



Beyond the Ordinary

Established 1998

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A Word from the Headmaster

“Privatized Education Success in Sweden”

By Daren M. Houck

This past summer, the Associated Press printed an article regarding privatized education in Sweden. In 1992, Sweden’s private school enrollment was 1.7% in high school and 1% in elementary. Families interested in private schools were required to pay public education taxes on top of their private tuition. All public schools in Sweden are required to use nationalized methods and curricula, and a small number of families wanted a different choice for their children.

During that same year (1992), the government passed a new law allowing parents to use public funds to pay for private education. “Friskolor,” or independent schools, received the same national tuition rate as public schools and became government financed. Today, private school enrollment has risen to 17% and 9%, respectively.

The success of these government financed independent schools—enrollment is still on the rise—has attracted the attention of other European nations, including Britain. Michael Fallon, who worked in Britain’s former Conservative government, visited Sweden in May. “It is a model that is clearly working, and we need to learn from that,” said Fallon.

Upcoming Events

10/8	PAB 9:00 am
10/10	Hike for Hunger
10/13	Columbus Day-No School
10/16	Picture Re-Take Day
10/22	1/2 Day-Noon Dismissal
	Mid-Term Reports Home

We are fortunate that 20 Town Academies in New England and hundreds of other publicly funded Charter Schools throughout the country have already realized the value of choice. Public schools—**where an average of one in three students drop out each year**—might possibly learn from their private counterparts if all families were provided an option. Simply put, independent schools *must* be successful, or they go out of business. Somehow public education remains one of the few businesses that can fail 33% of the time and still make more money the following year. Perhaps the rest of the world will learn what Sweden—and New England—already knows.

10/22 Parent Conferences and Early Dismissal

Just a reminder that Parent Conferences will be Wednesday, October 22 at 12:30 p.m. There will be a Noon Dismissal that day as well so teachers may meet with parents from 12:30 p.m.-7:30 p.m. If you are unable to sign-up with your child(ren)’s teacher on that day, be sure to contact them regarding other available days and times.

Daren M. Houck, Headmaster
Carol A. Stachelek, Office Manager

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Hike for Hunger

The Mountain School has “Hiked for Hunger” each of the last four years, raising over \$4,500 for the Vermont Campaign to End Childhood Hunger.” We invite all of our parents to join us in this hike again this year. Students in grades 1-8 will bring home a pledge sheet where sponsors can pledge a certain amount of money per mile for a student to hike (students will hike 4 miles) or give a lump sum donation. Our goal is to again raise over \$1,200 for this event, with a special prize going to the top student fundraiser.

This year’s hike will be held at Jamaica State Park on Friday, October 10. We will leave The Mountain School at 9:30 a.m. and hike from approximately 10:00-11:00. Students need to bring a trail snack, **GOOD HIKING SHOES AND WEATHER-PROOF CLOTHING** (check the weather Thursday night—we hike no matter what!), and water bottles for the trail. A backpack or fanny pack can be brought to carry items if needed, but students are responsible for their equipment. *If you can be a hiking chaperone and driver, please contact Mr. Houck.* Let’s Hike for a good cause!

PK/K News

It was nice to see so many parents at the Open House. Many of you reported that your child loves coming to school and is excited about learning. That is wonderful to hear and our goal is to continue to build the enthusiasm!

In September, P.K. Kids have learned classroom procedures and routines, explored the room, and began building a community based on respect and kindness for all learners. Together we have come up with five expectations: 1. Be nice. 2. Use soft voices. 3. Raise your

hand. 4. Listen. 5. Follow directions. We also learned the consequences of not following these expectations. They are: 1. Friendly reminder. 2. Warning 3. Take-a-Break, and if the behavior persists, a call home.

Last month we had lots of fun exploring Eric Carle’s illustration techniques, writing a class book based on *The Mixed-Up Chameleon* and learning all about school. This month students are very excited to be starting a Dinosaur Thematic Learning Unit as well as a Kevin Henkes Author Study.

Please feel free to call with any questions or concerns.

1st & 2nd Grade News

The children have transitioned very nicely into the school year and we are very much under way with the reading, writing and math curriculums. Next week we will begin our integrated science and social studies theme of Pilgrims/Wampanoag and health and diet. We will compare and contrast our life with that of a Pilgrim or Wampanoag, especially in respect to lifestyle and health. This unit will culminate at Thanksgiving time.

Next week we are getting a new first grade student, Marcus Morris. The boys are extremely excited to be adding to their brood! This addition brings the total number of students in our room to 11.

Please remember our class will be participating in The Hike for Hunger on Friday, October 10th. We will be hiking at Jamaica State Park at 10:00 a.m. Please send your child to school in appropriate clothing and footwear.

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Please pack a lunch that does not have to be heated up as we will be eating at the park. A water bottle would also be a great idea. If you are still interested in helping out, please let me know.

Thank you for all your support at home with homework and communication. As always, if you have any thoughts or questions don't hesitate to contact me.

3rd & 4th Grade News

Wow! Where did September go! All of a sudden, we look outside and it's a whole new world of bright colors and different plants! We are well into our unit on plants and the students are well on their way to being experts! They are growing their own plants and conducting their own experiments to see whether water, air or sunlight are most important to a plant's survival!

We know what plants need to survive and now are exploring how plants live on as a group by studying seeds, flowers and the life cycle! Plants are very complicated and have many parts. We have been discovering this through observation and dissection! Ask your students about it! To look at the life cycle of a tree, we are hoping to dissect rotting logs! To do this, we need the rotting logs! I am looking for logs about the size you chop for firewood (1 foot long and 5-6 inches in diameter) and soft to the touch so that we can break them apart! If you have these in your backyard, please let me know and I will come take them for our study!

On October 10, we will be doing the Hike for Hunger at the Jamaica State Park. It will be a great opportunity for us to study a new environment of plants as well as support a great cause! To give

this field trip context, we will be exploring hunger as well as the plants! This will include interesting challenges like buying healthy groceries on a budget and creating the ideal healthy breakfast! Again, ask your students about this!

I am really enjoying this year and hope your students are as well! If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me! Thank you for supporting me and your children!

7th & 8th Grade News

"The world will not evolve past its current state of crisis by using the same thinking that created the situation." – Albert Einstein

This poignant statement has never been more relevant than now. As we pursue our various academic goals this school year in the shadow of the tremendous challenges facing our post-modern world, at the top of my lengthy agenda, is the goal to empower our students to become independent, creative and critical thinkers; to ignite a passion for learning and then to provide the tools and skills necessary to pursue that passion.

My hope for the future is directly linked to the yet undiscovered solutions and talents that our students will bring to bear on the world as they come of age. This may sound intense, but I have high hopes for the bright minds of our youngsters here at MSW! Each and every one of them has something unique that our world needs.

As we pursue our learning goals in the various content areas I believe that it is important for you to have an

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understanding of how we are seeking to accomplish those goals—it certainly will not be through rote memorization or repetitive, mundane activities! Student inquiry, choice, and exploration will play a huge role. In sum, teaching students how to think rather than what to think is the point. This sort of learning is exhilarating and often messy. Thank you for your support as we get down and dirty this year!

Suzanne Houck

The following are the broad science and social studies themes through which our integrated curriculum is being taught this trimester:

“Systems In And Out Of Balance”

Complex vs. Linear systems: Law of Limits

Second Law of Thermodynamics (Law of Entropy)

Law of Self-organization in complex Systems

“History, Geography, and Time”

A study of the organization of time and space and how we orient ourselves in history.

“Humans in the Universe”

A study of how human history fits into the larger history of the universe in order to contemplate how our ideas about the universe, the earth, and our own species affect how we think about ourselves and our place in history.

“Human Beings Almost Everywhere” 200,000 – 10,000BCE

This era before farming was by far the longest in human history, embracing about 95 percent of the time that our species has existed on earth. But it is also the era we know least about.

“Farming and Emergence of Complex Societies” 10,000 – 1,000BCE

Math Lab News

Hello from the MSW Math Lab! It was great to see everyone at Open House and show you all what we’ve been up to. In Kindergarten we are beginning to explore numbers, tallying, and graphing. In first grade, we are moving into our Unit about addition and subtraction. In third grade, we are beginning to investigate place value and multi-digit computation. The fifth grade class is continuing to explore mathematical concepts and are preparing to explore multi-digit multiplication and division. In seventh grade we are learning about stretching and shrinking images using ratios and scale factors. Phew!!! Lots of hard work going on down here! Feel free to stop in and let us refresh YOUR math skills!

Spanish News

Pre Kindergarten and Kindergarten

Pre Kindergarten and Kindergarten are working in household items (las cosas de la casa).

They are doing a project about decorating a house. They will learn a lot of vocabulary such as body parts, clothing, family members, weather, animals, days of the week, months of the year, seasons, music, etc.

First and Second Graders

First and second graders are learning about clothing. This year these students will also learn vocabulary, they will do projects and learn Spanish music, and we will focus in Mexican culture, etc.

Third and Fourth Graders

Third and fourth graders are working on dialogues. They have done great

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dialogues. These students will learn grammar, vocabulary, and verbs in culture we will focus in South America.

Fifth and Sixth Graders

Fifth and sixth graders are working on verbs and also on dialogues. They will learn Spanish grammar, Present tense of regular and irregular verbs, vocabulary, and culture.

Seventh and Eighth Graders

Seventh and eight graders are also working on verbs. They will write a paragraph using verbs in present tense. I will send to the students the course outline for this year. Please read it, sign it and send it back.

Fifth through Eight Grade will choose the sentence or phrase of the month. That will be something they selected and will appear every month in the newsletter.

NECAP Testing

The state-mandated NECAP test has arrived at MSW. Students in grades 3-8 are required to be tested in Math and Reading each October. Grades 5 and 8 are also tested in Writing. A grade 4 and 8 Science test will be proctored in the spring. The Mountain School will follow a similar "low-key" testing approach in their respective classes like last year.

Long Trail Help

Interested in working on the Long Trail? Marge Fish of the Green Mountain Club has worked with MSW in the past and has offered several events for area residents to help clear the trail. Hoes, shovels, clippers, food, water and proper gear (they go, rain or shine!) are needed. Days available are 10/14, 10/15, 10/18, and 11/3. If you are interested in going for any of these days, please contact

Marge and the Green Mountain Club. Greg Hasaj will be a Mountain School parent rep on the 10/18 event. If you are interested in joining Marge and him, meet at Hapgood's Store in Peru at 8:00. Hope you can help keep the Trail clear!

Manchester Music Festival

The middle school will be attending the Manchester Music Festival at the Congregational Church in Manchester Village on Wednesday, October 22. We will be leaving at 8:40 a.m. and returning before 11:00 a.m. If you can chaperone and drive PLEASE contact the office. Thanks!

Journey East is Here!

Once again the Leland & Gray Journey East program has returned to Vermont, and our students have been invited. All students in Pre-K-6 are attending this 45-minute song and dance performance by artists from Inner Mongolia. We are requesting both drivers and chaperones to join us for this amazing experience. We particularly are asking for 1:1 chaperones for all Pre-K/K students. If you are able to come and help, please contact the office today. Thank you!

Here We Grow Again!

The Mountain School would like to welcome our new family, the Morris's, joining us the week of October 6. Hugh (Kindergarten) and Marcus (1st Grade) are moving into Winhall. MSW will be hiring another part-time Pre-K/K classroom assistant to join our school family. Welcome, Morris's!

School Houses

This year we are going to divide our students and staff into three houses; Bromley, Stratton and Magic. The houses will each have a teacher as a

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“house mother” and the older students will act as mentors for the younger students in their house. The teachers are Mrs. Thompson for Bromley, Ms. Spence for Stratton and Ms. Levine for Magic. The activities the houses will participate in will be noncompetitive and focus on acts of kindness, generosity and teambuilding. We plan on having one major event during the last period of the last Friday of each month. Our first event is planned for October 24th as the last Friday of October is Halloween. Each member of the team will be making a tie-dyed t-shirt to wear on School House Fridays. **Each child needs to bring in a plain white t-shirt by October 22nd.** These t-shirts will be tie-dyed. Please write your child’s name on the label of the shirt. Your student can drop the t-shirt off at his/her House Mother’s classroom. Attached are the House Teams. For more information, please see Mrs. Thompson, Ms. Spence or Ms. Levine. Thank you!

White T-shirts Needed!

All students need to bring in a plain white t-shirt by October 22nd. These shirts will be tie-dyed. Please label the tag of the shirt with your child’s name. Look for more information about this under “**School Houses**” in this newsletter. If obtaining a shirt presents a problem or for more information, please see Mrs. Thompson, Ms. Spence or Ms. Levine. Thank you!

Visa & Mastercard Accepted!

Looking for points or miles with your favorite store or airline? Just remember that we accept credit cards for your convenience!

Transportation Changes

If you child has a change in his/her routine transportation home, please remember to send in a **written note**. Thank you.

Target Fundraising Program

We have just received a check from Target’s “Take Charge of Education” program for \$76.44! Thank you to those families who participate in this program.

Spaghetti Dinner/Open House

A big thank you to those families who helped with set-up, cooking, decorating, and helping our staff organize the Open House & Spaghetti Dinner. A very big thank you to the Klemchuk’s and Gianotti’s and how about those waiters!!



Thank you to the Cyr family for their donation of a 10X10 storage space for our School!

Procedures for public participation at Board meetings:

Individuals wishing to address the Board must contact the Board Chair at least 3 days in advance of the Board meeting. The contact should include the subject of the presentation and the approximate time needed to speak. Board meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month.

The Mountain School Board of Trustees:

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