



## IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

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

Friday, January 24, 9:45-10:15am  
**Friday Share (open to all)**

February 3rd - 7th  
**Black Lives Matter at School - Week of Action**

February 5-7th  
**7th-8th Graders to the Farm School**

January 17, 2020

Volume 23, Issue 17

### Halftime Highlights

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

This past weekend the Mission Hill School staff traveled to Essex, MA for our annual “halftime” winter retreat. Historically, this is a time when we take a pause to connect, reflect and plan ahead. At the winter retreat, we have time for longer conversations than we can typically have during a school day. Time for these conversations are critical to the health and longevity of our school. We worked hard throughout the day and enjoyed delicious meals together. In the evenings we enjoyed laughs, card games, football playoffs, and karaoke.

This year during retreat we furthered our work to update our Election to Work Agreement (EWA). The EWA outlines the working conditions for our pilot school and is an addition to the regular union contract. It reflects the unique mission and expectations for working at our school and it continues to evolve over the years as new staff join us and our professional community changes. The debates we had around the EWA helped us become stronger as a teacher-powered school.

To further our work toward becoming an antiracist institution, we watched and discussed the TEDtalk *How to deconstruct racism one headline at a time* by Baratunde Thurston. I encourage you to Google this video and watch it. Baratunde weaves personal stories, humor, grammar rules, historical facts and current media to highlight the white supremacy in which we are all operating. “There is a structure to white supremacy, as there is to misogyny, as there is to all systemic abuses of power. Structure is what makes them systemic. I am asking people to see the structure.



Screenshot of Baratunde  
Thurston's TEDTalk on YouTube

To see the power in it. And more importantly the humanity by those of us made targets by the structure.” He added, “I walk around in fear because I know that someone seeing me as a threat, can become a threat to my life. I am tired. I am tired of carrying this invisible burden of other people’s fears.” His words helped us think about our own role in disrupting racism when we see it, and recognizing it in our own thoughts, words and actions.

At the end of the retreat we called our founder Deborah Meier. We huddled together for our halftime motivation speech. Her words to us reminded me of Baratunde’s. She impressed upon us that schools should be a place of joy, and not a place of fear. She encouraged us to work to create a school that will help raise children who know how to speak to power, where children and adults are not afraid of power. This is our mission. Are you with us?

*Geralyn Bywater McLaughlin*

### KINDERGARTEN

#### K0 Room 108

**Quéla, Liana, Donna & Sarah**

As a preliminary study to the Ancient China Unit students in 108 have been learning about themselves in the context of the world. After reading Me On The Map by Joan Sweeney we have been looking at maps of Boston's neighborhoods, Massachusetts's counties, The United States of America, the seven continents, and their countries. The Burgers have been filling in their own individual maps and all the while giving us insight to who is in their world. Some of the Burgers' maps include labels such as "mommy's car," and "grandma's house," - while others proclaim "my house", "my house", "my house" while pointing all over the map. (We support our future real estate tycoons!).

Furthermore we have had a blast putting ourselves on the big map of Boston. Students are excited to find unexpected neighbors in their friends, and to show their peers what their homes look like on Google Maps and Google Earth. The K0 team is excited to watch the revelations and connections unfold as we connect this knowledge to our studies of China in the coming weeks.

-Quéla, Liana, Donna & Sarah



#### K1/K2 Room 106

**Kathy & June**

The children in the Cats class have been thinking about what they want to learn about Ancient China. Here is the start of their ideas. If you know about any of these things and would like to be a guest speaker, then please share your knowledge with us.

#### What we want to learn about Ancient China

Jaelle: The writing and the makeup.

Selma: The nature, Chinese art, and the writing.

Forest: Pandas and the emperor of China.

Melina: Speak Chinese and how did they travel?

Jo Jo: What did they do, their daily life?

Walter: How did they make pottery?

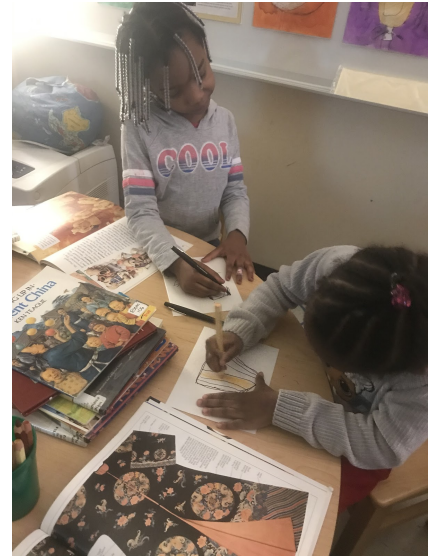
Griffin: Rice paddies and what did they grow and eat, and ancient Chinese stories.

Jayden: Learning about the dead.

Ailey: Paint like in China.

Leora: Dragons and phoenixes.

Ezra: What did the kids play with?



#### K1/K2 Room 107

**Jada & Manny**

While finding out what the Snow Cat Bumblebee Tummies thought they knew about ancient China, one of our students asked the question, "What does ancient mean?" Instead of answering the question right away, we decided

to ask the class what they thought the word meant. Here are their responses/ideas:

Jonathan: I think ancient means a bunch of years ago.

Beck: I think that ancient means that it was a long, long time ago.

August: I think ancient means when its outer space with the planets.

Alysha: I think ancient means a rocket ship.

Josue: I think ancient means old.

Lucy: Ancient means circles.

Will: Ancient means old.

Maeve: I think it means a long time ago.

As we delve deeper into the stories and history of this culture, we hope to provide our students many opportunities to deepen their understanding of this word.

- Jada Brown and Emmanuel St. Vil

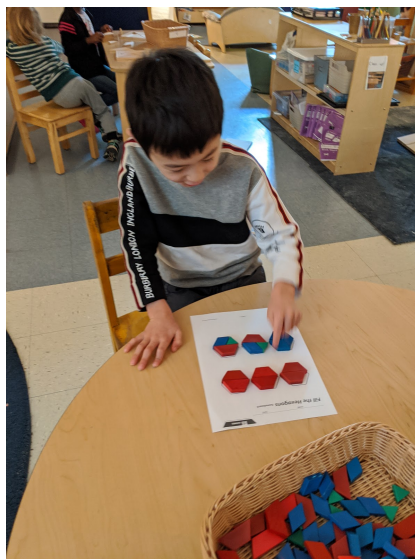
## **K1/K2 Room 109**

### **Katie & Courtney M.**

Our study of geometry is up and running! Children are using pattern blocks to learn about multiple ways to fill a hexagon, teaching them concepts of algebra as well as spatial knowledge. They are using rubber bands and geoboards to make shapes, which helps them understand the concepts of straight lines, points, and closed shapes. They have also used attribute blocks to sort by color, shape, size, and thickness, teaching them about categories and generalization. Take a look

at the photos below to see some more of our geometry work!

- Katie



## **GRADES 1 & 2**

### **Room 210**

#### **Amy, Alana & Stephanie**

Cocoa Kindness has been wondering a lot about our new theme:

*What is a civilization? As a group we decided:*

A civilization is a group of families and friends who live in the same place. They have rules, laws, government, police and dogs.

*What makes the Ancient China civilization great?* Here are some of our ideas:

1. They have really good food. - Benjamin

2. Over half of the world's inventions come from there. - Hannah

3. They had good war skills and they're strategic. - Danae

*And lastly here are our questions:*

1. How long ago is ancient? - Manny

2. Why Ancient China more than Ancient Other Places? - Xander

3. What were the jobs in Ancient China? - Sabina

We'll be exploring our wonderings over the next few weeks and focusing especially on what the stories and fables of Ancient China can teach us.

## **Room 216**

### **Danny, Felicia & Usra**

January has brought about many changes for our class, one of them being that we now have music *in the music room!* Before this week, Ms. Cara would come to our classroom for music class. The Rock Stars were so excited to go downstairs and be in a new space. Ms. Cara showed us Dot Piano, a visual musical instrument which uses a computer's keyboard to play notes and shows colors corresponding to the notes. Everyone took a turn playing on the keyboard and seeing what designs they could make. Anish got the colors to zig zag from one to the other, and Max played a set of notes repeatedly so that the colors fanned out on the screen. Emily even started playing "Do-Re-Mi" from *The Sound of Music!* I was so excited by this

tool that later that day I tried playing some songs on Dot Piano. We look forward to all of the new and exciting work which will come with being in the music room each week!

- Danny Flannery and Felicia Haynes

## GRADES 3 & 4

### Room 207

#### Amina & Ms. Hernandez

It was wonderful to have ALL of us back in school together last week. Amanda and I were afraid that much of the week would be spent helping the Wolves reacclimate themselves from the long vacation to being back in school. However, they seamlessly jumped right back into our normal routines without skipping a beat. It was amazing and felt wonderful.

Part of our time together was planning a secret baby shower for Amanda. The Wolves talked about their experiences from other baby showers they had attended, and made a plan. We had a party with homemade decorations, hats, a sign for Amanda and a sign for the baby. We had games, cards, a special snack and carved out time to share well wishes for Amanda. The Wolves did an amazing job with their preparations as well as keeping it a *secret* **ALL WEEK LONG!** The shower was lovely and we had a great time. We felt good being able to send Amanda off on her maternity leave with a bang. We will **ALL** miss her

immensely and are already looking forward to seeing her in the spring and meeting her baby.  
- Amina Michel-Lord and Eveline Hernandez

### Room 212

#### Cleata & Ayan

What do you know about Ancient China? What would you like to learn about Ancient China? What is the history of Ancient China? These are some questions that the Black Warriors were asked to think about as they begin their exploration of the Long Ago, Far Away theme this winter. Students shared that they know that China has a wall that is ancient. They also said that China is in the continent of Asia.

For our “Word of the Week” we discussed the meaning of ancient and defined what it means in our own way. Some students shared that it is about something that is from a long time ago, such as the Great Wall of China. Others shared that it is about what happened thousands of years ago, while others said it is about artifacts which we see in museums. These artifacts can tell us about what happened in the past. Students were excited as they read to find information about the history of Ancient China.

- Cleata Brown and Ayan Osman

### Room 215

#### Leila & Kat

This week the Wonders began exploring Chinese folktales. We

read a story about the Chinese zodiac calendar, and a story about Chinese names. We learned that folktales often have a lesson, or moral, that they are trying to teach. As we prepared to write our own folktales, we brainstormed a list of good lessons to include:

Tell the truth.

Be kind.

You get what you give.

Think before you speak (or do).

Don't be greedy.

Listen to good advice.

Choose your friends wisely.

Be smart/clever (more than strong).

Don't trust strangers.

Use your skills. Play to your strengths.

Don't be gullible.

Be yourself.

Don't brag. Be humble.

Listen to your elders.

Focus on your work.

Be a leader, not a follower.

Now students are working to create their own folktales to teach these lessons. Get ready to learn from dragons, emperors, and talking animals!

## GRADES 5 & 6

### Room 203

#### Ms. Coleman & Frances

Great news, “Mad Skills” is excited about mapping and designing their theme in Ancient China this week. They started out learning about the history of China and the mapping of the country. For one of the first parts



of the theme, students learned how to say their names in the Chinese language, by using their own laptops. What an exciting day for every student.

Also, this week students will create a name and logo for their newspaper about Ancient China. There will be a place on the newspaper for families to write comments based on what their children have learned.

### **Room 205**

#### **Nakia & David**

Here are some student responses to our fall report cards:

"yeah but i have been working with \_\_\_\_ to be friends.

"I feel like I can edit and revise writing to include appropriate punctuation and Capitalization"

"I think I'm good at math and I'm proud of my grades"

"I feel really good about the fact that I achieved all the grade level theme work :D"

"I think im not so good at my reading so i think you should organize with ABCD instead of color in my own words is way easier for me to say out loud because it's my own words"

"I can work better if I put more mind to the story and not my surroundings"

"My question is how come its blank where it says " Grade level expectations \_\_\_\_ is not yet able to do" because I don't understand what that means?"

"I kinda have to do much better on my reading"

"this is a good milestone for me to move on to and i feel like i am going to try to be more participant in class"

"is is very true but i am going to be practicing my reading much more"  
- Nakia and David

## **GRADES 7 & 8**

### **Room 213**

#### **Jenna & Courtney D.**

This past week was our first week of learning about our new theme, Ancient China. I have been particularly excited to start this theme as I had the amazing opportunity to go on a Fund for Teachers trip last summer to visit China. I traveled with Cleata, Meg, and Danny and it truly was an adventure; we got to visit historical sites like the Great Wall of China and the Forbidden City and take classes about Chinese culture like a cooking class and landscape painting class. This week, Meg and I showed our students pictures of our trip. They were excited to see the sites of Ancient China with their teachers in the foreground. Their reactions ranged from funny to overdramatic, with exclamations of "Oh my god, Jenna, you didn't take me?", "Is that a real panda?" and "That's my teacher! She's in China! She's on the Great Wall!" I hope that through sharing my experiences with students, I can help the content come alive and inspire

them to travel the world and learn about different cultures for themselves.

- Jenna & Arianny

### **Room 214**

#### **Kathy B. & Ayanna**

Ancient China Theme has launched! The first day we enjoyed watching a slide show from the last time our 7th and 8th graders did this unit. Both classes laughed watching smaller versions of themselves visiting Chinatown and working on their Chinese inspired art pieces. It was a lot of fun to take some time reminiscing and then use those memories to talk about what they want to learn this term.

We did a scavenger hunt through our new National Geographic textbooks so students could get excited about the wealth of information they contain. These books are full of beautiful photos and other visuals to support our students in their quest to learn about ancient societies and their influence on modern day societies. Online resources accompany this series, containing videos and interviews from archaeologists and other historians. Students this week are working on mapping Ancient China in order to delve into one of our essential questions, "How does geography influence a civilization's development?"

### MHS K-Quad Successfully Achieves NAEYC Re-Accreditation!

Congratulations are in order! After a robust process that included the creation of comprehensive classroom and program portfolios, as well as a site visit, we have received word from the National Association of Early Childhood Education that our K0/K1/K2 program has achieved a new five year term of accreditation.



## FEBRUARY VACATION PROGRAM

FEBRUARY 18 - 21, 2020

**ENROLL NOW!**  
**SPACE IS LIMITED**

february vacation is right around the corner!

Are you looking for a full day program where your child will get to play, learn and have fun with their friends? Imagine That has you covered. We will be offering a Full Day February vacation program for ages 5 and up. We have only limited slots, so it is first come first serve. Please be sure to fill out the registration form on the back side and send back to us ASAP.

**program benefits:**

- Increased academic skills
- Interactive educational environment
- Hosted on-site at your school for convenience
- Educated caring staff
- Partnership with Math and Movement, Kinderlabs Robotics, and WGBH
- Critical thinking & problem solving skills
- Self regulation & emotional control

**enrollment** (age 5 and up)

**schedule**  
February 18 - 21  
2, 3 and 4 day options available  
**Time:** 8:00am - 5:00pm

**cost**  
**4 DAYS:** \$180 • **3 DAYS:** \$130/wk • **2 DAYS:** \$90/wk

**locations**

<b>KIPP Boston</b> 37 Babson St. Mattapan, MA	<b>KIPP Lynn</b> 90 High Rock St. Lynn, MA	<b>UP Holland</b> 85 Olney St. Dorchester, MA
-----------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------

**ENROLL TODAY!**  
[afterschool@imaginethat.com](mailto:afterschool@imaginethat.com)  
LEARN MORE AT IMAGINETHAT.COM

### After School and Vacation Week Opportunities with Imagine That

Imagine That's After School program is an extended day supplemental educational program for children from K - 5th grade. The goal for all Imagine That After School programs is to support families needing extended school care with a quality enrichment program that complements the students' academic day and enhances creativity utilizing state-of-the-art interactive tools, technology and curriculum. Imagine That understands a child will succeed and work their hardest when he/she is motivated, engaged, felt heard and are in a safe nurturing environment.

Imagine That also offers school vacation and summer program.

February vacation is right around the corner!

Are you looking for a full day program where your child will get to play, learn and have fun with their friends? Imagine That has you covered. We will be offering a Full Day February vacation program for ages 5 and up. We have only limited slots, so it is first come first serve.

Imagine That is currently enrolling with limited space available for our extended day program as well as February vacation so don't miss out!

**Geralyn Bywater McLaughlin and  
Jenerra Williams, Co-Teacher Leaders**

~  
**Deborah Meier, Founder**  
**Ayla Gavins, Former Principal**  
**Dr. Brenda Cassellius, Superintendent**



**Mission Hill K-8 School**  
**A Boston Public Pilot School**

[WWW.MISSIONHILLSCHOOL.ORG](http://WWW.MISSIONHILLSCHOOL.ORG)

*This newsletter, and an archive of past newsletters, is on our website.*



**20 Child Street**  
**Jamaica Plain, MA 02130**  
**(Carolina Avenue entrance)**

**T 617-635-6384**  
**F 617-635-6419**



# 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: 2<sup>nd</sup> 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.**