

# **Howard Gardner MI Charter School Public Board Meeting**

Tuesday, July 16, 2019

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a Public Board of Trustees meeting on Tuesday, July 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, Laurie Cadden, Susan Hennemuth, Dr. Fran Langan, and John Ezbiansky. Absent: Dr. John Ruddy, Stephanie Westington, 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 that 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 June 18, 2019 Board of Trustees meeting minutes and asked if there were any corrections or additions. The **MOTION** to approve the June 18, 2019 Board meeting minutes, as submitted, was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Fran Langan. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the minutes as submitted, with three Trustees absent.

## **II. President's Report**

**Susan Trussler**

Susan Trussler welcomed and introduced TreeAnne McEnery, Assistant Principal, along with Laurie Cadden and Susan Hennemuth, new Board of Trustees members.

Susan announced that the Board of Trustees met last week for an extended 3 hours session to discuss the Master Plan. There were 5 design option plans presented to the Board of Trustees by the architectural firm for the re-design of the building. The Board of Trustees discussed the pros and cons of the Master Plan options. The Board of Trustees concluded that there were two viable options that would meet the needs and enhance the educational experience for the students. The Board of Trustees now is considering financing strategies including fundraising and foundation/grant applications.

In addition, Susan announced that Phase I of the Master Plan is underway and on schedule. The new water fountains have been installed, the assistant principal's office has been constructed, and carpeting for the new conference room and Title I Classroom should be installed within the next two weeks.

### III. Finance Committee Report

Chuck Wallinger

#### 1. Financial Report

In Stephanie Westington's absence the Financial report was turned over to Chuck Wallinger, Business Manager. Chuck reported revenues are \$194,575.37 above budget for June 2019. Tuition revenue was above budget by \$128,658.94 based on increased school district per pupil rates. The school district payments are up to date through May 2019. The SIG (School Improvement Grant) revenue of \$3,236.04 and federal grant revenue of \$21,038.06 were not included in the original budget. There also was EITC revenue of \$37,908.16 for IT costs that had not been budgeted. Chuck reported that expenses were \$25,227.88 above budget for June 2019 due to IT costs of \$15,644.58 that are offset by EITC revenue. June expenses were also above budget by \$7,660.41 due to facilities costs for Phase I of the approved Master Plan. The Year-To-Date revenues are above budget; the budgeted Net Operating Revenue of \$137,232 for Fiscal Year 2019 has been surpassed by \$222,872.

Chuck noted that the School had 172 days of cash on hand at the end of June 2019; which places the School in a very positive solvency position. There is \$451,478 remaining on the FNCB loan at a fixed rate of 3.35%

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

### IV. Facilities Committee Report

John Ezbiansky

In John Ruddy's absence John Ezbiansky reported that on June 10<sup>th</sup> there was a joint meeting held between the Facilities and Finance committees to discuss both Phases I and II of the Master Plan along with various improvement projects to the school. John stated that the meeting was very productive. John stated that several bids for demolition and removal of the lower lot buildings were received; Shea Industries was selected to demolish the buildings, remove debris and grade the lot with only the pad and a concrete retaining wall left.

Laurie Cadden asked if there was someone from HGMICS who will oversee the demolition and removal process to ensure all waste removal regulations are followed and the job is completed. Marie answered by stating that Bryan Kerns, Facilities Manager will over-see the demolition process. Marie also stated that any work that is contracted for HGMICS is not paid in full until the job is totally completed according to any agreement with a company. Susan Trussler added that there is money that was originally allocated for the Phase I project that now will allow the demolition of the lower lot building to be completed. Susan added that this will place the Master Plan ahead of schedule. With no further discussion, a **MOTION** was made by John Ezbiansky and seconded by Fran Langan to approve the Demolition and Removal of the Lower Lot properties by Shea Industries at a cost not to exceed \$78,000. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the demolition and removal of the lower lot buildings, with three Trustees absent.

### V. Bylaw Amendment

Susan Trussler

Susan Trussler presented the resolution to amend the bylaws to increase the membership of the Board of Trustees from the current maximum of nine to not more than eleven Trustees. **MOTION** to approve the resolution to amend the bylaws was made by Laurie Cadden and seconded by Fran Langan. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the Amended Bylaws as presented, with three Trustees absent.

## **VI. Acceptable Use of Technology Policy**

**Marie George**

Marie George presented for approval the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy that was developed by Michael Abballe, IT Specialist. The policy clarifies who has access to HGMICS technology, such as teachers, parents, administration and students. Once the policy is accepted, it will appear in the Parent/Teacher Handbook and on the school web site. Laila Kane asked if the students will be made aware of the new policy. Both Marie and Maria said that teachers will notify students of the new procedures and an Acknowledgment statement will need to be signed by the parents and returned to the office and kept on file each year. **MOTION** to approve the Acceptable use of Technology Policy was made by Susan Trussler and seconded by Fran Langan. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the Acceptable Use of Technology Policy as presented, with three Trustees absent.

## **VII. Handbooks**

**Marie George**

### **1. Employee Handbook**

Marie George presented the 2019-2020 Employee Handbook for approval and stated that there were minimal changes to the Employee Handbook. Changes included the nondiscrimination clause and acceptable use of technology policy. An acknowledgment statement page is also signed by each employee. **MOTION** to approve the 2019-2020 Employee Handbook as presented was made by Fran Langan and seconded by Laila Kane. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the 2019-2020 Employee Handbook as presented, with three Trustees absent.

### **2. Parent Handbook**

**Maria Rozaieski & TreeAnne McEnery**

Maria Rozaieski and TreeAnne McEnery presented the 2019-2020 Parent Handbook for approval. Changes consist of the nondiscrimination clause, grading system, acceptable use of technology policy, "Safe to Say" program, and the compliance process pertaining to the homeless policy. **MOTION** to approve the 2019-2020 Parent Handbook as presented was made by Susan Trussler and seconded by Fran Langan. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the 2019-2020 Parent Handbook as presented, with three Trustees absent.

### **3. Teacher Handbook**

**Maria Rozaieski & TreeAnne McEnery**

Maria Rozaieski and TreeAnne McEnery presented the 2019-2020 Teacher Handbook for approval and stated that there were some minor changes to the handbook. **MOTION** to approve the 2019-2020 Teacher Handbook as presented was made by John Ezbiansky and seconded by Laila Kane. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the 2019-2020 Teacher Handbook as presented, with three Trustees absent.

## **VIII. Personnel**

**Marie George**

Marie George informed the group that an extensive search and interview process took place for the open positions of Middle School Teacher, Mandarin Chinese Teacher and two Teacher Aides for the 2019-2020 school year. At this time, the following nominated candidates were presented to the Board of Trustees for appointment and approval.

### **1. Middle School Teacher**

**Andrew K. Filler**

Marie George nominated Andrew K. Filler for the position of Middle School Teacher. Marie gave a brief summary of Andrew's educational credentials as well as skills and work experience.

**MOTION** to appoint Andrew K. Filler to the position of Senior (Middle School) Teacher effective August 15, 2019 at an annual salary of \$38,379 and estimated benefits not to exceed 30% or \$11,513, for an estimated total of \$49,892 was made by Laurie Cadden and seconded by Susan Hennemuth. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the appointment of Andrew K. Filler as Senior (Middle School) Teacher for the 2019-2020 school year, with three Trustees absent.

### **2. Mandarin Chinese Teacher**

**Qinghua (Jane) Tang**

Marie George nominated Qinghua (Jane) Tang for the position of Mandarin Chinese Teacher. Marie gave a brief summary of Qinghua (Jane)'s educational credentials as well as skills and work experience. **MOTION** to appoint Qinghua (Jane) Tang to the part-time position of Mandarin Chinese Teacher for the 2019-2020 school year from August 15, 2019 through June 12, 2020 at the part-time salary of \$18,112 (based on 18 hours of weekly on-campus teaching and planning time) was made by Laila Kane and seconded by John Ezbiansky. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the appointment of Qinghua (Jane) Tang as part-time Mandarin Chinese Teacher for the 2019-2020 school year, with three Trustees absent.

### **3. Teacher Aide**

**Stephanie Tolerico**

Marie George nominated Stephanie Tolerico for the Teacher Aide position. Marie gave a brief summary of Stephanie's educational credentials as well as skills and work experience. **MOTION** to appoint Stephanie Tolerico to the position of 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 Susan Trussler and seconded by Fran Langan. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the appointment of Stephanie Tolerico as Teacher Aide for the 2019-2020 school year, with three Trustees absent.

### **4. Teacher Aide**

**Ariana Liples**

Marie George nominated Ariana Liples for the Teacher Aide position. Marie gave a brief summary of Ariana's educational credentials as well as skills and work experience. **MOTION** to appoint Ariana Liples to the position of 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 Susan Trussler and seconded by Laila Kane. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the appointment of Ariana Liples as Teacher Aide for the 2019-2020 school year, with three Trustees absent.

## **IX. School Matters**

### **1. CEO Report**

**Marie George**

Marie began her report by announcing effective July 1, 2019, TreeAnne McEnery joined the Howard Gardner Community as Assistant Principal. TreeAnne will assist Maria Rozaieski (Principal) in leading the academic administration of the School. TreeAnne's role has a specific emphasis on the HGMICS' curriculum and instruction, which supports Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan. Marie summarized TreeAnne's educational credentials as well as her skills and work experiences.

Marie informed everyone that the annual Parent Survey distributed in late May had a 30% response rate from parents/guardians, which represents an increase of 8% over last year. Survey findings indicated high satisfaction with the teaching staff, health services, and communications regarding School events and reminders. Parents expressed concerns about the need for more ongoing communication about students' progress, greater clarity about information contained in the grade reports, and more consistency in how teachers use Google classroom. Additional feedback from parents was received at four focus groups held in June. Survey responses were reviewed and discussed with the Principal and Assistant Principal for follow-up.

Marie also stated that in the summer there are numerous reports that are due. Additionally, while students are on summer break, much is done to prepare for their return from facility to technology upgrades. Below are specifics about summer happenings.

Our newly-hired external auditing firm, Baker-Tilly, visited the School to review documents in June and will return starting July 20<sup>th</sup> to complete their field work.

The School's Consolidated Application for the three federal Title grants was submitted by June 30, 2019, which now allows us to begin spending funds effective July 1<sup>st</sup>. Title grants include Title IA (reading & math): \$75k; Title IIA (professional development): \$12k and Title IVA (well-rounded education & student safety & health): \$10k. Additionally, the Safe Schools Grant was submitted by July 12<sup>th</sup> deadline for \$12k to support the Schools' Positive Behavior Support Program and Crises Prevention Program/TACT2 Training.

PIMS (Pennsylvania Information Management System) reporting commences July 15<sup>th</sup>, with more than a dozen reports that detail final 2018-2019 submissions and new 2019-2020 student information. We will be reapplying for the EITC program, due by August 31<sup>st</sup>.

Seven (7) new water coolers were installed throughout the building and electrical work completed for each classroom. New bathroom flooring was installed in all classroom and nurse's office bathrooms. New bathroom sinks were ordered. Two of three room renovations are mostly completed, with carpeting slated for installation in the next two weeks. The Assistant Principal's office was created, with final finishing (painting) slated in early August. Extensive cleaning of the kitchen, windows, floors, walls, and student desks and chairs is underway. Bryan Kerns, Facilities Manager, is closely monitoring all projects and when appropriate, completing the work himself. The estimated cost of the summer projects will not exceed \$85,000, which is considerably below the \$165,000 allocated. Demolition and removal of the three lower lot properties had been discussed and approved by the Board of Trustees earlier in this meeting.

## 2. Principal Report

**Maria Rozaieski**

Maria highlighted events that took place from the end of the school year to the present time:

- Over the past few weeks we were busy conducting interviews with candidates for the open positions.
- Parent/Student Handbook, Code of Conduct and the Handbook for Teaching Staff were reviewed and revised.
- Projects that are in process are:
  - \*Review of the parent survey in preparation to follow up on areas of concern
  - \*Analyzing preliminary results from the 2019 PSSA tests, findings will be submitted to the Board of Trustees in August or September to review
  - \*Development of the 2019-2020 master schedule
  - \*Finalization of the class lists
  - \*Finalizing the agenda for teacher pre-service

Laila Kane asked Maria if HGMICS will accept new students for the additional 7-8 grade class. Maria responded by saying, at this time there are no plans to add eighth grade students. The 7<sup>th</sup> grade class is larger due to the expansion last year for 6<sup>th</sup> grade. There are enough senior students to form three homerooms, albeit smaller than the typical 22/class.

## VIII. New Business

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

At 8:02 PM, no further items of business were raised. A **MOTION** to adjourn was made by Laurie Cadden and accepted by all Board of Trustees present, with three Trustees absent.

The next HGMICS Public Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, August 20, 2019 at 7:00 PM.**