



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- September 29 - October 10
Listening Conferences
- Thursday, October 2, 2014 at 5:00 pm
Rescheduled Governance Meeting
- Friday, October 3, 2014 at 9:45 am
Friday Share

September 26, 2014

Volume 18, Issue 2

Making Our Way to School

Dear Families, Students, Staff, and Friends,

I've come to understand the beauty and value of having some outside time early in the morning. The morning sun, the brisk wind, the blue or gray sky—a connection to nature by experiencing the weather is part of greeting the day. The reminder of our human selves as we wake up is a wonderful daily habit. Instead of putting all of our attention on the morning destination, what if paid more attention to the journey?

For years I've had a vision of our students coming to school in different ways- walking, biking, riding the school bus and taking public transportation. Christina Kim, a former parent conducted a study of families that revealed support of such an effort. Last year the transportation department agreed to support this idea of transportation diversity. They connected us (our school) to an organization called Safe Routes to School and conducted an audit of our school location for walkability. In summary, we are in a great location for students and families to walk, bike or take public transportation.

Imagine starting with just one morning each week, a Friday morning. On that morning the walk to the school bus is extended, or the car stays at home, or the parent or caregiver of a schoolmate walks your child to school with a small group of other children, or a small group of students bikes from one home to another to pick up schoolmates and ride in together.

Where do we begin with increasing the number of minutes students have under the early morning sky? How do we increase the distance that students walk or bike as they make their way to school? How do we make arrangements for students to travel together and facilitate new relationships? Is it possible for our school community to become stronger by changing the way we come to school?

Our first step is to gather information. We'd like to know how your child gets to school and if you are available on a Friday to walk to school or walk to a bus stop, or to bike with a group to school. Please complete the questionnaire about this that is coming to you soon.

In the mean time enjoy your journey to work or wherever you are headed and may you have a moment (or more) in the morning weather as you awake.



Children learn bicycle skills during Bike Week at MHS. We hope to see more families and children use alternative means of transportation to and from school this year.

KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

We started this week with a guided discovery of the Outlast Blocks. Outlast Blocks are wonderful moveable parts (large wooden blocks, planks, and wheels) that can be used and stored outdoors. The wood has been pickled in a natural way – so the blocks are weatherized without harmful chemicals. For our guided discovery, we opened the shed to see what was inside, and then each child explored one block. Next, they paired with a child near them to compare their blocks: were they the same? Different? Could they find a way to use the two blocks together? We slowly brought out more blocks and soon the building really took off: A balance beam, a train, a house, and more.



One of the things I love about the Outlast Blocks is how big they are. The children have to figure out how to carefully move the blocks they need – many of the blocks require two children to cooperate. This initial shared building experience on Monday was the first of many we will be experiencing this year with the Outlast Blocks. Thanks so much to the many people in our community who helped us to purchase them



from our friends at Community Playthings!

-Geraldyn McLaughlin & Donna Winder

Room 106

Happy last week of September! With our school year officially underway, room 106 is beginning their Physical Science investigation of water. Our first question was, what shape is water? Children explored this question using different shaped clear containers and colored water. Here are some of the things the students noticed.

“It can come down in a line.”

“It can be any shape- it changes to the shape of the bin.”

“It will not go from a small bin to a big bin. It spills out”

Over the next few months, students will continue to take a closer look at water. We will explore its properties, where it comes from, and different ecosystems that can live in it. Through open exploration and guided experiments, the children in room 106 will soon be experts on all things water!

Also, for those of you who haven't heard yet...Kathy is now the happy mother of a beautiful boy! Once we know his name, we will be sure to let everyone know!

Our door is always open,
Liz & Stephanie

Room 107

This year, we will be exploring various definitions of power. This will include personal power, the power of nature, political power and the power to affect change. When asked what “power” meant, although some students immediately answered, “I don't know...”, it didn't take long for

them to formulate something. Here are just a few of their ideas:

Romeo: “Power is something you use to help someone out...like if someone is under a refrigerator, you can use superpowers to get them out.”

Keith: “Power is like you have light at your house.”

Geneva: “Power is something that you buy, save, take...It's like candy, money, sips and brownies.”

Jordan: “It's light at my house that works the t.v. and bills.”

Farrah: “There is power to do good and power to clean up the village (houses around the city).”

Eamon: “It encourages the person to do what the other person said to do.”

Max: “Power is electricity and it helps you see in your house so you don't trip and hurt yourself.”

Gerson: “Running is power...”

-Jada Brown & Jo-Ann Hawkesworth

Room 109

“Look! Another rainbow!”

Every afternoon several rainbows dance across the floors and the walls. The children wonder where come from. With this wondering, our investigation of light begins. This week I asked, “How is a rainbow born?”



Khi: It has to rain and then the rain stops and the sun comes out. The kids see the rainbow.

When the rainbow leaves it leaves a treasure!”



Kaia: I think how a rainbow is born is by water and sunlight. I drew a sun here and a bit of yellow here. This is a sprinkler.



Simona: The sun and water drops make rainbows outside. Inside the jewel in the window makes rainbows.



Moxie: The rainbow comes by the jewel. The jewel is blue and it's kind of the color of rain. The window is yellow, the color of sun, so it shines on the jewel and makes a rainbow.



Ella: The rainbow is coming out because the sun shines, and then it rains, and then both the sun and the rain shine on the rainbow.

-Jenny Goldstein

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 204

I returned from a conference in Puerto Rico this week and the island is still with me. I found myself doing Salsa in the hallways, craving café con leche, and saying small words I know in Spanish. This inspired me to read some of the books from our library in a box labeled “Books in Spanish” I read *My House, Mi Casa* and a Spanish-English kid’s picture dictionary.

As I read, inquisitive faces watched me as I, with limited Spanish speaking skills, read the English first and then the Spanish. After reading one or two pages hands went up and one after one my Spanish speakers began to comment on and facilitate the read aloud. They made connections to the words they knew and even began to tell their own short stories about how they knew

the word in Spanish. Soon I was deferring to them for pronunciation and verification on English-Spanish translation I wasn’t sure about. Pride swelled deep within and spilled out into smiles scattered across the rug. They were proud of their knowledge and being able to share it with us. I was proud of them too and can’t wait for the next time a new group of experts emerges and shares with us and... my next Spanish lesson!

-Jenerra Williams

Room 205

“Wonder and curiosity are the doors into the world of writing for many authors. At the core of all nonfiction writing is often a question, an observation, a passion fermenting in the author’s mind and heart,” Georgia Heard & Jennifer McDonough share in their book, *A Place for Wonder*.

As we embark on a study of nonfiction writing and reading we wanted to first create a place for wonder in our classroom and establish the habit of asking questions and finding answers. We began by having different wonder areas in our classroom. You should stop by to look in our Wonder Jar and read the students’ many wonders, or you could use our binoculars to look out our wonder window, or take a look at our discovery table and the many wonder objects the children brought in, or you could even share your thoughts about our wonder of the week. From the very first week of school we have also been exploring a poem of the week. So we decided to write a wonder poem about our class wonders:

We Wonder

by the students in Room 205

I wonder what it is like in space.

I wonder how much legos there are in the world.

I wonder who was the first person on Earth.

I wonder how does snow come out.

I wonder how monarchs got their poison.

I wonder how planes fly.

-Ashleigh, Kate, & Amy

Room 217

Participating in a Democratic school means taking responsibility for creating the types of spaces we want to grow and learn in. One way our classroom builds collective responsibility is by creating classroom agreements. We begin this process by sharing our dreams and hopes for the year and we use these ideas to help remind us about what is possible in our classroom. Then we discuss what we need to do to support each other’s dreams for the year. We answer the question, “What needs to happen or not happen in our classroom for us to grow this year?” Students share their ideas (don’t slap, be kind, don’t get distracted, don’t distract others) and then we categories the ideas. By the end of this week long process are classroom came up with the following agreements: Be nice and kind. Treat our materials nicely. Keep your hands and feet to yourself. Work hard. Pay attention to the speaker. Talk to your child about these agreements at home and encourage them to share how they show responsibility in the classroom by following these agreements.

-Emma Fialka-Feldman

GRADES 3 & 4

Room 207

An important part of our classroom day is morning meeting. This time of the day allows every member of our class to feel welcome. As teachers, this time also allows us to get a sense of where each student is emotionally. One way we do this is through our daily “check in”. Here, everyone rates with their hands how they are feeling that morning. In our 1-5 system, five means you are happy and ready to be here while one means that you are having a bad day. Students and teachers are very honest about their current state and when a student chooses to share, we are able to hear what’s on his or her mind. An important part of this process has been building the trust and respect necessary to make every member of our class feel safe enough to speak up. As a class we will continue to listen to each other and build the empathy necessary to hear and care about each other’s feelings and emotions and find ways to help each other.

-Juan Cortes & Amina Michel-Lord

Room 212

There is research that says homework supports learning within the classroom. Homework has been found to be useful for high schoolers and sometimes middle schoolers, but the research is minimal and weak for grade school. Often, teachers succumb to pressure of parents and administrators and give out homework to satisfy those requests or because the routine was in place when the teacher attended grade school. Homework must be meaningful and related to class.

Students NEED to read for 20-30 minutes DAILY. Reading helps

students to make meaning of their world, can be fun, and is a way to communicate. Students will also NEED to fill out a reading log and respond to literature once a week. I will go over this routine with students and allow them to build up this habit in class first. Please allow for students to practice in class before beginning to do this at home. Once this becomes a habit, they will be able to complete the logs and open response with minimal help from parents. I want students to understand that this type of work will help them become thinkers. It is not rote learning. Making inferences, predictions, connections is what we all do on a daily basis.

-Brendan, Heron & Josh

Room 216

Greetings from room 216 and the marvelous mathematicians and voracious readers in grades three and four! Finally...we are well on our way to establishing a class name! After discussing our desire for a class name, Inka offered the suggestion of creating “advertisements”, in the form of posters for each suggestion. That way, we narrow our choices to a reasonable number before we create ballots and students have a chance to persuade classmates to vote for their choice. Amishai recommended that the ballot include a write-in option! That further cemented the idea of the ads; we discussed how even more important the lobbying to classmates would be. Stay tuned for the results! Our top contenders include: Terrific Tunas, Firecrackers, Golden Iceballs, Golden Brain and Jelly Doughnuts! This week we also had an intriguing conversation about poop! Did you know that more than half of the

students in room 216 have touched poop! Yes, indeed, poop! We have panda poop touchers and fans of fossilized dinosaur poop. (please don’t ask how we got on this subject). Olivia shared that although she rode a camel in the past, she refrained from touching its poop.

Listening conferences are coming soon. In advance, please be thinking about things you’d like to share with us about your unique student. Together we can talk about and create shared, measurable goals for the rest of the year (academic and social).

-Alicia, Shaina & Rachel

GRADES 5&6

Room 210

In continuing with our first theme of Near and Dear, students have discussed and written ideas related to their hopes and dreams for the school year, and reflections on the past one. Here are a few examples.

“Last year my favorite thing to do in school was math”

“The hardest thing last year was reading MCAS”

“I wish my school last year went on more field trips and also they could add more books”

“Last year my favorite thing to do in school was art because I got to draw a bird”

“If I could change one thing it would be homework because it was hard for me”

“Im a little worried about getting injured during recess”

“My favorite thing to do was to hang out with my friends”

“I am REALLY looking forward to spending the night at farm school”

“ I am a little worried about making friends”

“This year I am looking forward to not having so many fights”

“If I could change one thing I would play less and work harder”

Nakia, June & Elsa

Room 215

Our community members in Room 215 are practicing setting weekly goals and action steps. Below are our goals; please support us with them!

Henry: reading The Hobbit.

Zack: reading more, get good books, focus on reading.

Keyshawn: to be kind and not to say, “shut up.”

Jaylin: finish my book, Insurgent.

Angel: I want to listen more and get better at reading.

Ella: to be friends with Nora, say “hi,” and say, “sorry.”

Bryan: stay on task, pay attention.

Uly: finish my book, Al Capone Does my Shirts.

Tandin: finish my book, Itchercraft.

Tato: to get better at math, do more fractions, do more math signs.

Nora: be friends with Ella, be nice, help Ella when she needs help.

Chantal: I can raise my hand more and share out.

Ricardo: I need to be more calm.

Ayan: read more books, like Twilight.

AJ: I want to help people when they are stuck.

Kenya: getting more or my work done.

Rose: focus on my work, don't pay attention to talk.

Dario: to get better at math.

Angela: write my professional goals.

Abdi: write my professional goals.

Andrew: facilitate successful Opening and Closing Circle.

-Abdi, Angela & Andrew

GRADES 7&8

Room 213

When is the last time you participated in a survey? The answers to questions inform political campaigns and marketing strategies. In math class, we thought back to last May when Jada's kindergarten students polled us on our favorite ice cream flavors, and then used that data to decide which flavors to make and sell in their shop.

Survey data allow us to make quantitative comparisons. The 7th graders are learning that comparisons can be made in different ways. They discussed the results of a survey: What do you know from each form of comparison? What information is missing from each comparison? Is each comparison accurate and effective? Which statement would persuade you to buy the item?

The fractions, ratios, and percents of quantitative comparisons are an application of proportional reasoning - that perfect combination of meaty math and meaningful applications. We are learning to choose and use quantitative comparisons to solve problems and make decisions. This is POWER MATH. Ask your 7th grader for advice the next time you want to make a decision based on number comparisons.

Ann Ruggiero & Letta Neely

Room 214

As Luis pointed to the picture of the airplane and explained that it represents all the places he has

visited, there was a clear increase in the excitement level in the room. Some of the other students blurted questions at him in rapid succession, “how many places have you been to?” “How long did it take to get there?” At least one student commented to her friend that she had never traveled by plane before. I knew at that moment that the activity had met its goal.

This week students shared their identity boxes. An identity box is visual representation of ones identity. The outside of the box is decorated to reflect things that are commonly known about a person. This may include physical characteristics (skin color, height), family members and commonly known interests. The inside of the box represents lesser-known parts a person's identity. This may include hobbies and interests that are only known by those that are closest to us.

The goal of the project was not only to allow students to reflect on their identity and the people and/or events that helped to shape them, but it was also a way for us to get to know each other at deeper level than we might have otherwise. The boxes will be on display throughout the fall. Feel free to stop by to check out our identity boxes. *-Reginald Toussaint, Carol East-José & Manny St. Vil*

GOT NEWS?

Do you have news or information that you would like to share with the MHS community?

Email submissions to

Dani Coleman:

dcoleman@missionhillschool.org.

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

Apprentice Learning

Middle school is not too early to begin exploring careers. Apprentice Learning, an educational non-profit partner that works with 7th and 8th grade students here at Mission Hill, gets students the skills they need to enter the working world. Students in the 8th grade will have 6 weeks of preparatory classes before being placed at one of 33 different local businesses and organizations for 2 – 3 hour apprenticeships each week. At each of these apprenticeships, 8th graders will work alongside professionals in different fields exploring real work experiences. Every 8th grade student at the MHS will have the opportunity to participate. We share class time with the 8th grade teachers to prepare students for our apprenticeship program. But we will also begin career exploration with the 7th grade as we take those students on insightful career related trips and experiences in the spring.

The first group of 8th grade apprentices have begun their prep classes and are excited about where they will be working. If you have any questions or want more information, you can find myself or Helen Russell, our Executive Director, in Room 203. You can also send me an email at cmoncrief@apprenticelearning.org. It is going to be a great year for us here at Apprentice Learning! I will keep you updated with all the amazing experiences these students have as the year goes on.

-Chris Moncrief, Program Director

Courtney's Corner

Check out Courtney's Corner, outside her office (114) on the first floor or online at www.missionhill-school.org under Family Resources for information on various programs and resources for you and your family. Be sure to check out the community event calendar for things to do all year long.

We collect Box Tops!

Turn in all those Box Tops for Education you've been collecting on groceries and home/office supplies! Remember, each one is worth 10¢, so every single one counts! Clip them from products you use every day and bring them up to the office to leave for Courtney. For a complete list of Box Tops products or to sign up online to support our school, log onto www.boxtops4education.com.

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 use ID Number: 09287. If you would rather send your stop and shop card number (13 digits) and last name that the card is registered under 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 3, 2014 until March 19, 2015.

"The Clubhouse" After School

We are thoroughly enjoying After School and are grateful that you've entrusted us with your child's care. The Simmon's tutors will be joining us to help provide academic tutoring and community building opportunities.

We spend a significant portion of our time in the MH playground where we play with a large number of children not associated with After School. In order to best serve ALL the children, we'd like to extend our "Clubhouse" guidelines to other families:

- When using legs to hang on the monkey bars, one must always have one hand on a bar.
- Use the slide going downward only.
- Sliding down the railing of the stairs is dangerous, as is standing on top of the monkey bars.

Being together is great fun and in order to stay safe, we feel it's best if all the children observe the same guidelines.

-Letta Neely & Amina Michel-Lord

Tech Goes Home

This fall, MHS will offer computer literacy classes for students and family members. Tech Goes Home is 15-hour course, attended by a student (grades three and up) accompanied by an adult family member. At the end of the course, families may purchase a brand new Chromebook laptop computer for only \$50 (one per family). Low-cost Internet and free Rosetta Stone subscriptions are also available for participants. Stay tuned for more info next week!

Ayla Gavins, *Principal*

Deborah Meier, *Founder*

John McDonough, *Interim Superintendent*

Mission Hill K-8 School

A Boston Public Pilot School

WWW.MISSIONHILLSCHOOL.ORG

20 Child Street
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130

T 617-635-6384

F 617-635-6419