



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.

MFCS January 18, 2017 Board Meetings Minutes

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

1. Call to Order

Roll Call: Roberge, DePasse, Martin, Levin, Brough, Connors, Butterfield, by phone: Johnson

2. Public Comment - no public in attendance.

4. Meeting Business

a. Approval of Minutes from December 2016 meeting

Motion: Brough motioned to approve the December Meeting Minutes; Connors seconded.

Vote: Unanimous.

5. Montessori Moment (Fortin with intro by)

Lower Elementary Lead Teacher, Collette Fortin, shared a prepared video in which she demonstrated a lesson on the Addition Snake Game – a Montessori Material which is a first year work designed to help students strengthen their number sense and focuses on the many ways to make 10 and utilize 10 to make larger numbers. The goal is to get as many golden bead bars in the shape of a snake; each golden bead bar=10. Students trade (exchange) the different colored bead combinations from 1-9 for golden bead bars. Fortin demonstrated how the work is self-correcting, noting that the children check their work after they create the golden snake.

6: School Update

a. Educational Program Director

Wrubleski shared that the Student Services Coordinator who also is one of our two Special Educators on staff is out on leave for an undetermined amount of time. Currently, Wrubleski is filling this position in addition to her administrative role as EPD. Wrubleski is attending Special Ed (IEP) meetings, writing and implementing 504 Plans, providing services, and assisting in all the facets associated with these additional roles. Our other Special Educator has also added some additional students to her caseload to assist. The school has posted ads and reached out to educational institutions to temporarily fill the Special Educator position and has one applicant. If the leave is extended into late February, Wrubleski does have a qualified candidate that can start at that time. Wrubleski noted that there are no teachers on staff that carry dual certification in Education and Special Education so there is no one else in-house who can assume this role in the interim.

b. Wrubleski and Levin have had the first of a series of meetings with the Staff Playground Working Group. That group included members of the educational team from each level (K-6) and was created to generate ideas and gather feedback from them regarding playground improvement plans. It was a very productive meeting and the staff brought forward a lot of great ideas. After the group compiles some concrete ideas, she and Levin will bring them to the Facilities Committee.

c. Wrubleski and members of the teaching staff recently attended a CPI training (crisis prevention), which was hosted by the Manchester School District and led by Chris Martin. The District generously allowed Mill Falls staff to participate in the training. Attendees learned how to deescalate behaviors and how to safely restrain students when necessary, and to use such a tactic only as a last resort. With regard to restraint, Wrubleski discussed that one of the steps after a child is restrained they need to be assessed by a licensed medical professional. She pointed out that the school does not

currently have a nurse on staff and discussed some possible options for fulfilling this need for assessment.

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

Levin briefly discussed the 2017 Lottery – to date there are 118 applications in as of today (most for 2017 Kindergarten) and shared that currently it looks like about 14 of the K spaces will be taken by siblings of students currently enrolled. She has held the first of 4 information sessions which are scheduled throughout the Lottery Enrollment Period. She also shared that she had testified at the House Education Committee in favor of a current bill, which would provide funding for full day Kindergarten.

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

a. Finance Committee:

Roberge discussed that there are no significant changes or new developments in our financial picture as she shared a copy of the December Budget to Actual. She also disbursed a copy of the FY16 Audit and noted that Levin will post the Audit on our website and it will be submitted to the DOE as required.

b. Facility Committee (Martin/Levin)

Moving into Closed Session

Motion: Martin moved to go into closed session to discuss real estate; Butterfield seconded.

Vote: Unanimous. Closed session began at 6:21 pm

Exiting Closed Session at 6:39pm:

Motion: Brough motioned to come out of closed session; Butterfield seconded.

Vote: Unanimous.

Outcome of the Closed Session:

Motion: Butterfield moved to approve the rental agreement put forth by the School's Landlord, the Union Leader Corporation; Martin seconded.

Vote: Unanimous.

c. Charter Renewal Update Levin discussed her meeting with Mr. Jerry Frew, one of the reviewers working with the DOE on charter renewals. It was a very productive meeting, which clarified the actions needed to prepare for the renewal visit, which will take place at Mill Falls on April 18th. There is writing to be done to update our original charter and other documents and Levin will also prepare a parent survey so that those results are available for the visiting reviewers. Frew supplied Levin with a sample survey. The written renewal will need to be completed prior to the one-day visit, which will include focus groups with members of the Board, Parents, Students and Staff.

8. Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, February 15th, 2017 5:30pm

9. Adjournment:

Motion: Martin motioned to adjourn at 6:55pm; Connors second. **Vote:** Unanimous.



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

Happy New Year!

Required Reporting

We had our annual Fire Inspection in late December and await the Department's review letter, which we will send on to the DOE, as required. Additionally, we continue the filing of our quarterly financial reporting. Special thanks to Michelle for her great eyes on those finance reports.

We are once again required to participate in the **Civil Rights Data Collection** – an extensive collection of data provided by individual public schools/districts across the country between February and April.

In preparation for our Charter Renewal this spring, earlier this month I met with Jerry Frew to review the requirements for the renewal process. I will speak specifically about that at our meeting.

Charter School Alliance

The Alliance, a new organization grown out of the intentional demise of the NH Charter School Association, holds quarterly meetings. Last month, the meeting's featured guests were from Fred T Church, a long-standing insurance company with a focus on schools across the country. The Fred T Church team is meeting with interested charter schools in hopes of putting together a consortium. I followed up on that meeting, and invited the Church team to Mill Falls last week. They were here for a few hours, getting to know our programming in order to work up a coverage plan they feel would work well for us. I don't yet have that in hand, but will share their proposal first with the Finance Committee once I do. No change would come about in coverage for quite some time because our current policy just renewed on 1/1/17, but this could be an interesting opportunity for us, if the price is right. Church offers a 'Safe Schools' program that has a lot of school-specific resources and webinars. Stay tuned...

MFCS ChildCare Program

Enrollment in our Child Care Program remained fairly consistent this month: Before Care has 7 children; Kinder Care (12-3pm) has 17 children 13 of whom are full time/4 part time (and one part-timer will be added in later this month); Kinder Extended Day (12-5:45pm) has 6 students - 2 full time/4 part time; and our After Care Program has 16, 8 of whom are part time/8 full time. We continue to have a small number of families taking advantage of our Drop In options for each program and we always offer Drop In care during our Early Release Day on Wednesdays for a flat \$35 per child if they are not already enrolled in the After Care Program.

Enrollment

Lottery 2017 got off to a strong start. This is the close of day 9, and we have nearly 100 applications so far; the majority kinder (as usual). The application available on line on our website (and hard copy for those who need it) on until March 10th at 5pm. On 1/12, I lead the first Lottery 2017 Information Session. 40 adults and 15 of their children joined us to learn more about our programming and specifics on how the Lottery works. Additional information sessions are scheduled as follows: Tuesday, February 7, 9am; Wednesday, February 22, 6pm; Saturday, March 4, 10am. And our 2017 Lottery is scheduled March 20th.

Today we send parents our **Intent to Return**. This will be due back at the end of the month and will begin to paint the picture for us of how many openings we will have for the 2017/18 School Year.

Financial

Last week we received the final **documents from our Auditor**. Please let me know if you would like a copy. The Financials will be posted on our website following our Jan 18th meeting.

The second month of **Special Education reimbursement payments** were paid promptly, though we are still awaiting reimbursements for services provided to two students. Additionally, this month I set up a more streamlined tool for the Paraprofessionals to track their time with our students.

Legislative Update

As some of you may have seen in the news, on January 12th, the Education Committee heard testimony on the newest bill related to funding Full Day Kindergarten. I testified and also brought with my our Reading Interventionist, Sherry Humphrey. We testified individually, but together our words painted a picture from the school side (not just the charter school model). Sherry did a great job, as did many of those who testified to bolster the argument for the urgency of funding districts and charter schools who offer (or will offer) full day kinder programming. Currently, kinder programs across the state are only funded at ½ what is allotted to students in grades 1-12. Over 70% of NH towns and cities have gone ahead and started full day K, scrambling to pay for this programming they have deemed key to student success. This bill attempts to have the state support those programs, rather than funds be taken from property taxes. Just as a reminder, in our case, of course, as a state-issued charter school we do not have access to property taxes.

MFCS Community Building & Volunteerism

This week I learned that the former Executive Director of the NH Charter School Association is now the Executive Director at the Food Bank. She is thrilled (and proud) to see the programming we are doing with the Food Bank (most recently the start of our **new Food Bank Food Pantry**. The students and families receiving this food support are deeply appreciative. Together the admin team has created a discrete means of sending food home with our students who qualify for Free and Reduced three times per week. The cost seems to be between \$20-\$30 per week. We are so very pleased to have this program in house!

We have just kicked off a MFCS Food Drive, which will benefit our Food Pantry. That will run all winter long.

Related, we are also running a coat drive. If you have any gently used coats you'd like to share, please bring them to the meeting, or drop them off here any time this month.

HR

Paper work received this month indicates that the current **unemployment claim** will continue. As a reimbursing payer, we send payment to the state each time a bill is sent. Our payments come out of our unemployment budget line item.

Facility

Earlier this week, we received an agreement from the Union Leader Corp. regarding the **renewal of our lease**. We will be talking about this in a closed session at our upcoming meeting, to confirm the Board's approval of the agreement. Thanks to Will Kanteres for working with the UL's broker on our behalf.

The **Staff Outdoor Recess Space and Activities Working Group** has scheduled a meeting for later this month to discuss/brainstorm ideas related to improvements. These will be brought forward to the Facilities Committee and Board as they begin to take shape. There are a few parents who have already expressed their interest in volunteering time and resources once we are ready to move forward with a plan.

Foundation

In response to the **2016 Annual Appeal**, which was sent to community supporters of MFCS, we have received \$6400 to date from 21 donors.