

Gathering Waters Board Agenda
January 14, 2023 9 a.m.-11 a.m.
Virtual - Google Meet

The mission of Gathering Waters Chartered Public School is to offer students in the Monadnock region an education that enables them to discover their interests and capabilities; explore the surrounding world; and cultivate a lifelong love of learning, a sense of community responsibility and understanding of environmental sustainability. We carry out this mission by providing a rich and engaging curriculum that integrates the arts, meaningful practical work, outdoor education and service to the larger community.

Our vision is an inclusive school culture of compassion and respect where deep interest in others goes hand in hand with individual growth. The educational environment enables students to develop self-confidence, self-knowledge, intellectual flexibility, and the capacity for creative problem solving that supports ethical action in their local and global communities.

Core Principles of Public Waldorf Education

1. Image of the Human Being:

Public Waldorf education is founded on a coherent image of the developing human Being.

Each human being is a unique individual who brings specific gifts, creative potential, and intentions to this life. Public Waldorf education addresses multiple aspects of the developing child including the physical, emotional, intellectual, social, cultural, moral, and spiritual. Through this, each child is helped to integrate into a maturing whole, able to determine a unique path through life.

Rudolf Steiner's educational insights are seen as a primary, but not exclusive, source of guidance for an understanding of the image of the human being.

2. Child Development:

An understanding of child development guides all aspects of the educational program, to the greatest extent possible within established legal mandates.

Human development proceeds in approximate 7-year phases. Each phase has characteristic physical, emotional, and cognitive dimensions and a primary learning orientation.

The Public Waldorf educational program, including the curriculum, teaching methodologies, and assessment methods, work with this understanding of human development to address the needs of the individual and the class in

order to support comprehensive learning and healthy, balanced development. Our developmental perspective informs how state and federal mandates, including curriculum sequence, standardized testing, and college and career readiness, are met.

3. Social Change Through Education

Public Waldorf education exists to serve both the individual and society.

Public Waldorf education seeks to offer the most supportive conditions possible for the development of each student's unique capacities and for engendering the following qualities to work towards positive social change:

A harmonious relationship between thinking, feeling, and willing;

Self-awareness and social competence;

Developmentally appropriate, academically informed, independent thinking;

The initiative and confidence necessary to transform intentions into realities; and

An interest in the world, with active respect and a feeling of responsibility for oneself, one's community, and the environment.

Such individuals will be able to participate meaningfully in society.

4. Human Relationships:

Public Waldorf Schools foster a culture of healthy relationships.

Enduring relationships — and the time needed to develop them — are central to Public Waldorf education. The teacher works with each student and class as a whole to support relationship-based learning.

Healthy working relationships with parents, colleagues, and all stakeholders are essential to the well being of the student, class, and school community. Everyone benefits from a community life that includes festivals, events, adult education, study, and volunteer activities.

Public Waldorf education encourages collaboration in schools, within the Alliance for Public Waldorf Education, among all schools working out of a developmental approach, in conjunction with the broader field of education.

5. Access and Diversity:

Public Waldorf Schools work to increase diversity and access to all sectors of society.

Public Waldorf schools respond to unique demands and cultures in a wide range of locations in order to provide maximum access to a diverse range of students. Schools work towards ensuring that students do not experience discrimination in admission, retention, or participation.

Public Waldorf schools and teachers have the responsibility to creatively address the developmental needs of the students with the most inclusive possible approaches for all learners.

The Public Waldorf program and curriculum is developed by the school to reflect its student population.

6. Collaborative Leadership:

School leadership is conducted through shared responsibilities within established legal Structures.

Faculty, staff, administration and boards of a Public Waldorf school collaborate to guide and lead the school with input from stakeholder groups. To the greatest extent possible, decisions related to the educational program are the responsibility of those faculty and staff with knowledge and experience of Rudolf Steiner's educational insights.

Governance and internal administration are implemented in a manner that cultivates active collaboration, supportive relationships, effective leadership, consequential action, and accountability. A Public Waldorf school is committed to studying and deepening its understanding of best practices of governance appropriate to its stage of organizational development.

7. Schools as Learning Communities:

Public Waldorf schools cultivate a love of lifelong learning and self-knowledge.

Public Waldorf education emphasizes continuous engagement in learning and self-reflective practices that support ongoing improvement. At the individual and classroom level, teachers reflect regularly on their observations of the students and of the educational process. Essential aspects of school-wide work and professional development include self-reflection, peer review, faculty and individual study, artistic activity, and research.

Rudolf Steiner is a primary, but not exclusive, source of guidance for developing an active inner, meditative life and an understanding of the dynamics within society.

Public Waldorf schools encourage all community members to engage in active and ongoing ways to enhance their capacities as human beings through self reflection and conscious social engagement.

In Attendance: Dan Kurz, Jonny Norris, Janet Gordon, Justin Somma, Katie Osawald, Eliza Murphy, Elizabeth Hamshaw, Jessie Morin

Non Voting Members: Luke Goodwin

Other Attendees: Dallas Welch, Keith Hetman

Call to order:

I. Welcome

II. Approval of December Meeting Notes

Motion: Justin / Jonny / Unanimous

III. Principal Report - Presented by Luke Goodwin and attached below

a. Enrollment

b. Annual Fund & Capital Campaign

IV. Upper School Support: Resource & Rec Committee (enriching student life)

- There are some indicators that the current 31 Washington campus and lack of electives could start to threaten Upper School enrollment, especially for High School families, and thus warrants some board attention. There may be good ways we (perhaps through a sub committee) can support the development of student activities, sports & recreational options, and utilizing community resources. Creativity and thinking outside the box is needed for the short term while we work on future facilities options!

Some suggestions were looking into community volunteer options, usage of public spaces, community resources already available.

Some activities should be exclusive to High School grades to create excitement with students for new opportunities during matriculation.

New facilities will alleviate many current issues, simply by having additional space (ie Auditorium, Cafeteria, etc.)

Question from community member, Keith Hetman around student exchange and working with Kroka. Luke has looked into both of these and they are being considered and further research is needed.

Do we need a part time Student Life Holder, or can this be held by Board, Parent Council, Community Members?

Jonny will talk to Sara about getting Parent Council involved in creating a committee to address the need for additional activities.

Elizabeth will send e-mail out to members interested in attending a special meeting to further discuss.

Include more frequent updates in Ripple to inform parents and students about current opportunities. Possibly add info to the website as well. Suggestion to add upper school students to

Dallas has ordered two @ 15 passenger vans from Melansen Ford. However, there is a shortage and no current delivery date. Will continue searching for other options in the interim.

V. Committee Business

a. Finance Committee Report

i. Re-Approval of Fiscal Year 2023 Budget - Dallas

Motion: Eliza / Elizabeth / Unanimous

ii. Additional Salary Increase Concept - Luke - One time bonus given to faculty prior to holidays, paid for from budget surplus. Base salary increase will be included in next year's budget (works out to approx. 5.5% cost of living increase). Line item will be for approx. \$65k. Need to continue to include increases in future budgets for COL increases and retention purposes.

iii. Remove Gabrielle Schuerman from our SBW account and include Elizabeth Hamshaw as a new signer if required by the bank

Motion: Dan / Jonny / Unanimous

b. Other Committee Business to share

VI. Faculty Report - Presented by Katie and Jessie, and attached below

VII. Winter Board Social at Camp Glenbrook - Tentative date of Sunday Feb. 12th. Time forthcoming.

VIII. Public Comment - Keith Hetman asked about reasoning behind GW continued recommendation to vaccinate students for Covid in light of current CDC guidance, and asked that we look into updating these recommendations. Luke responded that he has worked with the Medical Advisory Group around this decision from a health and safety standpoint in order to contain the spread of the virus and limit school closings. It is only a recommendation and each parent will make their own personal decisions. He will continue discussions with the Medical Advisory Group to look at any new data and update recommendations as needed.

IX. Non-public session

Motion: Jonny / Dan / Unanimous

a. Facilities Update & Discussion

Motion to exit closed session: Elizabeth / Jonny / Unanimous

Motion to seal closed session minutes: Dan / Justin / Unanimous

Closing Verse

You have been joined by fate together
To unfold the powers
Which are to serve a good creative work.
Wisdom itself will teach you as you walk on the soul's path
That greatest things can be achieved
When souls who give to each other spirit certainty
Unite and work towards the healing of the world in faithfulness.

- Rudolf Steiner (From Benedictus, a character in the Mystery Dramas or also called the Portal of Initiation-thank you to Janet for bringing this)

Next Meeting: Saturday January 14, 2022 9-11

School Principal January 2023 BOT Report

January 14, 2023

- Hiring:

Our Statement of Intent letters and forms for next school year have been submitted by faculty and staff (there are several that I am still collecting). We ask the faculty and staff to consider their intentions for next school year during the Holy Nights of December and early January. Karen and I are having “intention discussions” with a number of faculty who asked to discuss their roles and responsibilities for next year.

One faculty member has informed us that they are not returning, and this position will create one new class teacher opening. For next year we will need to hire, i) new HS Humanities teacher for continued 11th grade enrollment growth (this role is posted and we are currently receiving applications), ii) new HS Math/Science teacher for continued 11th grade enrollment growth (this role is posted and we are currently receiving applications), iii) ½ time Upper School Level Chari (could combine with one of the HS academic positions (this role is posted and we are currently receiving applications), iv) one Class Teacher, v) full-time Spanish teacher (this position is posted and we have a very strong internal candidate), vi) part-time movement teacher and part-time eurythmy teacher to account for expanded program offering of 11th grade. We also anticipate posting for a HS Special Education teacher to round out the Special Education department.

- Governance:

The Faculty have nominated the three members of the Pedagogical Advisory Council (PAC). We will announce this membership after nominations are accepted by those individuals. This important faculty decision making support council will support the School Principal and pedagogical leadership in their roles as single decision makers. The role of the PAC is listed below and in the Gathering Waters Governance Structure document in the Board shared folder.

Pedagogical Advisory Council (PAC)

- Includes: Membership chosen by faculty with representatives of each level. Terms will be 2-4 years, ideally rotating members so that there is ongoing continuity of membership. Membership Criteria: i) Full and at least 50% Part-time Lead Teachers, ii) Alignment with the Mission and Vision of Gathering Waters School
 - Provide pedagogical consultative input to the School Principal and Pedagogical Faculty Chairs
- Will be consulted under these critical pedagogical decisions,
 - Hire of full time faculty member
 - Major programmatic changes that include full levels of the school

- Yearly operating budget review
- Strategic Planning, Mission and Vision updates
- Alliance for Public Waldorf Education membership changes

- Facilities:

Luke Goodwin will present an Upper School Facilities Report at the meeting.

- Enrollment:

New 2023-24 re-enrollment and new applications opened on December 1st. To date we have received 78 new student applications. Our internal advertising has continued on our website, in the Ripple and in social media. The upcoming push will be for our open houses and we will do external marketing for these events. We are hosting three open house events, K-5 on February 1, 6-8 on February 8, and High School on the evening of February 9. The grades school open houses will be during Morning Lesson and provide an opportunity to see “Waldorf in Action.” We will present to parents about Waldorf education and Gathering Waters School mission and vision. This will be followed by visits to the several classrooms to see students working and teacher presentations. The open house will conclude with a Q&A session with the parents. The high school session will be similar to last winter and we invite students as well (essentially presenting to middle school families). Our middle school class teachers will promote and invite their classes to this event. The high school open house will be in the evening and include Waldorf high school mission and vision, high school child development and overview of curriculum and student activities.

Open enrollment concludes on February 15 and our enrollment lottery will occur on March 1.

- Department of Education 1st Year Audit:

The on-site visit is occurred on December 14th. The input and report from the visit was overwhelmingly positive, with the following comments included in the written report.

GW has demonstrated strong and consistent enrolment between their upper and lower schools for a total of approximately 240+ students...School Website Gathering Waters (gatheringwaterscharter.org) is well laid out, easy to navigate and provides a wealth of information about the school...School culture was calm and cool with students engaged and involved throughout the building. Students seemed connected and supported. Staff seemed to have positive relationships with students and climate in the building reflects a mutually positive and supportive environment. Buildings between the upper and lower school were warm, inviting and indicative of the care and commitment to creating a positive

learning environment. School has a wonderful handworks program where all students can express themselves and use hands on applications of math, science, and language in a variety of arts/crafts methods including glass and woodwork. Overall the school had a feeling and culture of a school that has been in existence much longer than 1 year. There is an intentional and well thought out approach to establishing the schools culture and norms.

Areas of improvement include an added focus and preparation for the NH SAS testing. There were no noted areas of improvement noted from the on-sight visit,

Aligning the scope and sequence of a waldorf educational curriculum and state standards. In the younger grades, there is much less emphasis on technology, test taking and standard modes of instruction and learning and greater emphasis on teaching students how to think and be curious about the world around them. Typically Waldorf students struggle with assessments in comparison to their peers in traditional public schools in the early years but catch up in later middle school/high school assessments when their strongly developed ability to think critically and creatively leads their educational pathway. The question becomes, how does address these challenges in the early years without sacrificing and impacting what makes Waldorf effective at creating lifelong learners.

Space- The upper school building is at capacity needs additional social and community space. GW is aware and has been diligently working on both temporary(satellite and outside spaces) and long term solutions(new buildings).

Our next step will be for me to present before the Board of Education in February, TBD. They will ask questions regarding the current school state and future development.

Marketing, Outreach & Enrollment Committee January 2023 Board Report

Committee has not yet met in January, but here is a brief summary from Kelly on what she is currently working on:

1. Enrollment and open houses - we are planning to get the word out about upcoming open houses for current and prospective families. It will be promoted in The Ripple, on social media, the website (it will be a pop up), and there will be flyers around town.
2. Summer programs - I've started working on the flyers and graphics for our summer programs, though it is still in the beginning stages. We will advertise in print (The Shopper, possibly newspapers and other magazines), as well as online. I'd welcome feedback on high viewership publications to advertise in.
3. Lower School display cases - I am going to try to spruce up the display cases with photos and student work samples. Long term, I would like to have a rotating display of student projects. Short term, I want it to look nice for the open houses!
4. Signage - Looking for professionals who can help with installing the large sign. It's fine to go ahead and start making the smaller sign to go above the entrance since we are confident about having it installed. Dan will be visiting the lumber supplier next week with Enrique to look at options for live edge slabs.

Faculty Report 1/14/23

Lower School:

- Building community through assemblies

Upper School:

- December Coffee House was a big success, with performances of original poetry, music, and even interpretive dance
- The US now has three assistants who are all incredibly capable and effective. The situation is vastly improved.
- Middle School Class Evenings have been combined into one to support families, hopefully increase attendance, and present some bigger picture aspects of the curriculum such as the Arts through Eurythmy and Fine Arts presentations.
- Open Houses for LS, Middle School, and US are coming up in early February.
- Play season is about to begin! This creates community, helps to reinforce the importance of the social-emotional elements of our curriculum.