

Howard Gardner MI Charter School Public Board Meeting

Tuesday, January 15, 2019

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a Public Board of Trustees meeting on Tuesday, January 15, 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 7:05 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. John Ruddy, Laila Kane, Stephanie Westington, Dr. Fran Langan, and Lou Nivert. Absent: Dr. Amy Kenton, Dr. Clarence Lamanna, and John Ezbiasky.

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 January agenda. At this time, the visitors in attendance had no comments or questions regarding the agenda.

I. Minutes

Susan Trussler presented the December 18, 2018 Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes and asked if there were any corrections or additions to the meeting minutes. The **MOTION** to approve the December 18, 2018 Board meeting minutes, as submitted, was made by Fran Langan 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 provided an update on the Strategic Plan for 2019-2021. Input on action steps for each of the nine goals is being requested via a survey distributed to various stakeholders, e.g. faculty, staff, parents and community representatives. Everyone was encouraged to complete the survey as soon as possible and thanked for their participation.

III. Finance Committee Report

Stephanie Westington & Chuck Wallinger

1. Financial Report:

Stephanie Westington informed the group that a request for proposals for audit services was distributed to sixteen accounting firms; the due date for proposal submissions is February 8, 2019 after which time the Finance Committee will select finalists for further review and interviews. The objective is to have a recommendation to the Board for the March 2019 meeting.

Chuck Wallinger reported that revenues are \$7,207 above budget for December, 2018 based on actual Tuition Enrollment of 276 students compared to the budgeted Tuition Enrollment of 275 students. The Tuition revenue was above budget by \$6,972; this was based on increased school district per pupil rates. Expenses were \$6,614 below budget for December, 2018. The budget variance is due to unused Student Activity expense that is anticipated to be used in future months. The Year-to-Date

revenues are above budget and Expenses are below budget; there is an expectation of surpassing the budget Net Operation Revenue of \$137,232 for the Fiscal Year 2019. A **MOTION** to approve the Financial Report, as presented, was made by John Ruddy 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. Facilities Committee Report

John Ruddy

1. Master Planner:

John Ruddy reported that the Facilities Committee met on January 7th to review the proposals received in response to the School's RFP for a Master Planner. Three proposals were received and the committee discussed both the pros and cons of each proposal. It was unanimously decided that the most comprehensive proposal was submitted by the firm Hemmler + Camayd, the recommended firm to develop the School's Master Plan. A **MOTION** to approve the architectural firm Hemmler + Camayd to conduct a planning process and produce a Master Plan for the school at a cost not to exceed \$40,000 was made by John Ruddy and seconded by Laila Kane. Motion was approved by all Trustees, with 3 Trustees absent.

Susan announced that a presentation from Hemmler and Camayd will be scheduled for the next Board meeting when a review of the master planning process will be presented. Interested faculty, staff and parents/guardians should plan to attend.

V. School Matters

1. CEO Report

Marie George

Marie reported that the Student Re-enrollment/Enrollment process is underway for the 2019-2020 school year. The Admissions page of the website was updated with more detailed information about the admissions and lottery process. The current enrollment is 275 and with the additional senior (7th/8th grade) class in 2019-2020, the anticipated enrolment is expected to be 288 students. Students who wish to re-enroll, and their siblings, must submit the 2019-2020 Enrollment Notification form by January 16th. This step allows us to know what availability exists for grades 1 through 8. Kindergarten will continue at 36 students. Enrollment forms for new students must be submitted no later than March 15th, after which time the lottery will take place and new students will be notified if they have been selected for admission or placed on a wait list.

Marie announced that the Parent Forum is now utilizing the office adjacent to the lobby for their meetings, supplies, etc. Marie thanked Joy Nelson, Parent Forum Vice President, for the generous donation of attractive new office furniture, which was from BMC Office Furniture. Marie reminded everyone that the Parent Forum will be hosting the Fifth Annual Family-friendly Bingo, On January 27th and they are still accepting donations. The Annual Book Fair is planned for March 13-20, which is a big favorite of teachers and students. Also, an Art Show will be taking place on March 20th and will feature student art work and performance music.

Bull Dog Maintenance, the firm currently contracted for cleaning service, performed an extensive cleaning during the holiday break to include student desks and chairs, bathroom fixtures, floors & walls, kitchen floor, appliances & walls. In early January, the LED fixtures for the four lights at the street entrance were installed and air quality testing was conducted with no issues found. The five more up-to-date breaker boxes for the electrical panels have been ordered and will be installed shortly.

2. Principal Report

Maria Rozaieski

Maria Rozaieski, Principal report focused on events that took place in the latter part of December 2018 and the beginning of January 2019. Maria reported that the Parent Forum carried on the wonderful tradition of hosting “Cookie Day” as a thank you to all faculty and staff. Everyone filled their cookie tins to the brim with a wide variety of cookies donated by the parents of the school. Leftovers were donated to the Saint Francis Commons for veterans. The school held an impromptu assembly on December 21st where some faculty presented our version of the 12 Days of Christmas for students....everyone enjoyed this fun presentation.

The Student Afterschool Club activities that began at the end of November or December and are continuing through the new year include STEAM and Pep Squad that are run by Intermediate class teacher Michele Wall and classroom aide Kim Wall; Pennsylvania Junior Academy of Science run by Senior class teacher Michael Rescigno; MATHCOUNTS run by parent volunteer Dr. Ahmed Gomaa and Upper class teacher Amanda Conti; Video Club run by Spanish teacher Joseph Bomba. A Basketball Clinic will begin on January 19th and Tutoring Program will begin the last week of January. So far there are 25 students who are interested in the Tutoring Program.

On January 2nd, HGMICS was the scene of some slimey activity when students were asked to donate non-perishable food items. All in fun and for a good cause, five students got the opportunity to slime the teacher of their choice. WNEP covered this event reporting that we collected over \$1,000.00 worth of food items that were donated to the Bread Basket of Northeastern Pennsylvania, Elm Park location. This was our tenth year participating in a food drive for this organization.

In addition, the Schoolwide Positive Behavior Support team completed Day 2 of a three-day training session. The team updated and revised the behavioral expectation matrix, developed new cafeteria rules and lesson plans, and revised other lesson plans for hallway, dismissal, playground, bus line, etc. Maria also reported that the DARE Program has been placed on hold because the officer assigned to the program has had some personal issues. Further information to follow.

VI. Educational Presentation: Arielle May, Jaci Sandercock, and Sara Wintermute Overview of Montessori in the HGMICS Kindergarten Classes

Arielle May began the presentation by defining the Montessori Theory. Arielle stated that the Theory, when applied in school, inspires children to work at their own pace, alone or with others. Teachers encourage the growth of self-motivated, independent children by balancing active, self-directed learning with small group collaboration and peer teaching. Arielle stated that there are five areas of Montessori Classroom that will be presented by the group.

Arielle began by introducing the first area which is “Practical Life” activities. Here activities teach children to function in their own environment. Exercises include pouring, sorting, food preparation, care of self (hand washing and dressing oneself), care of the environment (table setting, sweeping, etc.), and grace and courtesy lessons (saying excuse me, introducing oneself, etc.) all of the “Practical Life” activities are designed to be purposeful work that leads to more complicated work; children are able to refine their fine motor skills through repetition of these exercises. These activities build children’s concentration, coordination, order and independence enabling them to master other Montessori

curriculum areas.

Sara Wintermute introduced the next two areas of Montessori, which were Sensorial and Language. Sara began by explaining that Sensorial curriculum promotes the development and refinement of the five senses. Sara said that children learn through their senses and all materials in a Montessori environment provide learning through touch, taste, smell, sight, hearing or hands-on manipulation.

Sara then explained that the Montessori Language program is a complete literacy program for children. The program begins with story-telling and sound games with objects. The reading and writing materials are instructive and informative. The Language curriculum is phonetic in nature and utilizes games and powerful teaching tools to help children learn to decode phonetic words, high frequency/sight words, diphthongs and digraphs.

Jaci Sandercock then explained the last two areas, which were Montessori Mathematics curriculum and Culture curriculum. Jaci informed the group that the Montessori Mathematics curriculum allows children to explore math in a concrete way through “hands-on” materials that leads to abstract math concepts becoming easier to comprehend. All Montessori Mathematics materials are based on abstract concepts and create concrete learning materials that children use independently. Math materials cover recognition of math patterns, addition, subtraction and skip counting. *Everyday Math*, the math curriculum used at HGMICS, is also utilized at the Kindergarten level, in addition to the Montessori Math curriculum.

Jaci added that the Montessori Culture curriculum is focused mostly on Science, Geography, Music, and Art. Yoga exercises are a modern addition to the program. The Culture curriculum provides a wide array of activities including learning about the continents of the world and their unique features such as animals and habitats. Children learn the names of the continents, oceans and countries of the world. Children learn through “hands-on” materials such as puzzle maps of the world. A project of making maps is completed by the students.

The teachers then entertained questions and discussion ensued about the benefits of Montessori education and the challenges to ensure continuity through the elementary grades.

VII. New Business

At this time, there was no new business brought forth.

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

Visitors wishing to speak: Joy Nelson, resident of Riverside School District.

Joy Nelson, Parent Forum Vice President presented the Board of Trustees with a cake and card to acknowledge “Board Appreciation” month. Joy added that on behalf of the Parent Forum, faculty, staff, and students the Board of Trustees are very appreciated for all they do.

At 7:45 PM, no further items of business were raised. **MOTION** was made by Laila Kane and seconded by John Ruddy to adjourn, which was accepted by all Board of Trustees present, with 3 Trustees absent.

The next HGMICS Public Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, February 19, 2019 at 7:00 PM.**

