

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

Tuesday, June 16, 2020

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a Public Board of Trustees virtual meeting on Tuesday, June 16, 2020. The HGMICS facility is located at 1615 East Elm Street, Scranton, PA; however, due to the state mandated closure this meeting was held virtually. Dr. Susan Trussler, President, called the meeting to order at 7:04 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, Sam Ceccacci, Susan Hennemuth, Dr. Clarence Lamanna, Aaron Nivert, Dr. Fran Langan and Dr. John Ruddy.

Also, in attendance: Dr. Marie George, CEO; TreeAnne McEnery, Interim Principal; Chuck Wallinger, Business Manager; Janet Kania, School Secretary; and Kimberly Kost Scanlon, Esq., School Counsel.

Dr. Susan Trussler welcomed visitors and announced that at this time any visitor could comment and ask questions regarding June's agenda items; however, visitors must state their name and school district affiliation. At this time, the visitors virtually in attendance had no comments or questions regarding the agenda. The meeting proceeded.

### **I. Minutes**

**Dr. Susan Trussler**

Dr. Susan Trussler presented the May 19, 2020 Board of Trustees meeting minutes and asked if there were any corrections or additions. With no corrections or additions, a **MOTION** to approve the May 19, 2020 Board meeting minutes, as submitted, was made by Dr. Fran Langan, and seconded by Laila Kane. At this time, all Trustees present voted in favor of approving the minutes as submitted, with no Trustees absent.

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

**Dr. Susan Trussler**

Dr. Susan Trussler announced that it had been a very busy month with the close out of the academic year. Many items will be addressed at tonight's meeting such as the 2020-21 Budget, personnel issues, salaries, and procedures toward re-opening the School. The Board will receive a Safety and Health Plan for approval next month that will outline procedures and protocols for reopening the School.

Dr. Trussler happily announced that the 2020 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Graduation will take place outdoors on campus on Thursday, June 25<sup>th</sup> with a rain date of Friday, June 26<sup>th</sup>

Dr. Trussler thanked Kim Kost Scanlon, Esq. for her years of dedicated service to HGMICS as School Solicitor. Kim's term will conclude at the end of June; however Kim will continue to assist with the legal aspects of the loan for the building addition. Dr. Trussler expressed the appreciation of

the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, families, and students who over the years worked with Kim.

### **III. Personnel Committee**

**Dr. Susan Trussler**

#### **1. Updated Teacher Salary Step Scale**

Dr. Trussler announced that after several meetings including one with HGMICS teachers, the Committee determined that the emphasis on increasing teachers' salaries should be a major priority for the 2020-2021 budget. It was decided by the Board of Trustees that the teacher salary step scale would be moved from the 80<sup>th</sup> percentile to the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile of the average of the Scranton and Abington Heights teachers' step scales. This would result in a starting salary for a new teacher of \$40,500, and substantial increases for all current teaching staff. With no further discussion, the **MOTION** to approve the Updated Teacher Salary Step Scale as submitted was made by Laurie Cadden and seconded by Aaron Nivert. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the Updated Teacher Salary Step Scale, with no Trustees absent.

#### **2. Updated Teacher Aide Step Scale**

Dr. Trussler announced in addition to the Teacher Salary Step Scale increase all Teacher Aides will receive a 5% salary increase and their scale adjusted by the same amount. With no further discussion, the **MOTION** to approve the Updated Teacher Aide Step Scale as submitted was made by Sam Ceccacci and seconded by Laila Kane. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the Updated Teacher Aide Step Scale, with no Trustees absent.

### **IV. Finance/Facilities Committee**

**Stephanie Westington**

At this time, Stephanie Westington asked that Chuck Wallinger, Business Manager present the Financial report for May and deferred to Chuck to presentation.

#### **1. May Financial Report**

**Chuck Wallinger**

Chuck Wallinger, Business Manager reported revenues are \$9,181 below the budgeted amount for the month of May 2020; this was based on a decrease in enrollment to 273 students. The Contributions revenue was below budget by \$6,847 due to the cancellation of the Annual Golf Tournament. Expenses are \$7,547.02 below the budgeted amount for May 2020. The Substitute Teacher costs were below budget by \$2,000 due to COVID-19. The NEIU-19 (Northeast Intermediate Unit) costs were below budget by \$2,144 due to COVID-19. The cleaning costs were below budget by \$3,500 due to the elimination of the daily cleaning services. Utility costs were below budget by \$251 due to COVID-19. The Debt Service was below budget by \$14,066 due to the delay in the \$4.5 million dollar loan from FNCB. The Net Operating Revenue for May 2020 of \$54,897 was below budget by \$1,634. The Fiscal Year Net Operating Revenue budgeted amount is expected to be reached.

The Unipay redirection payment of \$256,485 was received on June 1, 2020, this payment is usually received by the last day of the month. There is \$383,506 remaining on the FNCB loan at a fixed rate of 3.35%. The Federal Grants under Title I, Title II, and Title IV have been received in May 2020. There are 128 days of cash on hand.

Stephanie Westington thanked Chuck for his report. Stephanie asked if there were any

questions at this time regarding the Finance Report. With no further discussion, the **MOTION** to approve the Financial Report through May 31, 2020 as reported and submitted was made by Dr. John Ruddy and seconded by John Ezbiansky. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the Financial Report as submitted, with no Trustees absent.

## **2. HGMICS Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget**

**Stephanie Westington**

Stephanie Westington announced that the Finance/Facilities Committee met last week to discuss the proposed HGMICS Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget. It was agreed that the updated Teacher/Teacher Aide Salary Step Scales were to increase. In addition, consideration for the upcoming construction costs, additional costs required for the reopening of the school, and changes in staff had been factored into the 2020-2021 Budget request.

At this time, Stephanie asked Dr. Marie George to give a brief overview of the proposed 2020-2021 Fiscal Year Budget. Dr. George identified the following items in her overview:

- Recommended a 3% increase in salary rate for those employees not subject to the step scales.
- Recommended the increase in step scale for Teachers from 80% to 90%, which was approved by the Board of Trustees earlier in the meeting.
- Recommended the increase in the step scale for Teacher Aides, which was approved by the Board of Trustees earlier in the meeting.
- Recommended a 28% estimate for employee benefits that includes a 15% increase for Health Insurance.
- Included is the revenue for 296 students, with 254 regular education students and 42 special education students.
- Additional Grants from the CARES Act, PCCD and PEMA are also factored into the budget.

Dr. George asked if Chuck Wallinger, Business Manager had any additional comments at this time. Chuck added that the proposed 2020-2021 Fiscal Year Budget was a conservative budget plan and he had full confidence that the proposed budgeted amounts would be met. Stephanie thanked Marie, TreeAnne and Chuck for their hard work in compiling the proposed budget.

With no further discussion, the **MOTION** to approve the HGMICS Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget as presented was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Laurie Cadden. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the HGMICS Fiscal Year 2020-2021 Budget, with no Trustees absent.

## **V. Personnel Committee**

**Dr. Susan Trussler**

Dr. Trussler announced at this time there has not been any candidate brought forward to the Board of Trustees for approval for the new position of Facilities/Security Director. Dr. Trussler proceeded with her report.

### **1. Primary I Teacher**

**Alyssa Rook**

Dr. Trussler nominated Alyssa Rook for the appointment of the position of Primary I Teacher, effective for the 2020-2021 school year. With no further discussion, the **MOTION** to appoint Alyssa Rook as Primary I Teacher for the 2020-2021 school year at an annual salary of \$41,253 with benefits not to exceed 28% (\$11,550) for a total not to exceed \$52,803, was made by Aaron Nivert and

seconded by Susan Hennemuth. All Trustees present voted in favor of appointing Alyssa Rook as Primary I Teacher for the 2020-2021 school year; with no Trustees absent.

## **2. Intermediate I Teacher**

**Anna Boginski**

Dr. Trussler nominated Anna Boginski for the appointment of the position of Intermediate I Teacher, effective for the 2020-2021 school year. With no further discussion, the **MOTION** to appoint Anna Boginski as Intermediate I Teacher, effective for the 2020-2021 school year at an annual salary of \$40,500 with benefits not to exceed 28% (\$11,340) for a total not to exceed \$51,840 was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Laurie Cadden. All Trustees present voted in favor of appointing Anna Boginski as Intermediate I Teacher for the 2020-2021 school year; with no Trustees absent.

## **3. Principal**

**TreeAnne McEnery**

Dr. Trussler nominated TreeAnne McEnery for a 3-year appointment to the position of Principal, Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School, effective July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2023. With no further discussion, the **MOTION** to appoint TreeAnne McEnery as Principal, Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School effective July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2023 with a first-year salary of \$80,000 and benefits not to exceed 28% (\$22,400) for a first-year total not to exceed \$102,400, was made by Stephanie Westington and seconded by Dr. John Ruddy. All Trustees present voted in favor of appointing TreeAnne McEnery as Principal of Howard Gardner MI Charter School for the 2020-2021 school year; with no Trustees absent.

## **VI. Academic Committee**

**Dr. Fran Langan**

### **1. Revised School Year Calendar 2020-2021**

Dr. Langan presented the Revised School Year Calendar 2020-2021 to the Board of Trustees for approval. Dr. Langan stated that the 1<sup>st</sup> day of School had been changed from August 26<sup>th</sup> to August 31<sup>st</sup>. This change would allow preparation of classrooms and training of all faculty and staff to be in compliance with the State Mandated Social Distancing Practices and Safety & Health Plan of HGMICS. In addition, the revised 2020-2021 School Year Calendar would allow for 184 days of school that would include 4 additional snow days. Also, the revised calendar would allow for 5 days to be applied to flex instruction or weather-related days.

With no further discussion, the **MOTION** to approve the Revised School Year Calendar 2020-2021 as submitted for approval was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Sam Ceccacci. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the Revised School Year Calendar 2020-2021 as submitted, with no Trustees absent.

## **VII. Development Committee**

**Susan Hennemuth**

Susan Hennemuth informed the group that the Development Committee met in late May and held discussions to proceed with the Annual Fundraising plans. Due to the COVID pandemic, the Annual Golf Tournament will be cancelled for this year. The Development Committee will be exploring funding possibilities for the purchase of Vision Screening Equipment.

## **VIII. Nominating Committee**

**Laila Kane**

Laila Kane stated at this time there are no new updates from the Nominating Committee. Laila stated that the Nominating Committee will be meeting in July to brainstorm ideas for the future, and all Board of Trustee Members will retain their Board positions.

## **VIII. School Matters**

**Dr. Marie George**

### **1. Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit (NEIU 19) Agreement**

Dr. Marie George presented the Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit (NEIU 19) Agreement and Resolution for Itinerant Special Education Services for the 2020-2021 School Year. Dr. George stated that this is an annual agreement that requires the Board of Trustees approval for the use of services through the NEIU 19. This Agreement is always presented to the Board of Trustees in the month of June for renewal.

With no further discussion, the **MOTION** to approve the Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit (NEIU 19) agreement and resolution for Itinerant Special Education Service was made by Dr. Fran Langan and seconded by Laurie Cadden. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the Northeastern Educational Intermediate Unit (NEIU 19) agreement and resolution for Itinerant Special Education Service as submitted, with no Trustees absent.

### **1. CEO Report**

**Dr. Marie George**

Dr. Marie George reported the following:

- The last school day was Friday, June 5<sup>th</sup> and student grade reports were issued on Friday, June 12<sup>th</sup>. The 2019-2020 school year is complete except for graduation.
- With Lackawanna County in a Yellow Zone, plans for graduation were finalized for the 18 graduates and their families. Graduation for the Class of 2020 will be held Thursday, June 25<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM on the campus of the school. Students will assemble in the Multipurpose room, receive their framed photos and yearbooks, and spend some time with their classmates while following appropriate social distancing. The graduates will process out to a seated area to the right of the stage and their families will remain in or near their parked cars. Commencement speakers will be former Principal, Maria Rozaieski and Valedictorian and Salutatorian are Anthony Ghigiarelli and Everly Prostka, respectively. Additional academic achievement awards will be announced at the ceremony.
- On June 3<sup>rd</sup>, the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) issued guidance for reopening schools in the fall. Prerequisites include the development of a comprehensive Safety and Health Plan that must be approved by the Board of Trustees prior to submission to PDE followed by public viewing on our website. The Safety Committee established workgroups to address various aspects of reopening the school such as health, safety, classroom/instruction, transportation, lunch, mental health, facilities, technology, and human resources. Surveys were conducted with families and staff to gather input on remote learning options, health procedures

e.g. temperature checks/masks, technology, and transportation. Three focus groups were held with parents on June 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, followed by two focus groups with staff on June 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. It is anticipated that the HGMICS Safety and Health Reopening Plan will be presented to the Board at the July meeting. In late July, students and families will be notified of the instructional options that we will provide if the School is in either a yellow or green zone.

- One related change is a revised 2020-2021 School Calendar that delays the first school day from August 26 to August 31 thereby affording a longer time period for teaching staff to adjust to reentry into the School and related changes in procedures and protocols. The revised 2020-2021 School Calendar was approved by the Board of Trustees earlier in this meeting.
- Update on Building Addition – municipal authorities have recently opened their offices so our application for final approvals for our building addition are now being addressed. Design details are now finalized and bidding specifications are being drafted pending final municipal approval on June 24<sup>th</sup>; however if our application needs to be moved due to the municipal meeting agenda; this will cause a delay in the process. Proposals from two firms in response to our RFP for Construction Manager were received and interviewing will take place next week.
- Personnel Updates – Screening and interviewing for the two open teaching positions were completed early June, and two internal candidates were recommended for the Primary I and Intermediate I teacher positions, which have been approved by the Board of Trustees earlier in this meeting. In addition, the positions of Principal and Director of Facilities and Security were recently advertised and posted on our website with interviewing and recommendation for Principal submitted and approved by the Board of Trustees earlier in this meeting. Interviews for the Director of Facilities and Security position will begin next week.
- A drive-by send-off for Jaci Sandercock was arranged by Stacy Nivert, parent, and organized by Jade Volchoff and Renee Dougherty. The drive-by send-off was highlighted in the local newspaper. A video tribute to Maria Rozaieski was enjoyed by all. Maria will additionally be recognized at commencement.

## **2. Interim Principal Report**

**TreeAnne McEnery**

TreeAnne began by thanking the Board of Trustees for appointing her to the position of Principal earlier in the meeting. She stated that it has been an honor these past few weeks to serve as the Interim Principal. She has been working closely with the CEO and instructional staff to address the current, as well as the future, needs of the School, and they continue to inspire her to find ways to actualize the School's vision statement. TreeAnne reported the following items:

- CoE and Closing the School Year – The final day of school was June 5<sup>th</sup>. Students and teachers celebrated their successful school year remotely and held the third trimester with a half-day of meetings and farewell messages. The third-trimester progress reports were due on June 10<sup>th</sup>. The reports were scheduled to be electronically released through Sycamore on Friday, June 12<sup>th</sup>. The staff completed their reports with exceptional timeliness as well as thoroughly citing content that was completed during the third-trimester remote education.
- One last instructional staff meeting was scheduled with the instructional staff on June 10<sup>th</sup> by Marie George and TreeAnne. This meeting allowed us to provide as much up-to-date information on the work being done to reopen the School in August so that the instructional staff could go into their summer rest assured that a framework would be in place when they returned.
- Jade Volchoff, School Counselor and Collen Coolbaugh, School Psychologist have been focused on the social-emotional well-being of students and staff when returning to school in the fall. They have initiated talks with several local professionals to establish programs and local

supports as needed for our School. One such training, *Calm of NEPA Mindfulness Foundation Course for Education*, led by Phil Sallivanti will support us in deepening the work that Jade and Colleen have established, with a gold standard schoolwide mindfulness program. This program will work with a cohort of staff, provide in-school coaching and mindfulness/stress reduction program development.

- The Continuity of Education (CoE) Summer program is scheduled to begin on June 15<sup>th</sup> and end July 10<sup>th</sup>. We have 24 students from grades K-8<sup>th</sup> attending the program with 8 instructors. Predominate grade levels are 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> (Primary) and 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> (Uppers).
- Kindergarten Screenings – Staff as well as the kindergarten teachers, schedule kindergarten screening each Spring for our incoming kindergartners. Due to COVID 19, this year's spring screenings were reimagined into what we are calling the *Kindergarten Summer Program*. There are 32 incoming kindergarten students, 19 of these students are currently enrolled. During the week of August 10<sup>th</sup> -14<sup>th</sup> a week-long program will allow the students to meet with their teachers, as well as our School Nurse, Amy Ryan, and related services staff to screen students for required health-related documentation.
- Educator Induction Program and Induction Committee – TreeAnne reported that eight teachers within their first or second year of teaching at HGMICS have completed the newly developed Educator Induction Program. Their mentors did an extraordinary job working with them throughout the school year to support their professional competencies. The Induction program Manual requires that both the mentor and mentee complete a *Needs Assessment*. The 4 topics most rated as a request for additional support are *Educational Technology, Reading and Writing Across the Disciplines, Differentiated Instruction, Designing coherent instruction with formative/authentic/performance assessment*. Megan Feliciani will continue the Educational Technology professional development with the new learning management system(LMS) and Schoology with all staff.
- Jade Volchoff, Guidance Counselor; EJ Murphy, Senior Cultures Teacher and TreeAnne are in communication with the founder and director of the *Black Scranton Project*, Glynis Johns to schedule racial literacy professional development and training for the staff. Update information will be reported at the July meeting.
- Parent and Staff Reopening Survey – TreeAnne reported that a Reopening School Survey was sent to both the staff and families inquiring about reopening guidelines. Questions reviewed were temperature checks, masks, hybrid education schedules, lunch programs, and transportation. Marie and TreeAnne hosted three parent and two staff focus group meetings between June 10<sup>th</sup> and June 16<sup>th</sup>. Both families and staff were updated on specific requirements of the PDE Health and Safety Plan, a template provided by PDE, as well as our internal considerations in respect to the guidelines. All meetings were successful.

## **X. New Business**

**Dr. Susan Trussler**

At this time, Dr. Trussler asked if there were any new business items that needed to be presented or discussed. Without hearing any, Dr. Trussler asked for a motion to adjourn.

## **Adjournment**

At 8:08 PM, no further items of business or comments were raised. A **MOTION** to adjourn was made by Dr. Trussler and accepted by all Board of Trustees present, with no Trustees absent.

The next HGMICS Public Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, July 21, 2020 at 7:00 PM.**