



*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.*

*The child is both a hope and a promise for mankind.*

-Dr. Maria Montessori

## **MFCS Meeting Minutes for August 29, 2017**

Mill Falls Charter School, 100 William Loeb Drive, Manchester, NH

### **1. Call to Order: 5:55pm**

**Present:** Kacavas, Levin, Wrubleski, Butterfield, Connors

**Absent:** DePasse, Roberge, Johnson, Brough

### **2. Public Comment:** No public present.

### **3. Approval of Minutes** from June 2017 meeting

**Motion:** Connors moved to approve the minutes; Kacavas seconded.

**Vote:** Unanimous.

### **4. School Update**

#### **a. Educational Program Director** (Wrubleski, 10 min)

**Space:** We now have new areas within our open space to accommodate for our growing needs. One area is an office for our Reading Interventionist/ELL Coordinator who was moved out the 'bowling alley' area because we have hired a second full-time Special Educator; and the other is a Sensory Space for students who need a space to regulate. The Sensory Space will have some regulation resources in the space, and we will have help from the Autism Bridges Team in designing that space.

**Hiring:** We are fully staffed with a strong team, though there were a few jobs which were filled in late summer. This year we received far few applications for most of our openings than in past years. Our core staff has just a few new people, the majority of our new staff are paras. While we do have about 11 new staff members in total, we are very pleased to share that two of our Assistant Teachers are returning staff – each took time away to be with their young children, and are now thrilled to be back! Our new Student Services Coordinator came to us late in the process, but comes with extensive experience. We also hired one new Special Educator. You can view everyone's bios on line at our website.

Kacavas Added: Currently, staff utilizes the Automated External Defibrillator (AED) machine located in the Union Leader portion of the building. She asked that Levin check in with the landlord regarding the machine's maintenance, and also be sure all staff knew where the machine is located. She added that each machine is designed differently, so staff should view the building's machine to be sure they are familiar with its design

#### **b. Executive Director** (Levin, 20 min)

Levin shared that the **Emergency Response Plan** will be filed later this week, as required by a new NH law, with the DOE/Homeland Security. The Board discussed **Board Growth:** Butterfield mentioned she does have a suggestion for a new possible Trustee. Levin shared the **Child Care numbers** – 9 BeforeCare; 15 KinderCare; 15 AfterCare. Not all children are enrolled full time, but these numbers are a good alignment to last year at this time. Levin updated the Board with regard to the impending **sale of the building**. The expected new owner has shared some of his ideas with Levin and Wrubleski with regard to both indoor and outdoor changes. Levin and Wrubleski met with the engineer working on the outdoor space to discuss the parking lot and traffic flow. Levin reminded members of the upcoming **Road Race and Fun Run** on Sunday, September

24<sup>th</sup>. She asked that they plan to be present at this great Community Event, which is co-sponsored by SNHU, along with many other lower level sponsors, including BrandIt which is providing race-day tshirts free of charge.

Levin asked for some suggestions regarding a new venue for the annual fall family fundraiser - **Night of Community** – as SNHU is no longer providing the venue free of charge. The Board discussed approaching the Yard, Franklin Pierce, and a few other local venues.

#### **6. Non-public session**

Butterfield moved to go into closed session for matters of personnel; Kacavas seconded.

Connors moved to come out of closed session; Butterfield seconded.

**Result of closed session:** discussed personell contracts. No decisions made.

#### **7. Program**

**a: Trustee Engagement** (DePasse/Levin, 20 minutes)

The Board engaged in a discussion regarding Prep for Annual Meeting, Strategic Planning/Retreat, Committee Membership, Slate, etc. Next month the Board will hold their Annual Meeting and Committee Assignment Review. Strategic Planning will be scheduled over the course of the year. Trustees discussed: Strategic planning needs to allow time and space explore issues/challenges and build goals to achieve them. Making the year 2-3 sessions to explore the issues, brainstorm, work in voices and participation of staff to be intentional about the goals. Important for the staff to feel that sense of accomplishment and be able to see the results of those goals - so goals and timeline needs to be realistic/attainable. All agreed that the process needs to include periodic check ins. Levin will work on identifying a facilitator for some portion of this work.

**8. Next Meeting:** Tuesday, September 19, 5:45pm (DePasse, 2 min).

**9. Public Comment\*** (10 min)

*(Members of the public may address the Board for 2 minutes each, and will be called upon in order by the Board Chair)*

**10. Adjournment:** Butterfield moved to adjourn; Kacavas seconded. Vote: Unanimous. Adjourned at 7:26pm.



**Executive Director's Report  
For the August 29th, 2017  
MFCS School Board Meeting  
Submitted by Meryl Levin**

### **Required Reporting**

Final **End of Year (EOY) Report** was filed in mid-June, immediately following the end of the school year. After that report was reviewed and processed, the final FY17 Pupil Aid funds were deposited in our bank account before the end of June.

**DOE-25 Quarters 3 & 4** have been filed with the state. The final year-end DOE-25 report will be completed once our FY 17 Audit is completed.

**The 2016/17 Annual Report** was filed in early August. A copy of that has been sent to the Executive Committee as well as the DOE. Please let me know if you would like me to send you a copy.

Over the summer, the DOE announced that the legislature had approved a new bill requiring all schools so submit their **Emergency Response Plan** to the DOE in partnership with the Homeland Security Office. I spent a good deal of time reviewing and updating our existing plan, and will send that in by the Sept 1 deadline. Most of the report is public, but there are some specifics to our response planning which will remain confidential. The entire plan is available to any Board member to review and has been sent to our Chair to sign off on. His signature, along with mine, Laura's and Susanne's as well as those of the Fire Marshall and the Police Chief are required. With the expected construction in the building (see below), there will need to be some mid-year changes to the plan. I will work with our School Safety Committee and our Board's Facility Committee after constructions plans are completed.

There were also a small number of smaller reports and surveys, which have been filed, as per requirements, in the late spring and summer.

### **Charter Renewal**

Earlier this summer, the Commissioner of Education presented the findings of the Charter Renewal Team to the Board of Education. On August 24<sup>th</sup>, the Board of education voted unanimously to approve our Charter Renewal along with all of the other NH charter schools, which were up for renewal.

### **Board Related**

Hoping that the warm summer air has provided some time for you to think of and/or approach some **potential new Trustees**, please let me know. I'd be happy to reach out to him/her and set up a meeting with potential candidates and our Governance Committee.

On our August Meeting Agenda will be time to discuss **general board items** including our upcoming Annual Meeting in September, Officer Slate, Committee Assignments. There has also been some talk of a retreat, which relates to our Strategic Plan making.

I have registered for a morning workshop on September 28<sup>th</sup> on Strategic Planning and Execution for Non-Profits. This free workshop is being presented by Enterprise Bank, one in a series they are doing for non profits and will be held at Rivier University from 8-10:30am. Please let me know if you'd like to join me!

### **Facility**

Over the summer our carpets got a deep cleaning and we did a lot of re-organizing of our storage areas.

This week our **fire extinguishers** were inspected. All is well, but we will need to refurbish 5 of the 7 next summer as they will be over 6 years old.

Even with creative space planning, we are pushing the envelope on available **space**. To accommodate some of our SpEd students, we will be creating 'chill out' space in the back library area, and additionally, we will be creating a space for our Reading Coach who was moved out of the 'Bowling Alley' space to make room for our second Special Educator.

Once again, our building is under agreement. Earlier this week, we learned that the new landlord will be Peter Levine, Principal, Amber Properties, LLC. I only learned about the sale, which is set to close in mid-September, when the Director of MC2 School stopped by after meeting with Peter and the UL. This summer there were a few competing bidders, but the other contenders stepped away from the purchase. Apparently, both the UL and MC2 will have signed leases with Peter (as per his lender's insistence) before week's end. So everyone is expecting that this sale will now go through. Peter walked around campus with Laura and I and explained many of his ideas for the space indoors and outdoors. We were told yesterday that construction will begin soon after the closing and is expected to be completed by March, if not before. Laura and I have a scheduled meeting with the exterior engineer on Tuesday. We will include a facility update on our Board Agenda for further discussion.

After going back and forth with the **Fred T. Church Insurance** team, we decided to start working together to explore a change to our coverage in the fall.

### **MFCS ChildCare Program**

Enrollment in our Child Care Program is strong out of the gate this year. Susanne is not in this week, so I'm not able to provide up-to-date enrollment numbers at this time, but hope to have them for the Tuesday meeting. At last count we had 14 KinderCare students signed up (some may be extended ie 12-5:45); 7 signed up for BeforeCare and 14 signed up for AfterCare (some of the children will be with us part time, the majority are full-time).

The AfterCare Program Coordinator this year is one of our Paraprofessionals who met with Laura and I this week to review programming. She will have assistance from other staff members. Our BeforeCare will be staffed by one of our Assistant Teachers, and our KinderCare will be staffed by our Kindergarten Lead and Assistant Teacher.

### **Enrollment & Prep for the New School Year**

We completed the year with a pretty clear picture of which students would be coming back, and who would be moving to other school environments. But as always happens, August brought some surprises and we only learned of plans for students to un-enroll in the last week or so. It's interesting to look at the movement, as we begin to turn our attention to our organization's growth and related challenges.

**Kinder:** At the time of the Lottery (March), there were 4 open spots in Kinder (19 spots were siblings; 2 were staff). One of our kinder siblings gave up his spot as did one child of a staffer who decided not to return.

**Lower Elementary:** At the time of the Lottery there were no openings in Lower El. Since then:

- Before the summer, 2 Lower El students un-enrolled from MFCS to attend their neighborhood schools rather than go into Upper El.
- In late August, 3 Lower Elementary students un-enrolled for various reasons. These spots have been filled.

**Upper Elementary:** At the time of the Lottery there were no openings in Upper El. Since then:

- Before the summer, twelve (12) 5<sup>th</sup> grade students un-enrolled at MFCS in order to attend various schools to begin their middle school experience. Remember we had more than 24 5<sup>th</sup> graders, so their departure did not open up all spots in our

Upper El, only some of those spots needed to be filled to keep our classroom numbers consistently at 24 per room

- Before the summer, one (1) 4<sup>th</sup> grade student un-enrolled to be homeschooled.
- In late August, we learned that 4 more 5<sup>th</sup> grade students un-enrolled at MFCS in order attend a variety of schools to begin their middle school experience. These spots have been filled.

Here's a snapshot of our 168 kiddos as broken down by grade for the start of the school year (as of today):

**Kinder:** 24;

**Lower El:** 1<sup>st</sup> = 24; 2<sup>nd</sup> = 24; 3<sup>rd</sup> = 24;

**Upper El:** 4<sup>th</sup> = 26; 5<sup>th</sup> = 29; 6<sup>th</sup> = 17

Of note: three of the students who joined us this summer are siblings of already enrolled students.

All of our **Handbooks** – Staff, Family, ChildCare and Volunteer – have been updated for the new year and posted on our website.

### **Financial**

**Special Education reimbursement payments:** In early summer, all outstanding payments from FY17 were made.

SpEd in relation to Manchester: After the Manchester School District reviewed the draft **Memo of Understanding between MFCS and the Manchester School District** which we sent them in May, they notified me at a meeting in August that they would continue this year with the monthly billing system we've used for the last years, rather than pay for the salary and related costs of employment of the special educators, as they had originally proposed.

Our Audit is expected to be begin on Monday, September 11<sup>th</sup>.

### **Legislative Update**

In late June, it was announced that there was a slight increase in Charter School Per Pupil Funding. The increase was built in to the State Budget for the 2017/18 School Year with another small increase expected in the 2018/19 school year.

Our FY18 approved FY18 budget is based on:

Grades 1-6 = \$6735.82;

Kinder = \$4917.79

The new numbers increase funding per child by +\$186.24 per child from previous funding level:

Grades 1-6 = \$6922.06

Kinder = \$5104.03

That looks to be an increase to MFCS of \$31,288.

Additionally, as you know from recent news stories, Full-Day Kindergarten funding has been passed (to be funded by KINO gambling). That does not go into effect until 2018/19 school year and there seem to be more than a few things to work out before implementation takes place. I'll be learning more about that from the charter perspective this fall, I expect, from the DOE and the NH Charter School Alliance, and will share what I learn so that we can plan accordingly.

### **MFCS Community Building & Volunteerism**

Over the summer a subset of parents have been hard at work on our **Annual Road Race and Family Fun Run scheduled for September 24<sup>th</sup> at SNHU**. Please plan to come and run, walk or just cheer us on! If you would like to be a **sponsor for the event**, please let me know at the Board Meeting! Sponsors will be included on our Race-Day T-shirts and celebrated throughout the event.

We are also potentially looking for a **new venue for our Night of Community**, as SNHU is no longer able to cover the food costs involved in the event (costs would be about \$20 per person there

this year, whereas in years past we've not had any expenses related to food or venue). Please let me know if you have any ideas or contacts you can share!

Our **first MFCS Summer Camp week** ran from July 10-14<sup>th</sup> and by all accounts was a big hit! The teachers had a blast, along with their students. Ms. Shannon (Lower EI) and Ms. Kristin (Kinder) lead campers in an exploration of the art and style of Eric Carle. Each day campers created their own works of art based on Carl's techniques.

As I've shared in the past, MFCS is part of a **consortium** of school districts and one other charter in support of our English Language Learners (ELL). Together, these many schools & districts have enough students to apply as a group for federal funds that support these learners. Last year we were able to provide professional development and acquire materials for our ELL students. We look forward to access this year's funds again (just over \$1000) for additional supports.

Please consider joining us on Wednesday, August 30<sup>th</sup> for our **Annual Popsicle Party**, which is held here at school from 6:30-7:30pm.

### **Human Resources**

Looking forward to next week when we welcome new and returning staff during our **Opening Days** (M-Th). During the week, our Retirement and Aflac brokers will meet with staff.

Laura will speak to some of the specifics on hiring, but we are a full house with 12 new staff members, as well as 2 Assistant Teachers who are returning after a year away to welcome and be with their new babies. Laura has done an amazing job of interviewing strong candidates and arranging a great team. Please take a moment to review our Staff Page here:

<http://millfalls.org/education/administration-faculty/>

Paper work received this month indicates that the **unemployment claim** we've been carrying since last fall may now have ended, though we await final confirmation on that.

### **Foundation News:**

The Foundation hopes to meet in the early fall to focus on the work of the 2017/18 School Year. The Foundation currently has \$212,180 in it's account.