



## IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

Saturday, March 9, 9:00am - 2:00pm  
***Boston Debate League City Championship!***

Sunday, March 10  
***Daylight Savings Time***

Thursday, March 14, 9:15am - 10:00am  
***Kingdoms of the Nile Curriculum Breakfast***

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## Teach Safe Internet Behaviors

Dear Students, Families, Staff and Friends,

Internet safety is always a struggle when students are using the computer, tablets or smartphones. We wanted to draw your attention to the latest internet hoax (Recent media coverage, which includes [this article in The Atlantic](#), explains that this challenge is likely a hoax). "The Momo Challenge." "The Momo Challenge" is an unsolicited, popup that has been viewed in variety of online platforms, including but not limited to YouTube channels, Peppa the Pig and Fortnite. Children are invited to participate in a challenge by contacting a stranger who tells them to participate in various tasks, some of which include self-harm.

Rather than focusing only on this particular internet hoax, we encourage families to focus on teaching children safe internet behaviors, so children and youth are prepared to avoid pressures to act out or give personal information, regardless of any trending threat. Those researching this latest craze believe that hackers are ultimately looking for personal information. Training your child on how to safely use the internet is a critical skill for avoiding dangerous situations for which young people are emotionally unprepared.

Parental supervision of online games, YouTube and social media is the best defense for these types of attacks. Restricting content on devices to suitable content may not be enough in some cases. We encourage you to talk about this topic with your child and the importance of not talking to strangers online. You can find more resources about internet safety using these links:

- Parental control tools: <https://bit.ly/2IJYa67>
- Teaching internet safety: <https://bit.ly/2SwNzuU>
- Common Sense Media: <https://bit.ly/1jaed83>

However, this information provides us an opportunity to remind our students and families of important tips to stay safe online and on social media. BPS launched a web page with online safety tips for students and families:

- [bostonpublicschools.org/internetsafety](https://bostonpublicschools.org/internetsafety).

The staff at school has been notified about this challenge, and if we are made aware that this challenge has participants or is being viewed, we will certainly address it here. Ayanna has met with and will continue to meet with students in grades 6-8 about internet safety. We are hopeful that parents of all our students that allow access to the internet will have that same conversation outside of school hours.

This letter was co-authored by N. Mack, BPS staff, and Ayla Gavins

### **Joel, Learning Coach- Grades 1-4**

A parking lot is a place to keep vehicles. We use a parking lot in our classroom too. Our parking lot guards the vehicles of knowledge: Questions! When students have a question that is a bit off-topic, or there is simply not time to answer in that moment, they write it down on a post-it note and place it on our parking lot poster. This keeps the question available to be addressed later, instead of forgotten or ignored. These questions are used to guide areas of research and future thematic learning. Here are some questions from our "Ancient Egypt Parking Lot":

- "What does cat have to with Egypt?"
- "What is a B.C.?"
- "Who were King Tut's Mom and Dad?"
- "How did they get Animals?"
- "How did they get gold?"
- "How did the MFA get its' artifacts?"

-Joel,  
*Learning Coach, grades 1-4*

### **Kathy B., Learning Coach- Grades 5-8**

A song I use in class states, "Language is power and that's the truth". I love learning new words and languages; all of it opens my mind to how big the world is and all the ways people live in it. These are the reasons I am enthusiastic

about a vocabulary website called Quizlet.com. Since teaching strategies for learning is as important as teaching content, introducing students to this website is exciting. Quizlet includes all domains of learning- audio so students can hear the word and its definition read out loud; images that connect to the words, practice with flashcards, writing, spelling, tests, and matching games; and there is a live team game which supports learning while producing friendly competition.

We've been using Quizlet in our 7/8 word study classes and the 5/6 classes with the novel, *Wonder*. Word study is a time for students to learn the origins and meanings of prefixes, root words, and suffixes to help them make meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. As students get older, they encounter complex words making this a necessary skill for them to possess. With the book, *Wonder*, I posted new vocabulary each week with pictures for students to study. Quizlet is a wonderful tool that is free for anyone to use. Ask your student to show you the words they're studying. An added benefit is that if you're studying for a test there may be a word set you can use because there are diverse topics on this website. Enjoy!

-Kathy B,  
*Learning Coach, grades 5-8*

### **Leila, Learning Coach, Kindergarten**

I recently had the opportunity to travel to Denver for the PEAK Conference on Inclusive Education. It was incredible to be surrounded by hundreds of

educators and parents who were all committed to full inclusion for students with disabilities. I was surprised to find that, while Massachusetts is ahead of the curve on many education stats, our state is not a leader in supporting diverse learners. I saw abundant data showing that full inclusion of students with disabilities leads to monumental educational gains, and no data indicating any negative side effects for non-disabled peers. Unfortunately, many schools in Massachusetts are stuck in their ways, and too many children are segregated into programs based on their disability label.

I was honored to represent MHS at PEAK, and share how everyone in our school is included in the classroom. It is my hope that, as our students learn together year after year, they will lead the way to a more inclusive future for our community, our state, and our country.

-Leila,  
*Learning Coach, Kindergarten*

### **Vanessa, Learning Coach, Grades 5-8**

For the two weeks before February Break, I had the privilege of working with Major Skillz (Abdi's and Courtney's class) during their theme time. My focus during my time with them was geography. We started with discussing basic geography terms (e.g., latitude, longitude, equator, etc.) and how they applied to maps and globes. Since some of the terms were new and a bit abstract, we created flashcards with the geography term, definition, and a picture that

related to the word. Then we took our new geography knowledge and applied it to a map of Nubia after the New Kingdom. Students had to find various latitude and longitude lines, find cities based on their cardinal directions in relation to other cities, and find various landforms and map features. Students are now working on creating their own Google map that will feature between 8 to 10 Nubian geographical locations from a bank of approximately 25 locations. They must locate and "pin" the location on their map. Their location pins will include a picture or video of the location and then students will write a brief description or fact about each location. The personalized maps will then be made public, so Major Skillz will have a Nubian digital map collection to share with the whole school community at the curriculum breakfast.

*-Vanessa,  
Learning Coach, grades 5-8*

### **Coordinator of Special Education Services (COSES)**

Hello Mission Hill Community! I want to take this time to introduce myself and thank everyone for the warm welcome I have received. My name is Kathleen McCarthy Shepherd and I am the Coordinator of Special Education at Mission Hill. I am so excited to be in this new role at Mission Hill! I have previously taught in both the Emotional Impairment strand and Learning Disabilities strand in BPS for the past 10 years. I was looking for a change that would allow me to continue working with families and help students succeed and I have found that change at

Mission Hill as the COSE. Another exciting change for me was getting married over the summer! Because of that, BPS is in the middle of changing my last name so you may receive information from both Kathleen McCarthy and Kathleen Shepherd. They are both me! During the transition I have been trying to sign things, Kathleen McCarthy Shepherd, to help ease confusion but also wanted to address it with the larger community in case there are any questions about either name. Please let me know if you have any questions about Special Education at Mission Hill, or about your child's IEP/504 Plan specifically. You can also access the Parent Portal on EdPlan for all documents pertaining to your child's plan. I look forward to working with every family to make sure every child has what they need to succeed at Mission Hill! Thank you!

*Kathleen,  
Coordinator of Special Education*

### **Speech & Occupational Therapy (SPOT)**

We appreciate the opportunities we get to collaborate with the amazing staff at Mission Hill. We also enjoy and learn a lot from each other while teaming up to support students. We sometimes see students together in SPOT (speech/OT) groups, where both OT and speech objectives are targeted in a fun but functional manner. Here's an example: Students used scooter boards to move back and forth along the hallway. At one end they used homemade fishing poles to "fish" pictures (with the help of Velcro).

Then they "scooter" down the hall and place the pictures in cups. After the activity the students each wrote a three-paragraph description with an introduction, main body/details and a conclusion. This session addressed planning and sequencing for both motor and language skill development. Everyone had a fun (including us) and made progress toward their goals.

*Alexia,  
Speech-Language Pathologist*

*Marion,  
Occupational Therapist*

### **Music**

As the new music teacher, I'd like to officially say, "Hello!"

I'm excited to join the Mission Hill community, and since starting in late January, I have had the opportunity to meet many wonderful staff members and students. A quick snapshot of what we've been doing in this short amount of time:

Our K-2 grades have been focusing on pitch matching and independent and group singing through our daily routine and the "Chubby Little Snowman" song. We have also worked on the concepts of loud and soft, as well as following the aural cues of a conductor as we ride a "silent roller coaster".

After Grades 3-6 worked together as a class to write an "I'm Like That" rap using Spongebob as an example, they then worked together in small groups to create

and share their own raps with each other. We have now moved on to pitch and interval exploration in grades 3-4 through solfege, and beginning improvisation and composition with grades 5-6.

Grades 7-8 have already provided me with a long list of music that I should be listening to in my free time (which I'm enjoying very much!) and we've started a keyboarding unit through playing the bass line to popular songs as a group, with an eye towards accompanying ourselves singing and playing as a class.

*-Cara*

### Theatre Arts

Kindergarten classes continue to delve into the world of Storytelling/Story Acting. Geralyn's class actually performed an original story at a recent Friday Share to the wonder and delight of all. Ancient Egypt has been a strong theme among kindergarten storytellers recently! We also continue the work of building positive team dynamics and personal confidence through a variety of theatre games which become more complex as the term progresses. Rehearsals are heating up for the two plays being produced by 5/6 classes. The BPS Arts Dept has just acquired portable lighting systems, and Paul will be among the first to put the

new equipment to use at MHS. Several parents in both 5/6 classes have stepped forward to volunteer as production assistants. It's still not too late to volunteer—just send Paul an email. Stay tuned for production details. Students in grades 7/8 just completed a unit in filming and editing PSA's (Public Service Announcements). Look for some of that work to appear at the end of the year at the Eighth-Grade Art Show. We are now working on a puppetry unit, which includes making and operating hand puppets. Maybe some of that work will end up in the Art Show as well! Until next time...

*-Paul*

**Ayla Gavins, Principal**

**Deborah Meier, Founder**

**Laura Perille, Interim Superintendent**

**Mission Hill K-8 School**

**A Boston Public Pilot School**

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Hello Mission Hill Community,

We're excited to share some news about the Co-Teacher Leader search and your opportunities to continue being involved in the process.

The positions are officially posted and we have already begun to receive applications. From March 11-March 15 applicant resumes will be available for review in the office. You can score each applicant on a scale of 1-3. On March 15, the committee will use the compiled scores as we make decisions about which applicants will be moving forward in the process.

We will do first round interviews during the week of March 18. Community members are able to attend these interviews but questions will be limited to the hiring committee. All of our questions were carefully curated based upon qualities and competencies determined through several open Governance Board and smaller group meetings, as well as the offsite forum times hosted by Governance Board family reps. Many of the questions being asked were submitted by MHS family members. At the end of these interviews - those present will have the opportunity to submit feedback to the committee through a google form directly following the interview.

After this first round, the hiring committee will narrow down the applicant pool and will request portfolio submissions and writing samples. In small groups, we will shadow the finalists in their present positions.

We will invite finalists for second-round interviews during the week of March 25. The same process for involvement from first round interviews applies to these interviews as well.

After meeting separately, the committee will bring our recommendations for hire to the 5:00pm Governance Board meeting on March 28.

Thank you for all of your input and interest leading up to this point!

Elizabeth Tambascio Cumberbatch, Governance Board Member and Alicia McKinney, Family Council Co-Chair on behalf of the Co-Teacher Leader Hiring Committee