



IMPORTANT DATES AND REMINDERS

Please note that all school community events are cancelled or postponed through the end of March.

See Schoolwide news for details.

*Friday, March 13
Friday Share (open to all)*

*Friday, March 20, 9:45-10:15am
Friday Share (open to all)*

*Thursday, March 27, 5:00-7:00pm
Governance Board Meeting (open to all)*

March 13, 2020

Volume 23, Issue 24

Standards

Standards. As adults we have encountered many connotations of this word. We might think of double standards, lowering your standards, standard of excellence, setting the standard to follow, etc. Adults in education also have their way of interacting with this word - Common Core standards, state standards, district standards, high standards.



The [Common Core](#) State Standards, established in 2009-10, are a set of criteria that students are supposed to be taught and assessed on throughout their K-12th grade career. They are a set of standards that have been determined to be what students should know before they graduate high school. As with most things, these standards are, and I'm sure always will be, a hot topic of debate. Are these THE things kids should know? Are these the ONLY things kids should know? What about social/emotional skills? Life skills? Are these standards

biased? Do these standards really prepare kids? The debate can go on and on. What is not up for debate is that our students, nationwide and here at Mission Hill, are not thriving with these standards the way they should be.

Earlier in the year, Geralyn shared in one of her newsletters about [The Opportunity Myth](#) study. One of their data points was this: "Of the 180 classroom hours in each core subject during the school year, students spent 133 hours on assignments that were not grade level appropriate and only 47 hours on those that were." This data, as well as other data presented in the report, was staggering to me and made me think of this line in our Mission Statement:

"We must expect the most from everyone, hold all to the highest standards, but also respect our different ways of exhibiting excellence."

What do we expect from our students academically? How do we hold them to the highest standards in their academic work? How do we monitor and assess our use of the Common Core Standards and the current MA Curriculum Frameworks? How do we hold ourselves and students accountable for working towards the "highest standards"? How do we push ourselves when we are not reaching the bar we set for ourselves and students? What will we do and what changes will we make within ourselves and our

school community to ensure that every student, not only gets every day what they need academically, but what they deserve?

These are the questions we are discussing and grappling with as we finish out the school year and set our sights on next year's plan. I don't know the answers to all these questions, but I do know that the standards we set for ourselves and for our students will determine the outcome.

Jenerra Williams

CLASSROOM NEWS

KINDERGARTEN

K0 Room 108

Quéla, Liana, Donna & Sarah

Last Friday, the brave Burgers headed up on stage to present their play "The Great Race" at Friday Share. If they were feeling nervous, it didn't show. Nehemiah, playing the part of the Emperor, delivered his lines with great enthusiasm. Jayce and Hezekiah were the perfect team as the ox and the rat. Lorenzo swam with great confidence as the tiger. Kai was so graceful as the flying dragon. Deusthcaelha showed brilliant acting skills as the frightened horse when Liam the snake crossed her path. Anais did a great job as the rooster, sporting a luxurious feather boa and Ana was very convincing as a monkey, using a river stick to guide the floating raft. Ethan played the part of the goat so well, munching on river plants to clear a path for the raft. Lastly, Raevonii brought down the house when she "dove" into the water as the playful pig!

Thank you to Ms. Quéla for coming in on her day off to help with narration. Thank you also to Ms. Nelly and Ms. Sarah for jumping in at the last second to play parts of the rabbit and the dog.

-The Burger Team



K1/K2 Room 106

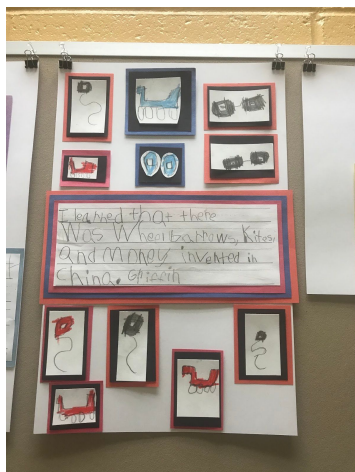
Kathy & June

We are working on documentation panels. Documentation panels are our way of making our learning visible to ourselves, other students, teachers, families, and visitors. Each child picked a topic to study more closely. Some topics included the Terracotta Warriors, money, dragons, food, and inventions. We then learned about Ron Berger's critique process. You can see him in action here. <https://vimeo.com/38247060> When critiquing other people's work we use the following code:

You need to be kind, helpful, and specific. The children then take the feedback given and do a second draft. One student told another student, "You can add more details." Another student commented that a student had written a very good title.

For Griffin's final draft he wrote, "I learned that there was wheelbarrows, kites, and money invented in China." Jayna wrote, "The emperor wore a hat and a robe. The robe was made of fabric and decorated."

Working with children this way has been eye opening for me as a teacher. I talk less so that they can talk more. They are kind, helpful, and respectful. Please come by and visit our works in progress.



K1/K2 Room 107

Jada & Manny

Recently, a student chose the book *Animals in the Stars: Chinese Astrology for Children* by Gregory Crawford for me to read to the class at rest time. This book told one version of the origin of the Chinese Zodiac and how the order of the animals to represent each year was chosen. As one can imagine, it certainly got our students talking. Each animal had its strengths, weaknesses, friend animal and conflict animal followed by a story that highlighted those qualities. "I'm a dragon!" and "I'm a sheep. My mommy told me so." were often statements heralded as each animal's story was read. A trip to the

planetarium gave life to many of these animals' constellations and after some research, we have determined that the majority of our class was born in either the year of the horse or the sheep. What year were you born in?
- Jada Brown and Emmanuel St. Vil

K1/K2 Room 109

Katie & Courtney M.

We have been learning folktales from Ancient China and retelling the stories. Here is our retelling of the story The Magic Horse of Han Gan.

(Part 1)

Han Gan worked for the innkeeper. Han Gan delivered food to the famous painter Wang Wei. Wang Wei watched Han Gan make a horse in the sand. He went to his house the next day and he could paint anything he wanted at his own house. He liked to paint horses. The Great Emperor summoned him over and said, "I want you to be an official horse painter." Han Gan refused to do what his teacher wanted him to paint, and he just did horses tied up. A warrior came and he wanted Han Gan to paint a steed for him so he could fight. Han Gan painted a horse but he wasn't happy with it, so he threw it in the fire. Then a horse jumped out that instant of the paper. The warrior got on his back and rode away. And Han Gan called after him, "Take good care of your horse." And only the moon was there to hear him.

To be continued....

GRADES 1 & 2

Room 210

Amy, Alana & Stephanie

Cocoa Kindness went to Chinatown with the Rockstars and loved it! We ate heartily: fried rice, noodles, egg rolls, crab rangoon, sesame mochi bean rolls, chicken fingers, bok choy, broccoli, scallion pancakes and pork bao. Most of us used forks but a few of us were successful with chopsticks.

We also enjoyed finding notable sights - the (mini) great wall of China, the Tiananmen Square memorial, the Mary Soo Hoo Park (with a very popular climbing structure), the statue of Confucius, a rooftop pagoda and the Chinatown gate. The scavenger hunt was a wonderful way to work as a team and learn about the amazing civilization of China that endures today and has even set down some roots right here in Boston.

It was a beautiful and fun day. Thank you so much to the generous chaperones who accompanied us!

Room 216

Danny, Felicia & Usra

Last week, the 1st/2nd grade classes took a trip to Chinatown, as we do every four years for our Ancient China theme. While in Chinatown, we completed a

scavenger hunt of landmarks and interesting places within the neighborhood. We then had lunch at Hei La Moon, where students got to try a variety of dishes including chicken lo mein and crab rangoon. After lunch, groups finished up the scavenger hunt and visited bakeries, shops, and stands to see if there was anything they'd like to buy. Here are some of the Rock Stars' favorite parts of the trip:

Going and finding things for the scavenger hunt. - Bilal
I liked the food and the coins that I got from the stand. - Yaniel
I liked all of the food because it all tasted good. - Elijah
When I got my good luck dragon and when I got to see my mom. - Elian
When we were buying stuff and looking around in stores. - McKenna
I liked those chicken fingers!- Adin
The scavenger hunt because there was stuff from long ago and far away right in Boston.- Anish
 -Danny Flannery, Felicia Haynes, and Usra Ahmed



GRADES 3 & 4

Room 207

Amina & Ms. Hernandez

On our way to the Museum of Fine Arts to see ancient Chinese artifacts, while waiting at the bus stop another rider commented on how great it was that we were on a field trip and that the children were so well-behaved. Little did she know that at MHS we see the city as an extension of our classrooms and prior to EVERY field trip we remind students to be mindful of others (i.e. be conscious of their voice levels and personal space). During the ride, some students discussed the signage concerning giving up seats to elderly and physically challenged riders. As if the universe was listening, several minutes later several elderly riders boarded the bus and we happily gave up our seats. Our bus stop friend shared

that she thought it was so good that we were, "teaching them the right thing". I informed her that our learning happens *EVERYWHERE* we go.

-Amina Michel-Lord and Evelin Hernandez



Room 212

Cleata & Ayan

The word transformation has been running around in my head a lot since last school year. Transformation refers to a change that is thorough or dramatic in appearance. In other words, it's obvious. We are in the second half of the school year and as we progress through the year it is quite obvious that students are transforming in their reading, writing, even in their physical and emotional growth. As I spoke with students

and their families during our family conferences, many stated that their child has grown a few inches taller. Some families shared that they noticed them reading more, writing more and even getting better at making friends. Overall, students seem to be enjoying new growth, whether academically, socially or physically.

Another transformation that students have experienced this year is being adaptable to changes in the classroom when adults have to change schedules due to assessments, weather, challenges or an emergencies. The Black Warriors have truly shown that they have what it takes to work hard, be kind and persevere no matter what comes their way; they are ready!

Room 215 **Leila & Kat**

Last week, as the Wonders prepared for Friday Share, I suggested that they might share their terracotta sculptures or their topographic maps of China. The push-back was immediate. "What about the dynasties we've been learning about?" "Could we do a skit about emperors?" I cautioned that a skit would be a big job and they wouldn't have much time to prepare. The majority voted, though, and I was overruled.

Working as a team, a group of Wonders prepared a quick skit about the Shang, Zhou, Qin and Han dynasties. They wrote

scripts and designed props. On Friday we laughed aloud as the Mandate of Heaven transferred from the Shang to the Zhou. We watched Emperor Qin Shi Huangdi put people to work on the Great Wall. We smiled as Confucius returned to the stage to bring order during the Han. It is fascinating to see history through the eyes of 8-10 year olds.

GRADES 5 & 6

Room 203 **Ms. Coleman & Frances**

Room 205 **Nakia & David**

GRADES 7 & 8

Room 213 **Jenna & Courtney D.**

7th and 8th graders are busy at work on their Ancient China Inventions Project. As you may know, China has contributed many important inventions to the world including paper, printing, gunpowder, fireworks and many more. Students have determined which invention they believe is the most important from Ancient China. Now they are writing an argumentative essay in which they provide their evidence and reasoning about why their invention is the most important. They are also writing a well-developed counter-argument. Students will

also create visual and oral presentations about their invention to share with the community. Students are expected to share their learning in a creative way and some students have begun writing raps and creating Prezi presentations to showcase their learning. We are excited to share our learning and hope that you will stop by rooms 213 and 214 to see their work. Pictures to come in the upcoming weeks!

Room 214 **Kathy B. & Ayanna**

8th graders have been working on a project stemming from a 2018 civic education bill passed by Governor Baker. Chapter 296 of the Acts of 2018 states, "Each public school serving students in grade 8, and each public high school, shall provide not less than 1 student-led, non-partisan civics project consistent with the History and Social Science Curriculum Framework for each student."

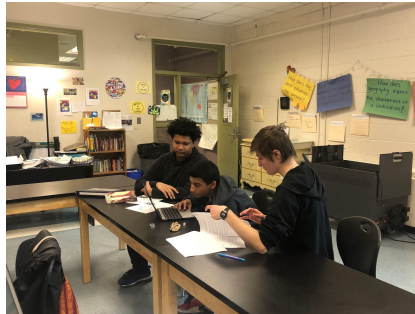
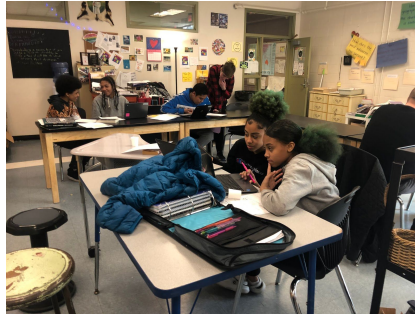
To achieve this goal, 8th graders have been working on projects with volunteers from 826 Boston (see below for more information). Projects grew from our Fall Earth Science theme to research the effects of pollution on climate change in Boston. Each student chose one area they can take action on at a local level. This effort will culminate in a Spring Showcase.

-Kathy and Ayanna

*826 Boston is a "nonprofit youth writing and publishing organization that empowers traditionally underserved students ages 6-18 to find their

voices, tell their stories, and gain communication skills to succeed in school and in life".

<https://826boston.org>



SCHOOL-WIDE NEWS

MHS Coronavirus Update

Out of an abundance of caution and concern for the Coronavirus outbreak, we will be cancelling upcoming community events through the end of March.

These events include:

- Family Council Meeting (3/12)
- Friday Share (3/13, 3/20, 3/27)
- Curriculum Breakfast (3/19)
- Governing Board Meeting (3/26) *will be rescheduled*

BPS cancelled all field trips (this started, Thursday, March 12th).

If you, or anyone in your household, has been in close contact with someone who has traveled to a Level 2 or 3 country in the last two weeks, please call to let our nurse, Georgie Marks, know. Also, when calling in sick children please let us know if the illness is a respiratory/flu illness so we can track absences. As with any medical information, confidentiality about our staff, students and families must be maintained at all times. Information about reasons for absences, travel history, and illness cannot be disclosed and will be protected. This is also a good time to remind you of the existing policy that states a child should be clear of symptoms for 24 hours before returning to school if the sickness involves a fever, vomiting or diarrhea.

Although the risk in our area remains low, we understand that any outbreak can be unsettling for families and students. Our custodial crew is working hard to keep us supplied with soap, paper towels and cleaning spray. We are working to get soap dispensers added to the classroom sinks on the second floor.

We will continue to keep you up to date as the situation evolves. Please contact your teacher or the office if you have any questions. The main number to the office is 617-635-6384. For the most updated information from Boston Public Schools please see <https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/coronavirus>.



Hiring Committee

To help with the hiring process for positions next school year, we need two members from our family community to join the hiring committee. We would love your input on candidates being considered and would also like to add some diversity to our hiring committee! If interested, please contact Corinne Ng (Governing Board Co-Chair and MHS Parent) at 857-891-7800 or corinnekl_n@hotmail.com of your interest. Starting March 11th resumes for open positions will be in the office and all are welcome to review and advise the hiring committee.

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

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



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REGÍSTRESE PARA EL PROGRAMA STEM DE VERANO GRATIS

MOTHERS FOR JUSTICE & EQUALITY

Program Dates: Julio 6th - Julio 31st
Hours: M- F; 9:00 am - 2:30 pm

Ages: 9 - 13 years old

Ubicación: Mildred Ave Middle School (*Sujeto a cambios)

Plazo de solicitud: Abril 30th, 2020

Cost: Gratis!

Los estudiantes inscritos en el programa serán:

- Aprenda sobre ciencia, tecnología, ingeniería, arte, matemáticas (STEAM) y aprendizaje de servicio.
- Enciende su imaginación.
- Ir en excursiones (museo de la ciencia y más!
- Use la influencia positiva de los compañeros para promover un ambiente educativo saludable, solidario y respetuoso.

Espacio Limitado: Enlístate Ahora. Contacto Mothers for Justice and Equality (617)516-8086 or email para jlee@mothersforjusticeandequality.org

