



*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.*

## **MFCFS Minutes for October 19, 2016**

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

### **1. Call to Order, Roll Call & Welcome Public**

Present: Levin Wrubleski, DePasse, Martin, Roberge, Brough, Kacavas; by phone: Johnson.

### **2. Public Comment:** No public present.

### **3. Meeting Business**

#### **a. Approval of Minutes** from September 2016 meeting (2 min)

Martin motioned to approve the minutes; Brough seconded

Vote: Unanimous

#### **b. Agenda Review** (2 min, ONLY if necessary due to emergent issue)

### **4. Montessori Moment** (10 min)

Wrubleski presented math materials used during today's teacher professional development (PD). Mahesh Sharma's work was the source for the PD day. Our math interventionist attended a workshop lead by Sharma last summer, and presented what she learned to staff today. Sharma's approach and our Montessori materials relate really well. Wrubleski discussed how his use of a particular Montessori material – counting bars - which he utilizes in traditional settings, could offer additional tools to our students. We want our students to be fluid in math facts so that the children can compute, i.e. do all the tasks involved in math. While our students are taught to use Montessori materials to do skip counting from a very young age – but what we find is that some of them are hanging on to the materials a little too long (i.e. counting the beads on the strands rather than mastering the math facts). This material, when used as Sharma suggests, provides the children with a visualization of the relationships between numbers. Colors of the 'counting bars' match those of the Montessori bead bar materials which works well in our setting. The plan is that this approach will assist those students for whom the beads don't work, and will enable them to master their number sense using this number bar tool.

### **5. Governance Committee:** New Nominee (DePasse, 5 min)

DePasse reminded Trustees of Jill Connor's background and work as an educator, and said that the Governance Committee met with Jill and bring forward with unified support her nomination to join the MFCFS Board of Trustees.

**Motion:** Martin motioned to bring Jill on the Board; Kacavas seconded.

**Vote:** Unanimous.

### **6: School Update**

#### **a. Educational Program Director** (Wrubleski, *pls see attached report*)

**Wrubleski discussed the following:**

**Fall Book Fair** hugely successful. **Bring a Parent to School Night** huge, maybe our biggest yet. Would be nice to have more events which are kiddo focused; we are working on some ideas for this year and in the future.

Next such event is the **Living Wax Museum** next week. This year, our Upper Elementary students are exploding a moment in the lives of a person in history. They will present to fellow students and guests, by sharing a first person account of why the moment they chose to focus on is key in the life of the person they are studying.

Wrubleski has attended several **Administrative Trainings** this fall, including one on **homeless children**.

Training helped Wrubleski know what to look for to help identify families that may be homeless and in need. She is MFCFS's Homeless Liaison (every school has one). Tomorrow Wrubleski will attend a **suicide prevention**

workshop. She also attended a **Social Thinking** workshop – teaching children how to perceive the world around them, interact appropriately and make good choices by understanding social cues.

**New Progress Reports** – working with ALMA has enabled us to build and format a new progress report structure. It will be much clearer than our past reporting model.

**b. Executive Director** (Levin, pls also see attached report)

From her report, Levin highlighted the magnitude of the expected monthly reimbursement costs related to the special education service delivery model on being used by most sending districts for their students with IEPs. She noted that the Finance Committee will check in monthly on the reimbursement status, and it will continue to be tracked on our monthly budget to actual. She also noted that there is an active unemployment claim, which was denied, but the claimant requested a hearing which Levin attended earlier this week along with our lawyer. We await results of the hearing. She also shared that she and Wrubleski will be heading to a conference in DC – the first ever Montessori in the public sector gathering, which aims to establish mentors among public Montessori leaders.

**7. Committee Reports**

**a: Facility Committee**

Martin shared that he expects to have the lease agreement worked out over the next few weeks. Will Kanteres is continuing to represent the school in the negotiation. The Union Leader wants to agree on a dollar amount, and then figure out the other details related to the space.

**b: Committee Assignment for New Trustee:** Jill Connor expressed interest in all of the active committees and at this time will be joining the Charter Committee.

**8. Next Meeting Date:** Wednesday, November 16, 2016 5:30pm

**9. Public Comment** – No public was present.

**10. Adjournment at 6:25pm**

**Motion:** Martin motioned to adjourn; Kacavas seconded.

**Vote:** Unanimous.



**Educational Program Director  
Board Report  
September 21, 2016**

**Bring a Parent to School Night:** As per usual, this night is always a success in many ways. It was lovely having so many families in house to see their children's work. The pride in the student's faces while teaching their parents, is always front and center. We also enjoyed watching the families interact and get to know one another as a community. Evenings such as these are essential to the community framework we are trying to create.

**Book Fair:** Once again, this year's Book Fair has yielded over \$3000 in sales and over \$250 in All For Books collections. The All For Books collection was used to buy books for students that did not have the opportunity to purchase books as their peers. In addition, we will receive at least 50% of the total sales in Scholastic book dollars so that we can purchase additional books or technology for the classrooms.

**Administrative Training:** This fall, I have attended a variety of trainings to meet the needs of individual students and our community as a whole. Social Thinking is an approach used to break down the "code" of social interaction for those students who struggle in this area. I also attended a workshop on the McKinney-Vento Act. This act refers to the parameters in which children that are homeless, need to have equal access to public education. I am designated as our school's Homeless Liaison and therefore am responsible for identifying who these children are and ensuring that the proper supports are provided in a timely manner. This week, Colleen Lacroix and I will attend a short training on Suicide Prevention for students. To this date, we have not had significant need for this type of support, however knowing that we do not have a counselor on staff, I felt it necessary to have some baseline information in case needed in the future.

**New Progress Reports:** This fall we adopted a new online record keeping system. Given that our last progress report was generated from Montessori Compass, we have taken on the task of creating a new progress report via ALMA. We anticipate these progress reports to be more user friendly for the parents and hope that the input of information will be less time intensive for the teachers.

**Library Organization:** We have quite a few parents that have volunteered to rescan all of our library books using a new online record keeping system called Booksource. Once all of our books are scanned, not only will we have an electronic record keeping system for inventory, we will also have a method for checking books in and out for our students. Our goal is give greater choice in reading materials for the students.

**October Early Release:** Colleen Lacroix, our Math Interventionist, attended a week long training with Mahesh Sharma this past July. She will take some of the methods learned in the workshop and share with our staff as a way to differentiate their instruction for all learners.



**Executive Director's Report  
For the October 19th, 2016  
MFCS School Board Meeting  
Submitted by Meryl Levin**

### **Required Reporting**

This week I completed the required Beginning of the Year Report, which is a comprehensive listing of our students and their related info from unique student numbers, birthday and sending district to race, grade and other codes. This report tracks every student enrolled from Sept 6- Oct 1, as well as those who ended last year with us, but did not start the year with us, and any who began the year with us, but left before the report cut off date (Oct 1). Next up is our report on our English Language Learners, as well as our Free & Reduced data.

### **MFCS ChildCare Program**

There have been some enrollment adjustments in our Child Care Program this month, now that busing has been sorted out for more families. Before Care has 7 children (last month we had 12); Kinder Care (12-3pm) has increased by 1 bringing enrollment to 18 children; Kinder Extended Day (12-5:45pm) held steady at 5 (making a total of 23 Kinders who are participating!); and our After Care Program has 17, 9 of whom are part-time. Overall, our billing for October (which Susanne sent out this week) is nearly consistent with September's billing. We continue to have a small number of families taking advantage of our Drop In options for each program.

### **Enrollment**

We have 3 students who enrolled since the start of this school year to replace those who did not tell us they were enrolling elsewhere until after the year began, and we had one student leave in September. All spots were filled immediately via our waitlist.

### **Financial**

Earlier this month, our auditor came to do his field work here. This is our 3<sup>rd</sup> year of working together with him and the firm. With Allison's assistance in the prep, his visit went very smoothly. He explained that he has several other field visits this month, so we will likely hear from him again in November about the completion of his audit.

September marked the first month of our Special Education service delivery on a large scale. As you know, we have a Student Services Coordinator, who is also a Special Educator. She provides services to our SpEd students 3 days a week. In addition, we currently have a second Special Educator who is now working 6 hours, daily. There is a pretty jam-packed service delivery schedule. This year we currently have 16 Manchester students for whom we provide academic support services at this time. In addition to those students, we currently have 5 students from 4 other districts for whom we are also providing academic services. We also have several paraprofessionals working with students throughout the school. The billing for September, which was not a full month of service delivery, came to a total of \$15,705, and of course the vast majority of that will be reimbursed from the Manchester School District. I am in close contact with the District's billing person who has been great; prompt reimbursement will be key to the successful management of this arrangement.

### **MFCS Community Building & Volunteerism**

This week, Laura and I met with **Chris Martin**, Assistant Superintendent of the Manchester School District. She came to school for a tour and to take some time to get to know our program mission and goals and to brainstorm about ways we can work together including, but also beyond our Special Education service relationship. It was a fantastic meeting, and will surely lead to many other conversations and opportunities over time. The new Special Education Director, **Jen Dolloff** will be visiting later this month, and the new Superintendent, **Dr. Vargas**, will be coming in late

November, as he makes his way around Manchester to meet with various educators and schools in town.

On Tuesday, October 18<sup>th</sup>, we will hold our annual **Service Day at the NH Food Bank**. Our 1<sup>st</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders will walk over to the Food Bank where they will package mac & cheese dinners for food insecure families across the southern portion of the state. Preceding the Service Day, our students will learn about the importance of community engagement in the context of hunger issues which impact a surprising number of our fellow citizens here in NH. Did you know that over 42,000 NH children are food insecure? About 10% of NH residents are living in poverty and facing serious hunger issues.

During September, I held 2 **volunteer trainings** for parents, grandparents and friends interested in volunteering at school this year. They were well attended and we look forward to engaging returning and new volunteers this year.

Our **5K/Fun Run & Walk on Sept 25<sup>th</sup>** was a GREAT community day and a great success. We had well over 150 participants, and the event brought in about \$3000. Our contact at SNHU, Helen Davis, left the morning event asking when we would like to schedule the 2017 5K! The event's success was largely built around the contributions of food and services – including a warm up Jazzercise clinic, a volunteer DJ who kept everyone moving – as well as the presence of various SNHU athletes and the Jr. Monarch's team to cheer on runners and help out in all ways on the day of the event.

A reminder to please save the date so you can join us at our **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Night of Community** on November 18<sup>th</sup> also at SNHU. That will feature an extensive auction, which the organizing parents have been working on all summer!

In mid-December, our After School Chorus group will perform a few songs at the **Governor and Executive Council Meeting** in the state house. We are looking forward to that opportunity to be part of that public meeting with our public school students.

#### **Commission on Special Education in Charter Schools**

This Monday marks the final meeting of the Commission. This fall we met multiple times to hammer out areas of agreement in order to generate the Commission's Report which will be issued in November. While it was challenging, the Commission's work did offer one of the few opportunities for various stake holders to come together and discuss important issues related to SpEd in NH Charter Schools.

#### **Facility**

The new traffic flow is slowly becoming our new normal at drop off and pick up. It does require many more staff members than our previous traffic flow in the parking lot to direct cars and buses safely.

The Facility Committee will report updates related to our lease signing when we meet together next week.

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