

Gathering Waters Board Agenda
February 17th, 2024 9am -11am

Lower School

98 South Lincoln St, Keene

Gathering Waters Board Meeting

Saturday, January 20 · 9:00am – 11:00am

Time zone: America/New_York

Google Meet joining info

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/oax-rfoa-och>

Or dial: (US) +1 601-526-1294 PIN: 574 911 013#

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: Tiffany Mathews, Dan Kurz, Elizabeth Hamshaw, Jan Lyndes, Doug Warrender, Anni Hamshaw. Via google meet: Janet Gordon, Julie Ludvigsen, Jamie Mankhen, Mark Stehlik, Katie Oswald.

Non Voting Members: Luke Goodwin

Other Attendees: Marcy Schepker, Jeronima Carral

Welcome:

I. Approval of January Meeting Notes

Motion: TM first and EH seconded, all in favor

II. Vote to confirm and welcome Doug Warrander as a new member of the Board of Trustees

Two children in the school, two more on the way. Financial background. Works for NH Community Loan Funds (affordable housing).

Motion: TM first and EH seconded, all in favor

III. Update on Jonny Norris- Resigned. Willing to help in the area of lease negotiations.

IV. Vote to approve final draft - Faculty Hiring Process

8) Board Review and Confirmation of *Hiring Process*

Application files for candidates that are recommended for hire will be shared with the Board, including a copy of the applicant's resume, references, and notes from the interview(s). Board members are asked to relay any questions, comments, or concerns to both the Board Chair and Vice Chair within 48 hours. **The intent of this step is to provide oversight for the hiring process and ensure the candidate has gone through the proper vetting procedure.** After feedback is collected by the Board and/or Vice Chair, if no issues were found with the hiring process, they will give an approval to the Principal to proceed with the offer of employment to the applicant.

Clarify that Questions and comments are about the hiring process: Interviews documented, references checked, not part of the hiring committee.

Added the bold to the document

Added **of Hiring Process** in the title.

Suggestion that a section added to the process of how the faculty is informed about a new hire. Current communication strategies include announcements at level meetings, and a communication plan for community/ parents.

- Added # 10: faculty and board will be notified by board faculty members in the next scheduled meetings.

6) The Hiring Committee presents its recommendation to PAC for discussion and decision by sharing the appropriate candidate's hiring file. The committee is responsible for sharing essential information and insights which led to the recommendation. If deemed necessary, a second interview is conducted. Final decision for faculty and administrative staff hires is made by the School Principal.

- Clarified this process. Principal can override the majority (except for the Chair positions).
- What happens if the final decision maker (principal) goes against the collaborative process (veto)? This would suggest a bigger problem. PAC members have the right to bring this to the annual principal evaluation.
- The board is responsible for checking the documentation of the process.
- What if the hiring committee votes for A and the principal votes for B. Speaks to a bigger issue.
- Reporting out from PAC process for transparency.
- What is the healthy advantage of having the process of having the principal decision making authority in the hiring process?
 - PAC's role in the hiring process should be for all hires.
 - Strike the word Chair from necessary sections

Mark uploaded in Board folder for today's meeting

Motion: EH first DW and seconded, all in favor

V. Vote to approve the following policies: Benefits, Leave of Absence, Payroll_Timekeeping, PTO, Reporting of Abuse and Neglect, Background Check, Corrective Action (including Corrective Action Template Form)

Question: Leave of Absence policy; What is the 102% payback based on? Minor detail. HR will ask Dallas.

Motion: AH first and JL seconded, all in favor

VI. Presentation of HR Knowledge proposal and vote to retain services

See HR report

This would be a resource for Dallas and the Board.

This HR work is really important for the initial growth of the Charter. THIS IS A COMPLIANCE ISSUE.

The current role of the Business Manager is too big. An organization this big needs two positions in this role: one for business and one for human resources.

Effects the budget, but it can come from the 250K start up grant this year could be reallocated.

- Hire of an HR person is 75K
- Or HR Consulting (Hilb Group of New England, LLC dba)
 - 'Essentials '40 hours with gap analysis. 1K per month (16K yearly)
 - Move up if it is shown to be necessary.

HR Consulting - would work with Dallas and the HR committee.

- Dallas and the HR committee can use this group for HR consultations.

Motion to hire HR Consulting (Hilb Group of New England, LLC dba)

- 'Essentials '40 hours with gap analysis. 1K per month (16K yearly)

Motion: JG first and JM seconded, all in favor

VII. Update to Board on completion sub-committee work tasked with evaluating Karen Atkinson

Completed-meeting was held with Karen and Luke

VIII. Update on Strategic Planning

The process is working as a process to hone and move forward the Strategic Plan. Behavioral challenges are coming to the Full Faculty in a three part process to assess where we are at and what we need to move forward. Specifically around goal #2. Continued interviews with teachers to assess where GW is at on all the Strategic Plan goals. Specifically around therapeutic waldorf education.

IX. Principal Report

Open House- returning students in the HS highlighted the strengths of GW. Question held is how we try to meet the breadth and depth of this mission. How do we support the faculty in the work? Acknowledging that teachers are overtaxed in this work. HR is seeing that there are issues that need to be addressed to support this mission from a leadership perspective.

X. Committee Reports

Finance Committee- overspending in special ed.

Family Council-

Discussed the past Parent Council and how the Family Council wants to develop.

Will develop a proposal of a charter change regarding the Family Council.

- Interested in supporting festivals, teacher appreciation.
- Want to learn more about Waldorf Education.
- Want to be part of fundraising.
- Concerns: program changes, faculty turnover. Concern about enough teachers and the longevity of the teachers work at GW.
- Could we have a faculty representative on FC. Kelly?
- Could the FC set up a monthly offering and invite 'experts' in to lead the topic/ discussion.

Strategic Planning Committee-

Continued interviews with teachers to assess where GW is at on all the Strategic Plan goals. Concerns about goal #2 as Red Flag. Follow up concerns about #4 Teacher and Student retention.

XI. Public Comment

Marcy Schepker- Impressed to hear all that is being done toward the mission of the school. Real theme of wanting to create community. Unsure if GW is interested in creating these smaller events: book sale, etc. Coordination of these activities is challenging due to the size of the school. Could the FC have a structure that create a clarified structure.

Are there applicants for open positions? Crisis nationwide of trained Waldorf teachers.

GW has hired HS candidates. There are no LS candidates.

Jeronima Carral : I am worried about the burnout and turn over of the teachers. Why are they leaving and how can this be fixed.

AH- exit interviews show some easy fixes and some reasons are more complex.

Themes: Special Education / emotional and behavioral needs are complex needs.

Others are more

Two committees: Yearbook Committee and Middle School Dance Committee have been started (with students). Paige Johnson and Finn Ann Cotton are organizing the Dance Committee.

XII. 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 - March 16th @ 9 am - Location: Lower School