

Howard Gardner MI Charter School

Public Board Meeting

Tuesday, April 19, 2022

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a Public Board of Trustees meeting remotely on Tuesday, April 19, 2022. Stephanie Westington, President, called the meeting to order at 7:05 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; TreeAnne McEnery, Principal; John Marsico, Business Manager; 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 of residence will be recorded before remarks are made. With no request for comments from the audience regarding the March agenda, Stephanie proceeded with the meeting.

I. Minutes

Stephanie Westington

Stephanie Westington presented the March 15, 2022, Board of Trustees meeting minutes and asked for approval. A **MOTION** to approve the March 15, 2022 Board meeting minutes, as submitted, was made by Dr. Clarence Lamanna, and seconded by Laila Kane. Stephanie asked if there were any comments or corrections on the minutes. Not hearing any, Stephanie called for a vote. All Board of Trustees members present voted in favor of approving the March 15, 2022, minutes as submitted, with two Trustees absent.

II. President's Report

Stephanie Westington

Stephanie Westington welcomed everyone in attendance to the April 2022 Public Board meeting.

Stephanie began her report by stating the School is working on budget preparations for the 2022-2023 school year. The Finance/Facilities Committee and the Personnel Committee held a joint meeting the first week of April to review a preliminary draft of the budget. John

Marsico, Business Manager; Dr. George, CEO, and administrative budget managers, are currently working towards a finalized budget for approval at the May 2022 meeting.

Several dates have been announced regarding HGMICS events. Wednesday, August 17, 2022, will be the date for the formal dedication and ribbon cutting ceremony of the building addition. The following Thursday, August 25th, an open house is scheduled for families and students to tour the new addition.

During tonight's meeting, the Board will be approving the appointment of two new directors to the Howard Gardner Charter School Foundation, Wayne Evans, a prominent business political and community leader in the Scranton area, and Vincent Rizzo, a leader with vast experience in the field of education, including previous directorship at the former Howard Gardner School for Discovery. The School is excited and honored for their willingness to provide their expertise and direction to the Foundation Board.

Stephanie announced that the school will once again participate in the NEPA Gives fundraiser on June 3rd, 2022. The School's participation last year was a huge success with over \$10,000 raised. This year, the goal is set for \$12,000. The Board would like to thank the Hawk Family Foundation for once again providing a matched donation \$2,500. The Howard Gardner Board of Trustees, Administration, Staff, and HGMICS families are encouraged to support our school in June.

Lastly, this evening, Jade Flynn, the School's Counselor, will be making a presentation on Positive Behavior Interventions and Support, a very important framework for the success of our students.

III. Presentation on PBIS

Jade Flynn-Volchoff

Jade Flynn-Volchoff began by introducing herself as the School's Counselor, where she has held this position at HGMICS for the past ten years. Jade began her presentation on PBIS by stating Positive Behavior Interventions and Support is an evidence based, three-tiered framework for improving and integrating all data and systems which affects the outcome for students every day. HGMICS promotes a positive learning culture and individual behaviors that reinforce school values daily. The expectations of "STAR" are reinforced, which are safe, trustworthy, accountable, and respectful. PBIS also rewards positive behaviors daily, establishes consistent responses for inappropriate behavior, monitors data to assess and enhance school life programming, which is reviewed as a committee on a monthly basis.

As the School moves towards it's MTSS, our focus is on Tier 1 of the three-tiered framework of PBIS, which provides preventative practices. Each year these expectations of behaviors are reviewed whether they are behaviors in the hallway, in assemblies, on the bus, and in the classrooms.

It is a multi-year process to accomplish all tiers, and Tier 1 is the foundation for all other tiers. Tier 2 Provides targeted interventions to support students classified as "at risk," who require more intervention than is typically provided within Tier 1 universal support. Tier 3 is the most intense level of intervention for students significant behavioral/emotional needs.

The PBIS team will implement Review 360 next year, a comprehensive and integrated web-based behavior improvement solution. Review 360 isn't just a discipline data tracking tool. It combines the School's universal screening data from Acadience, incident management, and offers Tier 1 supports such as professional development for teachers and allows for progress monitoring to help with movement between tiers. The Review 360 dashboard allows us easy access to trending issues in the school and reports on incidents and discipline data, whether it's based on incident type, location, teacher, student ethnicity, gender, race, or age. This will allow us to adjust our program as needed and gives us specific information on the needs of HGMICS students.

Jade concluded her presentation with information on PBIS and bullying. Bullying has many formal definitions, but typically it is when someone repeatedly uses threats, intimidation, or aggression to obtain objects, activities, or social gain from others. Bullying prevention focuses on the strategies for reducing bullying behavior by blending PBIS with explicit instruction. Teaching students to identify and respond effectively to the bullying and harmful behavior of others needs to match the students' developmental level. The goal is the same – to reduce bullying behavior – but the process may look different across our elementary and middle school population. Everyone in school should know what it means to be respectful. They should know what it looks like and how it feels to be respected. On the other side, they also should be able to identify if, when, and how someone else's behavior is inappropriate. School-wide definitions help everyone stay consistent. In Tier 1, all students and school personnel are taught directly and formally how to behave in safe, respectful, and responsible ways in every school setting. The emphasis is on teaching and encouraging positive social skills and character traits. At this tier, all students may also learn how to respond to the problem behavior of others. Tier 2 covers students whose behaviors don't respond to Tier 1 supports and receive additional preventative strategies involving targeted social skills instruction, increased adult supervision and positive attention, specific and daily feedback on their behavioral progress, and additional academic support, if necessary. If students don't respond to Tier 1 or 2 supports, the most intensive preventative strategies are used which include highly individualized academic and/or behavior intervention planning, more comprehensive, person-centered, function-based wraparound processes, and school-family-community mental health supports.

IV. Finance/Facilities Committee

Stephanie Westington

In the absence of Dr. John Ruddy, Stephanie Westington reported the Finance/Facilities Committee jointly met with the Personnel Committee to review the budget on April 6, 2022. The Committees had a very detailed discussion about the budget.

Stephanie Westington asked John Marsico, Business Manager to detail the March 2022 Financial Report for approval.

1. March 2022 Financial Report

John Marsico

John Marsico, Business Manager, reported revenues for the month of March 2022 of \$375,913. The majority of this reflects \$335,787 of School District billings. The Annual Spring Candy sale generated \$7,068 of revenue in March 2022. Expenses for this fundraiser totaled \$3,858 producing a Net Profit of \$3,210 which will be transferred to the Foundation bank account. Expenses of \$408,427 are \$17,686 higher than February 2022. This increase is primarily due to the timing of bill payments. The Net Operating Loss for March 2022 is \$32,514, with a year-to-date Net Operating Profit of \$102,026. During the preparation of this report, it was noted that \$5112 of administrative expenses were inadvertently excluded in the prior month fiscal year to date (2/28/2022) expenses. These have now been reflected in the fiscal year to date (3/31/2022) expenses.

The School had \$992,419 in cash at the end of March 2022. This is approximately \$15,158 lower than the balance at the end of February 2022. There was one draw made on the construction loan in March 2022. The total was \$255,544 and was for Pay Application #11 to Mar-Paul, Inc. in the amount of \$32,814, Pay Application #2 in the amount of \$84,894 to Joyce Electric, and Pay Applications #7 and #8 to Scranton Electric in the amount of \$137,836. Total construction funds drawn to date are \$2,154,874.

In relation to grants, the School was initially awarded \$130,663 in Title I funding. This amount increased to \$134,343 in March 2022. \$8,711 was received in March 2022 with a total of \$52,265 received year-to-date. The School was awarded \$14,596 in Title II funding. This was increased to \$14,966 in March 2022. \$973 was received in March with a total of \$5,838 received year-to-date. The School was awarded \$10,000 in Title IV funding. \$666 was received in March with a total of \$4,000 received year-to-date. The School was awarded \$413,069 in ESSER II funding. \$9,687 was received in March with a total of \$86,316 year-to-date. The School was awarded \$64,938 in ESSER III Set-Aside funding. \$1,181 was received in March with a total of \$3,542 received year-to-date. The ESSER III award of \$835,519 for the school was approved in March 2022. No dollars have been received as of this report.

At this time, Stephanie Westington entertained a **MOTION** to approve the Financial Report through March 31, 2022, as reported and submitted. The motion was made by Laurie Cadden and seconded by John Ezbianksy. Stephanie called for any questions or comments, not hearing any, all Trustees present voted in favor of accepting the March 2022 Financial Report as presented, with two Trustees absent.

V. Personnel Committee

Sam Ceccacci

Sam Ceccacci reported the Personnel Committee met in early March to review Personnel salary increases for the 2022-2023 budget period and decided to discuss those recommendations jointly with the Finance Committee on Wednesday, April 6, 2022. The HGMICS step scales were reviewed in relation to other school districts step scales and to ensure those salaries would fit into the annual budget for 2022-2023. Advertising has started in April for positions for next year, including a Spanish teacher, a Social Studies teacher, a new ELA position, another building substitute, and a Paraprofessional to help with Special Education. Also, the Benefits Task Force will meet Thursday, April 21, 2022, to explore ways to control costs. Jeff Haudenshield, the School's broker from the Benefits Group, will be in attendance. The next Personnel Committee meeting is Tuesday, May 3, 2022, at 8 a.m.

VI. Development Committee

Dr. Marie George

In the absence of Susan Hennemuth, Dr. Marie George reported the Development Committee met on March 23, 2022, and discussed several items, including the upcoming NEPA Gives campaign on June 3, 2022. The goal of \$12,000 was established. The Committee also talked about different strategies for Communications to increase participation. The Development committee frequently addresses different needs the School may have, the latest one being a kitchen freezer replacement. The Parent-Forum was asked to support this need and they generously agreed to fund the full cost of the kitchen freezer. The Committee also discussed other ways to pursue funding for other outstanding kitchen equipment, various activities associated with the building expansion, and ways to celebrate the dedication, ribbon cutting, etc. A follow up will be done at the next meeting to move forward some of those recommendations. There was also discussion about membership for the Foundation, which was forwarded to the Nominating committee for follow up. Finally, the Committee talked about the possible timing for an Annual Fund campaign. The Development Committee is schedule to meet again April 27, 2022, at 4:30 p.m.

VII. Nominating Committee

Laurie Cadden

Laurie Cadden proposed recommendations for motions to approve two new Foundation Board member appointments.

At this time, Laurie Cadden entertained a **MOTION** to approve the appointment of Wayne E. Evans as Director for the Howard Gardner Charter School Foundation Board for one term, or three years, effective May 1st, 2022. The motion was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Aaron Nivert. Laurie called for any questions or comments, not hearing any, all Trustees present voted in favor, with two Trustees absent.

Laurie Cadden entertained a **MOTION** to approve the appointment of Vincent J. Rizzo as Director for the Howard Gardner Charter School Foundation Board for one term, or three years, effective May 1st, 2022. The motion was made by Sam Ceccacci and seconded by Stephanie Westington. Laurie called for any questions or comments, not hearing any, all Trustees present voted in favor, with two Trustees absent.

VIII. School Matters

1. Principal Report

TreeAnne McEnery

TreeAnne McEnery began her report by discussing school culture activities. In honor of March Madness, the PBIS committee organized a week filled with activities associated with various multiple intelligences. In honor of March Madness, the PBIS Committee organized a week filled with activities associated with various multiple intelligences; planned activities related to the kinesthetic, interpersonal, musical, linguistic, and naturalistic intelligences. The week culminated in celebrating school spirit by highlighting t-shirts with our new mascot, the Hedgehog, that the Student Council sold as a fundraiser for children of Ukraine, and students had their first in- person Student of the Month Assembly since September 2021. TreeAnne thanked the PBIS committee for all of their hard work to make this schoolwide event a success.

This year, the School has Earth Day events scheduled throughout the week and it is the first schoolwide Day celebration. The Science department organized the Earth Day celebration for the week of April 19th through April 22nd. Classes will participate in the annual school grounds and neighborhood cleanup. Each of the grade levels from kindergarten through eighth grades will receive an Earth Day activity board, similar to a bingo board, with the opportunity to participate in different environmental activities to fill the board and win a prize. Also, each class will take part in a bulletin board decorating contest in which the students can only use recycled materials when designing their artistic creations based on the 2022 Earth Day theme, “Investing in Our Planet.” The winning class will receive a monetary award that will be donated to an organization they have chosen that works to protect the environment. Tomorrow, Nicole Shapiro, the Director/Recycling Coordinator from the Office of Environmental Sustainability of Lackawanna County, will be presenting on the importance of recycling during two different assemblies at the School. Arbor Day seedlings are also expected this week, and there should be over two hundred to hand out this year.

TreeAnne reported on the upcoming PSSA schedule for this year. The exams will begin the week of April 25th and will cover English Language Arts, Math, and Science.

On April 6, 2022, the Schoolwide Title I Advisory Group hosted “The Science of Reading: Strategies to Develop and Promote Literacy Skills” led by Terry Quinn, Literacy Specialist and Jeri McNulty, Schoolwide Title I Coordinator. The discussion focused on the four parts of literacy (Reading, Writing, Listening, and Speaking) and the various stages of reading development throughout each of those domains.

Summer programming enrollment has been announced. The School's K-2 Literacy and Mathematics Learning Academy, led by two of the primary teachers, is waitlisted. Grades 2-6 Art Enrichment program, with HGMICS' Art teacher, is also waitlisted. Offered for the first time this spring and coming back for summer programming is the Role Playing and Literacy Development program, "Dungeons and Dragons", which is currently a fully enrolled program. Several of the initially advertised summer programs were canceled due to under-enrollment.

2. CEO Report

Dr. Marie George

Dr. Marie George began her report by updating the Board on the recent meeting of the Comprehensive Planning Committee. The CPC is a 15-member group that has been very loyal to the many important tasks they've been charged with over the last several years. Their second meeting of the school year took place on March 24, 2022, where they welcomed two new committee members, one being a Trustee of the Board, Dr. Catherine Richmond-Cullen, as well as a parent, Dr. Kara Stone Price. An overview of the happenings at the School was presented, including the construction project, and all were informed about the dedication ribbon cutting on August 17th and to expect an invitation. Updates were provided on the status of the first year of our Schoolwide Title I program, the results of a Family Education survey, and the resultant educational programming for families for 2022-2023, and then attention given to the annual Schoolwide student achievement goals. Preliminary findings from Acadience were presented by Jeri McNulty and the end of year results will officially be presented at the Committee's next scheduled meeting on May 5th, 2022. The Committee was also briefed on the upcoming Strategic Planning timeline for Fall 2022 and their role in providing input as previously done in 2018.

Dr. Marie George moved on to Grant reporting, where she informed the Board that in the past few weeks both the US Department of Education and the Pennsylvania Department of Education released reporting requirements for all schools who received Covid-related federal funding. Four different grants fall into this category, including the Federal Cares Act ESSER I, ESSER II, ARP ESSER III, and ARP ESSER 7% set-aside. The first reporting period is due April 29, 2022, and provides expenditures from October 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, as well as planned expenditures. During this timeframe HGMICS had expenditures only for ESSER II grant, which simplified the amount of reporting. The next report is due October 1, 2022, and will include all grants except for ESSER I, which was fully expensed by October 1, 2020. With the recent approval of the ARP ESSER III grant, the first allotment of funds is expected April 21, 2022. This is the largest of all the Covid-related grants received and totals \$835,519, and included two construction projects - the annex that will allow Kindergarten students to have their own pathway to the main building without going through another classroom and an outdoor pavilion

The eighth-grade Graduation ceremony will take place on campus on June 2, 2022, at 6 p.m. Having the ceremony on campus since 2020 has been embraced by families and students

and makes graduation more meaningful. Dr. Sunny Weiland will be the keynote speaker. Sunny is a nationally recognized K-12 educator and is currently Education Professor at King's College. She has served on the Comprehensive Planning Committee since 2018 and will relate well to the graduates of HGMICS. The Parent Forum will host a reception for the graduates and their families following the ceremony. All twenty-one graduates will be featured on the School's website in the twenty-one days leading up to June 2nd. Trustees are welcome to attend the ceremony.

Dr. George continued by addressing kitchen equipment for the School. The Parent Forum financially supported the entire amount to purchase the replacement freezer, which arrived this week, for which we are greatly appreciative. A meeting with Laura Ducceschi and Cathy Fitzpatrick from the Scranton Area Foundation was held on April 8th where the needs for two other pieces of kitchen equipment used for the National School Lunch Program were reviewed. A Letter of Intent was encouraged to be submitted to the Foundation to explore funding opportunities for a new steamer and/or replacement steamtable.

With input from the Development Committee, our NEPA Gives campaign on June 3rd will have a goal of \$12,000 and once again focus on our new sports program. Marie was pleased to report that the Hawk Family Foundation will again sponsor a \$2500.00 match towards our fundraising efforts and thanked them for their generous donation. The School's profile for NEPA Gives has been updated and the communication strategy will begin in May.

Recent media coverage, thanks to Julie Imel, Director of Communications; included March students of the month, second trimester Honor Rolls, FNCB EITC donation, and Black History Month events and speaker. Media coverage is also being pursued for the extraordinary efforts of our Student Council.

The members of the Student Council recently sponsored a t-shirt fundraiser featuring our new mascot, Howie the Hedgehog. The t-shirt sales and other donations totaled \$1745 and was donated to the *Voices of Children Foundation*. Also, a Mother's Day Tea is being planned in early May and the School will attempt to have media coverage for this event, as well.

The Student Council fundraiser coincided with March Madness/Spirit Week and culminated on Friday with two student assemblies, the first in-person gathering for students this year. The Pep squad performed for each assembly, students and "staffulty" of the month awards were presented, and all students enjoyed a soft pretzels surprise treat.

The School's 'Go for the Greens' is celebrated every March and was once again enjoyed by all students as the tasting table had some interesting items to try including seaweed, green fruit drinks, grapes, etc. HGMICS was excited to welcome back parent volunteers to staff the tasting tables during student lunch hours.

HGMICS' last sport for the season is Cross Country, which had an excellent response of thirty-six students. The coaches are Jon Iannone, the School's Math teacher, and Dennis Gavin, Facilities Technician. The team will compete in the Catholic Cross Country League with scheduled meets for April 27th, May 4th, May 11th, and May 18th. The team will debut their HGS team shirts featuring our new mascot.

IX. New Business

Stephanie Westington

At this time, Stephanie asked if there was any new business. Not hearing any, Stephanie moved on to adjournment.

Adjournment

At 8:08 p.m., no further items of business or comments had been raised. A **MOTION** to adjourn was made by Dr. Clarence Lamanna. Adjournment was accepted by all Trustees present, with two Trustees absent. Stephanie thanked everyone for attending.

The next HGMICS Public Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, May 17, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.**