



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 September 21, 2016

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

1. Call to Order, Roll Call & Welcome Public

Present: Brough, DePasse, Kacavas, Martin, Levin, Wrubleski, Champagne, Johnson (remote)

Absent: Roberge,

2. Announcements/Updates – Levin added budget item from Wrubleski

3. Public Comment – no public present.

4. Montessori Moment: Community Building - Mindfulness, Grace & Courtesy (Wrubleski)

Wrubleski reported on the opening weeks of school noting the school-wide focus on community-building and encouraging respect, while promoting positive peer interactions. Lower EI Teachers have begun a new pilot program known as "Social Thinking". This program is also being used in other public schools. It utilizes concrete ways of looking at social cues using terms like rock brain verses flexible brain. In addition, the school will continue with the "Honoring the Light of the Child" social curriculum, which utilizes role-playing and other activities to teach students ways of dealing with different social situations. Students in the Upper EI work with other tools to develop mindfulness, grace and courtesy. International Peace day was celebrated on September 21st and the students participated in a school wide meeting and a peace walk. Students had the opportunity to share their thoughts of the meaning of PEACE.

5. Meeting Business

a. Approval of Minutes from August 2016 meeting

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

Vote: Unanimous approval.

6. School Update

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

Wrubleski reported Special Education Services and plans are going well. The School's Special Education Team has worked hard to look at the individual needs and goals of the students to determine the schedule. Some of the special education needs are greater than in years past, but the new team of Special Education teachers have a variety of skills and experiences that cover the different individual needs of the student population. Wrubleski also noted that the School has implemented a new peer mentoring protocol including different structures and has developed a Mentor Handbook for the program. Wrubleski will continue to meet with staff bi-weekly. She concluded by noting that the next early release day will be used for a math workshop.

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

Levin reported that the school is at full enrollment although there were some last minute changes that were not anticipated. Utilizing the current wait list, the spots were filled immediately. The School received its first per student payment from the state. Levin reports a smooth transition with special education and contracts, especially with the district of Manchester. The "Best of Both Worlds 5K/Fun Run" fundraiser is scheduled for Sunday. Levin attended the first quarterly DOE Charter Leaders Meeting and the NH Charter Alliance meeting earlier this week. Topics discussed included the Alliance's plan to bring board members of NH charter schools

together to feel a part of the new organization. The DOE's meeting included information about safety and charter renewal. Levin noted that she will work with the MFCS School Board's Charter Committee to explore and research aspects of the middle school option as part of the charter renewal process.

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

a. Facility Committee – (Martin/Levin)

Levin shared that the Facility Committee has made progress on the new lease negotiations and will bring it to the BOT when ready.

b. Finance Committee – (Levin)

Levin/Wrubleski brought forward the request for an additional \$7,000.00 to provide 1.5 hours per day more teaching time and related salary costs for our Math Interventionist than originally budgeted given the increased need among our student body, including many of those who are new to our program.

Motion: Kacavas moved to accept, DePasse seconded

Vote: Unanimous approval.

Levin confirmed that the Board will be able to review the tracking of special education costs via our monthly budget to actual.

d. Governance Committee – (Martin)

Martin reported that the committee met and identified many candidates. Depasse, Levin and Martin have begun to reach out to possible candidates. The Board's Governance Committee will continue to identify candidates that have experience with Montessori, business, finance, non-profit, legal, or a generalist with a willingness to participate.

e. Annual Meeting – (Martin)

Martin shared that the Annual Meeting is a time for the presentation of the new officer slate. The Governance Committee met and brought forth the following Slate for a full Board vote: Depasse (Chair), Martin (Vice Chair), Brough (Secretary), Roberge (Treasurer).

Motion: Kacavas moved to accept the slate as shared; Champagne seconded/

Vote: Unanimous approval.

7. Next Meeting Date: October 19th at 5:30pm

8. Public Comment

No public.

9. Adjournment: Kacavas motioned to adjourn at 6:40pm. Brough seconded. Meeting adjourned.



**Executive Director's Report
For the September 21, 2016
MFCS School Board Meeting
Submitted by Meryl Levin**

Required Reporting

With the prompt filing of our Day 1 Enrollment Form (which notes how many children are enrolled on day one), we received our first Equitable Aid payment, totaling \$319,656. In addition, our official School Roster was filed. Next up is our Beginning of Year Report, which is due after October 1. There are a few other reports that follow soon after.

Susanne is gathering information about the economic needs among our MFCS families – this year the state created a new form for this process. As always, we aim to have 100% response from our families.

MFCS ChildCare Program

Our Aftercare Program is humming. We currently have 17 students enrolled in our Kinder Care Program (12-3pm); 5 additional Kinders who stay from 3-5:45 in the Extended Day Program; 22 children are enrolled in the AfterCare Program (3-5:45pm) 8 of whom are part time, 2 of whom are only in for the first 3 weeks of school; and our Before Care Program has 11 students enrolled. We had a several families take advantage of our Early Release Drop in AfterCare this week. All of our Child Care Programs are staffed by MFCS Staff members. Keep in mind some of these numbers will change over the course of the year, but this shows great program growth since last year, especially in our Kinder Care Program, as we predicted when we decided to have Kristin and Kelsey (the Lead and Assistant Teachers) staff that portion of the Program from 12-3pm daily.

Enrollment

At the beginning of each year we do have some very slight flux in enrollment. This year to date, one kinder family could not manage the commute from their home outside Manchester, and a second decided to send their kinder and their 6th grade student to their neighborhood school. We did not learn about the second family until early this week. We were able to fill those spots the very next day, in all cases, after learning of the departures because we have been in touch with those at the top of the wait list for each grade, which gives us a strong sense of their interest level before the spots come up.

Financial

Allison Decesere, our bookkeeper and I, are preparing materials for our upcoming Audit of FY16. Our Auditor plans to visit the school in the first week of October. Allison has closed out the year, and we feel we are in good shape for our 3rd audit with the same firm.

Administrative

We have successfully transferred our student information system from Montessori Compass to the new system, ALMA. All parents have been invited to join, and communication between parents and teachers utilizing ALMA have been going very smoothly. While our e-Homework continues to be sent via regular email, ALMA will be the source for our Progress Reports going forward.

Human Resources

It was exciting to be able to offer staff the new option of enrolling in various Aflac plans this year. As per our budgeting, our full-time professional staff were offered enrollment in the short-term disability coverage with the school providing up to \$10 per person. Enrollment by staff in any other Aflac products are being self-funded by the individual staff members. Some full-time professional staff have also chose to self-fund other Alfac plans. We have been working with Marie Terhune as our Aflac Rep. Staff was also visited by Rae McMillian who manages staff retirement funds. Several of our new staff, and some of the returning staff enrolled in that self-funded program this year.

MFCS Community Building & Volunteerism

Next week we will be holding the first of our Volunteer Training session. We do require volunteers to attend, and to fill out the background check if they are going to volunteer in ways that require their working with or being with our students.

We hope to organize a trip to the Food Bank this fall. Stay tuned for the date on that.

Hoping to see all of you at our **5K/Fun Run & Walk on Sept 25th**, which is being produced in partnership with SNHU. Amanda Gerardi has been the flag-bearer of that project and has been joined by a new MFCS parent, Katie Cote. [PLEASE sign up for the run by clicking here](#). This event is open to the public, so please share word of the run/fun walk with friends & colleagues.

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

The first 2016/17 Charter Leader meetings in Concord kick off next Tuesday – this includes a meeting of the newly formed charter school organization, the NH Alliance for Public Charter Schools, as well as a Charter Leaders meeting organized by the DOE.

Commission on Special Education in Charter Schools

We are heading into the final stretch on the Commission's work and are meeting regularly now to review the content of the final report. There will hopefully be areas of global agreement, but it appears there may also be some areas which will note dissent among Commission members. My charter colleagues and I, particularly Beth McClure at Strong Foundations, have worked hard to explain to the Committee how the current law actually is working, and works best when strong relationships are built between our schools and the sending districts.

Special Education Update

As of this writing, nearly all of our SpEd contracts with sending districts have been approved and completed. The lion-share are of course with the District of Manchester, and we have had a very collaborative process with them as we make this transfer of services to the new arrangement where we hire and provide academic services and paraprofessionals. To meet the needs of all of our kiddos with IEP's, we have hired two Special Educators, Colleen Dellaporta-Wells and Sue Lambricht. This new 'department' here at MFCS has worked hard since our staff opening days in late August to establish new systems for scheduling, tracking and service provision. As the start of the year dust settles and we are clear about the SpEd needs of our newest enrollees, we have tweaked slightly Sue's hours to accommodate the service needs.

Facility

This week we introduced the new traffic flow for drop off and pickup, which our landlord, the Union Leader, required of us in late August. The change resulted from the incorporation of a new tenant here at 100 William Loeb Drive – a trucking company is now using the back bay area for their business. The UL has shifted the drop off /pick up arrangement due to safety concerns and space changes in the area behind the building. There have been a few hiccups, but folks have mostly been very patient with this change. We have had enormous amount of staff outside to facilitate this shift; next week we will reduce the staff outside in the mornings, as our Lead Teachers and support staff have other duties, meetings, planning periods they must attend to indoors.

The UL also had us change the blacktop area where our children play, from the semi-circle to the area adjacent to the grass behind the flag poles. We have gotten permission from the UL to paint some lines for games like 4-square, hopscotch and basketball in that new area. I have put out a call to parents to help bring that, and some other beautification projects to life for our outdoor areas.



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

Start of the Year: This year has started with tremendous ease and smoothness. Our systems as a staff are practiced and successful. Within the classroom, teachers are working to create learning environments that are safe and exciting. All classrooms have begun their workcycles, teachers are getting in the routines of implementing lessons while still fitting in activities to build community. The aspect of building a community is essential for a safe and successful environment; encouraging students to take risks in their learning. They are encouraged to ask questions, not only of their teachers but also of their peers. This is not an overnight task thus why the activities are integrated within their normal routines for some time after the beginning of the year.

Special Education Service Delivery: Our two new special education teachers have been working diligently to schedule students services and ensure that all programmatic needs are being met within our setting. I am incredibly happy with the structures we have in place and believe that the model that Manchester suggested for service provision will be incredibly successful for all. At this point, we have 27 students on IEPs and 5 students that require support through a 504 plan.

Assessment of Needs: Support staff and classroom teachers always begin the year with assessing student's needs. This is done through "dipstick" methods of assessment such as fast facts, simple computation problems or fluency analysis in reading. Once this data is analyzed, we then decide if there are students that would benefit from additional support outside of the classroom and how to best offer this additional instruction.

Mentor Teachers: We have decided to implement a peer-mentoring program for our newest lead teaching staff. In the past, I supported these teachers through our weekly mentor sessions, however it is equally effective for the teachers to meet with a peer as guidance. A handbook will be available to be followed- ensuring that the mentors cover the most important topics. And of course, the new teachers will have a larger support system that is "in the trenches" with them, and available to offer suggestions quickly. I will continue to meet with all teachers on a weekly basis as well for added support.

First Early Release: Our first early release was allocated to collaborative discussion time in level teams. Much of our instruction is discussed and implemented by collective levels, so this planning time is essential for teachers to determine cultural lessons, writing structures and general best practices.