



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.

The child is both a hope and a promise for mankind.

-Dr. Maria Montessori

MFCS Minutes for August 28, 2018

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

1. Call to Order at 5:52. Roll Call:

Present: Levin, Wrubleski, Butterfield, Roberge, Brough, Kacavas, Marr, DePasse.

Absent: Connors. Johnson

2. Announcements/Updates:

3. Public Comment: No public present.

4. Meeting Business

a. Approval of Minutes from June 2018 meeting: **Butterfield** motioned to approve the June 2018 BOT meeting minutes; Kacavas seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.

b. Agenda Review: The Board discussed the need to go into closed session to discuss a contract.

5. School Update

a. Educational Program Director: Wrubleski returned from her leave earlier this month and has been settling back into the position. Wrubleski discussed that the staff came back on 8/27/18 for the annual Staff Opening Days. She discussed some of the opening day activities and highlighted that the focus has been on the school's foundation of Montessori. The staff will be recertified in CPR this week, work on curriculum and focus some time on special education. The special education focus is on management in the classroom and on supporting paraprofessionals. The goal of special education this year will be less "pull out" for services and more "in classroom" services.

b. Executive Director (*please also see attached report*) Levin discussed that there is finally a signed contract between the Manchester School District and Mill Falls related to special educational services 2018/19 school year. She also discussed some of the outdoor updates as well as the completion of the adult bathrooms adjacent to the school's front office. In addition she highlighted some of the enrollment changes over the summer.

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

a. Strategic Planning: Review of Where We Are. Levin and DePasse discussed how the Board will communicate back to the parents the 3 areas of focus - 3 areas of focus which the winter and spring strategic planning generated. Butterfield offered to work with Levin to draft communication. Levin also discussed that they have planned out parent activities throughout the school year that will focus on educating and engaging parents in the Montessori model. DePasse suggested trying to complete a draft of the plan by the end of the year. The board agreed this should be an attainable goal. Levin will report back to Maryclare to discuss next steps.

7. Program

a: Trustee Engagement

Discussion regarding prep for the Board's Annual Meeting, Strategic Planning/Retreat, Committee Membership, Slate, etc. Levin discussed that the Annual meeting typically falls in September, but given Trustee schedules which will preclude the attendance of several, it will be on Oct 17th. DePasse voiced he

would like to review the current committees and ensure that there is still a need for the committees and also discuss if there is additional committee needs. DePasse and Levin also voiced the need to expand the Board by at least two members. DePasse shared that the Board should consider parental additions as they work to explore new potential nominees.

B: Closed session

Motion to go into closed session: Butterfield moved to go into closed session per RSA 91-A:3 II L to discuss a contract that MFCS came in possession of earlier today; Kavacas seconded. **Vote:** unanimous.

Motion to exit closed session: Butterfield moved to come out of closed session; Kavacas seconded.

Vote: Unanimous.

8. Next Meeting: Thursday, September 20, 5:45pm - note day change due to Yom Kippur.

9. Adjournment Kavacas moved to adjourn; Marr seconded. Vote: Unanimous. Meeting adjourned 7:04 pm.



**Executive Director's Report
For the August 28th, 2018
MFCs School Board Meeting
Submitted by Meryl Levin**

Required Reporting

The **End of Year (EOY) Report** was filed in mid-June, immediately following the end of the school year. After that report was reviewed and processed, the final FY18 Pupil Aid funds were deposited in our bank account in early July.

DOE-25 Quarterly Forms: Q1-3 have been filed with the state; Q4 will be completed this coming week. The final year-end DOE-25 report will be completed once our FY 18 Audit is completed.

There were also a small number of smaller reports and surveys, which have been filed, as per requirements, in the late spring and summer.

The Field Work for our **FY18 Audit** is scheduled for mid-September. Additionally, this year, the New Hampshire **AG's office** has a new series of reports we will now be required to file since the school does fundraising, but is not a 501c3 (therefore not required to file a 990, as the Foundation does). Our auditor will assist with this new process; Michelle will help review the process.

The 2017/18 Annual Report was filed in August. A copy of that has been sent to the Board, as well as the DOE.

Last summer, the DOE announced that the legislature had approved a new bill requiring all schools so submit their **Emergency Response Plan** to the DOE in partnership with the Homeland Security Office. I have reviewed and updated our existing plan, and will send that in by the Sept 1 deadline. I am also in conversation with the Homeland Security Team and we aim to have meeting with them, at school in September to discuss some updates we can make now that the building construction is complete and some of the recommendations have shifted with regard to lock down vs. leaving the building in certain emergency situations. Most of the Response Plan is public, but there are some specifics to our response planning which will remain confidential. The entire plan is available to any Board member to review and is sent annually to our Chair to sign off on. His signature, along with mine, Laura's and Susanne's as well as those of the Fire Marshall and the Police Chief are required. 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

Hoping that the warm summer air has provided some time for you to think of and/or approach some **potential new Trustees**, please let me know. I'd be happy to reach out to him/her and set up a meeting with potential candidates and our Governance Committee.

On our August Meeting Agenda will be time to discuss a general school update as well as **general board items** including scheduling our upcoming Annual Meeting, Officer Slate, Committee Assignments. We also need to plan for the continuing work of now drawing up our **Strategic Plan**.

Facility

Over the summer our carpets got their annual deep cleaning. Additionally, the 2 new adult-only bathrooms were built inside of our space, adjacent to our front office. This now means that we will not need to exit our space (except for our janitor in the evenings when he brings out the trash).

This month our **fire extinguishers** were inspected, and we refurbished a small number of them, based on their age (6 years old).

Outside there was also lots of action. To deal with a serious water issue, the sidewalk, a portion of the new blacktop, and much of the lawn was dug up over the last few weeks. Much of that has now been repaired...and sod has been put down. I learned today that the repair seems to have created a new issue with the sprinkler system, but hopefully that can be quickly repaired so the sod doesn't die out. We will be getting a new basketball hoop installed next week and a few other Montessori-friendly stations for our younger students to utilize. A reminder, we also have use of the small field that is located across the access road that leads to and from the rear of the building.

MFCS ChildCare Program

Enrollment in our Child Care Program is strong out of the gate this year. Susanne is not in this week, so I'm not able to provide up-to-date enrollment numbers at this time, but hope to have them for the Tuesday meeting.

The AfterCare Program Coordinator this year is Devon Venne who will also be our Fitness Instructor. The program will be supervised by Shannon Helie. Devon will have shift assistance from other staff members. Our BeforeCare will be staffed by our paraprofessionals and Kristin Ross, who is our 2-day a week, Office Assistant; and our KinderCare will be staffed as it has been for the last two years - by our Kindergarten Lead and Assistant Teacher, Kristin Lang and Kayla Messana.

Enrollment & Prep for the New School Year

We completed the year with a pretty clear picture of which students would be coming back, and who would be moving to other school/educational environments. But as always happens, August brought some surprises and we only learned of plans of several students to un-enroll in the last week or so. It's interesting to look at the movement, as a data point for considering our organization's growth and related challenges.

Kinder: Unlike last year when we had a class of nearly ALL siblings, this year the majority of our families are new to MFCS.

Lower Elementary: We had an unusual amount of movement in our Lower El this spring, summer.

- Before the summer, 5 Lower El students (including 2 from one family) un-enrolled from MFCS. As usual, there were a variety of reasons from moving out of state, to returning to neighborhood schools, to home schooling.
- In mid-ate August, we had a few late breaking notifications from families – another 5 Lower Elementary students un-enrolled for various reasons. As of this writing, these spots are now filled.

Upper Elementary: At the time of the Lottery there were no openings in Upper El. Here's a recap of what has transpired:

- Before the summer, nine (9) 5th grade students un-enrolled from MFCS in order to attend various schools to begin their middle school experience.
- Before the summer, one (1) 4th grade student un-enrolled one to be homeschooled and one to go to private school.
- Remember we had more than twenty-four (24) 5th graders, so their departure did not open spots in our Upper El immediately, as only some of those spots needed to be filled to keep our classroom numbers consistently at 24 per room.
- In late August, we learned that 4 more Upper El students un-enrolled from MFCS in order attend a variety of schools - 1 to begin the middle school experience, 3 others because their families moved. As of this writing, those spots have (finally!) been filled.

Here's a snapshot of our 168 kiddos as broken down by grade for the start of the school year (as of today):

Kinder: 24;

Lower El: 1st = 24; 2nd = 24; 3rd = 24;

Upper El: 4th = 28; 5th = 24; 6th = 20

This means we have the largest 6th Year Cohort in our history (this is our 4th cohort), but the 5th year crew is small, so next summer, we can expect to see a FAR smaller 6th Year cohort... At the moment though, we are thrilled to have so many 6th year students and look forward to some great programming for/with them!

All of our **Handbooks** – Staff, Family, ChildCare and Volunteer – have been updated as needed, and posted on our website.

Financial

Special Education reimbursement payments: In early summer, all outstanding payments from FY18 were made, even the final \$35K which MSD owed us into late July.

SpEd in relation to Manchester: We do not yet have an agreement with the District of Manchester (MSD) regarding for special SpEd this school year. Our lawyers, with leadership from Naomi and me, Laura and Maryclare, have been working on this all summer long. We will discuss this when we are together...perhaps by then we will have an update.

Unemployment: One of our paraprofessionals on staff last year will not be returning this year, as her students no longer require her services (one graduated 6th grade, and one has dropped the para support from his IEP). She made an unemployment claim, as is her right, as she was not offered a contract for this coming year. The last correspondence I received from the Unemployment Office states that she will not longer qualify after the initial period of payment over the summer. The total cost to us for her benefit came to just under \$200 (remember we pay directly, as we don't pay into the state's unemployment fund).

Legislative Update

As you know Full-Day Kindergarten is being funding by KINO gambling. In this first year, the state is only providing an additional \$1100 per student for schools with full-day programs. That was not sufficient to cover all-day costs for us. However, as you will recall from our budget process, since we are more than ½ day (and our schedule far surpassed the number of ½ day hours for the year), we are able to access a portion (pro-rated) of those funds for this school year.

MFCS Community Building & Volunteerism

Over the summer I've worked closely with the parent organizer, Amanda Gerardi, on our **3rd Annual Road Race and Family Fun Run scheduled for September 23rd at SNHU's new Penmen Stadium**. The fun starts at 9am!

We are nearing the deadline for securing sponsorship for the event which is a key element to the financial success of the event. Sponsorship provides some visibility for sponros on Race Day and beyond – sponsors' family name or business name/ logo will appear on the race day t-shirts and there are a few more benefits, too!. Please let me know ASAP if you would like to be a Race Day Sponsor (deadline is Sept 4).

Either way, please plan to come and run, walk or just cheer us on! You can register for the day here: <https://racewire.com/register.php?id=9624>. **There is also a link on our website's homepage, <http://www.millfalls.org>.**

Many of you were able to join us at the **Night of Community** event in June. While I am hopeful that we may be able to once again use that space, there may be a rental fee this time. So other options would be GREAT to explore. Please let me know if you have any ideas or contacts you can share!

Our **second MFCS Summer Art Camp week** ran from July 9-13th and by all accounts was a big hit! The teachers had a blast, along with their students. Ms. Shannon (Lower El) and Ms. Kristin (Kinder) lead campers in an exploration of the art and style of Leo Leoni. Each day campers created their own works of art based on Leoni's techniques.

As I've shared in the past, MFCS is part of a **consortium** of school districts and one other charter in support of our English Language Learners (ELL). Together, these many schools & districts have enough students to apply as a group for federal funds that support these learners. Last year we were able to provide professional development and acquire materials for our ELL students. We look forward to access this year's funds again (approximately \$1000) for additional supports.

Please consider joining us on **Wednesday, August 29th for our Annual Popsicle Party**, which is held here at school from **6:30-7:30pm**. It is a great way for you to introduce yourselves to the parent and student community, and give them the chance to thank you for your service!

Human Resources

Looking forward to next week when we welcome new and returning staff during our **Opening Days** (M-Th). During the week, our Retirement and Aflac brokers will meet with staff. We will also have a mindfulness/meditation session with Yogi, Rosy Latona from White Swan Yoga.

We are thrilled to have Laura W. back from her maternity leave. We missed her! We are also deeply appreciative to Shannon who stepped in and did an outstanding job in her stead. Laura will be working 4 day-weeks this year; Shannon will be our **Assistant EPD**, filling many of the roles of the EPD on those days when Laura is not in.

In addition, we will begin the year with a new face at the front desk, two days a week. **Kristin Ross**, our part time **Office Assistant**, will welcome folks and man the front office when **Roxanne**, our **Office Manager**, is working on other projects. We have created a clear flow **Chart of Roles and Responsibilities** so that staff understands who is working on what, and who to speak to, about the various project, ideas, issues and concerns as they arise.

Laura will speak to some of the specifics on **hiring**, but we are a full house with just 2 new staff members, and possibly a second Special Educator and one more paraprofessional, if the agreement with the Manchester School District can be completed. Laura and Maryclare have been interviewing candidates for these positions, so that we are prepared, if/when MSD responds with forward movement to sign the agreement.

Please take a moment to review our Faculty/Staff Page here:
<http://millfalls.org/education/administration-faculty/>

Foundation News:

The Foundation hopes to meet in the early fall to focus on the work of the 2018/19 School Year. The Foundation currently has \$290,268 in it's account.