

Howard Gardner MI Charter School
Public Board Meeting
Tuesday, August 17, 2021

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a Public Board of Trustees meeting in person on Tuesday, August 17, 2021. Stephanie Westington, President, called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM and then subsequently presided over the meeting. Stephanie led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance and then took roll call for the board members and non-voting attendees.

The following Trustees attended: Stephanie Westington, Sam Ceccacci, Laila Kane, Laurie Cadden, John Ezbiansky, Dino Galli, Susan Hennemuth, Dr. Clarence Lamanna, and Aaron Nivert. Absent from the meeting: Dr. John Ruddy and Dr. Catherine Richmond-Cullen.

Also, in attendance: Dr. Marie George, CEO; TreeAnne McEnery, Principal; Douglas Hein, Business Manager; Joseph Ross, Director of Facilities and Security; Janet Kania, School Secretary.

Stephanie Westington welcomed all Board of Trustee members, staff, and visitors. Stephanie asked if there were any comments or remarks regarding the August agenda. At this time, there were no comments or remarks from the audience and the meeting proceeded.

I. Minutes

Stephanie Westington

Stephanie Westington presented the July 20, 2021, Board of Trustees meeting minutes and asked if there were any corrections or additions. With no corrections or additions, a **MOTION** to approve the July 20, 2021, Board meeting minutes, as submitted, was made by Dr. Clarence Lamanna, and seconded by Laila Kane. At this time, all Trustees present voted in favor of approving the July 20, 2021, minutes as submitted, with two Trustees absent.

II. President's Report

Stephanie Westington

Stephanie Westington began her President's report by welcoming everyone in attendance. Stephanie announced that the construction of the building addition is underway. On July 27th a meeting was held with the residents and led by Joe Ross, Director of Facilities & Security. Concerns from the residents were addressed. TreeAnne McEnery and Dr. Marie George will report on the plans for the opening of school for the new year. The first day of school will be August 30th, and everyone is looking forward to in-person classes.

Stephanie announced that the 2020-2022 annual audit is being conducted by Baker Tilly, who has been working closely with Douglas Hein, Business Manager. Stephanie announced that on August 25th, Dr. Marie George and Julie Emil will facilitate a session to address community outreach goals within the strategic plan.

III. Finance/Facilities Committee

Stephanie Westington

1. July 2021 Financial Report

Dr. John Ruddy

In the absence of Dr. John Ruddy, Stephanie asked Doug Hein, Business Manager to present the July 2021 Financial report.

Doug reported revenues are \$332,367 below budget for July 2021 due to the amount received from the Title I and ESSER II federal grants. Payment amounts vary and are determined by PDE. However, over the course of the year, all allocated monies are received in a timely manner. Expenses of \$338,158 are \$5,585.16 below budget for July 2021 primarily due to not having a maintenance person on staff. The position of a maintenance person has now been hired and the budget will be back on track.

The Net Operating loss for July 2021 is \$1,791.36, which is basically break even for the first month of the fiscal year. The school had \$731,243 in cash at the end of July 2021. This is approximately \$404,248 less than the balance at the end of June 2021 due to the delay in receiving the June school district tuition payments, when annual reconciliation occurs. This represents 70 days cash on hand, which places the school in a positive solvency position.

The construction loan of \$4,500,000 has an 18-month grace period for principal payments, through October 2022. The term is twenty (20) years, and the interest rate is 2.99%. As of July 31, 2021, we have drawn down \$824,272.44, of which \$387,101.12 was for closing costs, which included the payoff of the prior mortgage. The other \$437,171.32 was to pay Mar-Paul Inc. applications #2 & 3.

At this time Stephanie called for a **MOTION** to accept the July 2021 Financial Report as submitted. The motion was made by John Ezbiansky and seconded by Sam Ceccacci. Stephanie called for any questions or comments, not hearing any, all Trustees present voted in favor of accepting the July 2021 Financial Report as presented, with two Trustees absent.

IV. Personnel Committee

Sam Ceccacci

Sam Ceccacci reported that Jennifer James has withdrawn her acceptance for the position of Senior Math teacher. The Administration will be reaching out to other qualified candidates to fill the opened Math teacher position. Kathryn Racavich has been hired as the Kitchen Assistant. This position is part-time for 20 hours per week. Elizabeth McDonough, Kitchen Assistant has resigned due to health issue.

At this time, Sam called for a **MOTION** to accept the Personnel Committee Report as presented. The motion was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Aaron Nivert. Stephanie called for any questions or comments, not hearing any, all Trustees present voted in favor of accepting the Personnel Committee report as presented, with two Trustees absent.

V. School Matters

1. Continuity of Services 2021-2022

Dr. Marie George

Stephanie asked Dr. George to present the Continuity of Services 2021-2022 plan. Dr. George reported that the plan this year pertains to all aspects of students' experience. The updated Health and Safety Plan, which received Board approval, appears on the school's web site.

At this time Dr. George asked Joseph Ross, Director of Facilities & Security to present the updated Health and Safety Plan. Joe stated that mitigation of the Health and Safety Plans main points will remain the same as last year. Masks will be required to be worn by all staff and student whether vaccinated or not. Outdoor education will be encouraged, weather permitting. Students will be allowed to remove masks when outdoor with parent's approval.

Joe stated all guidance from the CDC with recommendations and guidelines will be followed and any changes will be adjusted accordingly to the Health and Safety Plan in order to keep all staff and students safe. At this time, Lackawanna County is seeing a rise in COVID positive cases, and the status of the county has been changed to "substantial". The Administration is closely monitoring cases and that all aspects of the Health & Safety Plan are being followed.

2. Principal Report

TreeAnne McEnery

TreeAnne McEnery reported that 24 of our 32 enrolled Kindergarten students for the 2021-2022 school year attended the annual three-day summer program led by Sara Wintermute and Arielle May, Instructional Assistants, Maria Summa and Alyson Eckler were also in attendance. Some highlighted goals of the program were to provide an opportunity for students to meet their teachers and classmates, become familiar with the school, and the educational activities unique to our setting. The program was a success. TreeAnne commended the staff for organizing such a fun and inviting program for our newest students.

The school plans on offering in-person after school programs during the 2021-2022 school year. Current program offerings will be scheduled beginning September 20th through December 10, 2021. Programs include tutoring for K-8 in ELA and Mathematics. Enrichment Programs for K-8 include Musical-Rhythmic: Band with Steve Kurilla, Literacy with Terry Quinn and Jeri McNulty, Newsletter Literacy with Kim Hoskins, Naturalistic/Science with Kim Hoskins, Mathematical-Logical Chess with Andrew Filler, Kinesthetic-Pep Squad with Ciara Cawley, Intrapersonal-Mindfulness with Jade Volchoff and Brie Devine, and Visual-Spatial-Videography with Joe Bomba and Michael Abballe.

TreeAnne stated that in her July Board report and Handbook review did not include two updates in the instructional Staff and Family/Student Handbook. The first update is the handbooks transition to the use of the phrase "Middle School" when referring to our Upper and Senior Pods, grades 5-8. The second update, as of 2021-2022, middle school student's GPA's will include grades from the special's program.

The 2021-2022 August Pre-Service is scheduled for August 18th through August 26th. Highlighted professional development activities will include new Employee Orientation

and Educator Induction Program. The ELA Department and Instructional Assistants, Learning Support Teachers will be introduced and review ARC Testing. The Mathematics Department and Instructional Assistants and Learning Support Teachers will be introduced and review Everyday Math and Imagine Math. A defined Learning Webinar, project-based Learning (PBL) Leadership Cohort, Teachers Pay Teachers, Act 13, Administrative updates, Safety and Health, Trauma-informed, Suicide Prevention & Gender Spectrum, English Language Learners, MTSS, SEL, SISS, PBIS refresher, TDA: Writing Across the disciplines, and Special Education will also be presented.

3. CEO Report

Dr. Marie George

Dr. George began her report by stating everyone is excited to have all students returning to in-person classes. Dr. George announced that the enrollment for the 2021-2022 school year is at capacity, with the exception of 8th grade. Total enrollment is 309 students, 36 students per grade are enrolled for grades 1 through 7th. 8th grade has 24 students. With the exclusion of Kindergarten, homerooms are multi-grade, comprised of 24 students in each class, 12 from each of two grades. 20 families (36 students) have transferred the children to either their home districts or a diocesan school, but due to our waiting list we are able to fill any open positions. District billing for the 12 districts represented by our 2021-2022 enrollment began in July 2021. A break-down of general/special education students will be provided once all IEP's have been reviewed for this year.

Dr. George stated since the Board approval of the Health and Safety Plan at the July 20th meeting, the plan was updated based upon CDC guidance. Dr. Debra Georgetti, our School physician continues to be instrumental in proving us timely and expert guidance in our preparations for this school year. Earlier this week, the Administration attended several webinars regarding in-school COVID testing; however, no determination has been decided.

Dr. George announced that the painting of all classrooms was completed, along with freshening-up of the HGMICS tree logo in the lobby entrance. Also, two bollards in front of the Kindergarten Center have been painted to look like pencils. Extensive cleaning of walls, kitchen and floor polishing was completed. This is the earliest the summer cleaning projects were completed. Other minor projects included the replacement of the Primary II classroom rug, and some needed plumbing repairs. Attention to preparing classrooms is now the priority in anticipation of the instructional staff returning on August 18th and students on August 30th. All educational supplies and materials are being delivered to classrooms. Also, the shed is now located on the lower lot for storage purposes. The paved play area is larger due to the removal of the shed and outside freezers. Until such time as the building expansion is completed the Music Cottage will be used for music classes and Art, Spanish and K-4 Science classes will be held within each classroom. Landscaping on the existing grounds was completed and signs/banners are being purchased to greet students and their families at the Ice Cream Social, hosted by the Parent Forum on August 26th. A new employee orientation is slated August 18th for those recently hired, as well as the Pre-service training scheduled detailed in TreeAnne's report.

The scheduled East Mountain Neighborhood Meeting took place on July 27th with approximately 20 people in attendance. Representatives from Sordoni Construction and GPI were in attendance. All neighbor questions were addressed and or will be addressed. A summary of the meeting was distributed to all email distribution list assembled for neighbors with 24 hours of the meeting.

Advertising and interviewing for open positions continue with the most recent ad slated for August 15th for current vacant position including Behavioral Therapist, Administrative Assistant, and Lunch Monitors.

VI. New Business

Stephanie Westington

At this time, Stephanie asked if there was anyone who wished to voice any additional concerns or comments. Stephanie thanked the visitor for attending the meeting. Without hearing any additional concerns or comments Stephanie called for a motion to adjourn.

Adjournment

At 7:40 PM, no further items of business or comments had been raised. A **MOTION** to adjourn was made by Laurie Cadden. Adjournment was accepted by all the Board of Trustees present, with two Trustees absent. Stephanie thanked everyone for attending.

The next HGMICS Public Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, September 21, 2021, at 7:00 PM.**