



*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 July 15, 2020**

Public Meeting held remotely as per emergency provisions during COVID-19 State of Emergency

### **1. Call to Order & Welcome Public**

Butterfield called the meeting to order at 5:49pm under Gov Exec #12; the Board met remotely - no members physically present. For Meeting access, public was instructed to contact [Meryl.Levin@millfalls.org](mailto:Meryl.Levin@millfalls.org). No member of the public contacted her for access before or during the meeting.

**Roll Call:** Present: Bee, Butterfield, Corriveau, DePasse, Johnson, Levin, Marr, Talbot, Trombley, and Wrubleski; Connors arrived at 6:05pm. Invited guests – Heather Marr & Hind Bashier.

2. **Public Comment:** No public present on the call, nor emails from public received during remote session.

### **3. Meeting Business**

a. **Approval of Minutes** from June 10, 2020 meeting

**Motion:** Marr moved to approve meeting minutes; Trombley seconded.

**Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous.

### **5. Finance Policy for the Administration of Federal Grant Funds (10 min. Levin/Trombley)**

Levin & Trombley shared that each school that accepts federal funds are required to have policies that relate to the use of those funds. The NH Department of Education has recently brought on a person to oversee and monitor federal fund usage. These policies will help direct us in our steps when accessing, using and documenting federal funds. Marr asked if there is a reporting component; Levin shared that the reporting happens on the state's DOE single-sign on site through which the projects and requests for reimbursement are made. Levin added that there is also a performance measurement requirement on the DOE site as well as an end of project summary that is completed when the grant period ends. Additionally, she noted if there is a salary component to the grant, that there must also be documentation of that staffer's 'time and effort' as noted in the policy being proposed.

**Motion:** Talbot moved to approve the Finance Policy for the Administration of Federal Grant Funds; Johnson seconded.

**Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous.

### **6: Facility Update Related to Outstanding issue**

Butterfield provided an update following written communication with the landlord. The focus of the communication has largely related to ventilation and air quality as well as adequate temperature. The landlord's daughter, newly in place as our point of contact, has been in timely communication with us on these issues, as well as the exterior front door that will soon be replaced.

### **7. Update on COVID-related Planning for the 2020/21 School year (Levin & Wrubleski)**

Levin began with an overview of the planning process:

- The state announced guidelines since last we met, and left the details up to local control. With that, we have continued our work as an Admin Team and with the COVID Think Tank (a small group of staff members) which began meeting in early July. The Think Tank has helped us brainstorm, research and develop the needed resources and systems for our 2020/21 return to school.

- Laura has begun a series of meeting with Elizabeth Slade of Montessori in Action (MIA) – our Montessori Coach and we have both attended MIA’s seminar on reopening public Montessori Schools. Some of our teachers will also attend their seminars focused on teaching in the age of COVID.
- The results of this work along with additional support from the other members of our admin team, will be written up into a plan to be shared with our school community at the end of the July.
- Given the physical size of our school, as well as our commitment to attending to the strong recommendations by healthcare professionals for social distancing during this pandemic, we are only preparing for two options at this time: Hybrid and Total Remote Learning.
- It is important to know that we must and will remain flexible with regard to the teaching model. We are fully aware that circumstances such as community health or staffing levels, or significant scientific or medical data may shift, causing a change in the learning model at any (perhaps many) points from the start of the year, or anytime during the year.
- Additionally, in order to effectively execute these learning models, we also need to know that we have the confidence of staff and families to reopen the doors.
- Safety has been at the core of our planning work

**Wrubleski discussed:**

**Teaching & Learning Models:**

- **Hybrid Model:** It is currently understood that a key strategy for reducing the spread of disease is the establishment of stable groups (cohorts) in schools. This plan involves a combination of in-person and remote learning for students; with the ability to maintain 6’ physical distancing by limiting the number of students to 50% of the usual class size. The final schedule for the Hybrid Model will be dependent on Manchester’s in-person schedule and plan due to our busing agreement. Instructional days will remain consistent for in-person learning days and will include Montessori Work Cycles, small group lessons, classroom meetings, and many of the usual activities of our classrooms (as can be done safely given the distancing requirements). Our DRAFT schedule for the Hybrid Learning Model: Monday / Thursday: Cohort A and Tuesday / Friday: Cohort B with Both Cohorts Learning at Home on Wednesdays.
- **Fully Remote Model:** This model will be offered for those who are not able or willing to attend school in person. This model will also be accessed if circumstances require that the whole-school or individual classrooms need to return to remote learning. All learning will take place at home, Monday – Friday. Students will conduct all schoolwork at home; Students will be required to remotely attend daily classroom meetings; Students will be required to remotely attend at least one support check in daily; Students shall remotely attend live lessons and access recorded lessons as directed by their teachers; Students’ daily work must be completed and submitted by 3:15 pm to be counted as a school; If the child’s care situation on remote days can’t support student work expectation/completion, parents must work with the school to collaboratively develop a plan so that the student can meet academic work expectations.
- **Big Works Wednesdays for Hybrid & Remote Learners:** Students will be engaging in Required Big Works Day and additional time to catch up on the work output expectations which some students / families may need. Staff will be Planning / Lesson Recording / Collaboration as well as making time to check in with students. The facility will also be cleaned, and classroom organized.

**Protecting our Montessori Heart**

We acknowledge that neither the Hybrid nor the Fully Remote Models are perfect models. However, our goal is to create a learning environment for our students and staff that is stimulating and engaging and supports our students’ curiosity and independence. We are working with our staff and our Montessori Coach at Montessori in Action to **intentionally weave Montessori philosophy into everything we do** during these challenging times.

**Levin: Family-School Partnership Built on Trust: The Key to Our Success**

A successful year must include a **trust-driven partnership with our families and staff, including** open 2-way communication and personal responsibility in relation to both the health of adult and child members of our school community, and to the commitment by families to fully engage in the school model and partner with us to set the stage for student success. We view this as part of the Montessori Grace, Courtesy and Respect -

core operating principals at Mill Falls which, as always, extends to include the adults in our community as well as the children.

### **Wrubleski: Successful Academic Programming in the Age of COVID**

By design remote learning is included in both learning models, we believe a successful academic year must include: Clarity of Attendance Expectations; Clarity of Academic Work Expectations; Live Instruction and Interaction even when students are learning remotely; Method for small group lessons to be delivered with social distancing; Opportunities for students to work collaboratively and safely when at school and possibly from home; Reasonable and clear staff expectations given this double-teaching model so that they can have life balance and social/emotional health.

### **Levin Continued:**

**The Manchester Connection: We are tied inextricably to the Manchester School District.** Here's how:

The Busing agreement that allows for any Manchester resident student to take the bus; over 80% of our students are Manchester residents and many have siblings at different Manchester schools; related and special education services for our Manchester students on IEPs. Therefore, our model will need to be a close match to Manchester's plan, otherwise we risk alienating ourselves from our school families and incurring incalculable costs related to busing. Manchester does not expect to finalize their plan until much closer to the start of school, and like Mill Falls, circumstances on the ground may alter what learning models they are able to provide. We await the scheduling of a meeting where it is expected they will share important information with us about their transportation plans and their own hybrid model which may impact our final scheduling of our student cohorts for the hybrid model.

### **Facility, Operations, Health & Safety**

Levin touched on areas that will be included in the School ReStart Plan, including: Daily Health Screening Protocol for students and staff; required wearing of Facial Covering (and mentioned 'mask break' areas and breaks at recess and during snack and lunch); Social distancing guidelines; limiting non-essential traffic in the building; development of protocol for suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19 and related quarantine/isolation protocol as developed with healthcare professionals; Ventilation / Air Flow including fresh airflow, filter cleaning schedule, humidity levels and temperature levels. Student supplies for single-person use (outdoors and indoors); no-touch operations in the kitchen, bathrooms, and water fountain; hand sanitizing stations throughout the building including some camping sinks; cleaning of High touch areas in classrooms, front office, common spaces and bathrooms will be cleaned multiple times per day; Development of Nightly Cleaning Plan which will include CDC-approved cleaning materials and will clean high-touch areas nightly; establishing a closure and cleaning protocol in the event of a confirmed case. Collecting resources to address the mental health and trauma experienced by all in our school community.

### **Technology Purchase for 1:1 Access: One of our earliest decisions;**

Driven by the belief that many of our families suffered quietly during the emergent and near overnight switch from in-person learning to total remote last March. Many of our families made do with the technology they had, but often this was not designed for our students to work independently, as they are expected to do at school. This summer's purchase of units to enable 1:1 technology access will be both a safety measure at school (children work with just one machine/don't share) AND will facilitate their learning at home. Purchase Costs: \$45,001 for 145 Chromebooks, 5 charging carts, and the necessary Google Licenses. So far, we have received 96 Chromebooks and 5 charging stations and the Google Licenses. We await the balance of the Chromebook order – international shortage of machines! Largely paid through title, rollover funds and HY21 budgeted funds; still looking to raise the final \$10,300.

### **What Would Cause us to flip to remote learning only:**

Changes in local, state or federal guidelines or other policies; subsequent scientific/medical data regarding significant impact on the projections for future spread or risk could cause us to re-evaluate at ANY time; confidence that the procedures we've put in place allow for appropriate physical distancing. Negative changes in health of those in our school, city, region, nation; insufficient number of staff to safely care for and instruct our students due to illness, quarantine, or other causes.

**Title Fund Plans for 2020/21** (resources, staffing, etc.)

- Title I Funds: We are able to access Title I Funds in support of our students who need intervention. 2019-20 funds used to purchase some Chromebooks; Expect to access 2020-21 for our new Upper Elementary Interventionist.
- Title II: These Professional Development Funds will be used to continue our work with Montessori Coach – Elizabeth Slade of Montessori in Action. Some work over the summer using our remaining 2018-19 funds for this (deadline extended due to COVID). Expect to access 2019-20 funds to continue that work with her. Other Title II funds will be used for staff professional development in areas Laura determines to be most necessary possibly including trauma-informed instruction, training related to new learning resources, equity awareness, adaptation to the hybrid model during COVID. etc.
- Title III ELL Consortium: We will remain in the consortium and access Title III Funds in support our English Language Learners and the ELL Coordinator.
- Title IV Funds Tech purchase (mentioned above) and the new position of Expanded Learning Facilitator who will work in collaboration with Laura and Shannon to explore resources related to remote learning and other innovative supports for our students and staff.
- CARES/ESSER Funds: All used to cover purchase of 1:1 technology.

**Communication Schedule Discussion:** The Board discussed methods and an appropriate timeline for sharing the plan with the school community (staff and parents) and creating time for feedback within the tight timeline required for thoughtful cohort building and system development by the Admin Team and Staff. Levin said she will share the DRAFT Plan on August 28<sup>th</sup>. She and Wrubleski will set a date for a Family Orientation to School ReStart (via Zoom), and will create a form for feedback, and that parents will be asked to enroll their child in the Teaching and Learning Model of their choice by Monday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>.

After careful discussion and review, the Board took the following action:

**Motion:** DePasse moved to approve the development of the 2 Teaching & Learning Model presented - Hybrid and Fully Remote - with the flexibility for School Administration to refine, inclusive of all cited protection precautions as well as when/if the decision shall be made to suspend in-person learning at any point during the year; Johnson seconded.

**Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous

The DRAFT plan will be reviewed by the Board and discussed at the next meeting.

**8. Next Meeting:** August Meeting to be determined (Butterfield, 2 min)

## 9. Adjournment

**Motion:** Talbot moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:34 pm; Marr seconded.

**Roll Call Vote:** Unanimous.