

Howard Gardner MI Charter School Public Board Meeting

Tuesday, August 20, 2019

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a Public Board of Trustees meeting on Tuesday, August 20, 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 7:30 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, Laurie Cadden, Susan Hennemuth, Dr. Fran Langan, John Ezbiensky and Stephanie Westington. Absent: Dr. John Ruddy and Dr. Clarence Lamanna.

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

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

I . Minutes

Susan Trussler presented the July 16, 2019 Board of Trustees meeting minutes and asked if there were any corrections or additions. At this time, there were no corrections or additions and the **MOTION** to approve the July 16, 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 two Trustees absent.

II . President's Report

Susan Trussler

Susan Trussler informed the group that prior to the meeting the Board of Trustees held its annual meeting to appoint officers and committee chairpersons for the 2019-2020 year. The following officers will hold a one-year appointment beginning immediately:

Dr. Susan Trussler, President; John Ezbiensky, Vice President; Laila Kane, Secretary and Stephanie Westington, Treasurer.

In addition, the Board of Trustees also appointed Committee Chairpersons who will hold a one-year appointment beginning immediately:

Finance & Facilities Committee has now been combined as one committee due to an overlap in responsibilities with recommended co-chairs Stephanie Westington, Chair and Dr. John Ruddy,
Personnel Committee recommended Chair as Dr. Susan Trussler
Nominating Committee recommended Chair is Laila Kane
Development Committee recommended Chair is Susan Hennemuth
Academic Committee, a new Committee, with recommended Chair as Dr. Fran Langan

Susan also stated that both the President and CEO are members each committee as ex officio non-voting members. Also, Development and Academic committees can recommend to the Board President, non-trustees to serve as members according to the requirements in the bylaws. With no further discussion the **MOTION** to approve the 2019-2020 Officers and Committee Chairpersons was made by Laurie Cadden and seconded by Fran Langan. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the 2019-2020 Officers and Committee Chairpersons as submitted, with two Trustees absent.

Susan updated the group on the continued progress of the Master Plan. Susan announced that a meeting with the East Mountain Neighborhood was held Wednesday, August 14th. There were 15 neighbors who attended the meeting. The demolition of the lower lot was announced and a brief overview provided about plans for an addition and improved traffic flow. The neighbors expressed concerns regarding run off of water after the demolition of the lower lot, truck and school bus routes. The neighbors would like to see the parents and buses readjust their driving patterns to accommodate the residence of the neighborhood. Susan and Marie assured the neighbors that the demolition of the building will not interfere with their quality of life. Also, the new design of the building will include a cueing system to alleviate the flow of traffic.

III. Finance Committee Report

Stephanie Westington

Stephanie began by stating that the annual audit is in the final stages of being completed. A Finance meeting will be set with Baker Tilly to review the draft audit report before final presentation is made to the Board of Trustees. Stephanie then turned over the financial report to Chuck Wallinger, Business Manager.

1. Financial Report

Chuck Wallinger

Chuck Wallinger, Business Manager reported revenues are \$21,239.94 above budget for July 2019. Tuition revenue was above budget by \$5,650.89; this was based on increased school district per pupil rates. There was EITC revenue that was not included in the budget for \$14,000 for IT costs. Chuck reported that expenses were \$24,710.17 above budget for July 2019. The expenses were above budget due to IT costs of \$15,037.93 that are offset by EITC revenue. The IT costs included an upgraded network security system, new access points for internet connectivity, and Teacher laptops. The expenses were also above budget due to Facilities costs for Phase I of the approved Strategic Plan by \$4,439.69. The Net Operating Revenue for July 2019 of \$11,314.41 was below budget by \$3,470.23 due to Phase I of the approved Strategic Plan that was not budgeted. In addition, Chuck added that the School had 133 days cash on hand at the end of July 2019.

The **MOTION** to approve the Financial Report through July 30, 2019 as reported and submitted was made by John Ezbiansky and seconded by Susan Hennemuth. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the Financial Report as submitted, with two Trustees absent.

IV. Nominating Committee

Fran Langan

Fran stated that the amended by-laws recently approved by the Board of Trustees now allows for an increase of members of the Board of Trustees from 9 to no more than 11 members. With two additional seats now available, the Nominating Committee would like to bring forth the nomination of Aaron Nivert to serve one term (three years) on the Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School

Board of Trustees. This would bring the Board to a membership of ten trustees. With no further discussion, **MOTION** was made by the Committee to appoint Aaron Nivert to serve one term (three years) on the Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School Board of Trustees beginning September 1, 2019 through August 31, 2022. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the appointment of Aaron Nivert to the Board of Trustees, with two Trustees absent.

V. Policies

1. Parent and Family Engagement Policies for 2019-2020

Marie presented the Parent and Family Engagement Policies for the 2019-2020 academic year. Marie informed the group that the Parent and Family Engagement Policies need to be reviewed and resubmitted for approval by the Board of Trustees each year in order for the school to be in compliance with Title I federal grants. With no further discussion, **MOTION** was made by Fran Langan and seconded by Laila Kane to approve the Parent and Family Engagement Policies for the 2019-2020 academic year as presented. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the policy, with two Trustees absent.

2. Visitor Identification Policy

Marie presented a new policy in light of a recently acquired a Visitor Identification system that will ensure that all visitors, contractors, volunteers, etc. be screened prior to admittance to the building by scanning an authorized government issued ID that will identify any criminal history on an individual. Should an individual not be cleared, access to the School may be denied. In response to a question, it was noted that the system does process foreign government issued ID's. The system also does not require IDs to be presented every time, since the system stores previous visitors' information, along with a record of their visits. Marie also stated that once the policy was approved it would appear in all handbooks. With no further discussion, **MOTION** was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Stephanie Westington to approve the Visitor Identification Policy as presented. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the policy, with two Trustees absent.

VI. Personnel

1. Primary Teacher

Kaitlyn Hicks

Susan announced that with the recent departure of Ross Patane, Primary III teacher, that position needed to be filled. Marie added that internal candidates were interviewed and the nominated candidate was then presented to the Board of Trustees for an electronic vote. With no further discussion, **MOTION** to re-affirm the appointment of Kaitlyn Hicks to the position of Primary Teacher effective August 15, 2019 at an annual salary of \$36,244, and estimated benefits not to exceed 30% or \$10,873, for an estimated total of \$47,117 was made by John Ezbiansky and seconded by Susan Trussler. All Trustees present voted in favor of appointing Kaitlyn Hicks as Primary Teacher as presented, with two Trustees absent.

2. Teacher Aide

Anna Boginski

Marie announced that Stephanie Tolerico, who was hired as a Teacher Aide had apologized and decided to decline the position due to a full-time teacher position offer at another district. From the pool of teacher aides, candidates were then interviewed. The nominated candidate was then presented to the Board of Trustees for an electronic vote. With no further discussion, **MOTION** to re-affirm the appointment of Anna Boginski as a Teacher Aide effective August 15, 2019 at an annual salary of \$20,600, with estimated benefits not to exceed 30%, or \$6,180, for a total of \$26,780 was made by

Stephanie Westington and seconded by Fran Langan. All Trustees present voted in favor of appointing Anna Boginski as Teacher Aide as presented, with two Trustees absent.

Marie added that another candidate who was appointed as a Teacher Aide (Sarah Ross) declined the position and interviews to replace that person are underway. At this time, this position is still open and will be filled in the near future.

VII. School Matters

1. CEO Report

Marie George

Marie stated that the school is prepared to start of another school year and looking forward to students returning and new students beginning. Our teaching staff has grown to 27 teachers, 12 aides and 278 enrolled students at this time.

Marie added that the Annual Audit for 2018-2019 fiscal year was successfully completed by Baker Tilly. Chuck Wallinger, Business Manager, provided all needed information, which was time consuming. Auditors conducted document reviews in June and then returned early August to complete all data gathering. Chuck is working with the auditing team now to finalize the preliminary audit report for presentation to the Finance Committee. The final audit report will be presented to the Board of Trustees in September 2019.

Kudos to Patty Biko, Operations Coordinator and kitchen staff, Dottie Shoemaker and Kim Felkowski, for all their hard work during the summer preparing the kitchen for the start of the school year. This will be the schools second year providing free and reduced lunches as part of the National School Lunch Program (reduced is \$.40, student full price \$3.00 and adult price is \$4.50). A new feature this year will be the availability of Smart Snacks, ranging from \$.50 to \$1.50. During the summer, the kitchen was thoroughly cleaned, appliances polished and a new grill installed.

Michael Abballe, IT Specialist, utilized the summertime to install additional IT security and needed upgrades to the systems. New access points for Wi-Fi coverage and servers were installed. All existing teacher laptops were upgraded, and for the first time, provided to teacher aides; new laptops were purchased for all teachers. Student Chrome books are being prepared for student use and a new parent/student agreement will be distributed, consistent with the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy. TreeAnne McEnery, Assistant Principal is now updating the website to better reflect our academic program. Annual performance reviews and goals for 2019-2020 for all professional and administrative staff took place this summer.

The annually required Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Scranton Police Department (SPD) was recently signed by Chief Graziano. Sgt. Jeff Vaughn from the SPD Special Operations Group will visit the school on August 19th to discuss and prepare for the training and drills to be held with all staff on Thursday, August 22nd, which is a part of the pre-service training. Additional pre-service topics/presentations include Charter School Law, Special Education Law, Project-based learning and administrative updates.

Marie added that the school was notified that the application for Math Enrichment and Support from the Small Rural School Achievement Program was approved by the U.S. Department of Education for \$13,746. This grant will support math tutoring and advanced math classes for HGMICS students.

Lastly, Marie informed the group that the final stages of the summer project renovations are underway with painting occurring this week. Classrooms are prepared with some final touches extending into September. Major renovations are complete for the new conference room as well as improved space for the classrooms of Art, Title I Math, Learning Support, and Senior III/Science. New flooring for classroom restrooms were installed and the new sinks for all the classroom rest rooms will be installed during September. Upgrades to the employee lounge include upgraded electrical to accommodate appliances and where there was no water source previously, a sink/garbage disposal. The Lounge also benefited with additional space when the soda machine was removed. Except for plumbing and electrical, all work was done supervised by Bryan Kerns

2. Principal Report

Maria Rozaieski

Maria highlighted the work that has been happening throughout the past month as:

- Marie, TreeAnne and Maria conducted interviews throughout the summer for open positions. The majority of the faculty and staff will be returning for the 2019-2020 school year. Eight of the faculty and staff are new or have acquired new positions this year. Student enrollment is currently at 278; however there are a few open seats throughout a few grades: two seats available in sixth grade, five seats in seventh grade and thirteen seats in eighth grade. However it was decided not to fill all opened eighth grade seats with the anticipation of the increase of class size for 2020-2021.
- Parent information night was held on August 15th to provide new families valuable information and services for their students through the school. Twenty new families attended. The revised Parent/Student handbook has been posted on the website for all parents to review.
- TreeAnne McEnery, Assistant Principal and Maria have been working on the HGMICS Academic Plan Goals and 2018-2019 Parent Survey feedback that are influencing their goals for 2019-2020 which will focus on communication.
- A planned week of pre-service and professional development activities for faculty and staff from August 19th through the 23rd.
- August 22nd there will be a Kindergarten “Meet and Greet” for Kindergarten students and their families. In addition, the Parent Forum is hosting an Ice Cream Social. Times are 5:30 PM and 6:30 PM respectively.

VIII. HGMICS Academic Plan 2019-2020

Maria Rozaieski & TreeAnne McEnery

Maria Rozaieski, Principal; and TreeAnne McEnery, Assistant Principal presented the HGMICS Academic Plan for 2019-2020. The slide show presentation began by stating that Phase I is the initial stage of planning and brainstorming. Further development will be based on collaborative efforts of academic leadership and the academic committee of the Board of Trustees. Three key goals have been identified and articulated at this time; which will focus on communication. These key areas are:

- Academic Leadership communication
- Academic Leadership and Faculty articulation and communication of MI curriculum framework
- Teacher communication with a Parents about student progress and classroom instruction

The Principal and Assistant Principal will emphasize the HGMICS Mission, Vision and Academic Leadership School-wide Communication. The highlighted focus of the Mission statement will be:

- Provide an alternative approach to education that cultivated the potential of each child through the development of his/her Multiple Intelligences (MI)

- Focus on project-based experiences and real-world application of knowledge
- Empower our young people to become independent and self-directed learners
- Communicate with the community by describing the actions for the upcoming school year
- Highlight actions and plan throughout the year to the Board, parent Forum, and at all faculty meetings and in-services

The highlighted focus of the Vision statement will be:

- A leading center of excellence in primary education in Northeastern PA
- Attract students from across the region by offering authentic, transformative experiences rooted in Howard Gardner's MI theory
- A major resource for student growth and innovative model for teacher development and family engagement

The highlighted focus of the Academic Leadership School-wide Communication will be:

- Establish weekly school-wide communication that informs parents of school updates such as field trips, nurse, transportation, calendar, re-enrollment, After School Clubs and programs, etc.
 - This communication is electronically sent through Sycamore
 - The live calendar on Sycamore includes all of the information as well
 - Parent/Student Handbook will be posted to the website for easy access, hard copy will be available upon request
 - Principal will include a cover letter that highlights changes to the handbook
- All updates to Teacher and Employee Handbooks will be reviewed with the Faculty
- The Parent Forum will be asked to highlight the Parent/Student Handbook in their first meeting and refer parents to the handbook throughout the year

The next component will include Teacher Communication which will include:

- Teachers will establish routines to keep parents informed of student learning and progress by:
 - Updates to Sycamore Classroom page weekly, these updates will include student progress and grades
 - A "Blog" post about weekly instruction and upcoming instruction by highlighting something about the lesson(s) of the week which will include photo or short video(s) as a visual component
 - Classroom Aides will assist in ensuring this is accomplished
 - The Principal and Assistant Principal are included in the class distribution electronic communications
- An Instructional Planning Template is created for unit and lesson planning based on understanding goals, MI extensions, formative assessments, PA Standards
- A rubric/template for reporting student progress is created and managed in Sycamore "Progress Reports" to align with the Instructional Planning Template and based on attributes and evidence of student progress

Student Learning Portfolios will be re-established, students in grades K-6th will have Friday Folders that will go home with weekly examples of student work, grades 7-8th will have Periodic Progress Folders based on units.

The Teacher Development will ensure teachers have what they need to successfully bring the mission and vision into action. It will also ensure teachers have direction, understanding, and

commitment to the mission and vision. Also it will ensure that teachers understand and identify what good teaching is by developing PLCs to discuss and analyze classroom instruction. Pre-service will be held a few days prior to the start of the school year and distributed to all faculty and staff. Further information will be shared as the plan developments and progress moves forward.

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

At 8:43 PM, no further items of business were raised. A **MOTION** to adjourn was made by Stephanie Westington and accepted by all Board of Trustees present, with two Trustee absent.

The next HGMICS Public Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, September 17, 2019 at 7:00 PM.**