

# MEREDITH HILL

*An educator with a focus on sustainability and nature who promotes the power of youth voices in education*

An accomplished school designer, garden educator, and school leader, Meredith Hill is currently principal of MS 371, School of Earth, Exploration, and Discovery (SEED: Harlem), a new middle school launched in 2020 in New York City. She believes in the power of education to connect students to nature and encourages learning experiences in which pupils play a meaningful role.

Originally from Haverhill, Massachusetts, Hill moved to New York City to attend Barnard College, a women's liberal arts college. She majored in theater directing, minored in dance, and completed the Barnard Education Program. Her teaching career began in 2007, as a founding faculty member at Columbia Secondary School for Math, Science, and Engineering, a public school partnered with Columbia University, where she had previously completed two master's degrees at Teachers College.

She stayed in the job for over a decade, during which she not only taught sixth-grade English, but also launched various inventive projects, from a youth summer program with a focus on environmental

activism and engineering to a student magazine and a garden compost system that at its peak processed 75 percent of the cafeteria's organic waste.

Hill followed this by founding another remarkable project: the Columbia Secondary School Community Garden, located on a formerly vacant Parks Department lot. "I designed and taught courses ranging from garden-to-table cooking to high school agroecology, and hosted weekly open-garden hours to build our garden from the ground up," she says. "The goal was to educate about sustainable agricultural systems."

*"Students need to see voices of power that reflect themselves; we need to help our future leaders see their potential and the power in their own histories."*

Today, as principal of SEED, her focus is on social and environmental justice and hands-on, project-based learning. "Working toward equity is a critical obligation of educational institutions," she says. "We believe in the power of youth voices and the need for education to yield authentic outcomes for them. We aim to rethink

