

Howard Gardner MI Charter School
Public Board Meeting
Tuesday, June 18, 2024

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a public Board of Trustees meeting on Tuesday, June 18, 2024. Stephanie Westington, President, called the meeting to order at 7:01 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: Sam Ceccacci, Dino Galli, Laurie Cadden, Al Dorunda, Wayne Evans, and Dr. Clarence Lamanna. Absent from the meeting: Michael Barbetti, Suzanne Ambrogio-Jaffe, Susan Hennemuth, and Dr. Catherine Richmond-Cullen.

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

Stephanie Westington announced that there were no visitors present.

I. Minutes

Stephanie Westington

Stephanie Westington presented the May 21, 2024, Board of Trustees meeting minutes and asked for approval. A MOTION to approve the May 21, 2024, Board meeting minutes, as submitted was made by Dr. Clarence Lamanna and seconded by Wayne Evans. Stephanie asked if there were any comments or questions on the minutes. Not hearing any, Stephanie called for a vote. All Board of Trustees members present voted to approve the May 21, 2024, minutes as submitted with four Trustees absent.

II. President's Report

Stephanie Westington

Stephanie Westington welcomed everyone in attendance at the June 18, 2024, Public Board meeting. Stephanie acknowledged that this was her last meeting after serving on the HGMICS Board for six years, three of which she served as Board President. She thanked all of her fellow Trustees for their service and said it was an honor to work with each of them. She stated that her time on the board was one of the most rewarding experiences of her life and that she had learned so much along the way. She then addressed the Howard Gardner staff by saying that the unique approach to learning, incorporating different intelligences and the dedication displayed by all the school's employees, makes it like no other. Stephanie described how evident it is that everyone involved with the school, from students, families, teachers, staff, administration, and trustees, is so engaged, and has a deep love for the school and a desire to make it the best. If she could bottle everything that "is" Howard Gardner School and share it with everyone, she thinks the world would be a better place.

III. HGMICS Educational Session – “Schoolwide Data Review – 2023-2024 Benchmark and PSSA Results” **Ms. TreeAnne McEnery, Principal**

Ms. TreeAnne McEnery, Principal, presented a PowerPoint presentation detailing the 2023-2024 Benchmark and PSSA Results.

IV. Finance/Facilities Committee **Dino Galli**
1. May 2024 Financial Report **John Marsico**

Fiscal year to date revenues for the period ending 05/31/2024 were \$5,677,398 as compared to \$5,284,284 for the same time in 2023. Revenues for the period ending 05/31/2024 were higher than 05/31/2023 due to a change in the PDE-363 Form for the Scranton School District in the month of February 2024. This change resulted in a one-time revenue increase in February 2024 that was retroactive back to July 2023. Fiscal year to date expenses for the period ending 05/31/2024 were \$5,496,478 as compared to \$5,254,129 for the same time in 2023. Expenses for the period ending 05/31/2024 were higher than 05/31/2023 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 2023-2024 and food costs have increased in 2023-2024 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 I/II/IV and ESSER II grants by 9/30/2023. We continue to notice a leveling of monthly expenses in May 2024. The fiscal year to date Net Operating Income for the period ending 05/31/2024 was \$180,921, as compared to Net Operating Income of \$30,155 for the same time in 2023 for the reasons noted above. 2023-2024 Titles I/II/IV, ESSER III and Set-Aside, as well as our NSLP payments remained consistent. The school had \$1,139,484 in cash as of 05/31/24 as compared to \$710,027 as of 05/31/2023. This increase is primarily due to the additional revenue from the Scranton School District in March of 2024 because of the retroactive billing back to July 2023 due to the change to their PDE 363 form. That additional revenue was around \$334,000 and was received on 3/29/24. 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 May 2024 payment is \$4,233,143.

At this time, Dino Galli entertained a **MOTION** to approve the Financial Report through May 31, 2024, as reported and submitted. The motion was made by Sam Ceccacci and seconded by Wayne Evans. All Trustees voted in favor of accepting the May 2024 Financial Report, as

presented, with four Trustees absent.

V. Personnel Committee

Sam Ceccacci

1. June 2024 Personnel Report

At this time, Sam Ceccacci called for a **MOTION** to approve the June 2024 Personnel Report as reported and submitted. The motion was made by Laurie Cadden and seconded by Al Dorunda. All Trustees voted in favor of approving the Personnel report as presented, with four Trustees absent.

2. CEO Performance Appraisal

At this time, Sam Ceccacci called for a **MOTION** to approve the Board Affirmation of the CEO Performance Appraisal conducted by the Personnel Committee, voting the CEO performance was determined to be satisfactory or above for all criteria evaluated. The motion was made by Dino Galli and seconded by Laurie Cadden. All Trustees voted in favor of approving the CEO Performance Appraisal, with four Trustees absent.

VI. Nominating Committee

Laurie Cadden

1. 2024-2025 Slate of Officers

At this time, Laurie Cadden 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, 2024, through June 30, 2025. The slate included President Sam Ceccacci, Vice President Dr. Catherine Richmond-Cullen, Secretary Dino Galli (renewal term), and Treasurer Michael Barbetti. The motion was made by Dr. Clarence Lamanna and seconded by Al Dorunda. All Trustees voted in favor of approving the Slate of Officers for the Howard Gardner MI Charter School Board of Trustees, with four Trustees absent.

2. Board of Trustee Candidate – Dr. Fran Langan

At this time Laurie Cadden called for a **MOTION** to approve the term appointment of Dr. Fran Langan for one (three-year) term to serve on the Howard Gardner MI Charter School Board of Trustees, effective July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2027. The motion was made by Sam Ceccacci and seconded by Wayne Evans. All Trustees voted in favor of approving the Board of Trustee Candidate, with four Trustees absent.

3. Board of Trustee Candidate – Mary Beth D’Andrea

At this time, Laurie Cadden called for a **MOTION** to approve the term appointment of Mary Beth D’Andrea for one (three-year) term to serve on the Howard Gardner MI Charter School Board of Trustees, effective July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2027. The motion was made by

Wayne Evans and seconded by Al Dorunda. All Trustees voted in favor of approving the Board of Trustee Candidate, with four Trustees absent.

VII. School Matters

Joe Ross

1. NEIU 2024-2025 Special Education Agreement

At this time, Stephanie Wessington called for a **MOTION** to approve the Intergovernmental Agreement for the provision of Special Education Services by Northeastern Intermediate Unit (NEIU 19) for the 2024-2025 school year. The motion was made by Dr. Clarence Lamanna and seconded by Stephanie Westington. All Trustees voted in favor of approving the agreement, with four Trustees absent.

2. Annual Safety Report

Joe Ross gave an overview of the School Safety Report for 2023-2024. The Howard Gardner MI Charter School actively supports keeping our students, parents/guardians, staff, and visitors as safe as possible. During the July 2023- June 2024 timeframe, HGMICS completed several enhancements to the physical security of the campus. Notably, six cameras were added to the security system to eliminate some blind spots in problem areas. Integral to the safety and security of staff and students was the integration of the School's Positive Behavior Support System, Multi-tiered System of Support, and Social Emotional Learning programs.

3. Administrative Updates

The final weeks of the school year went by like a blur. Graduation was successfully conducted on May 30, 2024. The weather was perfect, and as a school community, we welcomed back Dr. Marie George, who provided the commencement remarks. The event was followed by light refreshments in the multi-purpose room hosted by the Parent Forum. On 5/31/24, the kindergarten class conducted the "Moving Up" ceremony on the loop. This allowed parents and families to celebrate our wonderful Kindergarten class as they move to the Primary class next school year. Field day was conducted on campus on 5/24/24. Kudos to Brian Kubilus for his leadership of this event.

Tonight's meeting will be the last for two of our long-serving Trustees. Dr. Clarence Lamanna and Stephanie Westington are both rotating off the Howard Gardner School Board. Dr.

Lamanna's ability to summarize complex academic and governance issues in a concise manner has been instrumental in enabling the BOT to deliberate and form a consensus that was always in the best interest of the school. Mrs. Westington's excellent leadership skills and unwavering commitment to the school, particularly during her tenure as the Board President, undoubtedly will leave a lasting impact. Both will be missed. As a school community, we are deeply grateful

for the standard they set for HGMICS. Stephanie and Clarence, thank you for all you have done to make HGMICS a special place for our students and staff!

Our school is undergoing significant changes as we prepare for the 2024-2025 school year. The ongoing remodeling is a clear demonstration of our commitment to providing a physical environment that caters to the educational needs of our students. We are pleased to announce that all teaching and administrative positions have been filled for the upcoming year. We are currently in the process of interviewing candidates for the newly created Instructional Assistant positions. Rest assured, a contingency plan is in place to ensure the smooth functioning of our school, even if we do not attract the full complement of instructional assistants.

As I am completing my first year as CEO, I would like to take this opportunity to express how thankful I am for the leadership and guidance provided by the Board of Trustees. Your support has been invaluable and has allowed me to grow as a professional and leader. We started this year in the throes of a Title IX investigation and ended the year with a Due Process hearing.

Throughout the entire year, the support and leadership of the Board enabled us as an Administration to stay focused on the task at hand, which is making decisions in the best interest of the students and the school's future. Thank you! My sincere best wishes for an enjoyable, relaxing summer!

IX. New Business

Stephanie Westington

At this time, Stephanie asked if there was any new business. Not hearing any, she moved to the adjournment of the meeting.

Adjournment

At this time, Stephanie Westington called for a **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting. Dino Galli made the motion and the Public Board of Trustees meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, August 20, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.