

Howard Gardner MI Charter School

Public Board Meeting

Tuesday, October 18, 2022

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a public Board of Trustees meeting on Tuesday, October 18, 2022. Stephanie Westington, President, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. 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, John Ezbiansky, Laila Kane, Laurie Cadden, Wayne Evans (virtual), Dino Galli (virtual), Susan Hennemuth, Dr. Clarence Lamanna, and Dr. Catherine Richmond-Cullen. Excused from the meeting: Sam Ceccacci and Michael Barbetti.

Also in attendance: Dr. Marie George, CEO; TreeAnne McEnery, Principal; John Marsico, Business Manager; and Joseph Ross, Director of Facilities and 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 September 20, 2022 Board of Trustees meeting minutes and asked for approval. A **MOTION** to approve the September 20, 2022 Board meeting minutes, as submitted, was made by Dr. Clarence Lamanna and seconded by Susan Hennemuth. 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 September 20, 2022, minutes as submitted, with two Trustees absent.

II. President's Report

Stephanie Westington

Stephanie Westington welcomed everyone in attendance to the October 2022 Public Board meeting and a special welcome to new Trustee, Mr. Wayne Evans. Wayne Evans is the owner of Wayne Evans Realty and very active in the community. He serves on several boards in the area and will be a tremendous asset to the Howard Gardner Board of Trustees.

Stephanie stated the Dedication and Ribbon Cutting Ceremony was a huge success. Attendance was great, including Scranton's Mayor, Paige Cognetti. A special thanks to the Student Ambassadors

for assisting with the event and providing tours, as well as the student's whose artwork was featured on the notecards.

The Annual Golf Tournament was held Sunday, October 9th, at Pine Hills Country Club and was a great success with the largest number of sponsor support in the tournament's history. Stephanie thanked the larger sponsors, Battaglia's, McKenna Synder, and Hemmler and Camayd. The anticipated net profit is between \$15,000 and \$18,000.

A Strategic Planning Retreat was held at the Waldorf on October 10, 2022. The President thanked the Board for 100% attendance and Dr. George for facilitating the day. Further, Stephanie thanked Administration for attending and providing informative presentations. The thoughtful discussion has led to reviewing the School's Mission and Vision Statements as well as core values.

Lastly, Stephanie thanked Mrs. Kimberly Hoskins, the School's Senior Science Teacher, who will be presenting on Science Then and Now.

III. HGMICS Educational Session – “Science: Then and Now” Mrs. Kimberly Hoskins

Mrs. Kimberly Hoskins presented on how the Science program at Howard Gardner MI Charter School has grown and improved significantly over the course of several years. She began by discussing facts of where the Science program for the Senior students began, such as the class received instruction three days a week for forty-five minutes with gaps in the curriculum, the curriculum was in a confusing sequence, and FOSS kits were used as a stand-alone curriculum.

By moving away from a “Specials Mentality”, i.e. not a core subject, was significant and then let to increasing the class frequency from 3 to five days). Also reviewed as the implementation of a grading system introduced at the Intermediate Level, reviewing CDT and PSSA Data, and integration technology opportunities, students performing at the Proficient Performance Level went up almost ten percent over five years and more than doubled for the Advanced Performance Level students.

Mrs. Hoskins gave several factors contributing to the success of the Senior Science program. She has been working diligently ordering content in order to improve the learner's understanding, supplementing the current curriculum with additional sources, updating the curriculum, posting class objectives, giving the students more choices, integrating STEM across all grade levels, utilizing outdoor education, and engaging in competitions.

IV. Finance Facilities Committee

John Ezbiansky

John Ezbiansky reported the Finance/Facilities Committee met on Wednesday, October 12, 2022 to review the September Financial Report and discuss any updates on the Annual Audit. Joe Ross gave a presentation on the financials of the Construction project.

1. September 2022 Financial Report

John Marsico

Revenues for September 2022 of \$416,380 are what was expected for the month. The decrease of \$275,090 over the prior month of August 2022 was due primarily to the ESSER funding normalizing after the significant amount received in August 2022 to more align with our expenses incurred as reported in our second quarter filing. Expenses of \$388,662 are \$167,261 lower than August 2022. This is as expected as we paid the remaining balance of \$78,332 to the NEIU19 in August 2022 and the PenServ August payment was not made until October 2, 2022. In addition, the spending for curriculum books and supplies began to level off in September 2022. The Net Operating Income for September 2022 is \$27,718, as compared to \$135,597 in August 2022, with a fiscal year-to-date Net Operating Loss of \$(21,081). This is as expected for the month of September 2022 for the reasons above and the additional expenses incurred in September 2022 for the new addition. The only funding received in September 2022 from the Title programs was \$3,680 from Title IA. This is the first payment received for the 2022-2023 fiscal year. With the current academic year in full swing, we continue to realize student cafeteria income during the month of September 2022. Through our new PAYA cashless system, cash and check payments, we collected over \$4,621 from our families for their child's breakfast, lunch, and snack items.

The school had \$909,784 in cash at the end of September 2022. This is \$162,008 higher than the balance at the end of August 2022. A contributing factor to this increase in cash is due to receiving *both* the 2021-2022 Reconciliation payments *and* the August 2022 payments in September, 2022 from the Scranton, Dunmore, Mid-Valley, and Old Forge school districts through the Redirection process. There were no draws made on the construction loan in September 2022. Pay Application #17 for Mar-Paul, Inc. in the amount of \$105,883 was approved for payment on September 28, 2022. This payment will be made the week of October 10, 2022. The total construction funds drawn to date after this payment will then be \$3,724,897.

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 September 30, 2022, as reported and submitted. The motion was made by Laila Kane and seconded by

Susan Hennemuth. Stephanie called for any questions or comments, not hearing any, all Trustees present voted in favor of accepting the September 2022 Financial Report as presented, with two Trustees absent.

V. Academic Committee

Dr. Clarence Lamanna

Dr. Lamanna stated the Academic Committee met on Tuesday, October 4, 2022 to review and discuss two policies.

1. HGMICS Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Student Policy

Dr. Lamanna called for a **MOTION** to accept the HGMICS Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Student Policy as presented. The motion was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Dr. Catherine Richmond-Cullen. All Board of Trustees members present voted in favor of approving the HGMICS Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Student Policy as submitted, with two Trustees absent.

2. HGMICS Parental Rights to Excusal from Curriculum Based on Religious Beliefs Policy

Dr. Lamanna called for a **MOTION** to accept the HGMICS Parental Rights to Excusal from Curriculum Based on Religious Beliefs Policy as presented. The motion was made John Ezbiansky and seconded by Dr. Catherine Richmond-Cullen. All Board of Trustees members present voted in favor of approving the Parental Rights to Excusal from Curriculum Based on Religious Beliefs Policy as submitted, with two Trustees absent.

VI. Development Committee

Susan Hennemuth

Susan Hennemuth stated the Development Committee met on Wednesday, October 5, 2022 to discuss one policy and updates on the Annual Golf Tournament, Scranton Area Community Foundation, Building and Dedication Ceremony, and Funding Opportunities for the play areas and lower campus.

1. HGMICS Grants and External Funding Policy

Susan Hennemuth called for a **MOTION** to approve the HGMICS Grants and External Funding Policy as presented. The motion was made by Dr. Clarence Lamanna and seconded by Stephanie Westington. All Board of Trustees members present voted in favor of approving the HGMICS Grants and External Funding Policy as submitted, with two Trustees absent.

VII. School Matters

1. Administrative Updates

Dr. Marie George

Dr. George thanked everyone who contributed in making the Dedication and Ribbon Cutting ceremony a great success. There were at least 100 in attendance to include the Middle School students and teachers, and 50 invited guests. Media presence was extensive with all providing excellent coverage. The Student Ambassadors were a highlight of the event.

PA Consortium for Public Charter Schools (PCPCS) The Consortium is the only entity that represents all charter schools in Pennsylvania. With the recent appointment of Dr. Anne Clark, who led a charter school for 20+ years, there are now increased opportunities for engagement with legislators, PDE leadership and among charter school leaders and their staff.

The annual PCPCS Conference was recently held in Lancaster with 400+ in attendance. Representing HGMICS were the CEO, Business Manager and Director Student Support Services. The conference provided networking opportunities with other Charter School colleagues and information on many topics of interest. I was a presenter at the conference addressing 'Effective Governance' and also serve on PCPCS Advisory Council. Joe Ross, Director Facilities & Security, was selected to participate in the inaugural grant-funded Emerging Leadership Fellowship Program for 2022-23.

Strategic Planning The Strategic Planning process has begun with an affirmed Mission and Revised Vision formulated by the Board of Trustees, Administration and Foundation representative. These were circulated to faculty and staff and their input; their responses were an overwhelming 96% supportive of the Revised Vision Statement; some comments included:

The revised vision statement is well stated, clear and concise. The new vision statement is much stronger and more focused. I also like the idea of being a model school and initiating innovation. I like the key words innovation and robust.

HGMICS Parent Forum Officers An invitation was extended to the officers of the Parent Forum to make a presentation at two public Board Meetings during the school year. This invitation was an outgrowth of recommendations from the Nominating Committee to ensure that families are aware of and have access to the Board of Trustees. The Parent Forum provides significant support for students, teachers, and families throughout the school year.

East Mountain Outreach As we strive to be good citizens and partners with the East Mountain community, several steps are being taken. An Open House for the residents will be held October 26, 2022 (4:30-5:30 p.m.) with tours of our expansion project provided and light refreshments in the Link. Also, a preliminary meeting with an officer of the newly constituted East Mountain Association will be held to discuss the improvements planned for Robinson Park and Mountain Lake and partnership opportunities with the School.

Principal Updates (Ms. TreeAnne McEnery)

The academic program continues to thrive, with departments focusing on their comprehensive plan goals, conducting benchmarks, reviewing data, and scheduling their Fall environmental education field trips. One exciting field trip planned for the Senior Pod in early November is to Ellis Island. This trip will complement the students' studies of world history and immigration.

Schoolwide Title I Staff and I held the annual Schoolwide Title I Family meeting on September 29, 2022. The contents of this meeting are also scheduled to be discussed at the October 13 Parent Forum meeting. Additionally, the Schoolwide Advisory Group held its first meeting of the school year and identified a variety of ways to better engage and inform families about the Schoolwide Title I program.

Spring 2022 PSSA Reports School Summary Reports were released to families. HGMICS' grade-level results outperformed at the state level in science and several ELA sections. While the School's performance in mathematics is below the state's average by 8%, when comparing the School's performance per content reporting category, student scores are not significantly lower than the state's. As previously reported, mathematics is the primary focus for administration this year. While the above-reported results are compared to the state, the administration proudly acknowledges that the School's percentages for each tested subject increased.

English Language Arts (ELA)

2021, 56% Proficient and Advanced

2022, 64% Proficient and Advanced

Mathematics

2021, 18% Proficient and Advanced

2022, 26% Proficient and Advanced

Science

2021, 66% Proficient and Advanced

2022, 78%, Proficient and Advanced

Teacher Effectiveness While the administration will continue to work with benchmarking and PSSA scores, formal teacher evaluations and differentiated supervision goals are all scheduled or approved. Teachers' student learning objectives or student performance measures are also submitted. There are many teachers initiating commendable innovative instructional focus and practices for the 2022-2023 school year. In addition, eight teachers are transitioning into the differentiated supervision mode, and seven are in their third year in a four-year cycle.

Student Support Services Updates (Mrs. Cathy Opshinsky)

University of Scranton Student Nurses On September 29th and October 4th, Howard Gardner MI Charter School partnered 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 came to HGMICS to assist with health screenings. All went well and we are looking forward to working with them again!

Cyber Civics HGMICS started the new "Cyber Civics" curriculum with the Uppers (5th/6th grade) and Seniors (7th/8th grade) through our Guidance Counselor. It is reported that the students really enjoy the program, are engaged and are getting a lot out of it. A parent informational session was held on September 15th at 6:00, presented by Diana Graber, author of the program.

NEIU Staff Training/Coaching Training for 'transition planning' began with Kristen Strong, from NEIU19 who is meeting on a monthly basis with our special education teachers regarding the transition processes, transition writing, and resources available for students who are age 14 and older.

Ongoing Autism training continues for our Primary (1st/2nd grade) instructional staff and is going very well. Joe Richter and Carla Skelton from the IU19 comes in monthly to train and coach the team on how to accommodate and modify curriculum for students with autism, and what behavioral supports look like for students with autism.

Facilities and Security Updates (Mr. Joe Ross)

Facilities- Since the last report, priorities have shifted to supporting regular school operations. A part-time staff member was added to help with some projects and to manage extracurricular dismissal at 4:30 pm. Additional signage was added at the "new" main entrance indicating the location of the intercom to enter the building. A card access reader was installed on the interior main office door.

Safety- Monthly refreshers are scheduled for all staff who are certified as TACT 2. This provides an opportunity to practice the skills necessary to respond to an emotional outburst. An active shooter training is tentatively scheduled for February 17, 2023, with the Scranton Police Department. Site work continues to proceed on the lower lot. An access road has been constructed connecting the lower loop to the lower lot. This provides for a safe evacuation route for the Middle School to the lower lot by Derby Avenue. We are trying to coordinate with the Scranton Fire Department to have an engine present during our October fire drill in celebration of National Fire Safety Month.

Information Technology (IT) - All chrome books were issued to students and are fully operational. IT staff have begun to work on the portal and associated apps that are used to deliver the curriculum. Additional training was provided on the phone system for IT staff. An additional data drop was added to the kitchen to improve the efficiency of scanning students for breakfast and lunch.

School Operations Updates (Mrs. Patty Biko-Moraski)

FOOD SERVICE Beginning the week of October 3rd, the Universal Free Breakfast Program was offered to our students and will run through the end of the 2022-23 school year. This program was launched by Governor Tom Wolf and provides free breakfast for all students regardless of eligibility to schools participating in the NSLP. On average, 73 students are served breakfast and 87 students for lunch.

National School Lunch Program Grant HGMICS recently received notice of a second Supply Chain Assistance grant. In 2021-22 an allocation of the Supply Chain Assistance (SCA) grant of \$10,674. was received. These funds are used exclusively to purchase unprocessed or minimally processed domestic food products to help School Food Authorities (SFAs) deal with challenges administering the Child Nutrition Programs. While we have yet to receive our 2022-23 allocation, the minimal allocation would be \$10,000.

PIMS Collection 1 – October reporting is complete and data submissions. Dr. Marie George along with Cathy Opshinsky and TreeAnne McEnery will then sign off on all Accuracy Certification Statements (ACS) after their review for the final submission to PDE no later than mid-November. Our next data submission is Collection 2 – December; Special Education 12/1 count. This collection is the unduplicated number of children with disabilities with a valid individualized education program (IEP) as of December 1 of the current school year.

Assistant Business Manager Updates (Mrs. Renee Dougherty)

Golf Tournament Our 2022 Golf tournament took place at Pine Hills Country Club Sunday, October 9th.

Excellent participation and support for the event led to an enjoyable day and financial return. The proceeds from the Tournament will support the needed improvements and equipment for our two play areas - one for Kindergarten and the second play area elementary and middle school students.

Preliminary numbers are summarized below:

- 92 golfers @ \$100.00 per golfer
- 28 baskets were on display for a basket raffle
- The 50/50 was \$5600 dollars and was won by a former student
- The Circle of Gold was won by two players

\$3174.07 was brought in by players, Circle of Gold raised \$115.00, \$13,500 from Sponsorships and \$900.00 from basket raffles. Total: \$17,689.00 plus 50/50 of \$2800 equals \$20,489. Expenses Cost of player gifts and prizes: \$1600 Preliminary Net Profit \$18889.00

Employee Benefits

A meeting was held on October 3rd with The Benefits Group to discuss health, dental and vision benefits in anticipation of the next annual benefit cycle that begins January 2023. They will be sending the School's employee census out to several carriers for quotes. Currently we have Geisinger for health and prescription and Guardian for dental and vision. A follow-up to discuss establishing an online portal for employees to enroll and monitor their benefits. Follow-up with the Personnel Committee will be planned.

IX. New Business

Stephanie Westington

Laurie Cadden presented Indraloka Animal Sanctuary as a possible field trip location. She will share contact information with Principal McEnery.

Dr. Richmond-Cullen inquired if the school would add the "A" to STEM to include the arts making it STEAM classes.

Laila Kane recommended the agenda be printed on front and back of the paper to conserve paper.

Adjournment

At 7:51 p.m., no further items of business or comments had been raised.

The next HGMICS Public Board meeting is scheduled for **Tuesday, January 17, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.**