

## **Howard Gardner MI Charter School**

### **Public Board Meeting (Virtual Only)**

Tuesday, November 21, 2023

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a public Board of Trustees meeting on Tuesday, November 21, 2023. 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: Michael Barbetti, Sam Ceccacci, Dino Galli, Laurie Cadden, Al Dorunda, Susan Hennemuth, Suzanne Ambrogio-Jaffe, and Dr. Clarence Lamanna. Absent from the meeting: Wayne Evans and Dr. Catherine Richmond-Cullen.

Also in attendance: Joe Ross, CEO; TreeAnne McEnery, Principal; John Marsico, Business Manager, and Deana Bonacci, Assistant to the CEO.

Stephanie Westington announced that no visitors were present.

#### **I. Minutes**

**Stephanie Westington**

Stephanie Westington presented the October 17, 2023, Board of Trustees meeting minutes and asked for approval. A **MOTION** to approve the October 17, 2023, Board meeting minutes, as submitted, was made by Dr. Clarence Lamanna and seconded by Dino Galli. 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 to approve the October 17, 2023, minutes as submitted with two Trustees absent.

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

**Stephanie Westington**

Stephanie Westington welcomed everyone in attendance at the November 2023 Public Board meeting. Stephanie stated she couldn't believe it was already the holiday season and she wished everyone at Howard Gardner and the Trustees a Happy Thanksgiving. Since the board does not reconvene until January, Stephanie stated she hopes everyone enjoys the holiday season and spending time with their families and friends.

Stephanie continued by wishing TreeAnne McEnery safe travels. The Board is excited for TreeAnne as she prepares to go to Hong Kong in December to attend the third International Educational Forum. Stephanie said they are delighted that TreeAnne will be giving the Educational Presentation tonight and sharing what she has prepared for the Hong Kong presentations.

### **III. HGMICS Educational Session – “Hong Kong Presentation”**

**TreeAnne McEnery,  
Principal**

TreeAnne McEnery, Principal, began by showing the Board the materials that have been submitted to the conference and walked them through how they will be utilized. The first document TreeAnne displayed was the HGMICS School Profile. It will be published in a publication of all of the schools that attend the conference. Deana Bonacci and Mykenna Hickey on this, utilizing the CEO profile Deana created back in January 2023. The opening page is the school profile, the at a glance information will be shared, the current enrollment, total employees, operating budget, and building size. The school overview details the history of the school but then also includes our Strategic Plan, where the goals are summarized. TreeAnne stated the presentation will describe HGMICS educational leadership, from Director of Student Services to all of the student supports we have in place, PBIS, restorative practices, MTSS, Schoolwide Title I, Dean of Students, and how the CEO is leading the school moving forward. TreeAnne did a summation of the strategic goals, focusing on strengthening our relationships with the community, deepening our understanding of Dr. Garnder’s theory, connecting with Harvard University’s Project Zero, and the continuation of services that we’re seeking to provide for students.

The next piece of the Hong Kong presentation will be the drone video of the school shot by Posture Interactive. TreeAnne thanked Joe Ross and Deana Bonacci for all of their hard work in putting this together. TreeAnne displayed the video for the Board of Trustees and then concluded with her PowerPoint presentation about the history of the school.

### **IV. Joint Finance/Facilities & Personnel Committees**

**Michael Barbetti,  
Sam Ceccacci**

#### **1. October 2023 Financial Report**

**John Marsico**

**Revenue & Expense Notes** Fiscal year-to-date revenues for the period ending 10/31/2023 were \$1,910,457 as compared to \$1,922,326 for the same time in 2022. Revenues for the period ending 10/31/2022 were higher than 10/31/2023 due to the influx of ESSER II revenue realized in August 2022. Fiscal year-to-date expenses for the period ending 10/31/2023 were \$2,040,247 as compared to \$1,867,925 for the same time in 2022. Expenses for the period ending 10/31/2023 were higher than 10/31/2022 due in part to the addition of a Speech Pathologist to our staff. Additionally, enhancements to both the landscaping and the security for the building were made in 2023 and food costs have increased in 2023 as well. Our legal expenses have also increased due to the Title IX investigations that have taken place. Finally, an effort was made to spend down the Titles 1/11/IV and ESSER II grants by 9/30/2023. The fiscal year-to-date Net Operating (Loss) for the period ending 10/31/2023 was \$(129,790), as compared to Net Operating Income of \$54,401 for the same time in

2022 for the reasons noted above. We did not receive any 2022-2023 Titles or ESSER II funding during the month of October 2023, as these grants were closed out on September 30, 2023. We are anticipating the receipt of \$18,402 in 2022-2023 Title I funds once the Final Expenditure Report is approved and \$77,490 from ESSER II funds once the Final Expenditure Report is submitted and approved. We did receive a PCCD grant reimbursement of \$34,238 in October 2023 and the ESSER III and Set-Aside payments as well as our NSLP payment remained consistent.

**Balance Sheet Notes** The school had \$732,822 in cash as of 10/31/23 as compared to \$558,054 as of 10/31/2022. This increase is primarily because of the increase in tuition revenue as a result of PDE 363 updates by some school districts. We continue to make principal and interest payments on the Construction Loan in the amount of \$25,035.47 per month. The amounts being applied to principal and interest each month are based on a 20-year amortization schedule for a \$4,500,000 loan at an annual percentage rate of 2.99%. The amortization schedule was provided by Baker & Tilly and is being compared and reconciled, if necessary, monthly to the Construction Loan bank statement. The principal balance outstanding after the October 2023 payment is \$4,332,517.

Michael Barbetti entertained a **MOTION** to approve the Financial Report through October 31, 2023, as reported and submitted. The motion was made by Dino Galli and seconded by Sam Ceccacci. All Trustees voted in favor of accepting the October 2023 Financial Report, as presented, with two Trustees absent.

## 2. November 2023 Personnel Report

**Sam Ceccacci**

Sam Ceccacci gave an update about the Personnel portion of the joint Finance/Personnel Committee meeting. There were staffing updates concerning an Instructional Assistant, new positions for the 2023-2024 school year were discussed, and the criteria that will be used to evaluate Joe Ross's performance after his first year in the role of Chief Executive Officer.

Sam Ceccacci made a **MOTION** to approve the November 2023 Personnel Report as reported and submitted. The motion was made by Suzanne Ambrogio-Jaffe and seconded by Dr. Clarence Lamanna. All Trustees voted in favor of approving the personnel report as presented, with two Trustees absent.

## V. Academic Committee

**Dr. Clarence Lamanna**

Dr. Clarence Lamanna stated the Academic Committee met on November 14, 2023, to discuss a number of informational items on the agenda. These items included a student community service update, an update about the drug and alcohol program proposed, a school calendar revision, and an electronic

signature policy.

Dr. Clarence Lamanna made a **MOTION** to approve the revision to the HGMICS 2024-2025 School Calendar as presented. The motion was made by Suzanne Ambrogio-Jaffe and seconded by Dino Galli. All Trustees voted in favor of approving the school calendar change, with two Trustees absent.

Dr. Clarence Lamanna made a **MOTION** to approve the HGMICS Electronic Records and Signature Policy as presented. The motion was made by Laurie Cadden and seconded by Stephanie Westington.

## **VI. Development Committee**

**Susan Hennemuth**

Susan Hennemuth stated the Development Committee met on November 6<sup>th</sup>. The discussion stemmed from a meeting that Joe Ross and herself had with Valley in Motion to see if the school could be considered for a land trust. Although HGMICS cannot be considered to be a part of a land trust, some ideas came out of the Valley in Motion meeting that the school plans on utilizing to benefit the students and the school in the future.

## **VII. School Matters**

**Joe Ross**

### **1. Administrative Updates**

**Annual Audit** The annual audit is nearing completion. Mr. William McGowan, CPA from Baker Tilly, is working closely with our Business Manager, John Marsico, to complete the process. Significant effort is being made to convert the construction in progress account into the depreciation schedule.

**Security Drill** As required by the Pennsylvania Department of Education, HGMICS conducted its mandated security drill on November 16, 2023. The drill was an evacuation drill. Upon evacuation, all students were relocated to the lower lot (by the Derby Ave gate). This portion of the drill was added to simulate a parent reunification process. Additionally, this drill was utilized to test the HGMICS emergency communication process. Under the guidance of Matthew Snyder, IT Manager, the school rolled out the REMIND communication portal for text and email messaging. This platform provides a way to directly communicate to all families that are in our student information system. Both tests were successfully completed.

Additionally, the Scranton Police were on site to observe and provide professional recommendations to the school. Post-drill debrief was conducted and Sgt. Hurchick was impressed with the actions of our staff and students. Overall, the drill was done extremely well.

**Community Service** In line with the HGMICS strategic plan, the school is seeking out service opportunities in the Scranton community. On 11/22/23, our 8 student ambassadors and 20 staff members will volunteer from noon to 4:00 p.m. at the Family-to-Family food distribution event at the Scranton Cultural Center. Our newly elected student council officers, under the direction of Jade Flynn, held an event to “link the Link” with messages of kindness on Monday 11/13 which is World Kindness Day. Lastly, as part of the HGMICS 12 Dys of Holiday Cheer, one day will be designated as a day of giving for our staff. Staff will be asked to bring in necessities that will be donated to the NEPA Youth Shelter.

**Personnel Update** As of this update, one of the kindergarten teachers has returned from FMLA. This return enabled the school to return the instructional assistant to the Intermediate pod, resuming her regular duties. The school has offered the open learning support teacher position to Doslah (DJ) Fruehan-Nah, and he is pending board approval. We have one current instructional assistant position that is posted, and interviews are underway to fill this position. Both teachers presently out on FMLA are scheduled to return in January. Upon their return, we will have both building substitutes return to their normal duties.

#### **VIII. New Business**

**Stephanie Westington**

At this time Stephanie Westington made a **MOTION** for Joe Ross to be approved to sign electronically on behalf of Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School as the school’s CEO. The motion was made by Laurie Cadden and seconded by Dr. Clarence Lamanna. All Trustees present voted in favor of approving Joe Ross to sign electronically, with two Trustees absent.

#### **Adjournment**

At 8:07 p.m., Stephanie Westington called for a **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting.

The next Public Board meeting will be held on **Tuesday, January 16, 2024.**