



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- Saturday, May 14, 2016 10am - 1pm
Family Discussion on Race at MHS (see flyer)
- Wednesday, May 25, 2016
Teacher Appreciation Day
- Monday, May 30, 2016
Memorial Day: NO SCHOOL
- Thursday, June 2,, 2016 5-7 pm
Governance Board Meeting

May 13, 2016

Volume 19, Issue 26

A Great Team

Dear Mission Hill School Friends, Families, Students, and Staff,

A great team does not happen by accident. As Naki's sports analogies illustrate to us, a great team requires a careful selection of team members and development over time. When we bring new team members on board we never quite know how our new team will function. Our hope is that each new member will constructively add something to the team and that we will become a better stronger more diverse group of people working together. Our hope is also that that new people will bring more joy to the work that needs to be done. This year as we move through our hiring process we are fortunate to have so many strong candidates to consider for our Mission Hill School teaching team. Our process is not fully complete but I thought I'd give you an update now so you know where we are in the process and who our new team members are so far.

Kathy Brucker is joining us as a new ESL teacher and Learning Coach. Kathy was a Mission Hill School parent years ago and it's great to have her back as part of our community in a new capacity. **Emily Kaplan** joins us as our new part time ESL teacher. Emily comes to us from Weston Public Schools where she is a second grade teacher. She loves to write and has experience with 826 Boston and 826 Valencia (San Francisco).

Daniel Flannery is joining us as a new grade one and two teacher. Danny began his time with us as a student teacher last year. This year he continued his degree and licensure program with placements in Jenerra and Cleata's classrooms. It is always helpful bringing someone who knows the school on board. **Alison Porter** will join us as a new theatre teacher. She comes to us from Lawrence Public Schools full of enthusiasm for starting this new element of our school.

At the end of May we will know more about the part time Spanish teacher position, as well as paraprofessionals, and a part time physical education teacher. More news to come about other new community members.

As we get closer to the end of the school year you might see some of our new MHS team members around. Please give them your warmest hello and welcome.



MHS staff team-building at Farm School.

KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

Welcome to Our Tiny Flower Town!

In Room 108 the Otters have been transforming the classroom into a small town. We have "Foxes' Grocery Store", "Silly Pies Bakery", "Village Ice Cream Shop", a house, and a hospital. We've also added a bus stop and police officers. Some of the 5th and 6th graders are helping us with a clock tower - which is still under construction. All of the ideas for "Our Tiny Flower Town" originally sprang from our walk around the neighborhood when we listed all the jobs we saw.

We have been making props from open-ended materials such as blocks and papier-mache. We could use a few donations to help us create our play scenarios. Does anyone have a small chef hat or two? How about small-sized scrubs? We are also looking for paper hats that the ice-cream shop servers could wear. Any donations welcome!

-Geralyn McLaughlin & Donna Winder



Yediel carefully carries eggs at Farm School.



Agboola carefully holds an egg in the chicken coop at Farm School.

Room 106

Last week room 106 headed to the Farm School. With fingers crossed we hoped it would be a beautiful day. It was. When we arrived we were greeted by Gus, one of the dogs at the farm. Rafe the farmer came aboard the bus and welcomed us.

We had lunch before we began our adventure. Children explored the greenhouses and the gardens where they asked farmer Charlie questions about growing plants. He confirmed for us that the plants needed water. He also recommended not farming in the rain as the soil could get pressed down by our feet. We climbed the compost pile and noticed sprouts in the garden.

We took many walks that day. We visited the enchanted forest, walked to go see the goats, and we took a nature hike. We sat on fallen trees that acted as benches to take a rest. We collected birch bark to add to the fire in the horse barn. It was a very

full day.

Last but not least, we visited the chickens. That was one of the highlights of the day. Holding the chicken eggs and carrying them carefully up to barn was a challenge.

-Kathy D'Andrea

Room 107

Can we come back again?

Last Thursday marked another amazing day on the farm. While the day began a little overcast with a few intermittent sprinkles, it didn't stop us from enjoying the animals, visiting the enchanted forest, eating pretzels in the bunkhouse and listening to a story in the horse barn. Our illustrations and reflections include the following:

Jordan: There was a ladder, Farm School people and cows.

Nikaye: I saw a cow.

Josie: We played camouflage in the forest.

Jonathan: The goats were eating

grass. Somebody dropped an egg and the chickens ate it.

Ava: The hike was fun.

Jeremy: These are teachers at Farm School.

Sophia: There was a farmhouse.

Janee: There was a farm barn.

Vidania: This is a horse at Farm School.

Emma: There was a goat, a puppy and poop!

Avian: I chased chickens.

Wren: We went in the forest.

Shona: This is the chicken that was sitting in the chicken house.

Agboola: This is the bus, the driver and the gas [coming out the wind-pipe}.

Jaslin: This is a cow at the Farm School.

-Jada Brown & Jo-Ann Hawkesworth

Room 109

Room 109 (The Turtles) had a really



Warlin with Farm School eggs.



Josie and Jeremy explore the enchanted forest house at Farm School.

wonderful time at the Farm School.

We saw cows, goats, and chickens, took a long walk in the woods, and listened to a story in the Horse Barn. Several children were especially fascinated by feeding the goats. They tried different kinds of grasses that they thought the goats would enjoy. And settled on long strands of a few varieties. They worked hard to stand very still in one place until the goat came over to eat the grass. And such excitement when they did! This activity produced a lot of conversation about different types of grasses, thinking about what goats might like, and strategies for getting the goats to come close enough to eat the grass. It was not only fun but also a good exercise in experimentation and perspective taking.

-Deborah

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 205

All of my students are makers. When given choice, a group of students would sit amongst colored pencils, erasers, crayons, markers and draw for hours. Others would gather up various collage materials, scissors and glue and begin piecing together recycled materials to create a scene. Some of my students build and build and build. There are some who enjoy visiting a special project room at school where they can knit, sew, and put together electronic circuits or Lego robots. To me, everyone seems happiest when they are making things with their hands, but I wanted to get the students' perspective also. Most mornings students respond to a question that we later discuss at our morning meeting. So, as we began our study of "The World of Work" I asked the class, "Do you like to make things with your hands?"



Grades 3 & 4 at Farm School.

18 children responded “yes” and 1 child responded “no.” During our follow-up discussion I asked them Why do you like to make things with your hands?”

Sarah: “When you’re done with it you can use it and explore it.”

Kaia: “When you ask someone to make something for you it’s like ordering someone around. If you want it, you should make it.”

Cyrus: “You can put materials together.”

Soley: “It involves observing.”

Adam: “I like to make shadow puppets with my hands.”

Madison: “When my brother throws things away I take it out of the trash and make something with it.”

Eamon: “It’s fun!”

Emile: “You can make something you can’t get anywhere else.”

-Ashleigh L’Heureux

Room 212

Our garden has been planted and we are checking on it daily to see if anything is growing. This week we are asking the question, “Where does

the food we buy come from?”

We are excited to welcome a visitor from Japan. Ms. Tomoko teaches 6th grade in Japan but is here in Boston to visit and learn about American schools. She is enjoying working with the children and this week helped us make macaroni and cheese. She enjoyed it greatly. As we continue our world of work unit on food I hope we will be able to make some Japanese food.

-Suzanne Brown

Room 217

On Tuesday, Ann, Abdi, and Ayla lead a professional development session on having rich math discussions. Teachers were broken up into groups of five and given four math problems to work with. Each group selected a problem, completed it and discussed it at their tables. It was amazing how much it felt like being back in middle, or high school working in a group. Some of us had the tendency to shy away and watch how others solved the problems. Some of us were engaged in solving the problems ourselves and worked quietly, somewhat disconnected from

the group. And others preferred to work out loud, building off of each other’s ideas and solving collaboratively. Groups worked together in college and graduate school, but this felt distinctly like grade school. It put us into the minds of our students when they’re working on a problem that is just challenging enough to put them in that wonderful place of true, deep learning. It can be hard to have rich math discussions when all of my students seem to be in slightly different places of understanding. Some students are ready for some really rigorous challenge, while others are still mystified by combining numbers. The professional development session inspired me to look deeper into my math teaching to find that special place of true, deep thought. Nowhere is as engaging or fulfilling as that place.

-Kate Needham

GRADES 3 & 4

Rooms 203

“There’s the barn! We’re here!” Last Friday was our annual trip to the Farm School. This is a Mission Hill



The Bee Squad Café in action.

School tradition and an important part of our learning year. Students get to spend the day on the farm located in Athol, MA and are excited every year to return. They saw and fed animals, learned about crops and took a healthy and challenging hike through the woods. Here are some thoughts about their experience.

Anna: I liked how the farmers were always nice to us.

Maya S.: I liked seeing the chickens.

Nevaeh: I liked seeing the cows and the chickens.

Rafael: I liked feeding the goats.

Rui: I liked petting the horses.

Gianna: I liked the animals and part when we got to hang out with our friends.

Janira: I liked the hike and seeing all the animals.

Zhuri: I liked feeding the goats.

Marquell: I liked seeing all the animals.

Braxton: I liked feeding the goats.

Luis: I liked hiking when we went down the steep hill.

Amari: I liked when we were doing the hike and we had to follow Rafe.

Skye: Feeding the goats.

Maya M.: I liked the cows and the chickens.

Peter: I liked the big walk in the woods.

Typrese: I like that you get to pet the animals.

-Jenerra Williams

Room 204

Welcome to the Bee Squad Café

A banner saying “Welcome to the Bee Squad Café” posted outside room 204 was evidence of a business ready for customers. Students were standing in their assigned areas ready to work. Maurice, a dishwasher, went above and beyond his duty to keep the customers happy. When he wasn’t cleaning up tables or washing cups he was asking “Would you like a cup of free cold water?” The greeter (Noah) was at the door along with the help of the managers (Jack and Hamse) welcoming customers, while four servers (Liam, Brian, Azaria and Mekhai) were busy taking orders and handing over order slips to the bakers (Shirley, Elias, Keysha and Chrisvely). It was interesting to see how Chrisvely worked hard to pass on the beverage orders to the baristas (Micah and Kelise) and kept checking in with them to ensure timely service. The cashiers (Yeilyvette and Adler) worked hard to manage the many orders and their bills as orders continued to come in. The atmosphere was one of a real life cafe with the buzz of business in full swing!

-Cleata, Danny & Yesenia

Room 207

Last Friday morning was overcast and cool. Nonetheless everyone was so excited for our trip to the Farm School. During the bus ride, there were several “Are we there yet” comments while anticipation grew. The moment we exited the bus, memories were made. Here are our reflections of our time at the beloved Farm School:

Aahmonyea: I slipped on the stinging nettle.

Amanda: I liked walking in the woods and talking with the other

teachers.

Amber: I liked finding a four-leaf clover

Amina: I LOVED the baby cows!

Amos: My favorite part was going on the hike around the farm, even though it was tiring.

Anand: It was really fun to see the chickens and hold the eggs.

Arianny: I like seeing the horses. I like petting their head.

Danny: I liked the chickens. When you try to pet them they walked away.

Destiny: I liked when we got to look at the cows.

Dillon: I liked collecting eggs from the chickens.

Euan: I liked feeding the goats.

Jahlimar: I liked feeding the goats.

Justin: I liked how we went on the walk in the woods. My group got to take a short cut.

Kaia: I liked going for a hike in the woods.

Kevauna: I liked the dog.

Lenardo: I liked when I went on the wood trip (walk in the woods).

Lucas: I really liked the walk. I liked walking in the forest.

Michelle: I liked when we went hiking. I thought we were going to get lost.

Sara: My favorite was when we got to feed the goats. And they followed me everywhere.

Xavier: I liked the goats.

These wonderful memories were topped off by the sun finally breaking through clouds showering us with its warm spring rays. It was truly a special spring day to remember and already some are looking forward to next year's visit.

Amina & Amanda



W. Mission Hill School Nike Field

Players	Flags	Catches	TD Catch	TD Runs
Joséphine	1	1		
ARIS				
Charlial	4	1		1
Emelia	4	1	12	
Giselle	5	3	12	
Jahlimar	1		1	
Janira				
Evelyn			1	
Maya				
Nataliah	3	1	1	
Lynka	1	2	1	
Shirley				
Yami	1			
Zayma	4	2	1	



GRADES 5&6

Room 210

Enjoy the photos of our elective, Girls' Flag Football.

-Nakia, Manny, & Elsa

Room 215

Where I usually update you about the goings-on with the FireFlies, this week's newsletter is about my own learning. I decided to share a video-taped, 10-mins. math lesson with my colleagues, using a teacher-driven

observation protocol. My focusing question was, what opportunities do you see for having a discourse rich math lesson? I shared a lesson that is representative of how my 6th graders experience my teaching, and one that illustrates my experimenting with how to have conceptually rich conversations about numbers. I asked Ann Ruggiero to facilitate the observation, and here's some of the feedback that I recorded that will support my growth:

- Have students' voices incorporated more into the lesson
- The opportunities were in the questions students were asking
- Use more manipulatives
- Consider parameters for the answer - what's way too big or way too small to be an answer?
- Have students struggle longer, on their own, in groups
- Fascinating how students can go in different directions

Math learning is generative - and I find it more so learning math for my students' sake, than I did when I was student in a math class. To have the review of my peers as I learn to teach math is invaluable.

-Abdi

GRADES 7&8

Room 213

"...and when you take the piece you want all the oowy goowy cheese when you lift the spoon..." "...I love listening to music, the lyrics, the beats, the artists, but my favorite artist is..." "...My mom likes cooking a lot of food. She cooks rice and beans, mac and cheese, mashed potatoes with butter, fish, and ice cream. Sometimes I help my mom to cook..." "...Have you ever been in the car, or at home watching T.V,

then a song comes on? You don't really like it, but you like the way the piano sounds?...” "...Most people know I'm like a big man, but I'm not, I'm a point guard....” "What I learned about myself when I cook is that I can never be on my phone because I will forget about the food and it will burn....” "...Colors, stripes, stars, circles, and more! Have you ever wanted to dye your hair?”

Intriguing? One of my favorite tasks is working with the 7th graders as they begin their Beyond the Classroom Portfolios. We ask students to share with their portfolio committees an out-of-school experience or passion that has helped them to grow. An essay and a demonstration/artifact accompany their reflective oral presentations. We learn a lot about the kids and what's important to them. And who doesn't enjoy sharing a special interest or passion with an appreciative audience?

-Ann Ruggiero & Letta Neely

Room 214

"Reginald, I don't understand this"
"Reginald, what do I do next?"

This past week, I have been aware of how often students tell me that they're confused or stuck on an assignment. Especially, since the assignments are designed to be completed independently. As a teacher, there is a fine balance between providing just enough support and too much support. Without the right support, students can become overwhelmed but with too much support they are simply plugging in information without much original thinking. What was telling to me is that stu-



Kevauna and Xavier feed the goats at Farm School.

dents were asking for help without trying to make sense of the text and or assignment on their own. It gave me the sense that the balance had been skewed and that my students had become overly dependent on me. I made a conscious decision that before explaining something, students have to show me that they really tried to think through the problem first and/or asked a classmate for help and are still stuck.

I'll know that things are more balanced when I start to hear more statements like, "Reginald, I'm not sure if I'm doing this right, am I on the right track?"

-Reginald Toussaint

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

New End-of-School-Year Dates!
School will now OPEN on Bunker

Hill Day, June 17. June 23 and 24 are early dismissal days. Friday, June 24 is the new LAST DAY of school.

From Nurse Georgie

Cleaning out winter clothes and moving in summer clothing? The nurse's office is looking for sweat pants, shorts with elastic waists, and plain T-shirts for students who need an emergency change of clothing. Please consider donating if your child has outgrown any of these items. Thank you!

Shoes! The warmer weather is here and some students have been wearing flip flops and open-toed shoes. Please have student wear sneakers or bring them for wellness and recess. We have had a few scraped toes and knees from falling when running and stubbing toes during recess with sandals.

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