

## **Howard Gardner MI Charter School**

### **Public Board Meeting**

Tuesday, November 15, 2022

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a public Board of Trustees meeting on Tuesday, November 15, 2022. Sam Ceccacci, Vice President, called the meeting to order at 7:26 p.m. Sam led those assembled in the Pledge of Allegiance and took roll call for the board members and non-voting attendees.

The following Trustees attended: John Ezbiansky, Laila Kane, Laurie Cadden, Wayne Evans, Dino Galli, Susan Hennemuth, Dr. Clarence Lamanna, and Dr. Catherine Richmond-Cullen. Absent from the meeting: Michael Barbetti and Stephanie Westington.

Also in attendance: Dr. Marie George, CEO; TreeAnne McEnery, Principal; John Marsico, Business Manager; Joseph Ross, Director of Facilities and Security; and Deana Bonacci, Assistant to the CEO.

Sam Ceccacci 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**

**Sam Ceccacci**

Sam Ceccacci presented the October 18, 2022 Board of Trustees meeting minutes and asked for approval. A **MOTION** to approve the October 18, 2022 Board meeting minutes, as submitted, was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Dino Galli. Sam asked if there were any comments or corrections on the minutes. Not hearing any, Sam called for a vote. All Board of Trustees members present voted in favor of approving the October 18, 2022, minutes as submitted, with two Trustees absent.

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

**Sam Ceccacci**

Sam Ceccacci welcomed everyone in attendance to the November 2022 Public Board meeting and reported that the Board will be voting on the Annual Audit, presented by Baker Tilly at the Finance Facilities Committee meeting. Sam also acknowledged the Trustees regretful acceptance of Dr. Marie George's notice of retirement and thanked her for her leadership over the years. Lastly, Sam thanked Ms. TreeAnne McEnery, the School's Principal, who will be giving an educational presentation on the PSSA's and PVAAS.

### **III. HGMICS Educational Session – “HGMICS Student Achievement and Growth – PSSA’s and PVAAS”**

**Ms. TreeAnne McEnery**

Ms. TreeAnne McEnery presented on how the PSSA and PVAAS scores at Howard Gardner MI Charter School has grown and improved significantly over the course of the 2019, 2021, and 2022 school years. She reviewed initiatives to support student achievement and growth, ELA Performance Levels and ELA PVAAS, Mathematics Performance Levels and Mathematics PVAAS, Science Performance Levels and Science PVAAS, how HGMICS compares with the rest of Pennsylvania State in 2022, and Economically Disadvantaged for ELA, Mathematics, and Science scores.

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

**John Ezbiansky**

John Ezbiansky reported the Finance/Facilities Committee met on Wednesday, November 9, 2022, to review the October 2022 Financial Report and to review the Draft Annual Audit presented by William McGowan, CPA of Baker Tilly. The Finance/Facilities Committee advanced a motion to approve the fiscal year 2021-2022 audit and upon completion, approve a single audit for ESSER Federal Programs.

#### **1. Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Financial Audit**

**John Ezbiansky**

At this time, John Ezbiansky entertained a **MOTION** to approve the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Financial Audit submitted by the accounting firm of Baker Tilly LLC that will include, upon completion, a single audit for ESSER Federal Programs. The motion was made by Dr. Clarence Lamanna. John Ezbiansky called for any questions or comments, not hearing any, all Trustees present voted in favor of accepting the Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Financial Audit as presented, with two Trustees absent.

#### **2. October 2022 Financial Report**

**John Marsico**

Revenues for October 2022 of \$438,235 are what was expected for the month. The increase of \$21,855 over the prior month of September 2022 was due primarily to the proceeds from the Annual Golf Tournament and revenue received from the National School Lunch Program for the first time this academic year. Expenses of \$438,580 are \$49,918 higher than September 2022. This is as expected as we incurred additional expenses related to an increase in the cost of food purchases, field trips for the students, annual Golf Tournament expenses, and an additional property insurance premium paid of around \$7,000 to accommodate the building addition. The Net Operating Loss for October 2022 is \$(345), as compared to \$27,618 of Net Operating Income in September 2022, with a fiscal year-to-date Net Operating Income of \$54,401. This is as expected for the month of October 2022 for the reasons above. We received our first funding for the Title programs for this current award period in the amount

of almost \$20,000 in the month of October 2022. This was funding for 2 months. The school had \$558,054 in cash at the end of October 2022. This is \$351,730 lower than the balance at the end of September 2022. This decrease was because we did not yet receive our tuition redirection payments for the month of September 2022 from the Scranton, Dunmore, Mid-Valley, Old Forge, and North Pocono school districts. We will be receiving both the September 2022 and October 2022 redirection payments from these districts at the end of November 2022. There was one draw made on the construction loan in October 2022 for Pay Application #17 for Mar-Paul, Inc. in the amount of \$105,883. The total construction funds drawn to date after this payment is \$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, John Ezbiansky entertained a **MOTION** to approve the Financial Report through October 31, 2022, as reported and submitted. The motion was made by Laila Kane and seconded by Susan Hennemuth. John Ezbiansky called for any questions or comments, not hearing any, all Trustees present voted in favor of accepting the October 2022 Financial Report as presented, with two Trustees absent.

## **V. Academic Committee**

**Susan Hennemuth**

Susan Hennemuth stated she chaired the Academic Committee meeting on Tuesday, November 1<sup>st</sup> in the absence of Dr. Clarence Lamanna. The Committee discussed 2022 PSSA Scores, a summary of the current benchmark scores, received an update on the World Language Program and the search for a language instructor, as well as an MTSS Program update.

## **VI. Nominating Committee**

**Dr. Marie George**

Dr. Marie George presented the Nominating Committee update for Laurie Cadden. Dr. George stated the Nominating Committee met on Wednesday, November 2, 2022, to discuss the rotation schedule for the Board of Trustees, potential Trustee candidates in the future, and term provisions to the Board of Trustees elected officers.

## **VII. Personnel Committee**

**Sam Ceccacci**

Sam Ceccacci stated the Personnel Committee met on Tuesday, November 1, 2022. The Committee discussed the annual benefits renewal, the re-opening of the Language Teacher search, the principal's contract,

as well as other Personnel updates.

At this time, Sam Ceccacci entertained a **MOTION** to approve the November 2022 Personnel Report, as reported and submitted. The motion was made by Dino Galli and seconded by John Ezbiansky. Sam called for any questions or comments, not hearing any, all Trustees present voted in favor of accepting the November 2022 Personnel Report as presented, with two Trustees absent.

## **VIII. School Matters**

### **1. Administrative Updates**

**Dr. Marie George**

#### ***CEO Updates (Dr. Marie George)***

**Strategic Plan** Additional strategic plan stakeholder input continued through October 2022 and early November 2022 with the Comprehensive Planning Committee meeting on October 28<sup>th</sup>, additional administrative, faculty and staff input and a Parent Session on November 10<sup>th</sup>. The emerging four themes have resonated with everyone based upon the comprehensive listing and analysis of internal strengths, weakness and external opportunities and challenges. A draft strategic plan is now ready for board review and approval. Once approved then, action planning will immediately take place to influence the budget planning for 2023-24. A draft plan, titled, *Strategic Plan 2023-2027: Approaching 2030* is available on the Board Drive and on the agenda for the Executive Work Session.

**Federal Grants** Final Expenditure Reports and Performance Goal Reports were submitted for 2021-22 Title IA, IIA, IVA grants. The role of Federal Program Coordinator is being transitioned to Principal McEnery. who attend a Regional Training Program for New Federal Program Coordinators, along with Business Manager, John Marsico. Close attention to federal requirements for our Title grants for 2022-23 is underway due to the School's scheduled four-year monitoring visit in 2023-24.

**Annual Audit and Single Audit** The annual draft audit for 2021-22 was recently reviewed by William McGowan, CPA from Baker Tilly with the Finance Committee. Due to the amount of federal grant money received last year that exceeds the \$750,000 threshold, a single audit additionally needs to be completed and will focus on our ESSER II, III, and 7% set-aside grant monies. This is the first time the School was required to perform a single audit and the goal is to have this completed by the end of December 2022. The Annual Fund Budget was submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Education prior to the deadline of October 30, 2022, and submission of the Annual Audit must be submitted by the end of December.

**Play Areas** The proceeds from the 2022 Golf Tournament are targeted for the two student Play Areas. With a record amount, the final net proceeds were \$17, 852. Play equipment for the Kindergarten Play area was ordered and appropriate ground cover (e.g., rubber mulch) is ordered. A different fence than the one installed via the construction project will be purchased as well.

**Foundation Grants** The Kindergarten Play area will utilize the entire golf tournament proceeds so a grant to the Hawk Foundation will be submitted to request support for the larger play area (behind the Music Cottage) and needed landscaping for the lower lot. The grant award of \$10,000. was received from the Scranton Area Community Foundation for a Steamer for the School's Food Service Program. The Steamer was ordered and upon receipt representatives for the SACF will visit the school. A scheduled photo shoot with all recipients of SACF funds will be held at the Century Club on November 15 with the School represented by Patty Moraski and me.

**Personnel** The recent hire of an IT Technician resulted in a need to terminate the employment, which was a mutual decision. The School is once again advertising for an IT position but has modified the job description to remove responsibilities for our printers, phones, and visitor management system. These responsibilities will be moved to the Facility Technician as further explained in Mr. Ross's report and included in the November 2022 Personnel Report. Additional hiring is underway for a World Language Teacher and Learning Support Teacher.

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

The end of Trimester I is quickly approaching, marking a transition in the academic program and annual calendar. All Fall environmental education trips are complete; Fall enrichment and tutoring conclude on November 21; first benchmark assessments data collected. The MTSS Data Team is regularly meeting and reviewing benchmark data, and MTSS interventions are underway by our Schoolwide Title I Specialists to support students with greater than Tier I needs. In addition, the first PBIS blow-out was scheduled: the annual Monster Mash for K-4, and new this year was an afternoon Fall-themed party for grades 5-8. The beloved Halloween Parade was in person this year, which hadn't been in person since 2019. Finally, coaching continues for our literacy and mathematics teachers through the American Reading Company (ARC) and the Ongoing Assessment Project (OGAP).

With the Link an active space for the school and its various meetings and after-school programs, an area has been dedicated for student work to be displayed. The first display was pumpkins that the kindergarteners decorated as characters from a storybook they had read; afterward, their annual project-based learning activity of designing and building a haunted house. The second collection of work to be displayed was from the Intermediate Pod. At the end of each ARC Literacy Unit, students create a writing portfolio or a book of their writing/stories, and these books were displayed.

Turning the corner will be the release of Trimester I Progress Reports to families on December 2 and Teacher Conferences scheduled from December 8 & 9.

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

On November 10<sup>th</sup>, we welcomed Ariana Liples, Building Substitute, who will transition to a Long-Term Substitute until a replacement is found for Nick DeConzo, Learning Support Teacher, who resigned effective November 10, 2022.

Our Annual Book Club has kicked off for the year! Parents and Staff will be meeting via Zoom on December 7<sup>th</sup> to discuss the first book of the year, “*Glow Kids: How Screen Addiction is Hijacking Our Kids and How to Break the Trance.*” In this book, Dr. Nicholas Kardaras examines how technology has profoundly affected the brains of an entire generation. At this point, we have 9 parents who have signed up for our Book Club.

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

**Facilities-** Since the last report, HGMICS successfully conducted the open house for our East Mountain neighbors on October 26, 2022. The open house was attended by approximately 35 residents. The Director of Facilities & Security has begun participation in the Emerging Leaders Fellowship program sponsored by the Pa. Coalition of Charter Schools. This ten-month educational leadership program will run through the school year.

On October 24, 2022, a delivery truck hit the link with his truck damaging the link. Mar-Paul, our general contractor, was on site that day. There was no structural damage to the link. They began repair work which was completed on October 27, 2022. Staff painted the hallway that all students pass through at arrival and dismissal. The lower lot has been leveled and grass was planted. HGMICS had an informational discussion with Paul Epsom regarding landscaping recommendations for the lower portion of our campus. Additionally, Dr. George and the Director of Facilities & Security had an exploratory discussion with Hemmler + Camayd regarding a retainer to help guide the landscaping of the lower lot.

**Safety-** On October 24, 2022, HGMICS collaborated with the Scranton Fire Department to have the SFD smoke house on campus for our Intermediate pod. This was done in conjunction with a supervised fire alarm by the SFD. Phone/PA systems were upgraded. Speakers were installed externally on the middle school. All phones in the school have been programmed to be able to dial a code to play the building wide lockdown message. All staff have been enrolled in and completed ALICE training for active shooter enhanced lockdown techniques.

On October 31, 2022, the Director of Facilities and Dr George conducted an active shooter table-top exercise for all staff. This two-hour program was designed to guide staff through the response to an active shooter. The exercise was successfully completed by staff. The Director of Facilities & Security will meet individually with each pod to discuss unique aspects to each area of the building.

**IT/Network-** The IT technician hired in September 2022 has left his employment. HGMICS has placed MBC Solutions on retainer and the Director of Facilities & Security has assumed most of these responsibilities. A search for a technician has resumed. The Facility Technician has begun training on the management of printers, phones, and the visitor management system as a permanent addition to this position and removing it from the IT Position.

***School Operations Updates (Mrs. Patty Biko-Moraski)***

**Food Service** Starting this school year and aligned with the Schools' Wellness Policy, HGMICS no longer allows outside food into the school for classroom celebrations. Families now have the option to sponsor class events involving affordable food trays purchased through the Food Service Department, such as Veggie/Fruit tray, Cookie tray or Ice Cream. Family feedback has been very positive.

With the National School Lunch Program beginning in 2018, there now is 5 years of trend data that demonstrated the increased participation and quality of our Food Service program. Note, last school year all families, regardless of eligibility, received free lunch under the Seamless Summer Option (SSO) program.

	National School Lunch Program Meals Served <b>during October</b>				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
<b>October Totals</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>1177</b>	<b>508</b>	<b>2159</b>	<b>1852</b>

**Pennsylvania Information Management System (PIMS)** Collection 1-October is complete with Accuracy Certification Statements submitted to PDE. Collection 2 – December will open on December 1<sup>st</sup> and will close on the 16<sup>th</sup>. This collection is for the Special Education count.

***Business Manager Updates (Mr. John Marsico)***

**Financials** Completed the October 2022 Financial Report for presentation to the Finance & Facilities Committee on Wednesday, November 9, 2022. Together with Bill McGowan, Partner at Baker Tilly, completed all necessary work to provide a draft of the Annual Audit to the Finance & Facilities Committee at their meeting on Wednesday, November 9, 2022. Conducted Budget Meetings with all Budget Managers to discuss the fiscal year-to-date operating expenses vs. budget for each of their respective budgets.

**Federal Grants** The Quarterly ESSER II, III, and 7% Set-Aside reports were submitted to the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The Final Expenditure Reports for 2021-2022 were submitted to the PDE for Titles I, II, and IV.

The Annual Financial Report for Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School was submitted to the PDE prior to the October 30<sup>th</sup> deadline.

**Other** Provided Detailed 2021-2022 Transactions to Janis Farese at American Transparency in fulfillment of the PA Right to Know Law. Completed online ALICE and Desktop training.

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

**Employee Benefits** Jeff Haudenschild from The Benefits Group received quotes from Geisinger

on renewing our current plan and an alternative Geisinger Level Funded Plan. The renewal of our current plan was quoted at a 4% increase for next year which compared to the GFA was a better option for HGMICS. Jeff will be available to answer any questions during an open enrollment event for employees at the beginning of December.

**Benefits Fair** A Geisinger representative will be available in January for an employee information session to review and answer any questions regarding our Wellness Incentives and EAP.

**Fundraising** A Gertrude Hawk Holiday Candy Sale is currently underway and will run through November 16<sup>th</sup> with the orders being delivered the week of December 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Events** HGMICS will be hosting The Twelve Days of Holiday Cheer for the faculty and staff that will begin on December 7<sup>th</sup> which includes themed dress days (Dress like a tree, Ugly sweater day, Mad about plaid to name a few) Along with the themed dress day, the annual Holiday Party is back this year! Administrative staff provides surprises throughout the twelve days including breakfast, hot chocolate bar, homemade desserts. Parents sponsor Cookie Day, Parent Forum, and the Board of Trustees each provide a lunch.

## **IX. New Business**

**Sam Ceccacci**

At this time, there was no New Business and Sam Ceccacci moved on to adjournment of the meeting.

## **Adjournment**

At 8:12 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.**









