

## **Howard Gardner MI Charter School**

### **Public Board Meeting**

Tuesday, September 20, 2022

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a Public Board of Trustees meeting on Tuesday, September 20, 2022. Stephanie Westington, President, called the meeting to order at 7:12 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, John Ezbiansky, Laila Kane, Michael Barbetti, Laurie Cadden, Dino Galli, Susan Hennemuth, Dr. Clarence Lamanna, and Dr. Catherine Richmond-Cullen.

Also, in attendance: Dr. Marie George, CEO; TreeAnne McEnery, Principal; and Joseph Ross, Director Facilities & Security.

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.

#### **I. Minutes**

**Stephanie Westington**

Stephanie Westington presented the August 16, 2022 Board of Trustees meeting minutes and asked for approval. A **MOTION** to approve the August 16, 2022 Board meeting minutes, as submitted, was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Dr. Clarence Lamanna. 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 August 16, 2022, minutes as submitted, with no Trustees absent.

#### **II. President's Report**

**Stephanie Westington**

Stephanie Westington welcomed everyone in attendance to the September 2022 Public Board meeting and to the start of another school year.

Stephanie announced the new addition is fully operational and occupied. The Open House, which took place on August 25<sup>th</sup>, was a huge success and everyone is looking forward to the Ribbon Cutting and Dedication Ceremony scheduled for September 28, 2022. The School's Annual Golf Tournament will be held on Sunday, October 9, 2022 at Pine Hills Country Club and is the School's biggest fundraiser.

Stephanie detailed a slight change to the format of the Public Board meetings where

faculty or staff will give a presentation prior to the Committee updates. Additionally, in lieu of individual CEO and Principal's Reports, there will be a singular Administrative Update Report.

Stephanie concluded by stating the Board of Trustees will be attending a Strategic Planning Retreat on October 10, 2022.

### **III. School Expansion Project**

**Joe Ross**

Joe Ross provided a presentation detailing the highlights of the School Expansion Project from inception to completion.

### **IV. Finance/Facilities Committee**

**John Ezbiansky**

#### **1. August 2022 Financial Report**

**Joe Ross**

Revenues for August 2022 of \$691,470 are higher than what was expected for the month. This increase of \$313,325 over the prior month of July 2022 was due primarily to the increase in ESSER funding received to more align with our expenses incurred as reported in our recent second quarter filing. Expenses of \$555,923 are \$55,211 higher than July 2022. This is as expected as we paid the remaining balance of \$78,332 to the NEIU19 for the Special Education services provided in the prior academic year. The Net Operating Income for August 2022 is \$135,547, with a fiscal year-to-date Net Operating Income of \$27,044. This is as expected for the month of August 2022. The only funding received in August 2022 from the Title programs was \$2,146 from Title IIA. This closed out Title IIA for fiscal year ending 6/30/2022. With the start of the current academic year in full swing, we began to realize student cafeteria income during the month of August 2022. Through our new PAYA system, we collected over \$3,057 from our parents for their child's breakfast, lunch, and snack items. The school had \$747,776 in cash at the end of August 2022. This is approximately \$146,366 lower than the balance at the end of July 2022. A contributing factor to this decrease in cash is because the loan draw reported in July 2022 was paid to the contractors on 8/1/2022. Thus, there was no corresponding cash deposit in August 2022 to offset these payments. There was one draw made on the construction loan in August 2022. The total was \$139,094 and was for Pay Application #16 to Mar-Paul, Inc. in the amount of \$90,118, Pay Application #12 to Scranton Electric for HVAC in the amount of \$5,777, Pay Application #13 to Scranton Electric for HVAC for 5% of the retainage in the amount of \$28,741, Pay Application #12 to Scranton Electric for Plumbing in the amount of \$1,346, and Pay Application #13 to Scranton Electric for Plumbing for 5% of the retainage in the amount of \$13,112. Total construction funds drawn to date are \$3,619,014.

Our Business Manager, John Marsico, continues to collaborate with our auditors, Baker & Tilly, to finalize the Annual Audit of our Financial Statements for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022. As such, adjusting journal entries are being made to true up balances as

of June 30, 2022. Several of these entries will subsequently be reversed with July dates. In the meantime, until all entries are posted and required reversals are made, the Financial Reports may reflect minor anomalies.

At this time, Stephanie Westington entertained a **MOTION** to approve the Financial Report through August 31, 2022, as reported and submitted. The motion was made by Susan Hennemuth and seconded by Sam Ceccacci. Stephanie called for any questions or comments, not hearing any, all Trustees present voted in favor of accepting the August 2022 Financial Report as presented, with no Trustees absent.

## **V. Academic Committee**

**Dr. Clarence Lamanna**

### **1. HGMICS World of Learning Institute Agreement**

Dr. Lamanna called for a **MOTION** to accept the HGMICS World of Learning Institute Agreement as presented. The motion was made by Michael Barbetti and seconded by John Ezbiansky. All Board of Trustees members present voted in favor of approving HGMICS World of Learning Institute Agreement as submitted, with no Trustees absent.

### **2. HGMICS Compulsory School Attendance, Unlawful Absences, and School Attendance Improvement Conferences Policy**

Dr. Lamanna called for a **MOTION** to accept the HGMICS Compulsory School Attendance, Unlawful Absences, and School Attendance Improvement Conferences Policy as presented. The motion was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Susan Hennemuth. All Board of Trustees members present voted in favor of approving the HGMICS Compulsory School Attendance, Unlawful Absences, and School Attendance Improvement Conferences Policy as submitted, with no Trustees absent.

### **3. HGMICS Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Student Policy**

The HGMICS Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Student Policy was tabled and returned to the Academic Committee.

### **4. HGMICS Family Engagement Schoolwide Title I Policy**

Dr. Lamanna called for a **MOTION** to accept the HGMICS Family Engagement Schoolwide Title I Policy as presented. The motion was made by Susan Hennemuth and seconded by Laurie Cadden. All Board of Trustees members present voted in favor of approving the HGMICS Family Engagement Schoolwide Title I Policy as submitted, with no Trustees absent.

## **VI. Personnel Committee**

**Sam Ceccacci**

Sam Ceccacci called for a **MOTION** to approve the September 2022 Personnel Report as presented. The motion was made by Michael Barbetti and seconded by Laila Kane. All Board of Trustees members present voted in favor of approving the September 2022 Personnel Report as submitted, with no Trustees absent.

## **VII. Nominating Committee**

**Laurie Cadden**

Laurie Cadden called for a **MOTION** to approve the appointment of Wayne E. Evans for one (three-year) term to serve on the Howard Gardner Board of Trustees, effective October 1, 2022, through June 30, 2025. The motion was made by Michael Barbetti and seconded by John Ezbiansky. All Board of Trustees members present voted in favor of approving the appointment of Wayne E. Evans to the Howard Gardner Board of Trustees, with no Trustees absent.

## **VIII. School Matters**

### **1. 2022-2023 Calendar Revision**

**Dr. Marie George**

A **MOTION** to approve the HGMICS 2022-2023 Calendar Revision as reported and submitted was made by Dr. Clarence Lamanna and seconded by Susan Hennemuth. All Board of Trustees present voted to approve the HGMICS 2022-2023 Calendar Revision as presented, with no Trustees absent.

### **2. Administrative Updates**

**Dr. Marie George**

Dr. Marie George introduced a new format to obtain timely updates from all HGMICS administrators, in addition to the Principal and me. Henceforth my entire Administrative Team will have the opportunity to provide brief monthly updates for each Board meeting providing a more comprehensive briefing of school happenings. So as not to detract from the Boards' business meeting, verbal reports will not be presented and instead questions or requests for further explanation will be addressed by either the Principal or me. Below are the CEO updates that are followed by additional administrative updates.

**Reopening an Expanded School and Campus:** The month of August was extremely busy in preparing to reopen the school with additional classrooms, new roadway and parking, relocated offices, including the Main office, and changes that affect visitors, service deliveries, students' arrival/dismissal. It was hectic, even chaotic at times, but it all came together, with excitement about the changes and the willingness of all staff to be patient and 'do what needed to be done'. I am most appreciative and proud of our faculty and staff, and the support from our students and families. We had a successful Open House August 25<sup>th</sup> with 400+ enjoying the Ice Cream Social and touring the new Middle School and Link connection. There was much excitement as students returned on August 29<sup>th</sup> and as we complete our third week of classes, new procedures and changes have become routine for

students, families, and staff.

**Dedication Ceremony** Plans are underway to host a Dedication/Ribbon Cutting Ceremony September 28<sup>th</sup>, with 140 invitations being sent out. A very brief program held in front of the new Main Entrance will be followed by tours led by Student Ambassadors. Light refreshments will be available on the Link and a box of notecards adorned with student artwork will be available for attendees.

**Golf Tournament** An improvement in organizing this year's annual Golf Tournament was to increase the use of technology for registration, sponsorships, and payments. We now have all forms online, able to be completed electronically as well as hard copy submissions. PayPal was restored as a payment vehicle in addition to checks. We are actively promoting the Tournament with our vendors, staff, families, and donors. Sponsors will be acknowledged on our website and on banners at the Golf Tournament on October 9<sup>th</sup> at Pine Hills Country Club. We are targeting the proceeds to support need play equipment for our students and for needed campus landscaping since this was value engineered out of the project.

**Grants** Two grant applications were recently submitted – one was for the annual PA Ready to Learn block grant of \$7249. that will be targeted to support math interventions and related coaching/training for staff. The second grant submission was to the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) that requires applications to address school safety and student mental health. With addressed multiple security and safety needs for the school with a total request of \$132,151.

#### **Personnel**

With the expansion of the School and relocation of the Main office, staffing adjustments became apparent, which have been reviewed with the Personnel Committee. In addition to the School Secretary, we now have need for an Administrative Assistant to support the many functions associated with the Main office and to support the work of key administrators integral to the day-to-day operations of the School – Principal, Operations, Student Services. Supervision of the Main office and personnel assigned there will be part of the portfolio of the Operations Manager. Due to the additional square footage of the building and increased use of the School after 3 p.m., we are replacing the part-time housekeeper needed during the pandemic with a part-time Facility Technician. Candidates for the Administrative Assistant and Facility Technician are submitted in this month's Personnel Report, along with the replacement for the IT Support position.

With the resignation of the IT Manager, we continue to receive support from MBC Consulting and Guyette Communications.

#### ***Principal Updates (Principal TreeAnne McEnery)***

**Student Assemblies & Curriculum Night** The Academic Program started with an in-person assembly on the first day of school, where I focused on the unique aspects of attending a school with a Multiple Intelligence mission. I also reflected on the gift of being kind to oneself as learning new ideas may present challenges and how kindness can help navigate those challenges successfully. Following those first days of school was a well-executed in-person Curriculum Night. With standing room only in each Pod, teachers expertly presented their Pod's pedagogy and curriculum programs. Located in the Link were staff from the Student Services Department, Specials, and Schoolwide Title I, where they could discuss the various resources

provided to students daily. Lastly, a longtime issue for families with multiple children was resolved with a schedule that rotated through each Pod over two hours allowing families to attend each Pod's curriculum discussion.

**Intervention & Enrichment** The Schoolwide Title I program continues to expand, with K-2 students accessing intervention and enrichment classes five days a week. The new online benchmark programs offer specialists and teachers interactive reporting options and a bank of research-based interventions. This work supports the burgeoning expansion of the MTSS framework, where now the School has a team of Interventionists to work with Tier II and Tier III students.

**Educator Effectiveness** With the increase of Level II Certified teachers come the opportunity to expand teacher innovation and professional growth through the School's Differentiated Supervision option. Additionally, a team of teachers bravely transition to the Student Performance Measure as part of Act 13, where they will focus on what *they* do to achieve student growth and achievement. Professional growth and inspiration are very present in the teaching staff.

**Middle School - Pilot Language Program** While the present staff is thriving, obtaining a Spanish language teacher for the 2022-2023 school year wasn't easy. To address the School's commitment to continuing to offer a language program, a decision to pilot an online World Language program with the World Learning Institute from IU08. Upper students will continue studies of the Spanish language while Seniors explore one language each trimester: Spanish, Latin, and Chinese. As the program is being piloted, student engagement, expanded interest, and success will be monitored to gauge the program's success.

#### ***Student Support Services Updates (Mrs. Cathy Opshinsky, Director Student Services)***

**University of Scranton, Nursing Students** On September 29th and October 4th, Howard Gardner MI Charter School will be partnering with the University of Scranton for the third year in a row to provide the University's nursing students with an enhanced educational experience. A group of 15 nursing students comes to HGMICS twice a year to assist with health screenings, and to complete mini-lessons on a varied number of health related content areas, such as hygiene and having a healthy heart.

**Cyber Civics Curriculum** HGMICS will be starting a new curriculum in our Guidance department this year. "Cyber Civics" is a curriculum designed by Diana Graber to teach digital citizenship, information literacy and media literacy. The School Counselor will be completing lessons with the Uppers and Seniors once a week for 8 weeks to complete the series. A parent informational session was held on September 15th at 6:00, presented by Diana Graber herself.

**Transition Planning** Our Special Education teacher who works with the senior students will be trained this year in transition planning for students with disabilities. Kristen Strong, from NEIU19 will be coming in monthly to train our special education teacher in transition processes, transition writing, and resources available for students who are age 14 and older.

**Autism Training/Coaching** One of our primary teams is also completing a training conducted by the NEIU19, on autism. Joe Richter and Carla Skelton come in monthly to train and coach the team on what autism is, how to accommodate and modify curriculum for students with autism, and what behavioral supports look like for students with autism. It is hands-on training with the staff, who really appreciate the support!

#### ***Facilities and Security Updates (Mr. Joe Ross, Director, Facilities & Security)***



The following items were completed during the previous month:

**Facilities**

- Received Occupancy Permit 8/25/22
- Certified Elevator Inspection 9/13/22
- Substantially completed construction
- Installed furniture in all classrooms
- Renovated staff lounge
- Successfully opened school

**Safety**

- Trained 4 staff members in TACT 2
- Trained HGMICS Instructional Staff in TBM (Therapeutic Behaviors management) de-escalation training
- Upgraded camera system, fire alarm and card access systems building wide
- Conducted first fire drill successfully

**IT/Network**

- Deployed chrome books to new students
- Worked with Consultant to gain understanding of the network infra-structure
- Began to onboard IT Manager
- Installed new smart boards in classrooms and teaching areas

***School Operations Updates (Mrs. Patty Moraski, Operations Manager)***

**Food Service Program** - For the first time in the 2022-23 SY, HGMICS is participating in the National School Breakfast Program, which serves approximately 25 students daily between 7:50-8:10 AM. On Friday, September 9<sup>th</sup> Governor Wolf announced that effective October 1, 2022, free breakfast will be offered to all students regardless of eligibility for those schools participating in National School Breakfast program.

**Transportation Program** - Howard Gardner Mi Charter School currently has 221 students utilizing district transportation provided by their school district of residence. Transportation is provided from 9 school districts and includes 4 full size school buses and 9 vans. HGMICS was notified September 6th by the Abington Heights Transportation Department that busing would not be provided short term due to staff shortages. There are 12 students from the Abington Heights SD who utilize their districts' transportation.

**PDE Reporting** - The Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS) data submissions for the 2022-23 SY will begin in October. The data sets include Student collection that identifies low-income students, immigrant students, special education students, and English Learners. Additionally, there is a Staff collection containing several important pieces of information including: positions in an LEA, salaries for all professional staff, demographic characteristics of employees, used in summary reports, years of experience, etc. The staff data is used in a number of ways including a) summary statistics for display in the Future Ready PA Index (FRPI), b) teacher certification processes with data describing experience, c) fulfill federal reporting requirements, d) provide the Pennsylvania Value-Added Assessment System (PVAAS) vendor with termination data for use in accounts management, and e) to populate the Pennsylvania Educator Effectiveness Rating System (PEERS) with demographic data, saving

users substantial data entry time.

**Personnel** - Hiring for an Administrative Assistant to adequately staff the relocation of the Main office is currently underway. Mrs. Moraski will be attending the Spring 2023 Data Summit for continued growth and accuracy of the reportable data.

***Assistant Business Manager Updates (Mrs. Renee Dougherty)***

**The employee handbook** was updated to include the following:

*Sick time leave can be accumulated from year to year to a maximum of 100 days. As a benefit for employees, unused sick leave will be compensated at the rate of \$50/day to a maximum of 100 days upon retirement/resignation. Sick leave time will not be compensated if resignation is not given within the HGMICS's requested time frame, i.e. – two weeks for ten-month employees and three weeks for twelve-month employees*

**Health Insurance** During the COVID-19 pandemic Geisinger Health Plan (GHP) waived member deductibles, copays, and coinsurance for inpatient treatment of COVID. These benefits ended on September 1, 2022. Members will not have any visit fees to PCP's urgent care centers or emergency room if they receive a test during that visit. All co-pays for telehealth visits or Teladoc services will be waived through October 31, 2022. This includes visits for medical or behavioral health need. Employees are still eligible for up to 8 free COVID tests per month.

**Employee/Student Count:** HGMICS currently have 49 full-time employees and 4 part-time employees. Enrollment is currently at 318.

**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 7:58 p.m., no further items of business or comments had been raised.

The next HGMICS Public Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, November 15, 2022, at 7:00 p.m.**