

Howard Gardner MI Charter School
Public Board Meeting
Tuesday, June 17, 2025

The Howard Gardner MI Charter School (HGMICS) held a public Board of Trustees meeting on Tuesday, June 17, 2025. Sam Ceccacci, President, called the meeting to order at 6:02 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: Michael Barbetti, Dino Galli, Suzanne Ambrogio-Jaffe, Mary Beth D’Andrea, Al Dorunda, Wayne Evans, Susan Hennemuth, and Dr. Fran Langan. Absent from the meeting: Dr. Catherine Richmond-Cullen and Laurie Cadden. Also in attendance: Joe Ross, CEO; TreeAnne McEnery, Principal; and John Marsico, Business Manager.

Sam Ceccacci announced that no visitors were present.

I. Minutes

Sam Ceccacci

Sam Ceccacci presented the May 20, 2025, Board of Trustees meeting minutes and asked for approval.

A **MOTION** to approve the May 20, 2025, Board meeting minutes, as submitted, was made by Mary Beth D’Andrea and seconded by Suzanne Ambrogio-Jaffe. Sam asked if there were any comments or questions on the minutes. Not hearing any, Sam called for a vote. All Trustees voted to approve the May 20, 2025, minutes as submitted, with two Trustees absent.

II. President’s Report

Sam Ceccacci

Sam Ceccacci began his report by announcing that 8th-grade graduation ceremonies were held on Wednesday, June 5, 2025, on the school grounds with parents, grandparents, relatives, staff, and board members present. Students observed the event from the hill with along with faculty members, making it a great day for all who were involved and participated in the program. The guest speaker was fellow board member, Mr. Wayne Evans, who delivered an inspirational message that was well received by everyone involved.

Later in the day, an employee recognition luncheon was held. Sam congratulated all who were recognized and involved at this event. He then congratulated the staff and administration for their efforts in making the school year a resounding success, as they pause before preparing for the new school year to begin.

Finally, Sam offered an expression of deep gratitude for the contributions of Ms. Susan Hennemuth, who will be missed as her term on the Board of Directors is completed with this meeting. Her contributions will always be remembered and appreciated.

III. Finance/Facilities Committee

Michael Barbetti

1. May 2025 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 those for 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 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, Michael Barbetti entertained a **MOTION** to approve the Financial Report through May 31, 2025, as reported and submitted. The motion was made by Al Dorunda and seconded by Suzanne Ambrogio-Jaffe. All Trustees voted to approve the May 2025 Financial Report, as presented, with two Trustees absent.

2. HGMICS School Meal Charge and Delinquent Policy **Michael Barbetti**

A **MOTION** to approve the HGMICS School Meal Charge and Delinquent Policy, as submitted, was entertained. The motion was made by Dr. Fran Langan and seconded by Wayne Evans. All Trustees voted to approve the policy, as submitted, with two Trustees absent.

IV. Personnel Committee **Dino Galli**

1. HGMICS May 2025 Personnel Activity Report
The Personnel Committee met on Tuesday, May 6, 2025.

V. Academic Committee **Dr. Catherine Richmond-Cullen**
The Academic Committee met on Tuesday, May 6, 2025, and discussed topics that will be reviewed at Pre-Service in August, as well as the PA Charter School Funding formula.

VI. School Matters
1. Administrative Updates

Joe Ross

CEO UPDATES – Joe Ross

As we close out the 2024–2025 academic year, I am proud to report that our school community continues to grow stronger, more resilient, and ever more focused on student success. This year has been one of measured progress, operational stability, and meaningful reflection. Thank you for your continued support and guidance throughout this journey.

One of our most significant accomplishments this year is the marked improvement in student performance on standardized assessments. Preliminary data shows a clear upward trend across multiple grade levels and content areas, particularly in literacy and math. This growth is a testament to our dedicated instructional staff, data-driven interventions, and the culture of academic excellence that we are fostering throughout the school.

Our recent physical campus improvements—most notably the conversion of a detached building into an administrative annex—have enhanced safety and functionality, allowing all instructional spaces to remain within the main school building. This transition has improved communication, efficiency, and most importantly, student safety. This summer will bring more renovation which will position the school perfectly to educate the expansion over the coming years.

This year, we made a meaningful change to our graduation ceremony by holding it at 9:30 a.m., enabling the entire school community—students and staff—to take part. The event was conducted smoothly and served as a wonderful celebration for our students and the broader school community. Trustee Wayne Evans delivered an inspiring graduation address. In addition, we held a heartfelt kindergarten moving-up ceremony. This year, our youngest students were proudly escorted by our 8th-grade graduates as they paraded through the school in a symbolic and inspiring send-off that beautifully highlighted the full arc of the student experience at our school.

While we have much to celebrate, we also recognize opportunities for improvement. Student discipline and misbehavior are continuous issues. Our team is already engaging in strategic planning to address these issues early in the coming school year.

Additionally, although we've seen academic gains, achievement gaps persist. We are committed to deepening our use of differentiated instruction, expanding tutoring and enrichment opportunities, and refining our intervention systems to support all learners more effectively.

Operationally, the school is stable and well-positioned for future growth. Our fiscal health remains strong, with a balanced budget and responsible financial management. We continue to prioritize compliance, transparency, and continuous improvement in all areas of governance and administration.

In development and outreach, we were proud to participate once again in NEPA Gives, raising

\$3,700 in support of our mission. Special thanks to Deana Bonacci for leading this effort with energy and dedication. This campaign helped increase our visibility and build meaningful connections with the broader community.

I would like to extend heartfelt gratitude to Susan Hennemuth, whose term concludes this month. She has been a steadfast advocate for our school and has contributed greatly to our mission through thoughtful leadership, accountability, and a deep belief in the potential of every child. We are thankful for her service and wish her the very best in future endeavors.

As we prepare for the 2025–2026 school year, we do so with optimism and confidence. Our trajectory is strong, and our commitment to serving students and families is unwavering. With continued partnership from this Board, the talents of our dedicated staff, and the enthusiasm of our students and families, the future is bright.

Thank you once again for your ongoing support and belief in the work we do. I look forward to building on this year’s momentum and achieving even greater impact in the year ahead.

VII. New Business

Sam Ceccacci

1. Board of Trustee Candidate – Judy Price

A **MOTION** to approve the term appointment of Judy Price for one (three-year) term to service on the Howard Gardner MI Charter School Board of Trustees, effective July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2028, was made by Sam Ceccacci and seconded by Dr. Fran Langan. All Trustees voted to approve the term appointment, with two Trustees absent.

2. June 19, 2025 as a Calendar Holiday

A **MOTION** to approve the date of June 19th, annually, to be a scheduled day off on the Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School calendar was made by Dr. Fran Langan and seconded by Susan Hennemuth. All Trustees voted to approve the calendar adjustment, with two Trustees absent.

Adjournment

The HGMICS January 2025 Public Board of Trustees meeting was adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

Next Meeting Date: Tuesday, August 19, 2025, at 6:00 p.m.