

Howard Gardner MI Charter School
Public Board Meeting
Tuesday, October 19, 2021

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a Public Board of Trustees meeting remotely on Tuesday, October 19, 2021. Stephanie Westington, President, called the meeting to order at 7:07 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, Laila Kane, Laurie Cadden, Dr. Catherine Richmond-Cullen, John Ezbiansky, Dino Galli, Susan Hennemuth, Dr. Clarence Lamanna, and Aaron Nivert. Absent from the meeting: Sam Ceccacci and Dr. John Ruddy.

Also, in attendance: Dr. Marie George, CEO; TreeAnne McEnery, Principal; Douglas Hein, Business Manager; Joseph Ross, Director of Facilities and Security; and 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 October 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 September 21, 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 September 21, 2021, Board meeting minutes, as submitted, was made by Laila Kane, and seconded by Susan Hennemuth. All Board of Trustees members present voted in favor of approving the September 21, 2021, minutes as submitted, with two Trustees absent.

II. President's Report

Stephanie Westington

Stephanie Westington welcomed everyone in attendance.

Stephanie announced that all in-person classes are taking place. Stephanie addressed the audience and informed them of several COVID positive cases that were conveyed through communication to HGMICS families with confidentiality.

Stephanie stated the Annual Golf Tournament, which took place at Pine Hills Country Club on October 10th, was a huge success. Stephanie thanked everyone who participated, donated, and worked at the golf tournament for their generosity and hard work.

Stephanie added that on Monday, October 11th Dr. George, CEO and TreeAnne McEnery, Principal held a three-hour Community Outreach Work Session with administration, faculty, Board of Trustee members, stake holders, community members, and families in attendance.

The Outreach Session focused on future goals and plans for the school. Stephanie thanked everyone who participated.

Stephanie stated Gov. Wolff recently announced the Charter & Cyber Charter Schools' Law will be changed, not through legislation but through a PA Regulation 6-439wn. This can have a negative impact and add undue burden on Charter Schools financially. The public comment period ended October 18, 2021. Stephanie said that she will keep everyone apprised of the ongoing changes.

Stephanie announced several policies will be presented at tonight's meeting for Board approval. In addition, Dr. George has agreed to retain her position of CEO for another three years effective July 1, 2022, until June 30, 2025.

III. Finance/Facilities Committee

John Ezbiansky

In the absence of Dr. Ruddy, John Ezbiansky reported the Finance/Facilities Committee met on October 6th. The committee had a thorough review of the recent audit and discussed internal controls. Doug Hein, Business Manager informed the committee that all documentation for PDE was submitted in a timely manner. Joe Ross, Director of Facilities & Security updated the committee on the construction project and occupancy is slated for next summer.

1. September 2021 Financial Report

Doug Hein

John Ezbiansky asked Doug Hein, Business Manager to detail the September 2021 Financial Report for approval.

Doug Hein, Business Manager stated that his report would include monthly and year-to-date budget details, balance sheet, statement of cash flows, disbursement details, and deposit details. Doug reported revenues for September 2021 of \$344,256 are in line with what was expected for the month. The majority of this reflects \$319,524 of school district billings. Expenses of \$342,608 are \$140,748 less than August 2021 because no major curriculum purchases were made. The Net Operating Profit for September 2021 is \$1,648, with a year-to-date Net Operating loss of \$137,290.13. This will change once the school is reimbursed from grant funds.

The school had \$1,006,361 in cash at the end of September 2021. This is approximately \$85,679 more than the balance at the end of August 2021. The school's loan of \$4,500,000 has an 18-month grace period for principal payments, which will end in October 2022. The amount allocated toward construction is \$3,820,138. Interest payments are based on the amount of funds drawn. The September 2021 payment was \$2,652 compared to the August 2021 payment of \$3,005. The term is twenty (20) years, and the interest rate is 2.99%. In September 2021, we drew down \$332,033 to pay Mar Paul Company, Inc. Total construction funds drawn to date are \$976,083.

The school was awarded Title I funds in the amount of \$132,198 for the 2021-2022 school year. Nothing was distributed in September or year-to-date. Title II funding of \$1135.11

was distributed in September with a total of \$3,405 year-to-date. Title IV funds of \$666.67 was distributed in September with a total of \$2,000 year-to-date. The ESSER II funding of \$9,686 was distributed in September with a total of \$28,199 year-to-date.

Stephanie thanked Doug for his detailed report. At this time, Stephanie called for a **MOTION** to accept the September 2021 Financial Report as submitted. The motion was made by Aaron Nivert and seconded by Laurie Cadden. Stephanie called for any questions or comments, not hearing any, all Trustees present voted in favor of accepting the September 2021 Financial Report as presented, with two Trustees absent.

IV. Academic Committee

Dr. Clarence Lamanna

Dr. Lamanna stated the Academic Committee met on October 5th to discuss two policies, which will be presented at tonight's meeting for approval, along with two informational items. PSSA test results were also presented at the Committee meeting. Both 4th and 8th grade science and ELA scores decreased in relation to pandemic learning. Math score results indicated students had done well. Improvements towards next year are on-going by developing assessments and pro-development options, it's optimistic that scores will increase. The Special Education Discipline Policy and English Language Learning (ELL) Policy are presented for board approval

1. Special Education Discipline Policy

At this time, Dr. Lamanna called for a **MOTION** to accept the Special Education Discipline Policy as presented. The motion was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Laurie Cadden. Dr. Lamanna called for any questions or comments, not hearing any, all Trustees present voted in favor of accepting the Special Education Discipline Policy as presented, with two Trustees absent.

2. English Language Learning (ELL) Policy

At this time, Dr. Lamanna called for a **MOTION** to accept the English Language Learning (ELL) Policy as presented. The motion was made by Laurie Cadden and seconded by Dino Gallo. Dr. Lamanna called for any questions or comments, not hearing any, all Trustees present voted in favor of accepting the English Language Learning (ELL) Policy as presented, with two Trustees absent.

V. Personnel Committee Westington

Stephanie

In Sam Ceccacci's absence Stephanie Westington reported on behalf of the Personnel Committee that recently met on October 5th. Various items were presented and discussed including salary compression among administrators, vaccinations policy for prospective staff, the need for a Food Service Supervisor, and retention agreement for the CEO. The search for a Food Service Supervisor will begin due to the expansion of the food service program most notably the 100% increase in the number of daily student lunches served. The CEO agreement will be for a three-year appointment period from July 2022 through June 2025 during which time Dr. George will continue in her leadership role.

1. Employee Vaccination Policy

At this time, Stephanie called for a **MOTION** to accept and approve the Prospective Employee Vaccination Policy as presented. The motion was made by Dr. Clarence Lamanna and second by Susan Hennemuth. Stephanie called for any questions or comments, not hearing any, all Trustees present voted in favor of accepting the Prospective Employee Vaccination Policy as presented, with two Trustees absent.

2. Personnel Report

At this time, Stephanie reported the recommendation of Melissa Kloss, Kitchen Assistant to be hired effective October 20, 2021. In addition, Kathryn Racavich will have a change in status from Kitchen Assistant to part time School Nurse Assistant. TreeAnne McEnery, Principal shall be awarded a Principal retention adjustment that is grant funded and partially addresses salary compression among administrators. Stephanie called for a **MOTION** to accept the approval for the October 2021 Personnel Report as presented that includes new hire for the position of Kitchen Assistant, change in status, and Principal retention adjustment. The motion was made by Dr. Clarence Lamanna and seconded by Laila Kane. Stephanie called for any questions or comments, not hearing any, all Trustees present voted in favor of accepting the Personnel Committees October 2021 Report as submitted and presented, with two Trustees absent.

3. Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Agreement and Job Description

At this time, Stephanie called for a **MOTION** to approve the Agreement with Dr. Marie George to extend her employment as the Chief Executive Officer for the Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School for the three-year period from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2025. The motion was made by Laurie Cadden and seconded by Dino Galli. Stephanie called for any questions or comments, not hearing any, all Trustees present voted in favor of accepting the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Agreement and Job Description as presented, with two Trustees absent.

John Ezbiansky “thanked” Dr. George for agreeing to the three-year CEO agreement. Stephanie Westington, Board of Trustee President added that the Board of Trustees are relieved that Dr. George has accepted the position and “thanked” Dr. George for her continuous dedication and hard work.

V. School Matters

Stephanie Westington informed the group two policies would be introduced for Board of Trustees approval. These policies are the Updated Family Engagement Policy, presented by TreeAnne McEnery, Principal and the Anti-Bullying & Anti-Hazing Policy, presented by Dr. Marie George, CEO.

1. Updated Family Engagement Policy

TreeAnne McEnery

TreeAnne explained the updated Family Engagement Policy is an annual policy, which needs to be reviewed and approved by the Board of Trustees and is required for Title I eligibility. The policy shall be implemented by the CEO or designee and be incorporated into the Schoolwide Title I Plan. The policy will involve family members of the school community in the process of school review and improvement according to the ESSA, Section 1116(a)(2)(A) grant. At this time, TreeAnne asked for a **MOTION** to approve the Updated Family Engagement Policy as discussed and presented. The motion was made by Dr. Clarence Lamanna and seconded by John Ezbiansky. TreeAnne called for any questions or comments, not hearing any, all Trustees present voted in favor of accepting the Updated Family Engagement Policy as presented, with two Trustees absent.

2. Anti-Bullying & Anti-Hazing Policy

Dr. Marie George

Dr. George stated on advice from the school's Solicitor, an updated policy was needed to more fully address Anti-Bullying & Anti-Hazing. The Board of Trustees and administration recognizes the importance of providing all students and employees with a safe school and learning environment with increasing awareness of the increased occurrence of Cyber Bullying among elementary and middle school students, this policy includes procedures, compliance, and training to take place on a regular basis. At this time, Dr. George asked for a **MOTION** to approve the Anti-Bullying & Anti-Hazing Policy as discussed and presented. The motion was made by Stephanie Westington and seconded by Dr. Clarence Lamanna. Dr. George called for any questions or comments, not hearing any, all Trustees present voted in favor of accepting the Anti-Bullying & Anti-Hazing Policy as presented, with two Trustees absent.

3. Principal Report

TreeAnne McEnery

TreeAnne McEnery, Principal began her report by stating the Schoolwide Advisory Group, as part of compliance with Federal Title I expectations, the school has a Schoolwide Title I Advisory group whose focus is solely on family engagement. The Group first met in June 2021 when the 2021- 2024 Comprehensive Plan was in its final review by the community. The Advisory Group reconvened on September 29, 2021. At the reported meeting, the group reviewed and provided input on the HGMICS Family Engagement Policy, which will be presented at the October 2021. In addition to reviewing the policy, the group developed survey topics and questions for the community's input on family engagement. The survey is currently being reviewed by the Group and is slated to be fielded to the HGMICS community in the first week of November 2021.

- MTSS - the three tiers of the MTSS Committee are actively engaged within the school. The Committee has decided to meet bi-weekly instead of monthly as there is a significant amount of organizational work to articulate and document the schoolwide framework. In addition, the Child Study Teams have started to meet, and the Special Education evaluations and referrals have been initiated.
- Benchmark Assessments/Data/Student Progress, Department Chair Meeting - schoolwide benchmark assessments have been completed. Benchmark Assessments include but are not limited to:
 - Grades K-2, ESGI (Educational Software for Guiding Instruction)

- Grades K-8, Acadience Reading/Literacy
 - Grades K-6, Acadience Mathematics
 - Grades 3-8, Imagine Math • Grades 3-8, CDT's (Classroom Diagnostic Tools)
 - Grades K-8, Learning Support Students, AIMS web
- The Schoolwide Coordinator reviewed the Acadience results with the MTSS committee and at the teacher team meetings. In addition, the initial PSSA and the first administration of the CDT's results have been reviewed by each department and discussed at the monthly Department Chair meeting. These assessments have informed department goals, teacher's Student Learning Objectives (SLO), and initial analysis of the impacts of the COVID pandemic on student learning loss.
- Environmental Education Program - grades K-8 have been actively engaged in the grant-funded HGMICS Environmental Education Program. Local and regional environments while integrating and exploring standardized academic content. All grade levels participate in the program twice a year, scheduled during the first and third trimesters. Each class attends one program at Lackawanna State Park Education Center or the Lackawanna College Environmental Education Center or Lacawac Sanctuary. This year the 7th & 8th grade classes recently visited Gettysburg, PA.
 - Educator Effectiveness (Act 13) - Danielson-aligned Formal Observations are scheduled from October 25 through November 19, 2021. Differentiated Supervision meetings are scheduled for October 18-29, 2021. Student Learning Objectives (SLO's) are submitted and approved. Annual Goals are submitted and approved.
 - Fire Safety Event - Joe Ross, Director of Facilities and Security, graciously invited the Scranton Fire Chief to have their fire prevention officer conduct a program for our students on October 18. Grades K-6 participated in this incredible learning experience. The event was cut short due to a fire call which required the fire departments attention. Grades 7 & 8 were on a field trip this day.
- TreeAnne thanked the Board for reviewing her report.

4. CEO Report

Dr. Marie George

Dr. George reported the following:

- Dr. Howard Gardner Communications - A recent outreach to Dr. Howard Gardner was made and an exchange of emails about the school and our students occurred. Additional information was provided by Dr. Gardner about Project Zero and his current research focus. TreeAnne and Dr. George are looking forward to a planned zoom meeting with Dr. Gardner in January.
- 2021-2022 School Year - Health and Safety Plan Updates- in addition to the school's ongoing notifications of covid cases, a Dashboard is under development that will present a summary of HGMICS COVID-case tracker information. The Dashboard will be placed on the school's website. Recently received approval from the PA Department of Health, the School is now authorized to provide Rapid Antigen Tests to our school community. Parent/guardian consent will be needed for any student testing to occur. The first batch of tests were received, and staff trained. Tests will be made available to staff as well as students. We are pursuing ways for the school to be a vaccination site for our HGMICS families. If offered, the clinic would take place on a Saturday. At this time there is no mandate for students to be vaccinated and any such future decision would be made at the state level. We contacted two area providers and are awaiting their responses to our

requests. All PA public schools no longer need to report positive COVID cases and related close contacts with the PA Department of Health. Instead, weekly reports to the PA Department of Education are due Fridays by 5 p.m. for the previous week. Additionally, in each weekly survey, schools identify if there was a closure since the decision to close because of COVID-19 is made a local level. It is important to note that even with slight increase in COVID positive cases, there is no evidence of internal transmission at HGMICS.

- Community Outreach Work Session –on October 11th, a three-hour work session was held with several stakeholders present– trustees, foundation director, parent, administrators, and staff. The session resulted in a collectively developed action plan that advances three strategic plan goals. The action plan identified immediate steps that can be taken to improve public relations and fundraising, as well as to establish a donor database including legacy information needed to advance development/fundraising activities. The importance of retaining expertise to develop the Bloomerang data base as well as development professional. The opportunity presented by the Opening of the building addition/new entrance etc. will be important to leverage.
- Golf Tournament - the 2021 Golf Tournament on October 10th was a huge success with a net outcome of \$20, 214. Dr. George thanked all for the many ways the HGMICS Community supported the Tournament that included 25 raffle baskets donated, 83 golfers, 50+ sponsors and \$7, 540 in 50/50 raffle tickets sold. The HGMICS family whose raffle ticket was picked on the day of the Tournament generously donated their winnings back to the school for which we are so grateful.
- Parent Forum - the Parent Forum is assisting the school in purchasing needed playground supplies to enjoy during recess time. The annual Halloween Trunk or Treat event, sponsored by the Parent Forum, will once again take place at the School on Sunday, October 24th, noon to 2 p.m. A recent Parent Forum survey was distributed to all families that included questions about their areas of expertise that might be shared with students and educational topics of interest for future parent sessions.
- Personnel – Dr. George thanked the Board of Trustees for their ongoing support and expression of confidence as she agreed to serve an additional three years as CEO. Dr. George expressed what an honor it is to be part of such an exceptional learning community with a mission that she wholeheartedly supports.

VIII. New Business

Stephanie Westington

- At this time, Stephanie asked if there was any new business to discuss or 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 7:53 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, November 16, 2021, at 7:00 PM.**