

Howard Gardner MI Charter School
Public Board Meeting
Tuesday, November 16, 2021

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a Public Board of Trustees meeting remotely on Tuesday, November 16, 2021. Stephanie Westington, President, called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. and subsequently presided over the meeting. Stephanie led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance and took roll call for the board members and non-voting attendees.

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

Also, in attendance: Dr. Marie George, CEO; Douglas Hein, Business Manager; Joseph Ross, Director of Facilities and Security; and Deana Bonacci, Administrative Assistant.

Stephanie Westington reminded the attendees the public hearing is on agenda items only, visitors may comment on items listed on the agenda, and names and school districts or residence will be recorded before remarks are made. With no request for comments from the audience regarding the November agenda, Stephanie proceeded with the meeting.

I. Minutes

Stephanie Westington

Stephanie Westington presented the October 19, 2021, Board of Trustees meeting minutes and asked for approval. A **MOTION** to approve the October 19, 2021, Board meeting minutes, as submitted, was made by Dr. Clarence Lamanna, and seconded by Laila Kane. Stephanie asked if there were any comments on the minutes. Not hearing any, Stephanie called for a vote. All Board of Trustees members present voted in favor of approving the October 19, 2021, minutes as submitted, with two Trustees absent.

II. President's Report

Stephanie Westington

Stephanie Westington welcomed everyone in attendance.

Stephanie announced that in-person learning as well as masking requirements remain in effect and our school administration will continue to follow protocol as set forth in the School's Health and Safety Plan to address all COVID-19-related matters. Stephanie announced a Pediatric vaccination clinic was held at Howard Gardner on November 8, 2021, after the recent FDA approval of the Pfizer vaccine for children. Additionally, Governor Wolfe announced the school mask mandate will expire on January 17, 2022, and it will be up to school officials to implement their own COVID19 mitigation measures moving forward. Stephanie added school administration is carefully evaluating how this change will affect school procedures in the New Year.

Stephanie informed attendees that Doug Hein, Business Manager tendered his resignation, effective November 30, 2021. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, Stephanie thanked Doug for his work and wished him the best in his future endeavors. Additionally, the School is posting the position of Business Manager and will be accepting applications and resumes in the near future.

Lastly, Stephanie discussed the school's Charter Renewal application process has commenced with administration working diligently to gather all relevant information as well as the Board of Trustees providing input for the Governance section of the application.

III. Finance/Facilities Committee

John Ezbiansky

In the absence of Dr. Ruddy, John Ezbiansky reported the Finance/Facilities Committee met on November 4, 2021, to review the October Financial Report as well as other agenda items. John discussed how the Committee received updates about the current construction project, such as the play area and roof installation timeline, the estimated occupancy schedule, as well as a potential vehicle purchase for the school to use once the new addition is completed.

1. October 2021 Financial Report

Doug Hein

Joe Ross asked Doug Hein, Business Manager to detail the October 2021 Financial Report for approval via telephone due to a technical issue.

Doug Hein, Business Manager reported revenues for the month of October 2021 of \$407,998 with the majority of this due to school district billings in the amount of \$366,447 against expenses of \$353,103. Net Operating Profit for October 2021 is \$54,894. The school had \$918,842 in cash at the end of October with no draws made on the construction loan due to a delay in receiving the payment applications from contractors. There will be two draws made in November.

Doug stated the School did not receive any Title I, Title II, or Title IV payments in October 2021. There will be double payments on these in November. The school received \$9,686 in ESSER II funding for October. The School received the entire 2021-2022 grant allotment for the Ready to Learn grant in the amount of \$7,249. Doug asked if there were any questions. With none being asked, Stephanie thanked Doug on behalf of the Board of Trustees for his work over the past couple of months wished him the best in his future endeavors. Doug responded that it has been a pleasure to work at Howard Gardner.

At this time, Stephanie entertained a **MOTION** to approve the Financial Report through October 31, 2021, as reported and submitted. The motion was made by Laurie Cadden and seconded by John Ezbiansky. Stephanie called for any questions or comments, not hearing any, all Trustees present voted in favor of accepting the October 2021 Financial Report as presented, with two Trustees absent.

IV. Academic Committee

Dr. Clarence Lamanna

Dr. Lamanna stated the Academic Committee met on November 2, 2021, to discuss several areas including the student baseline data review. Tentative goals were discussed regarding math, ELA, science, as well as for the economically disadvantaged in relation to goal development.

The Committee reviewed Set Aside Funds and possible uses of these funds centering on student services, behavioral health, professional development services, and summer school.

A special education update was presented regarding the school's continuum of services. A number of special education students are receiving more in-depth services on site, with focus on meeting the individual needs of students in the least restrictive environments. The discussion led to the possible procurement of school based behavioral health services.

Lastly, the curriculum cycle was reviewed as a six-year cycle encompassing review and revision in year one, curriculum development in year two, implementation in year three, revision opportunity in year four, monitoring and maintaining in year five, and evaluation in the sixth year.

Dr. Lamanna stated the Academic Committee has no formal motions for the board at this time.

V. Development Committee

Laurie Cadden

In the absence of Susan Hennemuth, Laurie Cadden reported the Development Committee met on October 27, 2021. Laurie stated the Annual Golf Tournament was one of the most successful, with approximately \$20,000 raised. The Committee debriefed the tournament and discussed recommendations for improvement in the next year. A 2021 golf tournament will be held but the date has yet to be determined. Additional topics of discussion included activating Boomerang donor database, engagement of a development professional, prospective foundation board members, and updates on the Epsom memorial gift.

VI. Nominating Committee

Laurie Cadden

Laurie Cadden reported the Nominating Committee met on Wednesday, November 10, 2021. Laurie stated items on the agenda, with no formal actions taken, were review of the board rotation schedule, the board vacancy effective July 1st, 2022, possible board candidates as well as additional candidates for future appointments. Also discussed was the procedure to formally invite trustees to serve a second term.

VII. School Matters

1. Compliant Internet Protection Policy

Joe Ross

Joe Ross, Director of Facilities and Security, explained that in preparation for the 2022 Charter Renewal, adopting a policy in accordance with the Compliant Internet Protection Act is recommended. The Compliant Internet Protection Policy would supplement the existing HGMICS Proper Use of Technology Policy, as well as make sure all students have been trained to use the internet safely.

At this time, Stephanie called for a **MOTION** to approve the Compliant Internet Protection Policy, 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 Compliant Internet Protection Policy.

2. Principal Report

Dr. Marie George

In the absence of TreeAnne McEnery, Dr. Marie George gave highlights from the Principal Report. The first trimester comes to a close on November 24, 2021, and progress reports are scheduled to be released to families by December 3, 2021. Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled for Thursday, December 9, 2021, from 3:30 PM to 6 PM and Friday, December 10, 2021, when students will be released for a half day, allowing parents to meet with the teachers in the afternoon from 12:30 PM to 3:30 PM. Considering the HGMICS Health and Safety plan, all conferences will be held virtually.

In relation to goals and updates on our Schoolwide Title I Comprehensive Plan, Currently, we are in the process of baselining. an in-depth review took place with the Comprehensive Planning Committee at their first meeting of this school year. The areas of focus, all of which have been determined based on data leading to these areas, include mathematics, text dependent analysis skills and increasing student growth for science and increasing student achievement, mathematics, and literacy for our economically disadvantaged population. Further data will be presented as outcomes become apparent and are discussed with the faculty.

Academically, there is a lot going on this year. The new American Reading curriculum is reaching all grades. Coaches are collaborating with our teachers who are implementing this new curriculum. We are currently in the development phase of this curriculum. Weekly coaching sessions are held, both virtually as well as in person, which help the teachers navigate the development of a complex literacy program. It's a testament to the dedication of our teachers, in light of the challenges inherent with teaching during a pandemic, to also take on a new curriculum. Also, beginning November 19, 2021, the mathematics teachers will begin monthly coaching with OGAP facilitators and master teachers. Additionally, two trainings for further professional development are planned for June and August.

3. CEO Report

Dr. Marie George

Dr. Marie George provided an update about the Health and Safety Plan regarding a change in case reporting. Since October 8, 2021, all public schools began weekly reporting of any positive COVID cases and related close contacts to the PA Department of Health. During the ensuing weeks, the school's number of positive cases dropped from eight to zero.

HGMICS is excited about the approval of the Pfizer vaccine for children ages 5-11 by the CDC and FDA. The School arranged for Hometown Healthcare of NEPA to conduct a pediatric clinic for eligible students to receive their Pfizer vaccine. The first dose was offered November 8, 2021, and a second dose will be offered on November 29, 2021. Additionally, our staff was provided the opportunity to receive a booster shot. The clinic took place in the School's Multipurpose Room during the 3:30-5:30 PM timeframe. With anticipated symptoms among staff no school was held on Tuesday, November 9th. Since the school calendar has 7 extra days built in, the 180 school days will be easily met.

HGMICS is in the process of a five-year Charter Renewal and the completion of the required application. The administrators are working to assemble requested documents and answer questions within the five sections of the application. The application will be submitted to

the Scranton School District and the Abington Heights School District, the two affiliated districts, with a submission target date of December 22, 2021.

The fall Sports Program was successful with many students participating. Brian Kubilus, Athletic Director, ordered uniforms based upon the financial support provided by the school's recent fundraisers. Winter basketball is now being planned, as well as spring cross- country. The Band Program provided instruments for students who are receiving lessons grouped by percussion, brass, and woodwind in preparation for future performances. Steve Kurilla, Band Director, is coordinating all aspects of instruction and instrument distribution. The School rented the instruments from Robert M Sides through Title IVA funding and there is no charge to families for the instruments or lessons.

To further develop an esprit de corps among the community, HGMICS is looking at identifying a mascot for the School. A first meeting took place and a timeline established. There will be a contest among HGMICIS students for the for the final selection. An announcement of the chosen mascot will take place in early January, coinciding with National School Choice Week.

The Parent Forum held a very successful Trunk-or-Treat event in October and are currently planning to hold a Winter Celebration. The event will be hosted outside on December 3, 2021, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. A lighting of the School will take place at 5:15 p.m. and student musical performance at 6 p.m. with many other educational and fun activities planned.

School lunches around the country have experienced shortages of food. Fortunately, HGMICS has been able to make sure there is an adequate supply of food. Requirements have been relaxed by the National School Lunch Program, which provides more flexibility for the lunch menus.

Regarding shortages, HGMICS leased copiers experienced many weeks of a back order for toner. This led to all three copiers being down at one point. HGMICS had to purchase a reasonably priced, replacement copier as an interim measure.

In contrast, good news in terms of the delay in the arrival of the roof insulation for the HGMICS construction project has pushed the completion date to July 2022, which is a more favorable time for occupancy to occur. The roof insulation is now slated to arrive January 10, 2022, two weeks earlier than expected. The expected date of occupancy remains July 2022.

The Supervisor, Food Service position search is underway with a very good pool of candidates. Screening through initial phone interviews started the week of November 15th and will be followed by interviews with final candidates.

Additionally, HGMICS long serving and dedicated Kitchen Chef, Dottie Shoemaker, has announced her retirement effective January 2022.

With Doug Hein's recent resignation, HGMICS will immediately begin the search for a new Business Manager.

VIII. New Business

Stephanie Westington

At this time, Stephanie asked if anyone had any new business to bring forth. John Ezbiansky asked if anyone has thoughts on the School mascot to please share. Stephanie asked if there were any other comments. Without hearing any, Stephanie called for a motion to adjourn.

Adjournment

At 7:38 p.m., no further items of business or comments had been raised. A **MOTION** to adjourn was made by Aaron Nivert and seconded by Dino Galli. 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, December 21, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.**