



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

September 30 - October 11
Listening Conferences - Please check your classroom schedule for your family's time.

Tuesday, October 8
Dr. Brenda Cassellius, Superintendent visits MHS

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

October 4, 2019

Volume 23, Issue 05

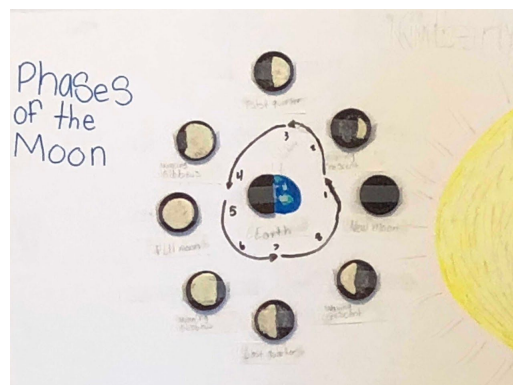
Be the Change

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

There are a lot of cliches out there about change. "Change your thoughts and you change the world", "You must be the change you wish to see in the world", "The more things change, the more they stay the same", "The only thing constant is change", and so on. All of us have either said some of these cliches or been on the receiving end of one. As cliché as these are, however, they are all true. Especially the last one. **Change is constant.**

I myself am a creature of habit. I like things done in a certain way, at a certain time, etc. I am a maker of plans and lists. Many of you reading this can probably identify with me. Because I'm such a planner, change has always been hard for me. I didn't realize how much until I became an adult...and a mother...and a teacher! For some of us, most of us if we are honest, shaking things up is difficult. **Change is hard.**

Our school has undergone some big changes, too. Our principal of 13 years, Ayla Gavins, stepped down. Our school was required to have a transformation plan for low MCAS scores. That plan has caused several internal changes to how we do things, and there are more to come. We've changed schoolwide routines like meeting structures and afternoon bus dismissal. We've changed where some classrooms are located in the building and what specific rooms are used for. Our before and after school programming has changed. Some staff members have moved on and some have changed roles. **Change abounds.**



But why all the changes? Great question! I'm glad you asked!

There are many reasons, but in a nutshell...for our children to be safe and successful. That's why we're all here, right? Our mission statement says, "The task of public education is to help parents raise youngsters who will maintain and nurture the best habits of a democratic society be smart, caring, strong, resilient, imaginative and thoughtful." I love our mission statement, because it always grounds me. It helps me keep central what is most important, our children. And over the last few years, we've realized as a school community that there are things we need to do differently, tighten up, rearrange, reorganize, and re-envision in order to carry out our mission statement better. **Change is necessary.**

Superintendent Brenda Cassellius sends her central office staff and school leaders a “check-in” email once a week. I look forward to reading them because she always says so beautifully and poignantly what needs to be done. The week of September 23rd, she shared these words:

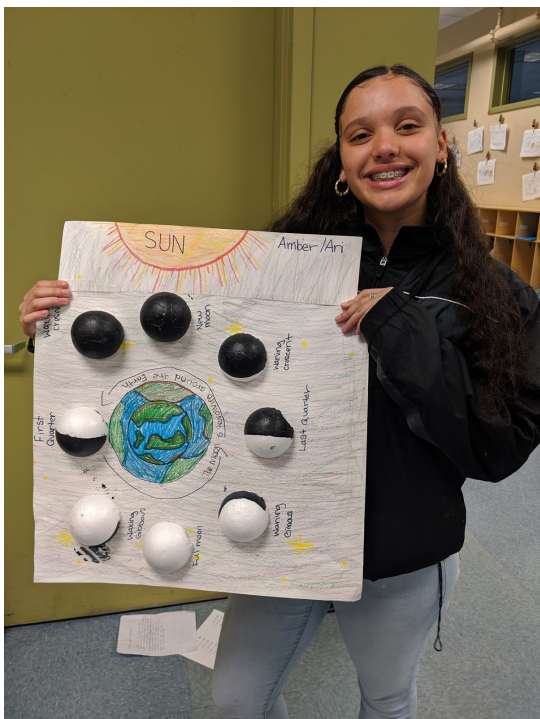
The path to achieve these goals over the coming months and years will require us to be nimble and open to new ways of thinking. We'll need to be gentle with one another and have a little patience as we push ourselves and each other to expect more and work differently. And we'll need to keep faith that as we transition from the status quo to new ways of doing our work, our path forward will continue getting clearer. „Abraham Maslow said, “In any given moment we have two options: to step forward into growth or step back into safety.” I’m asking you to step forward with me on a shared journey of growth.

We are asking the same of you!

So yes, the faces in the office are different, but our desire to make sure every child gets what they need, is the same. Yes, we are thinking about how and what we teach differently, but the goal is still the same - that children are equipped with all they need to be successful when they leave us. Yes, some of our routines have changed, but the priority has not - to keep children safe. Yes, lots of things will be different, but our mission will not. We will continue to put students at the center of all we do, because that is who we are here for.

Change is inevitable but growth is by choice. I hope you will choose to grow with us as we face change head on with joy, gratitude and a determination to make our school the best it can be for all our children.

Jenerra Williams



KINDERGARTEN**K0 Room 108****Quéla, Liana, Donna & Sarah**

Continuing our study of how scientists learn about the world, this week we explored our five senses. We used our eyes to admire how light looks through water beads. We used our noses to smell cinnamon, raspberry, and orange scents. We used our ears to discern the different sounds coming from sound shakers and we used our hands to touch bumpy, prickly and soft things.

One of the favorite explorations this week was taste! We learned about the different types of tastes by conducting a taste test. We tried sour lemons, salty pea crisps, sweet raisins and bitter 95% dark chocolate. The salty snacks were an overall favorite, while the bitter chocolate surprised nearly everyone by tasting different from the chocolate we are used to! Several students made fun faces while eating the lemon slices—that caused a lot of giggling. :)

All of these explorations have allowed us to practice the important skill of using attribute words. These kinds of describing words will help us as we dive into our study of weather this month.

-Donna, Quéla, Liana and Sarah

K1/K2 Room 106**Kathy & June**

Last week The Cats, (Room 106) went to the Arnold Arboretum for their open house. We were joined by Katie, Leila, Danny, and Ashleigh's classes. There were many different stations to explore. One station was about seeds that hitch a ride and their ability to attach helps them travel farther. We also explored acorns and horse chestnuts.

There was a story walk. Each page of a book is copied and displayed to be read. It is wonderful being in nature and reading. After our station work we went exploring. We walked to a place that had land, rocks, and water. "That is where the snapping turtle is," Walter yelled. We ventured closer to try to see it. We did not get a glimpse, however children noticed bubbles coming up from beneath the water. Those bubbles were also moving. Children thought it was the turtle.

We came back to school and wrote about what we saw. We made a list of Arboretum words. Here are some things we saw: monarch butterflies, water, leaves, trees, horse chestnuts, acorns, rocks, turkeys, popping seeds.

-Kathy and June

**K1/K2 Room 107****Jada & Manny**

As we continue to build our classroom community, we have been conversing more about Earth and Space Science. Our first question was, "What is Earth?" Many of our students were convinced their answer was correct while others were less sure in their convictions. Here is what they had to say:

Josue: Earth is a place where you and other people live.

Maeve: Earth is the planet we live on.

Abubakar: Earth is a circle.

Alysha: I made my mommy and daddy and me. We are in Jada class.

August: Earth is when you go out of space and find a treasure. I made a family holding a popsicle outside.

Will: I think Earth is the planet we live on. Earth is the name of my sister in Colorado.

Gio: Earth is where you play.

Giuliany: Earth has rainbows.

Jonathan: Earth is the planet we live on.

Beck: Earth is the world and sharks.

-Jada Brown and Emmanuel St. Vil

K1/K2 Room 109

Katie & Courtney M.

This past week Room 109 explored how to record weather data and the different ways of noticing what the weather is each day! Throughout the week, we were very careful to notice which way the wind was blowing. We were able to find this out by using our weather vane! We also had our first field trip to the Arboretum! We explored many different stations such as leaf rubbings and carry and burry seeds. We hiked up the hill to read each part of the story on the signs that the Arboretum folks had set up! As we approached the leaf rubbings station, friends of 109 searched on the ground for leaves to use for this experiment. We were thoughtful of not picking the leaves from the trees or plants but rummaged through the foliage on the ground! We had so much fun and can't wait to go back to the Arb!

-Ms. Courtney



GRADES 1 & 2

Room 210

Ashleigh, Alana & Stephanie

Bears, bears, everywhere! Last week, some special teddy bears arrived in our classroom. For several days they watched us as we worked and solved problems with friends. The second graders were excited to see their bears from last year and couldn't wait to reconnect with them again. New students were also curious and eager to take them down. Students wrote letters to the bears about how they would care for the bears and how our classroom would be a safe and welcoming space for them. Finally, after several days, the bears were ready to come down and meet us all. Each child selects their own bear and personalizes their bear with clothing and accessories. Then, students create stories and lives around their bear. Lesley Koplow, founder and director of Emotionally Responsive Practices at Bank Street College, is the author of *Bears, Bears, Everywhere! Supporting Children's Emotional Health in the Classroom*. We use this book to guide our work with bears in

our classroom. These teddy bears are more than just a stuffed animal. They offer comfort, self-expression, and motivation. Stop by Room 210 to meet our bears and read more about the reasons why we have teddy bears in our classroom.

Room 216

Danny, Felicia & Destiny

This week I am travelling to the Twin Cities to attend the Progressive Educator Network conference, where I will be presenting about our Struggle for Justice theme studies. In my preparations for the conference I looked back on the work my students have done with these themes over the past three years. In my first year we explored the judicial system and focused on historic cases involving racial segregation, gender identity, and marriage equality. The next year we learned about the experiences of refugees in their home countries and what the resettlement process looks like in the United States. Last year we discussed racial identity and school segregation during the Civil Rights Movement. As much as I love science (which is quite a lot), these themes may be my favorite to teach because they are central to our mission as a school: *"to help strengthen our commitment to diversity, equity and mutual respect...to step into the shoes of others...to not be easily conned."* I look forward to learning and sharing at the PEN conference, and returning next

week with renewed excitement for the work we do together!

-Danny Flannery



GRADES 3 & 4

Room 207

Amanda & Amina

Trips around Boston are an essential element to our curriculum. An important goal that I have is for all students to understand the learning that happens on our trips. Last week, we went to the Museum of Science. We focused our learning at one exhibit, the Charles River Watershed. All students became engineers to help solve a problem that is currently happening within the river. During our trip, students worked together, reflected, documented their learning and designed. After our trip we asked students to reflect on why the trip was important for their learning. Here is what some students had to say:

"I learned that animals are dying in the Charles River because trash is getting stuck in their gills."

"I learned that scientists take samples of the water and see if it is healthy for the animals."

"I learned that the flow of the Charles River went too fast so

they built a dam. They had to make the dam so fish could make it through safely and go to the Boston Harbor."

I look forward to the learning that will happen on our next trip to the Blue Hills Observatory.



Room 212

Cleata & Ayan

Our third grade mathematicians in Room 212 have been working on understanding equal groups to build their mathematical thinking to solve multiplication and division word problems. We started by thinking about familiar things we know that come in groups of twos, threes, fours, and so on. Some examples students shared were: Eyes, wheels on bikes, twins (twos)

Triplets, wheels on tricycles and scooters (threes)

Wheels on cars, legs on dogs and cats (fours)

Fingers, corners of a star (fives)

The third grade mathematicians moved on to writing and solving their own picture problems with

pictures, words and equations. Using triplets and tricycles were the most popular examples used in some problems such as:

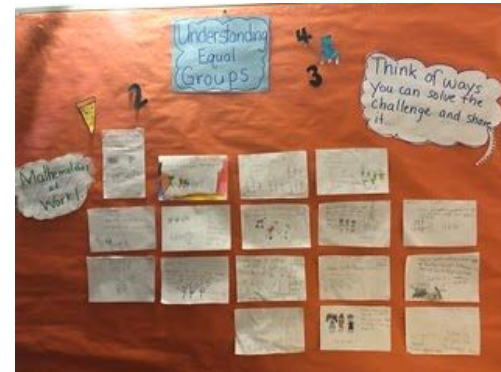
"Ava, Kate, Lilly were triplets.

How many legs do they have altogether?

"Isaac has 2 tricycles for his birthday. How many wheels are there in all?"

Students used appropriate pictures to show their work and then wrote an equation to match. We have attached some students' work for your enjoyment!

-Cleata Brown and Ayan Osman



Room 215

Leila & Kat

The scientists in Room 215 just can't stop asking questions! Before our field trip to the Museum of Science, we read up on the history of human impact on the Charles River. When we were done, every student had a question:

Darby: How many years will it take to make the Charles River a Grade A?

Jeremiah: Is the water still dirty?

G'Mauree: Why did people want to swim in the stuff?

Violet: Does the Charles River still have the smell?

Arianni and Angelina: How do people care about the Charles River if they put in trash?

Ada and Canei: Why did people throw their trash in the Charles River?

James: Do they still dump stuff in?

Jonathan: Why is it long?

Harmony: Why did they name it the Charles River?

Wren: Does the Charles River mean anything?

Emma: Are there fossils?

Tommy: What lives there?

Jazmyn: How was the Charles River made?

Levi: How many feet deep is it?

Jacobi: Is everything there from sewers?

We found a few answers and even more questions. To find out more, ask a scientist from 215!

GRADES 5 & 6

Room 203

Ms. Coleman & Frances

Room 203 has been reading *The Rock and the River* by Kekla Magoon. Set in 1968 Chicago, 13 year-old Sam is the son of a known Civil Rights activist. The tension begins when his brother starts to become interested in the Black Panthers – a group that seems to go against what his father has taught him. Though Sam wants to believe that his father's approach of non-violence is right, the horrible things he is seeing happen to his community at the hands of racism bring him doubt.

This leads to Sam being involved in something really serious and dangerous with his brother and he eventually has to decide which side he's on.

Room 203 has also been responding in writing to this book. One question that was asked was:

Why did black people in the 1960's have to be careful about what they said and where they went?

Beatrice's response is below:

"Because many white people thought them second-class citizens and did not want them speaking up. They also did not think that they should speak out. They thought that black people should be at home biding their time and cooperating with everyone and everything. But of course they did not want to do this. They kept speaking out and holding rallies protests and sit-ins."

-Saadia Coleman MS.Ed & Frances Pearce

Room 205

Nakia & David

Once a month we will be submitting our End of the Week Reflections. Here are a few. Enjoy.

"Something I want to get better at is answering more questions in the reading guides for Ninth Ward. I am frustrated about the homework I have for the weekend."

"Something that would improve this class is to make it a little less

cluttered."

"I want to get better at doing work."

"My week was long but good, I had a lot. One thing is my phone was broken, the battery was broken."

"Next week I am really looking forward to Art. I like art because I can be creative as I want, and even if the project is one that isn't my favorite, I always want to make it fun."

"Something that went well this week was good because we got most work done."

"Something I want to get better at is writing neatly."

"Something that I want to get better at is long division because I used to know it and I forgot."

-Nakia and David

GRADES 7 & 8

Room 213

Jenna & Courtney D.

Students have continued their study of the solar system during our Earth and Space Science Theme. This week, we conducted an experiment to understand why the moon has phases. Although at the beginning we all agreed that the moon itself does not change size or shape, we were not sure why it looks different to us. Through our experiment, we discovered that it is the revolution of the moon around the Earth that causes our view of the moon to change, depending on the angle from which we are viewing the moon. Students were then tasked with demonstrating this learning through a "Phases of the Moon

Project.” They were required to construct a model that showed why the phases of the moon occur; research a myth about the moon, and present their work during a gallery walk and to a small group of their peers and teachers. See pictures of some of our finished products throughout this week’s newsletter.

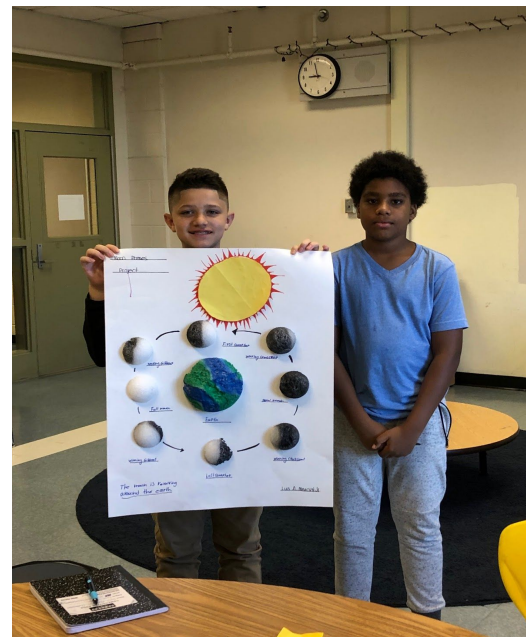
Room 214

Kathy B. & Ayanna

There was a lot of excitement in the 7/ 8 wing this past week as students worked on a “Phases of

the Moon” project. On Monday, we gathered together to do a gallery walk of student projects, then in small groups students presented their models to one another and gave summaries of a moon myth. The photographs show students using their Habits of Work and Mind to creatively capture all the moon phases -- notice the oreos in the image on the front page of the newsletter! Afterwards, students completed a work tag thus completing their first assignment for Portfolio Presentations in the spring.

-Kathy B. & Ayanna



SCHOOL-WIDE NEWS

Healthy Eating at School

If you are sending food to school with your child (or if they purchase food on the way to school), please help us and reinforce our school expectations: No candy or juice at school. Thanks so much.

Volunteers Needed

We are looking for family and community members who might be able to help us spruce up a few spaces around our building. If you can spend an hour or two on Monday, October 7th, please email GERALYN at gmclaughlin@missionhillschool.org.

Farm School Trips for 5th/6th Grade

Our annual trips to The Farm School in Athol, MA are beginning soon. Room 203 (Ms. Coleman’s group) will be going to the farm Monday, October 7th-Wednesday the 9th. Room 205 (Nakia’s group) will be going to the farm on Wednesday, October 9th-Friday, October 11th. Please be sure to check in with your homeroom teacher for permission slips, packing lists and other details.

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

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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.*

