



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Monday, October 20, 11:30 - 12:30
RiteAid Flu Shots: Nurse's Office, rm 120
- Friday, October 24, 2014, 9:45 am
Friday Share: Abdi, Jenerra, Liz, & Geralyn
- Thursday, November 13, 5:45 - 7:00
Family Council Meeting (see page 5)

October 17, 2014

Volume 18, Issue 5

Rules at School

Dear Families, Students, Staff, and Friends,

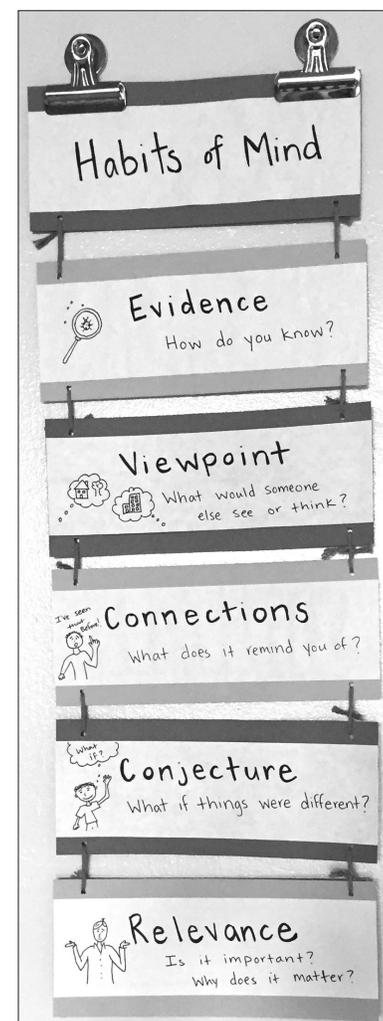
Every now and then a visitor comes to our school and inquires about how it is possible to have students that for the most part follow a set of school wide expectations without postings all over the school that list the rules. One student from another school said that at his school there are signs for no hats, no gum chewing and no running. We don't have such signs. So how do students at Mission Hill know what the boundaries, behavioral expectations, and rules to live by are?

Walking through the school I see classrooms creating agreements about how to treat one another, how to use the classroom space and how to use the materials in the classroom. I also see adults and students having thoughtful conversations about decision-making, the impact of decisions, consequences, making peace, lessons learned and giving back to the community or an individual. These conversations take time and are at the root of growth for our students in their understanding of how they impact other people.

The conversations and classroom agreements are part of our school wide understandings. 1. Treat people the way you want to be treated. 2. Do nothing that stops a teacher from teaching or a learner from learning. These 2 rules cover a lot of ground and we (staff) spend time each day teaching children how to live by these principles. Our community handbook contains more details about expectations and guideline for students. Please make the Community Handbook a family read. Treating people in kind and humane ways and being a positive member of a community are life lessons, not just for getting along in school.

Using Habits of Mind in social situations is one way we assist students in their learning about how actions impact others. When conflict or disruption happens at school it's important that first the whole story is understood (the root of the problem) and then the process for resolution begins. Within each situation is a lesson to be learned.

Similar to family life with siblings, children at Mission Hill are given multiple opportunities to engage with one another, establish friendships and working relationships. Adults facilitate these connections and coach students as they are learning how to relate to others who may be very different in age, ability and/or character. This too is a valuable skill for life in general.



KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

In our classroom, math experiences are embedded throughout each day – our routines, experiences and materials are intentionally chosen and designed to support each child's development. We are supporting the students' math development in a range of areas: solving math problems; curiosity around numbers and counting; sorting objects; geometry and spatial relations (this includes using positional words such as "over", "under" and "next to") and beginning measurement (this includes using words to describe size, such as "big", "little", "short", "long", etc).

When we gather together each morning, we use our home/school chart to count and record how many children are here and how many are missing. Our picture schedule helps us keep track of the day, and what is coming next – a way to measure our time together. Our daily songs include clapping/tapping rhythms and counting. Our materials, such as mini unit blocks create spontaneous sorting opportunities, as students search for the specific rectangle he or she needs to complete a structure. Magna tiles come in a variety of shapes and colors – and children sort these blocks many ways as they build. Children problem solve around sharing trains and cars – they compare how many they have and work to make it more fair.

This week we made a class graph to record and compare each person's favorite mode of transportation for getting to school. These are just a few of the ways that math experiences are embedded into our day. Where do you find math opportunities to

explore with your child in your home and daily life?

-Geralyn Bywater McLaughlin

Room 106

Last week the Sparkling Birds took a trip to one of our favorite places: the Boston Nature Center. The students used all five senses to do some exploring. We first had a chance to view some giant solar panels. Students sat under them, felt the smooth warm surfaces, and discussed what exactly they are used for. We then took a walk to the community garden, where we got to smell and taste all kinds of veggies, including kale, tomatoes, sorrel, mint, and chives! Finally, we took a nature walk to use our sense of hearing. We closed our eyes and were able to hear leaves rustling in the wind, and even some birds! I wonder if they were sparkling...

-Liz Borson & Stephanie Batista

Room 107

As we continue exploring our theme, we decided to follow up our definition of the word power with the question, "What has power?" 107 said the following:

Light has power; The sun has power because it's like a lamp and it is really hot; Phones have power because you can call on them; Cars have power because they have batteries; The TV has power... and the control; Power is light; You can move a refrigerator by your door so nobody can break in; Power is in numbers. Remember? The Magic School Bus said [that]; If someone picks up a monster truck, they have power; Power is in a lamp and its electricity; Electricity is like power that is inside; A light has power; Call 911 if someone is robbing your house; Drums have power...and



Continuous Line self-portrait by Anais Brito.

light bulbs; A torpedo ray has power. They have electricity in them. There is a special place for the electricity to go through; Cars and trains and trucks have power; Fire has power. It's more powerful than anything. It's a living, breathing, healthy thing.

-Jada Brown & Jo-Ann Hawkesworth

Room 109

Last Friday we had the opportunity to visit the Boston Nature Center. While boarding the bus the children were crying out joyfully. On the short bus ride over, we sang "Wheels on the Bus" and "Farmer Brown." Pulling into the lot I could overhear, "I remember coming here." "I love this place." "I wonder if we will see a fox." Venturing into the woods at least one student expressed concern, "I'm scared of the woods." The fear quickly subsided and the child broke out into a skip. Soon that very same child was heard shouting, "Look, look! I saw a rabbit! I saw a rabbit hopping in the trees!"

We enjoyed a color and texture scavenger hunt and then had a picnic lunch. Before we boarded the bus

CLASSROOM NEWS

to head back home we collected a bundle of sticks and branches. Back at school, I asked, "What can we do with these?" The children had many ideas, make a house. Make Art. Paint them. Stop by Room 109 to see what we do!

-Jenny Goldstein

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 204

This week we held the Progressive Education Network's (PEN) National Institute at MHS. Educators from around the country--as far as Hawaii and as near as Boston--came to discuss, contemplate, and see in action questions of progressive education. For two days they graced our hallways and classrooms taking in all that we do. They observed, asked questions, and interacted with students. They were a warm and kind group of educators that expressed how grateful they were to be able to share in learning with us and likewise, we were grateful to have them. As a way to say thank you, PEN participants jotted down some positive thoughts about their time in our classrooms and shared them with teachers individually. This was a real treat! Some of what they shared is below:

"I loved seeing democracy in action."

"The children seem engaged, independent, and confident."

"It was a warm, caring exchange with kids where the teacher was appropriately in charge but the children were empowered with choice."

When you are in the classroom day after day, head down and work forward, it can be hard to see the environment you are creating and the

students' growth. It was both confirming and heart-warming to read these and other comments. Thank you PEN! I look forward to your next visit and hearing about new ideas and actions you will put into place in your schools.

-Jenerra Williams

Room 205

This past week has been a blast in room 205! We have continued to use project time as a time for the MHS habits of work. Students have begun to use different materials for new endeavors, works of art, and creations. For starters, we brought out the story Legos. Kids write stories pertaining to different Lego pieces and figures that they choose from a variety of parts. Who knew you could write a story about being kind in the form of sharing Lego ice cream?

In other news, we have a wide variety

of creature creators in the room, who used beautiful stuff to make robots, turtles, and many other critters. Our block builders continue to thrive and add detail to their fortresses, and our playwrights are always ready to perform. This week we got the chance to see a show that was a mix between the story "Owen" by Kevin Henkes, and "Build Dogs, Build" by James Horvath, what a great performance!

We look forward to growing as a classroom, as a community, and as learners this year, with our minds always ready to wonder and create.

-Ashleigh, Kate, & Amy

Room 217

Creating a class name is an exciting part of the fall curriculum. Children talk fondly about previous class names (or continue to advocate for a name not yet (!) accepted by the following class community). This



Grade 3/4 teacher, Josh Kraus, with Progressive Education Network Conference attendee, Di Bloom from Chicago. Twenty six educators from around the country participated in the three-day national conference, hosted by MHS.

year as we started our class name process, I asked children to more intentionally think about who we are as a class. In just under 30 school days, the class had a lot to say about what we like to do and how we like to act. We named our passions for building, reading, learning about animals and drawing. We labeled our behaviors as silly, kind, and playful. Now when it came to thinking about our name children thoughtfully found ways to combine how we act with what we like.

Some of the names brainstormed were: the clay people, the house of hilario, the funny people, the artists, the invisible crayons, the drawing class, and the amazing nice fire breathing dragons.

-Emma Fialka-Feldman

GRADES 3 & 4

Room 207

After several weeks of getting to know each other, we finally came together to talk about and choose our class name. We started by brainstorming a long list of names. Some suggestions included The Be Kind Class, The Golden Ninjas, The Spectacular 16, The Golden Rulers, The Lions, and The Construction Workers. After a conversation about names that we thought accurately represented who we are as well as others that didn't, the list was narrowed down to four names: The Be Kind Class, The Golden Ninjas, The Golden Rulers, and The Spectacular 16. Next, we held a secret ballot vote where each member of our classroom community, adults included, privately voted for their choice. Finally, in overwhelming majority our class name was selected. From here on end Room 207 will be known

as The Spectacular 16! It has been an awesome start to the school year and we are looking forward to living up to our class name!

-Amina Michel-Lord & Juan Cortes

Room 212

My experience regarding the NIP-EN conference was great! I was able to connect with others, hear their stories and establish great resources. My goal is to develop a structure for math that supports the different needs of students. I enjoyed all of the questions and conversations for the past 3 days. I look forward to being in Chicago for the next conference which will occur in January.

-Josh, Brendan, & Heron

Room 216

This week we got the happy news that Rachel, our student teacher, has secured a set of pen pals for class 216. Rachel's brother works in two elementary schools in JAPAN! We're so excited to soon be writing to our new fifth grade friends 6,700 miles away! Not only will we be learning about writing and how to write letters and narratives, we'll be sharing our work and environment. Stay tuned for updates and pictures from Japan! Students had a wonderful excursion to the library Tuesday and all though it was not their first time it was my first time. I was encouraged by Amber who made sure to pick out a book for a classmate that was missing. What a wonderful group of friends we have in 216.

Enjoy the weather!

-Alicia, Shaina & Rachel

GRADES 5&6

Room 215

Supers? Nikomo Wonder Woman Peartree is clearly different because

she has superpowers. She descended from the stars, arrived on this planet in a "whisper," she told us last Friday. At one point in her career, Wonder Woman was a teacher in Boston. Today, she is a founder of the Freedom School Movement and its new school concept, the CommUniversity, a space for collective learning.

She is different. She has superpowers. "She is just like me," Ella blurted. Nikomo invited us to name our own superpowers which we did. She told us a beautiful story of the Sky and the Sea. She had us enthralled; she had us puzzled; she had us wrapped to her fancy and fantasy.

If we are going come together as community in Room 215, we are going to have to believe in our superpowers to be kind, to listen to each other, to help each other. To be less reactive, we have to believe that we are supers no matter the circumstance.

-Abdi & Angela

Room 210

Generating classroom names is always an interesting process. It begins free and fun, kids coming up with the most ridiculous ideas they possibly can. As they began to think about their identity as a group, and what name they want to represent them, the tone changes a bit. They still offer up funny and unique options, however they are more intentional with them the second time around. This is how a child could write a compelling persuasive paragraph, and share with a straight face on why the "Turquoise Turtles" is the best choice for a name. Early entries like the the "20 Leaf Clovers" begin to show up less and less.

CLASSROOM NEWS

After several discussions, writing assignments, shares and votes, here is what we are left with: Frozen Fire, Purple Tigers, Rising Tide, Funk Monkeys and the Successive Seceders.

-Nakia, June & Elsa

GRADES 7&8

Room 213

We enjoyed meeting with families during our Listening Conferences these last two weeks. For some, this meant reconnecting and picking up where we left off in June. For others, it was lovely to meet you and start your child's two-year journey through middle school together.

At each conference, we listened while families spoke about what was on their minds: the importance of outdoor play, concern about safe travel, developing confidence as a learner, finding a good fit for high school, behavior at home and school, and academic and social goals were among the topics discussed. Students read aloud their Vision Letters, an assignment that asked them to place themselves in June 2015 and write about the wonderful school year that had just ended. One of the goals was to identify specific actions the student took to be successful, and to note how families and teachers helped them achieve their goals. We heard directly from students what they need the adults that care about them to do.

Please keep in mind that we are always able to meet if there is something on your mind. We value working with you to support your child.

If we have not yet had your family conference, please call to schedule.

-Ann Ruggiero & Letta Neely

Room 214

As we continue to explore who we are as individual and learners the students in 214 have been writing memoirs. The following is an excerpt from Aujane Veazy's memoir:

"With the bright white paper in front of me and commotion around me, I already knew that focusing was important. My fingers were antsy and ready to start drawing. The music was playing loud. But the #2 pencil was already in my hand and eraser shavings all over the paper. My face was focused on the paper

Drawing is important to me. When I am mad I draw, when I am bored I draw. Drawing clears my mind off of a lot of things. When I am bored and I have nothing else to do, I take my drawing book find something that is interesting to draw and then I start drawing."

We will be working on our memoirs for another week and print them in book form for those would would like a copy.

-Reginald Toussaint, Carol East-José & Manny St. Vil

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

From Nurse Georgie

There will be a RiteAid Flu clinic for adults (over 18) at MHS on Monday October 20th from 11:30 am - 12:30 pm. All insurances except Tufts are accepted. There is no co-pay with an insurance card. The cost is \$39.00 without insurance.

Turn in your Box Tops!

Please turn in any Box Tops to Courtney by 10/24/14. We collect them all year long for two big submissions: 11/1/14 & 3/1/15.

Singit! Chorus

Community Music Center of Boston is offering a FREE choral to MHS students in grades 4-6 on Wednesday afternoons. For more information, please contact CMCB at 617-482-7494.

Brrr!

As fall approaches, we want to make sure all students have clothes to keep them warm through the winter. If your children needs a new, warm, winter coat please let Courtney know. She will be getting new coats for any child that needs one in October (infants and siblings too). Call, email, or stop by Room 114 to let her know what sizes your family needs. She can also get extra seasonal clothing for children ages 0-12 on an as needed basis. Check in with her if that is something that will help your family.

Family Council Positions

Bridget Lee (son Mauryon, 4th grade) and Rachel Goldsmith (son Adam, 1st grade) ran unopposed for the two Co-Chair positions. Chad Cover (daughters Zora, 1st grade and Lena, K0) ran unopposed for Treasurer. The first meeting will be held on **Thursday, November 13th 5:45 - 7:00**. Dinner and childcare are provided. Please rsvp to Joni in the main office if childcare is needed by Tuesday 11/11.

Ayla Gavins, *Principal*

Deborah Meier, *Founder*

John McDonough, *Interim Superintendent*

Mission Hill K-8 School

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20 Child Street
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real learning."**

*Nancy Carlsson Paige,
founder, Defending The Early Years*



Mission Hill School Premiere!

Thursday, December 11, 2014

6:00 - 7:30 pm

MHS Auditorium

For MHS Families

a new film by Tom and Amy Valens.
creators of *AUGUST TO JUNE: bringing Life to school*