

Howard Gardner MI Charter School

Public Board Meeting

Tuesday, June 21, 2022

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a Public Board of Trustees meeting remotely on Tuesday, June 21, 2022. Stephanie Westington, President, called the meeting to order at 7:06 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, Dino Galli, and Dr. Clarence Lamanna. Absent from the meeting: Dr. John Ruddy, Dr. Catherine Richmond-Cullen, John Ezbiansky, Susan Hennemuth, and Aaron Nivert.

Also, in attendance: Dr. Marie George, CEO; Joes Ross, Director Facilities & 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 of residence will be recorded before remarks are made. With no request for comments from the audience regarding the June agenda, Stephanie proceeded with the meeting.

I. Minutes

Stephanie Westington

Stephanie Westington presented the May 17, 2022, Board of Trustees meeting minutes and asked for approval. A **MOTION** to approve the May 17, 2022 Board meeting minutes, as submitted, was made by Dr. Clarence Lamanna, and seconded by Laurie Cadden. 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 May 17, 2022, minutes as submitted, with five Trustees absent.

II. President's Report

Stephanie Westington

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

Stephanie began her report by stating HGMICS Eighth Grade Graduation Ceremony took place on June 2, 2022 and was a wonderful event. She congratulated and wished the graduating class good luck in their futures. Stephanie announced the NEPA Gives campaign, which took place on June 3, 2022, raised \$7175.00 and thanked everyone who contributed and for their support to the HGMICS students. Stephanie extended her thanks to Megan Wolfe for her many years of service as the School's Science teacher for grades K-4. On behalf of the Board of

Trustees, Stephanie wished Megan the best of luck in her retirement. Stephanie concluded her report with thanking Dr. John Ruddy. On behalf of the Board, Stephanie thanked John for his six-plus years of exceptional service and for being such an asset to the School.

III. Finance/Facilities Committee

Stephanie Westington

In the absence of Dr. John Ruddy, Stephanie Westington reported the Finance/Facilities Committee met on June 1, 2022.

Stephanie Westington asked Joe Ross, Director of Facilities and Security, to detail the May 2022 Financial Report for approval in the absence of John Marsico, Business Manager.

1. May 2022 Financial Report

Joe Ross

Joe Ross reported revenues for May 2022 of \$480,584 are in line with what was expected for the month. \$348,436 was received from the various school districts where our students reside. May 2022 Revenues include a \$10, 674.22 National School Lunch Program Supply Chain Assistance payment. In addition, we received an additional \$68,562 in May from Title IA, Title IIA, and Title IVA funding because of actual expenditures recently reported on the 3/31/2022 quarterly reports. Expenses of \$349,290 are \$68,907 lower than April 2022. This decrease is primarily due to the timing of bill payments. The Net Operating Loss for May 2022 is \$131,293, with a year-to-date Net Operating Income of \$90,389.

The School had \$666,372 in cash at the end of May 2022. This is approximately \$215,699 lower than the balance at the end of April 2022. This is primarily because the tuition redirection payment from the State for May 2022 was not received until June 1, 2022. The amount received on June 1, 2022, was \$399,274.64. There was one draw made on the construction loan in May 2022. The total was \$238,698 and was for Pay Application #13 to Mar-Paul, Inc. in the amount of \$171,641. Pay Application #10 to Scranton Electric for Plumbing in the amount of \$8,863 and Pay Application #9 to Scranton Electric for HVAC in the amount of \$58,194. Total construction funds drawn to date are \$2,865,435.

In relation to grants, the School was awarded \$134,343 in Title I funding. \$69,687 was received in May with a total of \$130,663 received year-to-date. The amount remaining to be received is \$3,680. The School was awarded \$14,996 in Title II funding. \$3,892 was received in May with a total of \$10,703 received year-to-date. The amount remaining to be received is \$4,293. The School was awarded \$10,000 in Title IV funding. \$5,333 was received in May with a total of \$10,000 received year-to-date. The Title IVA Funding is now complete. The School was awarded \$413,069 in ESSER II funding. \$9,687 was received in May with a total of \$105,690 year-to-date. The School was awarded \$64,938 in ESSER III Set-Aside funding. \$1,181 was received in

May with a total of \$5,904 received year-to-date. The ESSER III award of \$835,519 for the school was approved in March 2022. \$15,191 was received in May with a total of \$5,904 received year-to-date.

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

2. HGMICS Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Reserve Allocations Joe Ross

Joe Ross reviewed the reserve allocations recently presented to the Finance Facilities Committee. A document is attached that explains each allocation. At this time, Joe Ross entertained a **MOTION** to approve the Fiscal Year 2022-23 Reserve Allocations that designates \$215,343 to the Committed Fund Balance, \$134,000 to the Assigned Fund Balance, and \$631,556 to the Unassigned Fund Balance.

The motion was made by Dr. Clarence Lamanna and seconded by Dino Galli. Joe called for any questions or comments, not hearing any, all Trustees present voted in favor of accepting the HGMICS Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Reserve Allocations as presented, with five Trustees absent.

IV. Personnel Committee

Sam Ceccacci

Sam Ceccacci reported the Personnel Committee did not meet in June and the next meeting will be held on July 5, 2022.

Marie George reviewed the monthly report that included four new hires for open teaching positions. A **MOTION** to approve the Personnel Report as presented. The motion was made by Dr. Clarence Lamanna and seconded by Laile Kane. All Trustees present voted in favor of accepting the Personnel Report, with five Trustees absent.

V. Nominating Committee

Laurie Cadden

Laurie Cadden reported the Nominating Committee met in the beginning of June and would like to put forth the following motions.

Laurie called for a **MOTION** to approve the Slate of Officers for the Howard Gardner MI Charter School Board of Trustees who will each serve for the year beginning July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2023. The Slate includes President: Stephanie Westington; Vice President: Sam Ceccacci; Secretary: Laila Kane; and Treasurer: John Ezbiansky. The motion was made

by Dr. Clarence Lamanna and seconded by Dino Galli. All Trustees present voted in favor of accepting the Slate of Officers, with five Trustees absent.

At this time, Laurie called for a **MOTION** to approve the term renewal of Susan Hennemuth for a second (three-year) term to serve on the Howard Gardner MI Charter School Board of Trustees, effective July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2025. The motion was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Sam Ceccacci. All Trustees present voted in favor of accepting the term renewal of Susan Hennemuth, with five Trustees absent.

At this time, Laurie called for a **MOTION** to approve the appointment of Michael A. Barbetti for one (three-year) term to serve on the Howard Gardner MI Charter School Board of Trustees, effective July 1, 2022 through June 30, 2025. The motion was made by Sam Ceccacci and seconded by Stephanie Westington. All Trustees present voted in favor of the appointment of Michael Barbetti, with five Trustees absent.

VI. School Matters

1. HGMICS Wellness Policy

Dr. Marie George

Dr. Marie George reported the School's Wellness Policy calls for it to be reviewed annually and to bring any revisions to the Board of Trustees. The School's Wellness Committee met this year and brought forth data based on information about the School's staff, as well as students. They decided to expand the focus of the Wellness Policy to include staff. The concept of wellness is now being reflected in the Wellness Policy and specifically in sections that deal with health education, social-emotional climate, school counseling, psychology, social work support, and employee wellness.

At this time, Marie entertained a **MOTION** to approve the Updated Wellness Policy as presented. The motion was made by Dr. Clarence Lamanna and seconded by Sam Ceccacci. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the Updated Wellness Policy, with five Trustees absent.

2. NEIU 2022-23 Special Education Agreement

Dr. Marie George

Dr. Marie George stated this an annual agreement that comes forward to the Board every June for the School's Special Education Services. This agreement is provided by our local intermediate unit, NEIU19. Upon approval of the agreement, a resolution needs to be signed by the Board President and Secretary.

At this time, Marie entertained a **MOTION** to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement for the provision of Special Education Services by Northeastern Intermediate Unit (NEIU 19) for the 2022-2023 school year. The motion was made by Sam Ceccacci and seconded by

Laurie Cadden. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving the Special Education Agreement, with five Trustees absent.

3. Annual Safety Report

Joseph Ross

Joe Ross stated the Annual Safety Report outlines the School's recent safety initiatives such as the creation of the Threat Assessment team, hiring a Director of Student Services, hiring a full-time social worker, and hiring a part-time nurse. The Annual Safety Report will be submitted to the Department of Education by June 30, 2022.

4. Principal Report

TreeAnne McEnery

The 2021-2022 school year ended with days of joyful celebration. The students participated in the annual field day event at Connell Park, and a PBIS Blow Out that included a giant inflated obstacle course and teacher dunk tank. Followed by these activities was a beautiful graduation ceremony where the Class of 2022 was honored for their hard work and achievements.

Dr. Marie George and I have been conducting interviews for all of the instructional staff positions that are currently open. We have several highly qualified applicants and look forward to welcoming those that meet the mission of HGS to our team.

In May 2022, I completed the Pennsylvania Department of Education's required Pennsylvania Inspired Leadership (PIL) Program. PIL is a statewide, standards-based continuing professional education program for school leaders. Completing this program makes me eligible for the Principal Level II certificate level.

The Spring 2022 PSSA results have been released through DRC. We are awaiting access to our school report. I hope to provide a report of results at the July BoT meeting.

In response to goals identified in the 2021-2024 Comprehensive and Schoolwide Title I Plan, math is a key focus for the school. To meet the challenge of increasing student achievement in K-8, the math department is participating in a research-based mathematics instruction and formative assessment program called the Ongoing Assessment Project or OGAP.

OGAP training began in the summer of 2021, with the intermediate and upper math teachers and the STEM specialist participating in the Fractional Reasoning training held at Wallenpaupack Area School District, followed by on-site coaching by an OGAP specialist. In summer 2022, grades K-6 teachers and STEM specialists participated in the Additive Reasoning in June and the Multiplicative Reasoning in August. In addition, the upper and senior mathematics teachers will attend the Proportional Reasoning training in June at Wallenpaupack Area School District.

All bi-annual and annual formal observations, differentiated supervision goals, and SLOs are completed. However, Act 13 forms are waiting for building scores to be released in the fall of 2022.

2022 welcomes three new inductees into our school community: Jon Iannone, Colleen Coolbaugh, and Shana Carmody. We express gratitude to their mentors, Amanda Conti and Jade Flynn-Volchoff, for supporting them throughout the year-long induction program.

Final Kindergarten Acadience results report that 81% of students are at or above benchmark: 26:32.

5. CEO Report

Dr. Marie George

Our 2021-2022 school year was both challenging and rewarding, and as always, a learning experience. Amidst the continuing need to respond to pandemic-related issues, students were excited to be back in the building, socialize with their friends and importantly learn and grow. As I walked the hallways and visited classes throughout the school year, students focused attention on their learning was always evident. Exhausted faculty welcomed the end of the school. When meeting with each at the end of the year, each expressed how rewarded they felt when viewing evidence of their students' learning. This year marked a return to professional development and included onsite coaching and training for faculty as well as their participation in a variety of off-site professional development programs. Five additional faculty achieved their Level II Instructional Certificate this year.

The Charter Renewal Application was a great undertaking and positively received by our two authorizing districts. The final year of our strategic plan continued to accomplish goals within the five thematic areas and positions us well to vision future strategies. We completed our first year of providing a Schoolwide Title I program with intervention and enrichment classes offered within the school day.

Assessment of the first year and better integration of the MTSS (Multi-tiered System of Support) are some of the changes planned for next year. An increase in public relations that projects a positive profile of the school in the community is now occurring and building a development program is underway.

The excitement of the building expansion and larger campus was palpable as our students and staff embarked on their summer vacation time. There are 12 year-round employees that I refer to as the Summer Crew and needless to say, the Crew is very busy getting ready for the fall. The School's summer hours are 8 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday through Thursday with Friday's off.

An annual Safety Report is required by June 30th for submission to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) and Pennsylvania Commission for Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) that summarizes the past school year's safety program, such as new initiatives, challenges, and goals. Since June 2019, this Report was submitted to the Board as part of the

June Board meeting. While Board approval isn't needed, submission to the Board as an informational item is required. Within this year's report, some areas to highlight are the central role of the Safety Committee, recent hires and training, initiatives related to behavioral health supports, and importantly an updated threat assessment completed by the PA State Police.

When HGMICS was approved in April 2018 to offer the National School Lunch Program, a Wellness Committee was established, and the required Policy written and approved by the Board. With an emphasis on nutrition and physical activity, the Policy is now expanded to include wellness programming for staff and students in the areas of social and emotional health. This updated Policy, drafted by the Wellness Committee, is presented to the Board for its approval.

As part of the School's engagement with community resources, various agreements, and memorandums of understanding (MOUs) may accompany those collaborative efforts. These include agreements with area Universities, Scranton Counseling Center, and many others. Two MOUs were renewed this past month with the Scranton Police Department and the Agency for Community Empowerment (ACE)– Early Learning Programs. The MOU with the Scranton Police Department is annually renewed, and the MOU with ACE is a triennial renewal related to transition planning for students in local Head Start programs who enroll in Kindergarten at HGMICS.

Also, each June, the Intergovernmental Agreement with our local Intermediate Unit (NEIU-19) for the provision of Special Education Services is executed. The NEIU-19 Agreement needs Board approval and is included on the Board agenda for this month's meeting.

Thanks to the efforts of our new Food Service Supervisor, Dawn Miller, Operations Manager, Patty Biko Moraski, and the Wellness Committee, our Food Service Program will expand in the following ways for the 2022-23 school year. A breakfast meal will be served and is eligible for reimbursement from the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Classroom food trays will be made available at an affordable cost for families to purchase to support celebratory classroom events. The cashless system is working well and will continue but replaced with a less costly fee-based system. PayPal (6.72%) will be replaced with Paya (2.85%), which also integrates more seamlessly with our Sycamore Student Information System. The ability for families to pay directly (via check) to HGMICS will continue. Families will be notified of the change to Paya for the food service cashless system in July 2022 as part of informational materials sent out related to the 2022-23 school year and further reinforced in Food Service communications. Advance notice of monthly menus for breakfast & lunch as well as nutritional information will be made available to families via our website in an interactive and re-designed format developed in collaboration with Julie Imel, Director of Communications.

A draft of the two-week pre-service training was distributed to staff prior to the end of the school year. The two-week schedule begins August 15th through August 26 with the first day of

school on August 29th. August 15th is the date when all ten-month employees return to work; the majority (n=31) of the 53 employees are ten-month employees. Pre-service affords time for teachers and all staff to settle into classrooms and offices, many of which will be in new locations. Structured time within the schedule provides annual safety training to include de-escalation (Tact2), and in-depth review of our emergency response policies & procedures – the latter is of great importance in light of the physical changes to the school building, exits/entrances, and campus configuration of roads/play areas etc. Some other topics include a full day for CPR/First Aid, a strategic planning session, guest speakers for special education and anti-bullying, MTSS, new assessment tools, department meeting time, and involvement of the Special Operations Unit of the Scranton Police Department for continuation of our ALICE training.

On June 2nd at 6 p.m. commencement for 21 students was held on the school campus with 100 guests in attendance. Dr. Sunny Weiland was the commencement speaker and provided an informative, interactive, and unforgettable presentation. Board President Stephanie Westington was present and following the ceremony, a reception hosted by the Parent Forum was provided in the Multipurpose Room. It was a beautiful evening replete with smiling faces and proud families. A slide show of our graduates with their plans for high school and comments about their experience at HGMICS was displayed for all to enjoy; this was also forwarded to Dr. Gardner who was impressed with our students' comments and diverse high school destinations.

Following graduation and coinciding with our final day of the school year the annual NEPA Gives fundraising campaign was held, which we our second consecutive year participating. We are very grateful for all contributions that totaled \$6700 and our two match donors -the Hawk Family Foundation and Battaglia's Sporting Goods. The Development Committee will debrief the campaign, which fell short of our \$12,000 goal at their next meeting on June 22, 2022. We will now turn our attention to planning for the October 9th Golf Tournament and several foundation grant applications.

As anticipated, once the school year ended, a multitude of projects are underway to finalize the expansion of the school and campus for the start of the 2022-23 school year. Related changes to the existing building (Phase III of the Master Plan) have also begun to include office relocations, expansion of the employee lounge, and new carpeting.

The anticipated major undertaking for the electrical re-wiring and connection of the two structures required a weeklong power outage, the timing determined by PPL. The timing required some adjustments to our June student summer programs and remote work for most staff who work year- round. Importantly, the projects are on track for a late July completion.

The seven classrooms in the expanded building are being equipped with white boards and smart boards and a unique colored accent wall for each room (selected by the teacher). Student lockers have arrived and are being installed. Concrete is being poured around the building so both inside and outside are now looking like a school. We anticipate the large window that showcases the two-story staircase to be installed the week of June 27th – our wow factor! We're

very exciting as we witness the fruition of this dream but at the same time the project involves many, many moving parts. Joe Ross has played such a critical role and especially now as we approach the final stages of the project. Thank you, Joe, for all your expertise and ongoing commitment to this project.

We have had an excellent response to our open positions, even prior to the local job advertisement - with one exception - Spanish. TreeAnne and I gave priority to interviewing the most qualified candidates, all with prior experience as well. Following reference checks, we are submitting recommended candidates for the following instructional staff positions: Instructional Assistant (Mary Kurent), Middle School ELA (Kathleen Krall), Middle School Social Studies (Katelin McAndrew) and Elementary Science (Chase Floyd). We continue to search for Spanish applicants and a Building Substitute, the latter for which there are several candidates.

VII.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 7:39 p.m., no further items of business or comments had been raised. A **MOTION** to adjourn was made by Laurie Cadden. Adjournment was accepted by all Trustees present, with five Trustees absent. Stephanie thanked everyone for attending.

The next HGMICS Public Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, July 19, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.**