



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 April 18, 2018**

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

**1. Call to Order:** 5:51pm

**Roll Call:** Marr, Connors, Depasse, Bough, Kacavas, Levin, Butterfield, Helie. Absent: Johnson, Roberge

**2. Announcements/Updates:** Trustee Wilhelm will be stepping down from the Board. Levin encouraged the members of the board to continue to recruit for board minutes.

**3. Public Comment:** No public present

**4. Meeting Business**

**a. Approval of Minutes** from March 2018 meeting

**Motion:** Brough motioned to approve the minutes; Connors second. **Vote:** Unanimous.

**b. Agenda Review:** Levin dispersed letter introducing the new charter administrator; Jane Waterhouse.

**5. Montessori Moment:**

Collette Fortin, Lower Elementary Lead Teacher in the Denali Room demonstrated *Window Words* a work which is a template containing several words with the vowel is missing (the 'window'). The template is placed on the paper and the student is instructed to write in the missing vowel onto the paper using a red pencil. After doing this the student is instructed to use the coordinated book and pictures to the list the words using the letter they have already written on the paper. This is a fairly simple word work, with built in self-correcting power.

**6. School Update**

**a. Interim Educational Program Director** (*See also attached report*)

Helie highlighted some items from the I-EPD report. She discussed the recent Spirit Week. She also discussed the state-wide testing which took place recently, reporting that this went smoothly. During test week, parent-volunteers came in to lead movement breaks that included Zumba and dancing. Helie also highlighted some of the after school clubs that are currently going on in the school including: Art Club, Basketball, and Coding.

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

Levin highlighted her request for Trustees to continue to actively recruit guests for the upcoming Annual Leadership Breakfast on May 15th. She highlighted the ELL Consortium organized by the DOE so that we, and other members can access Title Funds in support of our English Language Learner programming. As members of that consortium, MFCS is required to have site visits periodically by the Title III person at the DOE, currently Aaron Hughes. The recent visit went very well.

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

**a. Finance Committee:**

Levin highlighted noted that the school did have to purchase two new teacher computers recently to replace failing machines, and anticipates a few other purchased this summer. Butterfield asked about budget item for legal contracts and Levin explained that fortunately this year we've been able to stay inside of our pro-bono allotment arrangement with our law firm. Levin also pointed out the new format of the SpEd expense tracking in the budget to actual report for Trustees.

**8. Program**

**a: 2018/19 School Calendar:**

Levin highlighted the minor differences from the Manchester calendar. A brief discussion about the teacher conference in the fall took place. The discussion resulted in Levin making a decision to keep it on the proposed Thursday, but will continue to discuss with administration and would proposed an amendment should the admin team were to change the conference plan.

**Motion:** Butterfield motioned to approve; Marr seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.

**b:** Levin highlighted a facility update regarding the bathrooms that are used by staff and visitors. She presented the board with a drawing of the proposed plan for the bathroom. She also informed the board that she has been told that a play area will be paved over April vacation in addition to the drainage grate being replaced.

**9. Next Meeting:** Wednesday, May 16th, 5:30pm

**10. Adjournment: Motion:** Kacavas motioned to adjourn at 7:30pm; Connors seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.



**Educational Program Director  
Board Report  
April 18, 2018**

**Spirit Week:** The week of March 26<sup>th</sup> was a creative one here at school; we had our whole school spirit week. When entering each day you may have seen children dressed as twins or triplets, wacky with wild hair-dos and clothes, dressed up in fancy clothing and even veterinarians, teachers, doctors and artists on what you want to be when you grow up day! It was so fun seeing so much participation, not only from the students, but from the staff as well.

**SAS Testing (NH Statewide Assessment System) Testing:** On April 2<sup>nd</sup> our 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> years started their state testing. It was a smooth week with limited technology issues and less classroom interruption as we had a new schedule this year. Everyone was finished testing on Thursday, April 12<sup>th</sup> and that included 5<sup>th</sup> grade science. We had some lovely parents, Terri G, Sarah Duffley and Ramon Salomon provide zumba, yoga and hip hop dancing as movement breaks for the children who were testing.

**After-School Activities:** We have a lot of after-school activities happening right now. The Upper Elementary Coding Club just finished and the Lower Elementary Coding Club has started as well. Staffer Susanne Hojlo's oldest son, Jackson, has been guiding the students through the coding process along with help from Sue Lambright's son, both are students at The Academy of Science and Design (ASD).

Our Girls on the Run crew has been busy training and learning about how to be their best self! They are led by three parent coaches - Rachel Marziano, Angela Malone and Lauren Dupaul. There has been lots of team building going on as they gear up for their 5k race on Saturday, June 2<sup>nd</sup> in Concord.

Miss Kristin and Miss Roxanne have just started their arts and crafts club. They are working with kindergarten through third graders on various spring crafts. This club has 25 participants!

Miss Elizabeth and Miss Alyssa, both SNHU basketball coaches have started their Basketball Club. The participants are learning about the core basics of basketball and having fun while doing it!



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

### **Foundation Update**

Over the last few weeks, I've been attending to the details large and small related to our **6<sup>th</sup> Annual Leadership Breakfast on May 15<sup>th</sup> which will be held at the Puritan's Conference Center.** Manchester's Mayor, **Joyce Craig**, is our keynote speaker. A group of students will also share their voices that morning, some in song and others sharing their thoughts and understanding of the importance of our Montessori Core Values - Grace, Courtesy and Respect. As of this writing, we are expecting a few bodies short of 180 people, and we have almost \$10,000 in sponsorship along with a few checks from folks who can't make it, but wanted to lend some of their treasure to our effort. If you know anyone who is unable to make the Breakfast, but might still like to help support our work, please let them know they can donate on line (<https://millfalls.org/contribute>) or send checks to MFCS Foundation, 36 Salmon Street, Manchester, NH 03104.

The Foundation's bank account balance is currently: \$258,860.

### **Required Reporting**

Earlier this month, we filed the **Middle of the Year Report (MOY)** with the DOE. Additionally, we filed the list of **Board of Trustees**, and uploaded the **School Calendar** information to the DOE's website, as required annually.

### **Strategic Planning Related**

Maryclare Heffernan, Shannon and I met with a staff working group to continue the conversation begun last month at our Early Release Day regarding what the staff feels they will need to begin to act on the three areas, which have now been identified via the Strategic Planning work we've done as an organization this year. We hope to meet with them again in the next weeks and will share out what we gather.

As a Board, we need to come together for one last Strategic Planning Discussion before we break for the summer. I would suggest we do that at our June meeting, but ask that the Governance Committee determine the best plan by July 1.

### **Facility & Related Changes**

Making Community Connections Charter School (MC2) has been in the building for 5 weeks, and there continue to be many challenges in our co-tenancy. We speak with them multiple times each week regarding issues that arise. They have been receptive to this interaction. We are all looking forward to the new adult bathrooms, which the landlord plans to build as part of our space. Currently adults in our School need to go through their hallway to access the adult bathrooms we've used since we moved in (formerly shared with the UL). That area is now a largely unsupervised section of the MC2 space, so there have been some unmonitored behaviors on display by their students. Once those new bathrooms are in place, we expect to have far fewer interactions with the MCS students while indoors. We will continue to have outdoor interactions, at a minimum during arrival and dismissal, and will of course continue to work with MC2 as issues arise.

We have had several meetings with the construction team, and others who work for the landlord with regard to the bathrooms. We have insisted that those bathrooms be close to our front office, rather than accessed through the kitchen, kinder bathroom, or any other space in the middle of our school. It is my understanding that they are now collecting bids on the plan, which has the bathrooms in the front area.

With regard to the **outdoors**, we were originally told that the paving would occur during the April Vacation. That did not materialize, it was then postponed to last week, which also didn't happen. We have now been told that the paving of the new blacktop area (formally muddy/grassy area) will take place on the 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of May. They have done some work re-grading the outdoor area where there had been standing water on a regular basis, but that drain cover still needs to be replaced with a proper and safe cover. We are still awaiting word on the timeline for the creation of a **new field**, which will be located across the driveway from our current play space. During this transition time, the children have been playing either on the blacktop cordoned off in the parking lot, or in a lower field about a 5 minute walk from our front doors.

Over the past month, fire department has gotten familiar with the **new fire alarm system** in the building, and has run a fire drill. Previously they could run a drill that just required the evacuation of our school, but now the building is no longer zoned in that fashion, so each fire drill requires that all tenants vacate the building during the drill. The drill must now be activated from a central location in the building, rather than by the drill button, which had been located in my office.

### **Enrollment**

As we begin to close out the year, we are working hard to secure accurate information about students who may be planning not to return to MFCS in the fall. As you know, we aim to start each year with a full roster, as we are paid based on actual enrollment. To achieve this, we are communicating with the families who we know or have heard are considering other options, asking them to clarify their plans so we can plan accordingly. This communication is key to the success of the planning process. All members of the administration work closely with the Lead Teachers in an effort to accurately build our student roster for next year. Earlier this week we had a tour for families on the current 4<sup>th</sup> grade wait list. We invited 40 families, but unfortunately only 2 attended. We also asked in our correspondence with the wait list families to let us know if they are no longer interested in enrolling were a spot to become available. Knowing this will help streamline our work over the summer should we need to fill vacant spots. At the moment, we do not have any confirmed vacant spots, but we do have several students who we expect will not be returning. This is a typical ebb and flow at this time of year, so we will continue to work on this through the end of June, and throughout the summer, if/as needed.

### **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 / SpEd Related**

**Special Education reimbursement payments:** Earlier this week, our lawyer was told that we can expect a second installment from the Manchester School District to cover the unpaid invoices related to Special Education Services provided for Manchester resident students by MFCS staff. We have not received anything from them since the March payment of \$75,000, a portion of the funds owed since the start of the school year.

Shannon, Maryclare and I met on May 1 with MSD's Mary Steady, in an effort to determine the **plan for Special Education Service Delivery in the 2018/19 School Year**. I have since followed up that meeting with a proposal that we hope will help us reach a fair agreement. I have not been able to offer contracts to our Special Educators or Paraprofessionals because the plan for next year is not yet in place. We have asked for a final agreement with MSD by late May, June 1 at the latest.

### **MFCS Community Building & Volunteerism**

Friday night we hosted Family Game Night. Special thanks to MFCS Parent and event organizer, Lauren Doukas. This is mostly a friend-raiser, and families seem to enjoy this event each year. On

Friday afternoon, we sent the kiddos home with stickers on their shirts as a final reminder for them to come and enjoy this family event. Lauren was joined by two staff members and many families!

**Kindergarten Interview Day** included volunteer time by several Parent Ambassadors who helped welcome our new Kinder Families. It is a great opportunity for parents of currently enrolled students to be on hand to talk with new parents. While Shannon and I are also available for any questions, we have found that parents really appreciate the chance to talk with others now in the program.

**Teacher Appreciation** included so many expressions of support and appreciation for our amazing staff. We are deeply touched by the outpouring shared this week.

### **Human Resources**

Shannon Helie, our interim Educational Program Director is doing an incredible job of supporting our teaching staff in Laura's absence, of bridging that work to the rest of the admin team. It is a total pleasure working with her and we are really very appreciative of all she brings to the job.

Since last we met, I have provided contracts to those who will be returning next year. We have received a few interesting resumes for opening we do have, and Shannon is beginning to meet with some of those applicants. As noted above, I am not yet able to any SpEd related contracts until we have clarity from MSD about the plan for next year. Those staff members are aware of that timeline and are kindly waiting to hear about the next steps. We are grateful for their patience and their understanding that this delay is entirely out of our control.

### **Legislative Update:**

**Voucher Bill does not pass.** As reported in the Concord Monitor this week: "For the third time this year, the New Hampshire House of Representatives has voted against a bill to create education savings accounts. The bill that would have allowed for state tax dollars to be spent on private school tuition and homeschooling expenses had already been shot down by the House on two separate occasions. But following a last-minute push by Governor Chris Sununu, the bill was amended onto a separate piece of legislation that then passed the Senate. When that bill came back before the House on Thursday, Republican Representative Rick Ladd pleaded with his colleagues to send the bill to a committee of conference to keep the bill alive. But once again, the idea was rejected by the House, officially ending any hope for the bill to become law this session."

To learn more about charter-related legislation in NH, please sign up to receive members updates from the NH Charter School Alliance. Visit [www.NHcharter schools.org](http://www.NHcharter schools.org).

\* \* \*