



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

- February 7 & 8, 2017
Family Conferences
- Friday, February 10, 2017
Friday Share: Music Share
- Thursday, February 16, 2017: 5:45-7:45pm
Family Council Meeting at MHS
- February 20-24, 2017
February Break: NO SCHOOL

February 3, 2017

Volume 20, Issue 16

Family Conferences on February 7 & 8

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

Next week our school will honor the work of students and our family partnerships in learning by having family conferences. This will also be a great time to check in with the school nurse to say hello, see Courtney about summer camp information, or to see the art, music or physical education classes in action.

February Family conferences are different from the fall Listening conferences. In the fall goals were set and teachers listened as you shared information about your child. This winter conference is student led as much as child age and ability permit. Your child will talk to you about the work he or she has been doing, share an element of the classroom with you, then will sit with you and the classroom teacher for conversation. This takes more time than the fall listening conference. Plan to spend an hour at Mission Hill for each of your children.

There will be guidance through this process. Student greeters will assist you and your child to get to the classroom on time. Teachers will provide you and students with directions for the hour. This includes questions to spark discussion about the student's work.

After your family conference please complete a brief survey to let us know how we can improve this very important time for dialogue about student progress led by your child.

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.



Jahlimar leads her family conference.

KINDERGARTEN

Room 108

How does a three-year-old lead a family conference? Next week you will find out! During your family conference, your child will lead you on a guided tour of the classroom, highlighting their favorite activities in the classroom. The tour is interactive, so please come ready to build, sing, read and more! We will work with the children ahead of time, to prepare them for their classroom tour. During the hour long conference you will also have time to meet with GERALYN and view samples of your child's work and play. We have sent home a family questionnaire, so please take a few minutes to fill that out before you arrive. Thanks! And see you next week!

-Geraldyn & Donna

Room 106

Researchers, take your mark. This week in the butterfly class students chose topics about Ancient Greece that they hope to learn more about. Some of the topics included food, animals, the agoras, buildings, armies, toys, and boats. Children wrote down what they knew and what they wanted to learn. Elliot wrote, "Grapes were in Ancient Greece." James wrote, "The war of Troy." Angelina wrote, "I want to know if they had apples and grapes in Ancient Greece. After their first drafts, children did more research and found answers to some of their questions. While researching, they started finding more questions and continued to look up further information as well. For their second draft, we are making a book. The title is *Research of Ancient Greece*, by The Butterflies class. Please come by a take a look.

The feedback you give us will go into our third draft.

-Kathy D'Andrea

Room 107

"That was awesome!"- G'Mauree"

"The lion hugged me!"- Janee

Last week we were transported to the magical land of Oz, complete with a brave Dorothy, good and bad witches, flying monkeys, a timid lion, a heartless tin man and a brainless scarecrow. To be honest, it was musical theater at its best. The Working Presidents marveled at the beauty of the Strand Theater and were at the edge of their seats for almost the entire performance of Boston Arts Academy's *The Wiz*. They could not take their eyes off the amazing dance numbers, beautiful set and the silly antics of the characters. They danced in their seats to the music, rejoiced at the end when the wicked witch was defeated and Dorothy could return home and were excited to see images of their city flashed across the screen. "That's my house!" was the call of several of our students. Many students left questioning reality versus theater magic. For example, Shona pondered, "I don't think that was real water they threw on the witch." Tyrell tried to figure out the why of acting, responding to the Wiz saying that he was everywhere, "No he's not. He's right there!" G'Mauree wanted to know how everything worked, who was controlling the lights, why the singers were singing, etc. He particularly wanted to figure out how Dorothy was able to write her name in the sky. Frustrated, he said to me, "It's not working!" After some questioning he clarified, "I'm trying to write my name and it's not working! It worked for her!" Thanks Amina and Dani for getting us there.

Thanks BAA for such an amazing performance. Now our students can't stop singing Brand New Day!

-Jada Brown & Kenisha Epps

Room 109

In our room we have begun a focus on Ancient Greece through the lens of Aesop's fables. We've been reading, discussing, drawing, and acting out a few fables. So far, we have spent time with *The Lion and the Mouse*, *The Sun and the Wind*, and *The Hare and the Tortoise*. Some students have previous familiarity with some of these stories and for some it is new. It is very interesting to think about how long these tales have been with us and how they have been passed down through the years. Many of the messages or "morals" still resonate today. Gentleness can be more effective than might, "slow and steady wins the race", even the smallest of us can be powerful. We are using the fables as an integrated piece of our literacy work. We use them for storytelling, language development, vocabulary, sequencing, retelling, writing, and fun! More tales to come.

-Deborah & Stephanie



Mixing it up in room 215!

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 205

On Monday, we welcomed a new member to our community. Cocoa Bean, Cocoa for short, is our new class pet guinea pig. This little fur ball entered our lives because of the work some students engaged in during our fall theme study, Who Counts. During the study students learned about using their voice to make change. Some students really wanted a class pet and wrote a class bill. Once the bill passed, we did some more research to determine which pet would be best for our class. Some of the reasons we decided to get a class pet are to help build responsibility and strengthen empathy among students. We greet Cocoa Bean each morning and say goodbye in the afternoon. During snack time some students offer her fresh vegetables and Madison even read to her during rest one day! We are starting to build a very big bond with such a small creature. Stop by for a visit! Or you might consider hosting her at your house for a weekend or school vacation. See Ashleigh if you are interested.

-Ashleigh L'Heureux

Room 216

I love Mix-It-Up Week at Mission Hill! There's something so wonderful about watching students of all different ages come together to build and play. In my Mix-It-Up group I had students from K0 all the way to 7th grade, and they did not shy away from working together while building with Kapla blocks. Though none of the students in my group were brand new to me, I came away from the week knowing so much more about each of them. I noticed



Mixing it up in room 216.

how well Misael and Tyrell worked together while building a marble run. I found it interesting that Adam wanted to write instructions for how to manipulate a face he built out of Kaplas. I saw that Elias was so helpful with showing Massimo how to build with Kapla blocks. This is what Mix-It-Up is all about: students and teachers working across classrooms grade levels to learn more about each other and recognize just how big and diverse our school community is. I hope that in future weeks and months I can find some opportunities for my students to "mix it up" again!

-Danny Flannery & JoAnn Hawkesworth

Room 217

The United Kates have begun learning the Ancient Greek myths. We are doing a variety of learning experiences using the stories including drawing, building the temple and thrones

of Mount Olympus out of clay, retelling the stories, writing about the stories, and acting them out. Students love learning each of the character's names, their traits, and the stories they are involved in. Here is a retelling of the Greek creation story by Freyja.

"So at the beginning there was Chaos. Chaos was like lots of colors and when they mixed the colors together, they turned into a goldish-brown. The goldish-brown was Mother Earth. There was a god named Father Heaven. He rained water on the earth and she grew plants and flowers and trees. And his tears filled up the rivers and the oceans. Mother Earth married Father Heaven. They had six baby girls and six baby boys, they were called the Titans. Then they had they had three one-eyed monsters called the Cyclopes. They also had three mon-

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sters with fifty heads and a hundred arms. Father Heaven didn't like all the monsters so he threw them into a deep, dark hole in the ground. That made Mother Earth so mad. She gave one of the Titans, his name was Cronus, a sickle. She told him to go kill Father Heaven."

Students will continue to retell the Greek myths to help write an anthology of them by our class.

-Kate Needham

GRADES 3 & 4

Room 203

Last weekend Ayla and I traveled to Los Angeles, California to attend the Teacher Powered Schools Conference. The Center for Teaching Quality and Education Evolving have partnered together to support and highlight teacher powered schools, their success and their importance in the world of education today. This conference is a way for these types of schools to network and support each other.

The conference was full of educators who have started, are teaching in and running, or are beginning to plan teacher powered schools. There were also people there who are administrators, researchers, University professors and students. The Conference was held on the campus of UCLA and we were able to visit the very successful teacher powered school Social Justice Humanitas High School.

I was invited to give two presentations, the school's documentary - Good Morning Mission Hill - was shown and discussed. At the conference's conclusion, Mission Hill was given the "Extraordinary Achievement Award". After accepting the



Room 215's Mix it Up group.

award, Ayla and I led a convention center full of hundreds of educators in singing our Mission Hill favorite, Step by Step. The sweet singing was music to our ears and the words were a sweet reminder to keep moving forward in this incredible work.

-Jenerra Williams

Room 204

"Why do we study about Ancient Greeks?" is one of the essential questions that the Nerd Squad has discussed during theme/project time. Each student has shared his or her thoughts in response to the question; Noah said "We can learn about different things that the ancient Greeks did and how they influence the people we are today", "We can study the Greeks because we can each teach other students, if we become a

teacher" said Maurice.

Other responses were:

"We study Ancient Greece because we read to learn about our ancestors and what happened back then" -Brian

"We study Ancient Greece because the Greeks have some of the same foods as us, like mint, rice, plums, figs too" -Ada

"They invented most of the things we use and do today" -Sophia

"A lot of things we do, they did and they influenced us a lot" -Liam

"So we can know their history and the different things about culture" -Chani

Please story by anytime in room 204 to hear more reasons why we study ancient Greece!

-Cleata, Mayra, Ryan & Anna

Room 207

Two weeks ago, Mission Hill family members gathered to spend time with troupe members from Urban Improv. Urban Improv is a theater group that works with Mission Hill's 4th through 8th graders. Urban Improv uses "An innovative approach to experiential learning that uses structured, interactive, topical improvisation focused on real-life challenges and choices."

The family workshops are an opportunity for family members to explore difficult scenarios that may arise with our children. Scenes were started by the Urban Improv troupe members and family members were able to jump in and show how they might handle a particular situation. After each scenario, family members along with troupe members had rich discussions to share various perspectives. Some of the topics explored on this evening were cell phone use by children, children being picked on at school and teenagers attending a house party without an adult being present. While family members were hesitant in the beginning it was awesome to see some brave folks jump into the scenes.

Our Urban Improv family workshops are always a big hit and family members who attend say the workshops are helpful. If you missed this opportunity please be on the lookout for our second Urban Improv family Workshop which will take place in the spring.

-Amina & Amanda

GRADES 5&6

Room 210

We have been experimenting with Google Classroom in our class.

Most recently we posted a series of brainstorm prompts related to myth writing. Only instead of creating their own individual documents, the questions were posted within the "classroom" for all to see. We set a feature that would allow kids to respond to each other, hoping for a "social-brainstorm effect. It had the added bonus of modeling appropriate responses/communication on social media. Here are a smattering of their ideas for myths.

Why can't we live forever?
Why does the elf on the shelf move?
How snakes got their venom.
Why do we have 5 fingers?
Why are spiders so hairy?
Why do we have a gap year?
What does the fox say?
Why is Donald Trump so nosy?
How Trump got to be president?
How did the dinosaurs come to be alive?
Why rhinos got horns.
Why do we got to have school?
Why is Donald Trump racist?
-Nakia & Manny

Room 215

Meet Half Jamed Tancck - the name of our Mix It Up group in 215 - a creative rearrangement of the first initials of our first names: Hiram, Amos, Lucas, Freyja, Janira, Arilis, Maurice, Ethan, Destiny, Tato, Abdi, Neli, Cyrus, Carlos and Kat. We spent time getting to know one another, for example Neli gets up early in the morning to travel from East Boston; Amos loves to dance; Ethan loves strawberries; Janira enjoys drawing; Natalia loves to match her clothes; Arilis is from the Dominican Republic. Mix It Up is a national campaign launched by Teaching Tolerance in 2002 to help students make



Tyrell tries out a trumpet at Music Open Studios.

connections with peers. At MHS, the 2 days for Mix It Up are super special and give us a chance to start relationships that become friendships.

-Abdi

GRADES 7&8

Room 213

Have you heard the expression, "when it rains, it pours"? Well, it's been pouring for us in Room 213! Last Wednesday, we shared our Theme 1 Who Counts research and letters at the Sustainability Guild, a community center in Dorchester. According to founder Jhana Senxian, the Guild is "a direct action network

of urban residents who re-imagine and redevelop their communities.” The students presented themselves wonderfully and their work was well received. Students were intrigued by the space and possibilities – many have expressed a desire to return.

On Friday, we attended the performance of *The Wiz*, a production by Boston Arts Academy at the Strand Theater in Dorchester. The kids enjoyed the show, and were surprised at the specific references to Boston in the lyrics and setting.

On Monday, 20 of our middle school students went to Vertex Pharmaceuticals in Boston on a trip arranged by Apprentice Learning. The kids explored artificial mucus samples to understand the effects of cystic fibrosis. They conducted a DNA lab, collected a sample of their own DNA, and made a necklace with a vile of the DNA encased in plastic – very cool! The kids had lunch and conversed with Vertex employees. The interactions helped them to understand how people get to do the interesting jobs they saw. Food for thought.

Family conferences are next Tuesday, February 8th. Our class trip to the Farm School is February 13th – 15th.
-Ann Ruggiero, Elsa Batista & Letta Neely

Room 214

Recently, I’ve noticed that our class is completing fewer homework assignments. It is really important to get in the maintain the habit of working at home nightly. Homework provides students with the opportunity to

reflect on that day’s work, prepare for the next day and to work think through a problem independently. Here are a few tips to help you complete your homework consistently:

- Make it a habit: There is homework every night, schedule a regular time and make it part of your evening routine.
- Sacred Space: Create a homework friendly area, this can be the kitchen table, a desk in the bedroom. You should keep your supplies there to limit having to get up and get things.
- Limit distractions: If you are looking at the TV screen or checking your phone every few minutes it may seem like you are on-task when you are not and lose steam.

Lastly, homework should not be a burden, if you find that you are spending more than 90 minutes every night on homework, come talk to me and we’ll work out a plan.

-Reginald Toussaint & Frances Pearce

SCHOOLWIDE NEWS

Family Council News

The next Family Council meeting is Thursday, February 16th at the school from 5:45-7:45pm. Also Urban Improv will be returning to MHS for a caregiver program on Thursday, March 9th from 6-7pm. Babysitting and pizza will be provided for both, please RSVP for babysitting to familycouncil@missionhillschool.org.

Family Corner

At the Governing Board Meeting in December, parent representative,

Sarah Rocha, and Mission Hill staffers began a conversation about what inclusion means and how it affects Mission Hill classes. This column is now open for any more questions you may have about inclusion. Please email kbrucker@missionhillschool.org so we can continue the column.

Q: How do you deal with kids who are not on IEP’s but have trauma or may have undiagnosed special needs?

A: This is an issue all schools in the nation are dealing with and is why we are using positive support systems like Mindfulness and Restorative Justice. Teachers in each grade band meet weekly to share one student they have concerns about. During this meeting teachers share ideas about action steps to take to support the student (and family if needed) and decide if specialists are needed. Any further intervention requires family consent and support. We need you to help us help your children!



Mission Hill School recently received an Extraordinary Achievement Award at the Teacher-Powered Schools conference in California. See Jenerra’s column on page 4 to learn more!

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
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2017 SCHEDULE



**BOSTON CITY HALL, ROOM 806
12:00 NOON – 2:00 PM**

FIRST AND THIRD WEDNESDAYS OF EVERY MONTH

***January 11th and 18th**

(*Exception due to the holidays)

February 1st and 15th

March 1st and 15th

April 5th and 19th

May 3rd and 17th

June 7th and 21st

- First-come, first-served (no appointments)
- Please call at least 1 week in advance for interpretations (other than Spanish) and/or disability accommodations

For more information, call (617) 635-2980

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Kevin J. Walsh, Mayor of Boston



Consultas de Inmigración Gratis con Abogados Voluntarios

CALENDARIO 2017



BOSTON CITY HALL, OFICINA #806
12:00 MEDIODIA – 2:00 PM
PRIMERO Y TERCER MIERCOLES DE CADA MES

***11 y 18 de enero**

(*Excepción debido al calendario vacacional)

1 y 15 de febrero

1 y 15 de marzo

5 y 19 de abril

3 y 17 de mayo

7 y 21 de junio

- No necesita hacer una cita previa, atendemos por orden de llegada
- Por favor llame a nuestra oficina por lo menos una semana antes. en caso que necesite un intérprete o alguna acomodación especial por discapacidad.

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