



Mill Falls Charter School creates life-long learners by providing an intellectually rich and challenging experience delivered through the Montessori tradition. In a safe and peaceful setting, dedicated educators foster students' individuality, creativity and critical-thinking skills to fully prepare them for future scholastic, civic and personal success.

MFCS Meeting Minutes, May 17, 2017

Mill Falls Charter School, 100 William Loeb Drive, Manchester, NH

1. Call to Order, Roll Call & Welcome Public

Meeting called to order at 5:40pm.

Present at the meeting Roberge, Connors, Levin, Brough, Johnson (by phone), Butterfield, DePasse.

Absent: Wrubleski

2. Public Comment: no public present.

3. Meeting Business

a. Approval of Minutes from March 2017 meeting

Motion: Brough motioned to approved the minutes; Connors seconded.

Vote: Unanimous approval.

4. Montessori Moment: Colleen Costa, Upper Elementary Lead Teacher shared a video on math computation.

5: School Update

a: Educational Program Director (*please also see attached report*)

In Wrubleski's absence, Levin reviewed the EPD Report highlighting: 4th graders went to the State House on a field trip supporting the 4th grade social studies standards. This year Mill Falls is showcasing student art throughout the building (art was installed just before the Board meeting began and will be on display through Friday). Students also have completed NECAP for science and SBAC assessment and will be completed in-house assessment as well over the next weeks.

b: Executive Director (*please also see attached report*)

Levin & Wrubleski meet with Manchester Special Education Administration to review services for the 17/18 School Year. The plan is that Manchester will cover the costs related to hiring 1.5 Special Educators. A Memo of Understanding will be drawn up with particular details related to that agreement; Levin will work with Butterfield to draft that document before sending it on to the District. Levin noted that open staff positions for next year have been posted, and Wrubleski will soon arrange interviews. She also shared that funding for full day kindergarten and increase on Charter School funding are part of state budget considerations currently, but it's a waiting game as the legislature continues to work through each of these items.

Foundation News included a review of our 5th Annual Leadership Fundraising Breakfast. Levin reported it was a great morning with 165 guests. The event featured a strong connection between our mission and the program which was presented. To date, the Breakfast raised close to \$30,000, with a few other donations still expected to come in.

7. Officer/Foundation/Committee/Working Group & Related Q+A

a. Finance Committee (Roberge, Levin): The monthly Budget to Actual was presented, and Roberge noted that there are no surprise trends in expenses or income. She also shared that the Finance Committee has reviewed the FY 18 Budget, which the Board will review later in this meeting. Levin

shared that Manchester is behind in reimbursements, but Levin has discussed this with the Special Education Director and expects back payments to be corrected shortly.

8. Program

a. 2017/18 Budget: Discussion & Vote Expected (Levin)

Levin led the Board through the FY18 Draft Budget, highlighting the changes from the previous year. She noted that this Budget has been reviewed by the Finance Committee over the last few months, as it evolved.

Motion: Butterfield motioned to close section to discuss personnel matters; Johnson seconded.

Vote: Unanimous.

Motion: Connors motioned to return to open session; Brough seconded.

Vote: Unanimous

Closed Meeting Outcomes:

Levin presented the Finance Committee with a budget that looked at a 3% vs. 4% increase for returning staff, and the Committee concluded that the FY18 budget should include a 4% raise for returning staff. Levin noted that the Special Education contracts and related budget planning will be completed once the agreement for planned reimbursement is finalized with Manchester.

The Budget was reviewed in full, and after discussion no changes were made to the Draft FY18 Budget presented by Levin and the Finance Committee.

Motion: Butterfield motioned to approve the FY'18 Budget as presented; Roberge seconded.

Vote: Unanimous.

9. Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, June 7, 5:30pm (DePasse). Connors noted she will not be present at this meeting.

10. Adjournment

Motion: Roberge motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:10; Butterfield seconded.

Vote: Unanimous.



**Educational Program Director
Board Report
May 17, 2017**

Step Up Days- In the month of May annually, we begin the process of exposing transitioning students to their upcoming grade. Current Kindergarteners will visit Lower Elementary classrooms and current 3rd graders will visit Upper Elementary classrooms for about an hour each Friday in the month of May. Students will have the opportunity to visit each classroom in their designated level, tour the classroom, experience some of the works and get to know the children in that classroom. Students are not told of their 1st or 4th grade placement yet so the purpose is to prepare them for their upcoming grade. From our past experiences, this process is incredibly helpful for the student's transition.

Kinder Interviews- On Friday, May 7th, we had the opportunity to meet our incoming kindergarteners starting in the fall. Ironically, 18 of the students starting next year are siblings of current students or children of staff members, so this was not our first meeting for most. While here for interviews, we give a brief screening of the students to gather baseline data for when they enter our program. This day is always incredibly exciting!

Opera NH performance- On Thursday, April 18th, Opera NH came to put on a 30 minute performance for the entire school. There were 4 members of their company and they sang songs that the students were familiar with from music class. Thanks to all who performed and donated their time!

Special Education- Last week, we had the opportunity to meet with the Manchester School District regarding the special education service delivery model for next year. We have agreed that we will continue providing services with our staff. This is a great relief as we enjoy supporting our students with our philosophy in mind.

Standardized Tests- Fourth grade students have finished their final standardized test for the year. The Science NECAP is a state mandated, paper and pencil assessment that is completed in 4th, 8th and 11th grade. Students did well with completing this task in 3 days, 2 of which were comprised of multiple-choice questions and the last involved a full lab experience.

Field Day- The first field day communications have been sent out to families and we are now collecting materials for all of the stations that the committee has planned. In regards to food, we have decided to continue a potluck style of

meal. The family picnic is always a fun way to wrap up the year and a great way to experience the cultural diversity of our community. If you are interested in attending, we will be eating from 12-1:30 on June 2nd!

Staffing for next year- We have posted as usual for all positions within our setting, however we only have a need to hire for a small number of positions for the 2017/2018 school year. We will begin interviewing the week of May 15th.

Dental presentation- We were incredibly lucky that the office of Dr. Evelyn Bryan in Bedford, NH, volunteered Ruth, a resident hygienist in their office, to do some dental education for our students. Ruth arrived with toothbrushes and paste in hand and spoke to the kids about healthy nutrition and smart dental hygiene. Many thanks for the time donated and of course for the free toothbrushes and toothpaste!

Afterschool Programing- This month, we have a great variety of programs going on for our students. For the first time, we started a soccer club for our upper elementary students. This popular program runs weekly and they will have their final game versus the staff on their last day of the program. The adventure club began this month too. Lower elementary students leave the school to investigate the outdoors by taking short hikes around the city. Lastly, another round of the drama club has been going strong with a plan for a short play to display their skills in June. Our amazing staff is running all of these clubs!



**Executive Director's Report
For the May 17, 2017
MFCS School Board Meeting
Submitted by Meryl Levin**

Required Reporting

Over April Break the Health Inspector visited MFCS. Our approved inspection is on file here at school and has been filed with the state, as required.

Small reports have been filed over the last month including the Immigrant Survey and Teacher Evaluation. Once our 2017/18 Budget is approved, that too will be filed with the DOE and posted on our website.

Facility

Over Spring Break, a few MFCS staff kicked off our outdoor improvement project with small steps by painting some fun and popular games on the sidewalk and blacktop. The UL maintenance team also re-installed the basketball hoop that had blown over in a winter windstorm. And I purchased large Soccer Nets, all of which the students are really enjoying (as seen in last week's Newsletter). We also purchased 2 picnic tables, which will be assembled by parents next week (if the weather holds).

I will be working the **Fred T. Church Insurance** team in May/June to explore the next steps in building a working relationship with them. I have also been approached by the Manchester-based Insurance Broker who we work with for our Aflac coverage. That firm will also be providing a review of our needs, along with a bid.

MFCS ChildCare Program

Enrollment in our Child Care Program remained fairly consistent this month, as it has in recent months. Looking to next year, we have signed up 11 kinder students for next year in our kinder program. We will be highlighting the program with the new kinder parents/guardians at our orientation on Step Up Night later this month, and expect more will enroll after that, and/or once the year begins, as happened this year.

Enrollment

We are continuing to talk with those currently enrolled families who are not sure of their plans for their children next year, with hopes that we - and they - will have clarity as the school year comes to a close.

Financial

Special Education reimbursement payments: Most sending districts are keeping current with their reimbursements. We are awaiting some back payment from Manchester. When Laura and I met with the District's SpEd Coordinator, Jen Dolloff, today and explained the past due invoices, she said she would help move payment along as soon as possible.

Also at the meeting with Jen and Chris Martin, we agreed that going forward the District will fund 1.5 Special Educators. We offered to draft a Memo of Understanding that outlines an agreement (including rate, benefits, unemployment and payroll taxes). I hope to work with Naomi to draft that document. We will again hire needed paraprofessionals (based on our students' IEPs) and bill monthly for their hours worked – the same system which has been in place for some time.

I look forward to the Board's review of the **2017/18 DRAFT Budget** at our May Meeting with an aim to approve it at the meeting. As of this writing, all members of the Finance Committee have now reviewed the document.

Legislative Update

Full Day Kindergarten is being talked about by our new Governor and by others in Concord, but it is not clear how that will play out for us. Additionally, there is some work being done with the Governor and others to once again link charter funding to a percentage of the state student average usually named as \$14,500. It is unclear how this will play out, and when it will be completed. So, for now we will move forward with our budget and we can revisit it, if needed.

We plan to continue our Kinder After Care Program so that we are able to provide a full day, albeit pay-to-play option, for our kinder families next year.

The **NH Alliance for Public Charter Schools Newsletter** is a great resource for info on legislative happenings: <https://nhcharterschools.wildapricot.org/stay-informed/>

MFCS Community Building & Volunteerism

In the days before April Break, a MFCS parent generously donated food, which was sent home with our food insecure kiddos to manage during the vacation.

Our first week back after April Vacation was **National Teacher Appreciation Week** and our parents spoiled us! Rachel Marziano & Lisa Zonfrillo masterminded a week full of amazing activities from massages by MFCS mom Julia Soto, to Smoothie and Salad Bars. We are so deeply appreciative of everything shared and felt both loved and appreciated!

We will be running **our first MFCS Summer Camp week** from July 10-14th. Our 2017 Summer Art Camp is open to our current kinder through current 3rd year students. Ms. Shannon and Ms. Kristin will lead campers in an exploration of the art and style of Eric Carle. Each day campers will create their own works of art based on Carl's techniques.

On June 2, we will hold our Annual Field Day. At the end of the morning Field Day Events, we will assemble for our **Annual Community Potluck Lunch from 12-1pm**. This is a wonderful MFCS community day. Please plan to join us for our annual community lunch or just stop by in the morning to warm your heart and enjoy the fun!

On June 8th we will hold our **2nd Annual Graduation Celebration for our 6th Year Students**. The event will be held at the Derryfield School in Manchester (as it was last year) from 4 until about 5:30pm. Our speaker is a graduating NH High School Senior who has been involved in a great deal of service programs, and though not a Montessori kiddo, she has much to share with our 6th year students as they all launch from where they have been to new experiences. There will be light refreshments after the ceremony. We do like to have someone from the Board present to speak briefly at this event. Please drop me a line if you are willing and able to be that person!

The majority of our Community Outreach in late winter was spent building the guest list and sponsorship for the 5th Annual Leadership Fundraising Breakfast. Please see more about that below.

Human Resources

Just before April Break, all **contracts** were provided to our teaching staff. While a few on our staff are moving on to other opportunities, the majority will be with us again next year. We have held off providing contracts for the SpEd Team and paras, as we needed to speak with the Manch District before doing so. With a clearer understanding of the plan, we can now turn our attention to that group. I will provide contracts for them next week and also plan to provide contracts for the admin team. We have posted the educational job openings and Laura will begin interviews later this month.

Paper work received this month indicates that the current **unemployment claim** will continue.

Foundation News:

Our 2016/17 Annual Leadership Breakfast may have been one of our best in terms of the weaving of our mission and goals with our speakers. We welcomed over 165 guests at the Puritan Conference Center venue (about 30 or so less than last year – an election year when everyone was attending everything they could). As it happened, that morning was also an emergency planning meeting for many of our supporters who have been working on hard advocating for Full Day Kinder, so there were a few important folks who couldn't join us.

Ahead of the event, I had secured sponsorship from Chris Dolloff/Cityside Management, Susan Contos/Accurate Title, Quentin Keefe/Regency Mortgage, Will Kanteres/Kanteres Real Estate, Newton Kershaw/Elm Grove Properties, SNHU.

The morning began with a beautiful and thoughtful welcome by our own Naomi Butterfield, followed by some Beatles songs sung by our kiddos, led my music man, John Choinard. I spoke a bit about the deliberate culture we've established at school and how that relates to our Montessori approach, something touched on again when two of our 6th Year students spoke about their experiences at Mill Falls. I also took this opportunity to publicly acknowledge the many contributions and enormous generosity of Roland Martin, and was so glad to be able to do so. The tables held beautiful flowers donated and arranged by Mindy student-written notes collected during our Week of Kindness, which preceded April Break. Laura introduced our two student speakers, but first shared a bit about her own journey from traditional to Montessori, further helping people understand why what we do here is so special, and how our team of talented and committed educators make it possible for us to succeed.

Our keynote speaker, Stan Spirou, brought it all together when he shared his own story of arriving in NH as a 9 year old speaking no English in around 1960 or so. He noted that it wasn't until middle school when a special teacher helped him for real and when he was invited on to the basketball team – for the first time becoming part of a group and where he could shine. He was introduced by one of our Bhutanese kiddos who herself arrived with little English as a 1st grader. She drew some laughter in her intro when she noted that 'though it doesn't look it, Coach Spirou and I have a lot in common.' She is about 4.5 feet tall and tiny – he is well over 6 feet...

And the ask was made by MFCS Parent Katie Cote who shared her passion and appreciation for the educational opportunities the school provides for her family and for our greater community.

Per guest – we had the highest percentage of donors of any breakfast thus far. And though we didn't raise as much as we had last year (as I predicted we would not), we did very well. As of this writing, the event raised \$29,605. There may be a few more donations that float in over the next week or two...

It takes a village to pull off an even like this, and so I thank all of you for your contributions of time, energy, encouragement and dollars.

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