



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Thursday, December 18, 5:00 - 7:00 pm
Governance Board Meeting at MHS
- Tuesday, December 23, 2014
Regularly scheduled school day
- December 24, 2014-January 4, 2015
Winter Break: NO SCHOOL
- Monday, January 5, 2015
All Students Return to School

December 12, 2014

Volume 18, Issue 12

Defining Grief

Dear Families, Students, Staff, and Friends,

Anger. Rage. Sadness. Fear. All of which are words for my emotions that don't even touch the surface of the true depth.

The recent non-indictments of the police officers that killed Michael Brown, an unarmed Black teenager in Ferguson, MO and Eric Gardner, an unarmed Black man in NYC, have my mind, spirit, soul and stomach stirring. The questions that enter and re-enter my mind weigh heavily on my heart; saturate my spirit with layers of grief.

My grief however is not only for the countless numbers of Black lives lost to the hands of police and others. My grief is not only for the families and loved ones left shattered by the death of their husbands, sons, uncles, cousins, grandfathers, god fathers, etc. My grief is not only for the communities left torn apart. It is not only for a nation that is repeating its history because it has not learned from the past.

My grief is for my 17 year-old son. For him and for every other black male in my life. It is for the black boys I teach every day. My grief is for them.

As a mother of a young Black man, I live in fear daily. My fear is rooted in one thing only...others' perceptions of him. Though no parent is perfect, I am proud of the job I and his other family and extended family members have done to raise him. Sadly, a part of the raising was and is having conversations about how others see him, especially as a Black boy and now as a Black man. As he gets older, he too realizes our nation's preoccupation with race and how that affects him.

I have a litany of wishes. I wish I could say he has never been stopped by police. I wish I could say he has never been accused of something he didn't do. I wish I could say that he feels safe in the presence of law enforcement. I wish I could say that he doesn't believe it's "because we are Black" when other people get seated before us in a restaurant or look at us with suspicion when we enter a high-end store...but he does.

I wish I didn't get that feeling in the pit of my stomach when he's a little bit late coming home. I wish I didn't have accusatory thoughts when a white person tells me what a "good kid" he is. I wish I didn't have to explain all of this to my eight year-old daughter. I wish I didn't cry every time a police officer gets away with a modern day lynching of our black men...but I do.

Grief. It is defined in Webster's Dictionary as "deep sadness caused especially by someone's death". Why then do I grieve for the living?

-Jenerra Williams, Teacher, Grades 1 & 2



KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

We have been studying motion for weeks! In small groups, we have walked around our school as motion detectives, have used playdough to produce something that can roll down a ramp, have constructed chain reactions, created art using motion and so much more. Now, we have even experimented with wind. We made our own pinwheels and discovered that it spins slowly when you blow soft and spins fast when you blow hard. We then took a look at objects found around our classroom and determined whether or not we believe the wind can blow it. During our outdoor time we witnessed the wind move the leaves on the ground and the flag on the flagpole. We've learned that motion can be found everywhere: outside, inside, up high and down low. Have you ever taken a few moments to wonder and describe how things move? We sure have; we've used wooden geometric shapes and found that they move in one or more ways, they can spin, roll, slide, and/or flip. Can you find things that move this way?

-Elizabeth Estepe, student teacher

Room 106

This week room 106 began a mini literacy unit on the Gingerbread Man. We will be reading all different versions of the story, including the Gingerbread Boy, the Gingerbread Girl, The Gingerbread Baby, and even the Gingerbread Cowboy! The students are going to use these stories to help recognize different elements of a story. Children have been identifying characters, as well as what happens at the beginning, middle, and end of each story. The chil-

dren in room 106 will be graphing gingerbread house decorations, (fruit loops which we will then get to eat!) and be comparing and contrasting the different Gingerbread rhymes. Students will also think about what they would be like if they were a gingerbread girl or boy, who they would run away from, and even what their Gingerbread House would look like! This week is also the Sparkling Birds turn at Friday Share, and we will be talking all about the water cycle. Hope to see you all there.

Our door is always open,
Liz & Stephanie

Room 107

"My heart is pumping fast!" "I need to get some water." "I'm hot...I need to take off this sweater!" "Wow! On that one, you have to use your power to pull your whole body up."

These are just a few statements that students have made over the past few weeks as they continue to physically expend the power stored in their bodies. In order to aid this process, we have been using exercise machines that include a kid-sized stepper, treadmill, stationary bike, and rower. As the novelty of the machines being a part of our room wears off, Jo-Ann and I have slowly begun focusing students' time while using them. Both adults and students have issued several movement challenges. The first student-to-teacher challenge (300 steps on the stepper) was issued by Josie. As we counted each step, other students joined in. By the end of our project time, a determined Eamon had passed 1000 cycles on the stationary bike and the class had done about 3,600 steps/cycles collectively. Now, as students eagerly ask "Are the machines open?"

Jo-Ann and I mentally prepare to meet the next challenge.

-Jada Brown & Jo-Ann Hawkesworth

Room 109

This week we combined two of our favorite activities... shadow making and gymcraftics! The children described the experience.

"We have a shadow screen. We did shadow gymcraftics. It was very cool. They made shapes with their feet and hands." -Ella

"I liked it when you could see their hair in the shadows, curls and everything. I know who it was...the curly ones were Beatrice and William."

-Simona

"I liked when Moxie went up with Laura. It looked like she was flying."

-Theodore

"I liked that you could see shadows through the screen. My favorite was when two people were doing the horse pose."

-Jenny Goldstein



Can you guess who the shadow belongs to?

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 204

Anxious relief; that is what I felt when I received the email from BPS with the subject line: Position Assignment-Mission Hill School. I was relieved because after not finding a suitable position in the Post-Transfer Placement Process, I had to wait until I was notified of a placement. I was anxious because I did not know much about the Mission Hill School and how I would be able to fit in. How quickly my anxiousness and nervousness disappeared. After attending a week of professional development before the start of school, I felt an overwhelming feeling of belonging. Not only did the staff welcome me with open arms, some literally with hugs, they were also very accepting of me as a co-teacher and were genuinely interested in my thoughts and ideas. Throughout the week, I noticed how dedicated and caring the staff was. Then later after school began, there it was again, that respectful caring nature was clearly evident with the staff, the students, and the parents. The Mission Hill School is truly a unique and wonderful school that lives by their motto: Be Kind and Work Hard!

-Polly Wing

Room 205

An important part of a scientist's work is to share what he or she has learned. Right now we're working on collaboratively writing two books: *How To Make Something that Flies* and *Why Do Birds Fly?* Here are some of the student's reflections on what they have learned about flight. Amos: If a plane is very heavy, it

needs a lot of thrust to push it.

Cyrus: When planes land, their noses point up not down.

Gimar: You need to match the right wings with the right engine.

Milo: If you have too much stuff on your plane, you have to take some off to make it go up.

Lenardo: If you use three rubber bands your plane can go farther.

Emile: Drag pulls things back.

Anand: Weight pulls things down. Everything has weight.

Victor: Thrust makes planes go faster.

Adam: If you stretch rubber bands really far, it gives it more thrust.

Euan: I learned that there are four forces of flight: thrust, weight, lift, and drag.

Olivia: Thrust is a force that pushes things forward.

Zora: If all 4 forces work at once the plane is still.

Gianna: Birds fly because they have wings and they flap them.

Lukas: Flying helps you get from one place to another.

Braxton: Birds fly to get away from predators and to catch food.

Azad: Birds and planes fly.

-Ashleigh L'Heureux

Room 217

For most of the year, the 1st and 2nd graders spend time in their own grade-level math groups. They are working on the skills they need to be confident mathematicians. The first graders recently started a new unit: Measurement. After a few months of focusing on showing their strategies solving story problems, the students now get to spend time measuring objects. We first talked about what makes something long or short and



Grade 1/2 students measure each other in math.

then with little restrictions students began measuring. Quickly students found partners to measure each other's height. Erik, wanting to be a precise measurer, said, "Can I have my partner take off his shoes.... and his socks? I need to get an accurate measurement!" We know that students develop math concepts throughout the day - building a tower during project time, counting friends for a game of tag, deciding if there is enough snack for seconds - but our daily math block gives students an opportunity to focus, develop, and practice concrete skills that will be essential as they move on to higher grades.

-Emma Fialka-Feldman

GRADES 3 & 4

Room 207

Last week the Spectacular 16 had art with Jeanne. They made God's eyes- a type of yarn weaving. The following are reflections of their time in the art room:

Amari- It was hard making my 1st God's eye but I like my 2nd one.

Andrew- I created a bunch of shapes that locked together.

Athena- I liked trying the different techniques.

Daniel- I alternated colors and I like the look of it.

Enaisja- I used different colors and I made it into a necklace.

Janira- I liked making my 1st God's eye because I worked hard on it.

Jovanni- Making my God's eye was really hard and I liked the colors I used.

Marquell- I liked making my God's eye because I got to put on the tassels.

Maya- I liked making the tassels and tying them to the sticks.

Melissa- My God's eye is colorful and it was a bit challenging.

Nelson- When I finished my God's eye I got to make it into a necklace.

Nevaeh- I liked making my God's eye.

Rafael- I like the way my God's eye looks.

Shawnmathew- I put different kinds of colors on it.

Skye- I liked making the designs.

Zuhri- The different techniques made different shapes.

-Amina Michel-Lord

Room 212

This week we worked on testing out

our comparative questions with the Lego cars, creating predictions and recording data/observations. "What will you guys need to build your ramps?" I asked the whole class. "We will need cardboard," one student replied. "We could stack books." "What if I brought in some wood, I think my Dad has plywood," responded a few students.

"Okay, what could we use within our school community?" "I know! We could use blocks!" The students went around the school looking for blocks. Thank you to all the adults who allowed them to use these materials. We promise to bring them back in good shape!

The next step was figuring out what we would use to measure them. "Oh, we could use rulers." "Or we could use Kaplas to measure the length." "Maybe we could use books." It was clear to me the students had a sense of using non-standard and standard units. "If we are going to use non-standard units, we need to make sure we are precise and accurate as mathematicians. What should we do with Kaplas or books?" "We need to measure them with a ruler," said one student. To be continued...

-Josh, Brendan, & Heron

Room 216

Hoping that everyone is keeping dry and warm, winter is here. In room 216 students have decided that we must find a way to incorporate our Physical Science work in our new theme work after the winter break (we're just not ready to let it go!). Students will do some research to help narrow our study of Kingdoms of the Nile. Please do some brainstorming with your students. Ayla has talked about the amazing

contributions of water in that part of world. Perhaps we will study the use of water for transportation or agriculture. I am interested in the engineering that was prevalent in early Egypt and think it would be intriguing to study ancient structures compared to current engineering in that region. We'll see what the kids say.

-Alicia, Shaina & Rachel

GRADES 5&6

Room 210

End of the Week Reflections

"Something I am looking forward to next week is doing dancing again because it was super fun and awesome. Plus I can't wait till I start choreography and music, I think it will be very fun."

"One thing I wish went better is my math. I don't like math but I try to do it and sometimes ask for help and I like that we can pick a card from a cup (for groups).

"Something I learned this week was how to control my anger, how to be kind to others, and how to make friends."

"Something that went well this week was theme because my group did the blueprint and we are going to start building and it is really fun doing steps and thinking of them."

"This week was great because I had fun and I got a perfect score on a test in Abdi's class. And I had fun with the 7th and 8th graders..."

"Something I am going to make better is not to slack off at doing work and not be very lazy, by doing my math work"

"Today recess was very fun because me Joelle and Tandin tried doing backbends. Then we went inside and

CLASSROOM NEWS

planned for our class dance then we played music and danced and just had fun..."

-Nakia, June, & Elsa

Room 215

We begin and end each day in Circle (emphasis on symbol and not geometry). Our Circle is led by students. Tato asked to lead one day, spontaneously, and so we began. AJ led next, then Uly. Now, Chantal leads. Dario, Keyshawn, Kenya, Henry and Ella are waiting their turn. We review the daily schedule, review our community's essential question and goals. In Circle, each leader has to offer a prompt that gets us to use our imagination (if you could design your train, what would it look? If you could create your own ice cream flavor, what would it be?) Getting to know another person, hearing someone's perspective, becoming more self aware, being kind - these dispositions need intention and daily practice. What are the rituals in your family? Please share, and join us when you can. Usual start time? 9:35am.

-Abdi, Carlos, & Angela

GRADES 7&8

Room 213

The 8th graders were not sure they would like graphing and transformations, but that changed quickly. They were comfortable with six basic graphs and their equations, but transformations add a new challenge. Using what they knew about the shape and position of direct variation, inverse variation, quadratic, cubic, absolute value, and

square root relationships, they were soon exploring the effects of adding to and subtracting from the x and y variables.

Charged with exploring changes by making predictions and then checking the result on a graphing calculator, excited voices began talking about where the new graph would be located and why. "I added 3 to x, but the parabola moved to the left." "Why does it move to the right when you subtract?" "I need to see the points to see what's happening. I'm going to make a table." "Why did my parabola change to a line when I added 3?" "Oh, I know how that happened. You have to square the x and the 3. Move your parentheses."

Once kids understand the relationship between table, graph, and equation and can produce each representation of a relationship, a graphing calculator or program is a great time saving tool.

-Ann Ruggiero & Letta Neely

Room 214

The 7th and 8th grade classes visited the Farm School recently. Upon our return, we reflected on our experience. It was clear that students appreciated the opportunity to get out of their comfort zone.

"Driving there was fun itself, everyone smiling laughing calling out which bunk they were going to sleep in, planning what we were going to do ahead of time...The ride is nice, especially taking in all of the scenery on the way there. As a city girl I don't get to experience much wild life."

-Elianna Pena

"...the farm work and chores gives you a real sense of life on a farm. I milked a cow, fed pigs and brought water to the chickens. These are amazing experiences that you could never even think of having in the city. Have you ever stopped to look at the stars? At the farm you can see everything, the stars were shining bright in the night sky. It was one of the most amazing things I've ever seen in my life. The Farm school is a completely amazing place to visit."

-Alpha Bah

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

Cold Weather Reminder

Please remember MHS students of ALL ages play outside as much as possible. Remember to send your child with layers and appropriate clothing, according to the day's forecast. If they enjoy playing in the snow, please send them with an extra change of clothing for that day. If you need extra gloves, scarves, or a jacket for your child please let your child's teacher know or call Courtney at 617.635.6384. We are happy to assist in any way we can.

MHS Online Family Forum

Did you know that the MHS online family forum is a GREAT resource for parents, caregivers, and staff? We'd love for you to join us today! Get to know the community better, stay informed about exciting school celebrations, accomplishments, and fundraisers, join initiatives, as well as get and share news and plans. To join, please email Amy Banzaert (parent of Eli in Jenerra's class) amybanz@mit.edu.

Ayla Gavins, *Principal*

Deborah Meier, *Founder*

John McDonough, *Interim Superintendent*

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