



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 February 15, 2023 @ 6pm

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

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

Bee called meeting to order at 6:17

Present: Butterfield, Bee, Dalton, Bashier, Hollingworth, Corriveau, Wrubleski, Levin

Absent: Trombley, Marr, DePasse

On Leave: Connors

2. Announcements/Updates (2 min)

3. Public Comment: No public present.

4. Meeting Business

a. Approval of Minutes from January 2023 meeting

Motion: Hollingworth motioned to approved January 2023 minutes; Butterfield seconded.

Vote: Unanimous (with Bee abstaining due to her absence at January meeting).

b. Agenda Review: Levin requested to go into closed session to discuss a disciplinary issue at the end of the meeting.

5. Montessori Moment: Kristin Lang, our Lead Montessori Teacher in our Kinder Room, shares a lesson about Arctic Animals.

6. School Reporting

a. Educational Program Director (Wrubleski)

Wrubleski shared that it is has been a busy couple of weeks. Students have just completed internal benchmark assessments. She noted that staff pauses all other lessons and do only assessments during this time. Students are assessed in reading, writing and math; they have 45 minutes of math, one reading assessment and work on writing in the afternoons. It's a lot of work for teachers, and they are also starting to work on the next round of progress reports that will go out in March.

Our culminating Cultural Studies event will be next Thursday, February 23rd. Students will present on all aspects of South America. Parents are invited to come to school for one hour. This is one of the first events since COVID for parents to see academic presentations and it is the first time we have had it in in 3 years.

Valentine's Day was earlier this week and we are celebrating the 100th Day tomorrow, February 16th, so it has also been a busy week of celebrations. Teachers will decorate classrooms and staff and students dress up as a 100-year-old or wear 100 items. The staff has also prepared a slideshow.

Last week, we had a Montessori site visit from the consultant we have been working with for the last 3 years. The first half of the day consisted of observations and the focal points we want to talk about; the second half of day was professional development. Staff are working on setting up a program where students get one-on-one conference time with a teacher (1st grade and up) weekly. Meryl and Laura will have follow-up meeting with the consultant in March.

Dalton asked about staff morale. Wrubleski said that it is typically a stressful time during assessments and progress reports and staff is also dealing with the pressure for the upcoming parent event. Needless to say, everyone is ready for February Break! Hollingworth commented that she enjoys and appreciates the music played during morning drop-offs.

b. Executive Director (Levin)

Levin reported that we were the back-to-back recipient of charitable gaming money donations. We received \$7,200 from Hanover, less \$1,250 fee.

The Foundation is still just about finished collecting checks for our annual appeal. We will be just shy of \$9,000.

Levin has secured June Trisciani to be our Lottery Official. She connected with Levin at a Montessori Morning Tour.

Grandparents & Special Friends Day is coming up on March 23rd, 9:15-11a. Anyone from the Board is welcome to come by.

Our last scheduled **Montessori Morning Tour** will be March 8th, 9:00-10:00a. As a reminder, these tours are for community leaders and people in our networks. Please spread the word.

We also have one more in-person **lottery information** session on March 6th, 6-7p.

Levin is working on the Bean Foundation Grant focused on student wellness programming and supports. Levin and Wrubleski, of course, discussed how we might use funds for expansion, but the grant has restrictions (no real estate) and it would not be a feasible idea.

Levin and Wrubleski continue to brainstorm sustainable and meaningful ideas for the Federal Charter School Grant being managed by the NH DOE. We have \$550,000 available to us. Levin proposed we add a our cross-curricular program that integrates hands-on projects, connecting science math and arts. This idea will be mapped out by Levin, Wrubleski and others as the grant proposal is finalized. The deadline is March 8th.

Dalton asked how funds would be used. Levin explained that funds would go toward some salary in evaluation of current scope and sequence and new planning as well as additional materials (this could be lab stations, water tables, whiteboard tablets, collaborative working spaces just to name a few). We would also seek to provide professional development for staff to help the curriculum come to life. Levin said staff will be asked to take a survey in coming weeks as we want their input.

7. Committee Reports

a: Mission & Charter Committee Report (Dalton & Committee Members)

Hollingworth reported that items for the Calendar Raffle Fundraiser are coming in and Calendars will be ready to send home with kids next Thursday, February 23rd. Help may be needed to pack everything up.

Dalton reported that the next and last scheduled Montessori Morning Tour is on March 8th.

Levin reported that the Charter Funding Bill passed the Department of Education Committee. This Bill proposes to increase the cost per student to \$9,000. This is operational money that drives the majority of our budget.

8. AGENDA ADDITION:

Butterfield made a motion to go into closed session, Hollingworth seconded. Vote: unanimous.

Butterfield made a motion out of closed session, Hollingworth seconded. Vote: unanimous.

Board discussed disciplinary issue.

Action: The Board discussed the particular issues related to a student discipline situation. No actions were taken.

8. Next Meeting: TBA needs to be rescheduled (DePasse, 2 min)

9. Adjournment: Motion: Butterfield made a motion to adjourn 7:39p. Hollingworth seconded. Vote: unanimous.



Executive Director's Report

For the February 15, 2023
MFCS School Board Meeting
Submitted by Meryl Levin

Required Reporting

Earlier this month, we reported to the NH DOE on our enrollment as required for our 3rd per-pupil funding payment for this school year.

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 & Governance Committees** have no scheduled meetings this month.

Facility

This week our new key fob system was installed by Pasek Security. This security upgrade was fully funded by the federal Safe School Grant. We will be reimbursed for all costs via the NH DOE which is charged with distributing those funds. The system, which works alongside the traditional key locks, will soon be launched for regular use once some software system details are finalized.

Wellness Update

This message continues to be true: Illness (particularly flu, RSV and strep) 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

Our 12th **Lottery Enrollment Period** is humming along! We have hosted one in-person and one virtual Lottery Information Session and have 2 more to go (as noted below). We already have well over 125 applications, and more come in daily. Our currently enrolled families have now returned their '**Intent to Return**' forms which asks them to share their enrollment plans for their children for next year. We are now aware of a few students who will not be returning at this point and that helps us begin to plan for next year by contacting those on the waitlist in corresponding program levels for the coming school year. From previous experience, we can expect a few more families to change their stated plans over the next months and right up to the first day of school.

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:

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!

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 auditors have now completed their work on our **FY22 Audit**. Once we receive the final paperwork from them, it 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. As noted above, the **Safe Schools Grant** will also be accessed shortly once billing is received from the installers of the new lock system.

MFCS Community Building & Volunteerism

With the building now open to people other than staff and students, we have had a number of volunteer opportunities and events. Each classroom has returned to hosting a **Read In** once per month when parents/guardians or friends are invited to join students in the classroom to read together on Fridays. Our Afterschool Cooking Club Team includes **2 local high school students** who volunteered along with our two staff members to run the club for our 17 students. As you read in the newsletter, nearly all of our early release and full-day Professional Development days include beautifully **catered lunches** provided for staff by our amazing parent/guardian community. Our beloved **Student Variety Show** was rescheduled to this past Monday due to weather and was a huge hit! Twenty-three students performed to a full house. As shared previously, our Project Manager will soon be going on parental leave. In preparation for her time away, she trained a parent volunteer who will pack the **food pantry bags** for school staff to distribute to those children who receive food from the pantry twice a week. Trustee and Mill Falls Parent, Hind Bashier has taken the lead on organizing the schedule for **Teacher Appreciation Week** in the early spring. If any of you would like to lend a hand in these or other programs, please contact me directly.

Work on the **Annual Fundraising Calendar Raffle** is nearly complete. Led by long-time Mill Falls Parent, Lauren Doukas, the committee has collected a great variety of items valued at \$25 or more, which will now be placed into the calendar for the month of April. Printing of the calendar has a sponsor who will cover all copy costs. The packets of 10 calendars and directions will be sent home with each student before the start of February Break. Calendars will be sold in March, in advance of the 'prize month' of April, and can be purchased on paper or online.

On February 1st, I hosted another **Montessori Morning Tour** to welcome community leaders from across disciplines (nonprofits and higher education leaders populated this tour), to Mill Falls. It was a lovely morning and will hopefully lead to some future work together. **The next Tour is scheduled for March 8th from 9-10am.** **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.** **If you have anyone to invite, please contact me directly. This is critical work as we emerge from COVID and aim to connect/reconnect with the greater community.** Thank you!

We have scheduled the return of our **Grandparents & Special Friends Day for Thursday, March 23rd**

from 9:15-11. If any of you are available to join us in welcoming our guests that morning, please let me know!

As I've shared previously, I serve on the Board of the **NH Charter School Alliance**. The Alliance Board meets at least monthly, and has spent the fall finding our footing in the current charter school landscape, post the darkest time of COVID, and now that there are many new charters being approved. The Alliance is committed to providing a professional learning community to NH charter school leaders and boards. We will be hosting a Spring Charter Leadership Summit for school leaders on March 15th from 8-11am at Granite State College. In addition, we are working in partnership with the NH Department of Education on an **evening program on April 20th from 5-7pm that will bring together charter leaders AND Board members. Please keep an eye out for more information about this important gathering. I hope that Mill Falls will be well represented.**

I continue to participate 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:

The Foundation currently holds \$541,368 in its accounts.

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