

Gathering Waters Board Agenda
December 20th, 2023 7:15 pm -8:15 pm

Google Meet

Virtual Board Meeting

Wednesday, December 20 · 7:15 – 8:15pm

Time zone: America/New_York

Google Meet joining info

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/mif-tjq-any>

Or dial: (US) +1 219-292-7760 PIN: 957 128 259#

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: Daniel Kurz, Justin Somma, Janet Gordon, Tiffany Mathews, Jamie Mahnken, Mark Stehlik, Jan Lyndes, Johnny Norris, Janet Gordon, Elizabeth Hamshaw, Katie Oswald, Anny Hamshaw

Non Voting Members: Luke Goodwin, Dallas Welch

Other Attendees: Leah M, Leah Huntington, Susan Mahoney-

I. Welcome: Welcome all on the eve of December vacation

II. Approval of November Meeting Notes

Motion: Katie, Johnny with all in favor

III. Vote to approve Summative Performance Review (Evaluation) Process (Draft 10/31/23) Lead by Eliza, Luke, Kirsten, with HR committee review, Board HR committee signed off.

Motion: Katie, Anny with all in favor

IV. Vote to approve Approach to Mentoring, Coaching, and Peer Collaboration (DRAFT 10/12/2) Developed by summer working groups with the same process as above.

Motion: Mark and Johnny with all in favor

V. Vote to approve Lower School & Upper School Pedagogical Faculty Chair job descriptions (2023/2024)

Board Chair:

- Remove the section on how the positions are hired.
- Will add a clear process of how this position is hired and will include this before January 20th, 22024 Board meeting.

Principal:

- Section on the chair position having a teaching component was dropped accidentally and was re-added.
- 100% position (this fell off the description and has been put back on)
- Added a section that the FC will have daily interaction with students and faculty. (Under major job responsibility sections)

Healthy process of 3 months;

Board and leadership (leadership meetings) met over a dozen times. Faculty was asked, invited and involved in the process.

The weekly leadership meeting will continue to work on additional items- see principal report. Board governance group will review this additional work at a later date.

Motion: Mark and Johnny with all in favor

VI. Presentation of 1st Draft of 24/25 Budget- Dallas posted on the drive today 12/20/23

Highlights

- Preview 3 months in advance.
- 2024/25 will be the first year without the grant
- Last year that GWCS is adding 25 new students (adding 12th grade)
- Predicting a conservative estimation in the HS. Maintaining 10% under enrollment.
- More major difference - supplies budget has been reduced due to no grant.
- Additions of faculty due to necessity (adding a 12th grade)
- Additions of part-time special subject teachers to support the expanding school.
- Also the addition of compensation increases for faculty and staff.
- Slight increase on the professional development to fund the Mentoring and evaluation.

VII. Principal Report

Questions:

Have we made any changes to make the assistant positions more attractive? Looking to stretch assistants to pay over the summer.

Research from compensation benefits task force:

GWCS faculty salary is 1% over area Waldorf schools and 10+% less than local public schools. Research has been done by Luke and Dallas.

Anny suggested that they also look into Richardson Group for guidance.

Noted that we are under enrolled and the budget comes in under budget.
(150K roof work on LS is in 2024/25 budget and could be depreciated)

Information on full enrollment efforts:

- 8th grade meeting took place to introduce 8th grade families
- Step up day and shadow days are scheduled
- Outreach calls will be made to follow up on families that have not re-enrolled.
- Increase in enrollment will directly affect teacher/ assistant compensation

Discussion of having more board involvement in increased and maintained enrollment through Marketing and Enrollment (and retention)

- School culture of tradition - including field-trips to support retention.

Increase in rental of US space is in the 2024/25 budget.

Budget will be approved after the open enrollment is closes in February

New Hires: Environmental education

Nod to Lukes involvement with Alliance as a teaching member.

- GWCS is an Initiate Member of Alliance.
- Next year GWCS can begin the process of Developing Member of Alliance.
- After a year of being a Developing Member of Alliance GWCS can use the label Waldorf.
- Alliance resources for families, faculty, board.

VIII. Committee Reports

Financial Committee- report uploaded to folder.

Strategic Plan Committee- report uploaded to folder

Marketing and Outreach- Not yet written up

- High School focus
- Focus message on strengths (small class size)
- Marketing group may want to combine with Fundraising in the future.
 - Outreach or Capital Campaign.

Action item- Confirm that these notes are required to be posted. If they are then Committee meeting minutes will be uploaded to the Website- Committee Chair needs to get these notes to Kelly Barker.

Family Council:

- Family council committee chair spoke to many past members of the Parent Council and heard frustration due to lack of empowerment.
- January 25 at 7 pm a second Family Council Interest meeting will be held.
- In the past , the class representative was a key aspect of communication in the community.
- Interest was expressed in supporting the Festival life of the school.
- Teacher Appreciation support is missed.

IX. Public Comment

Susan Mahoney- Development- any thoughts about developing the website further?

- Yes, initially it was a free site run by volunteers.
- Now Kelly Barker developed the current site
- Marketing committee would like to develop the site further
 - Kelly Barker is the point person and others are welcomed to join!
- Word of mouth is our main way of being learned about.
- Susan has some of the old MWS web content if it would be helpful to GW.

X. Non-public session

Motion: Justin and Tiffany and all in favor

a. Update on Board Officers

Motion to exit closed session: Yes

Motion to seal closed session minutes: Yes

XI. 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 20th @ 9 am - Location: TBD