



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 Board Meeting Minutes for March 16, 2022 @ 5:45pm

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

Under Gov Exec #12 and 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. *Note:* There were no members of the public who requested access before or during the meeting.

Roll Call: Connors, Dalton, Marr, Bashir, Corriveau, Wrubleski, Levin

Not present: Trombley, Bee (maternity leave), DePasse, Butterfield

2. Public Comment: No public present.

3. Meeting Business

Approval of Minutes from February 2022 meeting.

Motion: Marr motioned to accept the minutes; Connors seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.

4. Montessori Moment: presented by Laura Blouin, Upper Elementary Lead Teacher, Olympic Room Lesson on Montessori Peg Board w/ Least Common Multiples.

5. School Reporting

Educational Program Director: Wrubleski shared that Progress Reports are almost complete and Parent/Guardian Teacher Conferences will be held next Thursday. This school year, using some of our ESSER III funds, Wrubleski has been working with Colleen LaCroix who is managing student data, helping Wrubleski and the entire teaching team to address student learning loss and progress. This coming Monday is a full day of Professional Development designed around understanding and discussing the data collected. Wrubleski closed her report noting that we recently had our all-school celebration of learning around the Continent Study of Africa. Each year the students study two continents and create age/level appropriate projects around that study. The projects are then shared with all members of our school.

Executive Director (*please also see enclosed report*) Levin and Wrubleski shared that our Montessori Consultant, Elizabeth Slade, provided her first in-person visit to Mill Falls since before COVID. While work with Slade has continued, her observation of our program is key to helping Wrubleski move the staff forward in Montessori fidelity. Work being done with Elizabeth is covered by ESSR Funds. Levin reminded the Trustees, that state-run COVID testing and vaccination sites will all be closed by month's end. The FY21 Audit is complete and has been posted online and sent to the DOE as required. Levin noted that the February budget-to-actual doesn't show anything surprising or out of the ordinary. Levin is hard at work on the Charter Renewal, noting that all materials are due on April 15th. She reminded Trustees that they should hold the date of May 5th, so that they can be present for the stakeholder conversation with the visiting Charter Renewal Team that day. She closed her report by noting that the 2022 Lottery was held last night. We had close to 200 applicants, including 18 kinder siblings. Intent to Enroll forms have been sent out to all those who received a spot via the Lottery; and the wait list numbers sent out as well.

Levin/Wrubleski requested a change to the current school calendar, changing the May Professional Development Day from May 18th to May 20th as the presenter is unable to attend on the 18th.

Motion: Marr motioned to approve change of 2021/22 School Calendar to reflect a change the Professional Development Day from May 18 to May 20; Connors seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.

6. Committee Reporting

- **Charter** (Dalton): Dalton reported that the School Climate Survey has been sent out to Mill Falls Families. Bashier and Levin have also collected several Family support letters all for the renewal work underway. She asked for a Trustee to help with the data analysis of the survey.
- **Governance** (Connors) Connors reported that plans for **March 26th (Saturday)** morning retreat 8:30-12 are in good shape. She reminded Trustees to please RSVP. Breakfast and beverages will be served.

7. Program:

a: Name Change? (Levin): Levin reminded Trustees that in 2018 following our Strategic Planning Work that there was agreement that the word Montessori should be added to our name. Given that our Charter is up for Renewal, and will be approved by the Board of Education, this seems a good time to revisit this idea.

She noted, the Official name right now is Mill Falls Charter: School Bringing Montessori Public. The planned change is to: Mill Falls Montessori Public Chartered School. That will live along with our tagline developed during our 2018 planning work: building better humans one lesson at a time. Levin is still exploring the steps that would be needed to make the change with members of the DOE staff AND there needs to be research about any unintended complications that might result from a name change. She asked the Board to vote in support of the name change, if there is a clear path to doing so.

Motion: Connors motioned to approve the pursuit of a new name; Marrs seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.

8. Next Meeting: **Wednesday, April 20, 2022 @ 5:45pm.** Connors noted that the next meeting, and all meetings going forward will be in person (unless there is a resumed need for safety mitigation).

9. Adjournment at 6:45pm

Motion: Marrs motioned to adjourn; Bashier seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.



Executive Director's Report
For the March 16, 2022
MFCS School Board Meeting
Submitted by Meryl Levin

Required Reporting

There have not been any significant reporting deadlines since our last meeting.

Board Related

Two of the three active BOT committees met this month, and each will be reporting out at our Board Meeting.

Facility

On February 23rd, our Broker, Will Kanteres and I met with the and the lord's broker, Roger Dieker at Dieker's office to review renewal processes. He shared a proposed lease draft which is a new format. We quickly discovered that it did not include many of the aspects of our original lease, which by original lease language we are renewing. Dieker said he would go back to the landlord's legal team to cull through both documents to be sure that the new lease reflects all previous elements. Kanteres suggested that the original lease be used as the basis and anything the landlord wanted to add could be discussed for amendment. At that time, Dieker also shared the landlord's desire to bring us closer to 'market value' which the current lease notes for renewals. He shared a proposed 5-year lease schedule. Dieker said at that meeting that we should expect a revised lease during the week of March 7th. I was clear about our budget timeline. As of this writing, we have not received a lease. In response to an email asking us to confirm the school's footprint, during February Break, Kanteres and I went to the school to measure the full space. I will continue to provide updates as this process unfolds.

Sharing this piece in case there are some resources among Trustees: As we struggle to find storage solutions, we are looking for cabinets that can be hung on the wall. Perhaps you have a lead to any sources of gently used/still in very good shape wall mount cabinets that can be repurposed for use here, please speak to me directly.

COVID Update

Following the Governor's February 16th press conference during which we learned of his decision to change masking protocol in schools from being a school decision to no longer allowing required masking in schools, and after the CDC's change in mask guidance on school buses, we have transitioned to highly suggested but not required masking at Mill Falls. This went into effect upon return from February Break on March 7th. As we had previously planned, we also announced that we would be relaxing some cohorting protocol to allow the classrooms to have recess together and provide for some additional flexibility for academic groupings as needed. All other of our COVID mitigation measures remain in place currently. We will continue to announce any school cases, though the state no longer requires that individual cases be reported to public health officials.

Charter Renewal Update

A significant percentage of my time is now focused on our 2022 Charter Renewal. All materials are due to the DOE's charter office by April 15th – I asked for a 2-week extension over break, as the amount of material that is required is extensive and it remains challenging to work this into the daily schedule given all the other unexpected COVID-related elements of our work. This week we sent out the Family School Climate Survey. HUGE thanks to Trustee Dalton for her great work in getting the survey in good, deliverable order! I have been working with Trustee Bashier to collect letters of support from parents/guardians and have a beautiful collection to share. I am also actively collecting student work and identifying student presenters for our on-site visit.

A reminder that all Trustees are asked to make themselves available for the Renewal Team's site visit on Tuesday, May 3rd. We have not yet set the agenda for the day, but you will be asked to join in a 30 minute 'stakeholders' meeting with the visiting team. Of note, this also happens to be during Teacher Appreciate Week... never just one thing at a time these days!

Enrollment

All 4 of our Virtual Lottery Information Sessions we well attended by families interested in our public Montessori program. Our 2022 Lottery Enrollment Period ended on March 9th which also happens to be our Annual Founder's Day – marking the day in 2011 when we received our first charter approval from the NH Board of Education.

Grace Eaton, our Project Manager, who handles enrollment reports that we had 196 applicants this year, which is a nice uptick from the last two years and closer to our pre-pandemic times of the usual 200 or so applicants annually. We have a large number of siblings in the Lottery, most of whom will enter Kinder next year.

Next Tuesday, we will host Lottery Day, which will also be held virtually, due to COVID. Our 2022 Lottery Official is Sharon Curole. Sharon is a long-time friend to Mill Falls and an incredible community member. Rarely does she resist the opportunity to lend her voice and energy to a new adventure. As a NH Justice of the Peace and an interfaith ordained minister, Sharon has made it her life's work to join together those in love, legally or otherwise and has, to date, officiated 460 marriages. We are thrilled to have Sharon's humor and grace at this year's Lottery Day. Those who are in this year's lottery are welcome to join us on Zoom, but attendance is not required. The Lottery Day Team will reach out by phone to those who are awarded spots on Lottery Day. All others will be contacted by email soon after.

Human Resources:

Please continue to spread the word - we are still looking for additional paraprofessionals and subs!

A reminder that each year we distribute contracts for the upcoming school year the Friday before April Vacation. If you know people interested in working with us NEXT year, please also direct them to hr@millfalls.org or to Laura and me directly. Thank you!

Financial

Our auditor has now completed our **FY21 Audit**. As required, I have sent it to the DOE, the AG's office along with the forms from the IRS' 990 which they require annually, and I have posted on our website.

Title Funds: We continue our regular flow of expense reimbursement in relation to various title funding grants for Title I (support for our students needing intervention), Title II (staff professional development); Title III (support for our English Language Learners); Title IV a flexible area of funding for student and staff support.

ESSER Funds:

ESSER funds are those related to COVID-related funding for schools. We have received ESSER I, II and III funding. These funds are released from the DOE on a reimbursement model. We request regularly for expenses incurred beginning mid-March 2020. We have completed our ESSER I reimbursement and are in process for ESSER II and III.

The required **6-month update of our ESSER III** plan has been completed and approved by the DOE which is also available for viewing on our website's ESSER page.

Special Education reimbursements from sending districts continue to arrive in a timely manner.

MFCS Community Building & Volunteerism

It remains our hope that later this spring we will be able to welcome back individual volunteers to work inside the school – though likely not directly with children – to help teachers produce materials, help organize our library, and other such needs. The timing of that will of course link to our work with the Manchester Health Department as we continue to evaluate COVID mitigation measures.

MFCS ChildCare Program

As previously noted: 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 from Mill Falls to the Club daily.

Foundation News:

The Foundation **currently holds** \$514,382 in its accounts.

The Foundation is waiting to hear from the charitable gaming group for the dates that will benefit the MFCS Foundation this year.

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