



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 from January 18, 2023

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

1: Call to Order, Roll Call, Welcome

Butterfield called the meeting to order at 6:06pm

Present: Hollingworth, Bashier, Corriveau, Levin, Dalton, Trombley, Butterfield, Marr, Wrubleski

Absent: DePasse. **On Leave:** Connors and Bee.

No public present

2: Montessori Moment: Sherry Humphrey, shared a recent lesson she did with young readers, showing how she works as our Reading Interventionist for K-3rd year students.

3: Agenda Review: Levin requested closed session later in the meeting for facilities related discussion.

4: Meeting Business

a. Approval of Minutes from December 2022 meeting:

Butterfield noted needed update of language, correcting "maternity leave" to "parental leave"; Levin will make that correction.

Motion: Corriveau motioned to approve December 2022 minutes; Trombley seconded.

Vote: Unanimous with Marr abstaining due to her absence at December meeting.

5: School Reporting

a. **Educational Program Director** (*please also see attached report*):

Wrubleski shared that January is one of the slower months in terms of updates and news, as lessons and student work moves ahead. She noted that the school is prepping for **Access Testing** (this is testing of our English Language Learners). Come February, end-of-the-year planning kicks into high gear, and she is already beginning to focus on next school year.

She shared that a Student Mentorship Program is starting up. The program is designed for Upper Elementary students to participate in a peer mediation approach; still working on what this could look like at the Lower Elementary Level given the age of those students. The Upper Elementary Students leading the all-school meeting tomorrow morning will have a "commercial" about peer mediators.

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

Levin shared that there are currently 91 applications received for the 2023 Lottery. She is still looking for a lottery official. She shared that the **Foundation's Annual Appeal** has brought in \$8,850 from about 35 donors. She also noted that the Foundation was selected in late December as the **benefit charity** of the Casino in Lebanon, NH which brought in \$8,860 (minus the \$2,500 facility fee). She also noted that the **Montessori Morning Tours** are back. She held one last week was small but included a great group. Levin is asking for Trustee help in growing these tour groups by introducing her to folks who might want to attend one. Next tours are 2/1 and 3/8 @9-10am. Levin invited the BOT to the **Student Variety Show on Feb. 3rd**. Levin also shared that the bill that proposed a mandated breakfast and lunch is likely going to go away, as bill's sponsors have now come to understand that most charters do not have any kind of facility that could meet that requirement.

6: Non-Public Session Motion: Trombley motioned to commence a closed session at 6:37pm for facilities related discussion [RSA91-A:3 li(d)]. The motion was seconded by Marr. **Vote:** Unanimous.

Closed Session Report: During the non-public session, the Board discussed facility related issues. No action was taken. Further, at the end of non-public session, Corriveau had to leave the meeting.

7: Returning to Public Session:

Motion: Trombley made a motion come out of non-public; Marr seconded. **Vote:** unanimous.

8: Committee Reports

a: Mission & Charter Committee Report:

Fundraising Raffle Calendar: Hollingworth shared that the working group comprised of staff and parents/guardians met again in early January to finalize plans and the list of businesses to approach for donation of items. Items are coming in (have about 12 so far). Collection of donated items will be completed by early/mid February and packets of calendars will be sent home with the students just before February Vacation. Classrooms that win the most and the runner up will win a small fun acknowledgement (extra recess, movie, pizza party). Additionally, there will be a raffle for all students who sell calendars.

Legislative Update: There is a bill to increase Charter Funding from the current \$7338.94 per charter school student to \$9000. Levin is working with Charter Alliance and will provide more updates to our community.

b: Finance Committee Report:

Trombley shared that the committee met before this meeting and reviewed the Budget to Actual for December, reviewing percentages of expenses so far. He also led a budgeting discussion to help inform upcoming budgeting process for FY24. The committee also discussed the cash flow statement and did a review of holdings and a flow of incoming and outgoing dollars. As part of the budgeting discussion, the committee also discussed adjusting areas of the budget that seem to have a history of not being spent fully in most years. Levin and Wrubleski will be examining some areas where there has been over-budgeting in years past, to see how we might be able to get a more accurate guide of expenses.

9: Next Meeting is 6:00pm Wednesday, February 15, 2023, at Mill Falls.

10: Adjournment Motion: Trombley motioned to adjourn at 7:38pm; Marr seconded. **Vote:** Unanimous.



Executive Director's Report

For the January 18, 2023
MFCS School Board Meeting
Submitted by Meryl Levin

Required Reporting

This week I completed the **required reporting on our ESSER III Funds Usage** (from July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022) - a federal requirement, managed by the state of NH. I also **updated the details of our plan** on the NH DOE's grant tracking system which is connected to the process for requesting reimbursements..

Next up for annual reporting is the **US Civil Rights Data Reporting**. Grace and I will tackle this lengthy report that seeks to capture information about our student body (not individual students). The report is due later this winter.

Board Related

Please see the meeting minutes in your Board packet from the **Mission & Charter Committee** which held its monthly meeting earlier this month. The **Finance Committee** is scheduled to meet right before the January 18th Board meeting; expect the chair to share an update verbally at the meeting.

Facility

Since the heavy rains in December, there has been some ceiling damage from leaking roof water in the front office and a few of the classrooms. The landlord's facility manager has been addressing this.

Additionally, as per the fire marshal's request following the annual inspection, the original locking doorknob to the specials room has been replaced by a non-locking knob. This is to facilitate emergency existing should that be required.

Wellness Update

Illness (particularly flu and RSV) continues to impact our student and staff attendance. This is not unique to Mill Falls, of course, as you are likely hearing in the news.

Lottery

On January 3rd, our **12th Lottery Enrollment Period Opened**. We have communicated this to our families and the general public. The Lottery Enrollment Application will be available online through March 8th, with Lottery Day on March 14th. As of this writing, we have received 86 applications. Related, this week we sent our families the **'Intent to Return' form** which asks about their enrollment plans for their children for next year. Those are due back at the end of the month, and helps give us a sense of openings for next year. However, in our decade of experience, we know that some families' plans will continue to evolve right up until the start of the new school year.

We will be hosting **Lottery Information Sessions** (with in person and Zoom options) between now and early March. The next Information Session will be held virtually on **Tuesday, Jan 24th, 6-7pm**. Zoom Info:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85339754195?pwd=VVB6M281OTVNL01uRVh1R3dQWkVBdz09>

Passcode: 2Kzr3V

The final two Lottery Information Session will be in-person on:

- Wednesday, Feb 15, 10-11am

- Monday, Mar 6, 6-7pm

If you know anyone who is interested in applying (or should be), please ask them to send an email to us at 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. Our website has all the information they will need at: <https://millfalls.org/lottery-info-sessions/>

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:

Just before the December Break, we finalized the **health insurance** and **dental plan renewals**.

During late December and early January, we were fortunate to have several **college students available for subbing**. This is a tremendous resource for us and we are so appreciative that they are willing to jump in to join our team during their time away from university.

We do continue to have **need for subs** on a weekly basis. **If you are aware of anyone who is looking for day work in a school setting, please contact Laura and I directly to arrange a connection with your contact(s).** Thank you!

This week we purchased tickets to the **March international Montessori conference** being held in Boston and hosted by the American Montessori Society. As discussed previously, we will be accessing ESSER III funds to cover the costs of staff attending the conference. Thirteen of us will be attending in person; others will access the conference virtually. The conference offers a deep dive into best practices in Montessori, challenges related to and beyond COVID, administrative workshops and very talented keynote speakers. We look forward to all we will learn there and all we will bring back to our school for implementation.

Financial

Our auditors are continuing their work on our **FY22 Audit**; they have completed a draft of the audit which was sent to us just after the new year. 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.

Federal Funds: Once the revision for our use of **ESSER III** funds has been approved by the DOE, we will once again continue our reimbursement requests. **Title Fund reimbursement** requests are ongoing.

MFCS Community Building & Volunteerism

Late December is always a time of kindness and generosity at school. Families are so thoughtful in the ways that they share their appreciation for our work often sending in heartfelt cards and small gifts. In the classrooms, the children also make small crafts and cards to bring home to their families.

Our families and staff were also very generous in helping make our **Annual Coat & Warm Items Drive a great success**. Donated items were so plentiful that they filled my car and a portion of Laura's for our delivery to the Brookside Church. Items will be directed to newly arriving/arrived refugees and immigrants who are able to visit the Church's Thrift Store regularly to secure items that have been donated.

During the month of December, there are a number of projects that parents/guardians help with including the Lower Elementary's exploration of Chanukah, Kwanza, and Christmas. This is a wonderful way for adults in our community to lend their time and energy and knowledge inside of the classroom. We so appreciate those who participated in these events in December.

December and January are also the organizing months for our **Annual Fundraising Calendar Raffle** which is now well on its way. Led by long-time Mill Falls Parent, Lauren Doukas, the committee has met twice to plan and schedule this important fundraiser. As readers of our weekly newsletter is aware, the committee is collecting gift cards or services/experiences that are valued at or above \$25 to feature on each of the 30 days of April. Calendars will be sold in advance of the 'prize month' beginning just before we go on February Break. **If you have any gift cards to share (that you have been gifted or purchased), please contact me directly!**

Save the date: we are once again able to host our beloved **Mill Falls Student Variety Show**. This evening family event will be held at school on **Friday, February 3rd** beginning at 6:30pm. It's great fun, and if you can make it, please come by!

This week I hosted a **Montessori Morning Tour**, welcoming community leaders from across disciplines (nonprofits and higher education leaders populated this tour). It was a lovely morning and will likely lead to some important partnerships going forward. As you know, **I am asking for your help** in connecting me with people in your circles (professional and/or personal) so that we can expand our reach in sharing our school with community members/leaders who may be potential partners, funders, elected officials. **The next two Tours are scheduled for February 1 & March 8th, both will run from 9-10am. If you have anyone to invite, please contact me directly. This is critical work as we emerge from COVID and aim to connect/re-connect with the greater community.** Thank you!

As I've shared previously, I serve on the Board of the **NH Charter School Alliance**. This is the long-standing organization of charter school leaders in NH. We are working with the DOE's Charter School Office and are organizing meaningful events this spring for both School Admin/Leaders and Boards. Please stay tuned for more info on that.

Additionally, I have been participating in a **special education working group** that has been organized by Jane Bergeron at the NH Association of Special Education Administrators (NHASEA). This convening is exploring the best practices and challenges related to Special Education service delivery to students enrolled at charter schools. It is being held alongside the DOE's development of a template for charters and districts to use now that a new law requires Memos of Understanding between the schools and districts mapping how special education services will be delivered to their shared students with IEPs.

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.

Foundation News:

As of this writing, the **Foundation's 2022 Annual Appeal** has raised \$8,750 from 32 donors. Notes of thanks were sent out to each donor, most of whom have donated to Mill Falls for years and years. Thank you to those Trustees who have made a donation. **If you have not yet done so**, please note we are continuing to accept donations for the appeal! 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 \$531,100 in its accounts.



**Educational Program Director
Board Report
January 18, 2023**

January Professional Development: The January professional development was modified to accommodate staff member attending the March Boston Montessori conference in person and because only a portion of our staff was in attendance on Wednesday, January 11th, we worked on level specific curriculum planning. The lower elementary focused on our new reading resource, Fly Leaf Reading Program and the upper elementary work on the Cultural curriculum.

Afterschool Progaming: We have been busy this month with afterschool activities. The McIntyre Ski program began as soon as we returned from December break and continues through the months of the January and February. So far, we have been lucky with cancellations and relatively smooth weather. We also began tryouts for our annual variety show to be held on Friday, February 3rd at 6:30. Christine Bisson, our resident Drama club facilitator has taken the lead in facilitation of this process with the help of Tana Gills as support. Please join us if you can! Additionally this month, Colleen Costa and Amy Broadhead are running a board game clubs and Amy is also running a another session of fit club.

Access Testing: Every January, we begin to prepare for ACCESS testing. This is the state mandated assessment that all English Language Learners must take. This standardized assessment determines if a student is eligible for continued English Language support for the 2023/2024 school year. Students will take this test in the latter part of the month or in early February.

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