, Ethio, Inka, James, Kaylon, Konnard, Mauryon, Mekhai, Nelson, Nevaeh, Skye, Typrese, Zuhri and Zoe.

~Melissa Tonachel

Amy Dolman & Ben Hallas

Grades Three & Four**Room 207**

As we embark on our new year in our new building and community, we realize that having the basics can't stop the Mission Hill way. During our first days this year we have taken the time to learn about each other. We have rekindled old friendships and created new ones. We have welcomed new members to the Mission Hill community and Mission Hill way. We have enjoyed our new

outdoor spaces and spacious hallways. We have grown and risen to the challenge of being a part of change. Having empty classrooms awaiting our boxes and furniture couldn't stop the Mission Hill way!

Welcome Back! I am excited to begin another great year at Mission Hill. Thanks and Gracias.

~Robert Baez

**Room 216**

Things have begun to resemble a classroom in room 216. We finally have tables to work on and some supplies to work with. We have a schedule that we are trying to solidify. We have written "Where I Come From" poems. And, we have been going about the business of learning the expectations and daily routines that will allow us to become a community. All in all, as unpredictable as everything seemed on the first day in the new building, we have a wonderful class.

I'm sure those of you who have been part of the MHS community for awhile have heard this before,

but I'm going to repeat this message yet again: *reading provides the words that are the core of literacy and communication.* Learners need to be armed with as many words as possible to be clear about what they know and what they wish to communicate. Reading creates a broader base of knowledge about the world, and provides the skills necessary for one to acquire, analyze, and use

information. A learner is a more capable problem solver when he or she is an effective and confident reader. This skill affects all academic subjects, including math and science.

I expect my class to be reading for at least thirty minutes each night. This can include any kind of text, such as newspapers, comic books and magazines. Books can be borrowed from the classroom, and reading assignments, when given, can be substituted for this free reading time. Please encourage your child's reading habits by asking each night about what he or she is reading.

~James McGovern

Erica Switzer & Jessica Watt

Grades Five & Six

Room 210

The beginning of the school is always an interesting time of the year. Children getting reacquainted with one another, new students trying to find their footing. Teachers working to get to know them all better, and helping them to learn how to be with one another in new and different ways. This year, however, is a bit different. In addition to all of the above, we are all getting to know an entire new building. New recess places to play, new hallways to navigate, classrooms to create. For as much time and thought we as a staff have put into deciding what those spaces would look like, ultimately the students play a role in shaping them. "Nakia, we are rolling down the hill!" a giddy sixth grader said to me as he and a few of classmates decide what the hill near the field could be used for. The same has been happening in our room as children have been figuring out which sections work best for different kinds of learning for them, despite having very little to work with. This is as exciting as it is interesting.

~Nakia Keizer & Kailah Simon

Room 215

The first two days of school went really well in room 215. Students did a great job listening and sharing their ideas. We spent a lot of time getting to know each other and creating class agreements. We came up with the following agreements as a

class:

- One person talks at a time
- Follow directions the first time
- Share our supplies
- Put things back where they belong
- Take care of each other
- Do our best
- Have fun

To help remind us of what we agreed on, students worked in pairs to create posters. Some students chose to simply write out the agreement on the poster while others wrote in symbols and drew pictures. At the end of the day we voted on where we should hang them up; 11 out of 17 students said they should go over the side whiteboard. I am looking forward to having a great year with the 5th and 6th grade.

~Sarah DeCruz

Grades Seven & Eight

Room 213

Welcome back! It was such a pleasure to see your children (and many of you) as we started a new school year. We are excited about the possibilities for learning in our new location, and the kids seem to be taking the change in school site in stride. This group of 7th and 8th graders is a wonderful class. We are happy to welcome seven new students and their families to our Mission Hill community.

We started the school year getting reacquainted and meeting our new students. Conversational games, identity charts, and BioPoems helped us

to learn what is really important about and to each of us. This work will be displayed in our classrooms. You are all welcome to stop in and learn about your children and their peers.

We're delighted that Kendal Schwarz and Laura Nixon, graduate students at Tufts University, are joining us this year. You'll hear from them in the future. Jacob and I are working together closely and will both be in touch with you throughout the year. Please contact us as needed (phone, text, email, or in person). We welcome families' questions and concerns, and depend on your support as we work together to help these fine young people to grow in body, mind, and spirit.

We look forward to seeing you at Curriculum Night on Thursday, September 20th.

~Ann Ruggiero

Kendal Schwarz & Laura Nixon

Room 214

We have had a great few first days of school so far in the 7/8 classrooms! It has been wonderful to see the faces of returning students and welcome some new ones into our community.

I have been deeply impressed by the patience shown by our students during a transition to a new building that has been a bit bumpy. Despite a classroom containing nothing but a circle of plastic chairs, they have remained excited and optimistic about a new year and a new space.

This excitement has been very helpful during our first Workshop project in which students are designing different parts of the classroom to support different styles of learning. While some students

have chosen to map out the entire classroom and the different areas where particular types of work can happen, others have chosen to focus on a particular area or assistive device (such as standing desks and lighting systems). The ideas being generated will be crucial for designing our workspace this year.

We are excited to welcome Chris Barnes onto the middle school team. He will be working with me in Room 214 this year. Welcome back middle school families – I look forward to seeing you at Curriculum Night on September 20!

~Jacob Wheeler & Chris Barnes

Hot Topics

Dismissal

While we continue to figure out the best way to get all our kids out to the buses, we ask that families picking up their children come in through the Carolina Ave. main doors and wait downstairs, in the Family Resource Room, Room 104, until 3:25 and then precede up Stairway A (the main entrance stairs straight up to the office) and into the classrooms. This will help us get the bus kids down Stairway B and out to the buses on time. Please be patient with us as we work this new system out.

Application forms for free and reduced price meals are being sent home this week. If you don't receive one, or you prefer

to apply online, you can fill out the application form by visiting: https://apps2.mybps.org/mealap/ps/lfs/EFORM_ENG.

In Haitian Creole:

<http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/haitian>

In Somali:

<http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/somali>

In Spanish:

<http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/spanish>

In Portuguese:

<http://www.bostonpublicschools.org/portuguese>

Music Lessons!

Music lessons will be starting soon. Mission Hill Students in grades three through eight may take string, brass or woodwind lessons free of charge before school. There is a \$40 rental fee for instrument rental, if the student does not have his or her own. Your child will be offered a registration packet with today's newsletter. Please read it and return the completed forms by September 21st.

Courtney's Corner

Check out Courtney's Corner 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" para información sobre varios programas y recursos para ti y tu familia.

Stop and Shop A+ Rewards

It's time to re-register your Stop and Shop card and designate it

to Mission Hill School. Then, every time you shop, your purchase total is rounded to the nearest dollar and used to calculate school earnings – free money for Mission Hill, just for buying your groceries! Register at:

<http://www.stopandshop.com/aplus> and us ID Number: 09287.

We are registered under our old address in Roxbury, but if you use our id number we'll come right up. If you would rather send your stop and shop card number (13 digits) to Courtney and have her register your card for you, please email her at courtney.bruno@bc.edu. Once you are registered you will earn points from October 5, 2012 until March 28, 2013.

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Call or e-mail your child's teacher if you have any questions about your child's experience and/or performance at school.

Lead teachers:

K0, ages 3 and 4 - Geralyn McLaughlin

K1&K2, ages 4, 5 and 6- Jenny Frazier Goldstein, Jada Brown and Kathy D'Andrea

1&2, ages 6, 7 and 8- Melissa Tonachel, Brenda Lau and Jenerra Williams

3&4, ages 8, 9 and 10- James McGovern and Robert Baez

5&6, ages 10, 11 and 12- Sarah DeCruz and Nakia Keizer

7&8, ages 12, 13 and 14- Ann Ruggiero and Jacob Wheeler

Mark these Mission Hill School events on your calendar.

Thurs. Sept. 20: Curriculum Night,* 5:45-7:00 pm

Thurs. Sept. 27: Governance Board, 5:00 dinner, meeting. 5:30-7:30pm

Oct. 1-12: Listening Conferences*, As scheduled

Thurs. Oct. 18: Middle School Healthy Choices family night, 5:45-7:00pm

Thurs. Nov. 15: Family Council: What is Family Council? 5:45-7:00pm

Wed. Nov. 21: Family Breakfast: Who Counts? 9:15-10:15 am

Thurs. Dec. 6: Governance Board, 5-7:30 pm

Thurs. Dec. 13: Family Night: Meeting Our Neighbors, 5:45-7:00 pm

Fri. Jan 11: Friday morning tea and talk with Ayla, 8:00 am

Thurs. Jan 17: Family Council, 5:45-7:00 pm

Wed/Thurs. Feb 7/8: Family Conferences*, As scheduled

Wed. Feb. 7: Camp Night, 5:45-7:00 pm

Fri. Feb. 15: School Closed, Staff going to North Dakota Study Group

Thurs. March 16: Family Council, 5:45-7:00 pm

Thurs. Mar. 28: Family Breakfast: Ancient Greece, 9:15-10:15am

Thurs. Apr. 11: Science Fair, 5:45-7:00 pm

Fri. Apr. 26: Friday morning walk & talk with Ayla, 8:00 am

Thurs. May 2: All School Music Concert*, 5:45-7:00 pm

Thurs. May 16: Family Council, 5:45-7 pm

Wed/Thurs. May 29/30: Promotion Meetings*, As scheduled

Fri. May 31: ELD Meetings, As scheduled

Thurs. June 6: Art Show**, Daytime & 5:45-7:00pm

Fri. June 7: Exhibitions*, 9:45-10:45 am

Thurs. June 13: Graduation**, 10:00 am

Fri. June 14: Field Day, 9:45- 1:30

Mon. June 17: School open, district closed

***Family member must be present ** Middle school event, requiring family member**

~Ayla Gavins

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 Deborah Meier, Founder
 Ayla Gavins, Principal
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