



## IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

February 29th  
**Paint Night Fundraiser**  
St John's Church, 7pm(adults only)

March 2 & March 3rd  
**Family Conferences**

Friday, March 6, 9:45-10:15am  
**Friday Share (open to all)**

February 28, 2020

Volume 23, Issue 22

## Educational Equity

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

As many of you know, Jenerra and I spent the week before February break at the Standards Institute ([www.standardsinstitutes.org](http://www.standardsinstitutes.org)) in Orlando, Florida. This national institute brought together 1700 educators from across the country. We were part of a large contingency of educators from Boston. As a new school leader, it was incredibly valuable to spend this dedicated time with my Co-Teacher Leader Jenerra and our Academic Superintendent Marjore Soto. It was a chance to learn alongside and deepen our relationships with other Transformation School leaders and instructional leaders in our district.

*Students experiencing racism can't wait for schools to move at their own pace and comfort level.*

**Paul Gorski**

The single biggest takeaway for me was the consistent focus on equity. It was the first time that I have seen standards and equity framed together. The opening remarks by Lacey Robinson set the tone for the week when she noted that as educators we are equity architects. Throughout the week we continually returned to the following critical idea:

*We become change agents for educational equity when we acknowledge that we are part of an educational system that holds policies and practices that are inherently racist and that we have participated in this system. We now commit to ensuring that all students, regardless of how we think they come to us, leave us having grown against (with respect to) grade-levels standards and confident in their value, identities, and abilities.*

Keynote speaker Paul Gorski was a familiar face to me, as he also was a keynote speaker at the Progressive Education Conference earlier this year in Minnesota. His powerful work around helping schools disrupt racism is worth a read. Check out his article "Avoiding Racial Equity Detours." It is available free online or you can call us for a hard copy to send home.

Jenerra and I will be sharing more about the institute, and our continued connections to the work, in the weeks and months ahead.

*-Geraldyn Bywater McLaughlin*

### **Joel Webb** **Learning Coach**

Recently I've been part of a team that has been working to prepare Mission Hill School to take the MCAS. There are a tremendous amount of logistics to this process. From managing the technology to implementing accommodations, everything going smoothly is essential to making sure our students can shine on these important testing days. Students in grades 3-8 will be taking the test and the MCAS team will certainly be in touch about testing particulars as our start date approaches. (The testing window opens 3/30/20.) Some students may feel some test anxiety, so we ask families to reassure their children that this is just another opportunity to "show what they know" and as long as they do their best, that will be excellent. The test is computer based. Over the course of March, we will make sure students are familiar with the software as well as get opportunities to practice taking the test. They have already been equipped with the learning they need and this process is about ensuring they can demonstrate it. We thank you in advance for your support in keeping students feeling confident and energized as we embark on this year's MCAS.

### **Priya Kumar** **Learning Coach**

As we head into the month of March, our focus turns to

preparing our students for the MCAS. The thought of state testing can produce anxiety for students and parents alike. However, by following some simple strategies, parents and families can help students prepare for the test and have a positive test-taking experience.

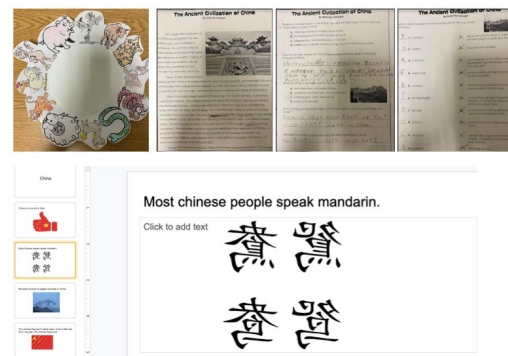
1. Make sure your child gets enough exercise and sleep, eats properly and gets to school on time.
2. Help your child practice MCAS test questions. Review the test together so you will all get familiar with the expectations. (Previous years' MCAS tests are online at [www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testitems.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/testitems.html).)
3. Encourage your child to listen/read carefully to all test-taking directions and to ask questions if any directions are unclear. So many people err on test questions due to failure to answer the question being asked.
4. Encourage your child to do the best work possible and to have a positive attitude.

Finally, encourage your child to focus on their strengths, such as their good memory and strong analytical skills, and remind your child that test scores do not determine one's worth.

### **Alexia Salata** **Speech Therapy**

Hard to believe that March is almost here! During these past couple of months students have been busy learning about

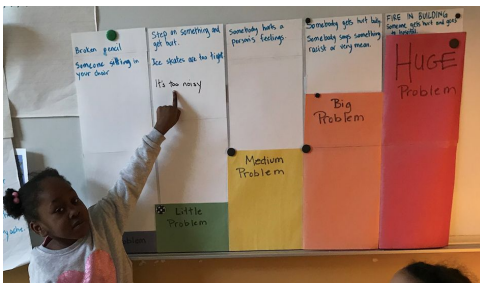
Ancient China and its amazingly rich history. During some of our speech-language therapy sessions students were presented with information about Ancient China as a way to reinforce their learning on this topic. They were asked to showcase their knowledge in a variety of different ways. This varied greatly, depending on their age/grade, and abilities/challenges. For some, this was through labeling/sequencing pictures. For others it was by reading text and answering questions. And for others it was by formulating sentences and creating slides to demonstrate their understanding of presented information. By creating projects and completing work that is meaningful to each individual student, children get to really understand the presented information, make connections with things they already know, and more importantly hold onto that knowledge.



## Marion Sitomer

### Occupational Therapy

Cocoa Kindness recently had a group discussion about “The Size of the Problem”, a concept from the Zones of Regulation curriculum. Students talked about different problems that could occur and whether they were tiny, little, medium, large or HUGE. Guiding questions like “Did anyone get hurt?” or “How hard was it to solve?” helped us figure it out. We agreed that the size of your reaction should match the size of the problem: tiny problem - tiny reaction, huge problem - big reaction. Not everyone felt the same about what size some of the problems were. For instance some people are sensitive to noise and others are not, so noise is not the same size problem for everyone. We did agree though that a broken pencil is always a tiny problem, and it’s always a huge problem when the school is on fire. When a problem is small you don’t have to get upset and there’s an easy solution. When the problem is big or huge it’s appropriate to get upset and it may be difficult to solve. Understanding the right size reaction to problems helps us be good problem solvers.



## Jeanne Rachko & Meg Walker

### Art Room

Continuing our theme of Ancient China, students have been looking at the art of printmaking, specifically relief printmaking. Relief printmaking was developed by the Eastern Han Dynasty (AD 25-220) in ancient China. Relief printmaking is where the artist carves into the surface of their material, leaving behind the protruding image. Their image is then colored with some type of ink. The ink sticks to the areas of the image that are projecting, while the areas that have been carved out remain ink free.

Students in grades K, 3rd/4th, 5th/6th and 7th/8th have all tried their hand at printmaking. 7th and 8th grade used a material called E-Z Cut (a soft rubber like material), a gouge and ink to create their images. Grades K, 3rd/4th and 5th/6th used styrofoam and markers to create their prints. Even though the materials and the process were slightly different, each grade did a great job creating their printed images.

## Cara Campanelli

### Music

*In class:*

This month we’ve kicked fully into gear with our Ancient China theme, as well as looking ahead to our spring concert!

All students K-4 have been learning Diū Shǒu Juàn or “Drop the Handkerchief”. This is a singing and movement game played in Chinese music classes that is strikingly similar to Duck, Duck, Goose. In this version, students sit in a circle and sing the song, while one classmate walks in a circle with the handkerchief. The handkerchief is dropped behind a classmate in the circle, and a game of tag ensues while the class sings and cheers.

*In performance:*

On Friday, February 14th students K-8 showcased their talents at our newly-revived Coffee House. Congrats on a great job to all our performers! Dancers, singers, instrumentalists, actors, and composers all shared their creativity with us.

Our school-wide spring concert is Wednesday, May 20th after school. We hope you can join us!

## SCHOOL-WIDE NEWS

### Painting Night

Saturday, February 29th from 7-9PM at St. John's Church, 1 Roanoke Avenue, Jamaica Plain. Join your friends from Mission Hill School for a night of guided painting. We will create original compositions with instruction from two MHS parents/art teachers.

Tickets at [www.eventbrite.com/e/90972438011](http://www.eventbrite.com/e/90972438011)  
Or email: [fomhs@missionhillschool.org](mailto:fomhs@missionhillschool.org)



### BAKE SALE Fundraiser

We are having a primary day bake sale:

Tuesday, March 3rd from 7am-8pm in the gym at Mission Hill School.

Bake, staff the table, or otherwise support us! Sign up for a table slot at

<https://www.slottr.com/sheets/18249333> or call 617-635-6384.

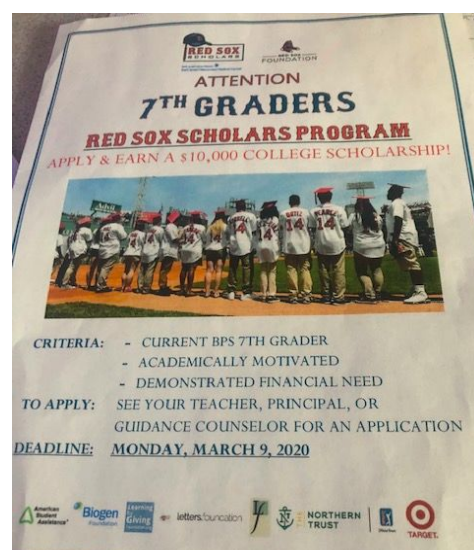
### ATTENTION, 7TH GRADE PARENTS:

#### RED SOX SCHOLAR APPLICATIONS ARE OPEN

We have the applications at school and can help your student fill them out.

Please contact Kathy B. for more information and application materials.

Deadline: Monday, March 9, 2020.



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

