



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.

These words reveal the child's inner needs; 'Help me to do it alone'.

-Dr. Maria Montessori

MFCS Meeting Minutes for May 18th, 2016

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

1. Call to Order, Roll Call & Welcome Public

Present: Depasse, Roberge, Kacavas, Martin, Levin, Wrubleski, Johnson, Champagne

Absent: Brough

2. Public Comment – no public present.

3. Meeting Business

a. Approval of Minutes from April 2016 meeting

Motion: Kacavas moved to accept the minutes; DePasse seconded.

Vote: Unanimous approval.

4. Montessori Moment (Jordan Vaillancourt, Lead Teacher, Lower Elementary)

Vaillancourt shared a video in which she explained the ways Lower Elementary Montessori students are introduced to triangles and related facts and information. She showed Montessori works related to this area of study.

5. School Update

a. Educational Program Director (Wrubleski – pls see attached report)

Wrubleski reported that we have recently had a lot of Special Ed meetings. The IEPs discussed at these meetings have language about transportation for services. The parents are not in favor, nor is Laura or our team. In these meeting, Laura has been disturbed to witness discussions about changes in IEP's to reflect the busing, not necessarily to reflect student needs. Roland and Laura have a meeting Thursday morning with Chris Martin (no relation to our Trustee), Assistant Superintendent at the Manchester School District. R. Martin has sent her some information about cost projections, which Levin and Wrubleski put together based on the known Manchester students with IEPs enrolled for next year.

b. Executive Director (Levin – pls see attached report)

Levin touched on enrollment, the growing interest on the part of our new Kinder families who are fast enrolling in our KinderCare program (10 as of tonight), and reminded Trustees about the upcoming 6th grade graduation and again extended an invitation for them to attend.

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

a. Finance Committee - Budget to Actual (DePasse)

DePasse shared that the Finance Committee met in full: budget to actual on track. Representing SpEd income and costs in our budget was something we discussed as a Board last month, and the committee came up with a means of doing that our last meeting (the Committee shared the budget which will be posted). Johnson asked if there was a "Plan B" for us to provide SpEd services to our students if the District insisted on the busing model. Martin/DePasse shared there is not currently a budget expense line item for service provision without reimbursement. Johnson wanted to know what our internal plan could be. Could we have a support person on the staff? Wrubleski/Levin did explain that we do have a Student Services Coordinator (along with many other of our staff) who support our SpEd students and links their needs to our teaching staff. Johnson

noted that R. Martin/Wrubleski should [at their upcoming meeting] ask about Ass't Superintendent Martin's communication preferences and what is a safe venue for parents to voice their concerns. Johnson noted, and the Board agreed, that we are hopeful that this will be resolved amicably, but of course acknowledged that parents, staff and the Board are very concerned about what is happening to their children's education plans.

b. Charter Committee Update (Brough)

Levin discussed the timeline for Charter Renewal Work. Brough and Levin reviewed the renewal process as noted on the DOE's website. She added that Wrubleski will join the Committee at the next meeting and going forward. Champagne said she did want to work on the Committee as well. Next Committee meeting is May 30, 2:45pm.

c. Foundation Update – Leadership Breakfast (Levin)

Levin shared the results of the recent 2016 Leadership Breakfast. It was the largest in size to date, and has brought in over \$38,000. She shared that days before the Breakfast, the Bank of NH responded to Levin's request for funds in support of growing our STEM Program with \$3500. Johnson added that SNHU is hiring a tech attorney being and she might be interesting for us to connect with. Champagne discussed that she feels there should be more time spent on technology and other STEM curriculum areas, especially in the Upper Elementary.

8. Program

a: Board Meeting Calendar for 2016/17

Martin went over the dates for the 2016/17 Board Meetings. It was determined based on Trustees' summer schedules that the August meeting would be Tuesday, August 30th at 5:30. After that, the meeting schedule will return to the usual Wednesday slot. The full schedule will be posted on line.

Motion: Johnson motioned to hold the Trustee's Annual Meeting in September at a regularly scheduled meeting each year and amend the bylaws. Roberge seconded the motion.

Discussion: Trustees determined after consulting the bylaws that it is not necessary to amend them to reflect the change in month for the Annual Meeting as the bylaws provide flexibility in the current language.

Vote: Unanimous approval of the motion to hold the BOT Annual Meeting in September 2016.

b: Trustee Update (Martin)

Martin reminded the Board that Trustee Callahan has now withdrawn from the Board and with that the Chair position is now vacant. Martin has been filling that position in her absence.

Motion: Johnson motioned to have Martin fill the Chair position, effective immediately, until the Board's Annual Meeting; Kacavas seconded.

Vote: Johnson called for a vote on the motion (since Martin was involved in the issue he could not initiate the vote). It passed with one abstention.

Motion: Martin motioned to nominate Johnson to serve as Vice Chair. Kacavas seconded.

Vote: The motion was approved with one abstention.

Martin reminded the Board that the Secretary position is still open.

Motion: Johnson nominated DePasse as Secretary; Kacavas seconded.

Vote: Unanimous approval..

9: Next Meeting Date: June 8, 2016 5:30pm

10. Adjournment: Kacavas moved to adjourn at 6:51pm. Champagne seconded. Meeting adjourned.



**Educational Program Director
Board Report
May 18, 2016**

Special Education Service Delivery: At this point, services are still to be delivered in local Manchester schools for the 2016/2017 school year. Last week, an official letter was sent from the Nash Reddy informing parents of our special education students of this impending change. The change is being discussed at IEP meetings with parents on an individual basis.

Science NECAP: Fourth year students just wrapped up another week of testing. The science NECAP is a traditional style of testing using the paper and pencil method. This test measures their growth from first grade through fourth grade concepts in science.

Field Trips: May always seems to be a big month for field trips. Every student in our school will have the opportunity to go on a field trip whether it is the state capital or the science center in Rye, NH. It's always great to get out see first hand the wonders of our world and how they apply to the curriculum taught in the classroom.

Afterschool Programing: We are coming to a close with the majority of our afterschool programing. The Musical Theatre Club will have their final performance at the Derryfield on May 24th. The Derryfield school has been gracious enough to transport our students to their facility for a dress rehearsal and for the final program!! The second session of our American Sign Language club is well underway and they too are planning a final performance at an all school meeting towards the end of the year.

Step Up Days: Every year, the students that are transitioning from kindergarten to first grade and from third to fourth grade have the opportunity to go into the lower and upper elementary classrooms. While in the room, they have buddies that show them around, they do a bit of work and get a feel for what expectations will look like the following year. These days are important for students to be prepared for a peaceful transition.



**Executive Director's Report
For the May 18, 2016
MFCS School Board Meeting
Submitted by Meryl Levin**

Required Reporting

This month I filed our Teacher Evaluation survey and our DOE-25 Financial Statement for FY16, Q3. We have begun to prepare for the robust end of the year reporting required of us by the DOE.

Charter Community Update

This month I attended the kick off of the new organization of NH charter schools – *The New Hampshire Alliance for Public Charter Schools*. At that event, the new organization gave awards to legislative 'friends' of charter schools. It was attended by law makers, charter leaders and some parents and school staff members.

Before/Aftercare Program

Earlier this month, we had our Kinder Assessments Day, which gave me the chance to talk with our new families about our Kinder Aftercare Program. There is an enormous amount of interest among our new families, and I think we are going to see that grow to a high enrollment level, especially once it becomes the norm for so many kinder students in 2016/17. Many families have already given us their deposits. Susanne is in contact with all interested families and we look forward to a very successful program. Our Kinder Lead Teacher, Kristin, is dreaming and scheming about her plans for that portion of our childcare program which will run from 12-3pm.

Enrollment & Lottery

As of this writing, we are at a full 168 students for the 2016/17 school year. As is usual, there has been a slight bit of movement in our new Kinder class; a few who originally got spots via the Lottery have chosen to give them up, so those on the wait list have filled their spots. We have over 100 on that wait list.

As is our practice at this time of year, we have a list students who we know are considering other options, but are still holding on to their spots here at Mill Falls. This is a challenge for us, as our teaching staff will soon be completing student placement for next year. We have begun a new wave of reaching out to those families who we know, or have a sense are considering other educational options for their children for next year. We hope people will notify us no later than the end of May so that new families can tour our school when it is open, rather than when it is all wrapped up for summer.

Financial

Huge thank you to the Finance Committee for helping to complete the 2016/17 Budget. In the coming weeks, I will post the budget on our website, as has become our annual practice. Our bookkeeper, Allison Decesere, continues to improve our recording and reporting methods. She is a great and valued member of our team. I hope some of you had the chance to meet her at our Breakfast.

Human Resources

This month we extended contracts to our teaching staff and our admin staff will be receiving contracts in the coming weeks. Laura and the teaching team have been hard at work interviewing for some of the openings we have coming up next year. This year I met with each employee to go over the contracts and to thank them for their service and to review any and all additions to previous agreements.

MFCS Community Building & Volunteerism

On Tuesday of this week, I attended the Governor's Summit on Substance Misuse. Over 800 people attending this meeting, which was designed as a multidisciplinary approach to addressing the opioid crisis. Some time ago, I had a conversation with the previous NH Health and Human Services Commissioner about the idea of addressing addiction through K-12 curricular programming. He has since resigned, but I went to this event with an eye for finding some people with whom Laura and I can connect. It was a very interesting event, and I am confident we will find some good resources as a result of my attendance.

Last week, Alison Batey organized a Family Bingo Night & Pizza Party here at school, which was fun and raised some money, too! By all accounts it was a great evening. Office Assistant, Allison Jacques joined Alison B that evening to run the show.

Field Day will soon be here and Laura has been working with members of our parent community to organize that day's activities and the community lunch that has become a tradition. Beyond that, there are many parents who are contributing time and energy. Several were chaperones this week as our spring field trip schedule kicked in to high gear. Others continue to supply handwriting instruction. Still others spoiled us on Teacher Appreciation Week with wonderful meals and treats. And one comes in regularly to hang the student art around our space. We are so appreciative of all our parents do as members of our school family.

We are looking forward to holding our first 6th Grade Graduation at the Derryfield School on June 9th and so appreciate the DF partnering with us on that. All Trustees are invited, the celebration begins at 4:00. Please let Laura and I know if you plan to attend!

Annual Leadership Breakfast:

The Annual Leadership Breakfast was a great success this year. Our Guest Speaker, Paul LeBlanc (President of SNHU), along with our kiddos voices and other voices shared impressed our guests. I have received many very positive comments about the event and our organization congratulating us on what we have accomplished and the way in which we have engaged the greater community all along the way. You have each contributed enormously to our ability to connect with so many of the leaders who have come to know and support our program - community, business, education and political leaders. I am so grateful for all you share in support of Mill Falls, and I know the entire school community values your wisdom, energy and ambassadorship! Your presence, our speakers, our kiddos and guests made me feel proud to be a member of the Mill Falls Community, and I hope you all felt the same.

The 2016 Leadership Breakfast was our largest yet (200 RSVP's about 185 actual attendees) and to date, we have raised \$36,540; we had \$1950 in expenses. This year we raised over \$3000 more than last year. Thank you cards have been sent to all donors. The children are making a thank you gift for our high-level multi-year sponsors: Cityside, Accurate Title, Regency Mortgage.

Finally, just days before the Breakfast, the Bank of NH's Ellen Soucy notified me that our grant request for their support of the growth of our STEM (Science Technology Engineering Math) Program was approved in the form of \$3500. Good stuff!