



*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 May 29, 2019**

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

### **1. Call to Order at 5:58pm (Butterfield)**

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

### **2. Meeting Business**

**a. Approval of Minutes** from April 2019 meeting

**Motion:** Marr motioned to approve the minutes; Trombley seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.

### **3. Montessori Moment:**

**The science of the life cycle of seeds and where they come from** provides additional curricular links to: language (matching word to picture and word to word) and sensorial (sound-related), presented by Kristin Lang, Kinder Lead Teacher.

### **6. School Update**

**a. Educational Program Director** (Wrubleski)

Began by discussing our **Montessori Audit** with Elizabeth Slade of NCMPs which is designed to look at what our systems are now in year 7. How are we doing and where can we improve. We chose to focus the work of this audit on SpEd, Math, the Montessori Coaching Model and our Assistant Teacher Model. Shannon, Laura and Meryl will be going to the Coaching Workshop in the Fall. The visiting team came for their first overview 'well school' visit in early May and will come back 3x next year to work with us. It is both proactive and exciting. Butterfield noted that it will be interesting to hear from them about what other models/solutions they are seeing across the country. Related, Kacavas asked if we are in touch with graduates to survey their transition from our public Montessori to their new schools. Levin and Wrubleski shared that we have just anecdotal positive information, but a survey has not been developed. The group agreed this would be interesting. *Please also see the rest of Wrubleski's report for other updates.*

**b. Executive Director** (Levin)

*Please see Levin's report for updates.*

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

**a. Finance Committee** (Levin) Review Budget-to-Actual

Levin and Roberge noted that there are no surprises in the budget-to-actual report. The group discussed technology in specific and planning for future purchases. Microsoft Surface was suggested by Michelle as a possible future item to consider for student and/or staff use.

### **8. Program**

**a: Closed Session:** Executive Director's Contract

**Motion:** Kacavas moved to go into closed meeting to discuss personnel issues; Trombley seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.

**Motion:** Kacavas motioned to end the closed session; Marr seconded. **Vote** Unanimous.

**Action:** The board moved to approve ED contract as presently written reflecting a 4% increase to base salary – a match to other staff, and to award a \$5,000 one-time bonus provided in FY19, in recognition of ED contributions over the past several years.

**b: Approval of 2019/20 Budget:** Discussion and Expected Vote

Levin projected and reviewed the draft budget with the Board, pausing on line items that had changed from last year, or since the draft was created.

**Motion:** Trombley moved to approve the draft budget as presented; Kacavas seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.

**c: Board Engagement:**

Butterfield shared that this item needs more time and energy than we have at this time – the end of the meeting. She wants this discussion to be free floating with good energy. She ask that each member come to the June meeting prepared to talk about what personally motivates them to serve on this board and what ideas do they have for future Board work and areas of focus. Staff engagement? Strategic plan? Events, etc. Tabled this engagement and strategic plan discussion until the June meeting.

**1: What does Engagement look like?**

Discussion

**2: Strategic Plan Related** (Levin, 15 min)

Check in on Plan Work

**9. Next Meeting: June 12, 2019.**

**11. Adjournment 7:48: Motion** to adjourn by Kacavas; seconded by Marr. **Vote:** Unanimous.



**Educational Program Director  
Board Report  
May 29, 2019**

**NCMPS Work:** This month we had our initial daylong visit from the National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector. Meryl and I had reached out to NCMPS as a way to gain additional perspective and supports; something of a Montessori audit. This visit involved hours of observation by the consultants, followed by meetings with various team members to discuss areas of strength and others in need of reflection. In the end, we walked away with a list of suggestions for improvement and/or ways to reconfigure systems and structures as a whole. Our plan is to meet via phone one more time this June and three additional times in person over the course of next school year to monitor our changes over the course of time.

**Variety Show:** Our second annual variety show kicked off with Joshua Mumford as the MC and 10 additional acts provided by kids of all ages. Acts varied from singing songs, to telling jokes and even unique shark facts.

**Art and Music Show:** Our first ever, joint art and music show took place on May 16th. Students had artwork displayed throughout the common space, while students performed Australian dances to traditional music.

**Upper Elementary Final Dance:** The upper el students participated in their final dance of the year. They planned a galaxy themed event where all students come dressed in preplanned colors, ready to party. DJ Ron volunteered his time again and made the night fun for all!

**Step Up Days:** Every Friday in the month of May, students transitioning to the next level get the opportunity to spend some time with buddies as a preview to the upcoming school year. They rotate each Friday to a different classroom weekly experiencing a bit from each teacher.

**Step Up Night:** This evening is designed to give transitioning student's parents an opportunity to meet next years teachers and to learning about the next levels curriculum. Students transition from kindergarten to first, third to fourth and of course our incoming kindergarten children.

**Living Wax Museum:** Annually, students write biographies on chosen inspirational figures in history. Usually the final presentation of this work is in the fall, however the team decided to move this presentation to the spring, and this timing change has paid off! Dressed as their biographical figures, students read biographies with confidence to willing audiences as the listeners traveled through the classrooms.

**Field Trips:** Lots of fieldtrips this may! Shaker Village for the 5th years, 4th years traveled to the state house and NH history museum, and traditionally the lower elementary takes a full level field trip and this year was to Squam Lake. The sixth years have their final overnight lock-in planned for next week.



**Executive Director's Report  
For the May 29, 2019  
MFCS School Board Meeting  
Submitted by Meryl Levin**

**Foundation News:**

On May 15<sup>th</sup>, the MFCS Foundation hosted its 7<sup>th</sup> Annual **2019 Leadership Fundraising Breakfast** at the Puritan Conference Center. The event was a resounding success. Guests included close to 180 elected officials, as well as business, education and community leaders, MFCS staff, students, parents and members from both Boards.. As is the case every year, the programming highlights the school's unique K-6 Montessori program, as well as other innovative educational initiatives. This year's guest speaker was **Eric Schwarz**, *Co-Founder and CEO of College for Social Innovation, Co-Founder and former CEO of Citizen Schools, former VP with City Year, and published Author*. Eric has led in the field of educational innovation for decades. His quest to bring cutting-edge, real-life enrichment opportunities into the lives of students and building links into their communities made him an amazing mission-match for Mill Falls, and a great voice to share with city and state leaders. The voices of Mill Falls students were also shared that morning, first in song led by Music Man John Chouinard, and later by a small group who discussed the meaning of their public Montessori school experience. Laura and I talked about the school's mission and Montessori approach to curriculum delivery. The ask for support was delivered with grace and humor by Mill Falls Parent, Heather Marr. The 2019 Breakfast was sponsored by Brady Sullivan Properties, Kanteres Real Estate, Elm Grove Properties, The Derryfield School, Accurate Title, and Applied Behavioral Mental Health Counseling. In advance of the event, we raised \$14,500 in sponsorship; to date, the event raised just over \$32,000 in total. My heartfelt thanks to all who helped make the morning such a success.

The Foundation's Sweep Account and the short-term CD's, which were arranged earlier this year, are interest generating. The Foundation is currently holding \$329,672.49.

**MFCS Community Building & Volunteerism**

The final fundraising event of the year will be held on **June 1 – our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Night of Community**. Designed to bring together ALL members of the MFCS Community, this event is co-produced by parents with my support. Once again we will hold the event at The Spotlight Room at the Palace Theatre. There will be food generously provided by Ignite Bar & Grill and live music and drinks, as well as an art auction. Tickets are \$35 and all board members are strongly encouraged to please join us for this end of the year celebration of our mission and goals and of our school community. You can click here to order your tickets: <https://bpt.me/4245742> or if you can't make it, please consider ordering tickets for teachers at a reduced price. Thank you for your participation.

I also want to note that our **2019 Graduation for our 6<sup>th</sup> Year Students** will be held on **June 5<sup>th</sup> at The Derryfield School**. It is our hope that members of the Board will be able to join us for this brief 1-hour (max) event which begins at 4pm. Please let me know if you can make it!

Our final deadline is fast approaching for my **Student Newspaper Team** who hopes to put out the final issue of the year in early June. This will be the paper's 6<sup>th</sup> issue since it began in 2016/17.

**Required Reporting**

There are several small surveys required by the DOE at the end of the year as well as the **End of the Year Report (EOY)** – a monster of a report that references extensive info on each student who attended MFCS in a given school year. Once completed, the report is the bases for the final per pupil aid deposit for this school year (generally received in late June).

**Board Related**

Several weeks back I sent out the **draft of the Strategic Planning Document**. There is still a good deal of work to complete on that, including a mapping of the Board's plan for itself over the next three years. This item will be on our agenda for discussion and planning purposes.

### **Facility**

As you will notice when you come in for the Board meeting, our interior front doors have now been replaced, and painted. This, along with other safety improvements have been funded by a **federal grant for safety improvements**. The final step in the improvements we requested will be the installation of the KNOX box. Once all improvements are complete, I will request reimbursement from the state, which is managing these federal funds. A reminder that the grant covers 80% of the improvement costs; the school is responsible to cover the other 20%. Former MFCS Board Chair, Roland Martin, has been an amazing partner in this work...please thank him when next you see him!

### **2019 Enrollment Lottery & Enrollment Overview**

At this time, our enrollment eyes are firmly focused on our **watch list**. We use this tool to help us get a clearer sense of family's plans for next year, especially from the families of our current 5<sup>th</sup> year students. Thus far we have 3 new students enrolled for next year, and have at least another 2-3 spots that we expect to have to fill between now and September (though hopefully sooner than that). This list grows annually at this time of year, as families finalize their plans and begin to share those plans with us, even though nearly all of our families have told us they plan to return next year. We will continue to connect with our families about this, so that we are not caught off guard in terms of openings at the end of the year and into the summer, 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. This spring we have been conducting tours for those on our wait list so they can see us in action.

### **MFCS ChildCare Program**

**Enrollment** in our Child Care Program remains at capacity. Susanne and I have worked with our bookkeeper, Allison DeCesere, to develop a **simpler billing system** for the Program going forward. Next year we will be accepting electronic payment of ChildCare bills for our participating families.

As of May 28, the following is our 2019/20 ChildCare Enrollment: **BeforeCare (7-8:15am)**: 5 full time. **KinderCare (12-3)**: 10 full time; 1 part time. **AfterCare (3-5:45pm)**: 20 full time (5 of whom are kinders); 5 part time; currently 1 on wait list. We expect that more Kinder families will sign up over the next few months through the start of the school year.

### **Financial**

At this month's board meeting, we will be finalizing the **FY20 Budget**. As of this writing, there is no clarity about any changes regarding full-time Kinder funding at the state level. Additionally, there is still talk of funding building aid for the first time in a long-time. But again, that is tied up in the legislative budget deliberation, which may not be finalized until late June.

**SpEd Manchester**: We have signed the 2019/20 Agreement with the District. It is our original agreement with a 2019/20 amendment in terms of para needs and rates. At this time, **All Districts** are in good standing with regard to their reimbursement payments.

### **Human Resources**

As is our annual process, earlier this spring we posted most of our positions in a variety of online venues including local collages/universities, the Center for Non Profits, School Spring, and our website among other. We have hired our new full-time Project Manager (Susanne will not be returning) and Laura is in the process of interviewing for openings in our teaching staff.

We are **seeking new staff for our AfterCare Program (3-5:45pm)** – both a coordinator and assistants to work with the children. If you have ANY leads on possible candidates or sources for candidates, please be in touch with me directly!