



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

October 1 - October 12
Listening Conferences

Thursday, October 11, 5:00-7:00pm
Governance Board Meeting #1

Friday, October 12, 9:45-10:15am
Friday Share (all are welcome)

October 05, 2018

Volume 22, Issue 04

1, 2, 3, 1, 2?

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

Mission Hill School opened its doors in 1997 with one principal, Deborah Meier. Within one year Brian Straughter was selected as Deborah's assistant principal. Realizing that both Deborah and Brian had different but equally important roles in managing the business of the school, instilling a mission and vision, and teaching progressive pedagogy to staff, Brian was named co-principal. In 2004 Deborah left Mission Hill, making Brian the sole principal of the school. During Brian's time as principal he had support from two teacher leaders. Of course all of the teachers at Mission Hill School are leaders. However, these two teachers were fully released from their classrooms to take on more schoolwide responsibilities. 1.5 years after Deborah left MHS, Brian announced that he would be leaving for a new career and life in New York state. I followed Brian, and stepped into the principal role at Mission Hill in 2006.

Our school, our city, our state, and our country have been through many changes over the past 12 years during my time as principal. I'm really proud of how our school has stayed on course with its mission through the many changes in our community, available resources, and other external factors that have impacted us. I have many of you to thank for that.

Our school past reflects a variety of leadership models. Presently we have one principal that has always also been a teacher to some degree. We also have an incredibly strong and talented team of teachers that came to Mission Hill School partly for its value of teacher voice and leadership. For the future, I believe the next step for Mission Hill School is to be fully teacher-led with two teachers that take on the responsibilities of the principal.

The role of principal, as protector of the mission and vision for a project based, progressive, inclusive and democratically run public school has become more complex as the landscape of education and raising healthy children has become more complex. The principal of the school has an eye on the conditions that all of the employees need in order to do their best work. The principal runs interference for the many things that can stop a teacher from teaching or a learner from learning. At the same time they create a vision and address issues that arise. There is not one aspect of the work that is without challenges. I believe our school community would benefit from having two people outside of the classroom to do this work.

This proposal of a teacher-led school model has been shared with the staff and the MHS Governance Board. This fall our governance board will take a vote on the proposed new model. I will write again after the vote to share the outcome.

With appreciation,
Ayla Gavins

KINDERGARTEN

Room 106

Kathy, Liana & June

For the past two weeks, we've been diving deep into the skill of using words to describe attributes. We read the book *Quick as a Cricket*, which uses attribute words to describe animals (happy as a lark; gentle as a lamb).

Over the course of these discussions, we've noticed that attribute words are connected to every subject. In math we've sorted buttons by shape, color, size and number of holes. We've noticed how the attributes of our monarch larvae have changed during their metamorphosis. We've discussed the attributes of our bodies and hair as we've created self portraits in the classroom and in the art room. We've noticed how authors use text of various shapes and sizes to create emphasis in storytelling.

We used the new attribute words we've been learning to describe something that we could feel in a bag, but couldn't see (a decorative gourd). Mira said, "It feels hard." Emerson said, "It felt smooth." Walter said, "It felt bumpy in some places."

These conversations about descriptive attributes will lay the groundwork for our discussions

next week about our new theme: bubbles and foam.

-Liana, Kathy & June

Room 107

Jada & Manny

As 107 continues to settle into our routines, we have also been talking about ways to keep our community a place where people feel heard, safe and loved. We spoke about how to make this happen, here are some of expectations that students suggested holding each other to in the classroom/playground and at meetings.

Classroom Expectations

Knock before you open the bathroom door.

Say sorry when you need to.

If there is no space at your first choice, move to another one.

Forgive each other.

Stop when someone says stop.

Treat each other kindly.

Wash your hands.

Keep your hands and your body to yourself.

Give high-fives, handshakes or hugs to your friends.

Play 2- finger tag so no one gets hurt.

Meeting expectations

Sing the songs (even if you didn't choose it).

Kids get to choose songs.

Sit on your spot.

Be a listener.

Please listen when someone is talking.

Raise your hand if you have something to say or share.

Be kind to everyone.

-Jada

Room 108

Geralyn & Donna

Our school has agreed to create "Peace Corners" in all of our classrooms. In Room 108 we have started the journey of designing and using our Peace Corner. We started by reading *The Peace Book* by Todd Parr. We then read a peace book that was written by our K0 class two years ago. We taught our class the song *Circle the Earth (with Peace)* and have been singing it each day. All of these experiences are helping our students to understand and internalize our desire to create a peaceful classroom. They are beginning to understand this new word and what it can mean. Our students know that sometimes they can experience strong feelings (the sadness that comes from missing mom, the anxiety that comes with being in a new place with new people and expectations, the disappointment of not getting to ride trikes due to heavy rain, etc...). The Peace Corner in our classroom is a safe and comforting place to go - to be by yourself - and to feel your strong feelings.

-Geralyn

Room 109

Katie & Mary

Our caterpillars have done their incredible, quiet work of pupating. Now we wait! And notice, of course. I was struck by a child's comparison of the chrysalis to a milkweed seed pod. The shapes and colors are remarkably similar, though the sizes are distinct. I wonder about the evolution of these two species, how they interact.



Angelina, reading outside!

While we wait, we have begun our study of bubbles and foam! Children explored bubbles in the sensory table. Using straws, children blew bubbles into soapy water. They held bubbles in their hands, and poured foamy water back and forth between containers. We brainstormed about bubbles and documented what we already know:

- You can pop them.
- You can spin them.
- And then they can pop.
- You can have a bubble whistle.
- To make bubbles you need soap and water.
- Making bubbles can make things slippery.
- Bubbles are clear.
- There are colors inside the bubbles when it's sunny.

We can't wait to continue learning about this phenomenon!

-Katie

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 205

Ashleigh & Alana

I've always enjoyed being in nature - skiing and going to outdoor summer camps as a child, but it wasn't until I got a dog a few years ago that I really began to appreciate and notice how powerful nature can be. With my puppy, we were out in nature many times a day exploring parks, hiking mountains, and walking around the pond. It always made me feel good and helped me be more present. This summer I saw an ad that encouraged office workers to spend one day a week making phone calls, answering emails, and having meetings outside. They shared how studies show that being outside boosts creativity, productivity, and reduces stress. When I saw the ad I thought about how I myself had experienced this during our staff

retreats outside at the Farm School every August. I thought this doesn't just have to be for adults, children would benefit from this as well. What could it look like to have a full day of outdoor learning? How could we work on literacy, math, science, community building, art, etc. outside? We jumped in with two feet and have had three wonderful Thursdays learning outside. Think Outside Thursday is now something that our class looks forward to every week. Stay tuned to hear more about our experiences next week!

-Ashleigh

Room 216

Danny & Felicia

This was our first official week of Passport Math at Mission Hill School! Passport Math is a time when students break out of their traditional classroom configurations to work on a mathematical skill with peers who are in a similar place with their math work. These Passport Math sessions are happening within each grade band, and some students are able to attend multiple sessions to extend their learning. It was wonderful working on multiplication with students from so many different classrooms; although the work we did was challenging, we supported each other in making sense of arrays and explored how they connect to solving multiplication problems. As I

looked over at Felicia's group, I saw students excited to play games where they practiced counting, such as racing to place teen numbers on a number line and counting down "10, 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2, 1, BLASTOFF!!" Ask your child what their Passport Math group has been working on! We look forward to continuing this mathematical journey throughout the year.

-Danny

Room 217

Kate & Kat

What does it look like to follow the Mission Hill School expectation to be kind? At our school we work hard and are kind to ourselves, others, our materials, and our school. At morning meeting last week we talked about what each of those expectations. We talked about why they are important and what they really mean. First we talked about the different ways one can be kind to themselves. It is so important to be kind to yourself so you can do your best. Parker shared "don't give up, try not to think "I can't do this." Alyssa shared "don't bring yourself down." Vidania said "you need to stand up for yourself if someone is not kind to you." Alice said "if you feel upset or frustrated don't hit your head on the table or with your hand, get help to feel better instead."

-Kate



203 scientists watch dancing raisins



Moxie, from 207, at one of the science stations

Each word in the acronym was accompanied by a particular experiment or activity that allowed students to practice using that routine. We made videos about being safe, observant, logical and effective. We observed raisins dance! We played different logic games and watched colors separate with water and coffee filters. All these activities stirred up much excitement and wonder as Room 203 was filled with questions, exclamations and lots of predictions! Now that we have an understanding of our basic routines, we move into the scientific method, which I predict will bring us interesting results!

-Jenerra

GRADES 3 & 4

Room 203

Jenerra & Mayra

This past week we have been busy scientists! Our Word of the Week was *routine* and we introduced the saying, "Scientists have S.O.L.E.!" They are Safe, Observant, Logical and Effective. The questions we asked were: 1) How do we keep ourselves and materials safe? 2) What do you see when you look closely at something for a long time? 3) What comes next? Does it make sense? and 4) Did I get the results I wanted?

Room 207

Amanda & Amina

Have you heard about the Science Station in room 207?! The Science Station is a place for students to interact with science throughout the school day. The station can be used in many different ways. Last week, students explored a material while thinking about the question: What do you notice about the material? Students wrote: "I notice that the material feels cold." "I notice that it looks hard when you pick it up, but it dries hard." "It has a thin layer of liquid but then it is solid." "The

more pressure you put, the harder it gets." "It is slimy and sticky." Later in the week, students learned that the experiment is called, "Cornstarch Quicksand." This experiment is an example of Non-Newtonian Fluid: fluid that becomes more viscous (thick, sticky) when a force is applied and less viscous (liquid consistency) when a force is not applied. This week, students thought about what type of experiment could we conduct using 5 pieces of paper towels, 4 cups, food coloring (yellow, blue, red, green) and water. Have an idea? Visit the science station to share your thoughts!

-Amanda

Room 212

Cleata & Ayan

Math Challenge has created a loud buzz among the Panthers of room 212! We can't seem to get enough of doing math challenges and that is exciting. Every Wednesday morning we do different math activities including math games and a math problem that allows students to think and problem solve with a bit of perseverance. One hint is given to those who needed it and then the Panthers were off to work with a buddy or self to figure out the math problem or puzzle! This week we completed three picture puzzles with different operations. In one puzzle the hint is that the racket and the ball are each the same

value. At one table Madison and Adan were working together; Madison looked at the puzzle with one that shows $3x = 33$ and said 'I don't know what is 3 times what equal to 33' She was then asked What could you use to help you figure out $3x = 33$? She thought for a moment then answered, "The multiplication tables!" She and Adan ran off to the math center and pulled out a multiplication, Adan hugged her with gratitude and they were back to problem solving.

-Cleata

GRADES 5 & 6

Room 210

Nakia & Kendall

People who know me know that I make liberal use of sports metaphors and analogies. They truly help me to make sense of things, as well as to describe them. In that spirit, I liken the beginning of the school year to the beginning of a football game. The first few plays that you run have the potential to set the tone for the entire game. To that end, coaches carefully craft, and oftentimes script, everything that they will do with the first few opportunities that they have the ball.

Likewise, the first six weeks of school are spent carefully and thoughtfully establishing the building blocks for the rest of the year. Teacher-created work groups are made so as to watch

children interact with one another. Guided discoveries happen where kids learn everything from where and how pencils are returned, to what we do when we need to use the bathroom. Curated lunch groups are supported with "challenge" questions so as to share commonalities, as well as structure what can at times be a difficult time of day for children. During these early days and weeks, even recess to certain degree is choreographed. Many adults watching, recognizing new friendships and struggles, assisting and modeling in sticky situations.

The intention is that all of this is effort and stage setting will lead to the tone and tenor of teamwork and success that will guide us through to the end of "the game" in June.

-Nakia, Kendall

Room 215

Abdi & Courtney M.

Farm School was miraculous. Your child had extended time to be among livestock and living beings. Students built a sturdy fence to keep the cows from roaming into Farmer Patrick's backyard where he has a vegetable garden. They harvested raspberries, squash, herbs and lettuce. They split and stacked firewood for the winter. They went on nature walks; milked the cows; fed milk to

Goose, everyone's beloved calf; prepared meals for everyone; fed pigs, chickens, turkeys. They rested and had quiet time for self care. Farm School is a dignifying place: your child's personality and work enlarge because each farmer makes space for them. "We thank you for filling this farm with your laughter and voices. This is *your* farm, take care of it. Be kind to yourself. Be kind to all living things." I am inspired by the Farm School to make Room 215 a classroom where your child's identity and genius may also grow.

-Abdi

GRADES 7 & 8

Room 213

Jenna & Natel

This past week we have been learning about the Scientific Method and how scientists conduct experiments and on Friday we got to conduct our first Chemistry experiment in the 7th and 8th grades. In our

experiment, we extracted the DNA from strawberries and practiced our Scientific Method skills (form a hypothesis, implement a procedure, make observations and draw a conclusion). It was amazing to see students' reactions when they were able to isolate the DNA from the strawberries and actually see and touch it. Everyone was wide-eyed with excitement! It made us wonder what our own DNA would look like and if it would be similar or very different from the strawberries. This coming week, we will be conducting two more experiments in order to learn about water molecules, the attractions between each other and the impact that heating and cooling has on them. Stay tuned for more exciting science discoveries!

-Jenna

Room 214

Reginald & Frances

What happens to your spirit/soul when you die? Is

there an afterlife? Are people born with their natural tendencies or do we change over time? These are some questions that have come during our discussions about *The Golden Compass*. When I chose to the book, I thought it would foster the kind of thinking that goes beyond the plot and gets us thinking about human nature and I am glad that it is accomplishing that goal.

I also planned writing assignments that would push us to think about ourselves, who we are and what we believe in. Students have just finished writing portrait poems, as usual, they came out beautifully. Next we will write "This I Believe" essays where we get to explore questions such as what do you believe in? How did you come to this belief? This is my first time working with students on theses kind of essays. I really look forward to what they will have to say and to reading them.

-Reginald

Family Council Election Results

Dear families:

The election results are in, counted by Courtney Bruno, who is our City Connect rep:

Family Council Co-Chair:

Alicia McKinney

Family Council Treasurer:

Sylvie Djian

Citywide Parent Council:

Neathery Brenzel

Special Education:

Parent Advisory Committee:

Kristen Collins

District English Language

Learner Advisory Committee:

Anne-Marie Vaduva

Governing Board:

Antonio Ocampo-Guzman (30);

Liz Cumberbatch (20); Corinne

Ng-Pann (18); Arianna

Montgomery (16). Michelle

Leibowitz and Lisa Jeanne Graf are the alternates.

Thanks everyone.

Family Council Executive Team

MHS

Beautification Day

MHS Beautification Day, Saturday, October 13th from 9:30 am to 12 pm. Please come help us clean up and plant our school grounds. If you can, bring the kids, tools, gloves or flowers/bulbs. Meet at the front entrance. Feel free to drop-in or stay the whole time. Let us know if you can make it by emailing: familycouncil@missionhillschool.org

We look forward to seeing you then!

The MHS Toy and Game Lending Library is now open!

At Mission Hill School we are always looking for ways to support imaginative and cooperative play. So many good things happen when children and families turn off screens and turn on quality play! To that end, we have created a place where children and families can borrow toys and games that promote positive experiences/interactions. Our MHS Toy and Game Lending Library also emphasizes a sharing culture over a consuming culture. Any student/family may borrow a toy or game. Just talk with Geralyn in 108, or our Learning Coach, Leila Parks, for more information. If your child takes the bus and wants to check out an item, simply text Geralyn or Leila your permission at 617-850-5471 or 781-561-5616. And if you have a non-media linked toy/game that you think might be a good donation to our lending library, please let us know!



The toy lending library

Mission Hill School Illness Policy 2018-2019

Children should stay home with a parent/guardian if the child:

- Has a **Temperature over 100 degrees**. Students should be without fever, and without the use of medication such as Tylenol or Motrin, for 24 hours.
- Has **Conjunctivitis**, which is an eye infection commonly referred to as **Pink Eye**. The eye is generally red with some burning and there is thick yellow drainage. Students can return to school 24 hours after treatment has begun.
- Has **Bronchitis and/or Croup**, which may occur together, but more often separately. These can begin with hoarseness, cough, and a slight elevation in temperature. The cough may be dry and painful, and it becomes more productive. In croup, there is a loud noise as the child breathes in and there may be increased difficulty in breathing. May return to school when cleared medically.
- Has a **Severe Cold** with fever, sneezing, and nose drainage. Students should stay home until symptoms have resolved.
- Has the **Flu**. A student should not return to school until 48 hours after his/her temperature has returned to normal without the use of Motrin or Tylenol and other flu symptoms have ceased.
- Has **Diarrhea**. A student should not return to school until the diarrhea has ceased for 24 hours since the last episode.
- Has **Vomiting**. A student should not return to school until the vomiting has ceased for 24 hours since the last episode.
- Has an **Earache**. The student should see their health care provider.
- Has strep throat. Students can return to school 24 hours after treatment begins, and 24 hours without a fever.
- Has a **Rash** that has not been diagnosed by a health care provider. Students should have rashes diagnosed. If a rash is diagnosed as a result of any infection, students must be no longer contagious before they can return to school.
- Has **Impetigo/Staph/Strep infection**. Students can return to school 24 hours after treatment is begun.
- Has **Pertussis/Whooping cough**. Students can return to school 5 days after antibiotics were begun.
- Has **Ringworm**. Students need to remain home until treatment has begun.
- Has **Rubella/German Measles**. Students can return to school 7 days after the rash appears.
- Has **Scabies**. Students can return to school after treatment has been completed.
- Has **Lice**. Students can return to school after treatment has been completed.
- Has a **Toothache**. Call the dentist and ask to have the student seen as soon as possible.
- Has **Varicells/Chicken Pox**. Students must remain home until 5 days after the onset of the rash or when all lesions are dry.

The school nurse is required to dismiss any child who may expose others to infection.

Ayla Gavins, Principal

Deborah Meier, Founder

Laura Perille, Interim Superintendent

Mission Hill K-8 School

A Boston Public Pilot School

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