



*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.*

*We cannot create observers by saying 'observe', but by giving them the power and the means for this observation and these means are procured through education of the senses.*

-Dr. Maria Montessori

## **MFCS Meeting Minutes from October 21, 6:30pm**

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

**Montessori Moment:** Before the meeting officially began, Wrubleski shared a video of MFCS Upper El Lead Teacher, Laura Blouin, presenting this month's Montessori Moment about division of fractions.

**1. CALL TO ORDER:** 6:46pm

**2. ROLL CALL:**

Present: Champagne, Tellez, Roberge, Martin, Levin, Wrubleski;

Joining by phone: Johnson; Absent: Callahan

**3. PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**4:** Approval of Minutes from September 2015 meeting

**Motion: Tellez moved to approve the minutes; Roberge seconded.**

**Vote: Unanimous approval.**

**5. SCHOOL UPDATE**

**a: Educational Program Director** (Wrubleski)

*Please also see attached report.*

**Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC).** Wrubleski discussed the plans for releasing information on Smarter Balanced Assessment (SBAC). As per state guidelines, information will be released to our School community AFTER the state deadline of Nov 12<sup>th</sup>. Before that, Wrubleski plans to hold a parent information session about how to understand the data from the tests. Wrubleski explained that the data, and the way it is presented is not inherently clear. That information session will be general about how the test was given and how to read the reports each family will get about their child's results. Wrubleski will not present overall school data at that information session, as it will be prior to the date when we are allowed to share data as per state guidelines. Individual student results will be provided to parents/guardians before our Parent/Guardian Teacher Conferences in mid-November so parents/guardians have the data at that time, should they wish to review with the teachers.

**Hiring:** Wrubleski reported that she will be hiring a Math Interventionist; Paraprofessionals as per agreements with those districts which allow her to directly hire the paras for our students; Assistant Teacher to replace Joelle Gaona when she goes on maternity leave; and hopefully the Reading Support Assistant (discussed later in the meeting).

**Scholastic Book Fair:** Wrubleski noted the Fall Book Fair was a huge success. We raised about \$1200 more than we've ever done. In fact, on our Bring a Parent/Guardian to School Night, we sold \$2000 worth of books in 1.5 hours!

**Parent/Guardian to School Night** was a great event and very well attended this year.

**Trustee Questions:** Champagne asked about how the new 4<sup>th</sup> graders are doing. Wrubleski noted that the classrooms are both resilient and flexible, even with a few more 4<sup>th</sup> graders than our usual 8 per classroom.

Wrubleski added classrooms are stable, rocking and rolling. Wrubleski noted that the first big Upper Elementary (UE) event will be on October 29<sup>th</sup> when the UE students will present their Mystery History Wax Museum. They have been hard at work on that project.

**b: Acting School Manager Report** (Levin, 10 min)

*Please also see attached report.*

**School-Based Fundraising:** Beyond what is in the report, Levin took a few minutes to share figures from in-school fundraising projects. She announced the upcoming event - A Night of Community which is a parent-based fundraising event being organized in collaboration with students in the SNHU Hospitality Department.

Levin has been working with lead parent-organizer Rachel Marziano. Levin also shared the projections for the Pizza Friday Program – an expected \$4308 for the 9-month school year, based on the first month of participation.

**Before/Kinder/AfterCare Projections:** Levin reviewed current figures for the Child Care Program and shared revenue projections. She noted, while the Program is doing well, it will not be able to make what was budgeted by former Executive Director Bisson. That budgeted income of \$48,000 was based on full occupancy beginning on the first day of school and on only needing one teacher for the Aftercare Program. We did not start the year with a full program, and our AfterCare Program has required hiring a second person to work for 1.5 hours each day. The Child Care Program at its current size is expected to bring in about \$36,900 based on the average of the first two months of operation.

**8. OFFICER/FOUNDATION/COMMITTEE/WORKING GROUP & RELATED Q+A**

**a. Search Committee: Update on Executive Director Search** (Tellez)

Tellez noted that the Search Committee is being re-convened. There have been some changes in makeup of the Committee with the addition of Trustees Johnson and Champagne. The previous staff person has stepped down from the Committee given her time commitments now that the search has gone beyond the summer and into the busy school year. Wrubleski is talking with staff to find a replacement, and suggested that the meetings/interviews held during the day, or at the end of the school day rather than at night would be best for staff. Tellez asked if staff could be paid to serve on the Committee. Tellez added that the Committee is assessing the applications, most of which were received before the end of last month.

**b: Finance Committee - Budget to Actual** (Roberge)

Roberge noted that the Budget to Actual for the close of September is still considered draft, as we do not yet have a final audit. So though the expenses and income for this year are accurate, there are some funds that will be rolled over from FY15, which have not yet been finalized. She explained that we received our Differentiated Aid payment - a payment received by the school annually which reflects last year's Free & Reduced funds, English Language Learner funds and funds for 3<sup>rd</sup> graders reading below grade level. The payment, \$54,000, was about \$24,000 higher than what was budgeted. Finally, she also noted that the State passed the budget increase, so we get a \$36 more dollars per elementary student this year (kinders stay the same). Next year that increase will mean an additional \$1000 more per elementary pupil (again kinder funding remains the same). She also noted that the Before/Kinder/After Care Program is doing nicely, and all of this leads to a projection that we will be in good shape in relation to our budget this year.

**c: Bylaws Working Group Update** (Martin)

Martin shared that he's been working hard with Johnson and Levin on revising the Bylaws. That group is hoping to have a revision to share in the next weeks with the full Board with the goal of bringing the revisions to a vote in November.

**d: Charter Committee: Legislative Update** (Levin)

The Commission to review the way Special Education services are provided to public charter school students has been meeting since the summer. The last day for Legislators to submit new legislation is October 30<sup>th</sup>. There may be some news around this issue in the coming week. In broad strokes the NH charter community's position is that we believe a change in the existing legislation could introduce unintended consequences that could prove harmful for charter school health. The 2009 change to the law has improved services and outcomes for New Hampshire students. The current

system is working well for the vast majority of students, districts and charter schools. Charter leaders oppose any effort that could endanger student access or create new barriers for students with disabilities. We support HB536 as introduced.

Levin also noted that NHPR has done a weeklong series about charter schools, and while all press can be considered good press, there are some items that may generate questions, some of which may be directed toward those involved in NH charter schools and the school leadership. Levin suggested that any questions be addressed and that those with many questions be invited to come visit the school to see what we are doing up close and in person.

## **9. PROGRAM:**

### **Finance Committee**

#### **a: Approval of Copier Purchase (Levin)**

**Motion: Tellez motioned to formally approve the purchase of the new photocopier machine to replace the old machine. Champagne seconded.**

**Vote: Unanimous approval.**

#### **b: Hiring of Reading Support Assistant for Lower Elementary (Levin)**

Levin shared that the Lower Elementary classrooms have an unusually large number of reading groups because of the variety of reading levels. To support them, as they support their students, they require more people power in the form of an Assistant Reading Support Person. Levin and Wrubleski calculated that it would be about \$7500 (including payroll taxes). This could be paid out of the Differentiated Aid, as needed. The Board agreed to put a bit more toward the position.

**Motion: Tellez motioned to approve \$8000 for the addition of the Reading Support Assistant Position; Roberge seconded.**

**Vote: Unanimous approval.**

#### **c: Increase in Facility/Cleaning Costs (Levin)**

Levin shared that the approved budget includes a reduced cleaning line as it was based on hiring one Janitor. However, after researching this idea, and with further consideration, Levin and Wrubleski conclude that it is wisest to contract with a cleaning company. Levin asked that the Board return the cleaning budget to the previous years' level which were based on working with a cleaning company.

**Motion: Tellez motioned that the Board approve an increase in the facility cleaning line item to \$17,500; Johnson seconded.**

**Vote: Unanimous approval.**

#### **d: Revision of Financial Policies (Roberge)**

Roberge reminded the Board that we have worked update the current Financial Policies to better reflect our organization's needs and to further remove the Board from the day to day management areas. The changes have been reviewed and approved by our Auditor.

**Motion: Tellez moved to accept the changed financial polices as presented; Champagne seconded.**

**Vote: Unanimous approval.**

## **10: NEXT MEETING DATE: November 18, 2015 6:30pm (Martin)**

## **11. PUBLIC COMMENT: None.**

## **12: CLOSED SESSION:**

Following the public comment section, the Board voted to go in to closed session.

**Motion: Tellez motioned to go into closed session to discuss Officer Slate and Trustee Nominations. Champagne seconded.**

**Vote: Unanimous approval.**

### **Actions taken during the closed session:**

**a: Trustee Nominations:** The Board Unanimously approved the nominations of Mindy Kacavas & Greg Depasse to serve as MFCS Trustees.

**b: Officer Slate:** The Board Unanimously approved the following Officer Slate:

Kate Callahan – Chair (on maternity leave)

Roland Martin – Vice Chair (serving as Acting Chair given Callahan’s leave)

Michelle Roberge – Treasurer

The Secretary position will be voted on after the service of the new Trustees begins.

The Board voted to come out of closed session.

**Motion: Champagne motioned to come out of closed session: Tellez seconded.**

**Vote: Unanimous approval.**

**13: MEETING ADJOURNMENT:**

**Motion: Tellez motioned to adjourn the meeting at 7:55pm; Champagne seconded.**

**Vote: Unanimous approval.**



## **Board Report, October 21, 2015**

### **Submitted by Laura Wrubleski**

### **Educational Program Director**

**Smarter Balanced Results:** Meryl Levin and I attended our first training on the results of the Smarter Balanced assessment (SBAC). The information that was shared at the training was dense. At times the new testing vocabulary and related reporting measures associated with the SBAC was confusing to those of us in attendance. The state is conducting these trainings because there are so many core changes to the method of testing, test reporting and the way the expect us to talk about the test data. The goal is that when each school reports its data to parents, all state educators and school leaders are able to explain these new approaches with relative ease and clarity. As a staff, we took a large portion of our October early release day (10/14/15) to begin the discussion of this data and the best way deliver this information to our community. The data will be shared after November 12th, as requested by the state of New Hampshire. Individual reports will be sent home sometime after this release date and we will hold an information session for parents in an effort to explain these new results prior to this information going home.

**Hiring:** I spent the better part of last Friday interviewing for 2 positions - our Math Interventionist and a paraprofessional who will work with one of our students. I anticipate hiring these positions within the next week. In addition, I will be hiring for an assistant to replace Joelle Gaona, who will begin her maternity leave in December.

**Additional Reading Support:** As I mentioned at the beginning of the year, we have had a significant increase in the number of special education students in our student body. With this has come an increase in the number of academic levels, especially in our Lower Elementary (LE) classrooms. One area of intense need relates to reading. Those LE classrooms have so many reading groups, that they have had to schedule some reading group time in the morning during work cycle, as well as the afternoons (the time usually allotted for reading/language lessons). To further assist our LE teachers, I am hopeful that at our October meeting the Board will approve our request for a reading support person for LE classrooms. I am confident this will provide the additional support needed by our LE classroom teachers so they can better address all needs of the curriculum more effectively.

**After-school Programming:** Both the FIRST Lego (FLL) program and Girls on the Run (GOTR) teams are preparing for their final events. The teams have about a month left before their culminating events. For the FIRST teams (we have 3), they

will be competing in a competition for which they were given a challenge at the start of the school. Each FLL team has designed and worked towards a solution for their challenge and will present their work at their competition. The GOTR team will participate in a 5K run in Concord on November 15th. Outside participants are welcome if any members of the community are interested in running.

**Bring a Parent to School Night:** Once again, we held our annual Bring a Parent to School Night on October 15th. We had a wonderful turnout of families coming in to learn about all of the wonderful Montessori materials the students work with on a daily basis.

**Fundraising:** Last week, we had our fall Scholastic Book Fair and sold a record \$3700 of books! As a school, we will receive 50% of that total in book purchase money. We have also once again started our Pizza Fridays. With the increase in enrollment, we order an additional 6 pizzas every Friday. I anticipate a greater return of funds over the course of the year due this increase!



**Acting School Manager Report  
For the October 21, 2015  
MFCS School Board Meeting  
Submitted by Meryl Levin**

### **DOE Reporting**

We have filed the Beginning of the Year (BOY report) – a comprehensive report that maps out each and every student's complete picture - from their sending district, to their attendance record through October 1 of this year.

I will next be working on the English Language Learner report and am working with Susanne (in her Project Manager roll) on reporting on the data related to families who qualify for Free & Reduced. Her work on this should lead to a more complete filing than was done last year, as she has been connecting with all families to complete the forms.

Earlier this month, the DOE made clear their plan for the Annual Progress Report. Since their new 'dashboard' plan will not be complete for quite some time, we have been asked to file an annual report similar to those filed in past years. That is due by the end of the month and will be a report on last school year.

### **Facility**

We are THRILLED to have the new photocopier in house! It is quiet, efficient and it scans directly to everyone's email. It's a hit and I bring thank you's from the staff for helping to get that machine this week. We promise to put it to good use and treat it with love!

We have begun interviewing cleaning providers as planned last year, but have not yet committed to a new provider. The approved 2015/16 budget line in this area is very tight, so we may need to review that line item as our options become clearer.

### **Before/Aftercare Program**

The Before/Kindergarten/Aftercare Program continues to grow. We are now up to:

11 Before Care

8 Kinder (short day)

17 After Care (3 of whom are part time; 2 are kinders)

We to continue to grow to accommodate those families who have need for coverage and can commit to 3 or 5 days per week. As you recall, we added a second staff person who is on duty daily from 3-4:30. We will only extend that second person's hours if/when we have solid enrollment over 20.

Susanne is managing the Program billing and it is going smoothly. Income (and payment detail) is integrated into our main Quickbooks file by our bookkeeper as the checks are prepared for deposit.

### **Enrollment**

We began the year and continue to be at full capacity – 168 students (24 Kinders and 144 Lower and Upper EI). Since the year began, there is just one kinder student who

moved to her neighborhood school because her family could not manage the transport schedule. That spot was filled right away and there was therefore no gap in enrollment.

### **Financial**

The auditor reports that he will soon have his materials ready for review by the Finance Committee – though no firm date for that has been set.

### **MFCS Parent Group**

#### **First Annual Night of Community**

November 20<sup>th</sup> from 6:30-9:30pm, MFCS will host our First Annual Night of Community in collaboration with the SNHU Hospitality Department. This parent-organized event will be held at the Quill Restaurant on the SNHU campus. Parent, Rachel Marziano, has taken the lead on this late fall parent fundraising event and she and I have been meeting regularly with the SNHU team of students who have taken on our event as part of their events production class. Rachel has been joined by a few other parents who are working to gather exciting silent auction items and packages.

Childcare will be offered by SNHU students on site (different room, same building) for a flat \$5 fee per child (for children over 2).

Rachel has begun selling tickets with a roll out of the event this week during all of our exciting parent activities held at school this week (Book Fair, Parents Night, etc) and we also sent info home in backpacks on Friday. All proceeds, including childcare fees, will go to support Mill Falls!

#### **Parent Group In Action:**

In addition, the Parent Group committees have been hard at work – the Teacher Support Committee has been preparing materials for teachers; the Hospitality Committee provided a beautiful luncheon for staff on our October Early Release Day earlier this week; the Group organized a gathering for families on the Early Release Day at 'Nuthin But Good Times' and indoor play area. We have also spoken with some of the group coordinators about growing the Ambassador Committee and look forward to seeing that happen. And parent Veronika Hombs is working hard on the Parent Directory with an aim of completing that by the end of the month. They will have their next meeting here at school on 10/21 at 2pm.

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