



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 September 21, 2022 @ 5:45pm

Held @ Mill Falls, 100 William Loeb Drive, Manchester, NH

1. **Call to Order, Roll Call & Welcome Public** (Marr) Marr called the meeting to order 5:49pm
2. **Roll Call**
Present: Bee, Levin, Dalton, Wrubleski, Bashir, DePasse, Marr, Trombley, Corriveau. **Absent:** Butterfield.
3. **Public Comment:** No Public present.
4. **Meeting Business**
 - a. **Approval of Minutes** from August 2022 meeting (2 min)
Motion: Bee motioned to approve the August 2022 minutes; Dalton seconded.
Vote: Unanimous
5. **School Reporting**
 - a. **Educational Program Director:** Wrubleski shared that the beginning of year is largely about front loading for staff to prepare for the year. Our Staff Opening Days included a Professional Development workshop with Gerri King that focused on social/emotional supports for kids and building a gossip-free environment in the classrooms and throughout the school. We will continue with social/emotional support development for kids throughout the year. Additionally, Wrubleski noted the plan for staff to attend the American Montessori Society's National Conference which will be held in Boston this winter. This 3-day conference is all Montessori focused and is an extremely rich environment for professional development. We are looking into what funds will be accessed to cover the costs of attendance, and will report back to the Board. We have just a few new staff members including our new music teacher, Katey Avedisian, as well as our new Assistant in the Zion Room – Amy Broadhead. We have a short-term substitute Lead Teacher, Kelly Franklin, covering two maternity leaves this year. And Brittany Pichette is our new Student Support Coordinator. We also have an addition to our specials schedule this year. Wednesdays are being led by Christine Bisson and Melissa Fortin. Christine will be doing about 2 days a month, yoga and self-care. The other two days a month, will be a cultural study with Melissa.
 - b. **Executive Director:** Levin took a few minutes to review the Board Workshop led by Gerri King which featured exercises and conversations. There were many tangible ideas that came out of the work together about engagement. Levin also shared that there are two potential new board members: Amy Hollingworth, a parent and physical therapist who has been a very engaged member of the Mill Falls Community; and Diane HARRIS, who served as our Student Support Coordinator. Both have been invited to attend next Board Meeting. After the DOE-25 report is completed, Levin will share the end of fiscal year 2022 budget to actual.
Motion: Trombley motioned that there are 2 vendors that should be added to the list of recurring expenses so that they do not require approval (for bills over the \$2500 limit, as per our fiscal policy). Those vendors are: Montessori in Action and Stearns Cleaning; DePasse seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.
6. **Program:**
 - a: **Annual Meeting**
 - Review of Trustee Terms: Corriveau and Butterfield are coming up for renewal this fall. Governance Committee will bring their renewals forward.

- Officer Slate: After some discussion, the Board arrived at the following slate: Greg DePasse, Chair; Heather Marr, Vice Chair; Sara Bee, Secretary; and Jeff Trombley, Treasurer.
Motion: Bee motioned to approve the slate as noted above; Trombley seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.

- Committee Assignments for the 2022/23 School Year are as follows
 - Governance: DePasse/Butterfield, Co-chairs, Bee, Levin
 - Finance: Trombley (chair), Marr, Dalton, Levin
 - Mission & Engagement (formerly Charter Committee): Dalton (chair), Bee, Corriveau, Hind, Levin, Wrubleski
- Committees agree to meet in advance of the next Board Meeting to set their year-long goals and then those will be shared with the Board.

7. Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 12, 2022 @ 5:45pm

8. Adjournment: Motion: DePasse motioned to adjourn at 6:49pm; Trombley seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.



**Educational Program Director
Board Report
September 21, 2022**

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 researched based social emotional curriculum and will reserve time on a weekly basis to implement this important skill set. Wednesday is our annual event with International Peace Day. We will begin the day with an all-school assembly celebrating peace around the world and in the afternoon, classrooms will incorporate peace activities by classroom. By the end of week 3, 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 the record keeping process 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 and incorporate those principles with the students. 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 Katey Avedisian as our Music teacher. Additionally, we added a new special that is shared between Wellness and Cultural Arts. This special is split between Christine Bisson teaching wellness a social and wellness focused special and Cultural Explorers taught by our Art teacher Melissa Fortin, is a cultural arts focused special that incorporates our continent studies at a deeper level. This coming fall, the focus of instruction will be linked to the continent South America.

Open House: We continued the tradition of our open house in person last Thursday. We had a great turn out given that many of our parents have never been in the school before. This time offered parents the opportunity to ask questions and learn a bit about how Montessori works in a public charter school and simply see the physical layout of the school. It was great to be altogether as a community again!



**Executive Director's Report
For the September 21, 2022
MFCS School Board Meeting
Submitted by Meryl Levin**

Required Reporting

Our first **2022/23 Opening Day Per Pupil Aid Reporting** was filed on the first day of school. This report reflects the enrollment numbers on our first day of school, and is submitted 2 more times during the school year. We received our first per pupil payment - \$369,936.00 - from the state which is based on the reported enrollment.

DOE-25 Form: Work on this **year-end DOE-25** (bear of a report) will be completed by Sept 30th, as per the extension we requested and received from the Education Commissioner so that our final 2021/22 payroll and related expenses could be included (reminder our payroll is spread out over 26 pay-periods, and runs thru late August).

I have connected with our auditor and await the formal start date of the Field Work for our **FY22 Audit** which they expect will be in early October. Their work will once again be done remotely. 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, and has arranged for a certified ELL assessment to be made for those who qualify.

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.

My work continues on the **2022/23 Emergency Response Plan (ERP)**. Following new legislation which created additional requirements for the ERPs, there is also a new deadline – October 15th. Our filing will include the Signature pages from both the Fire and Police Departments and will be filed with the NH Homeland Security Office, as required. The **Staff Safety Committee** will begin meeting later this fall. We have already activated our annual safety schedule related to staff prep and drills; our first fire drill will be next week.

Board Related

GREAT work at our retreat this weekend, which generated clear action items. Our September Board meeting's agenda will include our Annual Meeting, which will include the Officer Slate, and Committee Assignments. Trustees have been sent the documents that map out officer and committee roles in preparation. Once the committees are populated, each committee will establish a meeting schedule for the year (making sure to avoid conflicts if there is dual membership on committees).

Facility

This year there is a VERY simple Fall 2022 COVID Protocol that has been sent out to all school community members and partners with our Family and Staff Handbooks. Big picture: masking is optional, we will no longer be cohorting student groups (so we can run our Before Care Program AND after school clubs), we will welcome volunteers and guests into the building (as long that that continues to feel safe for students and staff in terms of our health). We are no longer

enforcing a formal morning wellness check; students and staff are still being sent home if they arrive at school with COVID related symptoms, or develop them during the day. They will have to follow the testing protocol and have significant symptom improvement before being welcomed back. Our HEPA air purifiers were integrated into our space 2 years ago, and are in continued use this year in all teaching areas and offices; signage about hygiene practices is still on display. Our touchless bottle filling station has been a great addition to our facility both for COVID mitigation AND for the environment; the water fountain is open again.

We have had to transform areas of our space to accommodate our additional staff members – as you saw at the retreat. Laura has done an amazing job of figuring out how to adapt the space. It is VERY tight, but very well planned.

MFCS Child Care Program

This year, we are running our Before Care Program. It is staffed by Mill Falls Staff Members, and runs daily, during school days, from 7-8:15am.

Enrollment & Prep for the New School Year

This year we had the most consistent student body from one year to the next that any of us can recall! We did not have any new Upper Elementary Students, and just a handful of new Lower Elementary Students. As usual, we begin this year at capacity - 168 students.

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 **Fall 2022 COVID Protocol** as well, all of which is posted on our website.

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 will continue to access our Title Funds. Here's how it looks this year: Title I to fund our part-time Upper Elementary Interventionist; 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 helping our students engage in collaborative play at recess and to support collaboration in the classroom. This is part of our social/emotional supports we have put in place as we help our students continue to recover from the impact of COVID. We will 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/>. Some of that will be tweaked as we enter this year knowing more about costs and available resources, but our areas of focus will largely remain the same.

MFCS Community Building & Volunteerism

We ended last year with a family meeting aimed at connecting with families in preparation of this year, when we can resume many in-person events, and our volunteer program. We updated our 'Count Me In' form (shared it on paper and digitally including in the newsletter) and look forward to coming to know our many new families – their strengths and interests – so that we can work together to rebuild our events and volunteer base. There is much work to do on that after 2.5 years of it being frozen. Many of those who we knew best, have children that have now

graduated from our program. Our first all-school event was held last week – **Open House** – which was very well attended (except by me, since I was home in COVID isolation). Please stay tuned for more information about upcoming events. As we discussed at our retreat, it is our hope that Board Members will find ways to join us at some of these family social and curricular events.

Human Resources

Our Staff Opening Days were especially full this year. Laura did an incredible job of organizing each day – balancing the need for information sharing, schedule building with quiet collaborative time for the teams. Our guest speaker this year, was Gerri King, who helped staff explore meaningful and effective ways to help our students best navigate social challenges. Our Opening Days Included: **Review of Duties, COVID Protocol, Communication/System Improvements, Emergency Response Protocols** and meetings with our **Aflac** Rep and our **Retirement** Program Manager and our **Annual CPR/First Aid Training** led by Len Agnelli – the Opening Day Schedule also featured: **Discussion of Events** for the full-school year; presentation of the **full Professional Development Calendar; review of student assessment data**. On our final day, staff headed over to Mindy's yard, where our Art Teacher, Melissa, led staff in a creative and relaxing drawing exercise.

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 FY23 on Aug 26, and our second on the 9th. Each year, ALL MFCS staff are expected to read our Family Handbook and this year that also includes our Fall 2022 COVID Protocol. All Staff members are also expected to review the Staff Handbook.

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 \$513,796 in its accounts.

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