

Mission Hill School News

Letter from Child Street

One More Year

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

Planning for a new school year begins while the current school year is in motion. Boston Public School district planning for next year has already begun. These plans include school locations among many other things. Changes in school locations have been proposed and announced over the past month, most recently at the last School Committee meeting. Those of you who were part of our school's move a year ago know how disruptive such plans can be to a school community.

REMINDERS

November

November 10 - 13: Netherland Visitors
HOST FAMILIES NEEDED

Mon. 11/11 - NO SCHOOL

Wed. 11/27 - Early Dismissal
(1:30) for Thanksgiving break

December

Mon. 12/2 - School re-opens
Thu. 12/5 - 5:00: Governing Board Mtg.

Our school is not moving, but will be impacted by the decisions made about the location of other schools. As you know Mission Hill School and Margarita Muniz Academy (MMA) share the school building. With the anticipated move of MMA, there were proposals on the district table about the use of space once they vacated. It became clear that both of our schools would benefit from having more time to adjust to pending potential situations. Who would occupy the space when MMA moves out? What about space needs for Mission Hill? What about promises made to our school community to occupy the whole building? Where would MMA go? Could both of our schools stay in the building? As our staff and Governance Board raised these questions another year together would buy us some time needed to get answers to these questions and plan. Mission Hill will plan for the use of additional space. Margarita Muniz Academy will use the year to plan its relocation. Both schools in the same building mean that we each have to compromise a bit. Some potential ideas involve a change in the cafeteria space and first floor offices to accommodate the additional MMA classes.

You are invited to join our next Governance Board meeting to discuss next year's space allocation and begin to plan for our use of additional space for the following school year. The next Board meeting is on December 5. Join us in the art room at 5:00 for dinner and meeting from 5:30 to 7:30pm. Childcare is provided if requested. I hope you will join us.

Sincerely,

Ayla Gavins

From the Classrooms

3 and 4 year-olds

Room 108

~No news this week

Kindergarten

Room 106

Over the last couple of weeks we have been looking closely at milkweed plants” I asked the children why they thought the seeds had these white things attached to them. Tafari said, “It helps them fly.” “Why would they need to fly?” I asked. Lumi added, “Well they need to spread. If they are too close together then they wont get what they need to grow.” What did Casey teach us about what plants need?” I asked (Casey is our friend from Students Learning Through Urban Gardening). In a chorus the students started yelling out, light! Nutrients! Soil! Water!”

Another day I asked them Will the milkweeds seeds with the wings travel farther than the milkweed seeds without the wings? Fifteen children said yes and one child said no. I asked them why they thought the way they did. Yesvirlin said, “The wind will make the milkweed seed travel farther.” Thatcher said, “The ones without the wings cannot fly so it makes them stay in one spot. The one with the wings travel farther.”

I then asked the children to think about where we should do the experiment. Everyone agreed that we should do it outside. Lumi said, “If we do it outside

then the seeds can grow and plant when we let them go.” I asked the children what things we would need. Paper, pencils, measuring sticks (rulers), tape measures, and binoculars were put on our list. How should we do the experiment? Tafari said, “We should stand up and hold both seeds and let them go. Then we should measure. That is what we did.

~Kathy Clunis D'Andrea

Room 107

Singing and dancing is a big part of our classroom. Each day we start with our morning song. This is a time where all our students have the opportunity to go into the middle of our meeting rug and do a special dance as the drums play and we sing, “Good morning...we’re glad you came to school!” We have noticed that the students who were once shy are now doing dances, flips, tumbles and even splits!

Most days we follow our morning song with our Days of the Week song. This song reminds us that there are seven days in a week and of each of their names. More recently, we learned a new alphabet song from the educational site starfall.com. While we have only sung it a handful of times in our room, it has quickly become one of our favorites. In fact, all throughout the day, students can be heard singing it while cooking, on walks, on the playground, etc.

During one of our rest times last week, I overheard Armani and Erik discussing the song and clarifying certain letter sounds and word meanings.

Armani: “Ms. Jada said that is the

“know” like you know something in your head.like I know my ABCs. Erik: “The other no is like ‘No. Don’t do that.’” Armani: “Okay, so let’s sing it again.” Armani and Erik: “A-ah-aligator, b-buh-ball, c-cuh-computer, d-duh-doll...” Erik: “You sing that page and I’ll sing this one.”

While singing and dancing is fun, they also serve as useful tools in teaching our students important information and providing confidence for future mastery.

*~Jada Brown
& JoAnn Hawkesworth*

Room 109

The days are getting cooler, and we are taking full advantage of these gorgeous afternoons in our new schoolyard. With plenty of new terrain to explore, we never seem to run out of things to do outside. I asked some of the children about their favorite places and ways to play outside:

Zora likes the South Lot’s many rocks. “You can find different types and you can examine them. When you find a really special rock you can hold it, and press it against your heart. It will make you feel happy, just like a picture of your family or your friends.”

Alex and Milo like to play cops and robbers in the traffic circle. It’s better to play there because you can run! Evan and Khi love to ride the trikes best.

Kaia shares, “I like to play in the teepees. We pretend that we’re making fires. After school I like to play there with my

brother."

We all love to be outdoors. There is a draw for each unique personality. We will continue to spend time outside every day, so keep coming to school dressed for outdoor play!

~Jenny Goldstein

Grades One & Two

Room 204

"Do you like to dance?" "Are you wearing stripes?" These are not questions between students, but questions that greet our students each day. Right outside our room, next to our morning board, is our Question of the Day. A simple pocket chart with a question and two choices hangs in anticipation of each Magic Learner placing their picture under the relevant answer.

We have made this a part of their morning routine and it caught on fast. Our reluctant readers are reading it by themselves. Our procrastinators quickly make decisions. Our hesitant mathematicians tally and share the results. Our students who are shy or maybe too pushy, find that evasive social balance in front of the chart.

Reading, decision making, counting and reading a graph, building social skills - it's amazing how this simple practice that takes less than 30 seconds to complete, benefits them so much! Thanks Mr. Juan for the idea. Thanks Magic Learners for making it a success every day!

~Jenerra Williams

Room 205

Learning to be part of a community takes time. We're all coming from different experiences at school and at home, we have different personalities, and working together can feel difficult at times. As a learning community there are certainly bumps we need to move over and problems we need to solve together. Sometimes a child may use unkind words or may not engage in an activity fairly. Our class has been working on making good choices, thinking about how our actions affect each other, and how we can be peacemakers. We've been working together to learn how to be problem solvers and understand that even though hard things happen sometimes we can still work together and be friends. During one of our discussions, Anand said it beautifully when he commented on the mistakes that we all make sometimes by saying, "Yeah...because we're all still learning." To work together with other people in the way we do at Mission Hill we must always be "still learning."

~Ashleigh L'Heureux

Room 217

Looking closely and carefully at nature is an important element of developing observational skills. This week we have worked on recording observations in our science journals of our two ant farms. We are learning the importance of making detailed drawings and writing what we are observing. Observations are useful tools, especially if we refer back to them to notice how our

ant farms have changed.

Therefore, we learned that, without the date, we do not know how to track changes that are happening in the ant farms. Sometimes we can use labels in our observations to help others know how to read our pictures. Labels in our observations have included: dead ants, dirt, cotton, pieces of plastic, tunnels, Roly-poly, and digging ants. Our pictures have led us to wonder things – we are developing questions that we can investigate further. Some of our wonderings include: how do dead ants get buried, how are ants able to tunnel, how long will the cotton last, and why are the ants trying to get out. As we continue to read, observe, and write about ants, we will be designing investigations to find out more about our wonderings.

~Emma Fialka-Feldman

Grades Three & Four

Room 207

Friday Share is an amazing event, which occurs weekly at the Mission Hill School. This event takes place on the first floor near our kindergarten wing. Every week 3-4 classes from various grade bands share out something interesting they are learning about. The things that are shared can vary among a song, a poem, a skit, showcase of artwork, showcase of group work (poster), a slideshow, an essay, singing, showcase of musical instruments and much more. Before classrooms share, the entire school participates in an opening

song. Students or adults can request the opening song. After the opening song and classroom share time the Friday Share host will present the Acts of Kindness, which is when children and adults are recognized for positive deeds throughout the week. After this wonderful moment the entire school will end the event with a closing song. The Role Model Hawks have shared once this year and will share again next week on Friday, November 1st. We want to encourage families from room 207 and the Mission Hill School to come and join us during this amazing experience.

~Robert Baez

Room 216

“What do plants need in order to survive?” This question was posed this week as students felt they knew exactly what plants needed to survive. “Air,” said one student. “They need sun and water,” said another. “I think they need branches.” I asked the class if they felt the same way. “No, they don’t need branches unless they are a tree.” “I think if the plant has branches then they do need branches to survive, but not every plant has branches. Then the plant wouldn’t need branches.” Next, the students set off to write what they thought they knew plants needed to survive and what they wanted to learn about plants.

As we begin the experiment stage with this question, the students already have some background knowledge on plants. It will be interesting to

see what predictions they have and what questions they come up with to inquire more about what is needed for the plants.

~Melanie Centeno, Selina Ruiz
Elsa Batista & Josh Kraus

Grades Five & Six

Room 210

We still do not have a class name. Everyone voted, but we can't figure out how to make a final decision based on the results. Each member of the room was allowed to rank their choices from one to three on, Smart Spiffy Warriors, Pride, and Rising Tide, respectively.

Based on the results it was clear that Pride was not a name people wanted. It had more 3rd choice votes (9) than 1st (4) and second (8) place. Smart Spiffy Warriors and Rising Tide however were a different story. Smart Spiffy Warriors had the most first choice votes (11)...but it also had the most last place votes (8). Rising Tide didn't have as many first place choice votes (6) as Smart Spiffy Warriors, but it had many more 2nd place votes (11). Smart Spiffy Warriors barely had any 2nd choice votes (2) at all. Rising Tide also had the fewest 3rd choice votes (4).

We spent a few days analyzing the results and reading the data. We could not however agree on how it should be decided. Some felt that the first choice votes are the only ones that count, and other votes didn't matter. Others said that all votes should count, and that you should not ignore the fact that Smart Spiffy Warriors

got so many for 3rd choice votes. “More of the class would be happy if it were Rising Tide because it got so many 2nd choice votes as well as some first choice votes.

We discussed different systems of voting, majority rules, consensus, etc.

We still do not have a class name.

~Nakia Keizer, June Myers,
& Katy Laguzza

Room 215

We began an activity called *Tiny Teacher* in our class meetings. The general concept is that everyone has valuable knowledge and skills that can be shared. I chose to do this activity because it is important that students recognize each others' talents; everyone can be an expert. Letta and I launched this activity by teaching the class two partner yoga exercises. Then we gave students time to brainstorm something they could teach us. Alberto and Keyshawn King taught the class how to take a free throw shot and do a lay up. It was interesting to watch how students responded. Some were nervous, but tried anyway. Others were more resistant and didn't want to participate. While other students wanted to keep trying until they made the basket. This is another way to show students that learning to do new things takes practice.

~Sarah DeCruz

Grades Seven & Eight

Room 213

Last week, we checked in on 7th grade math, so this week we'll look at 8th. We've been busy in algebra class, formalizing some ideas we've worked with before, extending others, and thinking about new ideas.

We were struck by how some math ideas seem to grow right along with us. For example, we found a connection in multiplication. Many kids remembered using a partial products array when they were first learning to multiply larger numbers. They split one factor into place value parts ($140 = 100 + 40$), and then multiplied each by the other factor. After multiplying each pair of place values, add to get the final product. This made a problem that at first seemed complicated make sense.

Last year, when we began to study the distributive property, we again used a rectangle model to make sense of what was being multiplied by what. And now, the expansion box tool serves that purpose when we multiply expressions $(-1/2x)(7x6^2-22)$. What the kids don't know yet is that this idea will return in the months ahead. We'll work backwards with an expansion box to factor expressions $(6x^2 + 4ax^2 - 2bx^3)$.

This week, we learned a strategy called "guess-check-generalize" to use our intuitive sense of solving word problems

to help write an equation to represent the context. Some kids are apprehensive about tackling word problems, but what better way to use our new equation solving skills!

~Ann Ruggiero

Room 214

~No news this week

Hot Topics

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.

Wellness Volunteers Sought

Dear parents,

Wellness Wednesdays is off to a great start this year with new programs like Green Dragons and Gymcraftics. Green Dragons is a martial arts program that incorporates gardening. Gymcraftics is a team building activity where students work in pairs and in groups to test their strength and creativity. Our second series of Wellness Wednesdays began on October 23rd. We are welcoming any parent volunteers who want to help out with our 2:15 – 3:10 sessions on Wednesdays. If you are interested, stop by the front office and let Joni know. I look forward to seeing your children in my classes and meeting you.

~Laura Golitko, Wellness Coordinator and Gymcraftics Facilitator.



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