



*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 Meeting Minutes, September 20, 2018**

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

### **1: Call to Order at 5:47pm.**

**Roll Call:** Kacavas, Connors, Wrubleski, Marr, Levin. **Absent:** DePasse, Roberge, Butterfield, Brough, Johnson

### **2: Public Comment:** no public present.

### **3. Meeting Business**

**a. Approval of Minutes** from August 2018 meeting. Due to low attendance, this item shall be taken up at the Oct. meeting.

### **4. Montessori Moment, Wrubleski**

Wrubleski noted that tomorrow is International Peace Day and we will hold our annual celebration. Wrubleski will be facilitating the morning assembly, which is set to begin at 8:45am. This assembly includes singing, reading *The Peace Book* by Todd Parr, and an all-school Peace Walk. Later in the day the students will work on other projects, including, new this year, an all-school activity inspired by the question: 'When you close your eyes, and think of peace, what do you see?'

### **5. School Update**

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

Wrubleski shared that we began the year with just 2 new staffers; however, in terms of children we have our 24 new Kinders and many more new students in our Lower and Upper for a total of 41 new students this year. To this year more than others in recent past, classrooms are spending a lot of time teaching the kids what Montessori is. Overall the new kids are doing well, but many of them do have some academic needs, which we are discussing as a team. New this year in the teachers' schedule is time for the Lower EI and Upper EI teachers to work with colleagues at their levels collaboratively and include the Special Ed team in those meetings. This involved some recess schedule changes. We are thrilled to have this planning and thinking time built into the school day.

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

Levin talked about actions being taken to further engage parents, including the revised 'Count Me In' form being used this year and sent home on the back of the Handbook Sign-off/Agreement page. The Board discussed having co-chairs at each parent organized/community event, as Connors does at her school, to be sure that new parent leadership is being developed. Levin also asked the Board to continue to work on board growth, and will talk with staff regarding parents. Levin also discussed that some of the suggestions and ideas that were put forth by staff during our SWOT and Strategic Planning work are already being implemented here at school. Levin did ask the Board if they had any leads re: para and AfterCare staffing. Connors will talk to her interns.

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

**a. Finance Committee (Roberge/Levin)** Review budget-to-actual. There are no surprises in this first budget-to-actual report.

### **8. Program**

#### **a: Trustee Engagement (DePasse/Levin, 20 minutes)**

The Board discussed the work they will do individually to reach out to some people in their lives about Board Growth. They also discussed the planning that needs to take place in advance of our annual meeting in October with regard to the Office Slate and committee assignments.

**9. Next Meeting:** Wednesday, October 17, 5:45pm

**10. Adjournment**

**Motion:** Kacavacs moved to adjourn at 6:16pm; Connors seconded. Vote: Unanimous.



**Educational Program Director  
Board Report  
September 20, 2018**

**Start of the School Year:** This year has been a banner year for returning staff. Given that the staff are familiar with the school expectations and students, it's almost as if it's not the start of the school year! Classrooms have been working on developing community through *getting to know you* games, lessons in meditation and kindness. This coming Friday is a culminating event with International Peace Day. By the start of week 3, students are completing full workcycles and getting back into the swing of lessons.

**Integrated Arts (Specials)-** This year we had 3 returning Integrated Arts Teachers and Devon Vonne, a past staff member took the position as our Fitness teacher. We have focused on developing curriculum for these specials that will coincide with classroom instruction. This coming fall, the focus of instruction will be linked to the continent Europe. As an example, in art, students will learn about European artists and styles and in Music students will be exposed to European composers.

**Staff Wellness Program:** Along with our Montessori focus this year, we have decided to support staff wellness as well. In doing so, we have hired Rosie Latona to teach an afterschool Yoga program for our staff. The intention by offering this program to staff is to reduce stress levels but also to give the teachers more tools to use in the classroom. Learning through doing is the best way to bring engagement!

**Afterschool Programs:** We are in the process of organizing afterschool programming for the coming 3 months. Our 5K running program began last week for both lower and upper elementary programs, and we anticipate a series of programs to begin the first week in October. Stay tuned!



**Executive Director's Report  
For the September 20, 2018  
MFCs School Board Meeting  
Submitted by Meryl Levin**

### **Required Reporting**

Our first **2017/18 Per Pupil Aid Form** was filed on the first day of school. This form reflects the enrollment numbers and is filed 3x per year, day 1 and again in November and February. We are awaiting our first per pupil payment from the state; this is based on the reported enrollment.

**DOE-25 Quarterly Forms: Q4** has been completed. The final year-end DOE-25 report will be completed once our FY 18 Audit is completed.

The Field Work for our **FY18 Audit** went very smoothly this past week and is now complete. Once the full audit is finished, our auditor will work with us complete the new requirements put for by the New Hampshire **AG's office**. As Treasurer, Michelle will help review the materials.

Susanne is working on the **Immunization Report** as well as collecting data from our families for our **Free & Reduced Report**. Additionally, language surveys have been assessed to identify our English Language Learners. The next large report will be our BOY. The Beginning of the Year report is the large report that lists information about each individual student enrolled with us as of October 1 of each year. Annually, we are required to complete the BOY, M(middle)OY and the E(end)OY.

**The 2018/19 Emergency Response Plan** had been filed as required annually (beginning last year). We will be meeting with members of the Homeland Security Team later this fall to discuss the current plan and consider possible improvements. I will continue to work with our School Safety Committee and our Board's Facility Committee as needed, as we tweak our current Plan.

### **Board Related**

On the agenda for this month's Board Meeting is a review of our plan for the **Annual Meeting**, which is scheduled for October, Officer Slate, Committee Assignments. We can expect to meet with Maryclare later this fall assist in our work on designing our **Strategic Plan**.

### **Facility**

We are thoroughly enjoying the **new bathrooms**, which provide adult restrooms inside our school space. As expected, this has greatly reduced interaction with MC2 students and helps contain us within our designated space.

The children are enjoying aspects of the **outdoor improvements**, most especially the blacktop. We have painted some games on the blacktop and added an in-ground basketball hoop as well as two tetherball poles. We have not yet received permission to add the activity stations, which we still hope to install in the play area. You will notice that we have weeded, and added a few seasonal flowers, as well as created a 'MFCs sign made out of the tree-trunk cookies. Most unfortunately, the sod that was placed down in August, but not watered, has died and we now face a very wet and muddy front area. I am told that the building management is working on having that repaired. Students are also utilizing the small field across the driveway, and are no longer playing in the parking lot area, which was previously coned off during recess time and for the aftercare program.

### **MFCs ChildCare Program**

Enrollment in our Child Care Program is extremely high this year. In fact, we have a significant waiting list for the AfterCare Program. We have 26 children almost every day in the AfterCare Program. That is likely the largest crew we've ever had. Here's a breakdown of all programs as of

this week:

BeforeCare (7-8:15am) = 10 full time; KinderCare (12-3pm) = 6 full time, 6 part time;  
AfterCare (3-5:45pm) = 16 full time, 5 part time, plus extended kinders (3-5:45) = 2 full-time, 3 part time.

We are finding the kids are staying later this year, than in past years, so we are adjusting, as needed, our Assistant hours – some days they stay until 5pm rather than the usual 4:30 if there are a large number of kids still with us. Shannon is doing a great job of overseeing the programs functionality, while Susanne continues to manage enrollment and Allison our bookkeeper is now handling billing with oversight from Susanne.

We are still looking for an AfterCare Assistant to work a few afternoons a week. We have posted at both SNHU and St. Anselm, and are spreading the word in other ways. If you have anyone you think would be a good fit, please let me know, so I can connect them with Shannon.

### **Enrollment & Prep for the New School Year**

We begin the year with a full house – 24 kinders and 144 Lower and Upper Elementary students for a total of our usual 168. While beginning of the year assessments are conducted with all returning students in reading and math, the teaching staff is taking extra care to quickly get to know the academic levels of our newest enrollees. Any of the new students who have IEPs are also seen by our Special Education Team who have begun observing and working with the students and communicating with their home districts and families to be sure they have appropriate supports in place.

Each year, ALL MFCS families are expected to read our Family Handbook and return their sign off sheets. All Staff members are also expected to review both the Family and the Staff Handbooks annually.

### **Financial**

**SpEd in relation to Manchester:** On August Aug 28, 2018, at 3:47pm, we received a signed contract from the Manchester School District in relation to SpEd Services for this school year. It is with our deepest appreciation that we thanked our lawyer for her tenacity and hard work on our behalf. It was a rough summer-long process, but we eventually reached an agreement that we know is best for our kids. Along the way we lost 2 staff members, but we have now rehired our full team. Please join us in welcoming Kathleen Cline who joined our Special Education Team as our newest full-time Special Educator. She and Sue work under Maryclare's management, providing Academic and/or Social Skill services to our students.

Last week, our Banker, Ellen Soucy, contact me this week to let me know that the bank approved her request to increase the interest rate of our Sweep Account to 1.00% from .15%.

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

Hoping you are planning to lace up your running/ walking shoes and join us at our **3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Road Race and Family Fun Run scheduled for September 23<sup>rd</sup> at SNHU's new Penmen Stadium.** The fun starts at 9am! We have a great crew of sponsors and partners for this event. A number of families and local businesses have helped us raise over \$3000 in sponsorship so far. We will do a big final push to get folks registered this week. [Click here to sign up!](#) **Or you can go to our website's homepage ([www.millfalls.org](http://www.millfalls.org)) and that will lead you to the link!**

We have also revised our '**Count Me In**' Form, which now highlights the variety of ways families can get involved including, but not limited to, helping with events that have been planned for the entire year. The Family Events and engagement efforts overall relate to three areas – Community, Service and Fundraising. Additionally, we have reinstated the role of Room Parent, to help parents connect to our program and to one another.

On Monday, September 17<sup>th</sup>, we will host the Board Meeting of **Reaching Higher New Hampshire**, a nonpartisan 501c3 public education policy resource for New Hampshire parents,

educators, and elected officials. I will utilize my usual Montessori Morning Tour model for the first portion of their time with us, which includes the chance for visitors to meet a few students and staff who will demonstrate the magic of Montessori.

Since late spring, Maryclare and I have been working with the **Manchester Proud initiative**, which has been launched to improve the Manchester School District. We are both serving on the committee charged with selecting firms to lead the grassroots and thorough analysis of Manchester and the District, and lead in developing a strategic plan for the District. We are serving alongside a group of talented, experienced and powerful minds including Dr. Virginia Barry, Rep. Mary Heath, Barry Brensinger among others. Both Amy Allan and Bolgen Vargas from MSD also serve on the committee. The work is intense right now, as the deadline for applying firms is upon us. Reaching Higher NH has been brought on to help facilitate the implementation of the mission and goals of Manchester Proud. [To learn more about Manchester Proud, please click here.](#)

### **Human Resources**

Our **2018/19 Staff Opening Days** were a huge success. Laura did an amazing job of welcoming new and returning staff to campus this year. As per our Strategic Planning last year, we prioritized time to work in small and large groups around our Montessori program. That included our reading articles and discussing them together. With some of this new programming, we did not manage to go on a field trip, but we did end the week with a lovely gathering on the patio of the Backyard Brewery. Between then and now, all HR details have been attended to, from new files and related paperwork for our new staff members, to meetings with our Retirement and Aflac Representatives. I ran our first payroll of FY19 on Aug 30, and our second this past week.

We have arranged with our mindfulness/meditation coach, **Yogi, Rosy Latona** from White Swan Yoga, to provide an additional 4 Yoga sessions for staff with the intent of helping relieve some of their start-of-the-year stress AND provide the with the opportunity to learn some additional skills for our school Mindfulness/Wellness Program. Those will be conducted this fall after school and is being paid for with funds provide by the Bank of NH in support of our Mindfulness/Wellness Program.

This coming week we will welcome a new paraprofessional to our staff, Judy Cassell. You can view the bios of our staff by visiting our website: <https://millfalls.org/education/administration-faculty/> (as of this writing, Judy's is not yet up).

### **Foundation News:**

The Foundation currently has \$292,681 in it's account.

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