

Gathering Waters Board Agenda
October 21, 2023 9:00-11:00 am
Gathering Waters - Lower School
98 South Lincoln St, Keene

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, Jonny, Anny, Tiffany, Katie, Elizabeth, Jamie, Justin, Jan

Non Voting Members: Luke

Other Attendees: Jed Hart

I. Welcome:

Dan will run the meeting, Justin read the mission statement.

II. Approval of September Meeting Notes

Motion: all in favor

III. Approval of Closed Executive Session Meeting Notes

- a. DRAFT - Executive Session Notes - 6.10.23
- b. DRAFT - Executive Session Notes - 7.8.23
- c. DRAFT - Executive Session Notes - 5.13.23
- d. DRAFT - Executive Session Notes - 8.26.23
- e. DRAFT - Executive Session Notes - 5.17.23 via Google Meet
- f. DRAFT - Special Emergency Board Meeting Notes - 8.17.23

Motion: One Vote: Only members who were part of the meeting will vote.

Jonny, Elizabeth, Justin, Anny, Dan

IV. Board Leadership Transitions Votes

- a. Two leadership structure options
 - i. The first one is having Dan, Mark, and Janet share a Leadership Group role, which spreads out the work/responsibilities more, but does not present as good of an outward facing appearance to the community.

1. This interim working model for the 23/24 school year would require a Board vote, as it varies from our Governance model outlined in the charter.
- ii. The second option would be to have Dan take on the role of Chair and Mark the role of Vice Chair, with the understanding that neither have the capacity to take on the burden these roles have held in the past.
 1. This would require the full Board to be more involved in all aspects of leadership, including having all emails previously sent to the Chair being sent to the full Board, so everyone will be aware of current issues (with Mark being the main point person for responses).
 2. Board members will be held to a high level of accountability to maintain Committee records and reports, as well as have access to and maintain awareness of the Governance Committee, Executive Committee & Leadership Advisory Group activities.

Special Vote that includes a 1 year commitment in Interim Leadership.

Future work to update the Board structure from a founding board to a supporting.

Comments:

Second option- needs the board to take up the work of updating the board structure. More mature board organization is coming from the age appropriate growth of the school.

Option 2 needs clarity of who does what for smooth operation.

GWCS will need of a Board retreat to do this work

Clarity of work is needed: Who does what. "Many hands make light work vs too many fingers in the pot ruins the food."

Collaboration with other NH Waldorf Charters - this could be Board based work.

Motion: Vote for second option All in favor

- b. Jan Lyndes as Board Secretary

Motion:all in favor

Action items:

Dan will update info with the Admissions/ Marketing and communications manager.

Jan will contact other NH Waldorf Charters to understand appropriate public notes

V. Discussion regarding formation & role of Family Council

- a. Refer to charter for details

Discussion around these roles needs to take place. Items include coordination with fundraising.

Tiffany is interested in being involved as the Board Representative/ Initial Head of the Family Council to help collaborate and take form.

Action items:

Tiffany will talk with old PC members and bring updated vision to the board.

VI. Board Committee Roles/Responsibilities

Meet once a month- Leads need to come up with a monthly meeting schedule. Tuesdays are a good night for these committee meetings.

Strategic plan- Jan

Finance- Justin

HR-Tiffany/ Anny

Marketing/ Outreach/ Enrollment- Elizabeth

Governance- Janet

Development and Fundraising - Jamie

- a. Note taking  Draft Committee Report Template
- b. Board reports Need to be uploaded to the drive Wednesday before the Board Meeting.
- c. Recruiting Luke will invite faculty with an expectation of one faculty on each committee

Also discussed need to have all new Board members go through mandatory background checks.

Action Item:

Dan will send out an e-mail with relevant information

VII. Forming of a new Sub-Committee to address attrition

- a. There is currently a High School Planning Task Force, which meets weekly, led by Kirsten, and overlaps some of this work.
- b. Should the Board form a new Retention Focus Group that will address both US & LS? Could collaborate with HS Planning Task Force.
Tied in with Strategic Planning and Family Council.

Could Board look into GWCS 'place in the larger educational community.

Strategic Plan will get up and running and then a sub committee can be formed that include Marketing/ Enrollment and Family Council.

Jan will learn what can be known as of now and bring a report back to the Board next month

- Meet with Luke.

VIII. Principal Report

Hiring: All full time positions are hired. Floating sub hired (Zoe). Resignation of hourly assistant in Kindergarten. Floating sub is filling in for the assistant in the Kindergarten. SPED director and Principal are filling in as sub quite often. Interview scheduled for a strong candidate next week.

Governance: Resumed summer work. The Faculty and Staff governance group is meeting weekly. 8 members. Good work and slow going. Unpacking lack of alignment from the summer work. Defining concepts like 'Leadership', 'Faculty Voice'- working toward common understanding.

Updates are shared in the full faculty meetings.

Job description for the level chair is almost complete and it is looking like it will not end up much different then it was but the process has allowed it to be owned by the faculty.

Faculty Evaluation and Mentoring sub group: eliza, luke,

Eliza is sending draft documents to HR. From there it will be shared with full faculty.

Goals: Draft Job descriptions ready for hire in January.

Not yet addressed how the current Lower School Chair will work with this new job description: will she re apply?

Special Ed Task force: (Leah, Kiersten, Jed)

Operationally active. Will be part Strategic planning work.

Spiritual Holding group (Dan Kirsten Luke +) : meeting regularly is working with verses, child study.

-separate but part Spiritual Holding group working on _____

Question:

How much Lead Administrator time is spent on governance - 3 hours.

Effective leadership systems are on pause / unclear. Collaborative work is happening everyday via 1:1 meetings with check ins (10 so far).

On pause - faculty evaluation, things that are a little sticky
This work is the hard forming work that is helping to form the culture of the school.
Working on some complex faculty work that comes out of doing hard work together. Not
always comfortable and is moving things forward.

How will this work come to conclusion? Will there be a voting process?
Not consensus, the group will be looking for majority, if it settles out in a 50/50 it will
need to come to the Board.

Principal is about 50/50. Coordinate with Jed and Kirsten to be sure all buildings have
someone in the leadership role.

Upper school has a healthy social and academic feeling so far this year.

Hiring, where are the positions posted? On GWCS website and Indeed.
Recommendation of posting on LinkedIn- high quality of applicants.

IX. Faculty Report Katie

Faculty Study: Goerheanum conversations, Roberto Trostli "Who shall teach the
teachers" essay. Using for Study Questions

Faculty is looking a Community Service

Festival - put on a wonderful Autumn Festival with a teacher written silly faculty play.

Broke into age appropriate activities in the afternoon.

Lantern Festival

Festival of Light- Weekly Monday assemblies- four elements

Field Trips- Budget, overnights where are they age appropriate?

High School- Big topic is AI. Looking at all the nuances of the existence of AI. A Task
Force has been created: Perrin, Joe, Kim etc. Perrin is working with a Hartsbrook
teacher who has developed a Waldorf Computer Science curriculum. Focus on the fact
that a computer is a machine that uses binary math- in contrast with awareness of
human quality of consciousness. Parallels with the Cyber Civics curriculum that is being
followed throughout the US.

X. Committee Reports

Financial Committee: Justin

GWCS is attempting to engage a new auditor.

FY25 budget will be presented in December

Difficult conversations need to start with the Board then trickle down to faculty of tightening the budget due to the Grant Funding coming to an end. This will effect bringing in new teachers and support.

FY24 budget - losing 11K yearly

Started with a surplus then HS headcount coming in lower. Removed costs of roof on S. Lincoln.

Grant requires policies- QWCS finance director is working on these and she will bring them to the Board first. Some of the policies that were written were insufficient and will be revamped by Dallas.

Looking into additional revenue opportunities

Justin will upload these notes in entirety

XI. Meeting Schedule for 2023

- a. Decide on meeting schedule this year: 3rd Saturday of the month
 - i. Conflict in November because of Craft Fair
 - 1. Could switch to the 2nd Saturday instead? How does this coordinate with Finance Committee meetings?
 - ii. Conflict in February and April because of school breaks
 - 1. Possibility of moving to Virtual meetings from December to April
 - a. Would be helpful for inclement weather

b. Note on Zoom link -
Anny/ Mark- to contact Luke: Google Meet via our GWCS Account is a better option
Dan will send out a sign up survey to identify the November meeting time.
Awareness of the timing of the finance meeting (10 days vs 2 days).
Sundays or Saturday for November
Schedule will stay regular after November

XII. Public Comment none

XIII. Non-public session session - Per 91-A:3

Vote to enter non-public session

Motion: All in favor

- a. Facilities / Finance Update:
- b. HR Update

Vote to seal non-public session notes

Motion: All in favor

XIV. 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:

Dan will send out a sign up survey to identify the November meeting time.
Awareness of the timing of the finance meeting (10 days vs 2 days).
Sundays or Saturday for November