

Agenda School Committee Meeting 4.8.2024

Mission Statement

The mission of the Gardner Public School System is to prepare, in collaboration with parents, students who are ready upon graduation for the challenges of college and career without remediation. This will be done in a safe, caring, just and equitable environment. Our Core Values are Academic Excellence, Creativity, Respect and Responsibility.

Notice: The listing of agenda items are those reasonably anticipated by the Chairman which may be discussed at the meeting. Not all items listed may in fact be discussed and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law.

Any person may make a video or audio recording of an open session of a meeting, or may transmit the meeting through any medium, subject to reasonable requirements of the Chair as to the number, placement, and operation of equipment used so as not to interfere with the conduct of the meeting. Any person intending to make such recording shall notify the Chair forthwith. All documents and exhibits used or referenced at the meeting must be submitted in duplicate to the Recording Secretary, as they become part of the meeting minutes.

GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

REGULAR MEETING OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Monday, April 8, 2024, 6:30 PM

City Council Chambers, City Hall, Gardner, MA 01440

ORDER OF BUSINESS

- A. **Call to Order**
- B. **Open Time for General Public**
- C. **Public Hearing – FY25 School Budget**
 - Budget Presentation
 - Public Comments
- D. **FY25 School Budget (Vote Required)**
- E. **Consent Agenda**
 - a. Approval of Minutes: March 11 2024
 - b. Warrant # 24-36, dated March 7, 2024, in the amount of \$355,239.59
 - c. Warrant # 24-37, dated March 14, 2024, in the amount of \$317,668.73
 - d. Warrant # 24-38, dated March 21, 2024, in the amount of \$150,559.06
 - e. Warrant # 24-39, dated March 28, 2024, in the amount of \$83,303.51
 - f. Donations -

Agenda School Committee Meeting 4.8.2024

F. **Subcommittee Report**

Finance Subcommittee
Policy Subcommittee

G. **Student Advisory Board** – Zayvian Rowe-Class

H. **Discussion Items:**

New Business

Item #3606 Appointments of Keystone & CAPS Collaborative (**Vote Required**)

Item #3607 School Improvement Plans GHS, GALT, GMS & GES (**Vote Required**)

Item #3608 First Reading of Policies (Information)

IMG – Animals in School

JF – School Admissions

JFBC – School Tuition Policy

JH – Student Absences and Excuses

Item #3609 Second Reading of Policies (Vote Required)

IHAMB – Teaching About Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs

IHBAA – Observations of Special Education Programs

IHBF – Homebound Instruction

IHBG – Home Education (for adoption)

IHBHE – Remote Learning

IJOA – Field Trips (for adoption)

IJOC – School Volunteers (for adoption)

ILD – Student Submission to Educational Surveys and Research (for adoption)

JICFB – Bullying

The Policy Subcommittee recommends acceptance of the above policies

JFA – Grade Placement for Students Leaving Charter School (For Removal - Vote Required)

The following policies have been found, by the MASC, to be redundant or unnecessary and should be considered for removal from our policy manual

Item #3610 Curriculum Coordinator Update (**Information**)

Item #3611 Grants Administrator Update (**Information**)

Item #3612 Special Education Update (**Information**)

Item #3613 SEPAC Update (**Information**)

I. **Communications**

J. **Final Comments of School Committee**

K. **Executive Session**

L. **Adjournment**

Briefing
School Committee Meeting 4.8.2024

GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BRIEFING

REGULAR MEETING OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Monday, April 8, 2024, 6:30 PM
City Council Chambers, City Hall, Gardner, MA 01440

ORDER OF BUSINESS

- A. **Call to Order**
- B. **Open Time for General Public**
- C. **Public Hearing – FY25 School Budget**
- Budget Presentation
 - Public Comments
- D. **FY25 School Budget (Vote Required)**
- E. **Consent Agenda**
- a. Approval of Minutes: March 11, 2024
 - b. Warrant # 24-36, dated March 7, 2024, in the amount of \$355,239.59
Subcommittee recommends ratification of Warrant #24-36.
 - c. Warrant # 24-37, dated March 14, 2024, in the amount of \$317,668.73
Subcommittee recommends ratification of Warrant #24-37.
 - d. Warrant # 24-38, dated March 21, 2024, in the amount of \$150,559.06
Subcommittee recommends ratification of Warrant #24-38.
 - e. Warrant # 24-39, dated March 28, 2024, in the amount of \$83,303.51
Subcommittee recommends ratification of Warrant #24-39.
 - f. Donations –
- F. **Subcommittee Report**
Finance Subcommittee
Policy Subcommittee
- G. **Student Advisory Board-** Zayvian Rowe-Class
- H. **Discussion Items:**
New Business
Item #3606 Appointments of Keystone & CAPS Collaborative (**Vote Required**)
Item #3607 School Improvement Plans GHS, GALT, GMS & GES (**Vote Required**)

Item #3608 First Reading of Policies (Information)
IMG – Animals in School
JF – School Admissions
JFBC – School Tuition Policy
JH – Student Absences and Excuses

Briefing
School Committee Meeting 4.8.2024

Item #3609 Second Reading of Policies (Vote Required)

IHAMB – Teaching About Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs

IHBAA – Observations of Special Education Programs

IHBF – Homebound Instruction

IHBHE – Remote Learning

IHBG – Home Education (for adoption)

IJOA – Field Trips (for adoption)

IJOC – School Volunteers (for adoption)

ILD – Student Submission to Educational Surveys and Research (for adoption)

JICFB – Bullying

The Policy Subcommittee recommends acceptance of the above policies

JFA – Grade Placement for Students Leaving Charter School (For Removal - Vote Required)

The following policies have been found, by the MASC, to be redundant or unnecessary and should be considered for removal from our policy manual

Item #3610 Curriculum Coordinator Update (**Information**)

Item #3611 Grants Administrator Update (**Information**)

Item #3612 Special Education Update (**Information**)

Item #3613 SEPAC Update (**Information**)

- I. **Communications**
- J. **Final Comments of School Committee**
- K. **Executive Session**
- L. **Adjournment**



Gardner Public Schools

FY 2025

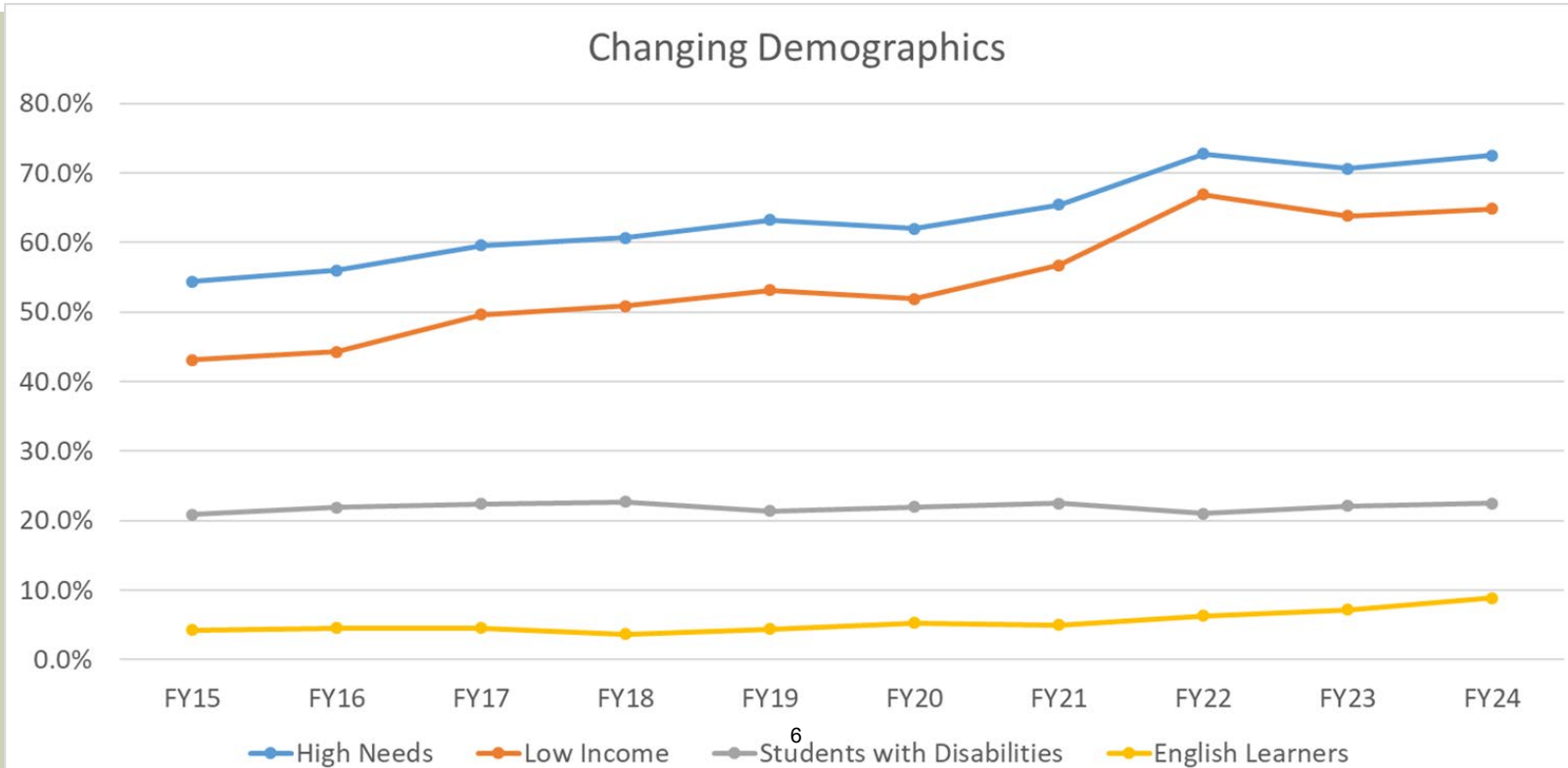
Level Services

Budget Presentation



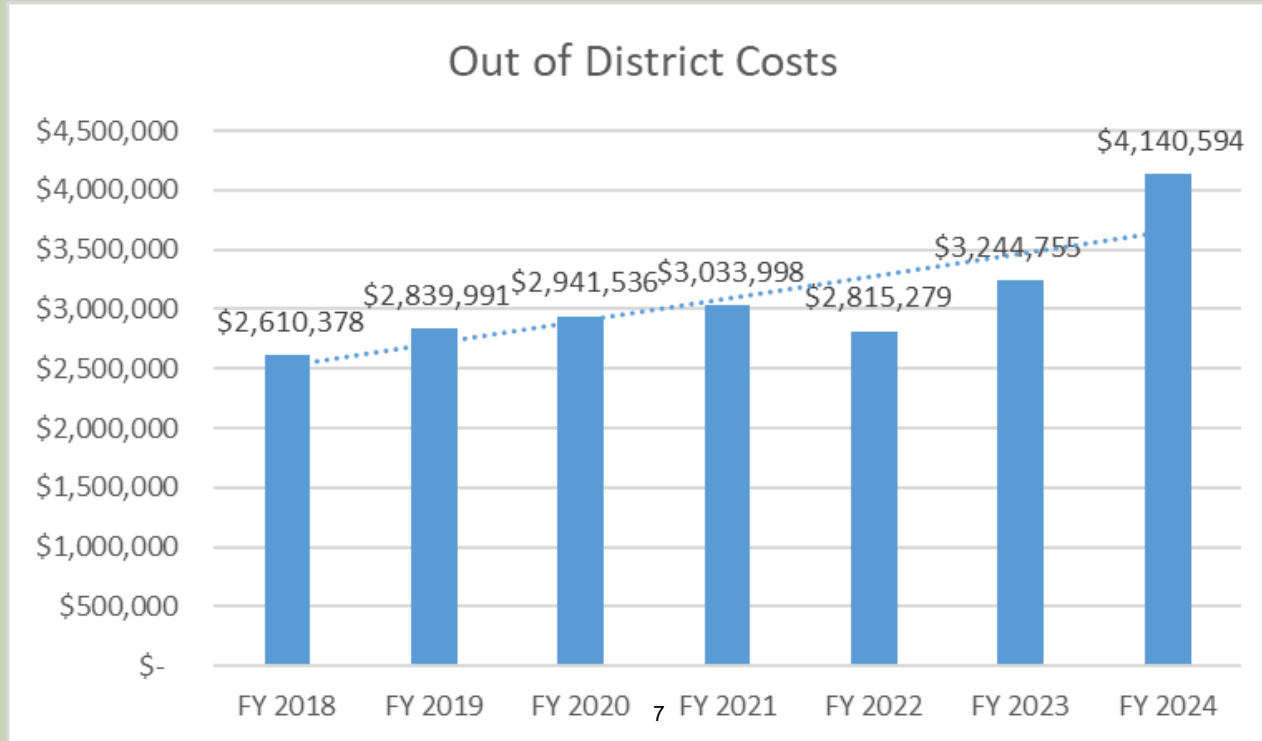
THE CHAIR CITY

Changing Demographics = Increased Cost



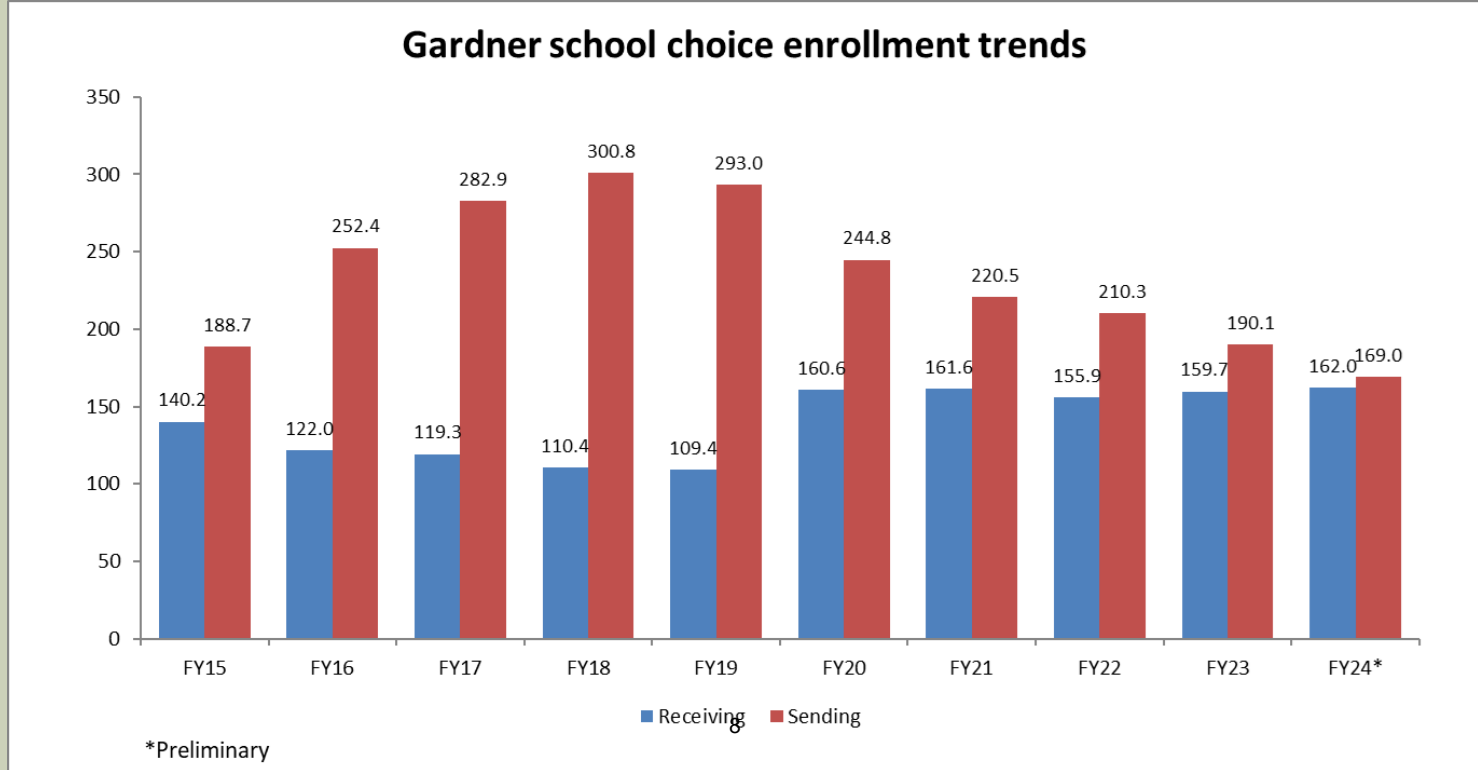
STUDENTS LEAVING DISTRICT

Gardner Students not in Gardner Schools = Higher Expenses



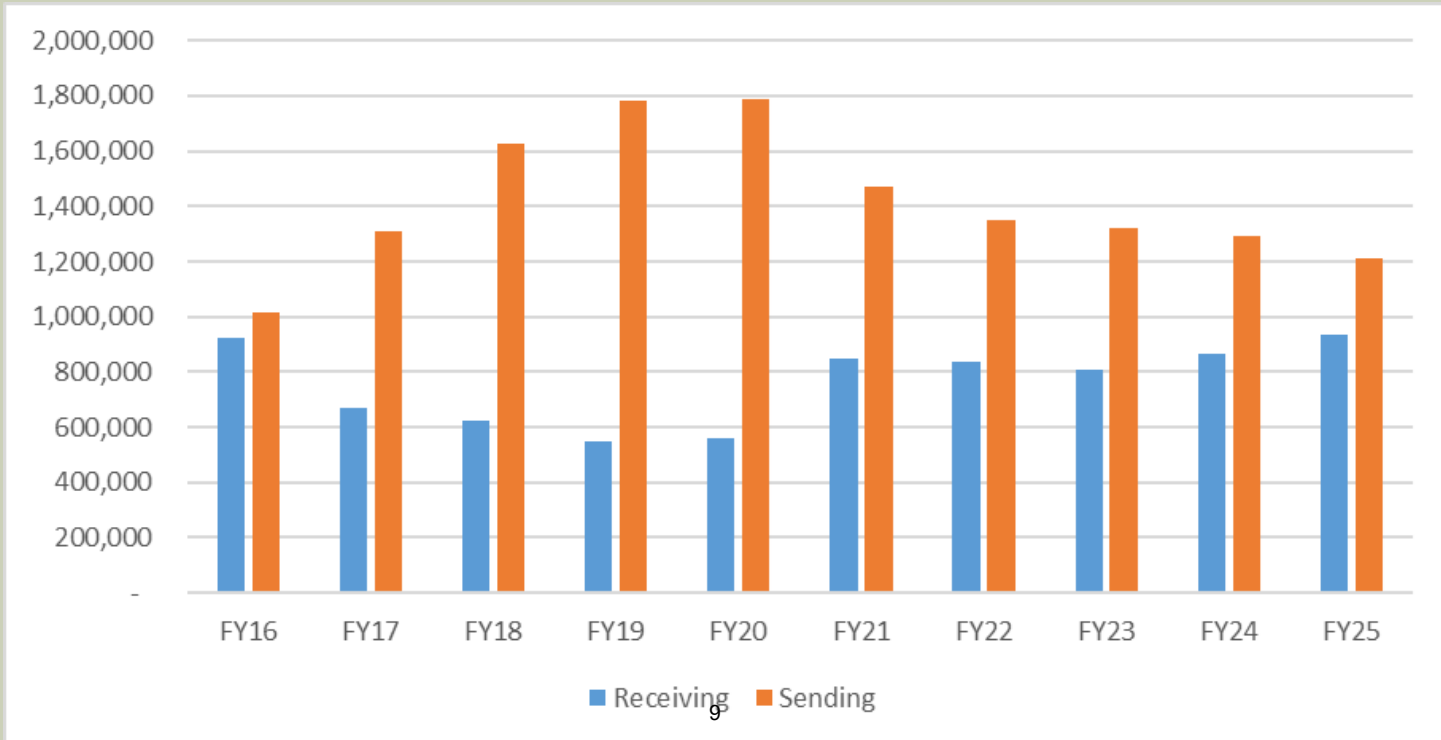
STUDENTS LEAVING DISTRICT

Gardner Students not in Gardner Schools = Higher Expenses

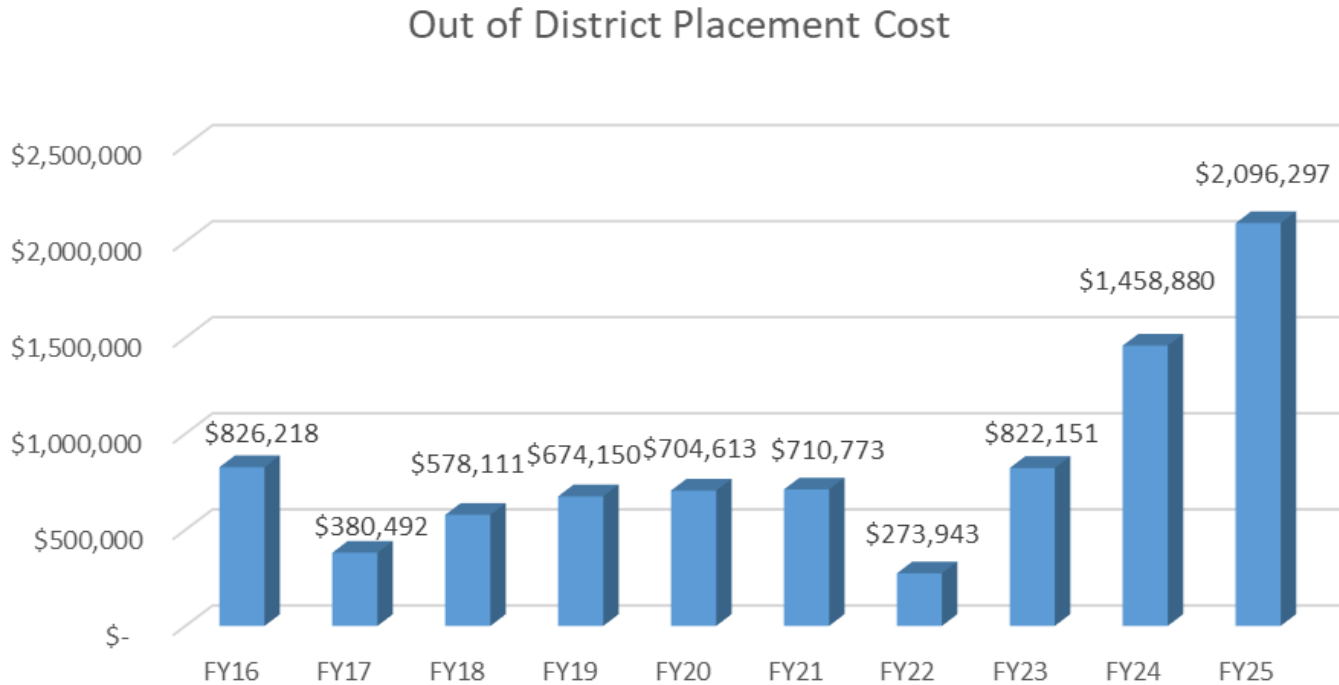


STUDENTS LEAVING DISTRICT

Gardner Students not in Gardner Schools = Higher Expenses



Out of District Placement Costs



Student Opportunity Act

GPS Meeting on February 6, 2024 with over 40 stakeholders.

Identified Student Populations that have the largest gaps as compared to all students:

- Students with disabilities (Academic/Social Emotional Learning)
- English Learners (Academic)
- Economically disadvantaged students (Academic)
- Hispanic/Latinx (Social Emotional Learning)
- African American (Social Emotional Learning)

Student Opportunity Act: Commitments

1. Implement a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) that helps all students progress both academically and in their social, emotional, and behavioral development.
 - Three year expected investment of **\$2,581,776.00**
2. Use the MTSS process to implement academic supports and interventions that provide all students, particularly students with disabilities and multilingual learners, equitable access to deeper learning.
 - Three year expected investment of **\$4,732,950.00**

BUDGET ADJUSTMENT PROCESS

Principals and Directors

- Submit level funded expense budgets
- Submit prioritized lists of needed additional staff
- Submit lists of proposed expense reductions
- Submit prioritized lists of potential staff reductions to own school / department. Assigned targets total \$125,000
- Meet with Superintendent & Business Manager in January

BUDGET ADJUSTMENT PROCESS - 2

Principals and Directors

- Meet with Superintendent as a team over month of March to integrate and prioritize all the individual lists .

Result:

- ❖ A jointly developed alignment of budget funding to stated goals

Balancing the Budget

	FY21	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	Diff from prior year	
Total Funding	31,474,597	31,761,374	34,524,590	38,690,364	41,739,345	3,048,981	8.8%
Total School Budget	24,789,935	25,628,349	28,619,951	31,316,678	34,476,971	3,160,293	11.0%
Budgeted Costs that do not apply to NSS	(1,713,411)	(1,679,390)	(1,999,036)	(2,133,669)	(2,803,981)	(670,312)	33.5%
City Indirect Costs	8,398,073	8,761,064	8,703,950	9,507,355	10,066,356	559,001	6.4%
Total Net School Spending	31,474,597	32,710,023	35,324,865	38,690,364	41,739,346	3,048,982	8.6%
	-	(948,649)	(800,275)	(0)	(1)		

Where did the money go?

	New Revenue			New Expenses
Chapter 70	\$ 2,241,794		Salary	\$ 1,203,217
NSS	\$ 647,187		Expenses	\$ 2,181,177
Homeless \$\$	\$ 160,000		Additions	\$ (225,000)
Over NSS	\$ -		Non NSS	\$ (670,312)
Additional FY24	\$ 15,500.00		Indirects	\$ 575,400
Total	\$ 3,064,481		Total	\$ 3,064,481

Budget Restorations, Additions & Reductions

Budget Restorations & Adjustments - Increases / (decreases)

Department	Description	FTE	\$\$	Total
District	Asst PPS Director	1.0	110,000	110,000

Salaries

	FY20 Budget	FY21 Budget	FY22 Budget	FY23 Budget	FY24 Budget	FY25 Budget	Change	%
PAYROLL ACCOUNTS								
Regular Education Instruction	\$ 8,976,128	\$ 8,880,967	\$ 8,987,193	\$ 9,691,814	\$ 9,945,950	\$ 10,194,363	\$ 248,413	2%
Special Education Instruction	\$ 4,602,347	\$ 4,873,752	\$ 4,918,799	\$ 6,059,225	\$ 6,848,587	\$ 7,248,384	\$ 399,796	6%
Support Services	\$ 2,060,586	\$ 1,892,241	\$ 1,999,357	\$ 2,419,194	\$ 2,611,995	\$ 2,712,106	\$ 100,110	4%
School Administration	\$ 1,752,265	\$ 1,804,998	\$ 1,827,919	\$ 2,015,557	\$ 2,033,889	\$ 2,556,724	\$ 522,834	20%
Central Administration	\$ 572,385	\$ 597,267	\$ 597,267	\$ 636,521	\$ 645,695	\$ 713,461	\$ 67,766	9%
Information Services	\$ 212,260	\$ 218,796	\$ 218,797	\$ 266,488	\$ 57,120	\$ -	\$ (57,120)	#DIV/0!
Facilities	\$ 314,296	\$ 275,605	\$ 275,487	\$ 354,633	\$ 353,494	\$ 367,449	\$ 13,955	4%
Substitutes	\$ 212,000	\$ 217,000	\$ 217,000	\$ 217,000	\$ 217,000	\$ 217,000	\$ -	0%
Total Payroll	\$ 18,702,267	\$ 18,760,626	\$ 19,041,819	\$ 21,660,431	\$ 22,713,732	\$ 24,009,487	\$ 1,295,755	10%

Expenses

EXPENSE ACCOUNTS	FY20 Budget	FY21 Budget	FY22 Budget	FY23 Budget	FY24 Budget	FY25 Budget	Change	%
Regular Education Instruction	\$ 164,726	\$ 206,189	\$ 219,421	\$ 230,795	\$ 243,274	\$ 290,746	\$ 47,472	16%
Special Education Instruction	\$ 171,206	\$ 177,219	\$ 179,701	\$ 202,494	\$ 220,097	\$ 428,341	\$ 208,244	49%
Support Services	\$ 115,546	\$ 117,582	\$ 116,672	\$ 124,842	\$ 192,603	\$ 224,423	\$ 31,820	14%
Program / Staff Development	\$ 51,629	\$ 83,335	\$ 69,897	\$ 81,460	\$ 94,025	\$ 146,270	\$ 52,245	36%
Other Programs (OOD)	\$ 1,182,464	\$ 1,129,361	\$ 880,610	\$ 1,041,887	\$ 1,795,878	\$ 2,528,835	\$ 732,957	29%
School Administration	\$ 166,718	\$ 168,609	\$ 171,080	\$ 167,330	\$ 180,712	\$ 203,623	\$ 22,911	11%
Central Administration	\$ 170,983	\$ 332,179	\$ 329,642	\$ 342,094	\$ 686,966	\$ 833,601	\$ 146,635	18%
Information Services	\$ 281,087	\$ 319,600	\$ 362,898	\$ 468,041	\$ 491,909	\$ 425,451	\$ (66,458)	-16%
Facilities	\$ 1,327,032	\$ 1,327,327	\$ 1,451,680	\$ 1,381,445	\$ 1,494,584	\$ 1,679,650	\$ 185,066	11%
Transportation	\$ 1,603,311	\$ 1,505,130	\$ 1,556,790	\$ 1,933,536	\$ 2,068,169	\$ 2,766,138	\$ 697,969	25%
Utilities	\$ 480,464	\$ 490,021	\$ 530,964	\$ 618,956	\$ 707,590	\$ 592,500	\$ (115,090)	-19%
Other Operations & Control Ac	\$ 372,502	\$ 275,761	\$ 717,174	\$ 296,639	\$ 428,039	\$ 237,906	\$ (190,133)	-80%
Total Expenses	\$ 6,087,668	\$ 6,132,313	\$ 6,586,529	\$ 6,889,520	\$ 8,603,846	\$ 10,357,484	\$ 1,753,638	17%

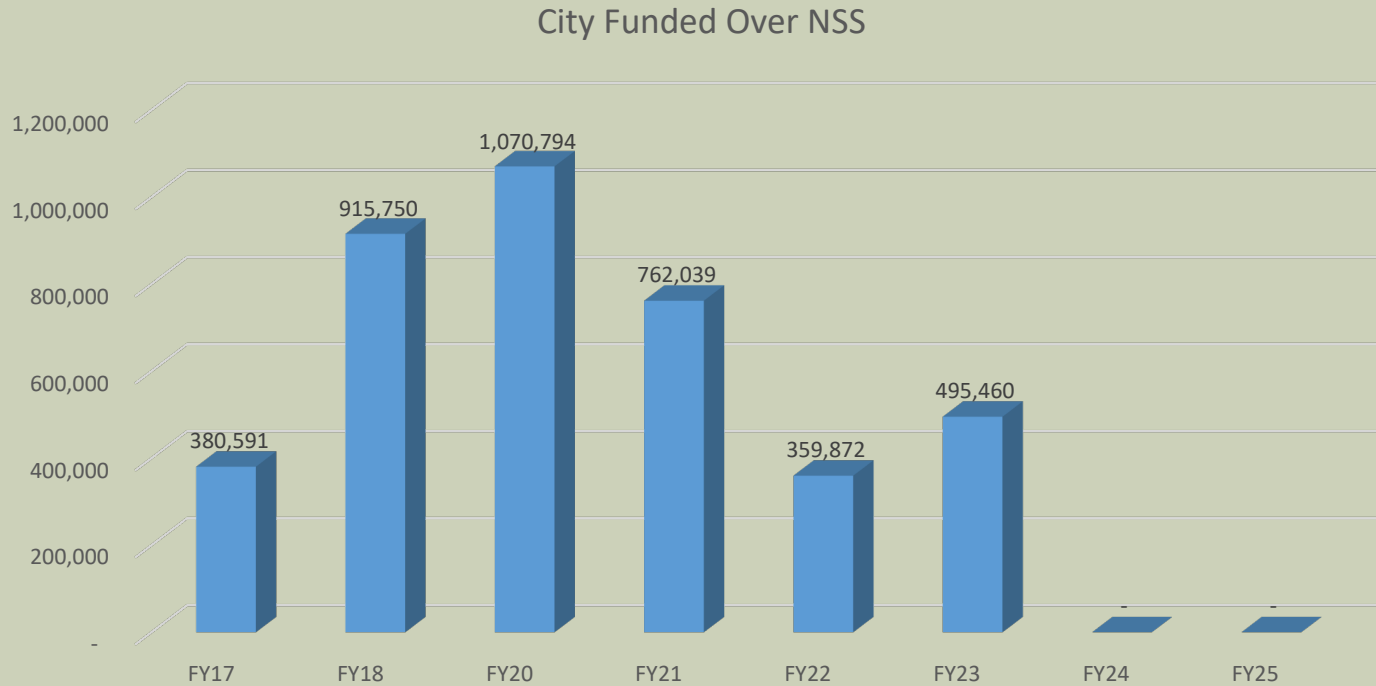
Costs That Do NOT Apply to Net School Spending

	Budgeted Costs that do not apply to NSS						Diff.	%Diff.
	FY20	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25			
Regular Transportation	\$ 729,360	\$ 591,300	\$ 657,000	\$ 711,000	\$ 782,100	\$ 71,100	12%	
McKinney Vento Transportation	\$ 185,000	\$ 90,000	\$ 90,000	\$ 90,000	\$ 180,000	\$ 90,000	100%	
Foster Care Transportation		\$ 110,000	\$ 157,000	\$ 110,000	\$ 200,000	\$ 90,000	82%	
SPED Transportation	\$ 688,951	\$ 825,490	\$ 1,029,536	\$ 1,157,169	\$ 1,564,993	\$ 407,824	49%	
Crossing Guard Expense	\$ 600	\$ 600	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ 500	\$ -	0%	
Crossing Guards	\$ 58,000	\$ 62,000	\$ 65,000	\$ 65,000	\$ 76,388	\$ 11,388	18%	
Bus Monitors	\$ 51,500	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -		
	\$ 1,713,411	\$ 1,679,390	\$ 1,999,036	\$ 2,133,669	\$ 2,803,981	\$ 670,312		

Revenue Projection

	FY20	FY22	FY23	FY24	FY25	Diff from FY 24
State Funding (CH. 70)	\$ 21,003,460	\$ 21,072,010	\$ 23,307,399	\$ 27,428,246	\$ 29,670,040	\$ 2,241,794
Required Net School Spending (NSS)	\$ 9,085,400	\$ 10,329,492	\$ 10,721,731	\$ 11,262,118	\$ 11,909,305	\$ 647,187
City Funding Over NSS	\$ 1,070,794	\$ 359,872	\$ 495,460	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Homeless Emergency \$\$	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 160,000	\$ 160,000
Total Revenue	\$ 31,159,654	\$ 31,761,374	\$ 34,524,590	\$ 38,690,364	\$ 41,579,345	\$ 2,888,981

NSS Spending History



THE BOTTOM LINE

Funding Gap as of April 8, 2024:

\$0

Discussion and Vote

Gardner School Committee

City Council Chambers, 95 Pleasant Street, Gardner, Massachusetts

Regular Meeting – March 11, 2024

Members present: Mayor Michael Nicholson, Chairperson
Jennifer Pelavin, Vice Chairperson
John LaFreniere, Finance Officer
Anne Hurst
Shannon Ward-Leighton
Robert Swartz

Member absent: Rachel Comier, Secretary

School Personnel Present: Dr. Mark Pellegrino, Superintendent
Terri Hillman, Recording Secretary
Dr. Catherine Goguen, Chief Academic Officer
Mr. Earl Martin, Principal Gardner Elementary School (arrived 6:45 pm)

Absent: Zayvian Rowe-Cross, Student Representative

Call to Order

Mayor Michael Nicholson, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. The meeting opened with a roll call and the Pledge of Allegiance. The meeting was broadcast live on Channel 8 (Gardner Educational Television Station).

Open Time for the General Public

No one from the General Public was present.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mrs. Ward-Leighton moved that the Gardner Public School Committee vote to approve the Consent Agenda as presented:

- **Approval of Minutes of Regular Meeting, February 12, 2024**
- **Accept Grant Funds on Grant Listing dated March 11, 2024, in the amount of \$22,657.00**
- **Ratification of the following Warrants as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee:**
 - **Warrant #24-32 dated 02/08/24 in the amount of \$241,028.08**
 - **Warrant #24-33 dated 02/15/24 in the amount of \$391,117.24**
 - **Warrant #24-34 dated 02/22/24 in the amount of \$383,962.91**
 - **Warrant #24-35 dated 02/29/24 in the amount of \$119,665.26**

Seconded by Mr. LaFreniere.

Vote – so voted.

Mayor Nicholson, Chairperson, abstained from voting.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Facilities Subcommittee

Mr. Swartz, Chairperson of the Facilities Subcommittee, reported that the Subcommittee met on March 7, 2024. Minutes of the meeting were presented.

Subcommittee members reviewed the Maintenance Department Project List provided by Mr. Wayne Anderson, Director of Facilities. Some projects are in progress and others are slated to be done during the summer break.

Finance Subcommittee

Mr. LaFreniere, Chairperson of the Finance Subcommittee, said that the Subcommittee met on March 7, 2024. Minutes of the meeting were presented.

The Expense Report was reviewed. Mark Hawke, Director of Finance & Operations, said that there are adequate funds remaining to cover negatives in various line items.

A preliminary FY25 Budget was reviewed. Mr. Hawke stated that the FY25 Budget should be finalized and presented at the next Subcommittee meeting.

Policy Subcommittee

Mrs. Hurst, Chairperson of the Policy Subcommittee, reported that the Subcommittee met on February 14, 2024. Minutes of the meeting were presented.

The Subcommittee reviewed the following policies and determined that no changes were required. The policies will be updated as “Reviewed February 2024”:

- Policy IJ - Instructional Materials
- Policy IJL - Library Materials Selection and Adoption
- Policy IKE - Promotion and Retention of Students

Five Policies were recommended for a first reading by the full School Committee. (See Item #3500 – First Reading of Policies.)

Student Advisory Board

Zayvian Rowe-Cross was not present this evening. There was no report.

NEW BUSINESS

Item #3495 – Program of Studies

Mrs. Pelavin moved that the Gardner School Committee vote to approve the Gardner High School Program of Studies 2024-2025 as presented.

Seconded by Mrs. Hurst.

Vote – so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Item #3496 – Student Opportunity Act (SOA)

Dr. Pellegrino presented the Student Opportunity Act Plan (SOA) 2024-2027. The DESE has created a tight timeline in that the plan needs to be submitted by April 1, 2024. To develop our FY 25 Student Opportunity Act Plan, consideration of the feedback from the recent convening held as well as our district MTSS data and feedback from all administrators and teacher leaders was used.

This is a new DESE requirement for ALL districts. While we received an increase of \$2.8 million, we do not have to account for the entire amount in our plan. Additionally, some of the initiatives are not new. Following DESE guidance, we included supports and interventions that have been created over the last few years and would not be sustainable without SOA funding.

Mrs. Pelavin moved that the Gardner School Committee vote to approve the Student Opportunity Act Plan 2024-2027 as presented.

Seconded by Mr. LaFreniere.

Vote – so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Item #3497 – Field Trip – GES to Stonewall Farm, Keene, NH

Mr. LaFreniere moved that the Gardner School Committee vote to approve the request of the Gardner Elementary School, third grade class, to travel to Stonewall Farm, 242 Chesterfield Road, Keene, NH, on May 28, 29, June 4, & 7th, 2024. A group of 45 students will leave at 9:30 am and return at 1:30 pm each day. Students will explore wetland habitats and document observations with scientific drawings.

Seconded by Mrs. Hurst.

Vote – so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Items #3498 and #3499 were delayed.

Item #3500 –First Reading of Policies

The following policies were presented for a first reading as recommended by the Policy Subcommittee:

- IHBG - Home Education for adoption
- IJOA - Field Trips for adoption
- IJOC - School Volunteers for adoption
- ILD - Student Submission to Educational Surveys & Research for adoption
- JICFB - Bullying

Item #3501 – Second Reading of Policies

Mrs. Hurst moved that the Gardner Public School Committee vote to approve the following policies for a second reading as recommended by the Policy Subcommittee:

- HA - Negotiations Goals – for adoption
- HF - School Committee Negotiating Agents – for adoption

Seconded by Mrs. Ward-Leighton.

Vote – so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Mrs. Hurst moved that the Gardner Public School Committee vote to approve the following policies for a second reading as recommended by the Policy Subcommittee:

- HB - Negotiations Legal Status
- IC/ICA - School Year / School Calendar
- IGA/IGD - Curriculum Development and Adoption
- IHAMA - Parental Notification Relative to Sex Education
- IHBG-E - Notice of Intent to Pursue a Program of Home Education

Seconded by Mrs. Ward-Leighton. [OB]

Vote – so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Item #3502 – Curriculum Coordinator’s Update

The Curriculum Coordinator’s Report was included in the members’ packets.

Dr. Goguen was present this evening.

Item #3503 - Grants Administrator’s Update

The Grants Administrator’s Report was included in the members’ packets. Ms. Courteny Dunn, Grants, Communications & Compliance Manager, was not present this evening.

Item #3504 – Special Education Update

The Special Education Update Report was included in the members’ packets. Ms. Joyce West, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, was not present this evening.

Item #3505– SEPAC Report

Mrs. Hurst reported for the SEPAC. A meeting was held on February 21, 2024, with a presentation on what SEPAC is, and Katie Donovan was elected to fill the Co-Chair seat. The Council continues to focus on increasing parent engagement and will be meeting with the Family Engagement Specialist. The Council is working on the language barrier and have reached out to Dr. Lori Simpson, ELL Coordinator.

Mayor Nicholson declared a short recess at 6:45 pm to allow Mr. Martin to prepare to present Item #3498 and Item #3499. The meeting resumed at 6:50 pm.

Item #3498 – School Improvement Plan - Gardner Elementary School

Mr. Earl Martin, Principal Gardner Elementary School, presented a PowerPoint of the Gardner Elementary School Improvement Plan 2021-2024. A printed copy was provided to School Committee members.

The Vision at GES is commitment to being a place where all community members experience joy, achievement, and care. The theory of Action, Strategic Objective and the Action Steps to accomplish these objectives were outlined. Objectives are ongoing and in progress.

Item #3499 – Kindergarten 2024-2025

A listing of dates for Kindergarten Registration, Screening, Orientation was presented. All Kindergarten students will start school on September 4, 2024.

COMMUNICATIONS

Dr. Pellegrino thanked everyone who helped with the DESE district review for the 2023-2024 school year. He also thanked everyone who helped prepare the SOA.

FINAL COMMENTS

Mrs. Ward-Leighton spoke about the musicals programs that the students have performed. She reminded members that the Middle School students will perform “Shrek, Jr.” in March.

Mrs. Pelavin commented on the large number of students who participated in winter sports this season. It is great that kids, and parents too, are participating. She thanked Mr. Martin for his presentation.

Mayor Nicholson reported that the Rockwell Fund has awarded \$83,000 to the schools for special projects.

ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Hurst moved to adjourn.

Seconded by Mr. LaFreniere.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

The meeting adjourned at 7:25 pm

Vote – so voted.

**Rachel Cormier
Secretary**

T. Hillman, Recording Secretary

**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 24-36

WARRANT DATE 03/07/24

Location	Office & Gen Supplies	Curriculum	Athletics	IT	Field Trips	Utilities	Facilities	TOTAL
High School	\$1,576.45		\$6,962.50	\$3,080.64	\$650.00	\$138.57	\$29,018.13	\$41,426.29
Middle School	\$22.14		\$887.00	\$1,668.05			\$21,590.01	\$24,167.20
Gardner Elementary School	\$1,184.04			\$3,097.34		\$8,242.52	\$38,194.77	\$50,718.67
GALT	\$11.83				\$1,320.00			\$1,331.83
Sub-Total	\$2,782.63	\$0.00	\$7,849.50	\$7,846.03	\$650.00	\$8,381.09	\$88,802.91	\$117,643.99

Location	Office Supplies	Transport.	IT	Travel	Legal	Tuition	Prof. Services	Prof. Dev	Facilities	Carry over	TOTAL
Special Education			\$810.90			\$12,805.17	\$5,739.60				\$19,355.67
Administration	\$28.78		\$14,903.08					\$685.00	\$6,131.69	\$625.00	\$22,373.55
Sub-Total	\$28.78	\$0.00	\$15,713.98	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$12,805.17	\$5,739.60	\$685.00	\$6,131.69	\$625.00	\$41,729.22

Revolving	\$181,397.75
Grants	\$12,338.63
School Music	\$2,130.00
Bond	
Sub-Total	\$195,866.38

GRAND TOTAL	\$355,239.59
--------------------	---------------------

**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 24-37

WARRANT DATE 03/14/24

Location	Office & Gen Supplies	Field Trips	Athletics	IT	Dues & Mem	Utilities	Facilities	TOTAL
High School			\$332.50			\$22,859.72	\$10,802.49	\$33,994.71
Middle School	\$114.75				\$600.00	\$12,900.11	\$5,645.57	\$19,260.43
Gardner Elementary School						\$10,653.16	\$648.00	\$11,301.16
GALT	\$11.42	\$156.58						\$168.00
Sub-Total	\$114.75	\$0.00	\$332.50	\$0.00	\$600.00	\$46,412.99	\$17,096.06	\$64,724.30

Location	Office & Gen Supplies	Transport.	IT	Prof. Dev	Legal	Tuition	Prof. Services	Utilities	Facilities	Carry over	TOTAL
Special Education		\$70,007.00			\$5,024.00	\$9,390.99	\$4,140.00				\$88,561.99
Administration	\$214.53	\$80,100.00	\$2,017.68	\$275.00				\$12,962.18	#####	\$653.75	\$106,500.35
Sub-Total	\$214.53	#####	\$2,017.68	\$275.00	\$5,024.00	\$9,390.99	\$4,140.00	\$12,962.18	#####	\$653.75	\$195,062.34

Revolving	\$265.00
Grants	\$57,617.09
School Music	
Bond	
Sub-Total	\$57,882.09

GRAND TOTAL	\$317,668.73
--------------------	---------------------

**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 24-38

WARRANT DATE 03/21/24

Location	Office & Gen Supplies	Curriculum	Athletics	IT	Field Trips	Utilities	Facilities	TOTAL
High School			\$8,470.00				\$317.09	\$8,787.09
Middle School							\$6,108.76	\$6,108.76
Gardner Elementary School	\$55.71							\$55.71
GALT								\$0.00
Sub-Total	\$55.71	\$0.00	\$8,470.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$6,425.85	\$14,951.56

Location	Office Supplies	Transport.	IT	Travel	Legal	Tuition	Prof. Services	Prof. Dev	Facilities	Carry over	TOTAL
Special Education		\$53,400.00				\$26,998.47	\$362.20				\$80,760.67
Administration			\$1,868.00					\$1,100.00	\$61.95	\$3,033.13	\$6,063.08
Sub-Total	\$0.00	\$53,400.00	\$1,868.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$26,998.47	\$362.20	\$1,100.00	\$61.95	\$3,033.13	\$86,823.75

Revolving	
Grants	\$48,783.75
School Music	
Bond	
Sub-Total	\$48,783.75

GRAND TOTAL	\$150,559.06
--------------------	---------------------

**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 24-39

WARRANT DATE 03/28/24

Location	Office & Gen Supplies	Curriculum	Athletics	IT	Activities	Utilities	Facilities	TOTAL
High School	\$484.46		\$367.00				\$2,318.74	\$3,170.20
Middle School	\$890.19						\$836.59	\$1,726.78
Gardner Elementary School							\$1,523.21	\$1,523.21
GALT					\$315.00		\$179.97	\$494.97
Sub-Total	\$1,374.65	\$0.00	\$367.00	\$0.00	\$315.00	\$0.00	\$4,678.54	\$6,915.16

Location	Office Supplies	Transport.	IT	Travel	Legal	Tuition	Prof. Services	Prof. Dev	Facilities	Carry over	TOTAL
Special Education		\$40,140.00				\$18,858.08	\$6,169.40				\$65,167.48
Administration									\$967.30		\$967.30
Sub-Total	\$0.00	\$40,140.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$18,858.08	\$6,169.40	\$0.00	\$967.30	\$0.00	\$66,134.78

Revolving	\$1,924.00
Grants	\$8,329.57
School Music	
Bond	
Sub-Total	\$10,253.57

GRAND TOTAL	\$83,303.51
--------------------	--------------------

GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Policy
Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, March 20, 2024
4:30 PM
Professional Development Room
160 Elm Street, Gardner, MA
01440

In Attendance: Mrs. Anne Hurst, Chair; Mrs. Rachel Cormier, Member;

Absent: Mrs. Shannon Ward-Leighton, Member

Also in Attendance: Dr. Catherine Goguen, Chief Academic Officer; Mr. Mark Hawke, Director of Finance and Operations

Mrs. Hurst called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m.

A motion was made by Mrs. Cormier and seconded by Mrs. Hurst to approve the minutes of the February 14, 2024 Policy Meeting. So moved.

The following policies were reviewed and it was determined that no changes were required. Therefore, the policies will be updated as "Reviewed March 2024":

- IMB – Teaching About Controversial Issues/Controversial Speakers
- JBB – Educational Equity
- JFABD – Homeless Students: Enrollment Rights and Services
- JFABE – Educational Opportunities for Military Children
- JFABF – Educational Opportunities for Children in Foster Care
- JHD – Exclusions and Exemptions from School Attendance

Policy IMG – Animals in School was reviewed and discussed. The Subcommittee recommended removing language regarding service animals. The District will follow the most up to date state statutes in reference to service animals. A motion was made by Mrs. Cormier and seconded by Mrs. Hurst to send the policy with the recommended changes to the April full School Committee Meeting for a first read. So moved.

Policy JF – School Admissions was reviewed and discussed. Dr. Goguen presented grammatical corrections and changes which updated the policy's statutory references. A motion was made by Mrs. Cormier and seconded by Mrs. Hurst to send the policy with the recommended changes to the April full School Committee Meeting for a first read. So moved.

Policy JFA – Grade Placement and Eligibility for High School Graduation of Students Leaving a Charter School and Seeking to Enroll in a District School was reviewed and discussed. Dr. Goguen stated that the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) does not currently have a policy regarding this matter. The Subcommittee recommended removing Policy JFA from the Policy Manual. A motion was made by Mrs. Cormier and seconded by Mrs. Hurst to send the policy to the April full School Committee Meeting for a vote for removal. So moved.

Policy JFBC – Pre-School Tuition Policy was reviewed and discussed. Mr. Hawke presented minor corrections updating the name of the Business Administrator to Business Office, and a change in the number of payments in the monthly payment plan from ten (10) monthly payments to eight (8) monthly payments. A motion was made by Mrs. Cormier and seconded by Mrs. Hurst to send the policy with the recommended changes to the April full School Committee Meeting for a first read. So moved.

Policy JH – Student Absences and Excuses was reviewed and discussed. Dr. Goguen presented updates to include the word “guardians” alongside any reference of “parents”. She also recommended the removal of language regarding unnecessary absences, and updated statutory references to be in alignment with the MASC model Policy JH. A motion was made by Mrs. Cormier and seconded by Mrs. Hurst to send the policy with the recommended changes to the April full School Committee Meeting for a first read. So moved.

The next Policy Subcommittee meeting will occur on Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 4:30 p.m. in the Central Office Professional Development Room

A motion was made by Mrs. Cormier and seconded by Mrs. Hurst to adjourn the meeting. So moved. The meeting adjourned at 4:54 p.m.

ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

No animal shall be brought to school without prior permission of the building Principal.

The Gardner School District is committed to providing a high quality educational program to all students in a safe and healthy environment.

School Principals, in consultation with the Health Services Providers in each building, shall utilize the Department of Public health publication "Guidelines for Animals in Schools or on School Grounds" and review student health records to determine which animals may be allowed in the school building. The decision of the Principal shall be final.

Educational Program

Use of animals to achieve specific curriculum objectives may be allowed by the building Principal provided student health and safety is not jeopardized and the individual requesting that the animal be brought to school is responsible for adhering to the "Guidelines for Animals in Schools or on School Grounds" and any other conditions established by the Principal to protect the health and well-being of students.

Student Health

The health and well-being of students is the District's highest priority. Animals may cause an allergic reaction or otherwise impair the health of students. No animals may be brought to school or kept in the school, classroom, office or common area that may negatively impact the health of any student who must utilize that area. Animals that cause an allergic reaction or impair the health of students shall be removed from the school immediately so that no student shall have his/her health impaired and each student shall have full access to available educational opportunities.

Service Animals (Guide or Assistance Dogs)

~~The Gardner School Committee does not permit discrimination against individuals with disabilities, including those who require the assistance of a service animal. The District will comply with Massachusetts law concerning the rights of persons with guide or assistance dogs and with federal law and will permit such animals on school premises and on school transportation.~~

~~For purposes of this policy, a "service animal includes any dog that has been individually trained to do the work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability". The regulations further state that "a public entity shall make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of a miniature horse by an individual with a disability if the horse has been individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of the individual with the disability".~~

~~Service animals perform some of the functions and tasks that individuals with disabilities cannot perform themselves. Service animals are not pets. The task performed by the service animal must address one of the following needs for the disabled individual: physical, sensory, psychiatric,~~

~~intellectual, and other mental disability. The service animal can be excluded from a municipal building or school or program if its purpose is to act as a deterrent to assaultive behavior, bullying, or other misconduct, or to provide emotional support and companionship to the disabled individual. In addition, the service animal can be excluded if the animal is not under the handler's control or if it is not housebroken. Under the standards of the ADA generally, a service animal can be excluded if the service animal presents a direct and immediate threat to others in the governmental building or school.~~

~~No particular breed of dog can automatically be excluded solely based on the perceived characteristics of the breed. Also, there are no weight or size limitations for the service dog.~~

~~When a student will be accompanied by an service animal at school or in other District facilities on a regular basis, such staff member or such student's parent or guardian, as well as the animal's owner and any other person who will have custody and control of the animal will be required to sign a document stating that they have read and understood the foregoing.~~

[Adopted: May 2011]

[Reviewed: August 2013]

[Reviewed: October 2019]

[Revised: 2024]

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

All children of school age who reside in the city are entitled to attend the public schools, as well as certain children who do not reside in the city but who are admitted under Sschool Ccommittee policies relating to nonresident students or by specific action of the Sschool Ccommittee.

Advance registration for prospective kindergarten students will take place in the school year preceding enrollment. Every student seeking admission to school for the first time must present a birth certificate or equivalent proof of age acceptable to the principal, proof of vaccination and immunizations as required by the state and the Sschool Ccommittee. Proof of residency or legal guardianship may also be required by the school administration.

The above requirements may be waived for eligible students identified under policies JFABD, JFABE, JFABF.

[Reference: M.G.L. 15:1G; 76:1; 76:5; 76:15; 76:15A; 603 CMR 26:001; ~~26:02; 26:03~~; JLCA, Physical Examination of Students; JLCB, Immunization of Students; JFBB, School Choice; JFABD, Homeless Students: Enrollment Rights and Services; JFABE, Educational Opportunities for Military Children; JFABF, Educational Opportunities for Children in Foster Care]

[Adopted: December 1998]

[Revised: April 2003]

[Revised: June 2019]

[Reviewed: June 2020]

[Revised: 2024]

PRE-SCHOOL TUITION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The School Committee believes that tuition payments for preschool peer models (non-IEP students) are an investment in our children's education. Therefore, the School Committee has the responsibility for adopting certain policies concerning the amount of tuition, the manner of payment, and in general, the development of policy. Further, it is the responsibility of the School Committee to insure that adequate financial resources are available to provide these programs and yet make enrollment in these programs as available and affordable as possible to the affected families.

TUITION PAYMENT

- I. Families with children enrolled as preschool peer models shall make tuition payments as established by the School Committee.
- II. All families shall be expected to make tuition payments according to one of the following payment plans. Each family's preferred manner of payment must be submitted following student registration.
 - A. **Full Payment Plan.** Under this plan, the entire amount of tuition is paid on or before August 30. This payment is made directly to the Superintendent's office. Checks shall be made payable to the City of Gardner.
 - B. **Monthly Payment Plan.** Under this plan, the entire amount (or the remaining amount if a cash deposit is made) is paid over a ten-month period beginning on August 30. Gardner Public Schools may choose to utilize an outside service for collection of these payments

The outside collection service may require a service charge for processing.

LATE REGISTRATIONS

- I. Tuition for students registering on or after the first day of school shall be pro-rated over the number of months remaining in the school calendar.

LATE PAYMENTS

It shall be the responsibility of each family to keep the Business Administrator informed of their need to make any changes in their preferred tuition payment plan or adjustments in the amount of tuition expected to be paid. Without such information, the following procedure will apply when tuition payments are received late.

- I. **Monthly Payments.** Families who choose the monthly payment plan and miss a monthly payment will receive a letter from the School Business Administrator requesting the payment in full immediately. If the family is unable to pay immediately due to hardship, the School Business Administrator will set up a reasonable payment plan.

II. **Tuition Delinquency.** Families who have missed two monthly payments and have not made suitable arrangements within fourteen (14) calendar days of the second missed payment will be informed that their child(ren) will not be allowed to remain in the program.

All families must be current in their payment of tuition. By August 25th, if the family is not current, students will not be admitted in the program on the first day of school.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

At this time, the School Committee is not able to offer any tuition assistance.

TUITION REFUNDS

Families withdrawing students prior to the first day of school shall be refunded the amount of tuition that has been paid for the current school year. After the first day of school, tuition refunds will be pro-rated over the number of school days each student was in attendance. From that amount, the School Committee will deduct a 5% handling fee to cover administration costs.

[Adopted: March 2003]

[Revised: June 2006]

[Revised: February 2021]

STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for success in school. The committee does recognize that parents/guardians of children attending our schools have special rights as well as responsibilities, one of which is to ensure that their children attend school regularly, in accordance with state law.

Therefore, students may be excused temporarily from school attendance, with approval of the School Administrator, for the following reasons:

1. Illness or quarantine;
2. Bereavement or serious illness in family;
3. Weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child; or
4. Observance of major religious holidays.

A ~~child~~-student may also be excused for other exceptional reasons with approval of the school administrator or excused under other applicable school committee policies relating to absences.

~~A student's understanding of the importance of day-to-day schoolwork is an important factor in the shaping of his character. Parents/guardians can help their children by refusing to allow them to miss school needlessly.~~

Accordingly, parents/guardians will provide a written explanation for the absence and tardiness of a child. This will be required in advance for types of justifiable absences where advance notice is possible.

In instances of chronic or irregular absence reportedly due to illness, the school administration may request a physician's statement certifying such absences to be justifiable.

Student Absence Notification Program

Each Principal or designee will notify a student's parent/guardian within 3 days of the student's absence in the event the parent/guardian has not informed the school of the absence.

Each Principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to meet with any student, and that student's parent/guardian, who has missed five (5) or more unexcused school days (a school day shall be equal to two (2) or more class periods in the same day) in a school year. The meeting shall be to develop action steps to improve student attendance and shall be developed jointly by the Principal or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian. The parties may seek input from other relevant school staff and/or officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing, and nonprofit agencies.

Dropout Prevention

A student who has not graduated from high school and has been absent from school for ten (10) consecutive days of unexcused absence shall not be considered permanently removed from

school unless the Principal has sent notice to the student, and that student's parent/guardian. The notice shall be sent within five (5) days of the tenth consecutive day of absence and shall offer at least 2 dates and times within the next ten (10) days for an exit interview with the Superintendent or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian. The notice shall be in both English and the primary language of the home, if applicable. The notice shall include contact information for scheduling the exit interview and shall indicate the parties shall reach an agreement on the date/time of the interview within the ten (10) day timeframe. The timeframe may be extended at the request of the parent/guardian and no extension shall exceed 14 days.

The Superintendent or designee may proceed with any interview without a parent/guardian present, provided the Superintendent or designee has documented a good faith effort to include the parent/guardian.

The Superintendent or designee shall convene a team of school staff to participate in the exit interview and shall provide information to the student and, if applicable, the student's parent/guardian on the detrimental effects of early withdrawal from school and the alternative education programs and services available to the student.

[Reference: M.G.L. 76:1; 76:1A; 76: 1B; 76:16; 76: 18; 76:19; 76:20; JFADB, Homeless Students: Enrollment Rights and Services; JFABE, Educational Opportunities for Military Children; JFABF, Educational Opportunities for Children in Foster Care]

[Adopted: June 1998]

[Revised: October 2000]

[Revised: April 2003]

[Revised: May 2019]

[Revised: August 2020]

[Revised 2024]

TEACHING ABOUT ALCOHOL, TOBACCO, AND DRUGS

In accordance with state and federal law, the Gardner School Committee shall provide age-appropriate, developmentally appropriate, evidence-based alcohol, tobacco, and drug prevention education programs in grades K-12.

The alcohol, tobacco, and drug prevention program shall address the legal, social, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use, with emphasis on nonuse by school-age children. The program also shall include information about effective techniques and skill development for delaying and abstaining from using, as well as skills for addressing peer pressure to use alcohol, tobacco, or drugs.

The objectives of this program, as stated below, are rooted in the Committee's belief that prevention requires education, and that the most important aspect of the policies and guidelines of the District should be the education of children and youth on healthy decision-making:

- To prevent, delay, and/or reduce alcohol, tobacco, and drug use among children and youth.
- To increase students' understanding of the legal, social, and health consequences of alcohol, tobacco, and drug use.
- To teach students self-management skills, social skills, negotiation skills, and refusal skills that will help them to make healthy decisions and avoid alcohol, tobacco, and drug use.

The curriculum, instructional materials, and outcomes used in this program shall be recommended by the ~~Superintendent-Health Director, Chief Academic Officer and other relevant stakeholders. and approved by the School Committee.~~

This policy shall be posted on the district's website and notice shall be provided to all students and parents/guardians in accordance with state law. ~~Additionally, the district shall file a copy of this policy with DESE in accordance with law in a manner requested by DESE.~~

[Source: MASC March 2016]

[Reference: M.G.L. 71:1; 71:96; GBEC, Drug Free Workplace Policy; JICH, Drug and Alcohol Use by Students]

[Adopted: November 2019]

[Revised: 2024]

OBSERVATIONS OF GENERAL EDUCATION/SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS BY PARENTS AND THEIR DESIGNEES

Parents'/guardian's request to observe their child(ren), current program, or a potential placement must be made with the Principal and/or Special Education Administrator or designee.

The School District will provide timely access to the student's current or proposed educational program. The School District will contact the parent/guardian to schedule a mutually convenient time for the observation.

When a parent/guardian requests an observation of a special needs student or program, the Special Education Administrator or designee will notify the Director of Special Education and Principal before it is processed.

The Special Education Administrator or designee and/or Principal will work with the classroom teacher and the observer to set up the specifics of the observation (including, but not limited to, scheduling and placement of the observer in the classroom).

The number, frequency, and duration of observation periods will be determined on an individual student basis in accordance with law and regulation.

Gardner Public Schools is responsible to ensure the safety of students at all times. If the observation threatens to compromise 1) the safety of the students in the observed program, 2) the integrity of the program during the observation, 3) if there is the threat of disclosure by the observer of confidential or personally identifiable information he or she may obtain while observing the program, then the School District may impose reasonable limitations and restrictions on the observation. Gardner Public Schools personnel will discuss these concerns with the observer prior to the observation, and the school district will make reasonable efforts to work with the observer around these issues to ensure a safe and productive observation. Any limitations on restrictions imposed pursuant to this paragraph will be done on a case by case basis, at the discretion of the Building Principal in consultation with the Director of Pupil Personnel Services.

If the observer is not the parent, the parent must sign a release for the individual to observe.

The number of observers at any one time may be limited.

The observer will be informed that he/she is not to interfere with the educational environment of the classroom. If his/her presence presents a problem, he/she will be asked to leave and this will supersede any previous arrangement. This notice is particularly important, since the presence of parents can influence both the performance of their child(ren) and those of others.

[Reference: MGL 71B:3; Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Technical Assistance Advisor SPED 2009-2 dated January 8, 2009;] [Adopted: December 2009]

[Reviewed: February 2013]

[Revised: December 2019]

[Revised: 2024]

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN THE HOME OR HOSPITAL

The school ~~shall provide educational services in the home or hospitals~~ ~~may furnish homebound instruction~~ to any eligible student who must remain at home or in a hospital on a day or overnight basis, or any combination of both, for medical reasons and for a period of not less than 14 school days in any school year. ~~The instruction is~~ Such services are designed with sufficient frequency to enable the student to keep up in the student's courses of study and minimize the educational loss that might occur during the period the student is confined at home or in the hospital. ~~provide maintenance in the basic academic courses so that when a student returns to school they~~ as long as the services do not interfere with the medical needs of the student. The Principal shall coordinate such services with the Director of Pupil Services/Special Education for eligible students. These education services are not considered special education unless the student has been determined eligible for such services, and the services includes services on the student's IEP. ~~will not be at a disadvantage because of the illness or the hospitalization.~~

To qualify for ~~the program,~~ educational services in the Home or Hospital, the student's treating physician must complete a Department of Elementary and Secondary Education form 28R/3 (or equivalent signed statement) and submit to the Director of Pupil Services. ~~needs a written statement from a medical doctor requesting the homebound instruction, stating the reasons why, and estimating the time the student will be out of school. This statement needs to be sent to the Director of Pupil Services*.~~

At a minimum the Physician's signed statement must include information regarding:

- The date the student was admitted to a hospital or was confined to home;
- The medical reason (s) for the confinement;
- The expected duration of the confinement; and
- What medical needs of the student should be considered in planning the home or hospital education services.

Homebound instruction is offered in basic elementary subjects and in secondary subjects which do not require laboratories and special equipment, subject in all cases to the availability of qualified teachers. A Licensed teacher(s) shall be assigned to homebound instruction by the Superintendent or designee. ~~Director of Pupil Personnel/Special Education or designee.~~

For eligible student's, special education and/or related services that are provided in a home or hospital setting under this provision will be delivered (or closely supervised) by staff certified or appropriately licensed to deliver such services.

LEGAL REF.: 603 CMR [28.03](#) (3)(c)

***NOTE: District to identify appropriate administrator**

SOURCE: MASC - Updated 2023

HOME EDUCATION

~~The Gardner Public School Committee accepts the fundamental responsibility for education of pupils in its jurisdiction pursuant to Massachusetts State Laws, particularly Chapter 76 S1 and Chapter 71, S1, S2, S3 and S37 governing school attendance, curriculum, instruction, physical education, and the powers/duties of the Gardner School Committee.~~

~~It is the policy of the Gardner School Committee that home school education may be provided as determined by statute and the administrative guidelines. Copies of the administrative guidelines are on file in the office of the Superintendent. Acceptance and completion of a homeschooling plan does not meet the requirements for a Gardner High School diploma.~~

The Gardner School Committee recognizes the right of parents or guardians to educate their child(ren) at home. The School Committee appreciates the personal and cultural uniqueness of each family and desires to ensure that the process by which school officials approve and review home education programs is both lawful and equitable.

The Massachusetts General Law requires the School Committee to determine that a Home Schooling program meet with the minimum standards established for public schools in the Commonwealth prior to approving such a program.

Therefore, when a parent or guardian of a student below the age of 16 wants to establish a home-based educational program for their child, the following procedures shall be followed in accordance with the law:

Prior to removing the child from public school:

- The parent/guardian must submit written notification of establishment of the home-based program to the appropriate administrator, and resubmit notification on an annual basis as long as the child or children are being educated in a home-based environment
- The Superintendent or their designee must provide the parent/guardian with written notification of approval of the home-based program
- The parent/guardian must certify in writing, on a form provided by the District, the name, age, place of residence, and number of hours of attendance of each child in the program.

The Superintendent or their designee shall give the notice to produce records required by law if there is probable cause to believe the program is not in compliance with the law. Factors to be considered by the Superintendent, their designee or School Committee in deciding whether or not to approve a home education proposal may be:

1. The proposed curriculum and the number of hours of instruction in each of the proposed subjects.
2. The competency of the parents/guardian to teach the children.

3. The textbooks, workbooks and other instructional aids to be used by the children and the lesson plans and teaching manuals to be used by the parents/guardian.
4. A mutually agreeable method of assessment which corresponds to the type of educational program being followed and may include one or more of the following:
 - a. Daily logs, journals, progress reports, portfolios or dated work samples;
 - b. An independent report made by someone acceptable to both superintendent or their designee and parent(s) or guardian(s);
 - c. A Periodic standardized testing of the children to ensure educational progress and the attainment of minimum standards
 - d. Consultation with the Superintendent or their designee;
 - e. Any other method agreed to by both Superintendent or their designee and home educator(s).

A student being educated in a home-based program within the district will have access to extra-curricular activities. Children participating in extra-curricular activities must meet all requirements regarding immunizations. Acceptance and completion of a homeschooling plan does not meet the requirements for a Gardner High School diploma.

The Superintendent or their designee has the responsibility for the development of the procedures and forms necessary for the implementation of this policy.

[Adopted: April 2001]
[Reviewed: September 2003]
[Reviewed: June 2007]
[Reviewed: September 2016]
[Reviewed: May 2020]
[Revised: 2024]

REMOTE LEARNING

In the event of a district-specific emergency requiring the use of remote learning, the superintendent of schools may declare such emergency and shall, as soon as possible, obtain the approval of the school committee. The remote learning plan below will be applicable in cases of disease, weather emergencies, destruction or damage to schools rendering them inaccessible, or other extraordinary circumstances, including emergencies declared by government officials, the school committee, or the superintendent.

When it becomes necessary for the school district to provide support to students who are unable to attend classes or access appropriate services due to an extended closure, the superintendent shall establish a plan and procedures to ensure that such services are provided. The provision of educational services may include the use of technology and devices, and strategies designed to support student learning away from school.

The remote learning plan will, to the extent possible:

- Ensure the safety of all students and faculty in coordination with appropriate local and state departments and agencies;
- Provide support for student social and emotional wellbeing and address the implications of trauma experienced by students or faculty as a result of the emergency;
- Identify goals and strategies for maintaining standards of student achievement and school improvement plans;
- Ensure instruction and services are delivered by district educators and personnel as much as practicable;
- Utilize the most effective tools and resources available for students and faculty, including the skills and talents of district personnel, in the delivery of instruction and services and share resources as needed;
- Provide resources and services equitably to meet the needs and circumstances of all students;
- Identify remedial strategies necessary after the emergency to advance student achievement (i.e. after-school, extended day, summer school, and contingency scheduling to cancel vacations.);
- Gather information both during and after the period of emergency regarding the most effective means of remote learning to implement as appropriate.

In developing a remote learning plan, the superintendent will:

- Identify and prepare effective means for communicating with faculty, students, parents and community stakeholders.
- Collaborate with municipal agencies that support the schools and community.

- Consult with the school committee to identify any extraordinary actions necessary or authority required to administer emergency and remote learning plans. This includes any changes to district policies on the school calendar, grading, promotions and retentions, local graduation requirements, testing, and standards and accountability.
- Consult with administrators and principals to ensure the continuing education of students at all levels, including:
 - use of the most appropriate resources, tools and strategies to deliver the curricula given local circumstances and conditions;
 - equitable access to appropriate content for all students;
 - specific accommodations for students at high risk, including clients of special education, students with disabilities, English learners, students at economic disadvantage, homeless students, students in foster care and students of military families.
- Utilize available technological resources suitable for serving students at all levels. This inventory will be prepared in advance in anticipation of an emergency.
- Ensure the privacy rights of students, faculty and families are protected, including assessing the security of district technology.
- Consult with bargaining units to determine if modifications to collective bargaining agreements need to be established for the period of the emergency.
- Identify the financial implications of the emergency plan and recommend transfer of funds as may be necessary.

LEGAL REFS.: 20 U.S.C. §1232g Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

15 U.S.C. §§ 6501-6506 Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA)

CROSS REFS.: [EBCD](#) - Emergency Closings
[IGA/IGD](#) - Curriculum Development
[IGB](#) - Support Services Programs
[IHBEA](#) - English Learner Education
[IJND](#) - Access to Digital Resources
[IJNDB](#) - Empowered Digital Use
[IJNDC](#) - Internet Publication
[IJNDD](#) - Policy on Social Media
[IHBEA](#) - English Language Learners
[JB](#) - Equal Educational Opportunities
[JBB](#) - Educational Equity

SOURCE: MASC - May 2020

[Adopted: November 2020]

[Revised: 2024]

FIELD TRIPS

Field trips can bring the school and the community closer together, which can result in real life experiences that enrich the curriculum for students and also bring about better public relations. The School Committee will also encourage field trips as an integral part of the instructional programs in the schools.

The Superintendent will establish regulations to assure that:

1. All students have permission from a parent or guardian for trips.
2. All trips are properly supervised.
3. All safety precautions are observed.
4. All trips contribute substantially to the educational program.
5. All trips allow student access without regard of family ability to pay.

All out-of-state or extended (overnight) trips and excursions, except those required for student participation in tournament competition or contests, must have advance approval of the School Committee. Fundraising activities for such trips will be subject to approval by the appropriate Administrator.

Trip organizers must inform students and parents/guardians, in writing, if the trip is not sponsored by Gardner Public Schools. The School Committee will be notified that the trip is being organized. Trip organizers must also disseminate copies of this policy to parents/guardians of students attending the trip. If the school committee votes approval and the district disseminates information and collects funds, then it would be a school sponsored trip.

The presence of a staff member, or use of school facilities for meetings or trip promotion does not, by itself, constitute school sponsorship. There are many third party trip providers, especially for out of state and out of country trips, who will hire teachers to run their tours or rent facilities.

CROSS REF.: [JJH](#), Policy Relating to Field Trips Involving Late Night or Overnight Travel

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

[Adopted: April 2001]
 [Reviewed: September 2003]
 [Revised: March 2004]
 [Revised: January 2006]
 [Revised: April 2008]
 [Revised: October 2013]
 [Revised: November 2016]
 [Revised: February 2021]
[Revised: 2024]

SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

The school committee encourages volunteers in the schools. Parents/guardians, business representatives, senior citizens, and other community volunteers are recognized as important sources of support and expertise to enhance the instructional program and vital communication links with the community. CORI's are required for all volunteers of the Gardner Public Schools.

Authorizing a volunteer to perform certain duties is viewed as a supplement to school services. Professional and non-professional staff will never be removed from service or laid off as a result of volunteer use.

[Reference: MGL, Ch. 71, 83R, Ch. 6, 172I]

[Adopted: April 2003]

[Reviewed: June 2007]

[Reviewed: August 2013]

[Reviewed: September 2019]

[Revised: 2024]

STUDENT SUBMISSION TO EDUCATIONAL SURVEYS AND RESEARCH

In this policy, “surveys, analyses, or evaluations” refer to methods of gathering data for research purposes.

Without the prior written consent of the student's parent/guardian, or of the student if he/she is at least 18 years of age, no student shall be required as part of any program wholly or partially funded by the U.S. Department of Education to submit to any survey, analyses, or evaluation that reveals information concerning:

1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student's parent;
2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student's family;
3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
8. Income, other than as required by law to determine eligibility for school programs or for receiving financial assistance under such program.

All instructional materials, including teachers' manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary material which will be used in connection with any such survey, analysis, or evaluation shall be available upon request for inspection by the student's parent/guardian. For the purpose of this policy, "instructional material" does not include academic tests or assessments.

A parent/guardian may inspect, upon request, a survey created by a third party before the survey is administered or distributed to a student.

The Superintendent or designee will be responsible for implementing any procedures necessary to protect the privacy of participating students and to provide parents with access to surveys within a reasonable time before administration or distribution.

The School District will notify parents/guardians of this policy at least annually at the beginning of the school year and within a reasonable time of any substantive change in policy. Where practical, the District will also directly notify parents/guardians annually at the beginning of the school year when surveys, analyses, or evaluations are scheduled or anticipated. Parents/guardians shall have the opportunity to opt their child out of participation in any survey, analysis, or evaluation. Students who are 18 years of age or older may opt out of such surveys, analyses, or evaluations.

Parents/guardians or eligible students who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with the Family Policy Compliance Office of the U.S. Department of Education.

[Reference: Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, 20 U.S.C. Section 1232h; JRA, Student Records]

[Adopted: November 2018]

[Reviewed: April 2021]

| [Revised: 2024]

BULLYING

The Gardner Public Schools is committed to providing a safe, positive and productive educational environment where students can achieve the highest academic standards. To this end, bullying and retaliation are prohibited. No student shall be subjected to harassment, intimidation, bullying, or cyberbullying.

“Bullying” is the repeated use by one or more students or by a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extracurricular activity or paraprofessional of a written, verbal, or electronic expression, or a physical act or gesture, or any combination thereof, directed at a target victim [PNI] that: (i) Causes physical or emotional harm to the target-victim or damage to the target’s-victim’s property; (ii) places the target-victim in reasonable fear of harm to him/herself, or of damage to his/her property; (iii) creates a hostile environment at school for the targetvictim; (iv) infringes on the rights of the target-victim at school; ~~or~~ (v) materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school. For the purposes of this section, bullying shall include cyber-bullying.

Acts of bullying, which include cyberbullying, are prohibited

- on school grounds and property immediately adjacent to school grounds; at a school- sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program whether on or off school grounds; at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased, or used by a school district or school; and
- at a location, activity, function, or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by a school district or school, if the acts create a hostile environment at school for the target, infringe on the rights of the target at school, or materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying is also prohibited.

~~An “Aggressor” is a student or a member of a school staff including, but not limited to, an educator, administrator, school nurse, cafeteria worker, custodian, bus driver, athletic coach, advisor to an extra-curricular activity or paraprofessional who engages in bullying, cyber-bullying, or retaliation towards a student~~

~~“Cyber bullying” means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, which shall include, but shall not be limited to, any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a:~~

- ~~Wire~~
- ~~Radio~~
- ~~Electromagnetic~~
- ~~Photo-electronic or photo-optical system, including, but not limited to, electronic mail, internet communications, instant messages or facsimile communications.~~

~~Cyber bullying shall also include the creation of a web page or blog in which the creator assumes~~

~~the identity of another person or knowingly impersonates another person as author of posted content or messages, if the creation or impersonation creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.~~

~~Cyber bullying shall also include the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons, if the distribution or posting creates any of the conditions enumerated in the definition of bullying.~~

~~“Hostile environment” means a situation in which bullying causes the school environment to be permeated with intimidation, ridicule or insult that is sufficiently severe or pervasive to alter the conditions of the student’s education.~~

~~“Retaliation” means any form of intimidation, reprisal or harassment directed against a person who reports bullying; provides information during an investigation about bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying.~~

~~A “Target” means a student against whom bullying, cyber bullying, or retaliation has been perpetrated.~~

~~Bullying and cyber bullying may occur in and out of school, during and after school hours, at home and in locations outside of the home. When bullying and cyber bullying are alleged, the full cooperation and assistance of parents and families are expected.~~^[PN2]

~~For the purpose of this policy, whenever the term bullying is used it is to denote either bullying, or cyber bullying.~~

~~Bullying and retaliation are prohibited:~~

- ~~• On school grounds;~~
- ~~• On property immediately adjacent to school grounds;~~
- ~~• At school sponsored or school-related activities;~~
- ~~• At functions or programs whether on or off school grounds~~
- ~~• At school bus stops;~~
- ~~• On school buses or other vehicles owned, leased or used by the school district; or,~~
- ~~• Through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the Gardner Public Schools~~

~~Bullying and retaliation are prohibited at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the Gardner Public Schools if the act or acts in question:~~

- ~~• Create a hostile environment at school for the target;~~
- ~~• Infringe on the rights of the target at school; and/or~~
- ~~• Materially and substantially disrupt the education process or the orderly operation of a school.~~^[PN3]

Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan (“Plan”)

The ~~school district~~District, shall develop, adhere to, and update a ~~P~~plan to address bullying prevention and intervention in consultation with teachers, school staff, professional support personnel, ~~school~~volunteers, administrators, community representatives, ~~local~~law enforcement ~~ageneies~~, students, parents and guardians. The ~~P~~plan shall apply to students and all school staff members ~~of a school staff~~, including, but not limited to, educators, administrators, school nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians, bus drivers, athletic coaches, advisors to an extracurricular activity and paraprofessionals. The consultation shall include, but not be limited to, notice and a public comment period. The ~~P~~plan shall be updated at least biennially.

The Principal in each building^[PN4], or their designee^[PN5], is responsible for the implementation and oversight of the bullying prevention and implementation planPlan within his or her school.

Reporting

Students, who believe that they are a target of bullying, observe an act of bullying, or who have reasonable grounds to believe that these behaviours are taking place, are obligated to report incidents to a member of the school staff. The target shall, however, not be subject to discipline for failing to report bullying.

Each school shall have a means for anonymous reporting by students of incidents of bullying. No formal disciplinary action shall be taken solely on the basis of an anonymous report.

Any student who knowingly makes a false accusation of bullying shall be subject to disciplinary action.

Parents or guardians, or members of the community, are encouraged to report an incident of bullying as soon as possible.

A member of a school staff shall immediately report any instance of bullying the staff member has witnessed or become aware of to the school principal or their designee.

Investigation Procedures

The Principal or their designee, upon receipt of a viable report, shall promptly contact the parents or guardians of a student who has been the alleged target or alleged aggressor of bullying. The school procedures for responding to the bullying or retaliation and actions being taken to prevent further acts of bullying or retaliation shall be discussed.

Notice to the parent shall be provided in the primary language of the home.

The school principal or a designee shall promptly investigate the report of bullying, using a Bullying Incident Report Form which may include interviewing the alleged target, alleged aggressor, staff members, students and/or witnesses.

Support staff shall assess an alleged target's needs for protection and create and implement a safety plan that shall restore a sense of safety for that student.

Confidentiality shall be used to protect a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or is witness to or has reliable information about an act of bullying.

If the school principal or a designee determines that bullying has occurred he/she shall take appropriate disciplinary action and if it is believed that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor, the principal shall consult with the school's resource officer and the Superintendent to determine if criminal charges are warranted. If it is determined that criminal charges are warranted, the local law enforcement agency shall be notified. The principal shall document the reasons for his or her decision to notify law enforcement.

The investigation shall be completed within fourteen school days from the date of the report. The parents or guardians shall be contacted upon completion of the investigation and informed of the

results, including whether the allegations were found to be factual, whether a violation of this policy was found, and whether disciplinary action has or shall be taken. At a minimum the Principal or his/her designee shall contact the parents or guardians as to the status of the investigation on a weekly basis.

Disciplinary actions for students who have committed an act of bullying or retaliation shall be in accordance with district disciplinary policies.

Each school shall document any incident of bullying that is reported per this policy and a file shall be maintained by the Principal or designee. A monthly report shall be provided to the Superintendent.

If an incident of bullying or retaliation occurs on school grounds and involves a former student under the age of 21 who is no longer enrolled in the school district, the principal of the school informed of the bullying or retaliation shall notify the local law enforcement agency if the principal has a reasonable basis to believe that criminal charges may be pursued against the aggressor.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality shall be maintained to the extent consistent with the school's obligations under law. A principal's notification to a parent about an incident or a report of bullying or retaliation must comply with confidentiality requirements of Massachusetts Student Record Regulations, 603-CMR 23.00 and the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations.

A principal may disclose a determination of bullying or retaliation to local law enforcement without the consent of the student or parent. The principal shall communicate in a manner that protects the privacy of targets, student witnesses, and aggressors to the extent practicable under the circumstances.

A principal may disclose student record information about a target or aggressor to appropriate parties in addition to law enforcement in connection with a health or safety emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals. It is limited to the period of emergency and does not allow for blanket disclosure of student record information. The principal must document the disclosures and reasons determined that a health or safety emergency exists.

Retaliation

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying shall be prohibited.

Student Assistance

The Gardner Public Schools shall provide counselling or referral to appropriate services, including guidance, academic intervention, and protection to students, both targets and aggressors, affected by bullying, as necessary.

Training and Assessment

~~Annual training shall be provided for school employees and volunteers who have significant contact with students in preventing, identifying, responding to, and reporting incidents of bullying.~~

~~Age-appropriate, evidence-based instruction on bullying prevention shall be incorporated into the curriculum for all K to 12 students.~~

Publication and Notice

~~Annual written notice of the relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to students and their parents or guardians, in age-appropriate terms.~~

~~Annual written notice of the bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be provided to all school staff. The faculty and staff at each school shall be trained annually on the bullying prevention and intervention plan applicable to the school.~~

~~Relevant sections of the bullying prevention and intervention plan relating to the duties of faculty and staff shall be included in the school employee handbook.~~

~~The bullying prevention and intervention plan shall be posted on the Gardner Public Schools website.~~

~~Before the first day of each school year, the superintendent or designee shall communicate with the chief of police or designee to discuss procedures and updates and any other subject appropriate to how the school district will communicate with the local law enforcement agency regarding suspected criminal charges for bullying incidents.~~^[PN6]

~~LEGAL REFS: Title VII, Section 703, Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended; Federal Regulation 74676 Issued by EEO Commission; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; 603 CMR 26.00; 603 CMR 49 MGL Sc 71:37O as amended; MGL 265:43, 43A; MGL 268:13B; MGL 269:14A~~

~~REFERENCES: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Model Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan;~~

~~CROSS REFS: AC, Non-discrimination; ACAB, Sexual Harassment; JBA, Student-to-Student Harassment; JICFA, Hazing; JK, Student Discipline Regulations]~~

[Adopted: January 8, 2001]

[Reviewed: May 2003]

[Revised: June 2007]

[Revised: December 2010]

[Revised: May 2014]

[Revised: May 2017]

[Revised: March 2021]

GRADE PLACEMENT AND ELIGIBILITY FOR HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION OF
STUDENTS LEAVING A CHARTER SCHOOL AND SEEKING TO ENROLL IN A
DISTRICT SCHOOL

A student may withdraw from a Commonwealth charter school at any time and enroll in the school district in which said student resides. To maintain enrollment stability, encourage promotion based on academic standards, and discourage social promotion, the school district will consult with the student's charter school regarding placement and eligibility for graduation. The District will enroll the student at the grade level the District determines appropriate.

The time of the school year when enrollment is sought may be a factor in determining the student's grade level placement. The school district may determine that a student seeking enrollment after the mid-point of the academic year may not be eligible for promotion or graduation in that academic year.

[Reference: Chapter 12, Section 11, Acts of 2010]

[Adopted: March 2011]

[Revised: December 2019]



Gardner Public Schools

Catherine A. Goguen, Ed.D., *Chief Academic Officer*

www.gardnerk12.org

70 Waterford Street, Gardner, MA 01440

(978) 632-1000

March 28, 2024

Data Driven Instruction: (MTSS – Systems, Data, & Practice Update)

Over the past several years, the District has been developing and implementing a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) model utilizing data from various evidence-based sources to monitor and adjust social, emotional, behavioral and instructional practices. Understanding that students must have the social, emotional and behavioral skills to maximize learning and academic achievement, the District began this work with a focus on the social, emotional, and behavioral legs of the model.

In the fall of 2021 the District also began to develop and implement the academic work of MTSS following the three step strategic plan noted below.

3 Step Academic Plan

TIER ONE: STEPS TO IMPLEMENTATION			
Step One...		Step Three...	
Systems		Practice	
Team	Systems	Data	Practice
Building Leadership Team (BLT) Review Data to Support Professional Development and coaching of staff and teacher leaders	Review Data for Effective CPT Team Facilitation & Development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Observe CPT Meeting Agenda, Minutes & Goals Admin/Teacher Leader Coaching Meetings 	Ensure Assessment Implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LinkIt! Formative Assessments Common Classroom Assessments of Objectives/Learning Targets LinkIt! Benchmark Assessments Admin/Teacher Leader Coaching Meetings 	Review Data to Assess Effectiveness of Tier 1 Supports and Fidelity to Practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mini Learning Walks to assess fidelity of practices Lesson Plans Results of LinkIt! Benchmark Assessments Admin/Teacher Leader Coaching Meetings
Teacher Leaders lead their Common Planning Time (CPT) Team to promote Data-Driven Instruction and Evidence-based Effective Practices	CPT Meeting Goals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align curriculum, instruction and assessments to the state standards so they are common to all grade-level teachers Decide how students can demonstrate mastery of the standard Unpack the standards to identify Objectives/Learning Targets Develop Lesson Plans that meet the standards/Objectives/Learning Targets 	Implement Assessments to Generate Relevant Data <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LinkIt! Formative Assessments Common Classroom Assessments of Objectives/Learning Targets LinkIt! Benchmark Assessments 	Review Assessment Results to Inform Responsive Practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Effective Use of Classroom's Inclusive Supports Four Evidence-Based Practices

During the summer of 2022, administrators and staff were trained and supported in the development and implementation of high level effective student tasks to address the standards and big ideas of each grade level/content area. In the fall of 2022 staff members began transitioning to step 2 of the strategic plan by using data from MCAS, summative, and benchmark assessments in literacy and mathematics to determine areas of instructional focus. An emphasis has been placed on developing student tasks that align with the level of MCAS-like critical thinking questions and instructional plans to support those student tasks.

During the summer of 2023 and throughout the 2023-2024 school year the District began to combine the work in step two of the strategic plan with the work in step three of the strategic plan to implement targeted learning experiences for students based on the data analysis from universal screeners, formative, and summative assessments. This work will continue within the framework of MTSS through varied sustainability measures such as, monitoring the fidelity of implementation of evidence-based practices as well as through adjustments to practice based on student achievement/growth monitoring.

Across all schools, staff are utilizing common planning time meetings to create robust student tasks, monitor student progress, and update instructional practices. As we move into the summer of 2024 we will begin to shift more of an emphasis on the training in the use of evidence-based instructional practices and targeted interventions/supports based on in the moment checks for understanding and other assessment data. Professional Development during the 2024-2025 school year will focus on supporting the work of administrators and staff in improving and sustaining all three phases of MTSS implementation of Tier 1. The District will also begin to support the successful implementation of Tier 2 and 3 practices as planning for these tiers is currently beginning.

Future professional development and administrative/staff work will focus on merging data analysis of academic outcomes with data from SEL outcomes to better support our students from a holistic perspective.



Gardner Public Schools

Courtney Dunn, *Grants & Communications Manager*

www.gardnerk12.org

160 Elm Street, Gardner, MA 01440

(978) 632-1000

Grants & Communications Update to School Committee – April 8, 2024

Grants

FY24 Grants

The district has applied for, and is waiting for approval of, the following grants:

- FY24 FC213 Strategies to Reduce or Eliminate the Use of Time-Out Rooms

The district is exploring applying for the following grants:

- Brookline Center Newcomer Grant to assist with addressing the social determinants of health

Community • Appreciation • Responsibility • Excellence



Gardner Public Schools

Joyce West, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

www.gardnerk12.org

130 Elm Street, Gardner MA 01440

(978) 630-4076

April 1, 2024

Report to the School Committee Special Education Updates

Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC):

The SEPAC held a Parent and Student Basic Rights Training in March 2023. This is a required annual training. The District has posted the presentation/powerpoint on the website for anyone unable to attend. SEPAC and the District are working to translate the powerpoint into other languages as needed.

Special Education Update:

District special education trends for placement have been consistent over the past 5 years. The district annually tracks trend data using the Student Information System (SIS) data submitted to the DESE each October 1st. This information typically comes out by December. The District also compares trends with the state to understand where we are falling in comparison to what other districts are doing.

DESE message about the importance of monitoring placement

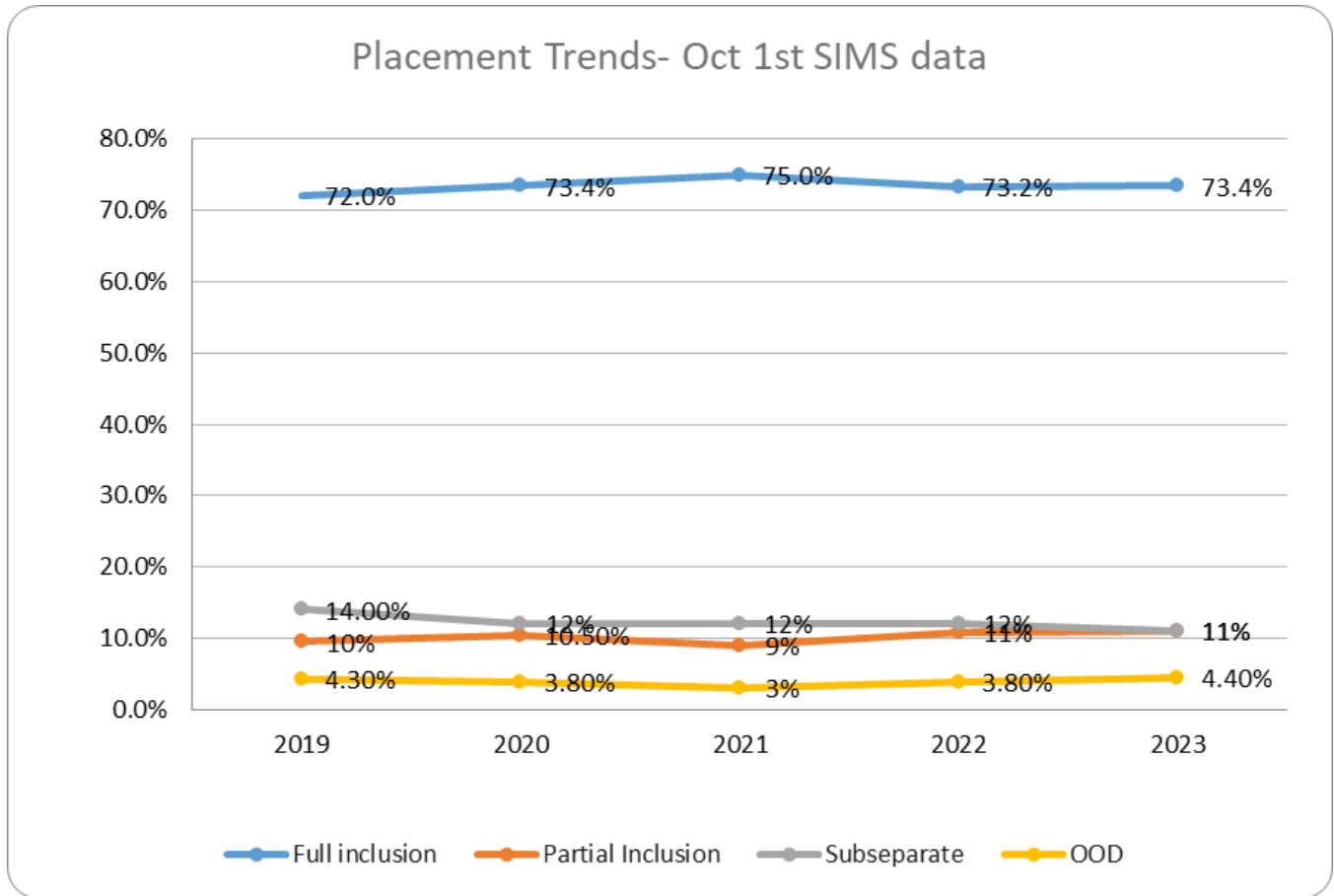
*"A student's **placement** matters because:*

- *A student with an IEP who is in regular classes has more opportunity for the same schoolwork and learning standards as all students have.*
- *The more time a student with an IEP spends with peers, the more they will be able to make friends and be part of school life.*
- *The more a student with an IEP can go to school and learn with peers, the more opportunity they have to achieve and be part of their community."*

Placement trends are important to review as the data indicates the level of need for our students and how the district needs to alter supports. These trends also indicate the movement of where student services are needed as students progress and when students are initially identified for needing special education services.

These trends support the consistency of decision making and understanding of special education. The district has not experienced extreme spikes and dips which indicates that our practices are consistent and those with decision making authority are consistent across the district.

District Placement Trends



The biggest change and increasing trend in the District has been with students identified for a day school placement. The October 1, 2023 data shows a slight increase with out of district placements, however, during the 2023-24 school year there have been more referrals to this placement category than over the past 5 years.

The increase in student referrals to more restrictive settings is a trend that many districts across the state are experiencing. Most Public and Private Day Schools have waiting lists and acceptance into programs is difficult given the few available placement openings.

State Trends as last reported in 2022

Data Review

English

% of School Age Students Receiving Services by Environment and Year

