



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 for January 16, 2019

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

1. Call to Order, Roll Call & Welcome Public by Marr:

Present: Connor, Johnson, Kacavas, Trombley, Marr, Butterfield, Levin; **Absent:** Wrubleski, Brough, DePasse

2. Meeting Business

a. Approval of Minutes from December 2018 meetings

Motion: Kacavas moved to approve the December Meeting Minutes; Trombley seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.

6. School Update

a. Educational Program Director (*please also see attached*). In Wrubleski's absence, Levin highlighted the January 2nd Professional Development Conference organized by Mill Falls and River Valley; the Paraprofessional Professional Development & Training workshops occurring monthly at school; and the Social Competency Workshop the school will be hosting in February.

b. Executive Director (*please also see attached*). Beyond her report, Levin shared the following: The 2019 Lottery numbers as of 1/14/19 are as follows: 82 total applications, including sibling and paper apps; 13 sibling apps with 10 for kinder. She also shared that the MFCS Foundation has moved forward with putting some of their funds into CDs at the Bank of NH as noted here: \$100K, \$50K, \$50K in 15 mos CD's at 2.5% interest per year (should bring in about \$5000); \$76K will now be kept in the Foundation's new Sweep Account at 1.9% (should bring in about \$1500); and \$25K will remain in checking. The Bank of NH, also increased the school's Sweep Account to 1.9%. Levin also noted that there is a bill being proposed by the NH House, which focuses on the percentage of state certified educators at each charter school. She will keep members posted as that and other proposed legislation evolves.

5. Montessori Moment: Sherry Humphrey, MFCS Reading Interventionist. Humphrey shared a video showing her work with a student while utilizing Foundations, a research-based material and strategy essential to a comprehensive reading,

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

a. Finance Committee: Roberge led the review of the December budget-to-actual, noting there were no unexpected elements to this month's report.

b. Foundation Update: Levin engaged the Board in its consideration of who they might invite to Montessori Morning Tours and how the tours link to the guest list at the Foundation's Annual Leadership Breakfast scheduled for May. There was also a brief brainstorming session to consider potential guest speakers for the Breakfast.

8. Program

a: Facility Issues Update: Required Lead Testing in Drinking Water: Levin shared that a new NH law requires that each school (including charters) test their drinking water for the presence of lead. We have scheduled our test for later in January. The Board suggested that Levin check in to see if the neighboring school – MC2, also housed at 100 William Loeb Drive - has scheduled their test, and if it would be possible to share any related cost.

b: Strategic Plan Related:

1: Levin reported that she had a very productive meeting with Heffernan and also provided a few examples of other schools' and districts' strategic plan-related literature. Levin will work to first create a spreadsheet mapped to the areas identified in the research phase of the plan, from there, the plan's structure will take shape. She also noted that there may need to be some more time spent by the Board

to develop some Board-specific goals and activities related to the plan. The staff did much of that work last spring, so that section of the plan will be more fleshed out from the onset. She noted again that many of those ideas are already being tested and others implemented at school.

2: Name Change or DBA: Levin led a discussion about the integration of “Montessori” into the school’s name, as per a goal of the strategic planning research work. The group settled on **Mill Falls Public Montessori: a chartered school** as the formal change. Levin and Butterfield will contact the secretary of state to determine next steps.

9. Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 20, 5:45pm (Butterfield, 2 min).

10. Adjournment: Motion: Kacavas moved to adjourn at 6:39pm; Trombley second. **Vote:** Unanimous.



**Educational Program Director
Board Report
January 16, 2019**

Staff Professional Development:

- **Public Montessori Conference:** On January 3rd, the Mill Falls staff traveled to Newburyport to participate in our 2nd annual Public Montessori conference. This year we had participants from both Hill View Montessori in Haverhill and Dante Alighieri Montessori in Boston in addition to River Valley Charter School. The structure of the day varied from last year in that we focused on best practices in the classroom and the feedback was great from teachers! Topics included ELL support, math fact strategies, writing lessons using 6 Traits, grammar symbolizing and much more. We hope to continue this orchestrating this conference in coming years.
- **Paraprofessional training:** The January paraprofessional training will focus on a paraprofessional's role and responsibilities in the classroom as well as support for executive functioning in the classroom.
- **Social Competency:** On February 13th, we will be hosting a workshop on the topic of Social Competencies. Elise Wulff from the Aspire program based out of Mass General Hospital for Children in Boston MA, will facilitate this talk to support the growth of a child-centered approach to creating community by utilizing the classroom as a learning platform. Elise primarily works with children on the Autism Spectrum; however this topic applies to all students.

NAEP prep: I am in the final stages of preparing for this assessment, which is scheduled to occur on February 20th. We have 25 fourth grade students scheduled to take this assessment, which should take no more than 90 minutes. Students will be tested in the areas of math and reading on either a tablet or with pencil and paper.

Afterschool Programs: Ski club at McIntyre Ski Area began the first full week back in January. first through sixth grade students carpool with parents and have the opportunity to take ski or snowboard lessons based on skill level through the McIntyre ski program.



**Executive Director's Report
For the January 16, 2019
MFCs School Board Meeting
Submitted by Meryl Levin**

Required Reporting

This month, we updated our student roster to reflect our student body, in part in preparation for the state standardized testing later this year.

Board Related

Last week, I met with Maryclare to discuss best practices for our **Strategic Plan writing**. She guided me in the creation of a document, which will map ideas identified during our research and planning and will be related to the three areas our plan work identified. This will link to the school as well as the Board and provide us with a reference source for our work and a means of sharing our work with the community. Once drafted, I will share that working document with the Governance Committee, and the Committee will then bring it forward to the full Board.

At our January Board Meeting, we will also discuss the possible **name change** and **Montessori Morning Tours** and the Board's role in helping us expand our reach for building our guest lists.

Facility

In early January, Members of the staff Safety Committee held our second workshop with members of the **NH Homeland Security Office**. We reviewed the details of our existing Emergency Plan, and talked about some areas of improvement. Following that workshop, the NH Homeland Security Office sent on some small suggestions for corrections/improvements. Additionally, we expect to work with **Manchester Police Officer** Nathan Linstad, to train our staff in some additional response methods. After that training, there may be some additions made to our existing emergency response plan for required the 2019/20 submission to the state.

Our landlord called me last week to check in about the adjacent space. We agreed our brokers would speak about it. I shared that we had applied for some Homeland Security funds to increase security in our front area and discussed the glass doors that separate us from the MC2 space.

2019 Enrollment Lottery & Enrollment Overview

The New Year marked that start of **2019 Enrollment Lottery**. Just a week in, we received over 80 applications. Despite a 2-hour delay on the day of our first Information Session, a few intrepid families made the trek to MFCs to join me. The **next Info Session is on January 29th**. Please spread the word on your FB page or other social media, as well as by word of mouth or via email. Here is a link to all things Lottery related on our website: <https://millfalls.org/the-2019-lottery> . Thank you!!!

We began the New Year with all 168 student spots 100% filled. But as some of you are aware, I worked through the vacation to fill **4 spots** left open by the departure of 2 families. I spoke with quite a number of wait list families – to fill both the Upper and Lower Elementary spots we had. It's not always easy to fill spots mid-year, especially for our Upper EI Program, but this year it has been surprisingly difficult to fill the Lower EI spots as well. We had a similar experience in late October, when another family left to homeschool their children. I don't hear any negative responses about our program when I speak to wait list families. Quite the opposite, but as always, each family has their reasons if they decline; many ponder and are conflicted, but decide to stay where they are, rather than enroll with us.

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 and on most days do not have space for drop-ins. Here's a breakdown of all programs as of this week:

BeforeCare (7-8:15am) = 10 full time; KinderCare (12-3pm) = 8 full time, 5 part time;
AfterCare (3-5:45pm) = 13 full time, 5 part time, plus extended kinders (3-5:45) = 1 full-time, 3 part time.

Financial

SpEd, Manchester: Manchester remains current in its reimbursements. **SpEd, Concord:** The district has now paid the majority of overdue service invoices. **SpEd, Goffstown:** Is currently behind in its payment, but we are in touch with them, and expect that the invoices will be paid in full shortly. **All other Districts** are in good standing.

MFCS Community Building & Volunteerism

We had a great turn out at the **2nd Annual Northern New England Montessori Convening**. Laura and I once again enjoyed working with our colleagues at River Valley Charter School to organize this ½ day Professional Development Day spent soaking in all things Montessori. Members of each attending school presented at this best practices convening. There is talk about making it an all-day event next year.

Last Sunday, members of our MFCS Community were invited to attend the **SNHU Women's Basketball Game**, by our own staffer, Alyssa Reaves, who is also one of the Team's Assistant Coaches. Fun was had by all!

On January 7th, Laura, Roxanne and I attended a **meeting about busing** called by the outgoing Manchester School District's Superintendent, Dr. Vargas. All Manchester charter and parochial schools were brought together to discuss issues being faced by the schools, as well as provide a means for the District to discuss the issues they have in relation to the bus service.

On March 15th, MFCS staff will once again participate in the **Annual Charter School Best Practices Conference**. There are some workshops that are geared toward Charter School Board Members. Please let me know if you are interested in attending. The event is being hosted at Founders Academy here in Manchester.

This coming week, I will be hosting a **Winter & Spring Family Event/Fundraising Meeting** with MFCS Parent Leads on our Calendar Raffle, Game Night and Night of Community.

This week I will be attending the bi-monthly **DOE Charter School Leadership Meeting** in Concord.

Foundation News:

The Foundation met last week. I provided the Board with an overall school update, and an update of funds raised by the Foundation in FY18. We discussed expanding our range of funders, including consideration of support from foundations with appropriate projects. We also discussed possible sponsors and partners.

Related, we discussed the **2019 Leadership Fundraising Breakfast**, which is planned for early May (final date TBA). We are continuing to discuss effective guest speaker ideas. To build a successful event, members of both the School and Foundation Boards as well as other friends of Mill Falls, will join forces to help fill the room with leaders in business, politics and education by acting as table captains – working individually or in teams of 2, with support from me, to fill tables of 10, with a goal of 18 tables.

The Foundation members have also helped me connect with the **Education Committee of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce**. It is our hope that the Committee members will join a Montessori Morning Tour. It has been several years since members of the group have visited Mill Falls. If you have links to similar groups of business people in and around Manchester, please help me connect with your contact, all with the goal of expanding our reach and exposure and hopefully support sources.

The **Foundation's 2018 Annual Appeal** has raised \$6600.

The Foundation currently has \$301,975 in its **bank account**. The Foundation will be moving some of the funds into CD's. The rest will be part of the Foundation's new Sweep Account, like we have for the School's checking account.