

Howard Gardner MI Charter School Public Board Meeting Minutes

October 16, 2018

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a Public Board of Trustees meeting on Tuesday, October 16, 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 7:06 PM and then subsequently presided over the meeting. Susan led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance and then took roll call.

The following Trustees were in attendance: Dr. Susan Trussler, Laila Kane, Stephanie Westington, John Ezbiansky, Dr. Clarence Lamanna, Lou Nivert, and Dr. Amy Kenton (via video conference). Absent were: Dr. John Ruddy and Dr. Fran Langan.

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

Visitors in attendance: Karen McKeon resident of Scranton School District, Michele Wall and Chris Lesnefsky residents of Valley View School District.

I . Minutes

Susan Trussler presented the September 18, 2018 Board of Trustees Meeting Minutes. Laila Kane noted that there was an error in the submitted minutes. A **MOTION** was made by Stephanie Westington to accept the amended minutes for the September 18, 2018 Board meeting and was seconded by Laila Kane. With no further discussion, all Trustees present voted in favor of the motion, with 2 Trustees absent.

II . President's Report

Susan Trussler reported that the work of the Board is assisted by the following five standing committees:

Nominating: Fran Langan, Chair; Laila Kane, and John Ruddy

Personnel: Susan Trussler, Chair; Fran Langan, Stephanie Westington, and Amy Kenton

Finance: Stephanie Westington, Chair; Lou Nivert, John Ezbiansky, and John Ruddy

Development: John Ezbiansky, Chair; Clarence Lamanna, and Laila Kane

Facilities: John Ruddy, Chair; Lou Nivert, John Ezbiansky, and Stephanie Westington

Susan announced that the Development and Facility Committees each can have up to two non-trustee members. Those that wish to be considered for either of these committees, please e-mail her.

Susan explained that an informational or educational topic will be introduced as an agenda item at Board meetings, starting with tonight's meeting when Maria Rozaieski makes a presentation on Student Achievement. These topics will serve to educate and inform Board members about HGMICS programs as well as educational trends and issues.

III. Finance

1. Financial Report:

Chuck Wallinger reported that for the month of September 2018 revenue is on budget and expenses are above budget by 8%. The additional expense is primarily due to increased IT costs needed to replace Chrome books and laptops. The expenses from September will be offset by additional revenue in October that is allocated to IT costs. In October, the finances are expected to be on budget. **MOTION:** to approve the Financial Report through September 30, 2018. Motion was made by John Ezbiansky and seconded by Lou Nivert. With no further discussion, all Trustees present voted in favor, with 2 Trustees absent

2. 2018-2019 Budget Revision:

Chuck Wallinger reported revisions to the 2018-2019 Budget are for non-operating depreciation costs. A depreciation audit adjustment will be made at the end of the fiscal year for newly acquired assets that are not reflected in the revised budget. A **MOTION** to approve the revised 2018-2019 Budget was made by Laila Kane and seconded by John Ezbiansky. With no further discussion, all Trustees present voted in favor of approving the revised Budget, with 2 Trustees absent.

IV. Personnel

Art Teacher

Melissa Cruise

Susan Trussler reported that an electronic vote was previously taken to expedite the hiring of a replacement needed for the vacant Art Teacher position. **MOTION:** to re-affirm the appointment of Melissa Cruise to the position of Art Teacher effective October 8, 2018 for the 2018-2019 school year based on an annual salary equivalent to \$35,000 and estimated benefits not to exceed 35% (\$12,250) for a total of \$47,250. The motion was made by Clarence Lamanna and seconded by Stephanie Westington. With no further discussion, all Trustees present voted in favor of the motion, with 2 Trustees absent.

Registered Dietitian

Cassandra Stockwell, RD

Marie George explained the need to have a professional dietitian to assist the School in meal planning that meets the nutritional requirements for the National School Lunch Program. **MOTION:** to accept the appointment of Cassandra Stockwell, Registered Dietitian, as a consultant to the Howard Gardner MI Charter School for professional services not to exceed \$3,500 from October 22, 2018 through May 31, 2019. The motion was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Clarence Lamanna. With no further discussion all Trustees present voted in favor of the motion, with 2 Trustees absent.

V. Wellness Policy

Marie George introduced a Wellness Policy that was developed by the Wellness Committee as required by the National School Lunch Program. The four major goals of the Policy address nutrition promotion, nutrition education, physical activity and physical education. A discussion took place regarding the implementation of the policy that includes providing nutritious snacks in classrooms and at school events. Regarding student birthday celebrations, the policy states that effective August 2019, student birthday parties will be celebrated on a monthly basis with a list of recommended healthy snacks that parents can provide. **MOTION:** To accept the HGMICS Wellness Policy as presented. Motion was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Amy Kenton. With no further discussion, all Trustees present voted to approve the Wellness Policy, with 2 Trustees absent.

VI. School Matters

CEO Report

Marie George reported that the school is preparing for its first Administrative Review by the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). The on-site review will take place November 1st and 2nd. Marie acknowledged the extra effort being put forth by Patty Biko, Chuck Wallinger, Dottie Shoemaker and Kim Falkowski to prepare for the on-site visit. Another NSLP requirement is to have a Wellness Committee. HGMICS convened a nine-member Wellness Committee comprised of two parents, two teachers, school nurse, one community representative, student, and two staff. The Committee's first task was to formulate a Wellness Policy for Board approval. The Committee meets monthly and will oversee the implementation of the Wellness Policy and explore offering Smart Snacks beginning 2019-2020.

An update on the following grant submissions was provided as follows:

- A. Safe School Grant proposal previously submitted in July 2018 requested support (\$18,358) for the Olweus Bullying-Prevention and School-wide Positive Behavior Support Program. Unfortunately the School's proposal was not funded.
- B. Undaunted, another School Safety Grant was submitted on October 12, 2018 that is available to all public schools as a result of additional state funding designated for school safety. Approximately \$52 million is available through the Pennsylvania Commission for Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). There are two components to the Grant: Part A – limited to public school districts and Part B – open to school districts, charter schools and other educational entities. Prerequisites for this grant include a School Safety Committee, School Threat Assessment, a federal grant account with Sam.gov, and registration with Dunn and Bradstreet (DUNS account and Cage Code). HGMICS' proposal includes infrastructure and emergency preparedness needs for a total of \$62,000 over a two year period.

Numerous reports to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) are due in October including five Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS) reports, the Annual Financial Report (AFR), and quarterly as well as year-end financial reports for federal and state grants. Chuck Wallinger, Business Manager, has taken over responsibility for PIMS reporting and all financial reports that were previously submitted by Charter Choices.

The 2017-2018 Annual Draft Audit was recently completed by our auditing firm, McGrail Merkel and Quinn (MMQ) and reviewed with the Finance Committee on October 9th. Following submission of the AFR to PDE, the Annual Audit will be presented to the Board at the November Meeting.

Recent purchases were made to equip our teachers, especially those teaching math and science, with interactive smart boards using funds from the EITC grant. Michael Abballe, IT Support, is developing a tracking system for all computers, laptops and student Chrome books that will also project a replacement schedule. Currently the School's inventory is 5-6 years old.

The CEO and Principal meet with the Parent Forum Officers on a monthly basis at which time issues are discussed, input provided and the agenda for the Monthly Parent Forum Meeting finalized. The Parent Forum has offered to assist in sprucing up the large play area including the purchase of a buddy bench. Parent volunteers are signing up for a variety of event and school activities. The vacant lobby office will be made available to the Parent Forum who will furnish it for their meetings and event planning. In addition, the Parent Forum developed an attractive new logo, which is similar yet distinct from the School's logo.

The Comprehensive Planning Committee held its first meeting of the school year on October 4th at which time they provided excellent input on documents generated through the strategic planning process. They reviewed the re-affirmed Mission Statement and new Vision Statement, and then

prioritized the SWOT document that details internal strengths & weaknesses and external opportunities & threats. The next meeting will take place on November 8th when student achievement scores will be reviewed.

Principal Report

Maria Rozaieski reported that the weather was uncooperative for the weeks of Outdoor Education for the Intermediate, Upper, and Senior classes. This resulted in each of the three classes having one week of Outdoor Education from September 10th through the 27th. Some classes are still taking advantage of the fair weather and making up days, when possible.

The Crisis Prevention Intervention Team participated in a yearly two-day refresher course on nonviolent crisis intervention. The Team is trained to respond to a crisis situation and provide the best possible care, safety and security to resolve potentially disruptive and dangerous situations involving student behavior.

Current fire, lockdown and lockout procedures are under review by members of the Safety Committee. Procedural documents were distributed to classroom teachers for their verification of student movement during an emergency event.

Recently teachers participated in the following professional development topics: Introduction to the Collins Writing Program; Everyday Math (EM) Workshop-Differentiation with EM4; Improving Performance in Math - A Formula for Success; and Equipped for Reading Success - an overview of the relevant Reading research. Also, the first School-wide Positive Behavior Reward Day was a Bingo game for all students held on October 2nd that included fun and prizes.

VII. Educational Presentation: Student Achievement

Maria Rozaieski, Principal, began the presentation by explaining what is student achievement and reviewing the progression of HGMICS student scores from 2013 to the present, Student achievement measures the student's knowledge of particular subject area based on the PSSA statewide tests. The PSSA tests measure Reading and Math in grades 3rd through 8th along with Science in grades 4th and 8th.

The charts that were distributed indicate the percentage of proficient and advanced students within a particular subject area, grade level, and academic year against the student population from within the state of Pennsylvania. Maria indicated that some of the percentage rates were lower than what was expected. The deficiencies in the lower rates were attributed to an increase in student transfer enrollment, change in curriculum and faculty turnover at the senior level.

VIII. New Business

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

At 8:15 PM, Lou Nivert made a **MOTION** to adjourn that was seconded by Susan Trussler and accepted by all Trustees present, with 2 Trustees absent. The next HGMICS Public Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, November 20, 2018 at 7:00 PM.**