



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 Minutes for March 21, 2018, 5:45pm

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

1. Call to Order, Roll Call & Welcome Public

Present: DePasse, Marr, Kacavas, Connors, Brough, Wilhelm, Levin

Absent: McCeil, Roberge, Wrubleski

2. Public Comment No Public

4. Meeting Business

a. Approval of Minutes from February 21st meeting.

Motion: Connors Motioned to approve, Brough seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.

5. Montessori Moment: Shannon Helie, MFCS Lower Elementary Lead Teacher, Glacier Room

Shannon shared a presentation she and Laura gave at the Annual NH Charter Schools Best Practices Conference about The 6-Traits Writing Program used at MFCS. She discussed how to start the program with the students and the details of the writing tool. Students at Mill Falls have writing 5 days a week.

Levin shared the 2018 100th Day Slide Show - photos from the first 100 days of school. The slide show showcased student work and many activities that have taken place during the school year.

6. School Update

a. Educational Program Director (Wrubleski,) *See attached report.*

In the absence of Wrubleski, Levin highlighted the English Language Learner Site Review by Aaron Hughes of the NH-DOE. Aaron met with Wrubleski, Levin and staffers Fallon and Gills regarding the MFCS ELL Program. This site visit was required because the school is part of a consortium of NH schools and now accesses federal Title Funds in support of our ELL program. Levin reported that the review went well and provided a strong look at our overall programming and how ELL Instruction fits into that.

b. Executive Director (Levin) *See attached report.*

Levin discussed the webinar she attended - "**Guns in Schools-A Review in New Hampshire's current Law**" - which was presented by Drummond Woodsum. Levin highlighted that she learned that Charter Schools fall into a different category than the school districts and can therefore restrict the presence of guns on their campuses. This prompted a brief discussion regarding our policy. Levin discussed that we do not have to change our policy or remove signage from the school.

Levin also highlighted the **2018 Lottery** that took place on 03/20/18. There were, 175 Applicants 24 towns, including Manchester and 11 languages represented in those who entered the Lottery this year. The Lottery was Officiated by Helen Davies, SNHU's Director of Community Relations.

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

a. Finance Committee: Review of Budget-to-Actual (Levin, 5 min) Levin discussed the SPED funding update, which is detailed in the attached report. In addition she discussed a new addition to the budget where the costs of our Special education program is outlined.

8. Program

a: Potential Growth & Lease Option (Levin)

Motion: Butterfield Motioned to go into closed session to discuss proposed lease amendment; Kacavas seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.

Motion: Butterfield moved to come out of closed session; Marr seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.

No action was taken during the closed non-public session.

9. Next Meeting: Wednesday, April 18, 5:45pm (DePasse, 2 min).

10. Public Comment* (10 min) No Public

(Members of the public may address the Board for 2 minutes each, and will be called upon in order by the Board Chair)

11. Adjournment, 7:45pm.

Motion: Kacavas moved to adjourn, Marr seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.



**Educational Program Director
Board Report
March 21, 2018**

Scholastic Book Fair: This past week we held our annual spring book fair themed dogs and puppies. As always, the children were excited to make their selections and share their books with their classmates. It was another successful book fair with it looking like the school sold about \$3,500.00 in books, meaning we will earn 50% of that value in Scholastic Book dollars to spend. We could not have done it without the help of our amazing volunteers; Gina Landry, Jennifer Mumford, Alicia Harressey, Lauren Doukas, Amy Green, Lauren Dupaul and Lisa Zonfrillo. These volunteers worked hard on not just running the fair, but with the set-up and break done as well. We are looking forward to our fall fair!

Drama Club final presentation: Last Wednesday, we started our morning with a hilarious reader's theatre led by our lower elementary drama club. It was wonderful having many parents in attendance as well. We heard renditions of the "The Bremen Town Musicians" and "Little Red Riding Hood". The children practiced tirelessly after school learning how to embody their character, project their voices, present with comfortable stage presence and supporting one another as acting peers. All of these learned skills were evident during their performance. We look forward to another performance this spring from the upper elementary drama club starting in April!

Progress Reports/ Parent Teacher Conferences: Our second trimester progress reports and corresponding parent teacher conferences are complete and occurred without hindrance. Our next reporting period will be the final progress report in June.

SAS (NH Statewide Assessment System) Testing and training for teachers: As a school, we will begin the SAS assessment the first week in April. On Tuesday, March 20th, the staff completed the SAS testing administration course and will be ready to implement the assessment as expected by the state. There have been some changes to the testing structure this year, so we are hopeful that it will take less time per student to complete the assessment.

ELL Site Review: On Wednesday, March 21st, we will participate in our first ever English Language Learner program site review. Aaron Hughes from the DOE will visit our school for about 3 hours with the purpose of reviewing all documentation of systems and to gain insight as to how we support our English Language Learners academically. At this point, we have 7 active(receiving services) ELL students and 4 students that are being monitored for continued growth.



**Executive Director's Report
For the March 2018
MFCS School Board Meeting
Submitted by Meryl Levin**

Required Reporting

The NH Department of Education recently added a new report to the roster – the Middle of the Year Report (MOY) – which is nestled in between the long-established BOY and the EOY (the beginning and end of the year reports). This new substantial report shares enrollment and attendance information with the DOE. I'm preparing that report now; this is due in early April.

DOE Related

Late last week, the DOE announced their new hire – Jane Waterhouse, an internal DOE candidate –has been named as the Charter School Administrator. I was able to meet her at the NH Charter Schools Best Practices Conference on 3/16/18. I have invited her to come visit MFCS and offered to work with her as she establishes priorities.

There was also a presentation at the Conference by a long-time DOE staffer, Heather Gage, during which she mapped out some of the changes afoot in terms of staffing and structure at the DOE. There is a renewed emphasis on more expansive data collection and analysis with a particular focus on achievement gaps. She shared that there are number of new hires expected in the areas Title 1 and Title II and ELL.

Strategic Planning Related

Maryclare Heffernan and I are in the process of reviewing the notes from our second Board Strategic Planning Session from last month, and will be sharing those notes soon.

Facility

Late last week, Will Kanteres and I met with the Landlord's Broker to again discuss the possible expansion space. We reviewed the initial bid they had received for the fit up and some other terms. We also discussed the external space they are proposing. I will be updating the Board at the meeting.

Meanwhile, in our space the installation of a new fire alarm alert system is in progress. The demise work in the possible expansion space has also been in the works causing a few power outages and such. We look forward to the completion of that.

And outside, there has not been a ton of progress, but on Friday the large pine tree was taken down as planned. This opens up some of the existing space for our kids to play in, once the snow and ice melt.

2018 Enrollment Lottery

Last week marked the end of our 2018 Lottery Enrollment Period (it closed on Monday, March 12th at 5pm). This year we had 175 applicants, 12 of whom are siblings or children of employees. Of that 12, 11 are kinder students for next year, so with that in mind, we expect to have 13 kinder spots open for our single kinder room. As always, we are tracking the plans of others who have expressed some thoughts or concrete plans to change schools at the end of the year. We do expect to have a number Upper Elementary students move to other schools for next year, as has become the pattern, and we continue to ask families to tell us as soon as possible so that we can plan and be in contact with those on our waitlist while school is still in session. We will be setting up a group tour for those currently toward the top of the waitlist so they can see the school in operation (rather than in the summer when it is buttoned up) and so that we can meet them as well. We did welcome 3 new students recently, one in Upper, one in Lower and one in

kinder. These new students filled spots which opened when students un-enrolled, all of whom left us to enroll in their home district schools.

Lottery Day is on March 20th, and our Lottery Official this year is Helen Davies, SNHU's Director of Community Relations. We have developed an important partnership with SNHU via Helen's leadership and we are so pleased she can make the event!

MFCS ChildCare Program

Here's how it looks as of this week: BeforeCare (7-8:15am) = 9 children; Kinder (12-3pm) full-time = 13 children, part-time=4 children, extended (12-5:45)=1 full-time; 3 part-time. AfterCare (3-5:45pm) = 10 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.

Financial

Special Education reimbursement payments: Payment has been received for most of the sending districts. As noted previously, Concord has been slow to respond, but is now on track to pay back payments and stay current going forward. As you are aware, we had a very long and intense meeting with Manchester Superintendent, the Director of Student Services and their lawyer a week ago. That meeting was held at our lawyer's office. We left that meeting with the following agreement, signed by both Dr. Vargas, and me:

"Absent a fraudulent or an illegal charge, the District agrees to pay Mill Falls pursuant to the current reimbursement model for the current school year or until the parties reach a new agreement on the terms of reimbursement for Special Education services, or, failing to reach an agreement, the District shall be solely responsible for providing such services as of July 1, 2018, as set forth in RSA 194-B:11, III(b)."

At that meeting, we were told that the first \$75,000 in past-due service fees would be paid to us in this month's payment cycle, so that should be to us in the next week or so. In return, we are preparing documents for their review, which relate to student schedules, service hour tracking and information on our 'real costs' for our SpEd Program. It is expected that in late March or early April Maryclare, Shannon and I will begin working with Mary Steady (Student Services Coordinator at MSD), to map out the service plan for next year.

MFCS Community Building & Volunteerism

Last week, MFCS staff attended the Annual Charter School Best Practice Conference which was held for the second year at The Founders Academy. Laura and Shannon presented one workshop on Lower Elementary Writing, and I presented on Charter School Board Governance. The event was well attended, and did provide me the opportunity to speak with a few colleagues and members of state government and the DOE.

Another MFCS parent, Lauren Doukas, will begin work on our annual **Family Game Night** – likely scheduled for April.

Our **Annual Calendar Raffle** has kicked off. Please visit our website to help support the school-based fundraising project which has a goal of \$15,000 in sales this year! All items have been donated and there is no cost to this fundraiser, so every dollar raised (except the PayPal fee) goes to support our school. Here's the link: <https://millfalls.org/spring-calendar-raffle>.

We gave a warm welcome to our more than 90 guests who joined us for our **Annual Grandparents & Special Friends Day** on Monday, March 12th. The day began with a brief assembly during which I shared information about our public Montessori school and showed our 2018 100th Day Slide. From there our guests set out to the classrooms to spend time with their student(s). The Book Fair was also in full swing, so many shopped there as well. Contributions by parents for our hospitality table (food and coffee/tea) as well as a few parent ambassadors and others who (wo)manned the Book Fair made the morning event a great success.

Human Resources

We will soon begin preparation for staffing next year. Please be aware it is our annual practice to post all teaching positions. That is no indication of expected staff changes, but rather a means of helping us be prepared in the event that we need to fill positions. We expect to provide contracts in mid to late April for most of our employees.

Legislative Update:

As I was writing this, I learned that the timeline for a bill that has been generated by a legislator who is also a parent at Founders has moved from the House to the Senate and will be heard in Committee on Tuesday. Matt Southerton, President of the NH Charter School Alliance, shared today that a public hearing has been scheduled for **Tuesday 3/20 at 9:45am to discuss HB1480**. He describes the bill this way: "This is the bill that would require that parent board members be voted on by the parent body and which would prohibit charter school employees (including teachers) from being voting members of the Board of Trustees. After discussing this issue with many of you I feel that this bill (if passed) would be harmful to many of your schools." If you feel this bill would be harmful to our schools, Matt urged folks to testify before the Senate Education Committee on Tuesday and/or submit written testimony.

This bill takes aim at the spirit of the charter school law by attempting to place legislative restrictions on the structure/bylaws/governance of these organizations. Currently on the DOE website, charter schools are in part described this way: "Public charter schools are created and governed by an independent board of trustees. Charter schools operate independently from many of the rules and regulations that apply to local school districts." So schools may have different ways of populating their school boards, and that choice is in keeping with the spirit of the original charter law.

Please be in touch if you would like to talk through this bill's implications.

Foundation Update

The Foundation's focus is now moving to the **Annual Leadership Breakfast**. We are still working diligently to identify our guest speaker. We have our first three event sponsors this year – our own Jody Wilhelm – thank you Jody! – and Foundation Board Members Will Kanteres of Kanteres Real Estate and Newton Kershaw of Elm Grove Realty. We are looking to continue identify sponsorship sources so let me know if you have any sources, please! As you are aware, our Breakfast has become a regular and well-attended spring event in our community with a target audience of (mostly) Manchester business and community leaders. I will be speaking more about this at our meeting as **Trustees will be asked to act as table captains** to help fill the room with those willing and able to help us meet our fundraising goal. Thank you!

Currently, the Foundation's bank account balance is: \$259,083.

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