



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

Saturday, October 11th 8:30am-3pm
Boston Debate League - Tournament 1
Suffolk University Law School

Monday, October 14th - **No School**

Wednesday, October 16th 5:54-7:30pm
Family Council Meeting
(open to all - see flier attached)

Friday, October 18th, 9:45-10:15am
Friday Share (open to all every week)

October 11, 2019

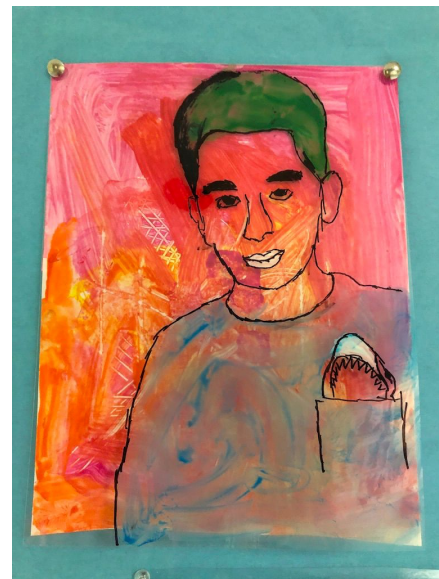
Volume 23, Issue 6

School as a Protective Factor

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

How can school act as a protective factor for children, and not a risk factor? This is the question that Amina Michel-Lord and I posed to a group of educators at the Progressive Education Network (PEN) National Conference in Minneapolis, MN last week. Danny Flaherty, Cleata Brown, Amina and myself travelled to PEN to present and to learn with other progressive educators from across the country - including past Mission Hill School principals Deborah Meier and Ayla Gavins!

School as a protective factor is an idea we have been working on at Mission Hill School, and it stems directly from our two-year partnership with Boston Children's Hospital Training and Access Project (TAP). Our two years with TAP/Children's Hospital has helped us to create a well-organized and easily accessible system of behavioral health supports. We have many Tier 1 supports - these are supports that are in place for all students and can help keep smaller problems from becoming bigger ones. These include our Peace Corners in every classroom as a place for students to go to safely work through and manage strong feelings. 80% of students have their behavioral health needs met through Tier 1 interventions. Tier 2 are more targeted interventions that are helpful to some students, some of the time. At Mission Hill this includes our Doc Wayne therapeutic sports program in 4th-8th grades. For a small number of students we have additional Tier 3 support, which includes individual therapy or a therapeutic mentor.



Our newly formed SEAL (Social Emotional and Academic Leadership) Team guides and oversees the whole system of support. The SEAL team includes Co-Teacher Leaders Geralyn & Jenerra; classroom teachers from all the grade bands: Kathy D, Jada, Ashleigh, Amina, Nakia, Kathy B; Art teacher, Jeanne; Occupational Therapist, Marion; Learning Coach, Joel; Nurse, Georgie; and school psychologist, Alyssa Alvarado. Attached to this week's newsletter is our new four-page document, *Accessing Behavioral Health Supports at Mission Hill School*, which was created in partnership with Boston Children's Hospital. It is also posted on the [resource page on our website](#).

Geralyn Bywater McLaughlin

KINDERGARTEN

K0 Room 108

Quéla, Liana, Donna & Sarah

K0 students have been learning about the four seasons through doing some of their own seasoning! (*ba dum tss*) In the past week students have been immersed in Fall related activities including making their very own apple pie. Following pie making, students expanded their learning about Fall to include weather characteristics of Summer, Spring and Winter. One book that helped us learn the four seasons was Chicken Soup with Rice by Maurice Sendak, which we read along with the Carole King song. From lines such as "In January it's so nice, while slippin' on the slidin' ice" to "In August it will be so hot I will become a cooking pot" this story was loved by all students as they spotted fun pages filled with sun, wind, clouds, and snow. The fun continued when we made our own chicken soup with rice and enjoyed it as a class. We enjoyed reading the story Rice Around the World prior to making our soup and hope to make some strong connections to our future study of China!

-Sarah, Quéla, Liana and Donna



K1/K2 Room 106

Kathy & June

Last week we went back to the Arboretum. Before we went we reviewed our Arboretum words and thought about what we might see this time. This time we were led by our student teach Yuliza. She had a special project in mind, nature art. Yuliza gave each child a bag to collect nature materials. Children collected a variety of leaves, wood chips, and seeds.

They used the materials they collected to make collages. Ailey: This is a fairy having a dance party." Walter: "I made a very very nice picture about leaves. It turned out to be a ginormous tree with giant leaves." Xander: "I made trains chugging." Come by and visit room 106 to see all our nature inspirations.

We did one more thing before we left the Arboretum. We read the story walk that is on display

(It starts near the main building). It was one of the highlights of the trip. The book was titled *Kate, Who Tamed the Wind* by Liz Garton Scanlon.
-Kathy & June

K1/K2 Room 107

Jada & Manny

After defining Earth both as the planet that we live on and another word sometimes used for soil, we began to think about what things are a part of/make up Earth for our class mural. Our students said the following:

Beck: A volcano is a part of Earth. It is spouting.

August: This is the map to find the treasure chest. The treasure chest is a part of Earth.

Abubakar: A big house is a part of Earth.

Jonathan: The center of the Earth has lava, melted metal and not melted metal.

Josue: Tomatoes and carrots, humans and rain are a part of the Earth.

Gio: A super super big boat is a part of the Earth.

Maeve: This is the lava at the center of the Earth.

Alysha: I made a kitty and another kitty. The tree with ice cream will turn into apples. Yummy! Kitties and trees are a part of Earth.

-Jada Brown and Emmanuel St. Vil

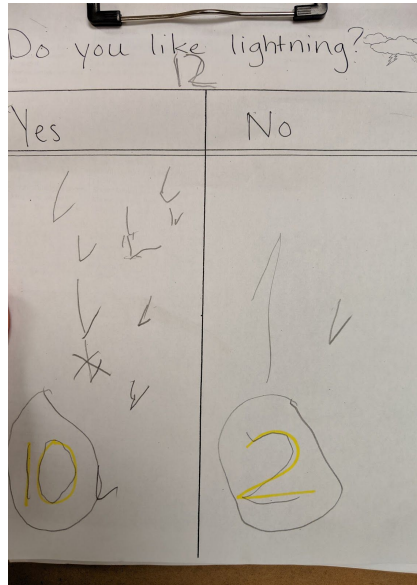
K1/K2 Room 109

Katie & Courtney M.

Room 109 has been especially enjoying math this year! Each day, children work with a partner at a rotation of math stations. At the end, the children gather on the rug for “problem solving.” The first few days, the problems were mostly about partner work. *What if my partner doesn't share the materials?* As children gain skills for partner work, our hope is that the problem solving will focus more on mathematical problems. Last week, we saw a mathematical problem arise in the survey station.

At the survey station, children use a clipboard and paper to survey the class about a question, for example, “Do you like wind? Yes or No.” They collect the data and compare the results. The survey station children were asking classmates, “Do you want to be on the *winning* team?” We discussed if the response with the most results “wins.” The children decided that it isn't winning or losing if you say what's really true for you. If you really *don't* like wind, but most children do, it's not losing to give an unpopular answer. With this, we are beginning to appreciate data and comparison!

-Katie



GRADES 1 & 2

Room 210

Ashleigh, Alana & Stephanie

Introducing....Cocoa Kindness.

After a couple of weeks of getting to know each other, brainstorming ideas, and generating persuasive arguments to convince classmates, we now have a class name. Part of our class name represents our beloved class pet, Cocoa Bean the guinea pig, and the other part of our name represents the kindness we want to spread throughout our classroom, school, and community. We felt this name also connected nicely with our four school-wide kindness agreements: Be kind to yourself, be kind to others, be kind to our materials, be kind to our school. It was important for us to choose a name that would describe our class well and be unique to who we are as a community.

Room 216

Danny, Felicia & Destiny

In our opening meeting on the farm, Carmen said “Clap your hands if you're Farm School. Clap your hands if your Mission Hill. We have a relationship here, so I think we all are Farm School, and Mission Hill too.” This week I went with Ms. Coleman and her 5th and 6th graders to the Farm School, my first time going on the three-day trip with students. While there, I saw excitement as students cared for the animals, from Ashton helping move the turkeys' houses to Jayden feeding a baby lamb with a bottle. I noticed hesitancy at trying new things, followed up by plenty of success: Majadi became an expert at cleaning the vegetables for lunch, and Darrius and Jimmy worked together to build a teepee of sticks so we could roast s'mores. I reconnected and reminisced with Jack and Moxie, who were both in my class three years ago(!). I could go on and on. Finally, I want to give appreciation to the farmers who supported us through the whole trip. The thought and care the farmers put into everything from the food to the evening activities meant a lot to us. As I return to Mission Hill, I know that I am Farm School too.

-Danny Flannery

GRADES 3 & 4

Room 207

Amanda & Amina

Last week Geralyn, Cleata, Danny and I headed to Minneapolis to

attend the Progressive Education Network (PEN) conference. Geralyn and I presented the work we've done at Mission Hill to support students and families with behavioral health. Danny presented work he's done for the Struggle for Justice Through the African-American Lens.

We talked about how important relationships are at Mission Hill and that includes adult relationships. The conference was fulfilling professionally and the time the four of us spent together allowed us to build our personal relationships. We talked about work *and* we had time to laugh and let go. I learned about everyone's families through stories about growing up. I learned who enjoys a good nap as much as I do and I learned that we all have a great appreciation for an inexpensive yet delicious meal of pasta!

During the conference, I also spent time with Ayla, our former principal, as well as Deborah (Debbie) Meier, our founding principal. It is always amazing to be able to spend time with these extraordinary women!

While I enjoyed my time away, I have been inspired and am ready to get back to the important work we do.

-Amina Michel-Lord

Room 212

Cleata & Ayan

At the beginning of each school we ask students to reflect on their past school year regarding

what went well for them, what



they would like to change and what goals they have for the new year. This activity is generally penned as "My Hopes and Dreams." This year as students shared their hopes and dreams, I also reflected on my past year and made professional and personal goals for the new school year. My hope is for all my students to bloom at their own pace as I allow them the space and resources they need to develop into individuals who are unafraid to be who they are and take risks to beat any opposition they meet along the way. My dream is to see them long after they have left 3rd and 4th grade shouting across the aisle at the supermarket, "Ms Cleata, it's me! Look, it's me!" I would give them a warm embrace and smile with pride to see them still blooming, still flowering in the real world.

-Cleata Brown

Room 215

Leila & Kat

One of the amazing things about third graders is how eager they are to try new things. Kat and I teach a mixed third grade math

group from two different classes. In listening conferences, many families have expressed surprise at how quickly we've jumped into multiplication. Isn't the beginning of the year all about review? Not with this group! While we have some built-in time for review of place value, addition, and subtraction (especially during Passport Math), we have been diving head-first into multiplication since the second week of school. And, you know what? These third grade students are eating it up! They know how to solve problems by drawing pictures, skip counting, and using a hundred chart. Some of them have already memorized several multiplication facts, and a few have started challenging themselves with self-timed quizzes during their independent work time. So, if you want to learn new strategies for solving 3×6 , talk to a Mission Hill third grader!

-Leila

GRADES 5 & 6

Room 203

Ms. Coleman & Frances

Editor's note: Please enjoy photos from Room 203's time at the farm throughout this week's newsletter. This week's news was sent from Ms. Coleman on their final day at The Farm School:

"What a time we had! We made history as the first ever farm school breakfast with milk products all from the farm."



GRADES 7 & 8

Room 213

Jenna & Courtney D.

I am excited to announce that Sole Train Practices are up and running (no pun intended) at Mission Hill! Sole Train is a nonprofit organization that seeks to empower youth through running and is active in 30 Boston Public Schools including, for the first time, Mission Hill. Young Soles (students) along with Old Soles (adults) will be practicing every Wednesday afternoon with the ultimate goal of either running 5 miles or a half marathon at the Run to Remember in May. By

participating, Young and Old Soles will not only improve their physical fitness but will learn how to break down and work towards a challenging goal (completing the race) while supporting each other along the way. This past week we held our second practice and despite the fact that the rain kept us inside, the enthusiasm amongst the students was electric; we certainly have an energetic group of Young Soles! We ran several laps around the gym and played a spirited game of "Fishie, Fishie Cross the Ocean". Our running community may be just forming but I can already tell that it is going to be an amazing year!

-Jenna & Courtney D.

Room 214

Kathy B. & Ayanna

When there is a job to do, everyone wants to understand how to do it, and why they're doing it. In Humanities, we started the year by unpacking a few of the Massachusetts English Language Arts learning standards for reading and language. I wanted students to understand the importance of reading text carefully, focus on finding text-based evidence to answer questions, and build vocabulary. We worked together to learn the standards, then write them in more familiar language to guide our work.

At one point, someone commented, "This is easy, we just need to find different words than we usually use." Maurice added, "We're gonna learn a whole new vocabulary this year." My hope is that this work will encourage students to understand how each assignment is increasing their knowledge and preparing them for the next academic challenge across the curriculum.

-Kathy B. & Ayanna

Room 205

Nakia & David

Students from 205 hanging out in the Enchanted Forest at the Farm School this week.



-Nakia



SCHOOL-WIDE NEWS

Holidays at Mission Hill School

Every fall we like to remind our community that there are many things we celebrate at school - such as our Theme Breakfasts to showcase work. We celebrate Acts of Kindness every Friday at Friday Share (families are welcome 9:45-10:15). We welcome families to teach their child's classroom about traditions and culture. Please also know that we **do not** celebrate holidays and birthdays at school. Please let us know if you have any questions about that.

We Can Help

Please let us know if and when your family is experiencing food insecurity during times when school is not in session (weekends and/or school vacations). We can help you. You can call or email our Co-Teacher Leaders or Georgie Marks, our school nurse. Call us at 617-635-6384 or email us (see below).

Jenerra Williams: jwilliams@missionhillschool.org

Geralyn Bywater McLaughlin: gmclaughlin@missionhillschool.org

Georgie Marks: gmarks@missionhillschool.org



Geralyn Bywater McLaughlin and
Jenerra Williams, Co-Teacher Leaders
Deborah Meier, Founder
Dr. Brenda Cassellius, Superintendent

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Accessing Behavioral Health Supports at Mission Hill School

last updated 08/22/19

PREVENTION SUPPORTS

1. At the end of school year:

- Age bands meet to establish classrooms for the upcoming year before 3rd week in May
- Meet with current teachers in June to discuss classrooms for next year and review current behavioral health supports.
- If a student is currently receiving behavioral health supports:
 - Outreach to family over the summer (phone call/letter in the mail). The goal is to collaborate with families to support the student.
- If summer outreach doesn't happen, make sure you contact the family before the school year starts.

2. At the beginning of school year:

- First welcome letter:
 - Include ways to communicate with teachers
- Add something regarding behavioral health to your welcome letter:
 - "If someone is currently supporting your student in the community with behavioral health, it will be helpful for us to collaborate with those providers so that we can better support your child."
 - Make sure the teacher receives a signed release of information to collaborate with the provider.

3. Plan for Tier 1 Supports:

- See supports on next page



SEAL TEAM guides and oversees the whole system of support (Social Emotional Academic Leadership TEAM)

Sequence of Supports

Strategies

TIER 3

- Contact Family - Have there been any recent changes in family?
- Permission to discuss child at Action Team.
- Action Team
- Child study can be an option at this level.

TIER 3

- Individual Therapy
- In Home Therapy
- Therapeutic Mentor
- [Intensive Case Coordinator \(ICC\)](#)
- IEP

TIER 2

- Contact Family - Have there been any recent changes in family?
- Keep IEP as a focus if the student has one.
- Connect with any outside support people (clinicians, church people, mentors, after school program managers, tutors etc).
- Child Study*
- Permission to discuss child at Action Team.
- Action Team

TIER 2

- Doc Wayne
- [Behavior as Communication](#)

Supports for Anxious/Active Behaviors

- [Movement Breaks](#)
- [Fidget Tools](#)
- [Optional Work Spaces](#)
- [Mindfulness](#)
- [Deep Breathing](#)
- [Mindful Listening](#)
- [Progressive Muscle Relaxation](#)
- [Pee Pad](#)

Supports to Build Self Esteem

- [Positive Self Talk](#)
- [Build Philanthropy](#)
- [Peer/Lunch groups](#)
- Help student look good
- Supports for Externalizing Behaviors**
- [Check in Check Out](#)
- [Monitoring](#)
- [Praise Approximation](#)
- [Soft Reminders/Non-verbal](#)
- [Consequence Mapping](#)

TIER 1

- Contact Family - Have there been any recent changes in family?
- Review IEP if the student has one.
- Age pair/ band team
- House Meeting
- Check with last year's teacher.

TIER 1

- [Responsive Classroom](#)
- [Classroom rules](#)
- [Structured Check Ins](#)
- [After School Programs](#)
- [Urban Improv](#)
- [Commonwealth Circus Center](#)
- [Music/Arts](#)
- [Electives](#)
- [Listening Conferences](#)
- [Welcoming Schools](#)
- [Democratic Classroom](#)
- [Friday Share](#)
- [Mission Hill Way](#)
- [Acts of Kindness](#)
- [Restorative Justice](#)
- [Zones of Regulation](#)
- [Peaceful Place](#)
- [Farm School](#)
- [Emotional Literacy/books and feelings wheel](#)



PROCESS AND CONSIDERATIONS

WHY USE A TIER SYSTEM OF SUPPORT?

It is effective and efficient. It streamlines meetings and helps reduce time for teachers - starting with a meeting with your Age Band, then moving forward and bringing in the other people that support the student. When we have a clear system, students are better able to receive the services they need and teachers are better able to ask for support for themselves, the students (families). Guiding our system of support are [Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices](#).

START AT TIER 1

- Monitor progress of strategies within your system of support (Age Band/House/previous teacher, any Tier 1 support).
- Allow 4 weeks for the strategy to solidify.
- Make sure that at 4 weeks you check with the system of support you have chosen to see if the strategy has been effective.
- If it wasn't effective, go to a higher level of support.

AT TIER 2

- Monitor progress of strategies within your system of support (Outside supports, Doc Wayne, other Tier 2 supports).
- Allow 4 weeks for the strategy to solidify.
- Make sure that at 4 weeks you check with the system of support you have chosen to see if the strategy has been effective.
- If it wasn't effective, go to a higher level of support.

AT TIER 3

- Monitor progress of strategies within your system of support (Action Team)
- See Action Team Protocol
- Allow 4 weeks for the strategy to solidify.
- Make sure that at 4 weeks you check with the system of support you have chosen to see if the strategy has been effective.

CONSIDERATION FOR ALL LEVELS OF SUPPORT:

- If you see an increase in intensity and frequency of a behavior reach out to ACTION TEAM. Fill out a Referral Form. At the Action Team meeting the team of specialized support can attend to the needs of those involved and help create a prevention plan.
- The Referral Form can be found on the Drive in the Action Team folder.
- If there has been a crisis after an Action Team, follow up with the Action Team to create a plan to support the student to avoid any further crisis.

You may go through each tier quickly at teacher judgement - a few days or weeks. When a student's behavior is escalating in intensity or frequency you can move through the tiers for higher levels of support.

Looking for more? Check out TAP Online Free Trainings:

1. [An Overview of Social Emotional Development: What Can We Expect in the Classroom?](#)
2. [An Introduction to Behavioral Health in Schools: Supports for Students](#)
3. [Managing Behavioral Health Crises in School](#)
4. [Understanding Trauma and the Impact on Learning Part 1: Definitions and Effects on the Brain](#)



For a full-sized version please see the [MHS website](#). For a paper copy, check in the main office.



Please join us for our monthly Family Council Meeting!

Wednesday, October 16, 2019

Mission Hill School Library

Carolina Street Entrance - MHS Library is on the second floor

5:45 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.



We will have an open conversation with our Co-Teacher Leaders
and will be viewing two chapters from A Year at Mission Hill

**Childcare and dinner will be provided*

*The Family Council operates on a limited budget and want to ensure we have **sufficient food and childcare for all**. Please **RSVP** by emailing the familycouncil@missionhillschool.org **by October 11th**.*

