



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- September 29-October 12
Listening Conferences (teacher-scheduled)
- Thursday, October 6 @ 5-7 pm
Governance Board Meeting
- Friday, October 7 @ 9:45 am
Friday Share: Ashleigh, Jenerra, & Reginald
- Monday, October 10
No School: Columbus Day

September 30, 2016

Volume 20, Issue 2

Elections

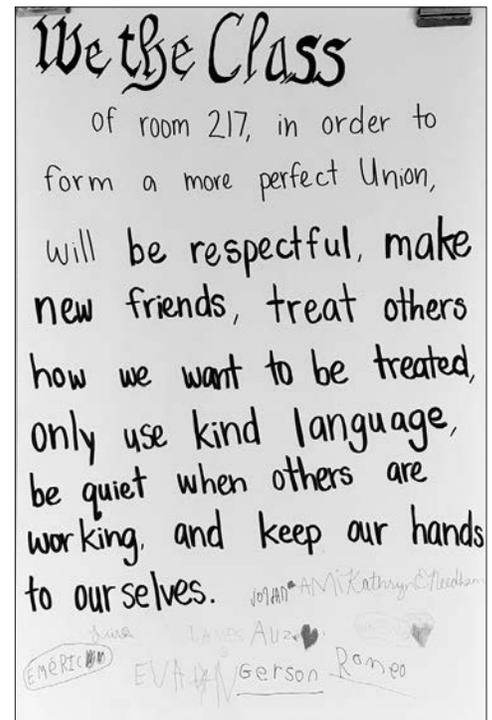
Dear Mission Hill School Friends, Families, Students, and Staff,
Mission Hill newsletters are a bit different than most school newsletters. There are dates about upcoming events like in most other newsletters, but there's also an invitation to think about broader topics. There is writing from each teacher that gives a whole school perspective. There is also the cover letter, meant to engage your thinking as well as inform you.

It's a pleasure working with your children. Walking in and out of classrooms I get to see much of the great work they are doing. When I write to you each week, I think of them. I try to connect with you through sharing thoughts or provocations about the things I see in our school, the state of education in our city or nation, and how those things may impact your child(ren).

This week I am thinking about the upcoming presidential election. As you know, Mission Hill is built on Democratic principles. During any election year we aim to have students engage in the process with intent to deepen their understanding the election process and the understanding of themselves. This year's election is a moment that will be marked in the history of our nation (no matter the outcome). We want our students to connect to it in meaningful ways that they can relate to as they grow up.

As educators it is our responsibility to present facts and share perspectives, so that students can weigh the evidence or content of a message that is put before them and come to their own conclusions. Given the heat of this year's candidates' MHS staff need to be even more deliberate in their thinking about how to educate our students about the campaigns, keeping the doors open for viewpoints to be shared. Take a look at the classroom news columns to see how each class is approaching this. How will you respond to your child(ren) if their opinions are different than yours? How will you respond if they would cast a vote for something that you are against?

Each classroom is going through a voting process of its own as class names are being selected. The process for determining class names democratically can be quite elaborate. On a whole school level our middle school students are running for seats on the school Governance Board. Families are running for seats on the Family Council. The results of each school wide election will be announced in next week's news. I thank you in advance for your participation as candidates or voters in either of these elections.



A grade 1/2 Constitution from Kate's class.

CLASSROOM NEWS

KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

Our trips to the playground down the street give us a chance be in our community, walk together and sing, as well as try new skills - like pumping on the swings and climbing tall structure. Please enjoy these pictures from our trip last week!

-Geraldyn B. McLaughlin

Room 106

"I think I can. I think I can." - The Little Engine That Could

Room 106 has a new name. The Butterflies Class is what we are currently calling ourselves. Our last vote was Butterflies 11, and Horses 4. I asked the students who voted for horses if they would be okay with the Butterflies as their class name. Three students said yes and one student said no. I asked the student that said no if he had an idea for another name. He said no. I asked him if we could try The Butterflies on for size for a little while. He said yes. After some time had passed, he told me that it would be ok if it was our class name. It was a wonderful experience for the children to hear each other's voices and listen to their ideas. It was also a lesson in compromise.

We have continued our work looking at how voices can be used. We read *The Little Engine That Could* by Watty Piper. After reading the story children wrote about things they wanted to try to do. Yeuri said, "I think I can swim so good." Simeon said, "I think I can go to school on my bike." Greta said, "I think I can do ballet."

-Kathy D'Andrea

Room 107

After celebrating many firsts last week, we are settling into our



Children in Room 108 explore the playground down the street!

routines. We are getting better at remembering our new friends names and are moving past the sadness of seeing last year's friends in different classrooms. As with all class communities, we are finding a way to gel... trying to find that thing that defines us. We have spoken about accepting people's differences, being kind and giving everyone what they need... though it might not always seem fair.

In a recent conversation that included the benefits of inclusive settings, I found myself referencing our statement of purpose. We discussed that though the process may look/ be challenging at times, it's worthwhile if our goal is to help mold future citizens who are accepting and accommodating to the needs and challenges of others. While at times we may desire that the world mainly consist of people most like ourselves, the reality is everyone has something to give, something to teach and we all can learn from each other. I wonder what we will be taught this year.

-Jada Brown, Kenisha Epps, & Ashley Penta

Room 109

In Room 109 we are beginning with studying ourselves. As part of this study we are making self portraits. Making the self portraits is a full week activity. Each day we discuss and add a different piece. In this way we can notice and discuss ways in which we are same, ways in which we are different as well as study ourselves closely. So far we have: used 'people paints' to mix our own skin colors, noticed and drawn our eyes, our lips, and added hair and noses! This is a "have to" project during Project Time and students take time to come over to the Mirror Table and

work with a teacher to add detail to their portrait. Soon you will see these displayed in our classroom! We are also reading books, such as the Colors of Us to support this work. We will continue to study ourselves as individuals as we also settle into our classroom community.

-Deborah & Stephanie

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 205

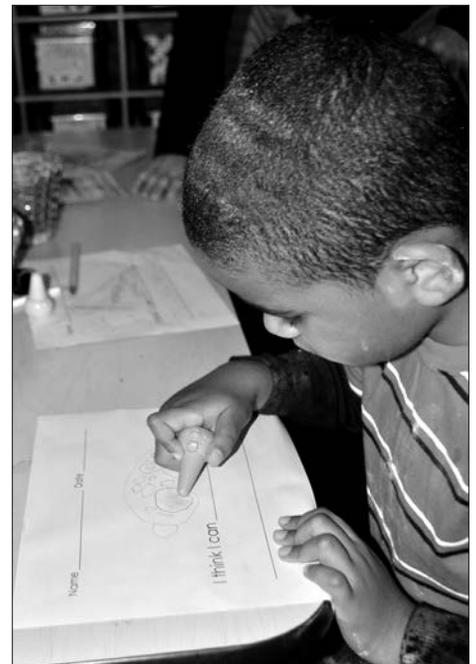
After lunch, a scowl shown upon Agboola's face while Jeremy sat quietly removed from the group. As the class settled into afternoon meeting, I commented on what I noticed about their feelings and asked how we could help. Agboola said that he would feel better if someone gave him something, but he did not know what he wanted to receive. Jeremy said that he needed flowers to feel better. When I asked Agboola if he would also like flowers he smiled and shook his head yes. I then asked the

class if anyone wanted to help these two feel better. Everyone became so excited! Beatrice stated that she needed tissue paper to make her flowers. Soley wanted construction paper and wire. Others wrote steps of how to make flowers to teach each other. We skipped a little bit of what we had already planned for the afternoon to help two members of our community feel better. My heart smiled as I watched students deliver their handmade flowers to their classmates and see the hugs and smiles on their faces. I hope that we continue to have more moments when work together to solve problems and take care of each other.

-Ashleigh L'Heureux

Room 216

At the start of the year we told our students that math class would look very different compared to what they've experienced in the past. The projects, energy, discussions, and fun which are so well developed in



Yeuri works on his "I Think I Can" picture.

our theme work would be integrated into our math curriculum. Students were intrigued by this idea, though they seemed unsure of what it would look like. Last week, we introduced the class to the "Ten Frame Tournament", a set of math games focusing on developing students' counting, addition, and subtraction strategies. Some students are practicing single-digit addition or counting on, while others can be found working on multi-digit subtraction. When this game is played the room is filled with the sounds of medieval music, dramatic challenges to friends, and lots of laughter. Students have the opportunity to be silly, to compete, to show sportsmanship, all while developing their numeracy. Students were excited to share their work at the end of the class, and if the energy and enthusiasm we've seen so far is any indication, we will have a phenomenal year of math in Room 216.

-Danny Flannery & JoAnn Hawkesworth



Jeremy and Agboola's flowers.

Room 217

Last week our class learned about the preamble to the U.S. Constitution. I read the preamble written in an illustrated picture book for us to talk about its purpose and language. We talked about how the new country needed to make rules in order to run well. We learned how the founding fathers wrote the Constitution together as the basic set of laws for the country. We used this information to create our own class Constitution. We then had an official signing where we all witnessed each other agree to the document. Our Constitution hangs proudly on display in room 217 if you would like to check it out!

We the class, of room 217, in order to form a more perfect union will be respectful, make new friends, treat others how we want to be treated, only use kind language, be quiet when others are working, and keep our hands to ourselves.

-Kate Needham



The Leave Me Alone Chair.



Working Hard and Playing Hard in Room 204.

GRADES 3 & 4

Rooms 203

With 10 votes the winner is the *Leave Me Alone Chair!*

This week another routine unfolded. For the first week of school the “spider” chair has had a sign on it that said “Stop. This area is closed.” Students have been waiting for it to open because it was a favorite place to sit last year.

This week I reintroduced the chair as a place kids can go to calm down from feeling angry, frustrated, sad, hurt, or any other feelings they need to let go of. The chair has a basket under it with a pencil case, doodle books and a “If You Don’t Have Anything Nice to Say Write It In Here” journal to write down any bad words or thoughts they can’t say out loud but need to get out. There is also a mirror in the corner so kids can see what their expressions are.

When asked what the name of the corner should be we had lots of good suggestions, but only one won the most votes. Come try our “*Leave Me Alone Chair*” for yourself.

-Jenerra Williams & Ji Yun Park

Room 204

One of the questions in class this week was about how we use our voice. Students shared that we may use our voice to inspire, complement, share, make decisions and choices, vote, encourage, and help. We discussed how to use our words in order to be kind and helpful to our friends and what it means to tell the truth at all times, but at the right time and place, so as not hurt others. I have been so moved and teary-eyed this year to witness the wonderful growth in students from last year, as well as the tenacity of the students who are new to room 204. Not that I am surprised, but like a mother I am always in awe of every sign of growth and development. The Nerds are truly living up to being studious and are committed to working hard, while still finding ways to have fun. Our mission is to work hard and play hard. We are well on our way to accomplishing our mission this year!

-Cleata Brown & Mayra Rivera

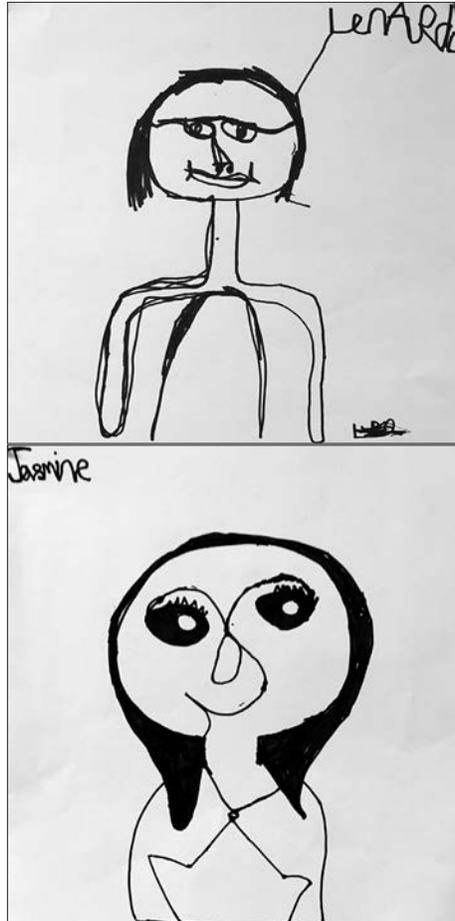
Room 207

On Monday morning, students learned the word of the week- voice. I asked, "What does voice mean?" Students took some time to think and then started to raise their hands. "Voice is when you speak," said one student. Another shared, "It is something you talk and sing with. It is so people can hear you." Throughout our week we continued to expand our definition of voice from the literal meaning to a deeper understanding. We thought about what it means to have a voice and all the ways you can use it. By the end of the week, our definition grew. Some students shared, "You can voice your opinion to tell somebody what you think." "Voice is not only noise but writing" and "Voice is advocating for yourself, your friends and community." As we continued to expand, one student shared, "Voice is power." Do you have a voice? Do you have power?... What are you going to do with it?
-Amanda & Amina

GRADES 5&6

Room 210

I have to confess something. I don't love the first few days of school. Sure, there are things to appreciate. The freshness, the newness, the anticipation of the unknown. But they ring hollow to me overall. It always seems to me that all parties are feeling each other out. Children as well as adults. Everyone seems to be pleasant enough, children adorned in their finest threads and painstakingly making efforts to show their best selves to all. The educators are performing as well, going over routines and expectations. Also working to read children, comprehend who they are this year and what role they



From the Art Room: Continuous Line Self Portraits.

may play for the upcoming school year. Similar to the early rounds of a boxing match, each participant feigning, moving around the ring, in circles, each one waiting for the other to "make a move."

Eventually the costumes come off, and the real children emerge. The ones that will be there for the year. Likewise, teachers begin to settle into the flow of the room, gaining a better sense of how the year might look, how the group will function as a whole. This re-emergence of all parties coincides with a focus on sharing, games, building community and establishing trust. We are at the beginning of that stage now, and I

am very much looking forward to the weeks to come.

-Nakia & Manny

Room 210

What is a community? Is our essential question for this for semester. The actions we are practicing are: be kind, work hard, be happy. Farm School accelerated our efforts to know our students, to learn about them as people with yearnings, hopes and aspirations. I am so grateful to the Farm School staff, the animals, the beautiful outdoors, the raspberry bushes. Students are writing longer narrative pieces from "snapshot" moments from our trip.

Our students want and deserve our attention; it is hard keeping up with their desires to be known and accepted and heard. I look forward to observing how they inspire each other to lead, to learn and to look out for each other.

Homework? Each child is expected to read for 30-45 minutes every night. Reading aloud is fun, too. Check in about your child's day; ask about the essential question and what it means to them.

-Abdi & Carlos

GRADES 7&8

Room 213

There was excitement in the room last week as students anticipated that specials would be starting. Art and music are familiar and appreciated. But this year, we also have a new Wellness/PE program and, for the first time, a real theater class. I heard "I can't wait" throughout the week. I'm reminded of a passage from the Mission Hill Statement of Purpose. "...Democracy requires citizens who are themselves artists and inventors

– knowledgeable about the accomplishments, performances, products and inventions of others but also capable of producing, performing and inventing their own art. Without art we are all deprived....”

I love to see the kids engaged in the arts and appreciate their eagerness to share their work. But I also know that creativity isn't a “special” fit into a class one day a week. Creativity needs to have a place in all our classes, every day. How we use our voice to defend or critique an idea, the strategy we use to make sense of a challenging math problem, the essay or poem that captures in words the world's struggles and beauty –there is a place in all of this work for creativity and art.

-Ann Ruggiero, Elsa Batista & Letta Neely

Room 214

“Try it, you might like it” is slowly becoming one of our slogans. Last week, at our closing meeting, the topic of disruptive behavior came up as a topic. Many students said that when they are in a class they don't really like, they sometimes engage in silly or playful back and forth with their classmates. We talked about how there are a lot more productive and efficient ways to give feedback to a teacher and agreed that we'll try things out, even if it doesn't feel right at first.

This year, along with the traditional offerings (math, literacy, history, theme, art) the 7th and 8th graders are also taking science. They will also have a chance to participate in

a variety of specials such as mindfulness, theater, debate, geography, wellness and music. Moreover, some of these classes are taught by new and unfamiliar teachers. It is very likely, that at some point during the day students will participate in an activity that they don't really like. It is also true that the only way that they will learn and grow is by giving it a chance. In other words, try it, you might like it.

-Reginald Toussaint

Middle School Science

I am delighted to join the Mission Hill School community to teach middle school science on Wednesdays. My specialty is teaching hands-on, inquiry-based science.

This year we will be developing skills of science inquiry while we study physics. We will practice using our own observations and questions as jumping off points for designing science experiments around science vocabulary and concepts. We will investigate physics as they relate to decisions we make as citizens on the local and global level.

I encourage you to contact me with any questions or concerns at kpercival@missionhillschool.org. I look forward to a great year together.

-Kari Percival

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

Governance Board Meeting

Our first Governance Board meeting of the year is next Thursday, October 6th at 5:00 pm. It will be held in the Art Room, 211 and all MHS families are welcome.

Agenda

- 5:00 Supper
- 5:30 Introductions
- 5:35 Approval of minutes
- 5:40 New board member introductions and recruitment check in
- 5:50 MHS program additions: theatre, debate team, sports teams, Girl Scouts, Doc Wayne and Mindfulness.
- 6:00 Response to concerns expressed last year
- 6:15 MHS High school planning update
- 6:25 Discussion of Superintendent Chang's K-6 and 7-12 grade configuration plan.
- 6:35 Standardized testing at MHS and in BPS
- 6:45 Board retreat
- 6:55 PEN letter and MHS Instructional Focus
- 7:10 Principal evaluation 2016/2017
- 7:20 Community voices- setting the agenda for next time
- 7:30 Departure

MHS Family Online Forum

We welcome you to connect with the school family community by joining our online forum at BigTent.

Please sign up by visiting this page: <https://www.bigtent.com/groups/mhsfamforum>

MHS T-Shirts For Sale

Come by the Main Office before they sell out! \$10.00 - One Price Fits All! Youth XS - Adult XXL.

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

Mission Hill K-8 School
A Boston Public Pilot School
WWW.MISSIONHILLSCHOOL.ORG

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It's Dinner and a Board Meeting!

Upcoming Meeting Dates : 12/15/16 3/2/17



Hello Mission Hill families!

You are and have always been welcome to attend our Board Meetings. Please consider this your official invitation to come out and meet our board members, hear a little about important conversations in education, learn about ways to support our school and hopefully consider being a member in the near future. We consider your presence valuable so both dinner and childcare will be provided.

Please **RSVP for childcare at 617-635-6384.**

We hope to see you there!

When: October 6, 2016

Where: Art Room (2nd Floor)

Time: 5:00- 7:30 p.m.

¡Es comida y una reunión de la junta directiva del consejo de administración!

Fechas de la Reunión próximas: 12/15/16 3/2/17



¡Hola familias de Mission Hill!

Ustedes serán siempre a sido bienvenidos a asistir a nuestras Reuniones de la junta directiva. Por favor tengan en mente que esta es su invitación oficial para que conozca a nuestros miembros del consejo, escuchar conversaciones importantes de la educación, aprende sobre modos de apoyar nuestra escuela y considerar ser un miembro del consejo en el futuro. Consideramos su presencia valiosa por lo tanto se

proporcionarán comida y cuidado de niño. Por favor

RSVP para el cuidado de niño al 617-635-6384.

¡Esperamos verle allí!

Quando: El 6 de Octubre de 2016

Dónde: Cuarto de arte (2do piso)

Hora: 5:00 - 7:30 p. m.