



The Lay of the Land



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*Selections from
an Evaluation of
The Farm School's
Program for Visiting Schools*

THE FARM SCHOOL

ATHOL, MASSACHUSETTS

FALL, 2005

THE LAY OF THE LAND

SELECTIONS FROM
AN EVALUATION OF
THE FARM SCHOOL'S
PROGRAM FOR
VISITING SCHOOLS



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First edition October, 2005

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How to use this book

evaluation that has been done of The Farm School's Programs for Visiting Schools. Sifting through observations, interviews, and many analytical discussions, a set of four key themes emerged rather naturally from the Farm School soil, and serve to organize this manual: the authentic and demanding nature of work as curriculum, the commitment of the staff, the ethic of clarity, kindness and community, and the spirit of the place. These are the key components of The Farm School, perhaps as they have never before been so clearly elucidated.

We can imagine many who might find useful information in these pages: other farm and outdoors-based educational programs, school teachers and consumers of such programs, and individuals and philanthropies seeking to expand the educational op-

Thanks for holding this in your hands, flipping it open and taking a glance. The contents explore the first formal



portunities for children in urban schools, to name a few. Yet time is so short for all of us, and there is a lot here: how can you best find your way?

We hope we've organized the contents in a manner that will be easy for you to find what most interests you. The first three sections lay the groundwork, describing the evaluation and sketching out the basics of both The Farm School and its partnership with the Mission Hill School, which is the subject of the evaluation. If any of this is new to you, dig right in! Each following section is self-contained. For those of you in the first stages of establishing your own farm school, **Place** might, indeed, be a good place to start. For some of you who are already providing or receiving programming, perhaps **Staff**, and/or **Ethic** and **Work** might hold the most interest. Each of these sections is bordered with quotes and pictures, intended to bring the reader more fully into contact with the real voices, textures and places of The Farm School: maybe they're the best place to start!

And for the amazing group that holds this place in their hands and hearts with their charitable donations, look anywhere in the pages that follow: you are making something wonderful happen in the world!

Wherever you do dig in, we hope you are drawn into the whole so deeply that you not only keep reading but you also follow up by coming to visit to see the magic for yourself.

The Farm School



The Farm School is a non-profit educational farm located on 130 acres in North Central Massachusetts dedicated to connecting people to the land. Since 1991, The Farm School has given children first-hand experience of nature, farming, work and community, bringing classroom-sized groups of middle-school students and their teachers to stay and work on the farm for three to five days. The Program for Visiting Schools has now grown to serve 1,500 visiting children from 32 schools each year (half public and half private) and another 200 children in its summer programs.

In 2002, The Farm School launched the year-long, residential Practical Farm Training Program to train adults interested in learning to farm at another farm (180 acres) known as Maggie's Farm just down the road. At the same time, on Maggie's Farm, we started a middle school cooperative for local students called the Chicken Coop School.

The Farm School has 18 full-time and 4 part-time staff. The Program for Visiting Schools operates with a staff of 9 and a budget of \$495,000. All of The Farm School's programs are operated on a sliding scale to make them available to low-income students.

The Mission Hill School Partnership

The Farm School's most significant relationship is with the Mission Hill School, a K-8 Boston Public Pilot School in Roxbury Massachusetts. Founded by renowned educator Deborah Meier, the Mission Hill School is a national demonstration site for a successful small urban school. Begun in 1999, the partnership with The Farm School now brings all 163 Mission Hill students visit the Farm School every year, starting with one-day visits in grades K – 3 and continuing with 3-5 day residential programs for grades 4-8. The Farm School is viewed by the Mission Hill School community as an extension of their campus and a vital part of their curriculum. It is particularly valued for engaging their students in an authentic work experience in the natural world, one that supports Mission Hill's core habits of mind through vivid interdisciplinary learning.

Students at Mission Hill are urban children, many of whom have little experience of rural life before visiting the Farm School. Although the school uses many resources throughout the city including parks, museums and other field trips, The Farm School is the students' most significant outdoor experience and, for many, their only overnight experience away from their families.

Each year, The Farm School provides the three-and-a-half weeks of programming for the Mission Hill School tuition-free and finds foundation and private funds to support the partnership.

The Evaluation

In 2003, The Farm School received foundation funds to conduct the first ever evaluation of its educational program for children. Its goal was to study what is often described as the “magic” of children’s experience here and show the structure, method and practice that turns each seed, fencepost and piglet into a memorable learning experience. Its focus was The Farm School’s Visiting School



Program, and specifically the special partnership with the Mission Hill School.

The evaluation reported on the Mission Hill School’s interactions over one full school year (2003-2004) in order to understand, from both parties’ perspectives, what happens at The Farm School and the impacts from those experiences.

The study was conducted by an evaluation team composed of both external and internal perspectives. Over the course of the year-long study, the

evaluation team conducted three multi-day on-site observational visits; pre- and post-interviews with students, staff, and teachers; focused group interviews; and reviews of students' written materials. By design, the evaluation's data-gathering and analysis aimed to be less a quantitative measurement than an expository study aimed at revealing the elements of The Farm School pedagogy at work. This approach was very important in gaining the trust of all the project's constituents – parents, staff, board, and students – so that they could use the final results to deepen their understanding of the partnership, and probe for opportunities to improve. The extent of their enthusiasm was evident at a Fall 2004 conference at the Charles Hotel in Cambridge when virtually all of The Farm School and Mission Hill School faculties attended the preliminary presentation of the evaluation results.

THE LAY OF THE LAND



1 place

place

“Kids come here every year. They grow up with it. They have deep, fond memories of the Farm School. This is unique. They say that it is the best part of the year.”

ROBERTA, MISSION HILL
SCHOOL TEACHER

“The first time I went for the sleepover there were only baby cows. This time there were baby goats and pigs too. We also got to see Snoopy when she was just about to give birth. She was moving around a lot. The other class saw the calf get born after we left. I think this time was different because I felt like we were the ones that knew the ropes. We were telling the new kids all about everything. Also, it’s cool knowing that there’s so much more to learn.”

MISSION HILL SCHOOL
5TH GRADER

The Farm School provides a radical shift in context for the children and adults visiting from Mission Hill School.

Located at the top of a hill one-and-a-half hours west of Boston with a large vista of open fields, trees, farm buildings, and animals, it feels a long ways from Roxbury. The curve of the hill, the trees at field edges, and the placement of the buildings all comprise a world that absorbs a group of 40 kids in an instant, with private spaces for small groups to own the farm on their own. The structures are aesthetically simple, peaceful, and rustic. They look like what real farm buildings should be like. They are not elegant hotel rooms or luxury cabins. The bunkroom is full of beds. The main interior room has colorful wall-hangings, photographs, and decorations. Cows bellow from the pastures.

The farm landscape itself can seem remarkably diverse, coming from a singular urban habitat. One can walk in the woods during the early morning, look for frogs in the pond at dusk, and snowshoe through the fields under the full moon. The various habitats are healthy ones, tended organically, and visibly sustain the farm. Students harvest wood from the forest for firewood and timber, put up hay for the animals to eat in winter, and plant and gather vegetables from the garden for their own meals. The evaluators noted the number of times that students made links between food eaten and how it is grown, tended, and cooked, something that wasn’t a stated intention of the program.

“The Farm School experience makes the Mission Hill kids pay more attention to other worlds. I’ve always thought that kids who come from places like Shady Hill, their lives are filled with rich experiences...lots of them have second homes, go to camp, go to Europe, they’ve been on farms. They feel like the world belongs to them and that they can go anywhere. But for our kids, The Farm School may be the first time out of Boston, first time in nature, first time seeing a cow. They don’t usually pay attention to other parts of the world because they don’t feel that sense of belonging. This is why it’s so important that they go back again and again to the farm. This is a world that most of them don’t think initially belongs to them, and it becomes their place. Over time, they feel at home there. It isn’t us versus them.”

DEBORAH MEIER, MISSION
HILL SCHOOL FOUNDER

The foreignness of the farm setting is often described as “scary” by students at first, on account of the unfamiliar noises and smells, dark woods, and large animals. As this strangeness subsides and the children learn the rules in place to provide for their safety, their fear gives way to confidence, new skill competencies, and peace of mind. They talk about “leaving all worries behind,” in a landscape without guns or other forms of urban disturbance and violence.

The comfort deepens with each return visit. They arrive anticipating change – the calves will now be cows, the new sprout house will be built – knowing also that the fundamental landscape and operation remain familiar. Students literally see the impact of their efforts – the completion of the stone wall their class began last year, for example. As Deb Meier suggests, the commitment to repeat visits translates into not just comfort but also into a sense of belonging and of ownership.

Farm animals are at the center of the place, and their role in rooting the children on the farm can hardly be overstated. Many inner-city children have little experience with animals, even dogs. At The Farm School, they confront their fears by being with the same animals year after year; by having to take care of them; and by becoming their “friends.” The animals provide a great deal of the spirit of the place, from the unique, “farmy” smell that greets the children when they get off the bus, to the very geography of the land (the pig hollow, cow pasture, frog pond, etc.) Animal care is the opening and closing of each workday, the motivation for 13 year olds to rise at 6:30AM and work for an hour before breakfast.

“Over time, kids see the results of their efforts. I remember Sagga saying that she had helped build a sprout house.

It is a big structure, from a child’s point of view, and it is still standing. It isn’t a snow or sand castle that disappears.”

ROBERTA, MISSION HILL
SCHOOL TEACHER

“I see kids differently [at The Farm School]...different strengths that they have.

I would be less upset with a kid who misbehaved in class if I had seen him being kind at The Farm School. For example, I saw Curtis in the barn today. Normally, he doesn’t pair up with Maya. Today they were strategizing on how to unchain the cows. They were clearly afraid of the cows. Curtis said, “Why don’t you pat the cow and I’ll unchain the cow”. It is wonderful that The Farm School world allows kids to take responsibility like that.”

MATTHEW, MISSION HILL
SCHOOL TEACHER

In pre-visit interviews and writings, when Mission Hill students of all ages were asked what they most want to see and do on the farm, the overwhelming majority listed Mack the draft horse, the piglets, Bill the dog, the goats, and the cows and calves. Some even know the names of the most recent animal babies and when they were born. The animals also call forth new positive behavior in the children. The Mission Hill School staff speak of the tenderness, care and responsibility engendered in their students when they tend the animals, and how the memories of that experience can be called upon throughout the school year. Observations suggest that the need to be gentle and quiet around animals allows many kids, particularly boys, to behave in ways that wouldn’t be accepted at home.

The chance to view each other in the entirely new context of the farm can be eye-opening as well. Students see their teachers in a different way, often remarking that the adults tend to be more relaxed and informal. “It’s real fun seeing our teacher change,” said one 7th grader. Teachers, for their part, often use their time at The Farm School to watch their students, think about how they learn, delight in new behaviors they observe, and enjoy the farm. Some teachers end up better understanding their students’ lives as a result, and notice a “softer” side of their students when the pressure to be “cool” is diminished. “The Farm School is a place where I can see kids in a different learning space,” says Mission Hill School teacher Roberta Logan. “For example, I noticed that the structure works so well for Omari. He listened. He did what he was told.”

“The Farm School encourages kids to break old habits and create new ones. For example, they learn to treat people and animals with kindness. Kids have a more compassionate side with animals.”

MATTHEW, MISSION HILL
SCHOOL TEACHER

“The Farm School is a good experience for kids in the city because farm life is the whole opposite of city life. Everything is so different in the country. We don’t hear cars rushing all over the place, horns honking, ambulances, fire trucks, and cop car sirens all over the place. The only reason that people scream is because they want to hear their echo not because they are getting beat up or something.”

LETTER FROM MISSION HILL
SCHOOL 7TH GRADER

Furthermore, the fact that every Mission Hill School student comes to the farm every year means that the school is able to use The Farm School as an integral component of their educational learning experience. In other words, the place itself inhabits the minds of those that have been here. For a school that regularly practices a school-wide simultaneous curriculum – e.g., K-8 grades study Egypt at the same time – this is particularly important. “There are times when our curriculum is focused on rural and industrial times, and The Farm School is used as an example to help the kids understand those times,” says Roberta. Visits to The Farm School are thus viewed as a serious part of Mission Hill School’s pedagogical experience, not merely as a field trip or an opportunity to be exposed to a different culture. Because of the on-going nature of the partnership, The Farm School has become the host of two Mission Hill teacher retreats each year.

The close connection between The Farm School and the Mission Hill School community makes the orientation to the farm each year much more immediate. Even the youngest kindergarteners often have heard so much about The Farm School from their siblings, friends, and teachers that they arrive at the farm for the first time asking the staff questions like, “Where is Mack?” “Did you get a new rooster?” Pre-visit interviews with returning students reveal that they are knowledgeable, curious, and excited about an upcoming visit. Farm School staff as a result feel a special kinship with these deeply connected students, and it seems clear that The Mission Hill School partnership has helped The Farm School understand the value of a whole school visiting each year.

“I had an opportunity to go to The Farm School for a one-day retreat and I now see what my daughter experienced. I felt free. I felt a spirit. I was able to lay out on the grass. The Farm School is a place where you don’t have to worry about guns.”

BARBARA, MISSION HILL
SCHOOL PARENT

“You should have heard the kids on the bus coming here today. It is as if they own this town and this farm. They pointed out places in Athol as if they live here. They say things like I always get this bunk even if they’ve been here only once before. They have ownership.”

ALPHONSE, MISSION HILL
SCHOOL TEACHER

Most of the relationship and community building occurs at The Farm School, so it is perhaps not surprising that some suggestions for improvement were collected to address that imbalance. A number of teachers, students, and parents interviewed want to expand the opportunities for interactions at Mission Hill School, and to provide parents a means of connecting to the farm. Suggestions included having some Farm School staff visit Mission Hill School each year in order to participate in a Family Night, Parents’ Council meeting or community party; providing greater visibility for The Farm School throughout the Mission Hill School hallways with art and photos; or hosting a parents retreat at The Farm School. The school visits might encourage reluctant students to participate in The Farm School and respond to The Farm School staff’s desire for additional cultural familiarity and exchanges. In order for this kind of interaction to fully succeed, time and resources need to be acquired and allotted by The Farm School.

THE LAY OF THE LAND



2 ethic

ethic

In every aspect of the workday, The Farm School chooses to focus on kindness, clarity, and community. It is an overarching ethic that guides behavior, shapes planning, and roots the programming. It is an ethic that has arisen organically and intentionally, based on the principles of sustainable farming and the way in which founder Ben Holmes was treated as a young man working summers on his uncles' dairy farm in Ohio. It seems to suit the Mission Hill School's culture particularly well. In fact, part of what seems to make the partnership between The Farm School and The Mission Hill School work well is that each has a similar set of values and is continually working to adhere to these values. One of the first sights a visitor walking into the Roxbury school will see is a large, hand-woven banner that reads "Be Kind and Work Hard", a slogan that is credited directly to The Farm School. The school's 5 "Habits of Mind" clearly state the educational expectations for each student, and community initiatives involving parents, neighbors and local businesses are a large and vital part of the school's success.

Mission Hill School Habits of Mind

- 1 **Evidence:** How do we know what's true and false? What evidence counts? How sure can we be? What makes it credible to us? This includes using the scientific method, and more.
- 2 **Viewpoint:** How else might this look like if we stepped into other shoes? If we were looking at it from a different direction? If we had a different history or expectation? This requires the exercise of informed "empathy" and imagination. It requires flexibility of mind.
- 3 **Connections/Cause and Effect:** Is there a pattern? Have we seen something like this before? What are the possible consequences?
- 4 **Conjecture:** Could it have been otherwise? Supposing that? What if...? This habit requires use of the imagination as well as knowledge of alternative possibilities. It includes the habits described above.
- 5 **Relevance:** Does it matter? Who cares?

The Farm School has developed into a natural place for Mission Hill School students to put into practice the slogans on the wall. Being kind to each other, taking responsibility, asking questions, listening, looking for connections, working

“You guys are nice...you let us do stuff. What we did wasn’t dangerous; nobody got hurt, but we wouldn’t have been able to do that stuff at school.”

TIM, MISSION HILL
SCHOOL 5TH GRADER

hard, building community – these are not abstract concepts on the farm, but tangible and necessary guidelines when translated in terms of how to treat animals and stack firewood.

Kindness appears to be the one value from which all others sprout at The Farm School. Staff emphasize kindness in real life terms: being kind to animals, to each other, to visiting teachers, to staff, and even to the plants that are not yet visible in the garden. Animals in particular often encourage children to act from a sense of caring and kindness. They love seeing, touching, feeding, brushing, and cleaning up after pigs, cows, chickens, ox, horse, and goats. The experience can have real lasting impact beyond the barnyard. “Last year, one boy who struggles with hitting and posturing came to The Farm School,” says Mission Hill School teacher Alphonse. “There he was around the little animals and was so gentle with them. Other kids commented on how well he treated the animals and how he reads magazines about animals. When he returned to Mission Hill, he became the in-house animal expert. The other kids saw him in a different light.”

From the very first opening circle with the students, Farm School staff make sure to carefully outline what they mean by kindness, drawing a distinction between the active nature of “being kind” with the more passive “not being mean.” Most importantly, this kindness is not just expressed, it is strongly demonstrated in practice. Every staff member understands that she/he is expected to model and practice kindness, and is hired with this attribute in mind.

“I got to know some of the kids better at The Farm School. My friend Raphael and I got along better at The Farm School.”

TREVOR, MISSION HILL
SCHOOL 5TH GRADER

“Jazz became nicer and more friendly when we got back to school after being together at The Farm School.”

TIM, MISSION HILL
SCHOOL 5TH GRADER

A sense of community is another key value that anchors the intentions of The Farm School.

Community comes naturally in farm life, created in the course of doing work that is purposeful, that has to be done together, and that serves the community, not just the individual. Yet a strong sense of community is also deliberately built, in this case continually molded by the structure of the program at The Farm School. The tone is set from the moment students get off bus, when they are given handmade birch name tags and shown to either the boys or girls bunkroom. At the Opening Circle, students meet every staff member on the farm, learn the rules that apply to everyone (e.g. “to be kind”) and are welcomed into the work of that week. It is clear from the beginning that achievement is measured in terms of group work, and the projects and games planned throughout the week reinforce this. Each visit ends with a Closing Circle, again with all staff present, at which everyone is asked to share a snapshot from the program. Kids routinely hear from their peers and adults about how excited, proud and appreciative they are of their efforts.

The collective experience of The Farm School can have profound impacts on the children in terms of their understanding of themselves and their relationships with their peers, adults, and their teachers. As one 5th grader related, “I think our class got to know each other a lot better. Like, Mauricia – at school she’s so serious and we didn’t really like her. At the farm, we got to see her laugh, and it totally changed the way we are with her in school.” There are many opportunities for peer-to-peer interactions built into

“No judgments are made about individuals. You expect to be treated well.”

BARBARA, MISSION HILL
SCHOOL PARENT

the program, including in the evenings during quiet time in the bunkrooms before sleeping. Teachers and students both report that relationships are improved after students return from visits to The Farm School.

The other portion of The Farm School ethic that appears to be equally important is the clear and repeated structure of the program. At The Farm School, the students know what they will be doing, which is measurably reassuring. The same basic schedule is in place for each visit and each year. Students get to know what to expect and in what sequence activities are most likely to occur. They know, for example, that visits usually start with getting name tags and drinking cups, followed by a farm tour, and then an Opening Circle. They know that they will have “free time,” farm chores, a community project, meals, and special activities. The schedule is posted on the bulletin board in the main building to allow students to adjust to farm life’s rhythm. Anyone can refer to it at any time. The Farm School also encourages fun and choice. A key opportunity for learning happens during “Afternoon Options,” when students get to choose from a number of work groups around the farm. Kids also treasure the far-reaching freedom of “free time.” Many choose to play basketball and football with their peers and Farm School staff. Others go together to the barn to be with the animals.

Rules at The Farm School remain consistent year to year as well, and are explained to the students so that they make sense. For example, “Stay away from the electric wire. You don’t want to get shocked;” and “when you hear the bell ring, come running because it means that it is time for the next piece of work.”

Students hear the rules and expectations soon after they arrive, again during their visit, and notice that they are consistently enforced. They learn quickly that Farm School rules are not designed to restrict or deny what they want to do, but are intended to let them move about without much risk, and experience the farm fully.

In this partnership, The Farm School benefits hugely from having the complete trust of The Mission Hill School community. While at the farm students and staff willingly defer to another structure and program, and do not dictate or even request specific content or process.

The evaluation did turn up a recommendation for a different approach to conveying The Farm School rules. Currently, a Farm School staff person recites a list of pragmatic rules not long after students arrive off the bus, when they are most restless and least able to take them all in. One possible suggestion is a list of rules tacked to the bulletin board, or distributed early teachers and referenced more briefly once the students arrive.

RECOMMENDATION

THE LAY OF THE LAND



3 staff

staff

“Kids behave at The Farm School because we are having so much fun. We don’t have time to be rude. Work is more like fun”

TIM, MISSION HILL
SCHOOL 5TH GRADER

Besides the animals, The Farm School staff is one major channel through which Mission Hill students learn to love the farm. When Mission Hill School kids write or talk about their experience at The Farm School, the staff comes in a close second to the cows, Mack the horse, and other animals. Students remember staff members’ names from the year before, content in the knowledge that “We know everyone at the farm and everyone knows us.” Virtually everyone interviewed says that much of the so called “magic” of The Farm School can be traced to the quality and longevity of the staff, and its faith in the power of the farm to speak to children. Clearly, in order to deeply understand The Farm School, one must start by looking closely at the staff. What makes them effective? How they are chosen and why do they stay as long as they do?

Founder and Executive Director Ben Holmes began The Farm School out of a passion for a “deep integration between farming and education.” He realized early on that in order for this goal to be realized, each staff member must be both an educator and a farmer. Many agriculturally-based educational programs have one staff whose role it is to teach and a separate group whose job it is to mind the farm. At The Farm School, by conscious design, the staff do both in an integrated manner. For example, Oona the head gardener also works with kids in the garden, leads them on walks, cooks with them, and leads a yoga session.

By having this integration of farming and education, the entire time at The Farm School can be a fluid, hands-on learning experience. In much of the farm work that is done, staff are naturally able to make

“Last night me, Sagga, Kiara, Amalia, Grace, Maya, Nora, and Brigita were sitting on Sagga’s bed and Sagga was reading from her diary. She told us good things.”

FROM CATHERINE, MISSION
HILL SCHOOL STUDENT’S
JOURNAL ENTRY

linkages for children – communicating lessons about mathematics, measurements, history, pollution, and a host of other skills and facts.

Also, as a result of holding the farm together as a group, staff deeply appreciate and acknowledge each other. There is a sense of togetherness as a group as well as a realization that each person’s contribution makes a difference. Staff help each other by trading off responsibilities, pitching in when another adult presence is required, and having frequent, informal check-ins built into their daily schedule. These supporting actions reinforce the sense for all who visit that this is a family farm, one where all share in the work to be done.

The students from Mission Hill are welcomed into this culture of respect and shared responsibility as equals. The conviction among Farm School staff is that “working with kids, not for kids,” is the best way to make the experience valuable for every child. There is little lining up, hand-raising or lecturing. Hierarchy is dispensed with, although in the course of a work activity there are plenty of directions given. Whatever the task, from wiring the electric fence to making wax candles, they maintain a low staff to student ratio to allow each student to be brought into the work in a significant way. Throughout the course of the day, the staff consciously engages students via multiple ways of learning. There are writing exercises, opportunities to listen while on a “wild walk” in the woods, exercises that encourage students to use their visual memories and artistic talents, physical work, singing, and drawing. This variety allows different students to excel based on how they best learn

“Tracy made the connection between soil and food. She even got kids to see that a Twinkie is made of stuff like sugar and flour that come from plants.”

MISSION HILL SCHOOL
4/5TH GRADERS’
OBSERVATION NOTES

RECOMMENDATION

and communicate. One is struck with the sensitivity of the staff and the willingness and ability to shift direction if the group seems not to be connected with what is happening.

Not surprisingly, then, Farm School staff are enormously well-liked by students. They are perceived as different from teachers (though this is exactly what they are), referred to as friends, authority figures and role models. This is important for Mission Hill School staff like Matthew, who says, “Roy inspires the children to believe that hard work is good.”

Inspiration also comes from being in an adult community where there are no traditional roles. At The Farm School men are gentle and kind and cook for the community, and women are independent-minded and live alone in the woods. What the staff members haven’t been so far is very racially diverse, and it is point both Mission Hill School and The Farm School would like to see improved in the future. While many current students plan on working there in the future (which is easy to think will happen), in the meantime, in order to hire more diverse staff at The Farm School, it will be important to cast the net more widely for applicants. The current hiring process is non-discriminatory, but depends on a pool of candidates finding their way to the farm through a variety of channels. Outreach is needed.

Once the applicants find the farm, how is the hiring process done? Ben Holmes relies on his gut and on the advice of existing staff when considering a new hire. When pressed during an interview to detail what he is looking for in a staff person for The Farm School, he came up with the following criteria: a

“I noticed how often The Farm School staff helps each other. One will chat informally with another and end up trading tasks, trading off, or adding another staff person to a particular activity.”

OBSERVATION NOTES FROM
MISSION HILL SCHOOL 4/5TH
GRADERS' VISIT

love of children; a caring and nurturing personality; an independent-minded approach to work; clarity about what one wants from the Farm School experience; and a belief that every child can succeed. It is interesting to note that years of farming or educational experience is not among the hiring criteria; rather, importance is placed on finding a person with the attributes to fit in and contribute to The Farm School ethic. The starting premise seems to be that it is more important who the person is rather than what she or he has done.

As Ben makes clear, each potential staff person must exhibit clarity of purpose to be hired. Once hired, however, staff members are given a great deal of freedom and encouragement for their ideas and intentions to evolve over time. Ben is constantly monitoring and asking if staff are feeling fulfilled or desire a change. He seems to sense when someone is struggling or restless, and his inclination is never to fire someone, rather seek to find an alternative spot. This organizational emphasis on personal growth and career development engenders loyalty from staff, and has made Ben particularly adept at finding new opportunities for employees to grow while remaining connected to The Farm School. Carlen Rigrod spent six years as a Teacher and Gardener in the Program for Visiting Schools, then, seeking a new challenge, became the first-ever Program Director for the brand new Practical Farm Training Program at Maggie's Farm. Bradley Teeter began his Farm School career as a summer camp instructor, spent a year as an apprentice on Maggie's Farm, and then was hired to be a staff person in the Visiting Schools Program. These

“Adults often drop out of these kids’ lives. The Farm School staff is steady. They know they’ll see you again. Even if a couple of people change, you’re mostly all still there and they can count on you. And the animals are there. The kids remember when those animals were born.”

ROBERTA, MISSION HILL
SCHOOL TEACHER

stories are typical among the staff interviewed.

Because of the way Farm School staff are hired, respected, and nurtured, they tend to stay in the fold a long time. Among the 11 Visiting Schools Program staff at the time of this evaluation, the average tenure was 3.5 years, and in the 15 years since its founding, The Farm School has had 8 staff members who have stayed 5 years or longer. These are remarkable statistics considering that the young age of the staff, rural location and the modest compensation (starting salaries have been \$12,000/year with room, board and full benefits) should dictate much higher turnover. Staff retention has been a goal of Ben and The Farm School’s Board of Directors from the very start, but its impact has perhaps never been so keenly felt as with The Mission Hill School. These children return to the farm year after year and see many of the same adults still working in the barn, cooking in the kitchen, tending the garden. They develop trusted relationships with these farmer-teachers, and the Farm School staff in turn benefit from knowing the returning students and their siblings. At no other moment does The Farm School so resemble a family farm as supertime in the dining room when a group of Mission Hill School students is visiting.

This familiarity extends as well to the visiting teachers from Mission Hill, with enormous benefits for both sides of the partnership. The dynamic between visiting teachers and Farm School staff can be one of the most critical relationships in the program. Generally, in order for The Farm School visits to happen at all, the visiting teachers need to be the advocates for the program within their schools. They

are the ones who can convince the administration and parents that the students should participate in the program; they coordinate all of the logistics to get the students to the farm; and they prepare the students for the experience they will have. Often there is a direct correlation between the preparation that the teachers provide for the students and the depth of the experience for the students. Once at the farm, the attitudes of the visiting teachers during the program also have very strong impacts on the students.

Ideally, Farm School staff and visiting teachers work together to support each other as they hold the students through the experience. The Mission Hill School partnership seems to be a shining example. Farm School staffers talk about a wonderful “camaraderie” they have with the Mission Hill staff, one built over the years and bolstered by their similar educational philosophies. They know that they can rely on Mission Hill School teachers to know their students and relate what The Farm School experience will be like beforehand. At The Farm School, Mission Hill teachers join the kids in the activities and will step in if discipline is needed, but otherwise willingly take part in the different structure and program on the farm. From a staff perspective, this is a true partnership.

The partnership is maturing from being an informal exchange to an institutional arrangement, and it appears to be time for both parties to work together and agree on a standard and efficient back and forth communication. Recommendations included a signed agreement between The Farm School and

Mission Hill committing to schedules, procedures for changes, transportation timing, number of expected students per visit, etc. In addition, the designation of one point-of-contact at the Mission Hill School to coordinate all of the Farm School logistics was proposed, with responsibility for scheduling visits and conducting telephone de-briefing sessions with Farm School staff before and after visits.

It was also noted that currently in the partnership there are no formal preparation mechanisms. Several mechanisms would be useful both to teachers and The Farm School staff, particularly: a new teacher orientation for Mission Hill School student teachers and first-time teachers, and a pre-trip planner or form filled out by teachers and sent to The Farm School in advance of each visit. The form would detail special needs and disclose what the class is most looking to gain from the trip.

THE LAY OF THE LAND



4 work

work

“I built an electric fence so the cows won’t wonder off someplace else. I liked this part of The Farm School because I did something I didn’t even know I could do.”

WRITING ASSIGNMENT,
MISSION HILL SCHOOL 6/7TH
GRADER

At The Farm School, real, meaningful work is the curriculum. From the moment the Mission Hill School students step off the bus, their educational program revolves around hard work with real and immediate benefit to the farm. It is the simplest pedagogical idea, and perhaps the most profoundly effective: learning by doing, in an environment where all efforts have direct and lasting value. By all accounts, this educational approach to work is vital to keeping the students so fully engaged. How is it done?

First of all, Mission Hill School students see that the work that they do is necessary for the survival of the farm. Nothing is invented for them; they join the staff in taking care of the work that needs to be done that particular week. As a result, students come to expect and love the hard work because they know that their efforts matter. “Last year I built a shelter for the baby cows,” says one 6th grader. “That was a good experience for me because I made something that was important to an animal.” As former Farm School gardener and teacher Carlen Rigrod explains, “Children know what is real, and The Farm School is real.” A student’s day on this working dairy farm begins at 6:15AM with chores, continues in the garden, hayfields, and barns, and often ends after 7PM with supper cleanup. Even the kindergarteners from Mission Hill School whose visit is just four hours long are put to work. The idea is not to observe what a farm looks like, but rather to experience what a farmer actually does.

The students know how important their contributions are in part because Farm School staff tell them

“Kids don’t feel vulnerable or exposed by doing the work at The Farm School. They know it’s simply work that has to be done.”

DEBORAH MEIER

“When I got to change the oil...I knew what it feels like to be a mechanic.”

MISSION HILL SCHOOL 4TH
OR 5TH GRADE GIRL DURING
THE CLOSING CIRCLE

so in direct terms that they hear and understand. As they prepare to work on a farm project or a chore, staff tell children the value of their efforts. Then later, when students talk about what they’ve done, the purpose is often explicit: “I helped build the fence for the oxen so they would stay in the field...I put plastic windows in for the chickens to keep the wind out...” For middle-school kids, school tasks and outcomes rarely seem linked or important. At The Farm School, the connection is clear. Students know why they are doing what they do.

Perhaps most important, the work they are doing is not laid out for their benefit, the product not desired for their gain, but for the farm’s. This engenders a feeling of being of use for the students that is deeply significant: they are needed contributors rather than the product consumers.

Second, the way that work is delegated on the farm entrusts a great deal to the students. Students are given responsibility for the work that needs to be done on the farm and, in the process, gain a sense of ownership, agency and accomplishment. In fact, one surprise at The Farm School is just how much the children are allowed to do. In determining what work to do with children, Ben says, “we look at the point at which children cannot be a part of the job, and we stop right before we get there.” One estimate by staff is that 90% of the labor on the farm is done with children. Every farm building since Ben moved to the farm in 1991 has been built with the children.

For the children, the work is hard and physical, and includes such adult tasks as cutting trees from for-

“Bob was the only one who would touch the bulls. He even said, ‘I’m scared,’ but he touched it first. Then the other kids began to try it. That was courage. In the classroom, he doesn’t have the courage to read out loud.”

JENERRA, MISSION HILL
SCHOOL TEACHER

“We got right into the doing of gardening. We didn’t talk a lot about stuff. We got right into getting tools, getting set up, and doing work. For some kinds, plowing was the right thing. Other kids dug and planted seeds. It is very different from a classroom.”

CARLEN, THE FARM
SCHOOL STAFF

ests, building stone walls, and making maple syrup. They learn how to handle hand and power tools. Armed with a clipboard of instructions, they practice independence and responsibility by feeding the animals themselves. Opportunities for getting “dirty” or “messy” are everywhere: in the mucking out of the stables, fencing in the muddy pasture, using hands when cooking, or tasting maple sap. The Mission Hill School students recognize that they are being treated like beginner adults, with contributions that matter. “You let us do stuff,” said one 5th grader. “What we did wasn’t dangerous, nobody got hurt, but we wouldn’t have been able to do that stuff at school.” From some of the children’s responses, one has a sense that they are being exposed to future career paths. “The Farm School means a lot to me because I love farming,” says one 7th grader. “I’m learning to be a farmer or learning how to take care of myself.” Another 8th grader said that he became so comfortable with animals at The Farm School over the years that he now gets paid to walk a neighbor’s dog.

Third, work at the farm is collaborative. Everyone participates and shares in the satisfaction of a job well done. As they did while stacking wood, students experience how working together is more efficient, faster, and uses the talents and energies of many people. When the children work individually – getting the grain for the cows for example – they do so with a sense of the group’s larger goal of finishing chores before supper. The Farm School resists competitive situations – with the exception of a lively and fun students versus staff basketball game – and consciously seeks to encourage each person to

“Down the street from The Farm School, there is a place just like it [Maggie’s Farm] which is for adults. I like to think that we do the same things that adults do. This is something where it doesn’t matter how smart or how many good grades you have gotten. This is something where you use common sense and do what you think is best. The last time I went two of the cows got loose. Some kids and two adults got them back into their pens. We had to make sure she didn’t start running. We worked together and got them. If there weren’t that many of us and we didn’t work together than we wouldn’t have been able to do it.”

WRITING ASSIGNMENT,
MISSION HILL SCHOOL
6/7TH GRADER

experiment, to work cooperatively, to be a part of a community rather than to induce students to strive for personal success or risk personal failure.

The impact of this non-competitive modus operandi is that some students who are not academic achievers excel at the farm. They feel proud of their accomplishments and their peers and teachers often view them in a different light afterwards. “Kids can enter at any level and be successful,” says Alphonse, “It’s not about the best and the brightest. You see children shine here who don’t shine in the classroom.” Another child, whose teacher describes him as not reading in the third grade, was “the only one brave enough to reach under and get the egg from the chicken. He didn’t gloat, but I could tell he felt really great.”

Finally, work at The Farm School is done in a way that provides students the opportunity to reflect on what that they are doing and make connections. This method is perfectly suited for Mission Hill School, where teachers are trying above all to teach the habits of an educated mind. “At Mission Hill, we try to experience with rather than lecture to students,” says Matthew. “Our teachers talk about ‘the teachable moment.’ The Farm School experience is a wide open teachable moment.” Teachers like Matthew appreciate how the educational learning at the farm comes out of the work, out of the natural curiosity of a 5th grader changing a truck tire. Farm School staff are comfortable with an experiential style of learning where students learn by doing. They don’t preach or moralize. Ben says, “I tell the staff that even if we grow organic food, for example, there’s no need to

“I think that The Farm School has helped me grow because it is a total different life style than what I am used to. Also, because it makes me think differently. For example, when I am out there, I am a lot more relaxed and I am not rushing around. I think that when I don’t rush around I take more time to think about things that have an impact on me. I think more about what’s going on around me and different ways of thinking about stuff.”

AYANNA'S PORTFOLIO FOR
“BEYOND THE CLASSROOM”

talk about it unless it comes up.” Staff relax and let the questions naturally arise, tap into students’ curiosity, and focus on the children’s interests rather than convey information that they, as adults, want to impart. The Farm School staff say that they particularly enjoy the Mission Hill School students because they ask so many questions and notice so much.

What emerges from the students’ questions and reflections? Students see the connections between their work on the farm and the life of the farm. They perceive the results of their efforts immediately and over time, and feel capable, brave, newly skilled. They experience being a part of something bigger than themselves – the care of a real, working farm – and discover first hand how hard, and how vital, farming can be. They provide healthy food for themselves and others. They discover new appreciation for their classmates and teachers. They feel real kinship with adults and a sense of belonging to another world.

And they find joy in all of it.

Next steps for the partnership

The Fall 2004 Conference that presented the evaluation to the Mission Hill and Farm School faculties elicited a broad ranging discussion that resulted in a clear set of practical recommendations from the group for furthering the partnership between the two schools.

- FIRST
- Figure out good preparation activities for kids to do before going to the farm.
 - In order for Farm School to prep for Mission Hills School trips to the farm, send an Farm School staff member to the classroom that is coming, about a week or two in advance, for the day, and then have them report to the Farm School staff about what is going on in that classroom.
 - Create an orientation for new Mission Hills School teachers at the farm, so that they know what to expect. Would be great to do this with other schools that come to the farm, so teachers can meet each other and swap ideas about how to integrate the farm into their schools.
 - Have a Mission Hills School orientation session during the summer at the Farm School.
 - Ask kids to write what new teachers need to know when visiting the Farm School.
 - Invite Farm School staff to participate in some of the Mission Hills School' summer retreat at the Farm School.
 - Figure out what the one really unique and special thing is that every grade cluster gets to do at the farm. Especially think about 2/3 graders. They *love*

animals. Could it be arranged that they stay through until chores? They already get home later than usual on Farm School days. How long could 2/3 stay without getting wiped out? Could they arrive later?

- What one thing could be special for each grade?

K/1: tour, garden

2/3: field crops? Sense of scale? Showing k/1 kids from Athol around? Donation to somewhere in Athol? Animals? Staying for chores?

4/5: maple sugaring

6/7: harvest dinner

8: bigger project, teaching younger kids, landmark left on farm, going to market?

- Set up a system for Mission Hills School teachers and Farm School staff to plan more ahead of time for each trip. Especially important that 8th grade trip get talked about, all teachers/staff are on the same page, and that students understand it's mandatory.
- Farm School should start talking about Mission Hills School visits more ahead of time, not just the week before.
- Farm School Program Director and Mission Hills School Contact Person should e-mail right after a Farm School trip, exchange impressions of what worked well and what didn't.
- Establish system to get thoughts from Mission Hills School about previous year to set up the program coming up.

- Share the Mission Hills School kids' writings about Farm School that they do when they return with Farm School staff so that they have an idea of what kids were most excited about.
- Could have 8th graders harvest at Maggie's and staff the Farmers' Market that week (would have to manage this carefully so there weren't too many kids standing around with nothing to do!)
- How do we think about the 8th grade trip? How do we make it fresh? A new season? Parent buy-in is a huge factor in the dynamics. Farm School staff could go in and talk to kids and parents before the trip.
- Have a post-visit interview with the 8th graders to see what they think works/doesn't work for them.
- Older kids mentor younger kids (role of teacher; more ownership of the farm).
- Provide "man work" for 8th grade boys.
- 8th graders maintain Farm School' records. Data can be used in Mission Hills School math class to analyze and graph the data
- Mission Hills School math department would welcome having kids use Farm School data for math work.
- This year, the mentoring of the 8th graders to the K-1st graders was amazing to watch. Should be done again.
- There needs to be a big finale for 8th graders, like a big project.
- Have an Open House at Mission Hills School, where

kids' writings about their Farm School experiences are shared, Farm School staff are there, parents get to hear all of the stories and meet the staff.

- Bring Farm School staff to Mission Hills School to do what they do: Chris to work with food, cook with kids, Roy to bring some of the small animals.
- THEN
- Encourage Mission Hills School students to focus their Beyond the Classroom portfolio on the Farm School experience.
 - Have all new Mission Hills School teachers go through an orientation at Farm School. Would be great to have that with new to the Farm School teachers from other schools, because they could share ideas about incorporating the Farm School into the daily life of their schools.
 - Could also tie 8th graders to restaurants Farm School has connections to, perhaps through Mission Hills School SCI (internship) experiences.
 - Farm School Staff could serve as community members on student portfolio committees at Mission Hills School.
 - Farm School Staff could teach electives at Mission Hills School (happen on Friday afternoons.)
 - Think about how Farm School and Mission Hills School can hear feedback about the partnership from parents.
 - Hardest time for 6th and 7th graders at the Farm School is when they feel that they are doing school work (like journaling). They have fun making the

covers but feel that this kind of reflective writing is like what they do in school. Think about what will really engage this age group during their trip.

- Create and sign an agreement regarding schedules, procedures for changes, transportation timing, etc. This agreement should be renewed each year.
 - Mission Hills School teachers complete end-of-visit evaluation forms.
 - Think carefully about which season each grade comes to the farm in.
- FINALLY
- Revive the exchange program between the Chicken Coop School and the Mission Hills School.
 - Set up an exchange program for Mission Hills School and Farm School staff: Farm School staff become second teachers in Mission Hills School classrooms for two weeks, person they are replacing goes to the farm.
 - Get Mission Hills School parents involved in our CSA program.
 - Host an Mission Hills School alumni gathering at the Farm School.
 - Do a Family Day where Mission Hills School alum show current and new Mission Hills School families around the farm.
 - Tie Mission Hills School and Farm School projects together: gardens, bees, chickens (kids could raise Farm School chicks at school and bring them to us).

- Invite Farm School staff to Mission Hills School has Alumni Nights.
- Ask Farm School staff to be resources for certain Mission Hills School projects, like growing plants for science classes.
- A Farm School staff person could come be an assistant teacher for a semester. Would be nice for kids to see we have something to offer The Farm School; would reduce the distance between the two places.
- Mission Hills School would love to have a roof top garden, perhaps Farm School staff could help with that.
- Have Mission Hills School students grow seedlings which would be taken to Farm School and planted in the garden there.
- Farm School Staff help kids at Mission Hills School build and maintain a good wood/workshop at the school.
- What would happen if took ownership of school kitchen. 8th graders help prepare. What is could come up w. Pilot program (Roy mentioned legislation that is encouraging kids to eat Mass Grown; kids work at Farmers' Market?
- Would be cool to keep a record of kids' visits specifically for kids' graduation.
- Create a written history of each place (Mission Hills School can add to its documentation with information about management).
- Codify the core principles ("enduring values").

- Prioritize and focus on implementing which of the core values is most important.
- Identify management style ingredients (e.g., nurtures responsibility and growth; builds trust; focuses on relationship building)
- Keep an on-going record of kids' reflections.
- Act politically to preserve our culture; protect the "pilot school" designation (participate in the union; go out to other pilot schools to share and communicate).
- Mission Hills School community is eager to help in any way in raising the funds needed to keep the program in place.
- Foster a "community of empowered leaders"; everyone "holds" the place—not just the leaders/founders.
- Train new staff at both schools in the value of the partnership.
- Define new roles for Deb Meier and Ben Holmes once they leave their official founder/director/co-principal roles.

Next steps for you

We've established a spot on our web site (www.farmschool.org) for folks who have an interest in exploring the ideas presented here a bit further. It includes a complete version of the evaluation, budgets from over the years, a staff map, schedules and a chance to check in and let us know any questions or ideas you have. We' really love to hear from you, to expand the community that extends beyond the field edges here!

And, **best of all**, we'd love to have you come see the place, staff, ethic and work in action: please do let us know if you would like to arrange a visit.

THE LAY OF THE LAND



appendix

2005 Visiting Schools Program Budget

REVENUE

PROGRAM INCOME

Donations	\$30,000
Tuition	\$172,141
Farm Sales	\$6,750
Total Program Income	\$208,891

DEVELOPMENT INCOME

Donations	\$285,695
Total Development Income	\$285,695

TOTAL OPERATING REVENUE \$494,586

EXPENSES

PROGRAMS EXPENSES

Equipment	\$16,040
Off-Site Education	\$4,800
Professional Fees	\$24,400
Facilities	\$23,200
Telecommunications	\$2,420
Insurance	\$15,840
Supplies	\$55,200
Wages and Compensation	\$249,000
Library	\$750
Contingency	\$6,400
Total Program Expenses	\$398,050

DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT EXPENSES

Financing	\$2,200
Postage	\$2,200
Printing	\$2,200
Equipment	\$1,320
Outreach	\$2,640
Supplies	\$3,520
Professional Fees	\$8,800
Wages and Compensation	\$72,600
Contingency	\$1,056
Total Management Expenses	\$96,536

TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES \$494,586

Focus Group Questions

The following questions have been developed by Nora Huvelle and Meg Coward to guide the focus groups of Mission Hill Staff, Farm School Staff, and Farm School Board Members in October and November 2003. The aim of the focus groups is to surface the areas of learning that are most crucial to this project as we go forward.

- From your point of view, why does the partnership between The Farm School and The Mission Hill School exist?
- What do you want the partnership between The Farm School and The Mission Hill School to achieve?
- What measures/indicators do you look for to know whether or not the partnership is successful?
- What makes this partnership work? What holds the partnership back from achieving its goals?
- How do you see The Farm School enhancing the educational goals of the Mission Hill School? How is that accomplished? How do you know?
- How do you see The Mission Hill School benefiting the Farm School?
- How does the partnership affect how you teach?
- How do you prepare for the programs/trips?
- What should we be looking for in this evaluation that would be of value to you?
- What would you like to learn?

Pre-trip Evaluation

MATERIALS	Index cards, pencils, white board and marker
FACILITATORS	Meg Coward and Elizabeth Kline
TIME	15 minutes for each group
PARTICIPANTS	Approximately 15 students in each of 2 discussion groups
PREPARATION	<p>1 Meg spoke to the 6th/7th grade teacher, Roberta, to schedule appropriate times to talk to the students in the week before their annual trip to the Farm School.</p> <p>2 Meg and Elizabeth talked over the phone to determine the best approach to these discussion groups. They agreed that Meg would facilitate the discussion, given her established relationship with the students, and that Elizabeth would observe and take notes.</p> <p>3 Just before the discussion groups began, Elizabeth wrote up on the white board the questions that the students were asked to respond to on the index cards.</p>
FORMAT	<p>1 Meg re-introduced herself to the students and explained how her job with the Farm School had changed.</p> <p>2 Meg explained that The Farm School had received funding from a foundation to do an evaluation of the partnership between The Farm School and Mission Hills School. As she spoke, she asked the students to define “foundation,” and “evaluation.”</p>

- 3 Meg further explained to the students that this was not an evaluation to determine whether or not they would still be able to go to The Farm School (which is a worry they have brought up in the past), but rather that the goal is for both The Farm School and Mission Hills School to understand what they are doing well and what they need to improve. She then emphasized to the students that we want to learn from them.
- 4 Meg introduced Elizabeth, and explained to the students that to do a credible evaluation, we need to bring in someone from outside The Farm School and Mission Hills School to look at the partnership with us. (“If we didn’t, it would be like evaluating yourself, and saying, ‘Yeah, I’m doing just great,’ that would be kind of shady.”)
- 5 The students were asked to take the index cards they’d been handed, and answer the following questions on those cards. (They were given the option of writing their name or being anonymous.)
- How many times have you been to The Farm School?
 - What does the Farm School mean to you? (write down the first thing that comes into your mind)
 - What are you looking forward to about going to The Farm School next week?
 - Meg then led a freeform discussion with the students for about five minutes, as Elizabeth took notes. The questions used to stimulate the discussion were:
What are you excited about when you think of going to the farm next week? What do you know is going to happen when you get to the farm? What would you

Post-trip Evaluation

tell someone who has never been to the farm before and is going on this trip? What stands out in your memory about the Farm School?

PREPARATION

Meg met with Roberta on Dec. 1 to discuss post-trip follow up interviews. They agreed that the kids should be allowed to volunteer to be interviewed, and that the goal would be to interview two boy and two girls, of whom two were veterans on this trip, and two were first-timers. Roberta agreed to solicit volunteers for the interviews.

The interviews will be conducted by Meg and Elizabeth. They will either interview kids one on one, or in pairs. Meg will be the scribe.

FRAMING THE INTERVIEWS:

When meeting with the students, we will explain the interviews in the following manner:

“As we explained before, our job in this evaluation process is to describe the Mission Hill experience at the Farm School to people who don’t know you all and don’t know the Farm School. So you are our best resources for describing what happens when you go to the farm! We just want to take a few minutes today to hear about what happened on your trip, and so we have a few questions to ask to help you describe that to us, okay? If we use any of what you say in our report, we’ll change your name, so you don’t have to worry about that. And if you are talking about something that went on with another kid in your class, you don’t have to use their real name if you

don't want to. Do you have any questions before we get started?"

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS •

Tell us about one of the things you did while you were at the Farm School this time.

- If I was a fly on the wall while you were doing this, what would I have seen?
- What were you thinking while you were doing this?
- Were there other folks working with you? How did that go?
- How did you feel at the end of that activity?
- How could the activity have been improved?
- Did the activity tie in to anything you had done at the farm before, or that you sense you will do there in the future?

(The above series of questions can be repeated a few times.)

- How did this trip to the Farm School compare with your past visits?

(Or: How did this trip compare with your expectations?)

- What do you hope for on your future trips to the Farm School?

COLOPHON

The text type for this book is Adobe Minion, and the display type is Century Gothic. Composition was done on a Macintosh G4 with Adobe InDesign and Photoshop.