



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 20, 2019

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

1. **Call to Order, Roll Call & Welcome Public** (Butterfield) 5:50pm.
Trombley, Marr, Kacavas, Butterfield, Wrubleski, Levin
2. **Agenda Update:** Tabled Board Engagement Discussion to next meeting, given that so many are out this month.
3. **Public Comment:** No public present.
4. **Meeting Business**
 - a. **Approval of Minutes** from January 2019 meeting: No quorum; will vote next time.
5. **Montessori Moment:**
 - Dividing Decimals** presented via video by Lauren Kolbe, Upper Elementary Lead Teacher
 - Fraction Presentation** via video by Anya Morales, Lower Elementary Lead Teacher
 - 100th Day Slide Show, 2019** presented by Levin.
6. **School Update**
 - a. **Educational Program Director** (*also see attached report*)

From her monthly report, Wrubleski noted that **assessments, data collection and reflection on our practice** have been the focus of recent staff work. This is the second year we have had our Child Study Team, which looks at data from assessments and discusses ways we can support students who have holes or where holes are suspected as impediments to student progress. She discussed that data without reflection is not useful. The Child Study Team is a deliberate way to get an overview of all the children in the school.

Wrubleski explained that this year staff didn't go to the annual **Charter School Conference**, because there weren't workshops that matched our needs as a school; only Meryl went. It was a very good decision for the rest of the staff. MFCS staff had a very productive day looking at math data and developing game plans for future meetings and discussing student transition between our program levels - k to 1st (Lower Elementary) and 3rd to 4th (Upper Elementary). Staff also discussed the Social Competency Workshop hosted at MFCS on the February early release day to discuss ways of integrating what the speaker shared, including exercises for kids to use in making eye contact and to develop other social skills.

Wrubleski ended by touching on parent-teacher conferences. The Fall conferences are mandatory, but the spring conference is elective. Wrubleski encouraged the teachers to think outside the box in terms of how to connect with the parents/guardians in March (call or do via email), to give some flexibility to the format. This generated different means of interacting with parents. The progress reports are rich with information as well. She stressed that our teachers reach out if there are concerns and they do so at any point during the year.
 - b. **Executive Director** (*also see attached report*)

Levin shared that she has led 4 **Montessori Morning Tours** this winter, the last of which was today. The tours featured new and very interesting people who had not been to MFCS before. She is hopeful that some partnerships and new paths will come out of the meetings.

In terms of Facility, today she filed an extension (as expected) with the state because the **safety improvements** will not be completed by the April 1 date, as she and Roland are still line up installers and waiting on receipt of some materials.

Levin highlighted the **Bus Update**, which features that at long last the District of Manchester has now assigned 3 buses to MFCS, which only serve our kids, and now provides 2 MC2-only buses to that school. Additionally, the District will now charge \$117/bus per day for any scheduling that doesn't match the

Districts. Levin will seek some more information about this plan, which was abruptly shared at a meeting of charter and parochial school leaders in late February.

Levin shared that she and Wrubleski and Heffernan met earlier this week with Mary Steady of the Manchester School District to discuss the plan for **SpEd services for next year**, as per the current agreement. All agreed that the current plan is working well. The MFCS team shared that we will need at least one more para because some students are transitioning to Upper Elementary from Lower into classrooms that don't have para support. MFCS is expected to send a para needs grid to Steady as follow up, along with an addendum for the 2019/20 school year to extend the current agreement.

Levin reminded Trustees that it is currently **Calendar Raffle Sales Month**. There are great prizes to be won and if we all purchase a few, that will help the parent-organizer of this all-school fundraiser reach the goal of \$12,000.

She concluded with an update on the **2019 Leadership Breakfast**. In a late breaking change of plans, the expected speaker declined, and so she is working with the Foundation to secure a new speaker. As soon as that is settled, she will share all invitation information with the Board and reminded them of their duty as table captains to help fill the room. In advance of the completed invitation, she did ask that they begin to think about who they will be inviting.

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

a. Finance Committee (Levin) Review Budget-to-Actual: Levin shared that there are no unexpected trends or expenses.

b. Brief Budget Discussion (Levin): She also noted that in the coming weeks the Finance Committee will come together to discuss the budget for 2019/20. She expects to have a draft budget for the April meeting. The group discussed and agreed that the new bus cost would not cause cancellation or policy change in our early release scheduling for 2019/20.

8. Next Meeting: **Wednesday, April 17, 5:45pm** (Butterfield, 2 min).

11. Adjournment:

Motion: Kacavas motioned to adjourn at 7:06pm; Trombley seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.



**Executive Director's Report
For the March 20, 2019
MFCs School Board Meeting
Submitted by Meryl Levin**

Foundation News:

It's spring, so it must be time for planning work, including sponsorship gathering, for the **2019 Leadership Fundraising Breakfast** (mid-May, date being finalized now). I will **need each of you to be a table captain or co-captain** in order to help fill tables of 10 (including you), with the goal of 18 tables. I will be sending you guest invitation information this coming week. **A reminder that the goal is to fill the room with leaders in business, politics and education...and of course to focus your guest list on folks who can and will make a donation on the morning of the breakfast.** There is no charge to attend, but there is an ask at the event.

Further, **I am also looking for sponsors of the Leadership Breakfast from \$250-\$5000** (as per past levels). If you have ANY leads, either business or individual, please let me know ASAP so that we can approach the potential sponsors. This is a key event component in raising CRITICAL funds for our school as part of this annual event!

The Foundation is currently holding \$307,249. The Foundation's new Sweep Account and the short-term CD's will be generating interest, which will be reported periodically.

Required Reporting

Upcoming DOE reporting includes: **2019-20 School Calendar, School Board Membership;** and **Teacher Salary Schedule.** We must always wait to complete our calendar until after the District of Manchester has completed theirs, so that we can match our school calendars as closely as possible. This month, I've worked to complete the **Annual Civil Rights Survey** – a bear of a report due in April. According to the survey's website, the purpose of the survey "is to obtain data related to the nation's public school districts and elementary and secondary schools' obligation to provide equal educational opportunity."

Board Related

I've been leading **Montessori Morning Tours** all winter, with the final one scheduled for **Wednesday March 20th. All tours run from 9-10am and I do need an RSVP** so I can properly welcome our guests. The March 20th tour was selected by the Manchester Chamber's Education Committee – I'm expecting 5 members as of this writing, with another 5 people I've invited from other organizations. If there are people you have connected with, but who could not make any of the Tour dates this season, please share their information with me so that I can reach out to them at a future time. Thank you.

Please also see above (Foundation Update) re: Annual Leadership Breakfast and your role in helping make that event a true success!

Facility

We will soon be installing new metal/fire rated interior doors with treated windows as part of the **federal grant for safety improvements** we have received. A reminder that the grant covers 80% of the true costs of these safety improvements, and the school will cover the rest. Additionally, we will soon be purchasing and installing a KNOX box, Huge thanks to our former Board Chair, Roland Martin, for his help with this work!

Mill Falls EDP, Laura Wrubleski, has been working with the 2018/19 Student Leadership Team to develop and create a **sustainable school garden** (contained in garden boxes). They Team has had a consultation with MFCs Parent, Peter Boisvert, during their research period. Additionally, MFCs Parents have planned a **Beautification Day on April 20th** to further enhance our outdoors –

including adding some more games painted on the concrete and plantings. Stay tuned for more information, and please let me know directly if you'd like to participate!

2019 Enrollment Lottery & Enrollment Overview

Our **2019 Enrollment Lottery Season** came to a close last week. During the Enrollment Period I led 4 Lottery Information Sessions; each was well attended...two of them included a hearty morning snow storm before the start time! The final count of received applications, all of which were processed by Susanne, came to 188 including siblings of currently enrolled students. Our **Lottery Day** is this coming Tuesday, March 19th at 4:30pm. Our Lottery Official will be graphic designer, Stacy Scarlett, a long time supporter of our school.

As other schools begin to announce their admissions, we are beginning to hear from families who will be planning to un-enroll and move their children to other schools. We have a developing '**enrollment watch list**' of those we know or have heard will not be returning - especially our current 5th year students - and will continue to connect with families about this, so that we are not caught off guard in terms of openings, at the end of the year, once school is out. As you know, it is much more difficult for prospective families to understand what we do and how it all works when they visit over the summer, when school is all closed up. I will be working with Susanne to lead tours of those on the wait list before the end of the school year.

MFCS ChildCare Program

Enrollment in our Child Care Program remains at capacity, and our AfterCare wait list is still active. With the newest hire from outside our faculty, staffing has been normalized. While we did have a slight uptick in fees last year, we do not plan to increase the fees for 2019/20.

Busing

Just before February Break, and following almost a year of communication from our school administration and at times from parents regarding serious concerns/actions/behaviors/issues related to having our children ride the same buses as the much older students from MC2, the District decided to reverse their plan. On the Wednesday after February Break, **Mill Falls was assigned 3 buses ONLY for our students** and MC2 now has 2 buses only for their students. We are very pleased to have finally been heard by the District and relieved that this change has been made. Parents flooded the District with calls of concern following a very alarming afternoon bus situation just before February break. The change over to the new plan was rather chaotic unfortunately, but most issues were resolved by the end of the second week, based largely on hard work by the MTA team.

Last month The District called a meeting of all Manchester-located charter and parochial schools. It was described as a meeting about a 'review of transportation request process.' Once there, we were told that the schools (charter and parochial) would be charged **\$117/bus per day** for any days that are different from the Manchester District school calendar. So for an early release day when we use the usual morning buses, but then release early, they will charge us half of the \$117 per bus, per day. (With the bus change, we now have 3 buses, rather than the 5, which we had at the time of this meeting.) At the meeting, I noted that because we have a 6.5 hour school day, we count hours, not days (usually 175), while the district has a 6 hour day and counts days (usually 180). We usually finish the year sooner. In past years it has basically 'come out in the wash' in terms of the differences, and has therefore not been a discussion point., As you are aware, we do work carefully each year to match, as best we can, to the rest of the District's calendar. But that was not taken into consideration when the new plan was presented. We were told at that meeting that the new charge was put into effect immediately, following that meeting on February 20th. We asked at the meeting, and I have asked again this week, to have a date by which the District will approve their 2019/20 School Year Calendar so we can plan accordingly.

Financial

SpEd, Manchester: Manchester remains current in its reimbursements. As per our existing contract, we will be meeting with the Director of Students Services from Manchester, Mary

Steady, this coming week, to confirm that the current agreement will continue into next year. **SpEd, Concord:** The district is once again lagging in payment of service invoices. **All other Districts** are in good standing.

Please be aware that there is real potential that the legislature will pass **full-day kinder** beginning next year! It has passed in the house, and has significant support by the governor, whose wife has made this her key issue. There is still quite a distance for the bill to travel, but should this pass, it will of course alter our Child Care Program currently offered to our kinder, and have financial implications to our programming.

You should also note that there are a lot of **bills related to school funding in our state**. The current legislature is looking very carefully at how public education in our state is funded. For more information, I encourage you to add yourself to the NH Charter Alliance mailing list by visiting www.NHcharter schools.org.

MFCS Community Building & Volunteerism

This month we kicked off our annual **Calendar Raffle Fundraiser**. Each student was sent home with 10 calendars to sell. We have spoken to the students about the Raffle and asked them to think of 10 people who might want to buy a calendar to support our school – friends, relatives, coaches, and neighbors. The kids are excited about this, and we hope you will be, too! There is power in numbers. If everyone were to sell 10 calendars, we would raise well over our goal of \$12,000! Calendars can be purchased from March 4th - March 29th for \$10 each. Calendars may be purchased online, by cash or by check. Encourage your buyers to buy more than one! That will increase their chances of winning. The winner's name goes back into the drawing to try to win again...that is 30 chances to win these great prizes for only \$10 per calendar!

April is prize month! A ticket will be drawn each day during the month of April to determine that day's prize-winner. We will call/email the lucky daily winners and announce it on our School Facebook Page.

How do you handle the sales?

To Pay Online: Have your buyers scan this -->
which links to:



<http://www.millfalls.org/spring-calendar-raffle>
where they can access all 2019 Raffle info.

To Pay In Person: Have your buyers fill out their contact information at the bottom of the calendar. They keep the calendar; you keep the contact info. **Return the contact info AND payments to school by Friday, March 29th.**

Our **Annual Grandparents & Special Friends Day** held on March 12th was a great success. It was literally a standing room only crowd as we first gathered in our common area. There I shared information about our public Montessori setting, with a particular focus on the Montessori classroom environment. Our guests then spent the rest of the morning working on 'mini work plans' with the students they came to visit.

Friday, March 15th was the annual **NH Charter School Conference**. For the past many years, our staff has struggled to find workshops at the conference that were meaningful to them and their work. In late January, after reviewing the offerings for this year's conference, Laura and I decided that staff would take the day to work collaboratively at school. They spent time discussing program transitions (from Kinder to Lower EI and from Lower to Upper EI), revising the complex and powerful presentation from our February PD Day about Social Competency, and reviewing some issues related to our math program. I attended the Conference, held once again at Founders, representing Mill Falls and also leading a **workshop in Board Governance**. During my time there, I was able to network with some other charter leaders, formally and informally, which I found productive.

My work on the **Leadership Team for the state's newly awarded Preschool Development Grant (PDG)**, and my work with Liz Lahey, director of the **Civil Rights Unit** at the New Hampshire Attorney General's Office about student safety issues in relation to their civil rights, continues.

MFCS parent event organizers have planned a number of events in April: the **2019 Spaghetti Dinner on Thursday, April 11th and will be hosted by and held at MST**; all proceeds will benefit MFCS. The event will be advertised widely and will give visitors the chance to learn about both of these innovative public schools; our Annual **Game Night (Friday, April 5)** and a new event – **Paint Night (Thursday, April 18)**. Our **Annual Night of Community** celebration (**Saturday, June 1**) is once again be hosted by the Palace Theatre in their new(ish) space beside the theater on Hannover Street in Manchester. **Please plan to join us at the June 1 event!** Tickets information will be forthcoming.



**Educational Program Director
Board Report
March 20, 2019**

Data Collection and Child Study Team- The staff completed the second trimester assessments and data collection the beginning of February. Once this data is collected, each team meets with the Child Study Team to analyze the data for students, and to bring up any concerns that may arise after assessments are completed. The intention of this meeting to develop supports that may fill academic gaps and to ensure that students are getting individualized analysis from the team.

Parent Teacher Conferences- Parents had the opportunity to participate in the second trimester conferences this past Thursday. This allows for face time with the teacher to discuss any concerns one might have or ask questions regarding programming.

Scholastic Book Fair- During the parent teacher conferences, we hosted the second and final book fair of the year. We sold about \$4000 in books, granting us about \$2,500 in book dollars to spend. We are hoping to add to our country resources in the library with these funds. Thanks for the numerous parents that helped set up, run the registers and break down the fair this past Monday.

Grandparents and Special Friends Day- Additionally this past week, we hosted our annual Grandparents and Special Friends day. Grandparents started their adventure with a brief presentation from Meryl regarding MFCS and ended the discussion with the 100th day slide show. Our guests then entered into the classroom for a day of Montessori learning with their special friends. All and all, visitors were in-house for about 2 hours and enjoyed every bit of our!

Professional Development Day- We rounded out the week last week with an in-house professional development day and spent the time analyzing our internal data followed by brainstorming sessions to address identified needs at a global level. Additionally, we discussed implementation of supports discussed during the social competency workshop attended in February.

SAS Training- The staff began preparing for the annual state mandated standardized assessment called SAS. They have completed the necessary training for test administration, prepped the students by practicing the online test and discussed how to navigate assessment questions. This year's test begins on April 1st and should be completed by April 8th.