



*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.*

*It is interesting to see how little by little, these [children] become aware of forming a community which behaves as such...Once they have reached this level, the children no longer act thoughtlessly, but put the group first and try to succeed for its benefit.*

*-Dr. Maria Montessori, The Absorbent Mind*

## **MFCS Meeting Minutes for September 16, 6:30pm**

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

### **1. Call to Order & Welcome Public: 6:34pm**

**Roll Call:** Johnson, Roberge, Wrubleski, Champagne, Martin, Levin

**Absent:** Callahan, Tellez

#### **Announcements/Updates**

Ward reminded the Board that while this meeting is being held before the outcome of the budget negotiations are known, we do have a slight Cost of Living Increase in the equitable aid this year:  
Grades 1-12: \$5,561.27/student; Kindergarten: \$3,780.64/student

### **3. No Public Comment.**

### **4. Meeting Business**

#### **a. Approval of Minutes from August meeting**

Tellez correction re: parenthetical phrase removed.

**Motion:** Martin motioned to approve with Tellez correction; seconded by Johnson.

**Vote:** Unanimous approval.

### **5. Update on search for new Executive Director (ED) (Levin)**

Levin noted the ED job opening has again posted/re-posted in a number of places. Current application materials are being shared with the Search Committee via DropBox. She shared that members of the committee have been told to expect applications from 2 people who intend to apply. The Search Committee will reconvene in early October to review applicants. Champagne suggested putting something in the weekly newsletter to ask parents to encourage appropriate candidates they may know to apply.

### **6: Montessori Moment: Year 4 (Wrubleski)**

Wrubleski said she wanted to take this opportunity to reflect upon the start of our 4<sup>th</sup> year of operation. She shared that the start of this year has been fantastic. Systems, policies and procedures now in place are making the school days run really smoothly; stress levels are down. From the beginning of the school year, our 4<sup>th</sup>, the necessary tasks have been clear. Opening Days (teacher orientation) went very well. Since school began, drop off and pickup, all going smoothly. And our parents seem positive. Drawing on all of this previous experience makes it possible for teaching the students to be the number one focus.

\* The public comment section of our agenda is an opportunity for community members to comment on the work of the Board. School Board Trustees are interested in hearing views from individuals, but will be unable to respond to comments immediately in this forum. The comments/questions will, however, receive serious consideration, and may warrant discussion at a later date. Please limit your comments to 2 minutes to allow time for others to speak. For lengthier comments, please feel free to submit a letter to the board.

## 7. School Update

### **Educational Program Director (Wrubleski)**

Please see report. Additional detail:

Afterschool Programming, Special Education and Mentoring the teaching staff, have been her focus since school opened.

**Afterschool Programming:** With curriculum in place, Wrubleski has been able to make an Afterschool programming plan through March. She feels this helps the school planning and also helps to offer year-long plan to parents so they can schedule and budget for afterschool activities. Currently offering: Girls on the Run (2 days/week) is a really great program about respect of others and self; First Lego Program is now meeting 4 times per week at school. In November, there are another 5 programs planned. Next learning curve is to figure out how many programs we can run at once, given our space restrictions and modest-sized student body.

**Special Education:** Wrubleski has long known that this portion of our program would grow this year. Consider this: in our first year, 2012, we had 2 students who had been identified as Special Ed students and had Individualized Educational Plans (IEP's). At the end of last year, we had 15 SpEd students, and this year we are now up to 31. Some of the original IEP students left at the end of last year; those spots plus some were filled this year with additional learners who need SpEd support. She also noted that often the students with 504 plans have as many needs, but less services than those with IEPs. This year we have many new students from Manchester, so we are working with Manchester more closely now and have scheduled collaboration time in place where the Manchester service providers come to school to meet and to talk with our teachers about the students they are serving. Beyond that, Alison Batey (our Student Services Coordinator) is also meeting with all teachers regularly to address any needs and offer support.

**Mentoring** – Wrubleski is meeting with teachers once a week. This includes weekly observation time as well as meeting time. She is also meeting with the Assistant Teachers bi-weekly to support them and get their perspectives on the workings of their classrooms.

### **Acting School Manager (Levin)**

Please see report.

Levin also spoke about the change in the admin structure: the addition of an Office Assistant – Allison Jacques who started the day before the teaching staff returned for Opening Days; and the creation of the Project Manager position, which Susan Hojlo has moved in to. Levin praised the work of Allison to date, noting she's a quick study and asking all the right questions as she gets her on the job training. Susanne's role as Project Manager (3 days per week) officially began this week; previous to that, she'd been working full time training Allison and helping to get the school year off to a smooth start. As part of her Project Management work, Hojlo has already set up the billing and tracking for the Before/Kinder/AfterCare Program and has begun work on some of the state reporting she will be doing. Overall the transition has been very smooth.

## 8. Finance Committee (Martin)

Committee met earlier this month.

**Financial procedures** being worked on to address re-assignment of some of the responsibilities mapped out in our policies, location of checks, and some other items. The proposed changes will alter about ½ of the current policies. These changes will be better for the organization and are all intended to restructure large pieces of the workload moving certain roles and responsibilities to the school and away from the Board - a natural part of our organization's maturing process. The changes are being put together now my Roberge, Levin and Martin, will be reviewed by our auditor so he his comfortable and satisfied with the changes, and then shared with the full Board for review.

**Changing banks** – Levin has met with the Bank of NH as per the Finance Committee's request to clarify costs and details of banking with BNH. Ward reminded Trustees that the Board has previously given the school administration ability to make that move based on the best timing.

**The Foundation's fiscal year** is also reviewed by the same audit firm, as the two organizations are woven together in mission. The preparation of the Foundation's 990 (annual reporting) is now in process.

**9. Next Meeting Date:** October 21, 2015 6:30pm

**10. Public Comment**

**Sarah Duffley** – Wondering where the school is going with regard foreign language. Is there any opportunity to re-introduce that into our curriculum as it was in years 1 and 2? Wrubleski asked the chair if she could respond directly, and noted that she is looking for a financially viable afterschool option for foreign language, as the introduction last year of the Smarter Balanced Testing created an urgent need to bring all students up to a basic level of comfort with technology, because the Smarter Balanced testing is now done on iPads.

**12. Adjournment**

**Motion:** Martin motioned to adjourn the meeting; Champagne, seconded.

**Vote:** Unanimous.

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Following the public meeting, the Board voted to go into closed session.

**The action taken during the closed session is as follows:**

The Board unanimously approved the following resolution:

Be it so resolved the Board of Trustees approves to continue to employ Meryl Levin in the Acting School Manager capacity and she will act as an *Ex Officio* on the Board during that period.



## **Educational Program Director Board Report September 16, 2015**

**Opening Days:** This year we had 4 opening professional days for our staff. These days were filled with CPR training for those in need, discussion of procedures and policies and basic Montessori training for our new assistants. We also made time for a bit of staff bonding with a hike at the Audubon Center on Massabesic Lake in Auburn, NH. The highlight of our week was the opening day spread of food provided by the Blaisdell Family. We are always so grateful for their generosity!

**Popsicle Party:** This year we had one of our best turnouts for this annual event. Families had the opportunity to meet new and returning teachers and friends alike. We had just enough time to have a tasty treat and chat with friends before it was time to head off to bed.

**Special Education:** At the start of the year, there are always meetings between service providers and our school staff to determine how to best support our students. This year has been particularly busy as our percentage of special education students has increased from 10% of our population to 18.5%. To put this in real numbers, we ended the year with 15 students on IEPs or 504's and now have 31 students requiring support via IEPs or 504's. Knowing this can put a strain on our systems, we have implemented several additional meeting times between the teachers and Alison Batey, our Student Services Coordinator as well as we now have an official weekly meeting time with the Manchester School District to collaborate on these students.

**Afterschool Programming:** We have started the year with two programs that are off and running for the upper elementary students. GOTR or Girls on the Run is a program for 3rd through 5th grade girls. This program works with girls on self-esteem and positive interactions with others. The FIRST Lego program has 3 teams meeting throughout the week and will be competing in November.

**Open House:** Thursday, September 10th we had our annual open house. All classrooms opened their doors to families to discuss the schedules of their day, food expectations and a bit about curriculum. It was great to see so many families come to see the classrooms and meet with the staff.



**Acting School Manager Report  
For the September 16, 2015  
MFCS School Board Meeting  
Submitted by Meryl Levin**

### **DOE Reporting**

We have filed the Student Roster, which lists the basic information on all of our 168 students (24 kinder and 144 1-6 graders).

Related, we have received our first installment of student equitable aid funds from the DOE. That is based on our Day 1 student count report, which we sent in on our first day of school.

Next up is the October 1 Beginning of the Year (BOY) Report which is a comprehensive report that maps out each and every student's complete picture – from their attendance and enrollment with us to proper coding for their race/ethnicity. I will be working with Susanne in her Project Manager roll (which begins officially on Monday) so that she can learn the details related to BOY/EOY reporting. Much of the 2015/16 reporting will shift to her in the near future in her new, part-time position as Project Manager.

All charter schools are still waiting for information from the DOE regarding the Annual Progress Report and the DOE's revision of this particular report and related deadline. That will be a report on last school year.

### **Facility**

In the final days of August, our fire extinguishers were inspected, as required annually.

The full staff reviewed our emergency procedures and practices and we have scheduled our first fire drill for this month. Laura and I are putting together a safety committee, and finalizing some materials for teachers related to our safety procedures.

The maintenance team at the Union Leader continues to be wonderful in helping us when needed to maintain and/or improve our facility.

### **Before/Aftercare**

The Before/Kinder/AfterCare Program is off and running. We will also be offering Care on our upcoming early release day and have publicized that in correspondence with parents.

Daily Enrollment: We have 11 children enrolled in BeforeCare; 5 children enrolled in the KinderCare (12-3pm) Program and 15 children enrolled in AfterCare (this includes 2 part time attendees). The daily AfterCare Program does not currently have space for Drop In. We are building a waitlist of interested families with the aim/hope of reaching 20 AfterCare enrollees as originally budgeted for when the Before/AfterCare Plan was first proposed. This would make it possible for us to add another full time staffer to the AfterCare Program. Given the size and makeup of the current group, we are looking to

hire one of our assistants to work from 3-4:30 during the busiest and most intensive time of the program day.

A billing system has been established by Susanne and is proceeding relatively smoothly, though a few families have been slow in paying the first month's bill. Susanne is in communication with those families. Now that school is in session, billing will go out on or about the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month, with payment due by the first of each month.

### **Enrollment**

In the days just before school began, we did have a few families who notified us at the last minute that they would not be returning/enrolling with us. Those spots were immediately filled and we were able to start the year at capacity – 168 students.

### **Financial**

This week, the auditor has been on site, reviewing our FY15 financial documents and clarifying any details, as needed. It has run very smoothly. His work will continue as he reviews our QuickBook files (created, managed and provided to our auditor by our bookkeeper, Anne Rawson). As occurred last year, the same firm will prepare the Foundation's 990 form. That too is underway.

### **MFCS Parent Group**

The MFCS Parent Group has been working with Laura and I to publicize the committees and parent engagement opportunities at the school. Each week we reserve a section in our newsletter for news from the Group and look forward to soon meeting with them to establish an activities calendar. Some volunteer work is already underway to assist our teachers.

A returning parent, Rachel Marziano has stepped forward to take the lead on the late fall parent fundraising event, scheduled last winter with the SNHU Hospitality school. Details on that event will be forthcoming.

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