

The Public Board of Trustees meeting of the Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School was held on Tuesday, April 21, 2026 at 6:00 pm.

Sam Ceccacci, Board President, called the meeting to order at 6:29 p.m.

The group joined in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Sam Ceccacci, President	Present	Mary Beth D'Andrea	Present
Dr. Catherine Richmond-Cullen, Vice President	Present	Al Dorunda	Present
Dino Galli, Secretary	Present	Wayne Evans	Present
Michael Barbetti, Treasurer	Absent	Dr. Fran Langan	Present
Suzanne Ambrogio-Jaffe	Present	Judy Price	Absent
Laurie Cadden	Present		

Nine (9) Trustees present, two (2) absent.

April 2026 Public Board of Trustees Meeting Agenda:

Public Comment on Agenda Items Only

Visitors may provide comment on items listed on the agenda, Names and School District of residence will be recorded before remarks are made.

I.	Approval of March 17, 2026 Minutes	Sam Ceccacci
II.	President's Report	Sam Ceccacci
III.	Finance/Facilities Committee	Mike Barbetti
	1. March 2026 Financial Report	
	2. HGMICS 2026-2027 Fiscal Year Budget (Attachment D.)	
IV.	Personnel Committee	Dino Galli
	1. April 2026 Personnel Activity Report (Attachment F.)	
V.	School Matters	Joe Ross
	1. Administrative Updates (Attachment E.)	
VI.	New Business	Sam Ceccacci
	Adjournment	

Public Participation:

Sam Ceccacci asked if anyone wanted to address the Board. There were no comments.

Approval of Minutes:

Motion: *Approve minutes from the March 17, 2026 HGMICS Board Meeting*

The motion was made by Laurie Cadden and seconded by Al Dorunda.

All Trustees voted yes with 9 Trustees present.

President's Report:

Sam Ceccacci delivered the following President's report:

The first task for the Board of Directors tonight will be presentation of the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027 which has already been passed through Committees, with the expected outcome of having an approved budget for the next fiscal year. Secondly, we will look for approval of recent Personnel Activity.

Academically, PSSA Testing is underway as well as end of year benchmark assessments. Student Activities and end of year field trips are scheduled including a visit by the upper grades to the Career and Technology Center of Lackawanna County. Preparations are also under way for graduation events.

Mental Health Awareness Week is scheduled for May 18-22.

Finally, we say goodbye to Ms. Deana Bonacci, Assistant to the Chief Executive Officer. That position, in my many years of experience, is crucial to coordinating all facets of the organization and keeping the organization running smoothly. Ms. Bonacci has been remarkable in doing just that in the time she has been with Howard Gardner Multiple Intelligence Charter School. We thank Ms. Bonacci for her contributions to Howard Gardner and we wish her success both personally and professionally in the years ahead.

Finance Facilities Committee:

March 2026 Financial Report

Motion: *Approve the Financial Report through March 31, 2026.*

The motion was made by Suzanne Ambrogio-Jaffe and seconded by Dr. Fran Langan.
All Trustees voted yes with 9 Trustees Present.

HGMICS 2026-2027 Fiscal year Budget:

Motion: *Approve the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget for HGMICS, as presented.*

The motion was made by Wayne Evans and seconded by Dr. Catherine Richmond-Cullen.
All Trustees voted yes with 9 Trustees present.

Personnel Committee:

April 2026 Personnel Activity report was presented for review by Dino Galli. The report contains an employee resignation, and a recommendation for hiring two 2026-2027 School Year positions. The first is an additional speech therapist and Dara Phillippen is recommended for hire. The second is for a middle school science teacher, Melinda Ciero is recommended for hire.

Motion: *Approved the April 2026 Personnel Activity Report as submitted.*

The motion was made by Al Dorunda and seconded by Laurie Cadden.
All Trustees voted yes with 9 Trustees present.

School Matters:

Administrative Updates

CEO UPDATES- Joe Ross

FY 26-27 Budget

Presented for consideration and adoption is the draft FY 2026-2027 budget. The draft budget which is in the drive is the culmination of an intensive zero-based budgeting approach led by Mr. John Marsico and carried out by our budget managers; TreeAnne McEnery, Cathy Opshinsky, Renee Dougherty, Dennis Gavin, Alycia Boot, Matt Snyder, Steve Kurilla, and Brian Kubilus. The budget managers submitted realistic operational budgets.

Forecasted operational revenues and expenditures were conservative. Revenues are projected to increase \$1,423,000 in the draft budget. The revenue increase is largely due to an increase in PDE363, especially in special education. Additionally, we will increase the students in grade 6 by 12 students. Projected expenses will increase \$1,180,000. This increase is attributable to increase in salaries and benefits, Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) which provides free lunch to all students, and an increase in the special education population.

The 2026-27 FY proposed budget has a pre-depreciation revenue over expenses of \$260,000, compared with \$17,000 in the current fiscal year. After depreciation, the draft budget shows a deficiency of \$25,000 as compared to \$248,000 last year. Salaries and benefits comprise approximately 74% of the expenses.

An intensive review of salary scenarios was conducted. The proposed Teacher Salary Step Scale has a 2% increase at each level. This results in salary increase for teachers ranging from 2% to 9.8%. Two per cent represent teachers who have maxed out after 16 years of service. The teacher step scale will remain constant for three years and will be reevaluated after two years. If this recommendation is approved, it will enable us to adequately forecast future expenses to remain in a financially solvent position.

APPRECIATION

A special thank you to Deana Bonacci for her years of service with HGMICS. Her talent and dedication will be missed.

Principal Updates- TreeAnne McEnery

As we welcome the spring season, our school community is actively engaged in finishing the year strong. This time of year, brings a balance of focused academic work and meaningful student experiences, with state assessments underway and end-of-year benchmarks approaching. At the same time, students are looking forward to a variety of enriching activities, including field trips, performances, and culminating events that celebrate their growth and accomplishments throughout the year.

PSSA Testing

PSSA testing is currently underway. All required trainings have been completed, and materials and parent/guardian communications have been distributed. Preliminary reporting will be shared at the June Board of Trustees meeting.

End-of-Year Benchmark Assessments

End-of-year benchmark assessments will begin immediately following the PSSA window and will continue through May. Results from these assessments will also be presented in June.

Graduation and Grade 8 Updates

Graduation preparations are in progress. Senior student highlights are being prepared for social media. Final Grade 8 grades are due by May 22, at which time the Valedictorian and Salutatorian will be announced. The graduation ceremony is scheduled for the last day of school at 9:30 a.m. and will include the introduction of a new award presented by the middle school counselor.

Kindergarten Events and Enrollment

The Kindergarten Moving Up Ceremony is scheduled for June 3 at 12:00 p.m. Incoming kindergarten screenings for the 2026–2027 school year will take place May 20–23.

Staffing Updates

Interviews for a science teacher position are ongoing, with a highly respected and recommended candidate identified. The middle school math position has been posted.

Student Activities and Field Trips

Field trips and events continue to support student learning and enrichment throughout the spring:

- April 30: Grade 4 Heritage Express (grant-funded)
- May 7: Senior Pod – Lacawac Sanctuary
- May 8: Senior Pod – The Nutcracker Ballet
- May 11: Upper Pod – Metropolitan Museum of Art
- May 12: Senior Pod – Gettysburg
- May 21: Spring Music Concert
- May 22: Devised Theatre Performance
- May 29: Intermediate Pod – Lackawanna State Park

Schoolwide Events

Field Day is scheduled for June 2.

I appreciate the Board's continued support as we move into a busy spring season of instruction, assessment, student programming, and community engagement.

Student Support Services Updates- Cathy Opshinsky

Mental Health Awareness Week

The Student Support Team is planning Mental Health Awareness Week, May 18–22, featuring daily themes focused on mindfulness, communication, wellness, gratitude, and friendship. Activities will include student-led announcements, schoolwide engagement opportunities, and optional family and staff wellness initiatives. The goal is to promote mental health awareness and strengthen a supportive school community.

Senior Field Trip to CTC

The 7th and 8th grade students at HGS will have the opportunity to visit the Career and Technology Center of Lackawanna County on May 18th. This field trip is designed to introduce students to a variety of career pathways and hands-on learning experiences that extend beyond the traditional classroom. During the visit, students will explore different programs such as health sciences, skilled trades, technology, and culinary arts. They will have the chance to observe live demonstrations, interact with instructors and current students, and gain a better understanding of how their interests and strengths can connect to future career opportunities. This experience supports our commitment to helping students explore their future goals and the many paths available to them. Early exposure to career options empowers students to make informed decisions as they move into high school and beyond.

Next Meeting Date: May 19, 2026 at 6:00 pm