

Howard Gardner MI Charter School Public Board Meeting

Tuesday, November 19, 2019

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a Public Board of Trustees meeting on Tuesday, November 19, 2019. The HGMICS facility, located at 1615 East Elm Street, Scranton, PA was the location for the public meeting. Dr. Susan Trussler, President, called the meeting to order at 7:00 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, John Ezbiansky, Laila Kane, Stephanie Westington, Laurie Cadden, Dr. Clarence Lamanna, and Aaron Nivert. Absent: Susan Hennemuth, Dr. Fran Langan, and Dr. John Ruddy.

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.

Dr. Susan Trussler announced that any visitor may comment or ask questions pertaining to items listed on the November agenda. At this time, the visitors in attendance had no comments or questions regarding the agenda. The meeting proceeded.

I. Minutes

Dr. Susan Trussler

Dr. Susan Trussler presented the October 15, 2019 Board of Trustees meeting minutes and asked if there were any corrections or additions. With no corrections or additions, the **MOTION** to approve the October 15, 2019 Board meeting minutes, as submitted, was made by John Ezbiansky and seconded by Dr. Clarence Lamanna. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the minutes as submitted, with three Trustees absent.

II. President's Report

Dr. Susan Trussler

Dr. Susan Trussler reported the Fall Gathering, which took place on Friday, November 1st from 4:00 PM-6:00 PM at POSH had a great turn out and she is hopeful that this will be an annual event. Susan thanked all Trustees and Dr. Marie George for their generous contributions in funding the event.

Dr. Trussler stated that significant steps on the Master Plan's Phase II to expand the facility have been made. There are several motions related to moving forward with the building addition that the Board will be considering at this meeting.

In addition, the Development Committee is actively interviewing fund-raising consultants to assist the School in future development activities. Consultants being interviewed responded to the School's Request for Proposal (RFP) that was distributed in early October. Further information will follow.

III. Finance Committee

Stephanie Westington

1. Financial Report

Chuck Wallinger

Stephanie Westington deferred to Chuck Wallinger, Business Manager who presented the report. Chuck Wallinger reported revenues are \$33,518.79 above budget for October 2019. The Tuition revenue was above budget by \$32,582.71; this was based on additional Special Education students, 36 actual compared to 23 budgeted. Expenses were \$8,715.66 above budget for October 2019. The Facilities costs were above budget due to Phase I of the approved Master Plan by \$1,613.33 and summer cleaning costs of \$5,905. Net Operating Revenue for October 2019 of \$10,545.04 was above budget by \$24,803.12. Three school districts showed increases on per pupil rate. The Scranton School District is currently up to date with their payments. Currently we have 177 days of cash on hand.

The **MOTION** to approve the Financial Report through October 31, 2019 as reported and submitted was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Aaron Nivert. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the Financial Report as submitted, with three Trustees absent.

2. Architectural Services

Dr. Marie George

Dr. George stated that Hemmler + Camayd provided a proposal to continue their services based upon the Feasibility Study. The additional work would assist in building design, construction document(s), documents for bids from outside construction firms, zoning permits as well a time-line for all stages of the project leading up to occupancy in August 2021. With no further discussion, the **MOTION** to approve the architectural services of Hemmler + Camayd for a building addition (Phase II of the Master Plan) at a cost of 5.9% of the total cost of construction less site work (\$4,175,000), or \$246,325 plus a one-time payment for civil engineering services (\$40,000) and a site survey (\$5,000), for a total of \$291,325. The motion was made by Dr. Susan Trussler and seconded by John Ezbiansky. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the Architectural Services of Hemmler + Camayd as submitted, with three Trustees absent.

3. Bond Counsel

John Ezbiansky

John Ezbiansky presented the agreement with Stevens & Lee, P.C. for approval. With no further discussion, the **MOTION** to approve the Agreement with Stevens & Lee, P.C. for which Brian Koscelansky, Esq. will serve as Bond Counsel for the financing of Phase II of the Master Plan for a fee not to exceed \$30,000 and related reimbursable expenses not to exceed \$1,500 was made by Aaron Nivert and seconded by Stephanie Westington. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the Bond Counsel as submitted, with three Trustees absent.

4. Resolution for Bond Issuance

John Ezbiansky

John Ezbiansky presented the resolution for bond issuance for approval. With no further discussion, the **MOTION** to approve the resolution for the issuance, by an acceptable issuer, of one or more series of its revenue notes in an aggregate amount not to exceed \$5,000,000, and authorizing certain actions relating thereto was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Laurie Cadden. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the Resolution for Bond Issuance as submitted, with three Trustees absent.

5. Resolution for FNCB Loan Transaction

John Ezbiansky

John Ezbiansky presented the resolution for FNCB loan transaction for \$4.5 million for the financing of the Phase II project and refinancing the existing mortgage balance. With no further discussion, the **MOTION** to approve the resolution for FNCB loan transaction was made by Dr. Susan Trussler and seconded by Aaron Nivert. Six Trustees present voted in favor of approving the Resolution for FNCB Loan Transaction, with one abstention (Stephanie Westington) and three Trustees absent.

IV. Nominating Committee

Laila Kane

1. New Trustee

Sam Ceccacci

In light of the Board's ability to have eleven Trustees as members, Laila Kane recommended that Sam Ceccacci be nominated to the open position. With no further discussion, the **MOTION** to approve the appointment of Sam Ceccacci to serve one Term (three years) as a Trustee on the Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School Board, beginning January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2022 was made by Laurie Cadden and seconded by Stephanie Westington. Six Trustees present voted in favor of appointing Sam Ceccacci to the Board of Trustees, John Ezbiansky abstained and three Trustees were absent.

V. Academic Committee

Laila Kane

1. School Calendars for 2020-21 and 2021-22

In the absence of Dr. Fran Langan, Laila Kane presented the School Calendars for the 2020-21 and 2021-22 Academic years. Dr. Susan Trussler and Marie George added that the anticipation of the building addition (Phase II) would impact the start and end of both school years. Although five snow days are built into both calendars, days off and end-of-the-year school year may be adjusted accordingly. With no further discussion, the **MOTION** was made by John Ezbiansky and seconded by Dr. Clarence Lamanna to approve the School Calendars for 2020-21 and 2021-22. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the motion as presented, with three Trustees absent.

VI. Personnel Committee

Dr. Susan Trussler

1. School Psychologist

Colleen Gaza-Coolbaugh

Dr. Susan Trussler nominated Colleen Gaza-Coolbaugh to be appointed to the position of School Psychologist effective January 1, 2020, as a 10-month full-time employee at an annual salary of \$56,500 with estimated benefits not to exceed 30% or \$16,950 for an estimated total of \$73,450. With no further discussion, the **MOTION** to appoint Colleen Gaza-Coolbaugh was made by Dr. Susan Trussler and seconded by Laurie Cadden. All Trustees present voted in favor of appointing Colleen Gaza-Coolbaugh as School Psychologist, with three Trustees absent.

VII. Policies

Dr. Marie George

1. Extracurricular Programs

Dr. Marie George presented the Extracurricular Programs Policies. Marie informed the group that all extracurricular programs will take place after school or during the summer. The policy identifies the responsibilities of those leading Extracurricular Programs and the administrative requirements for stipends, fees, supplies, communications and transportation. With no further discussion, the **MOTION** to approve the Policy that governs extracurricular programs at the Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Dr. Clarence Lamanna. All Trustees present voted in favor of the Extracurricular Programs Policy as submitted, with three Trustees absent.

VIII. School Matters

1. CEO Report

Dr. Marie George

Marie began her report by stating that the following updates are provided and pertain to an array of areas from externally directed public relations efforts to internally focused committees.

- Public Relations – these activities support the strategic plan goal to enhance HGMICS image and reputation in the local community.
 - A recent featured article by Sarah Hofius-Hall of the Scranton Sunday Times appeared in the October 27th edition. Included were quotes from Marie George and a student, along with classroom photos.
 - The Scranton Times listed all school districts' results from the 2019 PSSA test scores from the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), and HGMICS showed a strong academic profile. Of the twelve school districts in Lackawanna County we were third highest in Math and ELA, and fourth in Science.
 - In the Sunday Times "School Notes" section, which is a weekly feature that profiles local students and their respective schools, two students were profiled in the last month's edition.
 - TreeAnne McEnery's appointment as Assistant Principal was included in the paper's business section for "People on the Move".
 - The School launched its own Facebook page with weekly posts that highlight HGMICS events, student achievements, classroom projects etc.
- Governor Wolf continues to attack Charter Schools and the Pennsylvania Coalition of Public Charter Schools (PCPCS). The PCPCS has launched a campaign for parents of charter school students to express their right to school choice. The PCPCS has titled the campaign 143K Rising <https://143krising.com/> and the name represents the number of children in public charter schools and those children on PA charter school waiting lists. Families are encouraged to let state lawmakers know that public charter schools are essential for parents seeking the best education and future option for their children.
- The PDE Safe Schools grant submitted in July was not awarded to HGMICS. Another safety-related grant opportunity is available with the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) and was submitted on November 4, 2019 with its focus to support the Student Assistance Program (SAP), Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) and the Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) team and program. Awards will be announced in 2020.
- The Ready to Learn block grant was submitted to support student tutoring in Spring 2020.
- The Comprehensive Planning Committee (CPC), initially convened in February 2018, will meet on November 21, 2019. The CPC meets 3-4 times each school year. The CPC is represented by internal and external stakeholders, and monitors goals associated with the PDE-required Comprehensive Plan. The CPC also participated in the development of the School's Strategic Plan. The next planning cycle for PDE begins in 2020 with an updated Comprehensive Plan due in November 2020.

- The new Board Committees are now meeting and addressing important matters related to the growth and continuous improvement of the School. The Academic Committee is monitoring the development/revision of academic policies. The Development Committee is establishing a timeline and approach to increase fundraising activities. The Finance/Facilities Committee has been very active in determining the best means to finance Phase II of the Master Plan.
- School Committees are meeting and include the new Curriculum, PBIS Team, and Induction Committees.

2. Principal Report

Maria Rozaieski

Maria reported on various school happenings throughout the last month.

- The Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) program has a new team in place and has worked diligently to finalize an action plan. The Team developed a Tier One intervention flow chart, revised Minor and Major Discipline report forms and provided guidelines for staff on how to complete these forms at the November 6th faculty meeting. A guideline chart for classroom-managed vs. office-managed behavior was completed as well as a hierarchy of consequences, and a new rewards menu for students to choose from.
- Students, Faculty and staff participated in the school's annual Halloween Parade on October 31st. this was followed by a "Monster Mash" dance session, in conjunction with our monthly PBIS reward for students with STAR behavior for the month. This year the monthly reward blowout included games of corn hole and arcade game machines donated by families from HGMICS.
- The Parent Forum sponsored its third annual "Trunk or Treat" event on October 27th for the students and families of HGMICS. The event had to be moved indoors due to the uncooperative weather. Participants decorated tables in the multi-purpose room in lieu of trunks and everyone had a fun time.
- The Professional Development Committee's purpose is to identify and support the professional development needs of the faculty and staff and to improve instructional methods and increase student achievement. The committee discussed the level of professional development needed for all faculty in the area of Multiple Intelligence theory and project-based learning as presented at in-service, and how the model could be adapted for our school. There was discussion about continuing to use and train faculty in the Collins Writing Program. In the spring of 2019 the committee will be reviewing the results of work done by faculty to determine the root cause of areas of concern from the results of our PSSA test scores and the professional development that might be needed to address those areas.
- The Principal and Assistant Principal have started a series of POD (classroom grouping) meetings to discuss a variety of topics relating to grade level. The first round of meetings will be held November 11th through December 6th.
- Recent school happenings included a presentation in September from Maryellen Evers of the Lou Ruspi Jr. Foundation to our Senior class students that included the topics of depression, anxiety, self-harm, suicide awareness and prevention, coping skills, mental health and how it affects us, and mindfulness. Maryellen returned in October to present to our Upper Students with the goal of raising mental health awareness and overall wellness in 5th and 6th grades.
- A group of four students competed in the Young Scholars Program at Scranton Prep on November 2nd. Representatives of Scranton Preparatory, Wyoming Seminary, and Holy Cross High Schools came to HGMICS and gave presentations to our Senior class students on what their schools had to offer students going into high school.

IX. New Business

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

Adjournment

At 7:55 PM, no further items of business were raised. A **MOTION** to adjourn was made by Stephanie Westington and accepted by all Board of Trustees present, with three Trustee absent.

The next HGMICS Public Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, December 17, 2019 at 7:00 PM.**