



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

January 18th 8am-3pm
Boston Debate League Tournament

Friday, January 17, 9:45-10:15am
Friday Share (open to all)

Thursday, January 23rd, 5:00-7:00pm
Governance Board Meeting (open to all)

January 10, 2020

Volume 23, Issue 16

Motivation

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

We've entered a new decade. 2020 is here. When I was in elementary school 2020 seemed like light years away. We thought the old cartoon *The Jetsons* would be our reality in 2020. We thought there might even be people living on the moon. Though we have made advancements, for better or worse, in both those areas, 2020 is not quite the futuristic world we imagined back then. However, the idea of that world has been a great motivation for many things. We have computers that are lighter than books and thinner than a magazine. We have state of the art computers that we carry around in our pockets. We have access to people on the farthest side of the globe, with the click of a mouse or tap of a button. We can order something from California at 11am and get it the same time the next day. None of these things would exist without an eye towards the future. The future can be and has been a great motivator.

When Mission Hill School began, our founder, Deborah Meier, had her eye towards the future. She wanted to grant children in Boston access to a school that would help their families "raise youngsters who will maintain and nurture the best habits of a democratic society, be smart, caring, strong, resilient, imaginative and thoughtful." With that in mind, she and a handful of educators started Mission Hill School. Here we are, 23 years later.

Geralyn, Ayla and I went to visit Deborah this past weekend. She was doing well, her mind as sharp as ever, and it was such a joy to spend time with her. We reminisced about the "old" Mission Hill and special memories we all hold. She asked us about people she knows that are still at the school and how they were doing. We talked about alumni and where they are now. Stories of our own families and lives outside of Mission Hill were swapped. Politics - one of Deb's favorites - could not be omitted and of course this included the future of Mission Hill School. She shared her thoughts, ideas, praise and cautions. It is always such a gift to learn from her in any capacity. All three of us soaked it in.



As this new decade has dawned, our eye is towards the future. Our visit to see Deb was a great motivator for me, as I am sure it was for Geralyn and Ayla alike. Motivation to live out our Mission Statement to the fullest degree for our entire school community. If you are reading this, you, too, play a part in this great work. So tell me. What is your motivation?

-Jenerra Williams

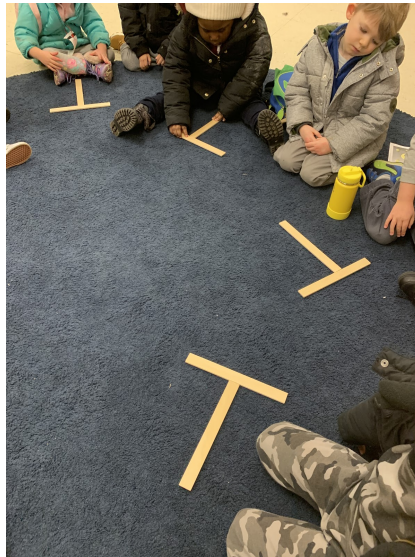
KINDERGARTEN

K0 Room 108

Quéla, Liana, Donna & Sarah

The Burgers came back from winter break ready to learn, and to embrace each other - quite literally. There were lots of hugs and “I love you”s exchanged on arrival. When that was done questions of “What’s my job?”, “What’s the letter of the day?” and “Will you tell my mom I had a good day?” soon followed. The Burgers were back in the swing of things and ready to pick up where we left off. We have now transitioned from focusing on letters that start their names to letters they will be able to write with independence: letters made from straight lines (I, H, T, F, A, E etc). We are building confidence and fostering connections to other letters by thinking about which letters can be made with long and short lines. Most of all we are getting back into the routine, developing, and nourishing a positive relationship with the alphabet by keeping connections to children strong, and creating situations for students to feel successful and loved each day.

- Quéla, Donna, Liana, Nelly & Sarah



K1/K2 Room 106

Kathy & June

What do you think the words Ancient China mean? I posed the question to the class.

Jayna: A different kind of China from a long time ago before the earth people and other stuff.

Jaelle: It means you can go to Boston.

Leora: A China that was long, long ago.

Selma: China from a long, long, long, long time ago.

Griffin: When it was first made before the dinosaurs.

Jo: China was made a long time ago.

Melina: China was made before any other city or town.

Forest: It means China without technology.

Jayden: I don’t know what it is called.

We reflected about asking Siri and Alexa for information. They sometimes know and they

sometimes don’t. We decided to go to the JP Library to see what we could find. We ended up finding a lot. We checked out many books to start our research.

In an early discussion children were not sure exactly what China was. Children thought it was a place, a city, a neighborhood, a town, a country, and a continent. We decided to get one of our books to see if we could clarify. Our book said it was a country. One book said it was the fourth largest while another said it was the third largest. Leora reported back that her father had told her it was a country. Walter also shared that he asked Siri and Siri told him it was a country. We are on our way to discover Ancient China and China today.

- Kathy & June

K1/K2 Room 107

Jada & Manny

Welcome back! The two weeks away have allowed us to rest and get ready to start the new year strong! This week we jumped right into our new theme, Ancient China. We began by asking students “What do you think you know about Ancient China?” Here is what they had to say:

Maeve: I think they wear red dots on their heads because they believe in every god.

Will: I think they don't believe in the only one true God.

Lucy: I think when my mom grew up she went to ancient China.

Josue: They built homes off of wood and the roof was a hay.

Giuliany: They had trucks.

Alysha: They had dots.

August: They had drums.

Beck: They had fireworks and rice.

Gio: I think they eat beans.

Jonathan: Maybe they made lasagna.

- Jada Brown and Emmaunel St. Vil

K1/K2 Room 109

Katie & Courtney M.

We were so happy to return from a wonderfully long break this week! We shared stories and news about the special things we did when we weren't in school. Then we got down to business! New math work stations opened with geometry materials like tangrams, attribute blocks, and geoboards. We learned our first Chinese word, *ni hao*, meaning hello. We discussed things we are excited to learn about Ancient China like the Great Wall and Chinese art forms. We used clay to make our own rocks, connecting our study of this ancient civilization to our study of Earth Science. Children were delighted to feel and shape the clay, describing it as cold, wet, hard, and tough. We read our first of 10 Chinese Folk Tales called The Rock Maiden, and we acted it out. We drew and colored animals associated with

the Chinese Zodiac, including elaborate dragons and orange tigers. We can't wait to keep diving into this special theme and to learn more about Ancient China!

- Katie

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 210

Amy, Alana & Stephanie

Cocoa Kindness is moving from studying maps of the whole earth to maps of China. And how did Ancient China grow to become the enormous country that it is today? How did it build such a resilient and enduring community?

Cocoa Kindness is working on building a strong community too! We started playing "The bucket of kindness." When someone sees a kind act, he or she writes it down for our classroom "Acts of Kindness" box. When our bucket is full of kind acts, we celebrate! On December 20th, we celebrated with an energetic game of charades.

Some of the kind acts were:

"Isaiah warmed my heart because he wrote about Jamaica."

"Kayari and Alice were nice to each other after they were mean to each other."

"Manny and Xander helped clean up without a teacher asking."

"Olivia helped me write my sentence."

"Myla gave us blocks even though she only had a little."

We know that we can live up to Ancient China's great leader Confucius's ideals of a good society in our classroom after seeing how quickly our bucket of kindness filled up. On to round 2 of the "Bucket of kindness!"

Room 216

Danny, Felicia, Destiny & Yuliza

"It is so hard to put so many details!" This week we began our second theme of the school year, Ancient China. The Rock Stars are learning about the Forbidden City, the imperial palace built during the Ming dynasty. We have been emphasizing that the Chinese people were able to do an enormous amount of work quickly, while also including many small details. This is something we are trying to carry through into our project work this week, where students are recreating part of the Forbidden City. Here are some reflections from our students about their project work so far:

"Today I was working on painting the poles in front of the building." - McKenna

"The roof is kind of the only part that has gold in it, and it's gorgeous." - Ebi

"I didn't know blocks was gonna be this good. This is a good choice! Look at all the good work we're doing." - Ethan

We look forward to sharing more of our students' work throughout this theme!

- Danny Flannery and Felicia Haynes

GRADES 3 & 4

Room 207

Amanda & Amina

Happy New Year! It felt good to be back at school this week after the long and lovely 16 day Winter Break. There was excitement in having our classroom community back together! The New Year is a time of reflection as well as a time to set new goals. We did just that this week. We reaffirmed our classroom agreements to remind ourselves of the expectations for our classroom community as well as the larger Mission Hill community. We looked back at the goals we set in the fall and thought about what needs to happen to work on those goals. Our hard work from the fall continues!

It was with great joy that we introduced Eveline Hernandez. She is joining the 207 Wolves' community as Amanda leaves and we are excited to have her join us. We have a great opportunity to have Eveline join us, starting on Wednesday while Amanda is still here.

This week was Ms. Amanda's last week with us as she prepares for the arrival of her baby. We spent time, as a community, being with her, giving her our well wishes

and sent her off on her maternity leave with LOVE! She plans to come back and visit with her baby before the end of the school year. She will officially return to Mission Hill in September.

We understand transitions can be hard and take time to get used to. We want to ensure that everyone is comfortable with the change. If you hear/notice that your child is having difficulty with the transition, please do not hesitate to reach out. We will be keeping a close eye on everyone at school as well and will reach out to you if we notice any changes. Thank you for the many well wishes for Ms. Amanda and to you for being an integral part of helping the transition go smoothly!

- Amina Michel-Lord and Amanda McCarthy

Room 212

Cleata & Ayan

Happy New Year! The Black Warriors are very excited to start their Ancient China theme. Our focus this week was the geography of China. We started off by discussing the meaning of the word "geography" as a segue into our new theme. We understand that geography is the study of places, people and how they interact with the environment. We looked at different maps of the world to find the seven continents and locate China.

On Monday, the question of the day was: What is included in the geography of China? Here are

some of the Black Warriors' responses:

- Culture
- Famous places and people
- Population
- Bodies of water
- Border
- Climate
- Governments
- Major landforms

The Black Warriors used a song to help them remember the seven continents from the largest to the smallest, along with their special features. We hope you can come see us perform at our next Friday share.
- Cleata and Ayan

Room 215

Leila & Kat

"I'm tired," moaned a chorus of sleepy third and fourth graders as they entered the room on Monday. We were excited to see each other, but also exhausted by the return of early wake-ups and the rush to get to school on time. We greeted each other, shared some exciting stories from winter break, and then got back to business as usual.

In the afternoon, everyone began working on their "Winter Break News." You might think, after a two-week vacation, that the Wonders would be a little rusty in their writing. Not so! Student after student came up to the teachers to show off their strong introductions, their improved paragraph formatting, and their interesting details. The Wonders

entered the new year with a desire to do their best work and be their best selves.

Newsletter bonus: For a fun story, ask the Wonders about the spontaneous Spice Girls conga line that came after Monday's hard work.

-Leila & Kat

GRADES 5 & 6

Room 203

Ms. Coleman & Frances

Happy New Year from Room 203 "Mad Skills". This trimester students will have the opportunity to learn about Ancient China. Everyone is excited about the Chinese culture and how it is one of the oldest in the world today. Over 6,000 years ago this culture began to develop in the Yellow River Valley and many of those ancient practices are still observed in the present. Daily life in Ancient China changes through the centuries but reflected the presence of the gods and one's ancestors in almost every time period.

This week students were focusing on the following: social class, clothing, and adornments. Check with your student to find out what they have done. If you have anything you would like to share with Mad Skills about Ancient China, we would love to have family presentations/guest speakers.

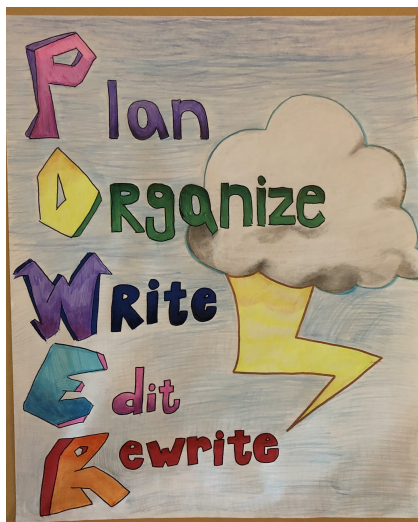
Room 205

Nakia & David

Students working on the writers process:



Plan
Organize
Write
Edit
Rewrite



- Nakia and David

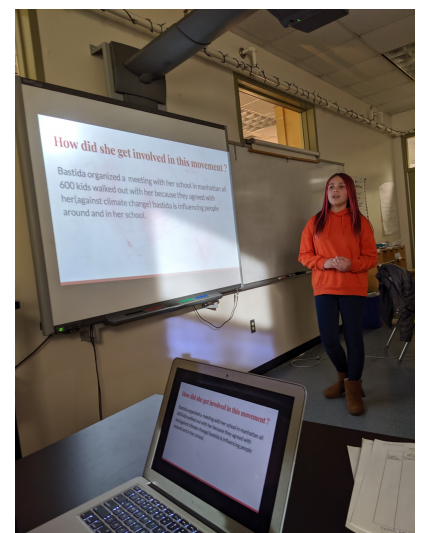
GRADES 7 & 8

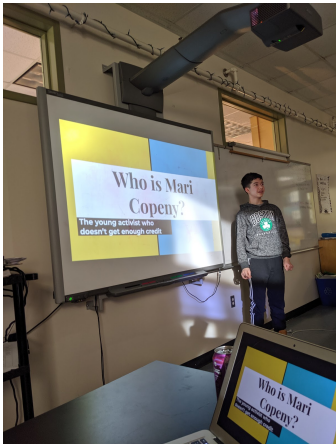
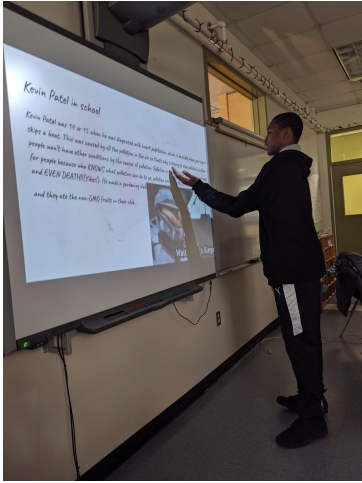
Room 213

Jenna & Courtney D.

In 7th and 8th grade we concluded our Earth and Space Science Theme by studying climate change, its causes and possible solutions. Many

students had heard about Greta Thunberg, the teenage activist who has been in the media for her dedicated work on climate change, and were excited to learn about her work. However, many students did not know that there are many other young people around the world who are doing this work as well. Many of these young people are people of color whose work is not being recognized. This prompted us to complete a "Young Activist Project" in which students researched a young climate change activist of color and presented their findings to the class. Students were amazed to learn that people younger than them are deep in work to help decrease the impact of climate change on our world. They were inspired to learn about how young people are making a difference. They were also interested in exploring the reasons why some people's stories are told while others are not. We will present some of these projects next week at Friday Share! See some of our projects below:





Room 214

Kathy B. & Ayanna

7/8 was busy in December! Each student chose a question they wanted to learn more about in Earth Science. They did research using books and websites, took notes, and paraphrased. Outlines were used to organize facts, then to write a research paper. Presentations, models, and visuals taught us about black holes, the effects of space on bodily functions, the meaning of astrophysics, and more.

We moved into climate change, studying its causes and effects on our earth. We Skyped with a scientist who works in the Virgin Islands to discuss his work saving turtles in a marine reserve. Students chose a young

climate change activist of color to research and then created a presentation about them and the essential, life changing work they're doing in their communities.

All of these skills will be built on through projects we create as we journey back to Ancient China this term.

-Kathy B. & Ayanna



SCHOOL-WIDE NEWS

Parent/Guardian Survey: Mission Hill School Co-Teacher Leader Evaluation

Please check your email for a short parent/guardian survey that should take only about 10 minutes to complete. There are 14 multiple choice questions, along with optional comment boxes. We welcome comments specific to either co-teacher leader (Geraldyn Bywater McLaughlin; Jenerra Williams) or for both of them. This survey is part of the 2019-2020 co-teacher leader evaluation process, as required by Mission Hill School by-laws and by Boston Public Schools. The survey was created by Mission Hill School community members serving on the evaluation committee: we very much appreciate your time and input into the evaluation process. Please note the survey is designed to be anonymous: your email address is NOT attached to responses. Thank you for participating! The survey is also available in hard copy at MHS front desk in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole.

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

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You can find this newsletter, and an archive of past newsletters, on our website at <http://www.missionhillschool.org/resources/newsletter/>.

It's Dinner and a Board Meeting!

¡Es comida y reunión de la Junta Directiva!

Upcoming Meeting Dates (Próximas reuniones):
3/26/20, 5/28/20



Hello Mission Hill families!

You are and have always been welcome to attend our Board Meetings. Please consider this your official invitation to come out and meet our board members, hear a little about important conversations in education, learn about ways to support our school and hopefully consider being a member in the near future. We consider your presence valuable so dinner will be provided.

We hope to see you there!

¡Hola familias de Mission Hill! Ustedes siempre son y han sido bienvenidas en las reuniones de la Junta Directiva. Por favor considere que ésta es su invitación oficial para venir y conocer a los miembros de nuestra junta. Venga a escuchar conversaciones importantes sobre educación, a conocer maneras de apoyar a nuestra escuela y a considerar ser un miembro de la junta en el futuro. Su presencia es muy valiosa, por lo tanto se proporcionarán comida. ¡Esperamos verle allí!

When: January 23, 2020

Where: 2nd Floor

Time: 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Cuando: El 23 de enero de 2020

Dónde: 2do piso

Hora: 5:00p.m.- 7:00 p.m.