



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 Board Minutes for February 15, 2016

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

1. Call to Order, Roll Call & Welcome Public

Meeting began at 5:40pm.

Roll Call: Connors, DePasse, Kacavas, Wrubleski, Levin, Butterfield. *By phone:* Johnson.

Absent: Brough, Roberge.

2. Announcements/Updates

DePasse shared his appreciation for Roland Martin who served with great enthusiasm and commitment first on the Foundation Board and then on the School Board. Martin's resignation was tendered in late December, effective January 31st.

3. Public Comment – No public present.

4. Meeting Business

a. Approval of Minutes from January 2017 meeting

Motion: Kacavas moved to accept January Meeting Minutes; Butterfield seconded.

Vote: Unanimous

5. Montessori Moment: Hands-On Equation Material (Blouin, 10 min)

Blouin shared, via video, a non-Montessori hands-on material used in the Upper Elementary Classrooms to teach pre-algebra. The focus of this material is to establish a basic understanding of algebraic concepts by establishing that the goal of using the work is to have each side of the 'scale' (ie equation) be balanced at all times. Blouin worked through some examples and showed how this material introduces the notion of variables (ie numbers we don't know, or more commonly introduced as 'x').

6: School Update

a. Educational Program Director (Wrubleski, *please also see attached report*).

NAEP: Wrubleski discussed the NAEP assessment, which is a national assessment of 4th graders across the country at schools randomly selected. MFCS was randomly selected as a participating NH school. It went very smoothly. The NAEP Assessment Team arrived with all the technology required to execute the assessment which was given to all of our 4th graders who were in school that day. The results will be included in the national assessment results being collected by NAEP.

Special Education: Wrubelski shared that we have hired a long-term sub for our Special Education delivery and Coordination; she starts next week. Also in Special Education, Levin & Wrubleski met with Manchester School District's Chris Martin (Assistant Superintendent) and Jen Dolloff (Director of Student Services) to discuss ideas about next year in relation to service delivery. The details have not yet been mapped out, but it was an open and positive meeting. The Board discussed some possible scenarios and inquired about related responsibilities. Wrubleski mentioned that some of our kiddos have significant disabilities that require very specifically trained Educators (not a skill set a first year teacher would have under his/her belt). Wrubleski and Levin will continue the conversation with the District, sharing basic budget forecasting and related concerns as the next step.

Upper Elementary Dance: Great time had by all.

b. Executive Director (Levin, *pls see the enclosed report*).

Levin highlighted the **Lottery applicants** – numbered over 175 as of now; as usual most are kindergarteners. She also discussed the upcoming **2017 Annual Leadership Breakfast** and appealed to

Trustees to be table captains at the upcoming event and in preparation for that to help build a guest list for some Montessori Morning Tours before the May Breakfast event.

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

a. Finance Committee: DePasse provided a brief review of the Budget to Actual which continues to reflect healthy spending patterns. Levin will begin working on the 2018 Budget which will first go to the Finance Committee, then be brought before the full Board for consideration.

8. Program

a. June Meeting Date Change

Levin requested that the Board change the June 2017 meeting date to June 14th. There was unanimous approval of that change.

b. Review/Discussion of Committee Assignments (Levin/DePasse, 15 min)

Trustees discussed the Committees and Committee Assignment with the following results for Committee population by current Trustees:

Finance Committee: Roberge (chair), Connors, DePasse, Levin (ex-officio)

Committee on Trustees: DePasse, Brough, Butterfield, Levin

Facility Committee: Levin, Kacavas, with Kanteres & DePasse and in consultation with Wrubleski.

(Kacavas will begin attending the Staff Playground Working Group)

Charter Committee: Levin, Brough, Connors, Johnson, Wrubleski.

9. Next Meeting Date: Wednesday, March 22, 5:30pm.

10. Adjournment

6:57pm: Kacavas moved to adjourn; Connors seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.



**Executive Director's Report
For the February 15, 2017
MFCS School Board Meeting
Submitted by Meryl Levin**

Required Reporting

On Feb 1, we filed our required **Student Aid Form** to initiate our Student Aid Payment; we reported our full 168-student roster. Last week, we received the February portion of our annual allotment, which totaled \$319,656. I have received the **Fire Department's review letter**, following our December Inspection, which found everything in good order. That has been forwarded to the DOE as required. I have begun work on the lengthy **Civil Rights Data Collection**, and aim to complete that over the next few weeks.

In preparation for our **Charter Renewal** this spring, I have developed two **Parent Surveys** – one a School Climate Survey for Parent/Guardians of all currently enrolled students, and the second is an Exit Survey for those who have chosen to enroll their students elsewhere for their 6th grade year. If it would just stop snowing, we will organize via Survey Monkey to send those out to families this coming week or early next (if delayed, the surveys have been reviewed by members of the Charter Committee – thanks to the Committee for that support. Parent Surveys are part of what the Charter Renewal Team requests as one small element of the 5 year renewal packet.

Facility

In the days following our January Board meeting, I met with the Union Leader's VP, and we both **signed the lease renewal** which was shared with each of you at our January meeting. Issues to still to be mapped out include any changes to the space adjacent to ours (mostly impacting adult bathrooms), which will be dependent on the possible tenants they've been talking with. Additionally, the Union Leader Administration will work with us and any new tenant regarding outdoor space, parking and drop off/pickup changes. As of this writing, the Union Leader reports that they have not yet signed an agreement with any new tenant.

The **Staff Outdoor Recess Space and Activities Working Group** will hold its second meeting this coming week, weather permitting, to continue initial discussions/brainstorm ideas related to improvements. These will be brought forward to the Facilities Committee and Board as the plans begin to take shape.

The **Fred T. Church Insurance** team has not yet provided a full detailing of their insurance proposal to us. They have told me I can expect that in the next weeks, and apologize for the delay. Stay tuned for more information.

MFCS ChildCare Program

Enrollment in our Child Care Program remained consistent this month, as it has in recent months: 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 monthly Early Release Day for a flat \$35 per child if not already enrolled in the After Care Program.

Enrollment

Lottery 2017 has continued to draw many applicants. As of late last week, we had received well over 150 applications; as always the majority are for Kinder. Thus far we have hosted two of our scheduled four **Lottery Information Sessions**. The next one is on Wednesday, 2/22/17 at 6pm and the final one is on Saturday, 10/4/17 at 10am. Sending a HUGE thanks to Naomi for securing this year's **Lottery Official** – State Senator Dan Feltes will pull the numbers for us at our March 20th Lottery. Susanne reports that we have 14 **siblings** of currently enrolled students who have been

entered in the 2017 Lottery for Kinder next year. That matches the high number of siblings from last year's Lottery for our Kinder class.

As of this writing, we have received nearly all of the **Intent to Return Forms** from our families. We have been in touch with those who have not yet returned them; in most cases those are families who are considering other options, but have not yet made up their mind. As always, we also have a developing 'watch list' generated by conversations with students or parents who have told us they hope to return, but may not. We will continue to talk with those families as the year comes to a close.

Financial

Special Education reimbursement payments: As of this writing, all sending districts are now current in their reimbursements. We continue to fine-tune the reporting by both Paraprofessionals and the Special Educators on staff to clarify and simplify the monthly billing process. Related, Laura and I will be meeting with the Manchester School District's Assistant Superintendent and the Director of Student Services later next week to discuss Special Education Programming for Manchester Students at Mill Falls.

Work on the **2017/18 Budget** is now underway. I am analyzing our current operating budget for any shortfalls, and working closely with Laura to discuss additional needs going forward. I will bring the draft budget to the Finance Committee once it has taken shape, and then we will share it with you in advance of our plan to vote on it, as is our usual process. Please be in touch directly if you have any concerns or things you want me to look into/consider as I draft the document.

Legislative Update

Earlier this month, I was asked to once again testify in support of **Full Day Kindergarten** – this time for a Senate bill also designed to have the state increase the funds for full-day K. Unfortunately, that hearing was at the same time as our second Lottery Information Session. I was able to forward a written version of my testimony, which was submitted to the Committee. As of this writing, both the Committee and the Governor has publically expressed support for the bill. However, it is unclear if enough funds have been allotted to cover the full cost of Full Day Kinder for all in the state in the Governor's proposed budget. As a result, we will consider the two options as we plan our budget – one with state funded full day K and one with our current model of the Kinder Aftercare program (12-3pm). To remind you, 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. Both the Senate and House bills attempt to have the state support those programs, though not require full-day K, rather than have funds be taken from local property taxes. As previously stated, in our case, of course, as a state-issued charter school we do not have access to property taxes.

Another interesting item mentioned in the Governor's Budget speech and also being discussed in Concord is a change in **funding of NH Charter Schools**. This new approach would be to link the funding Charter Schools receive to a percentage of the state student average usually named as \$14,500. More to follow on this initiative, as it unfolds, the details are still evolving. If you have any questions, please be in touch with me directly.

Related, if you have not signed up for the **NH Alliance for Public Charter Schools Newsletter**, and would like to, please visit: <https://nhcharterschools.wildapricot.org/stay-informed/> This newsletter includes helpful legislative updates.

MFCS Community Building & Volunteerism

Our school community has done an incredible job of responding to **our call for food donations** to our new Food Pantry. Parents, Grandparents, Staff and Board members have donated wonderful and healthy items, which Susanne has been able to quickly send home with our food insecure kiddos. A heartfelt thanks to all for their generosity. This is helping to subsidize our purchases and acquisitions (some items are free) from the NH Food Bank. Our Food Drive will run at least through the winter.

Related, our **January Coat Drive** brought in 66 gently used coats of all shapes, sizes and colors! The items were picked up at the end of January by staff from New Horizons, a Manchester Soup Kitchen.

In January, I began working with a group of Upper Elementary students and staffer Colleen Lacroix to develop **MFCS Student Newspaper**. The Editorial Team is made up of 5th and 6th graders, though all students at school may submit articles and artwork. The Students have named the paper – **The MFCS Roots: Digging Deeper**. Please let me know if the Board would like to provide a good luck wish to this student initiative, which could be included in the Newspaper. We expect to have our first issue completed in time for our 2017 **Grandparents & Special Friends Day** on March 13th.

Our Annual parent-Run **Calendar Raffle Fundraiser** will kick off just before February Vacation. MFCS Parent and project coordinator, Lisa Zonfrillo, has set a goal of \$10,000. We will talk with students about the Calendar before the packets are sent home – 10 Calendars for each student costing \$10 each. Lisa has put together a terrific set of gift certificates and prizes featured on the Calendar, which is designed by another MFCS Parent, Amie Libby. Printing of the Calendar has been sponsored by a MFCS Grandparent - Norman Hebert.

Our Fitness Instructor, Courtney Burns, is also the Assistant Women's Basketball Coach at SNHU. She worked with us to have our students create and art display in support of their **Annual Pink Day** – which recognizes the struggles and successes of those diagnosed with Breast Cancer as part of Breast Cancer Awareness.

Human Resources

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.

We are finalizing the agreement with our **Long-Term Special Educator Substitute**. She is scheduled to begin working with us just before February Break. This will allow Laura to return to a somewhat more normal schedule. Please be sure to thank her for her amazing work these last many weeks. She has given her heart and soul to our Special Ed kiddos and their families!

Scheduling & Weather-Related

With the cancelation of school on Monday 2/13/17 we have now run through all of our allotted weather days, which are built into our 2016/17 School Calendar. Any future weather related closings will require that we add on time to the end of the year.

Foundation

The final count showed that the **2016 Annual Appeal**, which was sent to community supporters of MFCS, brought in \$6450 from 22 donors.

Next up for the Foundation is our organization of the **2017 Annual Leadership Breakfast**. We will be asking members on both Boards (School & Foundation) to be a **table captain or co-captain**, which is how the guest list is built; each table seats 10 and we ask captains to secure their guest list in advance of the event. **I thank you in advance for your assistance with this** – the Breakfast is our largest single-day of fundraising. Last year it brought in \$39000 including sponsorship (excluding \$1950 in expenses). We are ALSO looking for new and returning **sponsors**. If you have ANY leads and can introduce me to individuals and/or business leaders you feel would support our event, I would be deeply grateful! We are working on securing yet another dynamic speaker for this year's Breakfast, and aim to have a similar size crowd (over 150 last year).

In advance of the Breakfast, I will be hosting a few **Montessori Morning Tours**. If there are ANY people you would like to invite to the Breakfast, it's always stronger to have had them to school first (most people in the room, will have visited us at some point this year or in previous years). **Please be in touch with me so I can connect with those you'd like me to invite for a visit!**



**Education Program Director
Board Report
February 15, 2017**

Afterschool Activities: This winter we have quite a variety of afterschool activities for the students to enjoy. Celia Botto, one of our lower elementary assistants, is running our first Chess club and continues to run the American Sign Language club. We've also had incredible luck this year with our McIntyre Ski Program. In the past, the weather hasn't been on our side and we've had many cancelations, however it's been quite mild and snowy, so the students have had plenty of opportunity to get out and ski!

Upper Elementary Dance: The sixth years took over the responsibility, with support from Colleen Costa (Upper Elementary Teacher) of planning our annual winter Upper Elementary dance. The students chose the theme of Winter Flames and encouraged their peers to choose a side of fire or ice and dress accordingly. Ron Content, a local DJ and uncle to one of our students, volunteered his time to ensure that the students had a rocking good time! Thank you to all involved in making this event so successful!

NAEP Testing: On Tuesday, January 31st., officials from the NAEP testing team arrived at 7:45 to administer the nation's standardized test. The team worked with all 34 of our fourth grade students during a paper pencil and technology based evaluation. Students were administered tasks in both language and math and were done in plenty of time to have recess and lunch. The results of the assessments will be analyzed and included in the nation's report card, however our student's individual results will remain anonymous.

Special Education: Starting February 22nd, Laura Chesney- certified special educator, will begin as a substitute Student Services Coordinator. She will take over the service delivery of reading services and assist with case management.

North American final presentation: Every year as a school, we focus on 2-3 continents to explore geographically, culturally, environmentally etc. In January, the students presented their North American final projects to their families and peers. Some of these amazing projects included salt dough maps, homemade game boards, pamphlets and Prezi presentations. South America will be the next focus of exploration for the students.

ACCESS Testing: Annually, our English Language Learners English proficiency is assessed to determine their eligibility for additional services. The testing took 3 days and evaluated the student's skills in reading, writing, listening and speaking. If eligible, students will continue to receive additional support in English Language acquisition.