

Howard Gardner MI Charter School
Public Board Meeting
Tuesday, August 20, 2024

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a public Board of Trustees meeting on Tuesday, August 20, 2024. Sam Ceccacci, President, called the meeting to order at 6:03 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: Dino Galli, Michael Barbetti, Laurie Cadden, Mary Beth D’Andrea, Al Dorunda, Wayne Evans, Susan Hennemuth, and Dr. Fran Langan. Absent from the meeting:, Dr. Catherine Richmond-Cullen and Suzanne Ambrogio-Jaffe.

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

Sam Ceccacci announced that there were no visitors present.

I. Minutes

Sam Ceccacci

Sam Ceccacci presented the June 18, 2024, Board of Trustees meeting minutes and asked for approval. A MOTION to approve the June 18, 2024, Board meeting minutes, as submitted, was made by Dino Galli and seconded by Michael Barbetti. Sam asked if there were any comments or questions on the minutes. Not hearing any, Sam called for a vote. All Board of Trustees members present voted to approve the June 18, 2024, minutes as submitted with two Trustees absent.

II. President’s Report

Sam Ceccacci

Sam Ceccacci announced the School would be welcoming back its teaching staff on August 19, 2024, for Pre-Service training and then welcoming students back to school on Monday, August 26, 2024. He also welcomed Dr. Frances Langan and Mary Beth D’Andrea to the Board of Trustees. Sam stated the Board looks forward to a safe, healthy, and rewarding school year filled with promise and hope for all of the students, staff, and administrators.

Sam announced there would be a back-to-school night on Thursday, August 22nd, to welcome students into their classrooms and engage familiarity of the school with parents and guardians. Sam stated that there would be a full complement of 385 students who will explore the multiple intelligences through their classrooms, field, and extra-curricular activities. After careful examination of the student expansion, new positions were added, and educators were selected to best meet the goals of maximizing the students’ educational experience. The School now has 71 full-time professionals.

The building has been updated to include a classroom inside designated for the Music Department, renovation of two Special Education classes, renovation of a classroom for STEAM and Advanced Academic Enrichment, and the addition of a third Kindergarten Class. Primary and Intermediate pods have added a fourth classroom, and the former “Music Cottage” is now home to administrative offices.

Lastly, Sam asked for community engagement and Staff and Board members to support the School’s Annual Golf Tournament, which will be held at Pine Hills Country Club on Sunday, October 13, 2024.

III. Finance/Facilities Committee

Michael Barbetti

1. June 2024 Financial Report

Michael Barbetti

Fiscal year to date revenues for the period ending 06/30/2024 were \$6,423,408 as compared to \$5,732,143 for the same time in 2023. Revenues for the period ending 06/30/2024 were higher than 06/30/2023 primarily 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 06/30/2024 were \$5,703,445 as compared to \$5,162,606 for the same time in 2023. Expenses for the period ending 06/30/2024 were higher than 06/30/2023 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 continued to notice a leveling of monthly expenses in June 2024. The fiscal year-to-date Net Operating Income for the period ending 06/30/2024 was \$719,964, as compared to Net Operating Income of \$569,537 for the same time in 2023. As previously mentioned, this increase in Net Revenue for 2024 was primarily due to the increase in tuition revenue due to the PDE-363 changes made by school districts, particularly the Scranton School District. In addition, the PSERS Net Pension Liability for 2024 decreased, thus reducing PSERS expenses for 2024 as well. The entry for this reduction was made prior to the commencement of the 2023-2024 audit being conducted, and accordingly, is a factor in this financial report. 2023-2024 Titles I/II/IV, ESSER III and Set-Aside, as well as our NSLP payments remained consistent. The school had \$1,159,005 in cash as of 06/30/24 as compared to \$972,009 as of 06/30/2023. 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 June 2024 payment is \$4,219,009.

At this time, Michael Barbetti entertained a **MOTION** to approve the Financial Report through June 30, 2024, as reported and submitted. The motion was made by Wayne Evans and seconded by Al Dorunda. All Trustees voted in favor of accepting the June 2024 Financial Report, as presented, with two Trustees absent.

2. July 2024 Financial Report

Michael Barbetti

Fiscal year to date revenues for the period ending 07/31/2024 were \$532,195 as compared to \$464,135 for the same time in 2023. Revenues for the period ending 07/31/2024 were higher than 07/31/2023 primarily due to changes in the PDE-363 Forms for the school districts, especially the Scranton School District in the month of February 2024. Fiscal year to date expenses for the period ending 07/31/2024 were \$271,364 as compared to \$457,212 for the same time in 2023. Expenses for the period ending 07/31/2024 were lower than 07/31/2023 due in part to the fact that HGMICS made adjusting journal entries at 6/30/24 to accrue expenses in preparation for the annual audit. This had not been done in prior years. As typically seen this time of year, we do anticipate an increase in expenditures over the next couple months as we continue preparing for the upcoming school year. The fiscal year to date Net Operating Income for the period ending 07/31/2024 was \$260,831, as compared to Net Operating Income of \$6,924 for the same time in 2023. As previously mentioned, this increase in Net Revenue for 2024 was primarily due to the increase in tuition revenue due to the PDE-363 changes made by school districts, particularly the Scranton School District. We received 2023-2024 Titles I/II/IV, ESSER III and Set-Aside payments in the month of July, 2024, but we did not receive any NSLP payments however. The school had \$910,888 in cash as of 07/31/24 as compared to \$597,853 as of 07/31/2024. 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 July 2024 payment is \$4,204,485.

At this time, Michael Barbetti entertained a **MOTION** to approve the Financial Report through July 31, 2024, as reported and submitted. The motion was made by Dino Galli and seconded by

Mary Beth D'Andrea. All Trustees voted in favor of accepting the July 2024 Financial Report, as presented, with two Trustees absent.

IV. Personnel Committee

Dino Galli

1. HGMICS July/August 2024 Personnel Report

At this time, Dino Galli called for a **MOTION** to approve the July/August 2024 Personnel Report as submitted. The motion was made by Michael Barbetti and seconded by Dr. Fran Langan. All Trustees voted in favor of approving the Personnel report as presented, with two Trustees absent.

V. Development Committee

Susan Hennemuth

Susan Hennemuth stated that the Development Committee met on Wednesday, August 7, 2024. The Committee discussed the upcoming Annual Golf Tournament and the creation of an alumni event/fundraiser early in 2025.

VII. School Matters

Joe Ross

1. Administrative Updates

We are thrilled to welcome back students and staff for what promises to be an exciting school year. Significant upgrades have been made at the school to accommodate our growth. We have a full complement of 385 students and a full-time staff of 71 professionals. The summer flew by as the HGMICS staff was busy preparing the school to welcome our students for the first day of classes on August 26, 2024. Consistent with our identity of multiple intelligences, we will offer our students a full range of extracurricular activities to allow them to explore their interests. We have added a STEAM Program Coordinator and will begin to immerse STEAM components into the school-wide curriculum. We are excited to add a drama/theater component to our after-school offerings. Through our partnerships with Arts in NEPA, we will host an artist in residence to run this program. A special thank you to Trustee Dr. Catherine Richmond-Cullen and Principal TreeAnne McEnery for their leadership in initiating this program.

Through our Leadership team's hard work and dedication, we are fully staffed in all instructional and administrative positions. After strategically identifying what is needed to maximize the educational experience of our students, multiple new positions were created. These positions include an additional School Counselor, lead teachers and instructional assistants in Kindergarten, Primary, and Intermediate pods, a Math & Reading specialist, a math interventionist, two special education teachers, an administrative assistant to the principal, and a business office assistant. We successfully recruited experienced and talented educators who share our passion for expertly delivering education to the students.

All state-required reporting requirements have been completed promptly to the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE), including the FY 2024-2025 Budget, the Annual Report for 2023-2024, Safe Schools reports, Child Accounting, and Annual Reconciliation Reports with districts. A new bi-annual agreement was signed with the Scranton Police Department, and numerous PIMS reports were submitted to each public school district is required to submit.

We remain grateful for the financial support from local foundations and the continuation of the Federal Title Grants for the 2023-2024 school year. On behalf of FNCB, the Commonwealth Charitable Foundation awarded the school \$10,000 as an EITC award to support environmental education and STEAM innovative learning activities outside of the classroom. Additionally, we received an SRSA grant of \$23,991 from the US Department of Education, which will reimburse any allowable expenses for this Fiscal Year. The Consolidated Application for Federal Title Grants (TITLE IA, IIA, and IV) was submitted before the June 30, 2024, due date. The Federal Grant monies support the Schoolwide Title I Program, Professional Development for staff (Title IIA), and the School's Band program (Title IV requirement of utilizing grant monies towards a well-rounded program). The school also received \$7,359 from the Ready to Learn Grant for \$7,359. HGMICS requested and received an extension to the PCCD 2023-2024 grant, which will allow us to gain reimbursement through June 30, 2025. Additionally, the School applied for the 2024- 2025 PCCD Mental Health Grant, which awards \$70,000.

HGMICS will conduct pre-service activities starting the week of August 19, 2024. During this period, an employee orientation for all new hires is scheduled, and verbal de-escalation training for all staff is conducted. Various training courses will take place during these three days to enable our staff to prepare for the new year.

HGMICS is hosting its annual back-to-school night, which was historically held in September, to coincide with the parent forum ice cream social. This event is on Thursday, August 22, 2024, from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. It will allow families to engage with our instructional staff inside the classrooms to learn more about each curriculum. This is important as we move to grade-level instruction this year. Mixed-grade classes will remain for specials.

Significant interior renovations have been completed to improve the school. Here is a summary of the changes:

- Music Department- Now has a dedicated classroom inside the building, adjacent to the link.
- Special Education- Two additional classrooms were renovated.
- STEAM and Advanced Academic Enrichment- A classroom has been renovated for these programs.
- Kindergarten- A third classroom has been added.
- Primary and Intermediate pods have added a fourth classroom.
- Administration Annex- The old music cottage has been renovated and will now house our

administrative offices.

These upgrades will enhance both the educational and administrative functions of the school.

I want to warmly welcome our two new Trustees of the Board, Dr Fran Langan (returning to the BOT) and Mary Beth D'Andrea. We are honored to have them join our Board and are excited about the background and experiences they will bring to HGMICS.

HGMICS hosted a Trustee Appreciation Event in July at Casa Bella to honor the Board's outgoing President, Stephanie Westington, and Trustee, Dr. Clarence Lamanna. We thank both for their dedication and many years of service to the school.

IX. New Business

Sam Ceccacci

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

Adjournment

At this time, Sam Ceccacci called for a **MOTION** to adjourn the meeting. Al Dorunda made the motion and the Public Board of Trustees meeting was adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, September 17, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.