

Howard Gardner MI Charter School Public Board Meeting

Tuesday, May 21, 2019

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a Public Board of Trustees meeting on Tuesday, May 21, 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 7:24 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. Clarence Lamanna, and Lou Nivert. Absent: Dr. John Ruddy, Dr. Amy Kenton, Dr. Fran Langan and John Ezbiansky.

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 May 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 April 16, 2019 Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes and asked if there were any corrections or additions. The **MOTION** to approve the April 16, 2019 Board meeting minutes, as submitted, was made by Stephanie Westington and seconded by Clarence Lamanna. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the minutes as submitted, with four Trustees absent.

II. President's Report

Susan Trussler

Susan Trussler announced that 6 Board of Trustee members recently attended ACT 55 Training at Bear Creek Charter School located in Wilkes-Barre. Act 55 Training is now mandated by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) for Trustees. Susan stated that the training was very comprehensive and informative.

Susan announced that the Board of Trustees have received updates from Hemmler + Camayd regarding the Master Plan. Phase I was approved and options for Phase II are still under consideration. Further information will be announced as the process proceeds.

III. Finance Committee Report

Stephanie Westington

1. Financial Report

At this time, Stephanie Westington turned over the Financial report to Chuck Wallinger, Business Manager. Chuck reported revenues are \$16,524.98 above budget for April 2019. Tuition revenue was above budget by \$8,213.75; this was based on increased school district per pupil rates. The SIG (School Improvement Grant) federal grant revenue of \$3,236.04 was not included in the original budget. The EITC revenue also has been surpassed, with \$3,500 earmarked to cover IT costs. Expenses were \$16,567.45 above budget for April 2019, primarily due to IT costs of \$4,244.75 and student activities of \$4,561.08. The student activities expense is highest during the end of the school year for activities such as field trips and career day. Student activities are below Y-T-D budget by \$5,586. The Year-To-Date revenues are above budget and expenses are below budget; the Net Operating Revenue of \$137,232 for Fiscal Year 2019 has been surpassed by \$33,388.

Chuck reported that the March 2019 School District billing was paid by Unipay on April 25, 2019 in the amount of \$241,309.29. The School District payments are up-to-date through March 2019. The remaining FY 2017-2018 district receivable of \$964.86 is expected to be paid by the Riverside School District in May 2019. The financial statement shows the school is in solid standing.

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

2. HGMICS Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Budget Marie George, CEO.

Marie reported that she and Chuck Wallinger, Business Manager worked on the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2019-2020 (FY 19-20) that was submitted to the Board of Trustees for approval. Once approved by the Board, the required submission to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) will follow. The budget line item format utilized is consistent with PDE requirements.

Marie explained that during February and March 2019, the development of the FY19-20 budget was coordinated by the HGMICS Business Manager, Chuck Wallinger, and collaboratively involved the functional budget supervisors. An incremental budget development approach was followed, with an annualizing spending report for the current budget year (2018-2019) provided to each budget supervisor, for their respective areas of responsibility. Based upon historical spending patterns, budget requests were submitted by each budget supervisor. The Business Manager and CEO reviewed individual requests and then reviewed the composite budget that also factored in other parameters such as tuition and grant revenues, and health care costs.

In April 2019, both the Personnel and Finance Committees met and reviewed the draft budget and provided oversight and guidance to its development. For most operating expenses, excluding personnel, a 2% escalator was factored into the final budget line items. The 2% increase was based upon the current Consumer Price Index, which is 1.9%. For personnel expenses, several approved new positions were included: Senior Teacher, Unassigned Classroom Teacher, Upper Aide, and Assistant Principal. With guidance from the Personnel Committee, and an affirmation from the Board on 4/16/19, a 2% across-the-board employee increase was incorporated into the budget. Further, newly updated Salary Step Scales for the Teachers and Teacher Aides (effective 8/15/19) were used to preliminarily determine teacher and aide salaries for next school year.

Budget revenue estimates included pupil tuition based on a total enrollment of 283 students: 258 regular students and 25 special education students (SPED). Actual tuition rates will not be known until the December-January timeframe and are then paid retroactive to July 1st. Therefore, conservative numbers based on 2018-19 rates were used in developing the budget. The National School Lunch Program, (NSLP) completed its first full school year and needs to be incorporated into the budget. While participation in the NSLP program progressively increased over the past school year, conservative budget projections are based on FY 18-19 annualized revenue. Miscellaneous revenue captures a variety of items such as the Golf Tournament, After School, interest, EITC, etc. EITC revenue is based on anticipated donations. Also included are the health reimbursement revenue and grants that are based on current year funding and include the PA Ready-To Learn-Block grant, Federal Grant revenue for Titles IA, IIA, IVA and School Improvement Grant (SIG).

Budgeted expenses include instructional salaries based on next year's staff of 27 teachers and 12 teacher aides. Salaries for each teacher and aide will reflect the higher of either the 2% increase or the appropriate salary from the new Step Chart (effective 8/15/19). Also included are expenses reflecting instructional benefits, services, supplies and materials, student activities, support staff salaries and benefits, services, facility services, supplies and materials, debt services, and depreciation.

The **MOTION** to approve the HGMICS fiscal Year 2019-2020 budget as submitted was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Susan Trussler. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the minutes as submitted, with four Trustees absent

IV. Nominating Committee

Laila Kane

In Fran Langan's absence, Laila Kane reported that both Lou Nivert and Amy Kenton will be retiring from their Trustee positions effective June 30, 2019. The two open Trustee positions will need to be filled by July 1, 2019. A strong pool of prospective candidates has submitted materials. Marie George has been meeting with candidates to review the school's strategic plan, future priorities and Trustee responsibilities. The Nominating Committee expects to put forth two candidates to the Board of Trustees for approval in June.

V. Policy and Resolution

1. Enrollment Policy

Marie George presented an overview of the enrollment process. Kimberly Kost Scanlon, Esq. added that HGMICS is in compliance with both public and charter school regulations. Enrollment procedures are posted on the web site for public information. A **MOTION** to approve the Enrollment Policy, as presented, was made by Clarence Lamanna and seconded by Stephanie Westington. With no further discussion, all Trustees present voted in favor of approving the Enrollment Policy, with four Trustees absent.

2. Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit (NEIU19)

Susan Trussler presented the Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit (NEIU 19) annual agreement and resolution for approval. Susan indicated this agreement between HGMICS and NEIU

19 covers payments for Special Ed students for 2019-2020. A **MOTION** to approve the Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit (NEIU 19), 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 Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit (NEIU 19), with four Trustees absent.

VI. Personnel

1. Primary II Teacher

A **MOTION** was made by Clarence Lamanna to appoint Brienne Barrett to the position of Primary II Teacher effective August 15, 2019 at an annual salary of \$37,758 and estimated benefits not to exceed \$11,327. for an estimated total of \$49,085. The motion was seconded by Susan Trussler. With no further discussion, all Trustees present voted in favor of hiring Brienne Barrett as Primary II Teacher, with four Trustees absent.

2. Unassigned Classroom Teacher

A **MOTION** was made by Susan Trussler to appoint Kimberly Wall to the position of Unassigned Classroom Teacher effective August 15, 2019 at an annual salary of \$35,513, with estimated benefits not to exceed \$10,654, for an estimated total of \$46,167. The motion was seconded by Lou Nivert. With no further discussion, all Trustees present voted in favor of hiring Kimberly Wall as Unassigned Classroom Teacher, with four Trustees absent.

3. Teacher Aide

A **MOTION** was made by Clarence Lamanna to appoint Robert Rouse to the position of Teacher Aide effective August 15, 2019 at an annual salary of \$20,600, with estimated benefits not to exceed \$26,780. The motion was seconded by Laila Kane. With no further discussion, all Trustees present voted in favor of hiring Robert Rouse as Teacher Aide, with four Trustees absent.

VII. School Matters

1. CEO Report

Marie George

Marie reported the hiring has begun for the 2019-2020 school year and candidates for the positions of Primary II Teacher, Unassigned Classroom Teacher, and Teacher Aide, were recommended to the Board of Trustees. Marie added that applications for the Middle School teacher and part time Mandarin Teacher are being received. The Assistant Principal search is underway, with fifteen applications received, that were followed by screening and phone interviews. Several candidates dropped out due to the less than competitive salary range. Four interviews are scheduled thus far.

Part-time psychologist, Rita Williams, PhD, informed the school of her anticipated retirement in December 2019. Efforts to identify her replacement will begin in earnest this summer with the goal to have some overlap in the fall. Rita has been a mainstay in providing timely student evaluations and leadership for weekly Child Study meetings where student issues are discussed and individualized Education Plans (IEPs) developed and monitored.

The Eighth Grade Commencement ceremony is scheduled to take place on Thursday, June 6th at the Scranton County Club. All Trustees are invited to attend. Andie Liao, Mandarin Chinese teacher at HGMICS since August 2017, will be the guest speaker. Andie will be returning to Taiwan at the end of

this school year, as her grant and visa require.

The School's grant proposal to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) unfortunately was not funded. On a positive note, the School was notified of its eligibility for a U.S. Department of Education Small Rural School Achievement (SRSA) grant. With little notice, a proposal was submitted to support a Math Enrichment and Support Program at HGMICS. Our SRSA proposal was approved and we are awaiting the funded amount. The Consolidated Application for federal Title grants will be open shortly, along with preliminary funding amounts. In addition, word was received that \$12,000 will be received for the Fall tutoring program.

As a follow-up to the Board's approval of the Child Abuse Reporting Policy, the revised policy was submitted to the Pennsylvania Attorney General's office, which is collecting current policies from all public-school districts and charter schools. A training session with all staff was held to review and discuss the revised policy.

HGMICS is now participating in the newly established PA Safe2Say Something (S2SS) Program that is coordinated by the Office of the Attorney General. The S2SS program provides a hotline, web and app to report Tips of suspected threats, which are then vetted at the state level prior to relevant school districts being notified and/or involved. Training for HGMICS staff was held recently and in-class training with 7th and 8th grade students will take place during the month of May as part of their weekly Olweus discussion classes.

In addition to fire drills, all PA public schools are now encouraged to also have security drills, on a regular basis. This year, two lock out drills were held and one lock down drill. A Hazard/Evacuation drill is planned prior to the end of the school year. In the meantime, teachers and students are practicing their evacuation routes and parents were notified. This is not an active-shooter drill.

The 14th Annual Golf Tournament will be held on Saturday, May 25th at Pine Hills Country Club. Sponsorships have increased this year and golfers will receive dinner as well as many goodies and opportunities for raffle baskets.

2. Principal Report

Maria Rozaieski

Maria reported that the last month of school has been very busy in and out of the classroom. Some of the events and activities that have taken place are:

- In-service day was held on April 23, 2019. The topics for the day were "Kindergarten screening planning, outdoor education, the child abuse reporting policy, a bereavement presentation by MetLife, student data analysis and action steps planning using PVAAS Digging Deeper Documents, and completion of student learning.
- Nurse Amy supervised a group of nursing students from the University of Scranton who did health lessons with our Primary students.
- The Kindergarten invited moms into the school on May 10th for our annual Mother's Day Tea. Each class performed a song and prepared snacks and tea to treat their moms. The classes are now busy doing an ABC end of the year countdown with a different event for each letter of the alphabet for each day or celebrating the letter of the week by making a food that begins with a specific letter. They recently took a field trip to Hillside Farms.
- Primary students have been working on animal research reports, Crazy Creatures creative writing contest, "When I Grow Up" careers project, and persuasive writing.

- Intermediate students are completing and presenting the third of three Multiple Intelligence (MI) projects for the school year. The process began with the students taking an MI survey and a discussion about what that means. The students then get to choose a topic for their project, conduct research and then present it to the class. Some examples of MI projects are painting rocks, facts about famous celebrities/athletes, building an obstacle course and creating a scavenger hunt.
- The Upper class went to Junior Achievement's BIZ Town. The Junior Achievement BIZ Town program allows students to practice running a simulated town for the day and each student takes on a profession. The students become a valuable member of their business team and community. They also took a trip to Philadelphia as part of this year's cultural curriculum covering American History from Early Civilizations through the American Revolution.
- The Senior class has been busy playing the game Risk in order to help demonstrate a few key concepts that have been discussed throughout the year in World History such as the many factors taken in to account when leaders have to make wartime decisions. Students had to take detailed "battle" notes of troop movements, battles won and lost and speculate the reasons why. These notes are reviewed and written as battle reports and then used to write the version of history they created.
- Twelve members of our Cross-Country team participated in the last meet of the year on Saturday, May 18th. Overall the coaches thought the team did very well. Mia Anderson and Camryn Thomas won medals in the girls' varsity division and Gianna Coroniti, Grace Campbell, and Paul Koberiecki won medals in the junior varsity division.
- The Video Club has been hard at work producing HGMICS promotion trailers. Thirteen students did their own rendition to promote HGMICS. It is very hard to judge and rank them.
- HGMICS after school tutoring program is in its final week. Parents have been expressing an appreciation for the program and teachers have seen it make a difference in the academic performance of the students who are participating.

VIII. New Business

1. Summer 2019 Building Projects

Susan Trussler explained the need to approve \$165,000. for summer building projects, as part of Phase I of the Master Plan. The monies will be utilized to upgrade nine bathrooms, create a third Senior classroom, Title I Math classroom, Art classroom, Special Education classroom, new meeting room space, as well as the re-arrangement of several offices. A **MOTION** to approve the Summer Building Projects' expenditures, not to exceed \$165,000, was made by Susan Trussler and seconded by Lou Nivert. With no further discussion, all Trustees present voted in favor of approving the Summer Building expenditures, with four Trustees absent.

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

At 8:10 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 four Trustee absent.

The next HGMICS Public Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, June 18, 2019 at 7:00 PM.**