

Howard Gardner MI Charter School Public Board of Trustees Meeting

Tuesday, December 18, 2018

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a Public Board of Trustees meeting on Tuesday, December 18, 2018. 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 7:09 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, Dr. Clarence Lamanna, Dr. Fran Langan, Lou Nivert, and John Ezbiansky. Absent: Dr. John Ruddy, Laila Kane, Stephanie Westington, and Dr. Amy Kenton.

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.

Visitors in attendance: Pam Kobierecki, resident of Mid-Valley School District; Mina Ardestani, Michele Wall, and Karen McKeon residents of Scranton School District; Jerri McNulty, resident of Dunmore School District. Susan Trussler announced that at this time any visitor may comment or ask questions pertaining to items listed on the December agenda.

I. Minutes

Susan Trussler presented the November 20, 2018 Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes and asked if there were any corrections, additions to the meeting minutes. The **MOTION** to approve the November 20, 2018 Board meeting minutes as submitted was made by Lou Nivert and seconded by Fran Langan. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the minutes as submitted, with 4 Trustees absent.

II. President's Report

Susan Trussler

Susan Trussler reported on the Taiwanese Grant partnership that has benefitted the School for many years. This competitive grant from Taiwan's Ministry of Education is based upon a cooperative agreement between HGMICS and the University of Scranton. The grant provides a certified teacher from Taiwan the opportunity to teach Mandarin Chinese in the USA and is renewable for up to two years. The current grant for Mandarin Chinese teacher, Andie Lao, will end in July 2019. HGMICS is one of only a handful of schools in the United States that has been awarded this opportunity. Susan and University of Scranton professor, Dr. Ann Pang-White recently met with representatives from Taiwan's Ministry of Education in New York City to discuss the program and our intention (HGMICS and the University) to submit a new grant proposal in the next few weeks. If that grant is approved, a new Mandarin teacher will be selected for the period from August 2019 through July 2021.

Visitors favorably commented on the Mandarin Chinese program but concerns were raised about repetitive content currently offered. It was recommended that an assessment of student progress be completed for the newly selected Mandarin Chinese teacher to ensure program continuity for current and new students.

Susan reported on the Board's new practice of having an educational presentation at Board meetings and recognized Jeri McNulty and Maria Rozaieski for their presentation at the November board meeting on the Theory of Multiple Intelligences. Due to the time of the year, a presentation at this meeting will not take place but future presentations are scheduled for January 2019 on the HGMICS Kindergarten program and in February, 2019 on the Math Curriculum at the School.

Susan provided an update on the Strategic plan draft goals that were reviewed by the Board and after incorporating some minor changes, were approved. The next step will be to develop an Action Plan that details more specifics about how the nine goals will be achieved. Various stakeholders will be asked to participate in drafting the objectives for possible inclusion in an Action Plan. Further information will follow.

III. Finance Committee Report

Chuck Wallinger

1. Financial Report:

In Stephanie Westington's absence, Chuck Wallinger reported that revenues through November 30, 2018 are \$12,304 above budget. Tuition revenue was above budget due to an increase from prior year reconciliation and increased school district per pupil rate. School district reimbursement payments have been on time. Expenses were \$5,124 above budget for November 2018. The budget variance is due to increased teacher aide costs, kitchen staff costs and PSERS pension costs. Budget projections through November 2018 are on target. **MOTION** was made by John Ezbiansky to approve the Financial Report as presented and seconded by Clarence Lamanna. With no further discussion, all Trustees present voted in favor of approving the financial report, with 4 Trustees absent.

IV. Personnel Committee Report:

Susan Trussler

1. Reaffirm Temporary Teacher Appointment

Alyssa Rook

Susan announced that due to the medical leave of the Primary I Teacher, Alyssa Rook the Primary I Teacher Aide will serve as Primary I Teacher for the duration of the medical leave. This emergency action had been approved electronically by the Board prior to the December meeting. A **MOTION** was made to reaffirm the appointment of Alyssa Rook as the temporary Primary I Teacher from November 26, 2018 through the duration of the permanent teacher's medical leave at an annual salary equivalent to \$35,000. The motion was made by Fran Langan and seconded by Clarence Lamanna. Motion was approved by all Trustees, with 4 Trustees absent.

V. Facilities Committee Report

Lou Nivert

Lou Nivert reported that the Facilities Committee met and reviewed recent maintenance projects that were completed. The Committee supports the School proceeding with repairing the refrigerator (\$750) and installing LED fixtures for the street-facing lights (\$2500). The Committee reviewed the progress made to date in updating and replacing the electrical panels. There are five replacements still needed. The expenditure associated with the need to replace the remaining five electrical panels requires Board approval.

Electrical Panels:

Lou then made the **MOTION** to approve the replacement of five electrical panels at a cost not to exceed \$10,800, which was seconded by Fran Langan. Motion was approved by all Trustees, with 4 Trustees absent.

VI. Development Committee Report

John Ezbiansky

John Ezbiansky reported the committee is currently working on developing an Alumni Family data base. Information for the data base will be gathered through various means and then reviewed for its accuracy.

VII. Nominating Committee Report

Fran Langan

Fran Langan reported that the Nominating Committee continues to meet and will forward any viable Trustee candidates to the Board.

VIII. School Matters

CEO Report

Dr. Marie George

Marie announced recent contributions received through the Pennsylvania Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC) to the Howard Gardner Charter School Foundation. The Philadelphia Insurance Company, a new contributor, donated a check for \$2,500 that was personally delivered to the School and a photo opportunity taken for public release. Contributions were also received from Waste Management Inc. for \$3,000 and from FNCB Bank for \$4,000. Publicity regarding FNCB's generous donation is also planned. All EITC funds support the School's technology needs and STEM programming. Formal acknowledgment to all contributors is sent immediately upon receipt of their donations. The total of \$9,000 received thus far is twice the amount received last year at this time.

The employee health benefit re-enrollment process is now underway. With the assistance of the School's benefit broker, Jeff Haudenschild, from The Benefits Group, there will be no increase costs for both HGMICS and participating employees for 2019; for the vision benefit there will be increased coverage for contact lenses that did not exist last year, also at no extra cost to the employees.

Marie reported that an updated list of all service contracts was completed by Bryan Kerns and Chuck Wallinger and shared with the Facilities and Finance Committees. Both Committees are monitoring the satisfaction and cost of service providers and ensuring that a regular schedule of bidding that involves other providers takes place. Quotes from three providers for snow removal resulted in the continued contract with John Kelly, who has provided the snow removal service in the past for HGMICS. Plans to issue requests for proposals (RFP's) for both external audit and cleaning services are underway with a January, 2019 distribution of the audit RFP and March, 2019 distribution of the cleaning service RFP. In December, 2018 a Master Planning RFP was distributed to six architectural firms in the Luzerne/Lackawanna area. Interested architectural firms must submit their proposals by January 4, 2019.

Marie stated that Bryan Kerns, Facilities Manager completed several projects recently to include bathroom upgrades, new flooring for the kitchen walk-in refrigerator, new exterior door for the Music cottage, and lime treatment for the school lawn. In addition, there are plans to replace the street-facing lights with LED fixture and to replace the motor of the upright kitchen refrigerator. Pending board approval, replacement of five remaining old electrical panels will be scheduled.

Marie provided an update on the non-assigned classroom teacher position that was recently approved by the Board. Both internal and external advertising took place and several candidates have applied. No interviews will take place however until an analysis of the job duties is completed and reviewed by the Personnel Committee. All candidates were made aware of the need for this analysis to be completed.

In addition, Kaitlyn Hicks, Intermediate III Teacher Aide will be out on maternity leave beginning January 2019 and replaced with Kelly Services substitute, Rob Rouse, who has been used as a substitute consistently, since the beginning of the school year. The Primary I Teacher, Chrissi Polizzi, is currently on medical leave (FMLA) and expected to return in January, 2019.

Principal Report

Maria Rozaieski

Maria reported that Grandparents Day took place on November 29th with a total of 130 grandparents participating. Grandparents with grandchildren in Kindergarten, Upper (5th and 6th) grades, and Senior (7th and 8th) grades attended the morning session for an hour. Grandparents with grandchildren in Primary (1st and 2nd) grades and Intermediate (3rd and 4th) grades attended an afternoon session for an hour. The event was a success with positive feedback from those who attended. The originators of the Grandparents group now have a healthy list of volunteers who have volunteered to launch their first project of organizing classroom libraries.

The first trimester report cards were distributed on November 30, 2018 and parent conferences were held December 5th and 6th and all went well. The Student Assistance Program (SAP) team continues to meet weekly to discuss students that have been referred to the program and keep updated and ongoing referrals.

The Parent forum hosted an annual Winter Holiday Celebration at the school on Saturday, December 8th. Children were able to make and take a few different craft items suitable for gift giving to family members, and Santa was available for pictures. It was well attended and fun for all.

Laila Kane is providing consultation and mentoring on the incorporation of Montessori equipment and methods in the Primary classrooms.

IX. New Business

At this time there was no new business brought forth.

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

Pam Kobierecki expressed her heartfelt gratitude to the Board of Trustees for their consideration of last month's meeting parent request and expressed her pleasure with the educational experience that her children are receiving.

Mina Ardestani asked the Board of Trustees if a decision to accept the resignation of a teacher will be discussed. Kimberly Kost Scanlon, Esq. explained that since this is a confidential personnel matter, no public comments could be provided.

Michele Wall questioned why the November Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes had not been added to the web page for the public to view and that the Safety Committee minutes are incorrectly posted in this area. It was explained that the last month's meeting minutes are not uploaded to the web page until after the Board votes to approve the minutes, and that the incorrect placement of the Safety Committee minutes will be rectified.

Jerri McNulty expressed her concerns about the inadequate lighting in the parking lot. Lou Nivert explained that all exterior lighting will be replaced with LED fixtures in the near future.

Susan Trussler stated that if there were no other requests to speak at this time the Board of Trustees would conclude the current meeting.

At 7:52 PM, no further items of business were raised. **MOTION** was made by Lou Nivert and seconded by Fran Langan to adjourn, which was accepted by all Board of Trustees present, with 4 Trustees absent.

The next HGMICS Public Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, January 15, 2019 at 7:00 PM.**