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### Important Dates and Reminders

Sunday, November 4  
*Daylight Savings Time Ends*

Tuesday, November 6, 7:00am-8:00pm  
*Election/Bake Sale*

Thursday, November 8, 5:00pm-5:30pm  
*Emergency Governance Board Meeting*



### Collective Protection of Our Children

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

This is not the newsletter that I intended to send home this week. I had one all set to go about the visitors we've had, several wonderful groups from Holland. Then last night I got an email from a principal friend. She was sending me the letter she wrote to her school community about the most recent hate crimes in Kentucky and Pittsburgh, the pipe bombs too. She asked me to send my letter to her.

I had not written one. I was shaken by my own lack of response, particularly because Pittsburgh is my hometown. My own grief, for what has been an ongoing loss of lives, got in the way.

My first thought was about the volume of tragic events and disturbing news. I can't keep up. It's overwhelming. My second thought was that our students and staff are a source of inspiration during these days of publicized violence across our nation. They need our time and full attention. Third, I wondered if you (MHS community) felt like you've had enough. Are you saturated with talk about violence and hate? I snapped to and started to write this letter because the violence should never be normalized.

The conclusion I came to is that our children need us adults to communicate so we can collectively protect them from some of the media messages, and help them manage what they have access to. Our children live in an era where information reaches their eyes and ears in unfiltered ways often before we (adults) want it to. The news these days is troubling, hard for adults to digest and even harder for our children. We have to be prepared to help the young people in our lives process emotions as they hear or witness frightful acts. We also need to have conversations with them about hate that can grow out of fear, ignorance, and no sense of belonging.

At Mission Hill we respond to questions that students ask. Teachers do their best to answer them factually and in age appropriate ways. Some questions are best answered by family. We do not elicit conversation about tragic events, but do offer safe spaces for discussion if a student needs to talk. A BPS psychologist is also available if needed.

Collectively let's take care of our children the best way we know how. These resources provided by my colleagues can help.

- [Talking to Children About Violence](#)
- [Tips for Parents](#)
- [Promoting Compassion and Acceptance in Crisis](#)
- [Hate Speech/ Civil Rights](#)
- [HealthyChildren.org](#)

Sincerely,

Ayla Gavins

## Kindergarten News

### Kathy, June & Liana Room 106

We have been talking about our class name. We brainstormed, we voted and slowly removed names that received zero or one vote. We made it down to three names. The Peregrine Falcons, The Raspberry Cheetahs, and The Wolf Pack.

We voted and Peregrine Falcons had eight, The Raspberry Cheetahs had six, and The Wolf Pack had two. We could not have a name that only two people wanted. Asa choose Wolf Pack. His whole body started to show disappointment.

We voted again and this time almost everyone voted for the Peregrine Falcons. Some students voted for the Raspberry Cheetahs.

Emerson said, "I would like the Peregrine Falcons." One by one almost everyone in the class choose The Peregrine Falcons.

One person did not want it: Asa.

I reminded Asa that we would not choose a name unless everyone was ok. He was assured. I said, "I need you to find another name that everyone will be ok with." As we were about to leave the rug he said, "It's ok. I don't really like it, but our class is still the same." That was a big deal. Handling disappointment so well at such a young age is really challenging.

-Kathy

### Jada & Manny Room 107

Recently when Jonathan R began classifying items as solids, liquids and gasses, I asked if he thought a solid could be turned into a liquid. "No", he responded confidently. Later that week we chopped 27 solid apples, placed them into a crockpot and as the apples cooked, students hypothesized: "It will stay the same." "It will turn into sauce." The next day we observed our cooked apples and noticed that it no longer had a shape of its own and it took the shape of the container it was in. They had transformed into a liquid-like state! We then asked, "What would happen if it kept cooking? Could it change its state again? Could it turn back into a solid?"

Joy: If we freeze it will become a solid.

Jonathan R. : If it cooks longer it might explode.

Eddy: It will push out in the air.

Alessandra: It will keep getting out of the pot.

Rowan: If you mix it harder it will become frozen.

Ebi: If we keep mixing, it will stay the same.

What do you think?

-Jada

### Geralyn & Donna Room 108

"I have both;" "I need more;" "Look how many I have!" Throughout the school day we are listening for ways that children are approaching mathematical situations and thinking about numbers/quantity. The "mistakes" children make reveal so much about how they are processing mathematical concepts and the language involved. For instance, a child who was amazed with her handful of eye droppers declared, "I have both!" She knew she had a collection, and used the word, "both" to convey the idea of "many." With prompting, she was able to count the eye droppers - revealing nine in total. Again, she proudly declared, "I have both!" I coached her, explaining that with nine she had "many" eye droppers and that "both" means two. It may take time for her vocabulary to catch up with her mathematical thinking, and as teachers we have evidence that she is showing interest and curiosity in solving mathematical problems and counting. This is part of the domain known as "Mathematical Thinking" in the *Work Sampling System Preschool - 3* assessment system we use (and that you may remember we shared at Back to School Night). On Friday 10/26 we sent home the "Short October Report" to all our K0 families and this year, in line with our school wide Instructional Focus we added a new component - specific evidence around your child's mathematical thinking. With this, we included ideas for supporting your child's math development in fun ways at home. If you did not receive your Short October Report, please let us know.

### Katie & Mary Room 109

Last week we had a special visit from the Beautiful Stuff project. Marina Seevak brought 14 "treasure" boxes to our classroom. Each box contained identical materials: small tubes, glass beads, bottle caps, and flooring tiles, about 20 pieces in all. Marina demonstrated opening one box, exploring materials on her mat, and then putting the pieces back into the box. She gave the tiniest shake, and opened the box again to new possibilities. The children took their seats at their own treasure boxes and the room became quietly busy.

Conventional wisdom in my teacher graduate program taught me that I could expect one minute of focus for each year of age, so five minutes of focus for a five-year-old child. Children explored Beautiful Stuff for 30 minutes. They worked in their seats, spoke softly and kindly to their neighbors, sorted, and explored different perspectives. Marissa told me "I'm just looking at everybody so I could have ideas." Beautiful Stuff will be back to our classroom in November. Reach out to Katie or Kathy if you'd like to come take a look.

-Katie

## First & Second Grade News

### Ashleigh & Alana Room 205

Last week, I joined Nakia and Kendall's class on their yearly trip to Farm School. We spent 3 days and 2 nights at the farm. I'll admit I was a little nervous at first. I had not spent much time with 5th and 6th graders, and I had never slept over at the farm with students before. After our first opening circle, I felt peaceful. I felt connection. I felt excited. It was such an amazing and special experience. It was extra special because I got to spend time with some students I had as first graders and second graders and I got to know new students even better. At the end of our time together, we all gathered for goodbye community circle. Carmen, one of the farmers, asked us to share a snapshot from our time at the farm. Although I could only share one during that time, many snapshots came to mind, and I wanted to share a few with you all here: hearing the students chanting Farm School as the bus pulled up the bumpy road, watching Andrew's face when he finally sawed all the way through a branch, seeing Gus the dog joining in the group soccer game, Lucas and Simeon feeding Goose, the baby calf, listening to Keysha's scary stories at bedtime, the sun rising up over the mountains in the distance, playing HORSE with the boys on the basketball court, and when Maya told me she was glad I came.

-Ashleigh

### Danny & Felicia Room 216

As if teaching at Mission Hill School were not enough of an undertaking in itself, this year I have been also presenting to teacher preparation programs as a part of my work with Teacher-Powered Schools. This past month I have presented twice at Northeastern University, to the same program from which I graduated. My favorite part of both sessions was when I opened it up for questions and got to talk more freely about what it's like working at a teacher-powered school like Mission Hill. One of the students asked me "What do you think Mission Hill does for a student's education that other schools may not be doing?", which launched me into a response which I hope would make Deborah Meier proud, all about the role of school in preparing students to take part in a democratic society, the need to practice decision-making, respectful disagreement, and the use of their voice to effect change. I hope that I'm representing Mission Hill well in the greater Boston community, and I will continue to improve my presentation so that we can reach as many future educators as possible. Happily this work will continue as we welcome some students from Northeastern who were interested in learning more about Mission Hill!

-Danny

### Kate & Kat Room 217

Last week we started making color wheels! You may have seen them hanging up in the green wing near our classroom. For all those interested, this is how to paint a color wheel as told by our class at morning meeting: You need red, yellow and blue paint. You use *Sharpies*, paper, a plate or pallet and a paintbrush. You get a piece of paper and make a circle in pencil and go over it in *Sharpie*. Make three long lines through the circle to make six triangles. Mix the paints to make orange, green, and purple. Paint the primary colors (red, yellow and blue) skipping one triangle between them. Then paint the secondary colors (purple, green and orange) in between the two primary colors that made them. Enjoy!

-Kate

## Third & Fourth Grade News

### Jenerra & Mayra Room 203

Last week on Friday, room 203 held a science game show called, "Do You Know Your Science?" In the style of Family Feud, our two teams went head to head. It was the Mission Matter vs. The Speedy Brained Scientists! Room 203 created the stage setup and the background as well as the questions that were asked. Each student wrote down 3 questions and answers to use in the game. Some questions included: What is the periodic table? What is a compound? What is the compound water made out of? Is Neon a gas? Do you have to be a certain gender to be a scientist? Both myself and our visiting 5th grader, Ares, were the hosts and Alyssa, visiting from Kate's class, also joined a team! Teams worked together and no one gave up or passed on a question! They persevered! In the end there was a tie

### Amanda & Amina Room 207



There are many things that we can learn as we travel around our beautiful city. We visit museums, monuments, historic sites and more. Students and teachers learn a lot from the sites we visit, but there is much more learning that happens as we travel to and from the destination. Students learn how to respect and be kind to the people around us as we travel. As we walk on the sidewalk, our class practices how to

### Cleata & Ayan Room 212

Having an open door policy in our classroom has allowed students access to even more resources, experiencing learning from additional adults besides their assigned teachers. Last year, parents and family members came in to share family stories of their ancestors' journeys to America. One dad came in and installed a shelf above our sink. Another dad once showed us a chemical experiment with rust. A mom was encouraged to come in and support learning during math. Recently we had visitors from the Netherlands who came to see the work we do. One visitor read to the class about atoms and molecules and eagerly told students that he was not a native English speaker but he would do his best with the read aloud. Student teachers are welcome to share our space and enjoy the reciprocal teaching and learning that only an open door policy could allow. Last week a student teacher from Massachusetts

score - 10 to 10. Ares and Jaiden S. from Abdi's class battled in a buzzer beater question to give The Speedy Brained Scientists the win! There were handshakes, high fives and words of "good job" from to player to player. We enjoyed game winning cookies at the end! We had a great time and I'm sure this will not be the last of "Do You Know Your Science?!"

-Jenerra

notice the people around us and respectfully move to the side as someone passes. They practice how to talk quietly on the train or the bus to respect the other passengers. Malia shared, "it is important to be quiet because most people are quiet on the train." Students learn how to take care of themselves and personal belongings. They learn how to take care of our community members by exploring with partners and making sure they are near a teachers. As you move about the city with your child, notice how they respect our city and the people who live here.

-Amanda

College of Art and Design visited for a day and worked with students to explore chemical reactions. In my observation, everyone enjoyed that shared experience, and the best news is that she wants to come back and spent the rest of her internship with us in room 212!

-Cleata

## Fifth, Sixth, Seventh & Eighth Grade News

### Nakia & Kendall Room 210 Grades 5 & 6

Last week Evolve spent three days and two nights at the Farm School. It was amazing as usual. Here are some sounds from the farm.

"FARM SCHOOL, FARM SCHOOL, FARM SCHOOL, FARM SCHOOL" shouted every child in unison as we approached the exit to Athol off of route 2...and every two minutes until we arrived.

"They let me use tools that my mom wouldn't trust me with..."

"Just because I eat them doesn't mean I can't be kind to them" - Commented a student regarding the chickens

"Farm School chores in the kitchen are fun."

"Hey Nakia, I'm shaking and baking!" - commented a student while cooking lunch for the farm.

"Yo...I *swear* to you that you'll fall in love with Goose" - one student to a late arriving student about Goose the cow.

"Ahhh nature's cologne" commented a student after rubbing an smelling Sage and Lemon Balm in the garden.

"Whose team is Gus on...is he on our team?!" - said a student after Gus, the Farm School dog, kept interfering in the soccer game.

-Nakia

### Abdi & Courtney Room 215 Grades 5 & 6

"Comprehension," the ability to understand what you read is the skill Kathy B., Ms. Courtney and I have begun working on in our classroom. We noticed that students are reading but are struggling to make sense of what they read. Kathy B. (Learning Coach) introduced students to Reciprocal Teaching (RT), an instructional activity where students take on a role (summarizer, questioner, clarifier, visualizer) for the purpose of making sense of a text. In small groups, each student contributes to the understanding of what they read; sentence starters facilitate students' participation in the reading process; the roles uncover different levels of the text. Students will need practice. At home, you can try these roles. RT can be used with fiction and non-fiction texts. Look for a blank sheet that will come home this week. Also, please sign and return Progress Reports. The math work sample is for you to review and inquire about.

-Abdi

### Jenna & Natel Room 213 Grades 7 & 8

Many statistics show that girls are underrepresented in STEM fields and begin to shy away from these subjects at an early age. This week, I saw this play out in my classroom. Every Thursday, I teach my 8th grade girls and boys separately. This Thursday, my girls were on fire! They were engaging with the math in a way I had not seen before. I was so impressed and asked them, "what was different today?" They said that having class without their male peers made them feel more comfortable to take risks; we discussed the societal factors that often make this experience a reality for girls and challenged ourselves to rise above them. Afterwards, I was able to talk with my boys about the impact of gender privilege in the classroom; they discussed this issue with interest and maturity. Today, I saw my girls pushing themselves more and some of my boys trying to give them the space to do so. I left feeling so inspired by the young people in my classroom and the hope of more equitable society for all of us.

-Jenna

### Reginald & Frances Room 214 Grades 7 & 8

"Lyra... walked into the sky" said the narrator. Then came a minor celebration. One student shouted, "We finished the book!" Another demonstrated what it must look like to walk into the sky. We finished reading *The Golden Compass*. Most of us really enjoyed it. Many are excited about reading the sequel. I am too, but first we must analyze *The Golden Compass*.

An analysis is when we write a review of a book or story using the literary elements: plot, setting, theme, point of view. The assignment assesses many things, including their understanding of the book, the elements and ability to write effectively. Some students say it is a difficult task, especially early in the 7th grade. We will write many of them throughout the school year. By the end of the year, they will get the hang of it.

After the analysis, we will begin reading our 2nd whole class book. Then write an analysis of that book. Then the cycle goes on and on. That way, students have several choices to draw from to include in their end of year portfolio presentation.

-Reginald

## Fliers & Attachments

**\*Special Board Meeting\***



A formal board vote will take place regarding a new leadership structure at Mission Hill School.

Come find out more.

Where: MHS Library

When: November 8, 2018

Time: 5:00- 5:30



**SATURDAY  
NOV 17  
9AM-1PM**

Boston City Hall  
1 City Hall Square  
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MBTA: Government Center, Haymarket,  
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