



*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 Meeting Minutes for November 15, 2017**

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

1. **Call to Order:** 5:43pm
2. **Roll Call: Present:** Roberge, DePasse, Butterfield, Kacavas, Brough, Connors, Levin, Wrubleski. **By phone:** Johnson
3. **Public Comment:** No public present.
4. **Montessori Moment:** Kristen Lang, MFCS Lead Kinder Teacher, demonstrated a work about the life cycle of the pumpkin. She discussed that previously, her students learned the life-cycle of the butterfly as well as the apple in a lead up to this. Lang incorporates cultural, math, language and science as well as fine motor into this study activity. In addition, her Kinder students participate in activities with the Lower Elementary Students as they work together to measure, weigh, describe and draw their pumpkins. Guided by the older students, the kinders also estimate how many seeds are in their pumpkin and then cut into their pumpkins and count the seeds.
5. **Approval of Minutes** from November 2017 meeting.  
**Motion:** Brough moved to approve the minutes; Roberge seconded.  
**Vote:** Unanimous.
6. **School Update**
  - a. **Educational Program Director** (*please see attached report*)  
From her report, Wrubleski highlighted the work of the Student Leadership Team. They are working on their recess activity project which they generated at the 2017 Student Leadership Summit last month. The Student Leadership Team created a survey and have talked with each of our MFCS students to hear the concerns of their peers.  
  
Wrubleski also discussed Progress Reports. These were sent out to parents last week and we will hold Parent-Teacher Conferences tomorrow, November 16<sup>th</sup>. The school will be closed to students to allow teachers to spend the day meeting with parents.
  - b. **Executive Director** (*please see attached report*)  
Levin discussed that she met with the representative of the owner of the building. She discussed that there has been some impact from the construction both inside and outside.  
  
Levin then shared that she has spoke to the Manchester Superintendent of Schools to set up a meeting to address unsigned contracts and the service reimbursements that have not yet been paid by the Manchester School District.  
  
Levin noted that the Bank of NH has selected Levin's community grant request in support of MFCS' expanded Wellness Program.
7. **Officer/Foundation/Committee/Working Group & Related Q+A**
  - a. **Finance Committee** - Review of Budget to Actual:  
Roberge noted that there has been nothing unexpected and school's budget/expenses/income is trending as expected. Levin advised there may be some teacher computers that need to be replaced this year, but she

reminded the Board that there are funds for this in the approved FY18 Budget. She will be working with staff to determine what may be needed this fiscal year.

**b. Governance:** Levin discussed that the Governance Committee met earlier in the day and has brainstormed ways to launch the Strategic Planning. She discussed the Board and greater school community engaging in a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) as one tool in the planning for the Strategic work. Her overview of Strategic Planning shall include: Preparation, Content Discussion before the Strategic Planning Session itself, and clarity about the Board's Desired Outcomes. She also shared that the work will include input from staff, advisors, parents, Foundation members.

**7. Closed Session**

**Motion:** Butterfield motioned to go into closed session to discuss personnel issues; Connors seconded.

**Vote:** Unanimous.

During the closed session, the board discussed leave. No votes were taken.

**8. Next Meeting:** Wednesday December 20<sup>th</sup> @ 5:45

**9. Adjournment: 7:44pm.**

**Motion:** Kacavas moved to adjourn; Connors seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.



**Educational Program Director  
Board Report  
November 15, 2017**

**Living Wax Museum and Amazing Authors:** Annually, students have the opportunity to participate in Living Wax Museum and Amazing Authors studies. For the Living Wax Museum, upper elementary students chose one impactful person on history, either living or deceased, researched their life and then chose a moment that was important in their life based on their research. Once this moment was chosen, students wrote a narrative piece from the 1st person point of view and described the events that made that moment important. Each upper elementary student stayed afterschool to present their written piece dressed as their historical figure to parents and friends of our community. The lower elementary students chose a favorite character from a book and researched to identify 3 important characteristics of the character. They presented these characteristics to their peers dressed as the character. Kindergarteners dressed as any favorite character of a book that they have. All students walked in an all school parade to wrap up the celebration!

**Student Leadership Team:** The leadership team has narrowed down their scope of data collection by gathering information on specific categories and are now traveling throughout the school to speak to the entire student body. This week, students will start to analyze which games will be most beneficial for the student body to learn and determine a schedule for introducing games to the student body. This couldn't have come at a better time since our playground space is limited and students need variety in the games that are available.

**Assessments and progress reports:** This November marks the start to the second school year using the ALMA online reporting system for progress reports. The process was wonderfully uneventful and smooth. The teachers also had new data to analyze with the Scholastic Math Inventory completed for a second time. This data has supported what is noted in classroom work and has decreased the amount of time that students spend on taking assessments overall. Teachers have expressed incredible support for this new assessment and the data it provides.

**Staff Professional Development:** In June of last year, Andy Willemson the Executive Director of River Valley Charter School, approached Meryl and I with an idea of creating a professional development day for Public Charter Montessori schools within the area. Of course we agreed whole-heartedly and have started the planning process. The day has been designated in our calendar for January 2nd and will be held at River Valley Charter School in Newburyport. We look forward to developing relationships with those schools that participate and hope to start an annual tradition!



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

### **Required Reporting**

On November 1<sup>st</sup>, I submitted our Per Pupil Count Aid Form which generates our quarterly payments of Equitable Aid from the state. Our submission reflected our 168 students (24 Kinders; 144 Lower & Upper). On November 8<sup>th</sup>, we received the payment via wire transfer of \$335,832 for the current quarter.

We have also filed our **Free and Reduced Report** which reported that 20 of our families qualify; the **Immunizations Survey**, and **Staff Course Verification**. Additionally, we have filed the final year-end **DOE-25** report for FY17– a financial picture of the fiscal year required by the DOE. I recently received notification from our **auditor** that the draft work on their end is ready for our review. I will consult with MFCS Treasurer, Michelle Roberge, to complete our portion of the audit.

### **Charter Office Update**

The Department of Education has posted the job description for Director of its Charter Office. The job description includes the following responsibilities which strongly suggests that the position will not only be in service to NH's charter schools: "Prepares and provides ongoing technical assistance and professional development to schools, parents and the community in implementing laws and regulations related to charter schools, home schools and non-public schools. Evaluates state and federal regulations to ensure ongoing adherence to standards."

### **Board Related**

A reminder that this month we will be spending time in our Agenda's Program Section, discussing and preparing for our Strategic Planning Session. Please come to the meeting ready to discuss your thoughts for this work and desired outcomes.

### **Facility**

This month has brought a flurry of construction activities to 100 WLD. While no construction has taken place inside our space, the work now underway has impacted us. There has been complete demise of the space on the new UL office space - toward the back of the building - and some construction which have been a bit noisy at times. After the UL office buildout is complete, it is expected that the construction will begin in the front of the building in preparation for the tenancy of MC2, another NH charter school. We were not notified in advance of the arrival of bulldozers and trucks this week, which began work on the exterior, specifically, the new entry and related drive/guest parking lot for the new Union Leader entry. That has taken the entirety of the open field we have been able to use over the years through verbal approval by the UL. The Facility Committee and School Admin are working with the new landlord to define new field space on campus. This is a work in progress. Additionally, we have been told that there will be drainage work in the next weeks to alleviate the terrible flooding / standing water that appears regularly on the sidewalk that leads to our entry doors. That will cause some disruption in the short term, but hopefully solve this years-old problem.

### **MFCS ChildCare Program**

Here's how it looks as of this week: BeforeCare (7-8:15am) = 8 children; Kinder (12-3pm) full-time = 9 children, part-time=7 children, extended (12-5:45)=3 full-time; 1 part-time. AfterCare (3-5:45pm) = 11 full-time children, 6 part-time children. Many families have been taking advantage of the drop in option for all programs and we continue to offer Child Care on a first come/first served basis on our Early Release Days. We will also offer Child Care to parents during the time they are at school this week for their Parent-Teacher Conferences.

## Financial

**Special Education reimbursement payments:** Payment has been received for many, but not all of the first set of bills (September services) and this week I will be sending out billing for October services rendered. Manchester is the district with the most number of students receiving services, and as of today, they have not yet paid their September billing. I have spoke with Finance and also with the Superintendent and we are in the process of setting up a meeting with the Superintendent and his team to clarify expectations on billing and reimbursement.

## Legislative Update

There are currently 9 bills related to charter schools in NH. You may have heard some discussion of the voucher bill, which advocates aim to discuss in the context of NH charter schools ("school choice"). Please keep in mind that vouchers and NH charter schools are completely different initiatives. We are public schools reporting directly to the NH-DOE. The voucher bill would lead to public funds being sent to private institutions. These institutions are not held to the same standard for SpEd, discrimination, or progress standards. There is plenty to read on the subject, and I ask that you do, so that you can speak clearly on the issues, should people ask your opinions as Trustees of our NH charter school.

## MFCS Community Building & Volunteerism

I am thrilled to report that we have been awarded \$2550 from the **Bank of NH's Community Support Grant Program**. I requested their support of our expanded Wellness Program, which includes development of a school-wide meditation curriculum. These funds will enable us to deepen our work with accomplished and highly trained Yoga Instructor, Rosy Latona. I feel fortunate to have the Bank of NH as our banking partner and appreciate their support of our work.

I am continuing work with MFCS parents Rachel Marziano and Mel Johansson to put together our **Night of Community** event. We have connected with a number of local breweries, but have not yet found a partner for this planned winter event which, will also include a silent auction and kiddo art auction.

Since our last meeting, I have attended two important **Leadership New Hampshire** events. The first was the first-ever alumni retreat. That gathering focused on 3 tracks related to leadership needs in NH. I engaged in the consideration of 'funding the common good' and have attended following up meetings with my fellow alumni. The second event was this week – the Education Day for the LNH Class of 2018. I have spoken many times over the years on Leadership Day, and once again enjoyed the opportunity to share information the story of MFCS, putting into context our work within the NH charter school construct, and highlighting many of the educational issues now in play. I kicked off the day as the first speaker. The morning also featured Manchester's School Superintended Vargas as well as Fred Bramante (known for his work in competency-based learning initiatives). Later in the day Andru Volinsky (lead counsel in the Claremont NH school funding case) spoke about school funding in our state and Michele Perkins (President of New England College) discussed the landscape of higher education in NH.

## Human Resources

Last week we hired a paraprofessional to fill the position, which had been open for several weeks. Additionally, last week we learned from our Music Teacher that for personal reasons she would not be able to finish out the year with us. We have posted the Music Instructor position and hope to fill that in a timely manner. In the meantime, John Choinard has stepped in to sub.

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