



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 December 14, 2022 @ 6pm

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

1: Call to Order, Roll Call, Welcome.

Trombly called to order at 6:13pm (DePasse arrived late).

Present: Hollingworth, Bashier, Corriveau, Levin, Dalton, Trombly, DePasse, Butterfield.

Absent: Marr, Wrubleski.

No public present

2: Meeting Business

- a. Approval of Minutes from November 2022 meeting:

Motion: Corriveau motioned to approve November 2022 minutes; Trombly seconded.

Vote: Unanimous.

3: School Reporting

a. Educational Program Director

Levin shared on Wrubleski's behalf: **personnel updates** related to parental leaves and fill-ins alongside many staff illnesses and call outs that are constantly being covered as can be accomplished by admin, other staff and our one sub. In Dec and Jan some college students who worked with us during COVID will be returning to help out.

b. Executive Director (please also see attached report):

Levin shared about the following:

Lottery is coming up and will be publicized in many ways including social media, contact with our families, with local nonprofits and by posting physical fliers. She asked the Board to help share the schedule of the Lottery (Kindergarten students must be 5 by Sept. 1st). Levin is looking for a Lottery Official – this person works with the school admin during the broadcasted Lottery; please send her any suggestions directly.

Annual Coat Drive: Coats and warm winter items are being collected until Dec. 22nd.

Levin and Dalton hosted visitors from **Kyrgyzstan** visited the school a couple of weeks ago as a part of a tour organized by Friends Forever International.

Levin hosted the First **Montessori Morning Tour** since 2019 in November. Dates for upcoming Montessori Morning Tours which run from 9am – 10am are as follows: **Thursday, January 12th; Wednesday, February 1; Wednesday, March 8th.** Levin looking for Board members to partner with her to populate each tour date; she will follow up with an email to Trustees.

The **2022 Annual Appeal** went out on Monday and was provided to all BOT members; the MFCS Foundation asks that Trustees considering a meaningful gift to Mill Falls as part of their year-end giving.

4. Committee Reports

a: Mission & Charter Committee Report:

- **Fundraising Raffle Calendar:** A fundraising calendar for the month of April, will be populated with daily prizes. This will be sold during the month of March, and then the prizes will be pulled each day in April. Hollingworth is on the working committee alongside school staff and other parent volunteers that are meeting in December to organize this fundraiser. That committee will work on figuring out the prizes and needs. The ask to the Board of Trustees is to acquire and share the gift cards or gifted services with the school. The cards or services should be valued between \$25 - \$ 100 to put towards the calendar.

- **May Leadership Fundraising Breakfast Event:** There has been some recent interest in bringing back the Foundation's Annual Leadership Fundraising Breakfast; Levin shared that the Breakfast would be in May. The format would follow past years and include music from the kids, a mission talk from Levin, a student share about something particular to our unique setting contextualized by Wrubleski, and a keynote speaker. This keynote speaker should be someone who would draw people in and get them excited to come as well as champion the school – in the past most have been of national stature. This is a room in the past of about 200-300 people from various industries. At the tables are kids, parents, and community leaders seated together. The call out to the Board members is to start thinking about who they would invite for the breakfast – each being a table captain to assist in building the crowd. The Montessori Morning Tours Trustees help populate also help drive people to the Breakfast once they have seen the school and are intrigued by our program.
- **Legislative Update:** Corriveau shared that now that the election is over, state government bills are filled. Bills are now in the process of being written; the session starts the first Tuesday in January. There could be as many as 820 bills that are going to be filed; Corriveau shared some of the education bills to watch and be aware of, but more might come in.

b: Finance Committee Report: Trombley shared a recap of the committee meeting that happened right before the General BOT meeting. The committee reviewed financial statements in depth with an explanation of reporting. Levin shared update about a healthcare cost renewal (increase of \$~900 total) to help offset the increase costs of health insurance to qualifying staff. The committee also started writing committee goals that will be more formalized and worked on throughout the year. These goals are around: 1) continue to educate BOT members around budgeting and finance needs; 2) analyze the trends in past years' budget and determine potential other budget generation options and practices. complete scenario planning that would be required when purchasing a building; 3) continue to lead the board in financial oversight as dictated by the bylaws; 4) complete scenario planning that would be required when purchasing a building in the future.

Corriveau mentioned how important it is for BOT members to consider become members of the finance committee at some point in their tenure on the board to gain an understanding in the innerworkings. Levin asked Governance committee to consider this suggestion.

Levin made a suggestion that the finance committee shares some aspects of the review of the monthly budget-to-actual that could be helpful for general BOT members to know as they review the report monthly.

The group engaged in a discussion around the impacts to budget and programming changes in relationship to pandemic and post-pandemic needs. They also discussed different budgeting ideologies and other fundraising events that have happened in the past.

Levin mentioned there is about to be a dashboard launched from the DOE that will include information on every public school's budget and finances.

5: Program:

a: Trustee Service - Corriveau Term Renewal:

Motion: Butterfield made a motion to renew Corriveau's term on the Board of Trustees; Trombley seconded. **motion;** **Vote:** Unanimous.

b: Communications: Levin reviewed Trustee training needs related to their use of Google Email/Drive, etc. She will plan a training for Trustees offered by Jen Z who is the school's technology person. Levin to follow up with Jen on those dates. DePasse will set up meeting invites to the BOT for general meetings and committee meetings. Levin asked that trustees focus on school events and asked that the Board review the weekly Mill Falls Newsletter to keep up with the engaging school events. This helps bring the mission to the fore, and Trustee attendance at events helps connect them to the school community.

6: Next Meeting is 6:00pm Wednesday, January 18, 2023, at Mill Falls.

7: Adjournment:

Motion: Trombley motioned to adjourn at 7:37pm; Hollingworth seconded; **Vote:** Unanimous



Executive Director's Report

For the December 14, 2022
MFCS School Board Meeting
Submitted by Meryl Levin

Required Reporting

Following the filing of our November **Per Pupil Enrollment** report to the NH Department of Education, we received the second of four state Per Pupil Aid Payments for the 2022/23 school year.

Board Related

Please respond if you have not yet to the invite to the Holiday Party on Dec 16th from 3:45-6pm which I am hosting.

We will briefly discuss the tech needs of our Trustees so we can move to Mill Falls emails; if you have not completed the needs survey, pls do: <https://forms.gle/R6sTJa21Gpc9LU3z7>.

Please see the meeting minutes in your Board packet from the **Mission & Charter Committee** which held its monthly meeting earlier this week. The **Finance Committee** is scheduled to meet right before the December 14th Board meeting; expect the chair to share an update verbally at the meeting.

Facility

The Fire Marshal completed his **Annual Fire Inspection**. We will file his report with the DOE as required, once we receive it.

Wellness Update

We continue to see a small number of **COVID cases**, as well as a rising strep, CSV and other bugs. This is impacting our students and our staff with regularity. This is not unique to Mill Falls, of course, as you are likely hearing in the news.

Enrollment

We have begun to communicate out the timeline for our **2023 Lottery** to our families and the general public. This will be our 12th lottery! The Lottery Enrollment Application will be available online beginning January 3rd through March 8th, with Lottery Day on March 14th. We will also be hosting **Lottery**

Information Sessions (with in person and Zoom options) during that time.

- **If you know anyone who is interested in applying (or should be), please direct them to send us an email to Admissions@MillFalls.org** asking that they be put on the 2023 Lottery Info List.
- **Please encourage friends, neighbors, and colleagues to consider applying to Mill Falls.** Thank you!
- **We are looking for a Lottery Day Official** – if you have any ideas of someone who would enjoy working with Jen and I and getting to know our school a bit, please be in touch with me directly.

Human Resources:

In late November, Anya Morales, our Lead Teacher in the Denali Room, welcomed her first child. She is on **parental leave** through February. In her stead, we have hired a very experienced Montessorian, Amanda Smart, who is also a former colleague of many of our staff members from their days at Hillview Montessori in Massachusetts. Next week we will welcome back Shannon Helie, our Lead Teacher in the Glacier Room, who welcomed her first child over the summer.

Illness continues to significantly impact our **staff attendance**. We have only had 2 days so far this school year when all expected staff were in. We have one sub who has been providing floating coverage, and

we are so very fortunate that our staff steps up to help out those whose teaching team partners are out. We expect to have a few college students as subs during their winter breaks.

This past month, I have worked closely with our **health insurance** broker to compile a small selection of plans for our qualifying staff to select from; our renewal month with Anthem is January. We sought to find plans that would be a close match to what we currently offer and that which would have only a modest price increase. After a discussion with our Treasurer, I have increased the benefit (for the first time since we began offering health insurance to qualifying staff) from \$5100 to \$5200. This helps to offset the insurance cost increase for our staff. Qualifying staff members will make their plan selection before we depart for December Break, and that coverage will begin on Jan 1. Additionally, our **dental plan** renews in February and those rates for this self-funded benefit have been shared with staff as well.

Financial

Our auditors have all materials for our **FY22 Audit**; we await word on its completion. Once completed, our audit will be sent to the DOE and posted on our website.

Thus far, **Special Education reimbursements** from sending districts are arriving in a timely manner.

ESSER Funds: in the next few weeks, we will be completing the required revised plan for the ESSER funds we have been allotted; this is a federal requirement, managed by the state of NH.

MFCS Community Building & Volunteerism

Read Ins are back and we have had wonderful attendance thus far! Each Friday, parents/guardians/friends are invited to selected classrooms to read for 30 minutes with their children. If you would like to join in the fun, there are always children who do not have guests; we'd love to include you!

On December 22, we will close out our **Annual Coat & Warm Items Drive**. Our wonderfully generous community has already donated a box full of coats as well as hats, gloves, scarfs and boots. This year we have partnered with the Brookside Church and other community groups to help support the International Institute of New England's work with newly arriving refugees and immigrants. Families may visit the Church's Thrift Store regularly to secure items they need. **If you have anything you'd like to donate, please bring those items with you to the December 14th meeting!**

Lending a hand and their physical strength, a hearty group of volunteers helped out this week moving our newly purchased reading program from a local publishing company (Flyleaf in the millyard) to school. WE also have a regular team of parents who come in on Tuesdays to cover lunch duty and enable our teaching teams to meet in full for their weekly collaboration time. Additionally, we have had parents helping on Fridays to support our robust art projects taught by Ms. Melisa.

Earlier this week, a **delegation of visitors from Kyrgyzstan** - a landlocked country in Central Asia - visited us to learn more about our unique Public Montessori School. The group is being hosted by the nonprofit youth leadership development organization, Friends Forever International (FFI), which is located on the Seacoast. FFI is a new friend to Mill Falls, and we are talking with them about potential partnership ideas given the links between our mission and theirs. It was a treat to welcome this international group, and speaks to the ways in which the world, near and far, is slowly opening back up again, providing opportunity for sharing of experiences, languages, and expertise. Special thanks to Mill Falls Trustee, Danielle Dalton, who joined me in hosting the group, and to our student, Weston, for sharing his strength by wowing our guests with a Montessori Math Material that teaches children about multi-digit multiplication.

MFCS Child Care Program:

There are currently 10 children enrolled in our Before Care Program which runs daily from 7-8:15am and is staffed by Mill Falls Staff members.

Enrollment

As mentioned previously, we received 5 new students a few weeks back. They are all settling in nicely, having been assessed and integrated into the classroom systems.

Foundation News:

At the end of November, I welcomed the first **Montessori Morning Tour** group since February 2019! It was a lovely group of leaders from around the state. As a reminder, we will be hosting several more of these tours during the school year. These are designed to **bring NEW people into our space** for them to fall in love with our program AND to feel engaged enough to join us at our Educational Leadership Breakfast which we aim to hold this May (as we did in pre-COVID times). **Trustee help is KEY** in helping me find new people to network with.

The Board will talk more about how you can help accomplish this at the December meeting. For your reference, **tour dates include: Thursday, January 12th; Wednesday, February 1; Wednesday, March 8th. Ideally, one or two trustees will partner with me to populate each tour date.**

December marks the Foundation's first formal fundraiser of year. The **2022 Annual Appeal** will be mailed on Monday to over 120 recipients – each of whom have supported Mill Falls in the past. The ask features student artwork, as it always does, as well as a celebration of our program. Each Trustee will receive an appeal at the meeting. A reminder that MFCS Trustees are asked by the Foundation to contribute to the school in meaningful ways during the course of each year, and they encourage others to do so as they seek support for our school. The Foundation thanks Trustees and all community members for supporting the work of securing funds for our school's ongoing sustainability.

The Foundation currently holds \$522,261.

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