



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Wednesday, November 11, 2015
NO SCHOOL: Veteran's Day
- Thursday, November 12, 2015
Family Council Mtg. 5:45-7:00 pm
- November 16-18, 2015
Grades 7&8 to Farm School

November 6, 2015

Volume 19, Issue 7

Dreaming of a Mission Hill High School

Dear Students, Families, Staff, and Friends,

The high school planning session that took place last Saturday was our second all-inclusive community Mission Hill High School planning session. Similar to the first session, there were about 45 people that attended. Some of the participants were not people who were directly tied to Mission Hill School. They were people invested in contributing ideas and joint envisioning of a great high school. Mission Hill caregivers, students, staff and community members were there. We were fortunate to have Deborah Meier and Roberta Logan join us. The combination of participants was electric and gave us great momentum for the work.

Our planning day began in the school library with introductions and singing. Next, we divided ourselves into three groups to imagine what a student's day in our high school would look like. We imagined the student's day through three different lenses; community, experiences and reflection. Each group expressed their work artistically. We drew and sketched, made dolls and built, and danced—all as vehicles and representations of our dialogue. So many ideas were creatively shared. We ended the day with appreciations to one another, including to Dani who prepared a wonderful meal for us.

Last Saturday we moved one step closer to shaping the vision of creating a high school. The vision, as I saw it being shaped, is one that invites the voice or expression of community members from many ages and life experiences to contribute to the learning and success of all other community members.

The next scheduled planning session is for students and alumni on Saturday, November 14 from 1:00 to 4:00pm. Please spread the word about this. We really need to hear thoughts from our young people.

Following the session for youth, the next step in our process is to take the ideas from our combined planning sessions and from what we've heard in other forums, and pull them together for critique. By critique, I do not mean to criticize. I mean to examine the ideas closely and provide feedback for fine-tuning and improvement.

If you have not been part of this high school design process so, you can join at any time. Invitations to participate will keep coming. I hope to see you at one of our future events.



Founding principal Deborah Meier and retired Humanities teacher Roberta Logan, at the Mission Hill High School Deep Dive Planning Meeting.

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KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

Autumn is the season for apples. And the Otters have had PLENTY of apples to eat for breakfast, snack and lunch every day. What were we going to do with all those apples? We decided to make applesauce in our crock pot. Here are our own directions for making it:

1. Wash apples (about 20)
2. Core and peel apples. (We used an apple peeler/corer. Each one of us took turns turning the handles. The skins came off in spirals.)
3. Cut apples or break apart with fingers.
4. Put apples in a crock pot on high.
5. Add a cup or two of water and some cinnamon to taste.
6. Cook until the apples have boiled down into applesauce.
7. Cool

No need to waste the skins! We had the sweet spiral skins for snack. And we enjoyed our apple sauce. Some asked for seconds and thirds.

-Donna, GERALYN & KYRA

Room 106

"Do birds fly away?" Misael asked. I posed the question to the Flying Birds class.

Darby said, "I know some birds do and some birds don't." "Birds travel south, it's called migration," Simeon added. "Migration, tell me more about this migration and where is south?" I wondered with the children.

We discussed why birds might migrate and the children wrote about it in their journals.

Joziana wrote, "some birds come back when they go and they go again." We read books to help us too. *Bird, Butterfly, and Eel*, by James

Prosek, *The Young Birder's Guide to Birds of Eastern North America*, and *The Migration* by Sandra Iversen all help shape more ideas about migration.

On my way to work I spotted a group of birds flying in a V formation. We wondered together about why birds fly that way. Do you know? We would love to hear your ideas.

-Kathy D'Andrea

Room 107

"The baby gorilla is on the mama's leg! That is so cool!"

Last Thursday morning I was awoken by howling winds and large, persistent raindrops beating against my windows. My heart skipped a beat because this was not the ideal weather for our scheduled trip to the Franklin Park Zoo. For about a week we were preparing for our visit. We learned a song about going to the zoo that students sang sporadically. We spoke about animals we might see and if they began their lives growing inside of their mother or inside of an egg. We could not be more ready or excited, and then the rains came.

Feeling uncertain, we decided to go anyway. We were glad we did because the sun came out and we pretty much had the zoo to ourselves! While there, the zebras answered Cristina's beckon and came to greet us! The lions roared! The lemurs leapt from branch to branch. The gorillas entertained us. The birds chirped, kangaroos relaxed, camels chewed hay, goats climbed fences to be petted and a peacock met us after lunch. All in all, with blue skies and 70+ degree weather, it was the perfect day to be at the zoo!

-Jada Brown, Jo-Ann Hawkesworth, & Cristina Noonan

Room 109

In room 109 we continue our nature study of all things fall. A surprising discovery in our leaf study is that the yellow and orange in the leaves is there all along! The chlorophyll turns them green and when it goes away we see their true colors. Now we are wrapping our minds around the tricky process that goes into the red colors.

We are excited to do another "walk and draw" when we go outside in small groups with clipboards to look at changes since our last "walk and draw". One exciting project this week was pressing leaves into clay to make impressions of the veins in the leaves. Children are becoming more and more independent in the classroom and beginning to explore their own thoughts on projects to revisit and materials to explore. We look forward to sharing work with you at the curriculum breakfast on November 25th.

-Deborah & Stephanie

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 205

It was a perfect fall day last Friday. With science notebooks, pencils, and apples in tow we boarded the bus to Drumlin Farm. We passed a beautiful tree with deep red leaves and other falling leaves fluttered past the bus windows as we drove through the country roads. The farm had many other signs of fall: pumpkins, scarecrows, baby piglets, and harvested vegetables. Students enjoyed seeing chickens, ponies, goats and cows. Some took a hayride and others saw bats and owls. Running around the crop field and visiting the learning garden were other highlights that students mentioned. Thank you, thank you to the many family members that joined us on the trip! We

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really enjoyed spending the day with you.

-Ashleigh L'Heureux

Room 212

We had a great trip to Drumlin Farm. Xavier pronounced it, "the best field trip ever!" The children walked all over the farm and observed both farm animals and wild animals. At the bird blind we saw chickadees, blue jays, and an insect hotel. The children noticed the acorns on the ground and that the leaves were falling. They enjoyed discovering all the farm animals and Romeo wondered why the goats' eyes are different from the other animals. There was even a surprise hayride which everyone enjoyed. Drumlin Farm is located 208 South Great Road, Lincoln MA, The cost is \$8 per adult, and \$6 per child, if you are interested in visiting with your family.

-Suzanne Brown

Room 217

Stay tuned next week!

-Kate Needham

GRADES 3 & 4

Room 203

As our science theme rolls along and we continue to think about how different plants grow, how plants and animals sustain each other and how we can contribute to a thriving environment, we began planting this week.

Room 203 was buzzing with excitement on Monday and Tuesday. After researching and writing a persuasive essay about what plants they wanted to grow and why we should let them, the planting was underway! Now more waiting begins as we keep our eyes on what our plants will do in the coming weeks. Below is a list of plants that were planted:

Rafael and Typrese - Watermelon
Navaeh and Kimberly - Roses
Anna and Lukas - Chinese Money Plant

Luis and Rui - Lemon Queen Sunflower
Shawnmathew and Marquell - Mammoth Sunflower
Maya S. and Maya M. - Cucumber
Zurhi and Skye - Tomatoes
Amari and Braxton - Venus Fly Trap
Peter - Black Snakeroot
Janaira - Cherry Tree
-Jenerra, Danny, & Nelly

Room 204

The Bee Squad is continuing their science inquiry on how plants and animals sustain each other. On our nature walk to find earthworms and snails, questions were asked, "Where do we look for worms?" "Is that a snail hole?" "Do slugs eat worms?" "Where did you find those snails?" Later while we were discussing our findings, we placed some of the worms in our classroom terrarium along with a slug. Then a student wondered "Will the slug eat the worms?" Adler's response was, "Well, it will be interesting to see that!" Students will take a closer look at the physical appearances and behaviors of the bees, snails and worms over the next few weeks. They will also search for answers in their observations by looking at facts about the different animals in our classroom and finding out how they survive and help our environment. However, the question still remains, Will the slug eat the worms?

-Cleata & Shaina

Room 207

"Come on, let's go this way!" Aahmonyex exclaimed. 18 students and 2 teachers excitedly followed the leader of our expedition. What was



A terrarium in the Bee Squad's room.

an impromptu trip to the arboretum, quickly became an adventure. Excited voices could be heard throughout, "Look at the bee!", "Look at the pretty flowers.", "A frog!" Like many adventures, there are obstacles, "Watch out for this branch it has thorns." These obstacles were conquered by help from classmates, "Here, I will hold it for you, and you can go through." Suddenly, we came to a halt. Some obstacles were easier to conquer than others. "Miss Amanda there are stinging nettles, I am scared, we can't go." 20 people standing in tandem and debating to push forward or turn back. The leader contemplated for a little and was encouraged by his classmates to persevere. The perseverance was rewarded by the accomplishment of reaching the end, "We did it!"

-Amanda & Amina

GRADES 5&6

Room Room 210 & 215

Grades 5 and 6 students' teach-in on student leadership was last Wednes-

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day. Here are randomly selected responses from all our students:

It was about...art, starting your dreams at an early age, and making them come true, comics and design, having fun with friends and learning how to calm down easily, SPOT!, this girl and how she has autism and how she deals with it, working together, thinking of how we can have better food so people don't feel hungry after lunch, doing collage and getting to know each other while we did our work.

I am going to be a leader by...showing and being a responsible and by keeping people in the community, following the rules and being cool, working hard, not waiting to be older to do something, help people, standing up for others, not following and doing the right thing, teaching art, making the right choices, making a business, thinking more about my future and the people in my community.

I think the next teach-in can be better if...we can do numbers and play basketball, there are more things to do, there are more spots for the popular choices, I like it but I don't want to change it, to go to the [SPOT Room] regulate class, more media workshops, there were some outside activities, there are more magazines to make collages, it was outside, we have more games, we do cool things, we all got our number one choice, or get to pick like top three choices and get one of those, there were more choices, I don't really know.

-The Crispy Leaves & The Fireflies

GRADES 7&8

Room 213

We enjoyed meeting with families



during our Listening Conferences these past few weeks. For some, this was a re-connection; for others, the start of a new relationship. The second formal round of family conferences will be held in February. But we are always available to meet if there is something on your mind. We value working with you to support your child.

At each conference, students shared how the year has started for them and also goals to focus on as a 7th or 8th grader. Then, families spoke about what was on their minds: transition to high school, adolescence as a stage of life, homework requirements, developing confidence as a learner, balanced use of technology, behavior at home and school, and academic and social goals were among the topics discussed.

We also signed a Home/School compact agreeing that family, student, and school would work together. The Mission Hill School community developed the roles and responsibilities we agreed to. By carrying them out, we act as partners to support student success in school and in life.

-Ann Ruggiero & Letta Neely

Room 214

As students read about Ghana, Mali and other ancient African empires, Ella looked up and commented "Reginald, if Ghana has so much gold, why do people say Africa is poor?" There were similar comments throughout the day. The biggest surprise was that salt used to be as valuable as gold.

We are taking a small detour from United States history to learn about former African Empires. As we begin our study of the first Africans to arrive in the English colonies, I wanted to reorient the way that students typically think of Africa and Africans. Too often, students walk away from learning about slavery with the idea that Europeans were able to enslave Africans because they were a superior civilization. I hope that by learning about some of the African Empires, our students will have a better context for how slavery evolved in the United States.

Though necessary, I worry that there won't be the kind of deep understanding I expect from students. I will continue to think about ways to incorporate African contributions to United States history throughout the year.

-Reginald Toussaint

Ayla Gavins, *Principal*
Deborah Meier, *Founder*
Tommy Chang, *Superintendent*

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