



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- February 8 & 9, 2016
Family Conferences
- February 15-19, 2016
February Break: NO SCHOOL
- February 22-24
Grades 5 & 6 to Farm School

January 29, 2016

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Facing a Tough Budget

A small group of teachers and I sat around a table this week trying to process the news we received about our school budget and changes we were forced to make. This scenario is happening in most Boston Public Schools this season.

You may have seen on the news or heard through friends or colleagues that the funding for BPS schools combined with staffing mandates have negatively impacted many schools. The loss of programs and staffing is difficult to comprehend. Parents and general public school supporters have rallied. School based educators have pushed back and asked hard questions. There have been meetings between the schools, the Superintendent and the Mayor. Frustration levels are high on all fronts.

How does this impact our school? The funding we receive and the district constraints for spending affect our choice of staffing and the experiences for students. For the upcoming school year we had to add some positions and cut others. We lost the funding for the additional hours MHS educators spend together planning in the spring, summer, and throughout the school year. We lost the funding of special contracts that pay for transportation to the Farm School, some of our classroom support staff, curriculum materials, and partnership fees to name a few things. In order to save two staff members they had to take on different positions at a lower pay rate. I'm sharing this with you, not to bring you down, but so we can rise up.

It's time to start aggressively raising funds. Our Friends of Mission Hill School (FoMHS), a non-profit, was created by Valerie Madden, as the fundraising organization of the school. FoMHS is in need of new leadership. If you have an interest in becoming involved in this group, please contact Dani Coleman at dcoleman@missionhillschool.org. Family Council is another organization that has been involved in fundraising. There are lots of ways to participate. More information to come about upcoming events.

It's time to plan and organize for the better. There's a way of thinking that I believe in. Keep an eye on the present, keep an eye on the future, and be sure to use the third eye of dreaming and imagination. We will use every resource we have to create a wonderful learning environment for our students right now. We could use your positivity and collective spirit of problem solving to help us along. We will need money to fund field trips and support staff. We need to continue voicing our thoughts about what all children in public schools deserve—adequate staffing, talented adults, arts programming, supplies (curriculum materials for students to engage with) and adequate facilities to learn in.



CLASSROOM NEWS

KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

We were thrilled to be able to play outside in the snow this week! As long as the temperature stays above 30 degrees, we bundle up and head outside. Making snow angels, trying to make snowmen, rolling and jumping in the snow have all be exciting adventures to explore. Even the process of getting ready to go outside is an adventure, as students learn to manage the process as independently as they can. What happens when you put your boots on before you put on your snow pants? How do you maneuver your fingers into the correct mitten position? How patient can you be if you are the first one ready and you are getting hot?! Please continue to send in snow gear (marked with your child's name), though we do have some extras on hand. And please consider volunteering and joining us for the outdoor fun!

-Geralyn McLaughlin & Donna Winder



Jack plays in the snow.



Ethan makes a snow angel.

Room 106

I hold up a picture of a man dress in a long draping robe. "Who thinks they know who this is?" I ask. "Emperor Qin Shi Huang Di," A voice calls out. "Who remembers what we learned about him?" I continue. Liam adds, "He made the Great Wall of China." Then Neli replies, "They called him the Dragon King. He made soldiers." "What were they made from?" "He made them out of clay." I ask the class, "Who remembers what the soldiers were called? The children pause and think. After about 60 seconds I give them a clue, saying "Terra..." The student immediately call out "Terra Cotta soldiers!"

For our study of Ancient China we are focusing on the time of Emperor Qin Shi Huang Di, the first Emperor of China. We started by reading *Day of the Dragon King*. It is a book in the Magic Tree House series and it helped us learn a great deal about the time period. The book has inspired us to build a ancient Chinese market in our block area.

-Kathy D'Andrea

Room 107

"*This is the best day ever! I wish Agboola was here.*" -Shona

Oh how we love pajama day! Whether it is the idea that we don't have to get dressed in the morning or are a part of the fun of the larger community (adults and students) being silly, it's always a highly anticipated day. In 107 it's a day of celebration with a special breakfast and a dance party. Here are a few memories:

I liked...

Vidania: Wearing Pajamas!

Sophia: Eating pancakes.

Jeremy: Playing with Romeo and eating pancakes.

Jonathan: Playing, wearing pajamas and eating pancakes.

Jaslin: Eating cereal and pancakes and dancing.

Avian: Wearing my pajamas and eating pancakes.

Janee: When we were dancing to the *Wavin' Flag* song.

Shona: Having my pajamas on and eating chocolate chip pancakes.

Jordan: Eating pancakes and Lucky Charms.

Ava: Eating Marshmallow Oaties cereal and eating pancakes.

Wren: Eating pancakes and cereal and wearing my pajamas.

Josie: Flipping my slippers off.

Emma: Wearing my pajamas and eating cereal and pancakes.

Nikaye: Eating cereal on pajama day.

-Jada Brown, Jo-Ann Hawkesworth & Mary Beth Fields

Room 109

We continue our learning about maps. This week we studied a map with a close up of our neighborhoods. First we found Mission Hill School on the map and then, with help, each student found the location

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of their home on the map. It was so interesting to see where we all live in relation to each other and also some surprises for how close or far we are! Children are spontaneously creating their own maps at both school and home and spending time looking carefully at many different kinds of maps donating to our classroom. Map folding has almost become its own center!

Students are constructing knowledge of the map concept and beginning to understand how the different maps relate to each other (room, neighborhood, city, state, country, world!).

-Deborah Freeman

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 205

How do the Mission Hill Habits of Work (forethought, perseverance, production, and reflection) fit into our project time work? The Tiny City explored this question recently as the students worked on self-selected week-long projects. On Monday, we engaged in forethought as each student had to make a plan and a goal for what they wanted to accomplish that week. They filled out planning sheets that indicated what materials they wanted to use, who they wanted to work with, and what inspired them for this project. Some students chose to build a marble track, while others wanted to create a restaurant. A group of student wrote a book about birds of prey and others used art materials to make various projects. We discussed perseverance as students stuck with tasks and worked through problems. Thatcher shared, "Look at our marble run so far! Tomorrow we're going to make it even better!" Halfway through the week we engaged in reflection.

Students thought about what they had gotten done so far and what they still needed to do to complete their goal. On Friday, we had our own little Friday Share in our classroom where the students shared the work they had produced throughout the week. Some projects were finished while others were works in progress. Throughout this all, we consistently referred back to the Mission Hill Habits of Work and thought about how they can be applied to other parts of our day. How do you use the Mission Hill Habits of Work at home or at your job?

-Ashleigh L'Heureux

Room 212

I am sorry I wasn't in last week and I'm sure I missed many wonderful events. I just wanted to remind families this week to be on the look out for the notice for Family Conferences. Family Conferences are scheduled all day for February the 8th and your child should have a notice in his/her backpack stating the time of the meeting by January 27th. Please email me at sbrown@missionhillschool.org or contact the school at (617) 635-6384 if you have not received it. Your child will have a chance to give you a tour and we can talk about the great work your child has done this year. I'm looking forward to it.

-Suzanne Brown

Room 217

What's going on in this picture? What do you see that makes you say that? These simple questions prompted a long discussion that mimicked a college art history class in Room 217. I projected two photos of Confucius for the students to analyze. We will soon be studying the Four Arts of the Confucian Scholar: hua-painting,



Confucius.

shu-calligraphy, qin-stringed instrument, and qi-Chinese chess. To begin our work, I wanted the students to see some images of Confucius to try to understand for themselves who this man was. I did not correct, or explain any "right" answers, but rather allowed the students to make up their opinions and build off one another. Here are some comments that were made:

It looks like an old man sitting on a chair. And he has a white thing hanging and also his eyebrows are hanging. It's a man because of the hair and the beard.-Armani

His eyebrows are longer than normal. It's a man because of his beard and mustache. He might be praying because he's sitting but not eating or doing any activities.-Jackson

He might be sitting there. He might be a king because he has a fancy robe.-Julia

I think it might be a Chinese God because he has a crown and a stick or sword. It might be Chinese because there is writing that looks Chinese.-Ashton

Maybe he's holding a candle because someone dies, and sometimes people do that when someone dies.-Alize

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I think he's holding a candle and it looks like a library for Chinese people. The stuff in the walls look like books.—Nashly

I see a man with a popsicle stick and he has a crown, it looks like pieces of pie in his crown. And he is in a book library.—Cole

I agree with Cole that it's a crown and a popsicle stick.—Gerson

It looks like he has scissors in his hand.—Hiram

I agree about scissors and it looks like he's poking into his chin.—James
—Kate Needham

GRADES 3 & 4

Rooms 203

Last week and over this past weekend the word “relationship” came up for me over and over again. Our winter retreat and the many decisions we made connected to relationships. My new student teachers are working to establish new relationships with the students in room 203. Adults at MHS reminded students of the things that hinder strong relationships from growing. A class I attended for church had a recurring theme of relationships with other people and with God. All these examples made me think about who I have relationships with, how I built them, and how I maintain them. From my home to church to work, there are many relationships I value that bring me joy and help sustain me in all areas of my life.

Relationships with people in your child's school are necessary and important to your child's success. May I suggest a conversation with your child after reading this? Ask them about the relationships they have at school with adults and with other

students. Are they strong? Helpful? Do they bring joy? If these answers are positive, celebrate that fact and talk about how to build more. If these answers are not positive, have a discussion about why and think about ways that your child can begin to build more positive relationships at school. Then ask yourself the same question. Do you have strong relationships with people in your child's school? If not, how will you build them for the success of your child this school year and beyond?

-Jenerra Williams & Mychaela Kelly



Room 204

As Mix It Up was approaching, I wondered where the idea came from to mix up students and staff for two days across the Mission Hill School community. I went to the Internet to feed my curiosity. I learned that there is a National Mix it Up Day in schools across the country in an effort to build tolerance for diversity among students. Here at Mission Hill our Mix It Up event helps us all

get to know the different faces that we do not see most days and do not have the chance to interact with in a conversation or even at play. As a new teacher here, this is important because it gives me a chance to put names to faces and to learn something new about students. Making connections across grades, age, race and culture is such a powerful way to build relationships and appreciation for diversity in our school.

-Cleata, Danny & Yesenia

Room 207

After Friday Share, grades 1-8 discussed school-wide behavior. In this discussion, teachers and students voiced opinions about negative incidents that happened around our school. These incidents did not involve all students in the building, but enough to get the whole community involved. What are our expectations for the Mission Hill community? How do all members of our community hold each other accountable? I often hear teachers ask students to reflect on their actions, “How would you like it if that happened to your family member or friend?” Students share they would not have liked the actions to be done to their loved ones. How can we move to a place where we see all members of the Mission Hill Community as important as our loved ones? Students display their protective instincts and love for others everyday, how can we channel those instincts to create the best possible environment for all at Mission Hill School? We can push each other to want teachers, students and families to feel safe, protected and a part of the Mission Hill community.

-Amanda & Amina

CLASSROOM NEWS

GRADES 5&6

Room 210

Here is the latest edition of the Crispy Leaves' End of the Week Reflections.

"Something that I learned this week was that a Polygon has to have line segments and can't have any curved lines. I presented at Friday Share about what a polygon is and I think that I did really well and it was really fun."

"This week we started a new book connected to China that I enjoyed. One suggestion I have for the class is that when we read the book kids should have a chance to read a page or a chapter aloud for the class. We could have a signup sheet."

"I'm looking forward to seeing the Nutcracker with my older cousin and my little sister. Last time it was very boring and this time I hope it's fun." "Something I learned this week was Urban Improv. I loved it but I can't wait until next week when we do groups and I had a lot of fun."

"I learned expanded notation with decimals and it was fun. Next week I will try hard to read more."

-Nakia, Manny, & Elsa

Room 215

The value of reading is more and more uncontested, though how a person learns to read and what a person reads is contested. In my 20 years of teaching in high schools, I met students that I wished had read more, had been read to, had broken through boredom to the pleasure of reading. I cannot say enough about the importance of reading to someone, or having someone read to another: poetry, images, the newspaper, a story, a joke, or a post, even. Every

person should have the pleasures of being read to - that's my maxim. To read is to see experience "touch[ed] into words," says the novelist Michael Ondaatje.

The FireFlies are reading with me Laurence Yep's *The Rainbow People*. We are in a brave new world where animals talk, monster demons crunch on human bones like chestnuts, and the world's clumsiest boy becomes the greatest bridge builder in China.

Read on, read more, read out loud, daily, at home. Please!

-The FireFlies, plus Abdi and Carlos

GRADES 7&8

Room 213

In December, many 8th graders and their families attended the BPS High School Showcase at the Bolling Building. I love the excitement in the air at the showcase event. There is such a sense of hopefulness as next year's newest high school students investigate their choices. Our 8th graders, their families, and I were all impressed by the number of schools, the range of choices each represents, and the pride and joy current high schoolers take in their schools.

Finding the right next school is a lengthy process, with outcomes not in our control. A student could complete all the parts of an application on time and beautifully but still not be selected or assigned to that school. That's why it's necessary to have a number of schools as choices.

In class, we don't think in terms of "good" or "bad" schools, but rather use descriptive language to find the ones that seem to be a good fit for each student. I remind the kids that we control the kind of experiences

we have in life – attitude counts for a lot, and hard work and engaged learning can happen in many places. This week, our final applications were submitted. We've worked hard to prepare the applications, requests for letters of recommendation, and admission essays. And now we wait – mid March seems so far away!

-Ann Ruggiero & Letta Neely

Room 214

"John Hancock? The John Hancock? The one who signed the Declaration of Independence?"

"Isn't there a building named after John Hancock?"

"I know where Hancock street is" "Reginald, isn't there a beer named Samuel Adams"

"Yes, Revere is named after Paul Revere"

These are just a few of the comments I overheard in seventh grade history class this past week. We've been learning about the conflicts leading to the Revolutionary War. We're really lucky to live in an area that is so full of history. For many students, it's the first time that they've become aware of the historical significance of the greater Boston area.

It's been a lot of fun. Students are making a lot of connections. There's an extra level of excitement in the air. Next, we'll be learning about the battles of Lexington and Concord. At some point, somebody will say, "ohh, is that why the football team is called the Patriots?"

-Reginald Toussaint

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

Family Conferences

Family Conferences are being sched-

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uled for February 8th and 9th. If you haven't already, you should be receiving a notice of you and your child's (or children's) time and date. If it is impossible for you to attend at your scheduled conference time, please call Tiffany in advance for a schedule change. Let's not waste the time of any teacher by standing them up. If there is any issue such as transportation or child care that makes it difficult for you to attend, please call 617-635-6384. We may be able to help. Your presence means a tremendous amount to your child and his or teacher.

Mix-it-Up Day!



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

Mission Hill K-8 School
A Boston Public Pilot School
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February Vacation Activities

Many sites require advance registration. All are first come/first serve.

Boston Nature Center: Ages 5-14. Must pre-register.

http://www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/program-catalog#program:sanctuary=21:program_code=43352

Boys and Girls Club: <http://www.bgcb.org/find-your-club/>

YMCA: <http://ymcaboston.org/youth-teens>

BCYF: FREE Water Safety Classes for youth ages 5-12 during February school vacation week. Please see the flyer for more information. Must pre-register.

http://www.cityofboston.gov/images_documents/BCYFSwimforSafetyFlyer_tcm3-50026.pdf

Franklin Park Tennis Association: Must pre-register.

<http://www.franklinparktennis.org/Home.html>

Sportsmen's Tennis & Enrichment Center: Full or half days available. Must pre-register. <http://www.sportsmenstennis.org/community/vacation-week-camps/>

Reggie Lewis Center: Various activities including programming specifically for girls interested in sports.

<http://www.rcc.mass.edu/reggie-lewis-programs/reggie-lewis-community-outreach-programs/reggie-lewis-after-school-programs>

Bird Street Community Center: Bird Street keeps multiple sites open from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., and all registered SACC students are eligible to attend over the school vacation weeks. <http://www.birdstreet.org/school-age-child-care>

Free Ice Skating on the Frog Pond – sponsored by the Highland Street Foundation.

February 15-19th 10am-9pm. Guest appearances, giveaways, and refreshments.

Additional activities on Tuesday, February 16th including a giant snow slide.



Swim for Safety

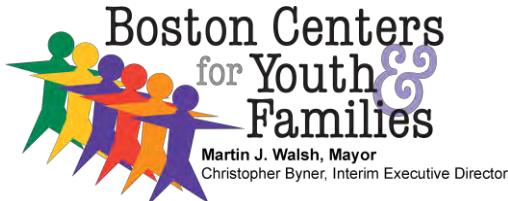
FREE WATER SAFETY CLASSES

In our continued effort to provide child safety programs to our communities, Boston Centers for Youth & Families is offering FREE Water Safety Classes for youth 5-12 years old!

- Space is limited.
- Pre-registration required.
- One lesson per child.
- Schedules will vary per site.
- Don't forget a towel and swim suit.

February 16 – 20, 2016
Classes will be held at your local BCYF pool.

BE SAFE AND CONFIDENT AROUND WATER



BCYF Blackstone Community Center 617-635-5162
BCYF Charlestown Community Center 617-635-5169
BCYF Condon Community Center 617-635-5100
BCYF Curtis Hall Community Center 617-635-5193
BCYF Draper Pool 617-635-5021
BCYF Flaherty Pool 617-635-5181
BCYF Hennigan Community Center 617-635-5198
BCYF Holland Community Center 617-635-5144

Have FUN, Get Healthy!

Basic swim lessons can build the confidence needed around water.
These basic lessons will have you eager to continue to learn!

BCYF Leahy-Holloran Community Center 617-635-5150
BCYF Madison Park Community Center 617-635-5206
BCYF Mason Pool 617-635-5241
BCYF Mildred Avenue Community Center 617-635-1328
BCYF Paris Street Pool 617-635-1410
BCYF Perkins Community Center 617-635-5146
BCYF Quincy Community Center 617-635-5129