



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

Friday, November 8, 9:45-10:15am
Friday Share (open to all)

Monday, November 11
No School

Thursday, November 14, 5:45pm-7:30pm
Family Council Meeting (open to all)

Saturday, November 16
Boston Debate League Tournament 2
John W McCormack Middle School

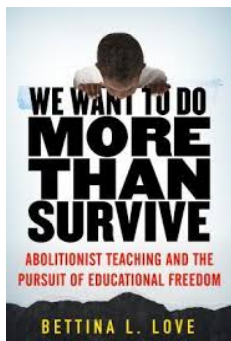
November 1, 2019

Volume 23, Issue 9

Lean In

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

Are you ready to lean in to a conversation about racial equity at Mission Hill School? At a recent professional development session lead by Steven Chen and the Office of Equity, we were looking at intersectionality and how it plays out in our relationships with students, families, and each other. Intersectionality refers to the different identities each of us has. I am a white woman and mother. I grew up in a big family where food stamps, government food, and free school lunch helped us get by. These are some of my identities. Jenerra and I both identify as women, but our experiences are very different. My white privilege brings advantages that Jenerra does not have. Discussions of intersectionality require conversations about implicit and explicit bias, institutional and individual racism, white fragility and more. These are not easy discussions to have.



Steven Chen asked us all to “lean in” to the discussion and to work with the discomfort that comes with talking about race and equity. Our public school system is racist by design, and many of us at Mission Hill are ready to lean in and actively disrupt racism when we see it. This is anti-racist work. When we were at the PEN conference in Minneapolis earlier this month we heard Dr. Bettina Love’s call to action - what she has termed “abolitionist teaching” in her book *We Want to Do More Than Survive* (<https://bettinalove.com>).

Silence is complicity, and that is no longer an option in my eyes. Throughout the spring and fall, as I interviewed and then began my work in the Co-Teacher Leader role, I have aimed to be public about my intentions and actions around race and equity. I don’t have all the answers, for sure. However, I have had many conversations with white colleagues and family members about our white privilege and the unintentional consequences of our actions. And that is because I believe that it is my responsibility to dismantle historic inequalities in education and to rebuild our system in ways that ensure all children see and feel their power and value in the world and to ensure that historically marginalized students are brought to the center. This is personal work, and everyone is in a different place on the journey. What do *you* believe?

One of my hopes is that we can move past the idea that individuals are either racist or not. The truth is, everyone in our society is capable of racist behaviors. We’ve been raised in a racist society, and therefore it is inescapable. Being able to self-reflect and learn from our mistakes is key. Catching yourself when you start to make an assumption, and retraining your brain is a big step to take. Being open to feedback and listening to others who are trying to raise your awareness is another step to take. Are you ready to lean in?

Geralyn Bywater McLaughlin

KINDERGARTEN

K0 Room 108

Quéla, Liana, Donna & Sarah

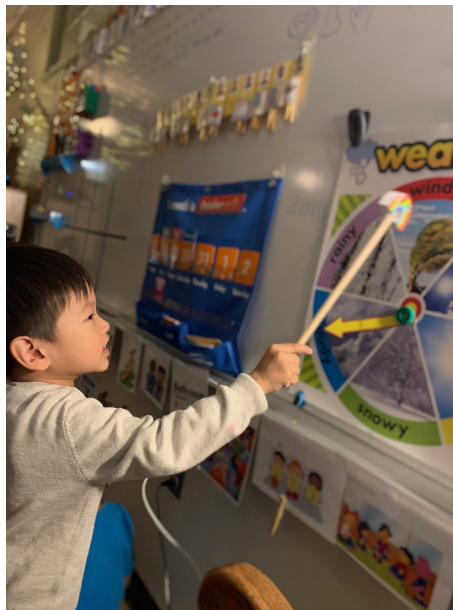
"Raindrops keep falling on my head, but that doesn't mean my eyes will soon be turning red, crying's not for me cause' I'm never gonna stop the rain by complaining, because I'm freeeee, nothing's worrying meeeee."

Watching The Burgers sing and dance to the classic B.J. Thomas tune is the most heartwarming way to start the morning of late. For some, New England is the perfect place to live if you like to complain. It's easy to break the ice with any New Englander by uttering the words *"Ugh it's too hot, i'm ready for fall"* or *"it's been so rainy and cold, when will summer get here?"* It's common for people to bond in anticipation of the coming seasons.

Introducing weather concepts to young children breathes excitement into what's happening outside each day.

From using a rain gauge, to singing weather related songs, creating cloud art and using water to spray ink and watch it run, it has been a joy to see the wonders of weather through 3 and 4 year old eyes.

-Quela, Sarah, Liana & Donna



K1/K2 Room 106

Kathy & June

Last week, The Cats (Room 106), explored the sun and the moon with Ms. Yuliza, during her takeover week. They completed charts that told us what they already knew about the sun and the moon. Forest said that he knew that "at different times the sun is shining on one part of the earth and not the other." Melina said she noticed that "one day the moon is a circle and the next it goes into a croissant shape."

First we learned about the sun through a read aloud and compared our original ideas about the sun and the information the book provided. We then designed our own suns using tissue paper and oil pastels, and each wrote a fact

that was learned or confirmed through the text.

Next, we learned about the moon and its different phases. We explored the moon's colors and textures using oil pastel and paint. We even played a memory math game with the phases of the moon.

-Yuliza, Kathy and June

K1/K2 Room 107

Jada & Manny

While we walked around the zoo we noticed many plants. We then asked the question, "What do plants need to live/grow?" They answered: Sunlight. Soil. Water. Pots. Knowing that plants come from seeds, we came upon a quandary. If all the criteria that fit living things don't apply to seeds, "Are seeds living things?" Josue, Gio, Will, Alysha, Maeve voted yes. Jonathan and Giuliany voted no. Here is the reasoning for a few of their votes:

Josue: I think seeds are a living thing because they grow living things.

Gio: I draw a flower falling down the hill. Flowers are not living. I think that seeds are living.

Will: I draw a mushroom plant growing by the waterfall.

Mushrooms are living. I think seeds are living.

Jonathan: Seeds don't live.

Alysha: I made a house for the seed. I think seeds are living.
Maeve: I made a seed and an egg. Seeds are living things.

What do you think?

-Jada Brown and Emmanuel St. Vil

K1/K2 Room 109

Katie & Courtney M.

On October 22 we excitedly boarded a school bus taking us to the Blue Hills Weather Observatory! After collecting our own weather data for about 3 weeks, we were excited to see professional earth scientists working on the same task! We had opportunities to see and hear about weather instruments. We asked many questions. Some of the things we learned about were:

- Anemometers measure the speed of the wind. We currently use a weather vane which measures the direction of the wind.
- Earth scientists measure cloudiness and sunniness. There is a crystal ball that can be used to burn a strip in a measurement paper that tells scientists when it was sunny and when the clouds blocked the sun.
- From the roof of the Weather Observatory, we can see Boston and what looked like "a whole new country!"

We loved riding the bus and visiting the Blue Hills Weather

Observatory and learning about the instruments used there.

-Katie & Courtney M.



GRADES 1 & 2

Room 210

Ashleigh, Alana & Stephanie

This week we imagined we were water droplets as we visited the New England Aquarium. We stopped by the Northern Fur Seals and made some observations. Then we looked at where they can be found on a map - in Alaska. Next, we searched the Aquarium to find the bright and colorful fish from the Indo-Pacific Reef. We continued to explore other water habitats as well: New England Pond, Giant Ocean Tank of the Caribbean, and many others. As we traveled from one spot to the next we imagined how one tiny droplet of water could visit all these places throughout its time here on earth. We connected this to our work and learning about the water cycle. For example, for a water droplet to get from the seals in Alaska to the New England Pond some students shared that the water droplet

could evaporate and condense with other droplets to form a cloud. The cloud could be blown by wind and land over New England where it rains and falls into the pond. It's amazing to think about how all the water we have on earth is continuously recycled and traveling all over the world!

-Ashleigh, Alana & Stephanie



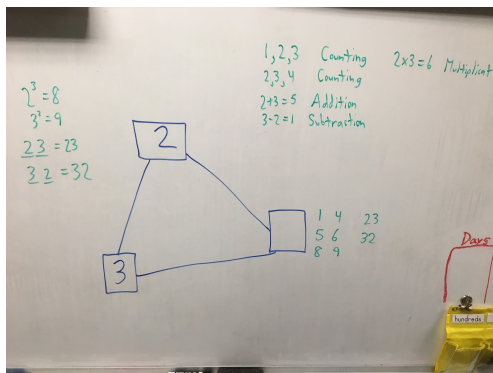
Room 216

Danny, Felicia, Destiny & Yuliza

Last week we had an amazing number talk during our math time. I drew three boxes connected with lines, then put

the numbers 2 and 3 in two of the boxes while leaving the third box blank. "How do you solve this problem? How will I know you're done?" As students discussed the objective of the number talk, they began to talk about their ideas for what could go in the empty box. "I think it's 1 because then it's 1, 2, 3" said Adin. "Or 4 so it's 2, 3, 4." said Emerson. "So you're both using counting," I noted. Yaniel also got 1 by using subtraction, Mira added to get 5, and Anish got 6 through multiplication. I got 8 or 9 by using exponents (2^3 and 3^2). A visitor from the Netherlands shared that 23 and 32 could be answers if the 2 and 3 represent digits of the third number. "Does it matter what the answer to this number talk is?" I asked. "No, look at all the math we did!" Elijah said. Number talks like these help spark students' curiosity in math and encourage deeper mathematical thinking. Be sure to try out the MHS Math Challenge!

-Danny, Felicia, Destiny, and Yuliza



GRADES 3 & 4

Room 207

Amanda & Amina

Our classroom has a designated question wall. This space was inspired by students' questions, wonderings and thoughts. Here are some questions that are currently on the wall:

Did people make molecules?
 Why are clouds white?
 Why can't you feel the earth turn?
 Why can't you see a water molecule?
 How did water get on earth?
 Are water molecules in milk?
 Does the water cycle every stop?
 How are oxygen and hydrogen made?
 Can it rain if it is really hot?
 How do you make earth?
 How does water get out of leaves?

This wall fills up quickly and the wonderings change often. Now a question for you...can you tell what we have been learning about based on the questions we are asking?

Room 212

Cleata & Ayan

Finally, after looking at over sixty different names, and with much consideration, the students of Room 212 decided on a class name. With a vote of 11-9 we are the Black Warriors! It is amazing how much work was put into selecting a class name. First we made a list of possible names. Then students individually chose three they would like, provided

their reason for each name and why it would be suitable for our classroom. From the list of sixty names, Ms. Ayan and I selected the teachers' top ten. Students then by show of hands narrowed down to four names. Although it took a long time to decide on a class name, most students were satisfied with the process and some students looked very excited to be the Black Warriors. As teacher/facilitator I was simply relieved that they arrived at a decision without further deliberation!

-Cleata

Room 215

Leila & Kat

Last weekend I had the pleasure of running the Sole Train 5K with our amazing MHS team from grades 5-8. When I signed up for Sole Train, I was excited mainly because I needed a good reason to exercise every week. Now, to be honest, I've done as much walking as running with our team, and my feet and legs are feeling sore rather than strong. However, I've received a far better benefit-getting to know the older Mission Hill students! What an incredible group of persistent, hard-working individuals. On our first day of practice, most of us (students and adults) were nervous about running around the building, let alone running 3 miles. At the Sole Train race, much to our own disbelief, every single student and adult completed the full 5 kilometers. When I see my teammates in the

hallway, I feel like we have a special connection. We've challenged ourselves and succeeded together. I'm confident we will continue doing so throughout the year as we train for 5 miles or a half marathon at Boston's Run to Remember in May.



GRADES 5 & 6

Room 203

Ms. Coleman & Frances

Room 203's Friday Share was outstanding. The entire 5th and 6th graders from 203 got on stage and gave their all. Students wrote their songs and poetry based on a book called "The Rock and The River." The book is about a young 13-year-old black male giving his rendition of the 1968 Civil Rights movement in Chicago.

"As the river flows, it wonders what it would be like to be so still. To take a breath to rest but the rock will always wonder what lies around the bend in the stream."

Here is an example of one of the student's rap-songs, written by James (aka) Jimmy Walsh

RIGHTS

By: James Alan Walsh

October 25, 2019

Black people wanted rights, that led to lots of fights. When all those fights had ended, you'd think it would have mended. Martin, he wanted freedom, black people he would lead 'em. Things started to get better. It took more than one letter. Even though Martin is gone, racism is still going on. I just wish that it would stop, because it's one big flop. Show them a three-leaf clover, this song is almost over; wish racism would mend. This song is at an end.

Room 205

Nakia & David

Progress reports went home last Friday. Beforehand, we asked kids to self assess their progress thus far. Here are a few snapshots of what they said:

"Social is good because I get to play and meet new friends each week."

"I put a dot in the middle of behavior because I get very emotional. But any other time I am not emotional I am in the middle."

"I need help in math because I've never been strong in math and I forgot over the summer."

"My behavior is not so bad or the best. I give sassy and attitude when I don't get my way."

"My work habits are some concern because I tend to sit with my friends."

"My investment in work isn't that great because I zone out and nothing's really interesting."

-Nakia, David

GRADES 7 & 8

Room 213

Jenna & Courtney D.

"Who's got Sole?" "Mission Hill Sole Trainers!"

Over the weekend, we had our first event with Sole Train, a nonprofit organization in Boston that seeks to empower youth through running, and it was amazing! The challenge was fierce, a 5k run (3.1 miles) around Franklin Park, and the students (and adults) were a bit concerned, thinking, "am I going to be able to make it?" While there were certainly moments of doubt and cries of "Jenna, I just can't do this" "I'm not going to make it" "I'm going to quit and never run again", these cries were replaced with proud smiles and exclamations of "wow, I did it!" by the end of the race.

We had 19 young soles (students) and 5 old soles (teachers) complete the race along with a student's mom and another's grandmother; 10 families also showed up to give their support!

Some of my favorite moments included Fabian cheering on others as they passed him, Arianny, Hennesy and Skye's excitement when finishing the race and Jayden cheering on his brother when Josiah wanted to quit. It was a fantastic first event and we hope you can join us at our next event, the Halfway to Dot Day 5k on December 7th.



Room 214

Kathy B. & Ayanna

"Relationships are the glue that keeps our community together" (Jenerra, Mission Hill Newsletter, 10/18/29). This quote sums up how I'm feeling after having listening conferences with families. I appreciate the time we've spent together and these conversations have helped me to better understand our students.

Last week during Humanities, we had class meetings to reflect on our work during these past 7 weeks. Students voted to make some changes. 8th graders discussed, then amended the weekly independent reading assignments. Seventh graders asked to have more time to share their work and have a weekly check-in time. Confusion about changes at Mission Hill was brought up by a few students. I have directly addressed these concerns, along with the reasons for them, to help students feel more comfortable in class. "Change is inevitable but growth is by choice" (Jenerra, MH Newsletter, 10/4/19), is a belief that's becoming true for 214.

Home/School Compact

Please see the attached Home/School Compact. We are also sending home printed copies for each student. We are asking that you take some time with your child(ren) to talk through and sign this shared agreement. Please return it to school. The Home/School Compact can also be found on the website on our [Family Collaboration](#) page.


Election Day Bake Sale

Friends of Mission Hill School is having an Election Day bake sale on Tuesday, November 5th. The table will open at 7am when voting begins and run until 8pm as long as we can staff the table. Please bake or if you are able, sign up to work the table here: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60b0f4fa8a72dab9-bake>

Baked goods can be dropped off at Rachel's porch the day before (142 Carolina Avenue) or at the table on the day of the sale. As always, thanks in advance for your support!

SoleTain Success!

On Saturday, 19 of our 22 Young Soles (kids) and 5 Old Soles (Adults - Jenna, Leila, Sarah, Katie and myself) ran the Sole Train 5K at in Franklin Park. 10 families came out to support us. Peter's mom ran the race and Ms. Karen, Gio, G'Mauree and G'Kharee's grandmother walked the race with her new grand-baby in the stroller! Everyone finished the race and was flying high (and moving slow) with our accomplishment! We are set to continue our training as we prepare for the next race. Halfway to Dot Day 5K on Dec. 7th. We'd love to have more supporters to cheer us on!

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
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*Terms and Conditions - Message frequency varies. Standard message and data rates may apply. Reply HELP for help. Text STOP to cancel. Mobile carriers are not liable for delayed or undelivered messages. See schoolmessenger.com/txt for more info.



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Sólo tiene que enviar "Y" o "Yes" a 67587

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* Términos y Condiciones - Las frecuencias de los mensajes pueden variar, mensajes y datos estándar pueden aplicarse. Responda HELP para obtener ayuda. Texto STOP para cancelar. Los operadores móviles no son responsables por los mensajes retrasados o los que no se entregan. Vea schoolmessenger.com/txt para más información.

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

**Mission Hill K-8 School
A Boston Public Pilot School
WWW.MISSIONHILLSCHOOL.ORG**

**20 Child Street
Jamaica Plain, MA 02130
(Carolina Avenue entrance)
T 617-635-6384
F 617-635-6419**



PLEASE JOIN THE FAMILY COUNCIL
Thursday, November 14, 2019
Mission Hill School Library
5:45 - 7:30 p.m.

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION
Mission Hill School and Progressive Education

What is Progressive Ed?
What does teacher-led mean?
What are our habits of mind?
What is our commitment to social justice?
How do we measure success?
How do we address discipline?
What's the deal with our holiday policy?
How can I support my child in school and home?

Come with your
questions and let's
continue the
conversation!

*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 November 11th.



POR FAVOR ÚNASE AL CONSEJO FAMILIAR

14 de Noviembre de 2019

Biblioteca de la escuela Mission Hill

5:45 - 7:30 p.m.

CONTINUANDO LA CONVERSACIÓN **Mission Hill School y Educación Progresiva**

¿Qué es la educación progresiva?
¿Qué significa dirigido por un maestro?
¿Cuáles son nuestros hábitos mentales?
¿Cuál es nuestro compromiso con la justicia social?

¿Cómo medimos el éxito?
¿Cómo abordamos la disciplina?
¿Cuál es el trato con nuestra política de días festivos?
¿Cómo puedo soportar a mis hijos en la escuela y en casa?

¡Ven con tus
preguntas y
continuemos la
conversación!

*Se proporcionará cuidado de niños y cena. El Consejo de Familia opera con un presupuesto limitado y quiere garantizar que tengamos suficientes alimentos y cuidado de niños para todos. Confirme su asistencia enviando un correo electrónico a familycouncil@missionhillschool.org antes del 11 de Noviembre.

Mission Hill School Home/School Compact

It is important that families and schools work together to help students be successful at school. The following are roles and responsibilities, developed by the Mission Hill School community that we will carry out as partners to support student success in school and in life.

Students:

I know that learning is important. I will always do my best to:

- Follow the Mission Hill Way—Be Kind and Work Hard
- Read or listen to a story every day at home
- Ask for help when I need it
- Come to school everyday
- Show respect for my school, my teachers, and other students by following our class agreements
- Allow my teacher and other grown-ups to help me work through any problems

Student Signature

Date

Teacher:

I understand that I am central to a child's education. I agree to carry out the following responsibilities to the best of my ability.

- Teach classes through interesting and challenging lessons
- Communicate with families often regarding their child's progress
- Provide family conferences and be available for informal meetings as requested
- Provide a positive and nurturing environment
- Participate in professional development opportunities that improve teaching and learning

Teacher Signature

Date

Parent(s)/Caregiver:

I know that my child's education is very important and the key to a successful life. I agree to carry out to the best of my ability the following:

- Read with my child every day
- Help my child with his or her homework each week and send it back to school on Fridays
- Participate in school activities such as family nights, family council events, volunteering, etc.
- Send my child to school every day and on time
- Check my child's backpack regularly for important notices
- Communicate with the teacher regularly
- Communicate to my child the importance of demonstrating appropriate social skills and behavior

Parent(s) Signature

Date