

Howard Gardner MI Charter School Public Board Meeting

Tuesday, April 16, 2019

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a Public Board of Trustees meeting on Tuesday, April 16, 2019. The HGMICS facility, located at 1615 East Elm Street, Scranton, PA was the location for the public meeting. Dr. Susan Trussler called the meeting to order at 7:10 PM and then subsequently presided over the meeting. Dr. Trussler led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance and then took roll call for the board members and administrators.

The following Trustees attended: Dr. Susan Trussler, Laila Kane, Stephanie Westington, Dr. Fran Langan, Lou Nivert and John Ezbiansky. Absent: Dr. John Ruddy, Dr. Amy Kenton and Dr. Clarence Lamanna.

Also in attendance: Dr. Marie George, CEO; Maria Rozaieski, Principal; Chuck Wallinger, Business Manager; Janet Kania, School Secretary; and Kimberly Kost Scanlon, Esq., School Counsel.

Susan Trussler announced that at this time any visitor may comment or ask questions pertaining to items listed on the March agenda. At this time, the visitors in attendance had no comments or questions regarding the agenda.

I. Minutes

Susan Trussler presented the March 19, 2019 Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes and asked if there were any corrections or additions. The **MOTION** to approve the March 19, 2019 Board meeting minutes, as submitted, was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Stephanie Westington. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the minutes as submitted, with 3 Trustees absent.

II. President's Report

Susan Trussler

Susan Trussler announced that Laura Gillette-Mills of Hemmler+ Camayd and her associates have been meeting with faculty, staff, and parents as well as touring the facility to gather valuable information for the Master Plan. There are several additional scheduled meetings over the next few weeks. A draft Master Plan will be submitted to the Board of Trustees for review, in May.

Susan announced four positions that need to be filled for the 2019-2020 school year are Senior Teacher, Primary II Teacher, Unassigned Classroom Teacher, and Assistant Principal. All positions are posted on the web page. Anyone who meets the requirements is encouraged to apply.

Susan also announced that a notification was received from the University of Scranton on Thursday, April 11th regarding the U.S. State Department notice regarding the J-1 Visa that covers the Mandarin teacher. The U.S. State Department will no longer allow a single J-1 Visa to cover a dual teaching experience at an institution of higher education and at a K-12 school. This will preclude the school from participating in the Taiwanese grant with the University. The Board of Trustees researched the feasibility of HGMICS sponsoring a separate J-1 Visa, however that option was not practical and was too costly. Instead the School has decided to establish a part-time position and hire a Mandarin Chinese teacher for the 2019-2020 school year. The position will be posted on the web site and

interested individuals are encouraged to apply. It is also anticipated that a broader search may be needed with local and regional universities contacted and other forms of advertising pursued.

I. Finance Committee Report

Stephanie Westington

1. Financial Report

Stephanie Westington informed everyone that the Finance Committee met last week regarding the preliminary budget for 2019-2020. Chuck Wallinger will finalize the preliminary budget for 2019-2020 and present the information to the Board of Trustees at the May meeting.

Regarding the monthly financial report, Chuck Wallinger reported that revenues for March 2019 are \$7,800.50 above budget. Tuition revenue was above budget by \$2,335.27; this was based on increased school district per pupil rates. All school district payments are currently up-to-date. The federal School Improvement Grant (SIG) revenue of \$3,236.04 received in March 2019 was not included in the original budget. The school Art Show produced unbudgeted revenue of \$2,255. School expenses were \$4,271.86 above budget for March 2019. The budget variance is due to IT/computer costs that will be offset by PA Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) funds. The fiscal Year-to-Date Revenues are above budget while Expenses are below budget. As a result, the projected Net Operating Revenue of \$137,232 for the 2018-2019 Fiscal Year has been surpassed by \$18,906. A **MOTION** to approve the Financial Report, as presented, was made by John Ezbiansky and seconded by Laila Kane. With no further discussion, all Trustees present voted in favor of approving the financial report, with 3 Trustees absent.

IV. Nominating Committee

Fran Langan

Fran Langan reported that there has been one application received for the two Board of Trustees positions available for 2019-2020. Nominations and applications will be accepted through April 26th. Those interested in applying should submit their application to Fran Langan via e-mail to Janet Kania, School Secretary.

V. Policies

1. Revised Child Abuse Reporting Policy

Susan Trussler presented the Revised Child Abuse Reporting Policy for approval. A **MOTION** to approve the revised Child Abuse Reporting Policy, as presented, was made by Lou Nivert and seconded by Fran Langan. With no further discussion, all Trustees present voted in favor of approving the Revised Child Abuse Reporting Policy, with 3 Trustees absent.

2. Equity Policy

Susan Trussler presented the Equity Policy for approval. Marie George briefly reviewed the purpose of this federally required policy. A **MOTION** to approve the Equity Policy, as presented, was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Susan Trussler. With no further discussion, all Trustees present voted in favor of approving the Equity Policy, with 3 Trustees absent.

VI. School Matters

1. 2019-2020 School Calendar

Susan Trussler presented the 2019-2020 School Calendar for approval. A **MOTION** to approve the 2019-2020 Calendar, as presented, was made by Lou Nivert and seconded by Stephanie Westington. With no further discussion, all Trustees present voted in favor of approving the 2019-2020 Calendar, with 3 Trustees absent.

2. CEO Report

Marie George

Marie reported the operating budget for fiscal year 2019-2020 was developed during the past few weeks, with input from all functional areas – academics, operations, facilities, technology, health and student services. The Finance Committee reviewed the preliminary budget and is awaiting the Personnel Committee's recommendation for salary increases. . The goal is to submit next year's budget at the May Board meeting. The proposed 2019-2020 budget includes monies for strategic plan initiatives in the areas of curriculum, student assessment and professional development. Additional new positions included in the budget are Senior Teacher, Unassigned Classroom Teacher, Teacher Aide and Assistant Principal.

Regarding hiring for 2019-2020, the HGMICS website now lists all anticipated personnel openings, including the new Assistant Principal position that will be advertised in local papers and job posting websites. Also, on the website is notice of the Board's invitation for trustee nominations to fill the two vacancies in July 2019.

Current eighth grade students' graduation will be held on Thursday, June 6, 5:30 p.m. at the Scranton Country Club. A speaker has yet to be confirmed. All Trustees are invited to attend graduation and the dinner that follows. Field day is slated for June 7th and the last day of school is June 11th. Summer camps (SCAMPS) begin the following week and go through the week of August 5th.

The 2019-2020 School Calendar was drafted for Board approval. Five snow days are built into the calendar as well as a total of five teacher in-service days. The first day of school is August 28, 2019 and last day is June 5, 2020. The 2019-2020 School Calendar was approved earlier in this meeting.

The School Lunch Program is doing very well. Daily lunch totals average 60 and menu planning for next year, with the assistance of Cassandra Stockwell, Registered Dietitian, is underway. Food inventory and costs are more efficiently managed, since ordering from Sysco and using a cyclical menu. The kitchen equipment and organization are continually being improved through regular maintenance, additional safety features (e.g. floor mats), and more frequent cleaning. A recent kitchen inspection by the Department of Agriculture, in March, produced no deficiencies and kudos from inspector, Sara Pavia. We have submitted an application to receive local commodities for the 2019-2020 school year.

The Comprehensive Planning Committee (CPC) had its final meeting of the school year on April 11th, at which time they discussed the Title IA program submitting an application to transition from a Targeted Assisted to School-wide Program. The consensus was that there would be increased benefits if school-wide status was pursued. The CPC also received an update on the School's Achievement Goals and underlying issues, which were developed by faculty over the course of this year. Finally, the CPC met with Laura Gillette-Mills from Hemmler + Camayd to review the master planning process and to

provide their input.

All Charter Schools were recently contacted by the PA Office of the Attorney General requesting that their current Child Abuse Reporting Policy be submitted by April 8th. Our current policy was submitted with the caveat that a revised policy was under development. The revised Child Reporting Policy, once approved by the Board will be submitted to the Office of the Attorney General (OAG). It is expected that a public report will be issued summarizing what the OAG received from charter schools. In February, a similar report was publicized for PA public school districts.

A statewide initiative – Safe2Say Something (S2SS) - is underway to establish, in collaboration with the Sandy Hook Promise Foundation, an anonymous reporting system for potential threats. This initiative is coordinated through the PA Auditor General's office with a centralized crises intervention team that triages all reports. Reports can be made through a website, app, or hotline. The program is run through PA public schools and is aimed at 5-12 grade students. The HGMICS Safety Committee is reviewing all requirements for our School to participate, including establishing an on-call team to work with the crisis center and training for teachers and students.

3. Principal Report

Maria Rozaieski

Maria reported that Kim Hoskins, Science 5-8 teacher, took the Upper Class (5th and 6th grades) to Kettle Creek Environmental Center at the Meesing Sugarbush site in Marshall's Creek to take part in a Maple sugaring program. The students were immersed in hands-on learning in the middle of the sugarbush. The learning experience started with the history of how Native Americans discovered maple syrup and how the colonists first gathered sap from trees. Students then moved onto to learn about the science behind how the trees produce the sap through photosynthesis. Students were then able to take part in tapping a tree, fitting a spiel into the tree, and placing a bucket on a hook in order to capture the sap. The students rounded out the trip with observing the sap being boiled down and cooked into syrup. The students had an amazing time and the trip was planned to integrate with the current science curriculum, Living Systems.

The new Schoolwide Positive Behavior Team completed its last day of training on March 20th and will continue to meet monthly to 1) revise our major and minor discipline procedures, 2) update the School's behavior matrix, with definitions, and 3) decide the type of acknowledgement to use.

The Parent Forum hosted a Scholastic Book Fair at the school the week of March 20th through the 26th. Student, parents and teachers shopped throughout the week. Proceeds from the sale allowed each student in the school to receive a book. Teachers were asked to make a wish list of Scholastic items they wanted for their classroom and then wish list items were filled.

The evening of March 20th was the first annual HGMICS Art Show. Melissa Cruise, Art teacher, proposed the project to showcase the various pieces of artwork produced by our students in grades K through 8. Artome, a company that frames and displays the artwork, was used to set up the show. Each student at the school has a framed art work on display. The Art Show was a great success with e 200+ visitors. Proceeds from the show enable additional supplies for the Art program to be purchased.

Parent observations were held from March 19th through the 29th. In lieu of parent conferences, parents came in the classroom and had a student-led view of the work that is happening.

HGMICS has its own form of March Madness each year with a different theme each day. This year it was held from March 25th through the 29th. We had: Multiple Intelligence Monday, dress to represent your favorite or strongest Multiple Intelligence or wear Howard Gardner Spirit wear/colors; Team Tuesday, show your team pride and wear your favorite team jersey or shirt. Classes were encouraged to work all day in teams; Wacky Wednesday, wacky head to toe...crazy hats, hair, mismatched clothes, etc. There was even a wacky parade; Pajama Day Thursday, dream of kindness and wear your pajamas. Students and staff were encouraged to do acts of kindness for one another; Flashback Friday, dress in your favorite decade and participate in a decade musical challenge.

Our Schoolwide Positive Behavior reward for the month of April was a talent show for students. Auditions were held, acts rehearsed, and the performance was held on April 3rd. The entire school enjoyed singing, the playing of musical instruments, dancing, gymnastics, a magician and comedian.

HGMICS students participated in the University of Scranton's annual Earth Day Essay Contest as part of the University's "Celebrate Earth Day 2019" program. The contest was open to students in grades 7th through 12th with this year's theme being "Caring for the Earth's Critters". Mrs. Hoskins' Senior I and II Science classes submitted entries in this year's competition. I am happy to announce that the students from HGMICS successfully placed in each category as they competed against students from other local districts, with over 106 entries in the competition. The 7th grade division took 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. In addition, our 8th grade class took 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in the 8th and 9th-grade division.

Formal teacher observations and evaluations began at the beginning of April and will continue through the beginning of May. Faculty continue to work on improving student performance by examining growth and achievement scores, predicting future outcomes, and digging deeper to consider root cause of some of the shortcomings we are seeing.

VII. Presentation – Report on Student Achievement Goals & Underlying Issues

Presented by: Maria Rozaieski, Principal

Maria began the presentation with historical data for HGMICS students' PSSA test scores from 2012 to present with comparisons to the state averages. In most cases, HGMICS scores are above the state average for English Language Arts, Math and Science. The possible variables contributing to the fluctuation in achievement scores might include: changing from a private school to a public charter school, increase in student population, newly adopted curriculum materials, staff turnover, and PDE's adoption of the Common Core standards. Responses from the School include: increased professional development for teachers, adoption of a more competitive salary scale, increasing the length of school day, and scheduling regular common planning times for grade level teachers.

Maria went on to briefly explain that PVAAS data gives the current year growth scores and a 3-year average for groups of students by grade level and subject area. The faculty have examined the data to look for patterns across grade levels and subject areas in order to project achievement and growth scores for this school year. The faculty is also digging deeper into finding possible root causes of some of the decreases we are seeing in our achievement scores.

4. New Business

At this time, there was no new business that needed to be addressed.

Second Public Hearing of Visitors for any school-related topics:

Name/home school district

Topic/Issue

Jeri McNulty / Dunmore

Expected hire date of new faculty

At this time, Jeri McNulty addressed the Board of Trustees by asking when they were expecting to have all the new faculty and Assistant Principal hired. Susan Trussler answered by stating all opened positions are expected to be filled by the start of the 2019-2020 academic year.

At 8:20 PM, no further items of business were raised. A **MOTION** to adjourn was made by Susan Trussler and accepted by all Board of Trustees present, with 3 Trustee absent.

The next HGMICS Public Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, May 21, 2019 at 7:00 PM.**