

APPROVED - Gathering Waters Board Meeting Agenda

April 8, 2023 9 a.m - 11 a.m.

Lower School

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, Mark Stehlik, Jonny Norris, Janet Gordon, Justin Somma, Eliza Murphy, Elizabeth Hamshaw

Non Voting Members: Luke Goodwin

Other Attendees:

I. Closed Session #1 - Executive Session

Per 91-A:3 Section II(a) - The dismissal, promotion, or compensation of any public employee or the disciplining of such employee, or the investigation of any charges against him or her, unless the employee affected (1) has a right to a meeting and (2) requests that the meeting be open, in which case the request shall be granted.

Motion to enter Closed Session: Elizabeth / Jonny / Unanimous

Motion to exit Closed Session: Elizabeth / Jonny / Unanimous

Motion to seal Closed Session minutes: Elizabeth / Mark / Unanimous

II. Closed Session #2 - Facilities and Hiring Update

Per 91-A:3 Section II(a) - 1. Buying, selling or leasing real or personal property if public discussion would give someone an unfair advantage of municipality; and.
2. Matters which would likely adversely affect the reputation of any non-board member.

Motion to enter Closed Session: Elizabeth / Jonny / Unanimous

Motion to exit Closed Session: Elizabeth / Jonny / Unanimous

Motion to seal Closed Session minutes: Elizabeth / Jonny / Unanimous

III. Public Meeting Call to Order

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

Non Voting Members Luke Goodwin

Other Attendees:

IV. Approval of February Meeting Notes

Motion: Elizabeth / Jonny / Unanimous

V. Approval of February Closed Session Meeting Notes

Motion: Elizabeth / Jonny / Unanimous

VI. Principal Report - Presented by Luke - see attached below

VII. Finance Committee Update - Dallas not able to attend, Luke gave brief overview

a. 2023/2024 Proposed Budget - Vote coming in May

Continuing to follow HB272 bill to increase charter school funding, including an additional 2% increase for 2024/2025 school year. Additional grants also approved by the NH House to increase building aid, which we would benefit from.

We are moving into the last year of the federal grant money, which is requiring maneuvering spending categories and aggressive spending for future needs.

Dallas has received the state audit, which will be reviewed by the Finance Committee

We are currently short of our fundraising goal of \$80k. Currently at around \$55k, including a single large anonymous donation of \$40k. May have to adjust this goal in next year's budget if we can't reach the goal.

New budget will include next year's projected increase in rent for new space at the upper school, as well as new hires and faculty compensation increases previously approved.

VIII. Faculty Report Presented by Jessie - see attached below

IX. Board of Trustees Self-Evaluation and Handout Presented by Janet - Initial look at our individual relationship and responsibilities. Larger overview of board as an organization. She will e-mail a digital copy. To be returned before the next board meeting.

Jessie mentioned a potential new board member that has a background in HR. Elizabeth and Janet will reach out.

X. Public Comment

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: May 13th, 2023

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- Hiring:

We are moving towards the conclusion of our interviewing and hiring season for next year. All new positions are interviewed by a team/individual faculty and School Principal. Full-time recommendations are brought to the Pedagogical Advisory Council (PAC) for input. Hiring and HR updates will be shared with the Board verbally in the meeting. We are nearing the timing of a large announcement message to the school community with our new hires.

Enrollment:

We are currently projecting enrollment of 298 students (full in every class except 11th grade with 23/25 students). After the March 31st deadline for supply fee submission and our individual parent/guardian discussion, we project that a total of five enrollments are in question, with rising 9th as the most common attrition point. The rising 9th grade class has experienced four confirmed withdrawals and with new students joining from the waitlist. We understand that three other rising 9th grade students are currently in question and we are having individual conversations with those students/parents. There are currently 82 students on waitlists throughout the grades and high school. We will continue to provide tours and add students to that waitlist in case any of our currently re-enrolled students decide to withdraw their enrollment spots before next September.

Summer Program (Camp):

I am again serving as the Summer Program Director for this year. Our enrollment is very strong (much higher numbers than this time last year). We currently have 65 total weeks registered (we project to break even in revenue at 51 weeks registered, thus projecting strong surplus). Erin Mounce will serve as the Summer Program Lead Teacher and at least one week is enrolled with more than 10 students and will require an assistant teacher to be hired. We will be advertising in the Monadnock Shopper Summer Camp issues in the coming two months and will continue to aggressively enroll in this program.

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Play season in full swing. Second Grade performed. 6th grade at LS each ML past 2 weeks.

LG announced salary increases and benefits to full faculty on 4/6. Seemed well received.

Spring Festival study & planning has begun. Date of the festival is May 19th at RHP. US honors classes developing and being offered.

Baseball & Track season is underway (Van super helpful). DEIJ student supported committee is very active.

LS Next assembly is April 21st at 2:15 (3rd&5th sharing). Theme=Kindness from the Star Code

LS in conversations regarding role, governance, morale, and process clarity. Elizabeth and

Katie have been in attendance. A third party facilitator has been requested for future meetings.

Blocks:

1st-Math Block (skip counting). Play=The Seven Ravens performance next week!

2nd-Math Block (place value & times tables)

3rd-Farming & Fibers & Johnny Appleseed Play Rehearsal

4th-Ended Animal block (reports & dioramas). Now in Norse Mythology Block

5th-End Botany. Monday beginning Ancient Greek History

6th-Play Block. Medieval Play

7th-Physics Block: Acoustics

8th-Physics Block: Fluid Mechanics. Ongoing play rehearsal. Romeo & Juliet

9th-Dramatic Scenes. Alice in Wonderland

10th-Ancient History of the Americas

Respectfully submitted,

Jessie Morin & Katie Oswald

Marketing, Outreach & Enrollment Committee

April 2023 Board Report

- Permanent Signage for Lower School
 - Receiving quotes from Sign Worx in Keene to create and install both signs.
 - This option will be more generic looking than original live edge wood slab, but will be lighter and easier to install

- Website updates
 - Working on adding an Extracurricular section to the website
 - Updating old links and reformatting site as needed
 - Create a more easily navigable section for admissions, including summer camps and after care.

- Literature / Advertising
 - Summer camp ads went into the Parent Express and the Shopper News. Spend for these ads was under \$1,000, which leaves plenty in the budget for future uses.
 - Working on creating tri-fold informational brochures to use at open houses and other public events
 - Working on creating individual single page flyers for each school grade to give to potential parents/students
 - Future ideas include a donation gratitude report showing how fundraising dollars have been used, as well as hand-made thank you cards by students.

- School Store
 - Creating new apparel to freshen up current offering
 - Introducing “River Otters” mascot

4/7/23

- The DEIJA Advisory Committee meets bi-weekly at the upper school - every other Tuesday 3:30-5pm.
- This group is open to all, and in the early part of the year included 4 9th graders as regular participants, as well as a board rep (eliza) faculty reps (nell and Kirsten A), a grandparent (Eleanor Elbers) and typically 3-4 parents. At present, upper school families are the main representation.
- In the last month, the DEIJA Advisory Committee has supported the youth members to split off into a student club, which is titled IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity Alliance). A proposal was created by the students, an adult sponsor was selected, and the club approval was granted by the ad-hoc Student Life Committee. So far, IDEA has met twice, with 3 more meetings planned for the school year. Currently, IDEA is for high school students and 8th graders in the spring semester.
- Work on a neurodiversity training and awareness initiative is one focus of the DEIJA Advisory Committee agenda. Initially brought by a family member, it is now potentially finding footing within the faculty.
- One lower school parent has recently reached out to the committee to share concerns about accessibility for students with special needs, encouraging further investment in Special Education, training for staff, enrichment for students, and infrastructure improvements. Notes from these meetings will be reviewed by the DEIJA group next week, with recommendations to the board to follow.
- Plans for clear communication about the DEIJA Committee to the community is a top priority- making the group visible and accessible. Possible community event being envisioned for the spring or fall.
 - Clear communication to the community about what is happening in the classrooms is also a top priority- suggestion to go to Kelly Barker directly to plan for a series of Ripple highlights on DEI in the classroom.