



*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 September 15 2021 @ 5:45pm**

### **1. Call to Order, Roll Call & Welcome Public (Connors)**

Connors called the meeting to order at **5:50pm**. Following the school policy of limited building access to staff, students, Special Education service providers and emergency personnel, the Board met remotely. For meeting access, public was instructed to contact [office@millfalls.org](mailto:office@millfalls.org). There were no members of the public who requested access before or during the meeting.

#### **Roll Call:**

**Present:** Connors, Bee, Trombley, Bashir, Talbot, Wrubleski, Levin, DePasse, Danielle Dalton (invited guest)

**Absent:** Corriveau, Johnson, Butterfield

### **2. Public Comment:** No public present.

### **3. Meeting Business**

#### **a. Approval of Minutes** from August 25, 2021 meetings

**Motion:** Bee motioned to accept the minutes; Trombley seconded.

**Vote:** Unanimous.

**b. Agenda Review:** Connors reminded the Board that the Annual Meeting will be held in October.

### **4. School Reporting**

**Educational Program Director:** Wrubleski shared that earlier in the day, staff participated in our first Professional Development Day which was led by communications consultant Gerri King. King's training focused on conflict resolution and strong communication skill building. She also noted that while we have not a positive COVID case yet at school, we had 28 students out on Monday/Tuesday as they had new and unexplained onset of COVID-related systems. Our families are doing a great job of following the guidelines. Wrubleski shared that systems and work cycles are taking shape and regular daily schedule is expected to be effect in classrooms beginning next week. She also discussed working with staff to support students who are at home but well enough to do school work. We do have one of our remote teachers from last year, who is our liaison so those at home.

- Connors asked: Was there a reason you brought in someone for communication?
  - Wrubleski: Yes, the teachers are burnt out, and felt that there were some community challenges and concerns around the way that communications were taking place. The environment has been impacted by the stresses of COVID. Levin added that staff requested support in this area during our end-of-year reflection meetings. This PD was organized in response to staff stated needs in this area.

**Executive Director:** Levin shared that while our classroom and school experience this year is largely normal, there are many steps/challenges daily to work to keep staff and students as healthy as possible during the ongoing COVID pandemic. She reminded the Board that Mill Falls' Charter Review process will take place this year. The first step was having the Manchester Health Department Inspection. That will be followed by a DOE Facility Inspection. There is also a great deal of paperwork involved as well as stake holder events and activities leading up to and during the Renewal Team's Site visit (date not yet set). She looks forward to working with the Board's Charter Committee in support of this work. She closed by reminding the Board that we are still looking for additional staff – Paras, Upper Elementary Interventionists, and subs, and asked the Board to continue to share that need with people in their networks.

## **6. Program:**

### **a: Indoor Air Quality Policy**

Levin led this brief discussion about this NH/DOE required policy. She noted that in our facility design, our windows don't open, and cars are not anywhere near the building, so the emissions issue is not one that impacts us. Additionally, our facility features a modern and well-maintained HVAC system; maintaining that is the responsibility of the landlord. The Board discussed the draft policy in relation to the facility and then moved motion and vote.

**Motion:** DePasse moved to approve the finalized policy; Trombley seconded.

**Vote:** Unanimous.

### **b: 2021/22 Board Planning**

- Officer Roles and Committee Work Overview – Levin reviewed the Board Committees and Office Roles in preparation for the upcoming Annual Meeting of the Board.
- Levin reminded the Board that this is the school's 10<sup>th</sup> Year Anniversary. The Board agreed that an ad hoc committee is needed to determine plans for celebrations of this important milestone. That will be discussed at the Annual Meeting.

**7. Next Meeting:** Wednesday, October 20, 2021 @ 5:45pm (Connors, 2 min)

## **8. Adjournment**

**Motion:** Trombley motioned to adjourn at 6:57pm; Connors seconded.

**Vote:** Unanimous



**Executive Director's Report  
For the September 15, 2021  
MFCS School Board Meeting  
Submitted by Meryl Levin**

### **Required Reporting**

Our first **2021/22 Per Pupil Aid Reporting** was filed on the first day of school. New this year - this reporting is no longer done on paper but has been integrated into the DOE's online reporting system. This report reflects the enrollment numbers on our first day of school and is submitted 2 more times during the school year. We await our first per pupil payment from the state which is based on the reported enrollment (see more info below).

**DOE-25 Form:** This **year-end DOE-25** (bear of a report) was completed by the DOE's September 1 deadline.

The Field Work for our **FY21 Audit** will be done remotely, starting the first week of October. I will soon begin working with our auditor to gather materials he needs for that process. Once completed, our audits are sent to the DOE and posted on our website.

Grace, our Project Manager, has begun collecting information from our families for our **Free & Reduced Report**. She will soon begin work on the **Immunization Report**. Additionally, Mindy our English Language Learner Coordinator, is reviewing **student language surveys** of our new students to identify our English Language Learners.

The next large report will be our **Beginning of the Year (BOY)** report – the report lists information about each individual student enrolled with us as of October 1 of each year. Annually, we are required to complete the BOY and the E(end)OY. The DOE has done away with the M(iddle)OY Report. NH Charter Schools now utilize the new Anytime (A)OY report for our per-pupil aid reporting form during the year.

**The 2021/22 Emergency Response Plan** had been filed with the NH Homeland Security Department as required annually. The Signature pages were returned from both the Fire and Police Departments and will be filed with the NH Homeland Security Office, as required, once they activate a means of doing so. The **Staff Safety Committee** will begin meeting later this fall.

### **Board Related**

This, our 10th year of operation includes our second **Charter Renewal**. This will include a **Facility Visit** (we just learned this will take place on September 22, 2021) as well as an extensive preparation process that will include surveys, meetings with stakeholders including Board Member. The **Charter Committee** will partner with our Admin Team in this process. In addition, we will need to renew our **lease**. We have sent an initial email to our landlord. Will Kanteres will once again work with us (Admin/**Facility Committee**) during the renewal process which, we've been told, will be conducted with the landlord's broker - Roger Dieker - as the main contact.

It is expected that our Board's **Annual Meeting** will be held at our October Meeting. A reminder that the Annual Meeting includes the Officer Slate approval and Committee Assignments.

### **Facility**

You have previously received our **Safe School Opening Plan** and are aware that masks are worn by students and staff at all times while indoors, and are optional outdoors. We continue to limit traffic indoors to students, staff, service providers (following a wellness check before proceeding past the Front Office) and emergency personnel. Our families are required to conduct a

morning wellness check via the ConvenientMD app each morning. Our HEPA air purifiers were integrated into our space last year and are in continued use this year in all teaching areas and offices; signage has been added about hygiene practices. Our touchless bottle filling station has been a great addition to our facility both for COVID mitigation AND for the environment.

We have had to transform areas of our space to accommodate our additional staff members – a part-time special educator, our part-time social worker among others. We are literally using every inch of our facility!

We will be reviewing, and I expect approving our **Indoor Air Quality Policy** at our Board meeting Wednesday. This is a required policy for all NH schools.

### **MFCS ChildCare Program**

Due to the COVID pandemic, this program is suspended until further notice. Several families have been able to enroll in childcare at the Boys and Girls Club; a bus transports the children daily.

### **Enrollment & Prep for the New School Year**

This year we welcome more new students than any year since our founding year. As usual, each family who chose to move their child/children to a new educational setting (creating an opening in our student roster) has their own set of reasons. Of note, many charter schools report a similar enrollment shift, and there is a general sense that COVID has disrupted so much about K-12 education. We are happy to report that we are now at capacity – 168 students - but during our first week of this school year, we had 2 open spots in our roster. Some of those who have left us were in the same family, while some families chose to keep one student with us and move another. We welcome 27 new students (beyond our new Kinder class of 24 of course). That's a lot of new children and families for us to get to know. Grace, our Project Manager, has done a fantastic job this summer of filling the spots each time they opened. And our classrooms students and teachers have done a beautiful job of extending a warm welcome to our new friends.

While **beginning-of-the-year assessments** are always conducted with all returning students in reading and math, the teaching staff is taking extra care to quickly get to know the academic levels of our newest enrollees. Any of the **new students who have IEPs** are also introduced to our Special Education Team who have begun observing and working with the students and communicating with their home districts and families to be sure they have appropriate supports in place.

Each year, ALL MFCS families are expected to read our **Family Handbook** and return their sign off sheets. This year that also includes our **Safe School Opening Plan** as well.

### **Financial**

**Special Education:** We have established contracts with the current sending districts who have resident students enrolled at Mill Falls.

**Title Funds:** As discussed previously, we have moved forward with our title funding in the following ways: Title I to fund our part-time Upper Elementary Interventionist (though this position is not yet been filled); Title II to support our staff professional development work and our ongoing Montessori Audit and Planning work with Elizabeth Slade (a reminder that some of our professional development will be paid for by ESSER/COVID relief funds); Title IV funds to support work in ensuring that our education program is equitable for all of our students. We expect to also participate in the Title III consortium in support of our ELL program.

**ESSER/CARES Funds:** A reminder that we have previously shared our plans for our ESSER III funds. Review of the plan can be found here: <https://millfalls.org/mill-falls-esser-funds-usage-plan/>

### **MFCS Community Building & Volunteerism**

While this is usually a very exciting time of year full of friend-raisers and even a few fundraisers, all school-sponsored in-person events are on hold until further notice, due to the COVID emergency.

Our always generous and caring **Family Hospitality Committee** does plan to regularly provide prepared luncheons for staff on our Early Release Professional Development Days. We are SO very fortunate to have such a thoughtful group of parents who are also amazing cooks!

### **Human Resources**

Our Staff Opening Days were especially full this year. Laura was able to share information about our Open Days at our last meeting. Our goal for those 4 days with staff was to create time and space for professional learning, preparation, planning in academics as well as social/emotional and physical health in the age of COVID. Aside from the usual - **Review of Duties, COVID mitigation, Communication/System Improvements, Role clarity, Safety Protocols** and meetings with our **Aflac** Rep and our **Retirement** Program Manager and our **Annual CPR/First Aid Training** led by Len Angelli – the Opening Day Schedule also featured: **Discussion of Events** for the full-school year; presentation of the **full Professional Development Calendar**; a Professional Development session with our Montessori Coach, **Elizabeth Slade of Public Montessori in Action**, about the role of **observation** in our public Montessori setting; **review of student assessment data** which then informed the launch and focus of a **new committee structure for child study teams, observation and math**. On our final day, Laura organized a staff outing that included a treasure hunt at the dollar store for fun and useful classroom learning items as well as a wonderful **celebration** of our colleague, Shannon, who will soon be married and our amazing staff (hosted by the amazing Mindy!)

On the housekeeping front, all HR details have been attended to by me, from new files and related paperwork for our 4 new staff members, to meetings with our Retirement and Aflac Representatives. I ran our first payroll of FY22 on Aug 27, and our second last week. Each year, ALL MFCS staff are expected to read our Family Handbook and this year that also includes our School Safe Opening Plan. All Staff members are also expected to review the Staff Handbook. Staff will continue to conduct daily self-wellness assessments before entering the building.

Please take a moment to familiarize yourselves with our staff by visiting our website:

<https://millfalls.org/education/administration-faculty/>

### **Foundation News:**

The Foundation currently has \$506,381 in its accounts.

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**Educational Program Director  
Board Report  
September 14, 2021**

**Start of the School Year:** Classrooms have been working on developing community through *getting to know you* games, lessons in meditation and kindness. The upper elementary program has started Growth Mindset work as entire level. Next Tuesday is an annual event with International Peace Day. Typically, we will would have an all school meeting in our common space to celebrate however we'll be thinking outside of the box to celebrate this all important day. By the start of week 4, students will be completing full work cycles and getting back into the swing of lessons.

**Staff Professional Development:** Over the summer, a good deal of time was spent on reflection. Using feedback from staff, parents, and assessment data, I've developed a professional development calendar that supports the needs of three specific areas: Math growth, social/emotional growth and our Child Study Team process with an overall focus on observation to tie in our Montessori practice. The opening days laid the groundwork discussion for these areas and our first early release focused on a social- emotional workshop with Gerri King- learning to become the best communicators we can be. Throughout the year, we'll spiral between these topics offering what I hope is a complete learning period for our teachers.

**Integrated Arts (Specials):** This year we had 3 returning Integrated Arts Teachers and added Jennifer Zedler as our Library Teacher and Technology Teacher. We have focused on developing curriculum for these specials that will coincide with classroom instruction. This coming fall, the focus of instruction will be linked to the continent Africa.

**Open House:** We continued the tradition of our open house virtually last Thursday. Given the easy access for parents, we had a relatively good turn out and parents had the opportunity to ask questions and learn a bit about how Montessori works in a public charter school. Unfortunately, even though its easy to attend, the virtual format can be a challenge for families that are brand new to the school and have not seen what a classroom looks like, let alone having never viewed Montessori materials. And because of the high number of new families to our community, we will likely need to provide more parent information to help introduce them to the philosophy.