

## **Agenda School Committee Meeting 11.12.24**

### **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**

**Tuesday, November 12, 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. **Recognitions by the Superintendent – Gardner Immigrant Circle - Volunteers**
- D. **Consent Agenda**
  - a. Approval of Minutes: October 15, 2024
  - b. Accept Grant Funds on Grant listing dated November 12, 2024 in the amount of \$150,000.00
    - a. Warrant # 25-14, dated October 03, 2024, in the amount of \$917,440.55
    - b. Warrant # 25-16, dated October 17, 2024, in the amount of \$219,680.61
    - c. Warrant # 25-17, dated October 24, 2024, in the amount of \$616,786.82
    - d. Warrant # 25-18, dated October 31, 2024, in the amount of \$425,383.28
  - e. Donations –
    - GHS Class of 1974 \$1,048.14
    - Jersey Mike’s \$2,214.94
- E. **Subcommittee Report**  
Finance Subcommittee

**Agenda School Committee Meeting 11.12.24**

F. **Student Advisory Board** – Nora Morris

G. **Discussion Items:**

**New Business**

**Item #3651 Second Reading of Policies (Vote Required)**

**JICA** – Student Dress Code

**JJD** – Athletic Policy

**JJF** – Student Activity Accounts

**JJIF** – Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Athletic Activities

**JK** – Student Conduct

**JKAA** – Physical Restraint Policy and Procedures

The Policy Subcommittee recommends acceptance of the above policies

**Item #3652** Contract Amendments to Unit A and B **(Vote Required)**

**Item #3653** Curriculum Coordinator Update with District MCAS **(Presentation)**

**Item #3654** Director of School Health Services Update **(Information)**

**Item #3655** Grants Administrator Update **(Information)**

**Item #3656** Special Education Update **(Information)**

**Item #3657** SEPAC Update **(Information)**

H. **Communications**

I. **Final Comments of School Committee**

J. **Executive Session**

K. **Next Meetings:**

**Meeting date for next School Committee meeting;**

Monday, December 9, 2024 @6:30PM

L. **Adjournment**

**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**BRIEFING**

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

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Subcommittee recommends ratification of Warrant #25-14.
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    - GHS Class of 1974 \$1,048.14
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- E. **Subcommittee Report**  
Finance Subcommittee
- F. **Student Advisory Board-**
- G. **Discussion Items:**
  - New Business**
  - Item #3651 Second Reading of Policies (Vote Required)**
    - JICA** – Student Dress Code
    - JJD** – Athletic Policy
    - JJF** – Student Activity Accounts
    - JJIF** – Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Athletic Activities
    - JK** – Student Conduct
    - JKAA** – Physical Restraint Policy and Procedures
  - The Policy Subcommittee recommends acceptance of the above policies
  - Item #3652 Contract Amendments to Unit A and B (Vote Required)**

## **Briefing**

### **School Committee Meeting 11.12.2024**

**Item #3653** Curriculum Coordinator Update with District MCAS **(Presentation)**

**Item #3654** Director of School Health Services **(Information)**

**Item #3655** Grants Administrator Update **(Information)**

**Item #3656** Special Education Update **(Information)**

**Item #3657** SEPAC Update **(Information)**

H. **Communications**

I. **Final Comments of School Committee**

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K. **Next Meetings:**

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Monday, December 9, 2024 @6:30PM

L. **Adjournment**

# **Gardner School Committee**

**City Council Chambers, 95 Pleasant Street, Gardner, Massachusetts**

**Regular Meeting – October 15, 2024**

Members present: Mayor Michael Nicholson  
Rachel Cormier  
Anne Hurst  
Shannon Ward-Leighton  
John LaFreniere  
Jennifer Pelavin  
Robert Swartz

School Personnel Present: Dr. Mark Pellegrino, Superintendent  
Terri Hillman, Recording Secretary  
Dr. Catherine Goguen, Chief Academic Officer  
Mark Hawke, Director of Finance and Operations  
Joyce West, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Student Advisor: Nora Morris

## **Call to Order**

Mayor 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 requested to speak.

## **Recognitions by the Superintendent**

Dr. Pellegrino introduced the new Student Advisor – Nora Morris. Nora is a GHS Senior and serves as Class Treasurer. She is also Secretary of the Leo Club, President for No Place for Hate and for the past two years has run the morning announcements, a shared duty.

## **Consent Agenda**

**Mr. Swartz moved to accept the Consent Agenda as presented:**

- **Acceptance of Minutes, September 9, 2024**
- **Ratification of the following Warrants as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee:**
  - **Warrant #25-10 dated 09/05/24 in the amount of \$426,759.42**
  - **Warrant #25-11 dated 09/12/24 in the amount of \$265,937.74**
  - **Warrant #25-12 dated 09/19/24 in the amount of \$105,140.62**

- **Warrant #25-13 dated 09/26/24 in the amount of \$156,918.00**  
**Seconded by Mrs. Ward-Leighton** **Vote - so voted.**  
**Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.**

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Finance Subcommittee**

Mr. LaFreniere, Chairperson, reported that the Finance Subcommittee met on October 9, 2024. Minutes of the meeting were presented.

The Subcommittee reviewed the Expense Report and general questions about various line items were asked and answered. Mr. Hawke noted that the GHS substitute line is already negative due to maternity and sick leaves. Also there has been movement in positions since the budget was created and is still occurring. Ms. Vickery moves the funds in salary lines to reflect this movement. The negative ELL Teacher line should become positive in about three months.

The new fence at Watkins Field was installed and includes a gate for facility vehicles. The GHS HVAC project is nearing completion.

**Policy Subcommittee**

Mrs. Hurst, Chair of the Policy Subcommittee, reported that the Subcommittee met on September 11, 2024. Minutes of the meeting were presented.

The following policies were reviewed and no changes were required and they will be updated “Reviewed September 2024”:

- JFBB-1      School Choice
- JJA            Student Organizations
- JJH            Student Travel
- JKD            Student Suspension/Expulsion

Six policies were recommended to the full School Committee for a first reading. See Item #3642 – First Reading of Policies.

**Student Advisory Board**

Ms. Nora Morris read her report updating happenings at GHS for the month of September. Among the many activities held were the annual Open House, the annual Safety Assemblies for all schools, and the All-City Band Night. The fall athletic programs are off to a great start. The new cell phone rules are going extremely well. Students are cooperating.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Item #3642 – First Reading of Policies**

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

- JICA Student Dress Code
- JJD Athletic Policy
- JJF Student Activity Accounts
- JHF Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Athletic Activities
- JK Student Conduct
- JKAA Physical Restraint Policy and Procedures

**Item #3643 - Second Reading of Policies**

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

- AC Non-Discrimination Policy
- BHE Use of Electronic Messaging by School Committee Members
- IJNDB Acceptable Use of Technology
- IJOA-E Field Trip Approval Form
- JIH Searches and Interrogations

Seconded by Mrs. Pelavin.

Vote - so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Mrs. Hurst moved that the District School Committee vote to approve the following new policies for adoption as recommended by the Policy Subcommittee:

- EHAA District Security Relating to Technology (for adoption)
- EHB Data and Records Retention (for adoption)
- GBEE Personnel Use of Technology (for adoption)
- IJNDD Policy on Staff Use of Social Media (for adoption)
- KDCB District Website and Social Media (for adoption)
- KDD News Media Relationships/News Releases (for adoption)

Seconded by Mrs. Pelavin.

Vote – so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

**Item #3644 - Superintendent's Goals**

Mrs. Pelavin moved that the District School Committee vote to approve the Superintendent’s Goals FY25 as presented at the September 9, 2024 School Committee Meeting.

Seconded by Mrs. Ward-Leighton.

Vote – so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

**Item #3645 - District Improvement Plan**

Mrs. Pelavin moved that the District School Committee vote to approve the District Improvement Plan 2024-2027 as presented at the September 9, 2024 School Committee Meeting.

Seconded by Mrs. Ward-Leighton.

Vote – so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

**Item #3646 – Curriculum Coordinator’s Update**

The Curriculum Coordinator’s Report was included in the members’ packets. Dr. Goguen, Chief Academic Officer, was present this evening

**Item #3647 – Director of Multilingual Learners Update**

The English Language Learners Update was included in members’ packets. Ms. Lori Simpson, Director of Multilingual Learner Education, was not present this evening.

**Item #3648 - Grants Administrator Update**

The Grants & Communications Update was included in the members' packets. Mrs. Dunn, Grants & Communications Manager, was not present this evening.

**Item #3649 - Special Education Update**

The Special Education Update Report was included in the members’ packets. Ms. Joyce West, Director of Pupil Personnel Services, was present this evening.

**Item #3650– SEPAC Report**

The SEPAC Report was included in the Special Education Update. Co-Chairs, Katie Donovan and Laurie Davis, are planning a virtual meeting on October 17 to welcome attendees and to provide an overview of SPEAC.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Dr. Pellegrino spoke about the Welcome Back events held at the schools prior to opening day. They were well attended. He reported on the Educational Conference he and Ms. Joyce West attended in Chicago. Ms. West was invited to speak and Gardner was recognized for the work we are doing. She did a phenomenal job.

The cell phone policy is working and parents are on board. The teachers are working hard and walk-throughs have taken place. The Homecoming event went well.



**FINAL COMMENTS**

Mrs. Ward-Leighton spoke about the cell phone policy. She also spoke about the importance of voting and especially being informed on the questions on the ballot.

Mrs. Hurst thanked Nora Morris for taking time from her busy life to represent GHS on the School Committee.

Mrs. Pelavin spoke about the new cell phone policy. She welcomed Nora Morris to the School Committee.

Nora Morris reported seeing a difference in classes with the new cell phone policy.

Mr. Swartz reminded everyone to vote on November 5, 2024.

Mr. LaFreniere welcomed Nora Morris.

Mrs. Cormier welcomed Nora Morris. She spoke about the cell phone policy and how it prevents distractions in the classrooms.

Mayor Nicholson spoke about the sports teams and the excellent band night. The Home Coming Dance was held in the City Hall Auditorium. It is great to see the Auditorium being used again. He reminded everyone that early voting for the November 5 election is underway.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. Swartz moved to adjourn.**

**Seconded by Mrs. Pelavin.**

**Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.**

**Vote – so voted.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm

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**Rachel Cormier**  
**Secretary**

T. Hillman, Recording Secretary

# Gardner Public Schools

Courtney Dunn, *Grants & Communications Manager*



www.gardnerk12.org

160 Elm Street, Gardner, MA 01440

(978) 632-1000

## Grant Funding for Approval – November 12, 2024

Grant Title	Amount	Grant Period	Use of Funds
FY25 Early College Support Grant	\$150,000	10/28/2024-6/30/2025	To support the Early College Program at Gardner High School and the Gateway Program at Gardner Academy.

Community • Appreciation • Responsibility • Excellence

*The Gardner Public School District does not discriminate due to race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, age, homelessness or limited English proficiency.*

**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 25-14

WARRANT DAT 10/03/24

Location	Office / General / Custodial Supplies	Curriculum	Athletics	IT	Field Trip	Prof Dev	Facilities	TOTAL
High School		\$768.23	\$4,728.89	\$6,269.07			\$30,150.47	\$41,916.66
Middle School		\$1,290.00		\$1,443.03			\$22,669.50	\$25,402.53
Gardner Elementary School		\$1,243.20		\$2,722.32			\$39,971.41	\$43,936.93
GALT							\$3,325.76	\$3,325.76
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$3,301.43</b>	<b>\$4,728.89</b>	<b>\$10,434.42</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$96,117.14</b>	<b>\$114,581.88</b>

Location	Office Supplies	Transport	IT	Assessment	Tuition	Prof Services	Legal	Facilities	Dues & mem	Carry over	TOTAL
Special Education	\$341.24	\$5,250.00	\$992.07		\$25,560.88	\$10,741.96					\$42,886.15
Administration	\$178.49		\$16,033.91					\$2,948.42			\$19,160.82
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$519.73</b>	<b>\$5,250.00</b>	<b>\$17,025.98</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$25,560.88</b>	<b>\$10,741.96</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$2,948.42</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$62,046.97</b>

Revolving	\$83,317.53
Grants	\$654,325.86
Student Activity Acct.	\$136.37
Bond	\$3,031.94
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$740,811.70</b>

<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$917,440.55</b>
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**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 25-16

WARRANT DAT 10/17/24

Location	Office / General / Custodial Supplies	Curriculum	Athletics	IT	Field Trip	Utilities	Facilities	TOTAL
High School		\$1,418.23	\$7,176.88			\$1,636.89	\$4,881.87	\$15,113.87
Middle School		\$1,986.25	\$252.00			\$628.41	\$1,557.19	\$4,423.85
Gardner Elementary School	\$1,832.25					\$1,033.44	\$962.60	\$3,828.29
GALT						\$87.50	\$3,204.17	\$3,291.67
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$1,832.25</b>	<b>\$3,404.48</b>	<b>\$7,428.88</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$3,386.24</b>	<b>\$10,605.83</b>	<b>\$26,657.68</b>

Location	Office Supplies	Transport	Dues & Mem	Assessment	Tuition	Insurance	Legal	Facilities	Utilities	Carry over	TOTAL
Special Education		\$6,445.00			\$88,950.80						\$95,395.80
Administration	\$21.20	\$2,760.00	\$2,999.00			\$1,120.00		\$167.05	\$87.50	\$2,185.20	\$9,339.95
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$21.20</b>	<b>\$9,205.00</b>	<b>\$2,999.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$88,950.80</b>	<b>\$1,120.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$167.05</b>	<b>\$87.50</b>	<b>\$2,185.20</b>	<b>\$104,735.75</b>

Revolving	\$22,842.70
Grants	\$28,182.73
School Choice	\$33,687.25
Rockwell Grant	\$3,574.50
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$88,287.18</b>

<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$219,680.61</b>
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**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 25-17

WARRANT DAT 10/24/24

Location	Office / General / Custodial Supplies	Curriculum	Athletics	IT	Student Act	Utilities	Facilities	TOTAL
High School	\$926.04	\$1,923.63	\$478.90	\$549.00	\$445.00	\$136.43	\$6,157.18	\$10,616.18
Middle School	\$2,488.01	\$826.40				\$187.49	\$2,673.58	\$6,175.48
Gardner Elementary School	\$195.67	\$111.71					\$3,479.72	\$3,787.10
GALT						\$5.00	\$890.62	\$895.62
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$3,609.72</b>	<b>\$2,861.74</b>	<b>\$478.90</b>	<b>\$549.00</b>	<b>\$445.00</b>	<b>\$328.92</b>	<b>\$13,201.10</b>	<b>\$21,474.38</b>

Location	Office Supplies	Transport	IT	Assessment	Tuition	Prof Serv	Prof Dev	Facilities	Utilities	Carry over	TOTAL
Special Education	\$84.55	\$36,267.68		\$407.76	\$79,263.35	\$1,687.80					\$117,711.14
Administration	\$183.15	\$81,000.00	\$4,082.59				\$2,011.98	\$3,345.55	\$5.00	\$11,222.54	\$101,850.81
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$267.70</b>	<b>#####</b>	<b>\$4,082.59</b>	<b>\$407.76</b>	<b>\$79,263.35</b>	<b>\$1,687.80</b>	<b>\$2,011.98</b>	<b>\$3,345.55</b>	<b>\$5.00</b>	<b>\$11,222.54</b>	<b>\$219,561.95</b>

Revolving	\$190,513.19
Grants	\$184,922.90
Student Activity Acct	\$314.40
Rockwell Grant	
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$375,750.49</b>

<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$616,786.82</b>
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**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 25-18

WARRANT DAT 10/31/24

Location	Office / General / Custodial Supplies	Curriculum	Athletics	IT	Student Act	Utilities	Facilities	TOTAL
High School		\$122.99	\$6,966.20		\$365.00		\$1,129.40	\$8,583.59
Middle School	\$624.28	\$114.38					\$1,033.95	\$1,772.61
Gardner Elementary School	\$1,105.30	\$2,437.61					\$103.00	\$3,645.91
GALT		\$264.91					\$1,323.55	\$1,588.46
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$1,729.58</b>	<b>\$2,674.98</b>	<b>\$6,966.20</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$365.00</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$3,589.90</b>	<b>\$15,590.57</b>

Location	Legal	Transport	IT	Med Exams	Tuition	Curriculum	Prof Dev	Facilities	Utilities	Carry over	TOTAL
Special Education		\$73,688.06			\$3,203.60	\$749.85					\$77,641.51
Administration	\$192.00		\$26,758.18	\$1,152.00		\$1,672.50	\$3,790.00	\$3,538.70	\$0.00	\$4,521.99	\$41,625.37
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$192.00</b>	<b>\$73,688.06</b>	<b>\$26,758.18</b>	<b>\$1,152.00</b>	<b>\$3,203.60</b>	<b>\$2,422.35</b>	<b>\$3,790.00</b>	<b>\$3,538.70</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$4,521.99</b>	<b>\$119,266.88</b>

Revolving	\$437.26
Grants	\$36,373.39
School Choice	\$244,709.18
Student Activity Acct	\$9,006.00
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$290,525.83</b>

<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$425,383.28</b>
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Brenda Smith &lt;smithb@gardnerk12.org&gt;

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**Donations**

1 message

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**Mark Hawke** <hawkem@gardnerk12.org>  
To: "Smith, Brenda" <smithb@gardnerk12.org>

Tue, Nov 5, 2024 at 9:16 AM

GHS Class of 1974 - \$1,048.14 - The GHS Class of 1974 recently held their 50th reunion. They decided to close out their class account and asked what GHS may need as a gift. After consultation with Principal Bolger, it was determined that another round picnic table to go at Watkins Field would be best. This donation will go toward that table.

Jersey Mike's - \$2,214.94 - Hosted a fundraiser for the music department. Gardner residents who received a coupon through the mail could donate a minimum of \$3 to the department in exchange for a regular sub. The four-day fundraiser collected \$2,214.94 for the GHS Music Department. Band Director Douglas Lepisto said the department does not have a specific plan for using the money, but they will add it to the department's revolving fund for future unexpected costs, instrument repairs, or equipment updates.

Mark Hawke  
Director of Finance & Operations  
Ph:978-632-1000  
DL:978-410-4302  
Cell:978-407-6140



Gardner Public Schools

## STUDENT DRESS CODE

School officials shall not abridge the rights of students as to personal dress and appearance except if such officials determine that such personal dress and appearance promote alcohol, tobacco, drug use, violence, or violate reasonable standards of health, safety, cleanliness, and the orderly operation of the school.

Student dress will comply with requirements for health and safety, will not be destructive to school property, and will not interfere with the educational process. The administration is authorized to take action in instances where individual dress does not meet the stated requirements ~~in the respective school handbooks~~.

Student, faculty, or parent groups may recommend appropriate dress for school on special occasions. A student will not be prevented from attending school or a school function, or otherwise be discriminated against, so long as ~~his or her~~their dress and appearance meet the requirements set forth above.

[Reference: MGL Ch. 71, Section 83; 192nd General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts: Acts of 2022, Chapter 117]

[Adopted: June 1998]

[Revised: May 2003]

[Revised: December 2006]

[Reviewed: February 2014]

[Reviewed: December 2019]

[Revised: November 2022]

[Revised: 2024]



## ATHLETIC POLICY

Participation in interscholastic sports in the Gardner Public Schools is a privilege extended to those students who wish to represent our school and communities. The students who exercise this privilege of participation assume responsibility for their behavior. Student-athletes are expected to conduct themselves at all times in a manner that will reflect positively upon themselves, their school and their communities.

### **Rules for Student Athlete Participants**

In conjunction with this philosophy, the following regulations shall be adhered to by all student-athletes participating in any sport:

1. All student-athletes must abide by the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (M.I.A.A.) rules. A copy of these rules may be found on the M.I.A.A. web site ([www.miaa.net](http://www.miaa.net)).
2. The athletic department provides bus transportation or a suitable substitute to all away games, scrimmages and or clinics. All team members are expected to travel with their team. Exceptions to this rule will be considered when a written request is made to the athletic director by the athlete's parent(s) or guardian prior to the contest. The athletic director may give permission for an athlete to ride HOME from a game site with their parents.
3. MIAA rule 56 states all students who participate in athletics must have written proof of a current physical examination and updated immunization records signed by a physician and dated within thirteen (13) months of the official starting date for that sport for any athletic participation.
4. "Captain's practices" are not endorsed or recognized by Gardner Public schools.
5. From the first allowable day of fall practice, through the end of the academic year or final athletic competition of the year, whichever is later, a student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use or consume, possess, buy or sell, or give away any beverage containing alcohol, any tobacco product, marijuana, steroids, or any controlled substance.
6. All rules and regulations contained in the Student Handbook and Athletic Handbook must be followed.
7. Students are expected to be present for all practices in order to be considered eligible for games. Should a student miss practice for an unexcused reason; they will be considered ineligible for game participation. This includes vacation weeks (Christmas, February, April), Holidays, and Fall preseason (please note that the fall season begins in mid-august and participation guidelines apply accordingly). Exceptions to these rules are subject to review by the Athletic Director.

6.8. Students who are interested in participating in a sport are expected to join the team within one week of the start of the season to be considered eligible to participate. Please note that in the fall, this policy is extended through the first week of school. Exceptions to these rules are subject to review by the Athletic Director.

**Do we remove the language for user fees given that we don't charge them, or keep the language in just in case they come back?**

### **Athletic User Fees**

Students who wish to participate in the Interscholastic Athletic Program at Gardner Public Schools ~~may~~ shall be required to pay an Athletic User Fee. The payment of the fee does not provide a student with any special consideration or entitlement with respect to playing time. Rather, fees collected in this manner are designed to help defray the operational costs of the Gardner Public Schools athletic budget.

### **Fees**

A User Fee will be assessed at the discretions of the Athletic Director, and will be communicated for each season, a maximum fee will be set. for families, and. any waivers will be given at the discretion of the Athletic Director.

In the event a student is unable to or decides not to participate in interscholastic athletics prior to the first contest for that sport, a full refund of the fee will be granted *provided that the Director of Athletics is notified prior to and up to the date of that contest.*

**Do we remove the language for user fees given that we don't charge them, or keep the language in just in case they come back?**

[Adopted: December 2010]

[Revised: April 2017]

[Revised: April 2021]

[Revised: 2024]

## **STUDENT ACTIVITY ACCOUNTS**

Student funds may be raised to finance the activities of authorized student organizations. Student activity funds are considered a part of the total fiscal operation of the District and are subject to policies established by the School Committee and the Office of the Superintendent. The funds shall be only for the benefit of students and managed in accordance with sound business practices, which include accepted budgetary, accounting, and internal control practices. The Superintendent shall ensure that, annually, all Principals and student organizations receive a copy of this policy as well as a copy of established procedures for control of receipts and expenditures that meet or exceed DESE guidelines.

In compliance with Massachusetts General Law, the School Committee:

1. Authorizes the Principals or designee to accept money for recognized student activity organizations, which currently exist, or as from time to time may be revised. All funds received for student activities must be deposited into the Student Activity Agency Account and no funds shall be directly deposited to a Student Activity Checking Account except from the Student Activity Agency Account. Standard receipt and disbursement form approval by the City Auditor shall be used.
2. Authorizes the Town or District Treasurer to establish and maintain a Student Activity Agency Account(s) which is to be audited as part of the Town's annual audit. The interest that is earned on such accounts shall be maintained in the Agency Account and distributed annually among the Student Activity Checking Accounts as directed by the procedures established by the Superintendent.
3. Authorizes Student Activity Checking Accounts for use by the Principals with specific maximum balances established annually for each school by vote of the School Committee. Payments for expenditures shall be made, whenever possible, by check, debit, or EFT directly from the Student Activity Checking Account. Reimbursements to personal credit card holders shall require the prior authorization of the Superintendent. Signatory authorization for Student Activity Checking Accounts shall be restricted to the Principal and (Superintendent or Treasurer). Student Activity Checking Accounts shall be audited annually in accordance with DESE guidelines.
4. Directs Principals to provide the Treasurer with a bond in an amount agreeable to the Treasurer.
5. Shall annually, prior to the start of each school year, vote to establish or change the maximum balance that may be on deposit in each Student Activity Checking Account.
  - Gardner High School \$30,000.00
  - Gardner Middle School \$30,000.00
  - Gardner Elementary School \$10,000.00
  - Gardner Academy \$10,000.00

For accounts with maximum balance limits that exceed \$25,000.00, the School Committee shall consider, in accordance with DESE guidelines, that an audit be conducted by an outside audit firm every three years

### **Graduating Class Funds**

Funds held on behalf of graduating classes are to be held within the Student Activity Checking Account for the High School. Such funds shall be designated by the class' Year of Graduation.

Once a class has graduated from High School, their funds should be removed from the High School Student Activity Checking Account no later than two years from the date of graduation. It is the responsibility of the class officers to arrange for these funds to be removed from the High School Activity Checking Account. When requested, and once all outstanding financial obligations of the graduating class have been met, the remaining balance should be removed from the fund by check transfer payable to the Class of XXXX. Checks payable to individual members of the graduating class are not permitted.

Should the class officers not request to have their funds removed from the Student Activity Checking Account within two years of their graduating, the funds will be forfeited by the class and transferred into the General Sub-fund portion of the Student Activity Agency Account. These funds will then be allocated by a vote of the School Committee.

Class officers should be given a copy of this policy during the course of their senior year to ensure their knowledge of their obligations to perform under this policy.

### **Inactive Student Activities**

When a student activity ceases to be active for a period of three years or more the Principal or other authorized administrator shall require the following actions:

1. obtain written notice from the faculty advisor or student officer that the activity will cease to be a viable account. If unable to obtain such notification the Principal shall request action to close the account from the School Committee.
2. Identify in writing all assets of the student activity. The disposition of any assets shall be determined by the School Committee and may not benefit specific individuals.
3. Annually notify all students of the required actions if an activity ceases to exist.

### **Student Activity Deficits**

Individual student activity accounts are not permitted to be in a deficit position. Whenever a deficit exists that is not the result of timing, the Superintendent shall recommend remedial action to the School Committee in a timely manner.

SOURCE: MASC - Updated 2021

LEGAL REFS: MGL [71:47](#)

CROSS REFS: [JJA](#), Student Organizations

DIE, Audits

NOTE: DESE audit guidelines for Student Activity Checking Accounts require an annual audit. ~~In regional districts these accounts may be a part of the annual audit by a third party auditor.~~ In municipal districts the audits may be conducted by a district or municipal employee but not by the Principal, Treasurer, Superintendent, or any authorized signatory on the accounts. ~~Districts with large numbers of schools may rotate the schools through the audit process.~~

[Adopt: November 2022]

[Revised: 2024]

## HEAD INJURIES AND CONCUSSIONS IN EXTRACURRICULAR ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES <sup>1</sup>POLICY

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Gardner Public Schools seeks to prevent concussion and provide a safe return to activity for all students after injury, particularly after a head injury. In order to effectively and consistently manage these injuries, the Athletic Department abides by the following procedures that have been developed to aid in ensuring that concussed athletes are identified, treated and referred appropriately, receive appropriate follow-up medical care during the school day, including academic assistance, and are fully recovered prior to returning to athletic activity.

### **Person Responsible for Implementation of School Policy and Procedures**

The Gardner School District has designated its Athletic Director to oversee the implementation of policies and protocols governing the prevention and management of sports-related head injuries. In addition, the AD will be responsible for:

- (1) Supporting and enforcing the protocols, documentation, required training and reporting
- (2) Assuring that all documentation is in place
- (3) Reviewing, updating and implementing policy every two years and including updates in annual training and student and parent handbooks.

### **Annual Training Requirement**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires annual safety training on sports related concussion, including second impact syndrome, for coaches, certified athletic trainers, trainers, volunteers, school nurses, school and team physicians, athletic directors, directors responsible for a school marching band whether employed by a school or school district or serving as a volunteer, parent or legal guardian of a child who participates in an extracurricular athletic activity and student who participates in an extracurricular athletic activity. At the Gardner Public Schools, the above-named school personnel are required to complete free, on-line training (either the National Federation of High Schools or the CDC's Heads Up Concussion training) or attend a training event organized by the athletic department and approved by the Department of Public Health. For student athletes and their parents, this training can be provided in the regular pre-season meetings where written materials are also available. Attendance can be taken at such meetings and the attendance roster serves as a record of verification for participants who are trained. If parents or students are unable to attend this training, they must complete one of the

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<sup>1</sup> Extracurricular Athletic Activity means an organized school sponsored athletic activity generally occurring outside of school instructional hours under the direction of a coach, athletic director or marching band leader including, but not limited to, Alpine and Nordic skiing and snowboarding, baseball, basketball, cheer leading, cross country track, fencing, field hockey, football, golf, gymnastics, horseback riding, ice hockey, lacrosse, marching band, rifle, rugby, soccer, skating, softball, squash, swimming and diving, tennis, track (indoor and outdoor), ultimate Frisbee, volleyball, water polo, and wrestling. All interscholastic athletics are deemed to be extracurricular athletic activities.

approved on-line trainings and submit a certificate of completion to the athletic director to meet this participation requirement. Alternatively, parents may review DPH-approved written materials (provided by the athletic department) and sign a verification form that they have read and understood these materials.

### **Documentation of Physical Exam**

Each student athlete must have a physical examination on an annual basis, i.e. within 12 or 13 months of the student's last physical examination (to allow for insurance coverage of the examination). Any student athlete who does not have a current physical on file with the nurse prior to the first day of try-outs/practice, is not eligible until a new/updated physical is submitted. If the student's physical examination expires during the sports season, they must have an updated physical examination to continue to participate in the sports season. All physical forms are to be turned in to the nurse, not the coach.

### **Pre-Participation Head Injury Reporting Form, Submission and Review**

The Massachusetts concussion law requires athletes and their parents to inform their coaches about prior head injuries at the beginning of each sports season. This reporting is done via the **Pre-Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting for Extracurricular Activities** form and should be completed by the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and the student. It must be submitted to the Athletic Director **prior to the start of each season a student plans to participate in an extracurricular athletic activity.**

**Until the pre-participation form is completed and signed by the parent/guardian and student and returned to the Athletic Director prior to the start of each sports season, the student cannot participate in the extracurricular sports activity.**

### **Medical/Nursing Review of Pre-Participation Forms**

At the start of each sports season, the Athletic Director will review all pre-participation forms and forward to the school nurse those forms indicating a history of head injury. The school nurse will be responsible for:

- reviewing or having the school physician review completed pre-participation forms
- addressing any questions raised by the Athletic Director
- communicating with the coach regarding the student's concussion history and discussing concerns
- following up with parents and students as needed prior to the student's participation in extracurricular athletic activities.

### **Medical/Nursing Review of Reports of Head Injury During the Season**

The following procedures will be followed when an athlete receives a head injury:

- Athlete is removed from the contest or practice.
- **Athletic Trainer** completes the **Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form**
- The **Athletic Trainer** will give **Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form** to Athletic Director.

- Athletic **Trainer** will also give a copy of the Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form to the notify school nurse ~~who will review the Report of Head Injury form.~~
- School nurse will contact athlete's teachers, guidance counselor, and principal.

### **Procedure for Reporting Head Injuries to School Nurse and/or Certified Athletic Trainer**

Head injuries or suspected concussions (after a bump, blow or jolt to the head or body) sustained during extracurricular athletic activities must be reported by the coach as soon as possible to the athletic trainer. The athletic trainer will then report to the athletic director and school nurse. ~~school nurse and the athletic director.~~ **Athletes who experience signs or symptoms of a concussion should not be allowed to return to play.**

### **Removing Athletes From Play and Medical Evaluation**

In the event that a student athlete receives a head injury, or is suspected of having a head injury, the student will be removed from play and will not be returned to play or practice that day. The coach should report the head injury to the athletic director, **athletic trainer**, or school nurse, if available, as soon as possible, for medical assessment and management and for coordination of home instructions and follow-up care. The athletic director or school nurse will be responsible for contacting the athlete's parents and providing follow-up instructions. If the athlete is injured at an away event or if the athletic director or school nurse is unavailable, the coaching staff are responsible for notifying the athlete's parents of the injury and, if warranted, call for emergency care. Coaches should seek assistance from the host site athletic trainer, coach or school nurse if at an away contest.

If the athlete is able to be sent home (rather than directly to MD):

- a. the coach or athletic director will ensure that the athlete will be with a responsible adult, who is capable of monitoring the athlete and understanding the home care instructions, before allowing the athlete to go home;
- b. the coach or athletic director will continue efforts to reach the parents;
- c. if there is any question about the status of the athlete, or if the athlete is not able to be monitored appropriately, the athlete will be referred to the emergency department for evaluation. A coach or athletic director will accompany the athlete and remain with the athlete until the parents arrive, and
- d. athletes with suspected head injuries will not be allowed to drive home.

### **Medical Clearance and Return to Play**

The **Athletic Trainer**, if available, should be involved. **Medical clearance is meant to be provided AFTER a student has completed his or her graduated return to play plan.**

The medical provider and/or athletic trainer giving medical clearance for returning to play must use the MDPH Medical Clearance Form, "**Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form**" available on the MDPH website ([www.mass.gov/dph/injury](http://www.mass.gov/dph/injury)). The Medical Clearance Form contains more detailed information than a simple statement that the student is ready to return to athletics. This additional information is necessary as school staff monitor the student returning from a concussion. Athletic staff may consider providing this form



to the athlete to share with the physician. The completed forms should be kept in the student's medical record in the school health office as well as athletic department office.

### **Development and Implementation of Post Concussion Graduated Reentry Plans**

It is required that all students returning to school and athletics after a concussion have a written plan for reentry. School staff, such as teachers, school nurses, counselors, administrators, speech-language pathologists, coaches and others should work together to develop and implement this plan in coordination with the student, their parent/guardian and the primary care provider.

Graduated return to academic plans are based on the stages of recovery framework that takes a student from rest, to gradual return to full participation in academic activities.

#### **Stages of Recovery:<sup>2</sup>**

The stages of recovery are a framework designed through a collaborative effort by health care professionals. The purpose of this framework is to create common language that will help guide students, families, school personnel and health professionals through the recuperation process. Placement in stages is based on assessment of the student's medical condition by a licensed medical professional and accompanied by written orders.

Red Stage (Usually 2 – 4 days, but could last weeks)

1. Rest
2. Students typically do not attend school

Orange Stage

1. Rest
2. Attend school half to full days
3. Avoid school bus and heavy backpacks
4. Work with designated educational personnel regarding school accommodations
5. No tests in school
6. No sports, band, chorus, physical education or outdoor recess

Yellow Stage

1. Attend school full-time if possible
2. Students and families work with teachers regarding homework deadlines (complete as much as possible)
3. See school nurse for pain management and/or rest if needed
4. Limit one quiz/test per day (untimed testing is recommended)
5. Work in 15 minute blocks
6. No sports
7. Licensed medical professional will make decisions regarding band, chorus, physical education and outdoor recess (elementary level) based on medical assessment

Green Stage

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<sup>2</sup> Based on the work of Dr. Janet Kent of South Shore Hospital; see [http://www.southshorehospital.org/yhc/HeadSmart\\_Handbook.pdf](http://www.southshorehospital.org/yhc/HeadSmart_Handbook.pdf)

1. Attend school full time
2. Resume normal activities
3. Resume sports once school work is back on track, student is symptom-free, and has been cleared by a licensed medical professional

Graduated return to athletic plans will begin only after a student has returned to full participation in academics and is completely symptom free at rest.

### **Return to Play Schedule**

When a student athlete is completely symptom free at rest and has the approval of a medical professional, she/he may begin a graduated return to play protocol. The return to play schedule for the student should proceed as follows:

Step 1: Light exercise, including walking or riding an exercise bike. No weight-lifting.

Step 2: Aerobic exercise such as running in the gym or on the field. No helmet or other equipment.

Step 3: Non-contact training drills in full equipment. Weight-training can begin.

Step 4: Full contact controlled training followed by practice or training.

Step 5: Full contact game play.

The written reentry plans will be signed by the student, their parent/guardian, the school nurse, the guidance counselor, principal, athletic director and coach so that all parties are in agreement as to the plan for reentry. Frequent or periodic assessments by the school personnel including the nurse, athletic director, school physician or team physician as appropriate may be necessary until full return to classroom activities and extracurricular athletic activities are authorized by medical staff. A copy of the plan will be kept in the student's medical record.

### **Providing Information, Forms and Materials to Parents and Athletes.**

#### **a. Annual Training Requirement**

For student athletes and their parents, this training can be provided in the regular pre-season meetings where written materials are also available. Attendance can be taken at such meetings and the attendance roster serves as a record of verification for participants who are trained. If parents or students are unable to attend this training, they must complete one of the approved on-line trainings and submit a certificate of completion to the athletic director to meet this participation requirement. Alternatively, parents may review DPH-approved written materials (provided by the athletic department) and sign a verification form that they have read and understood these materials.

#### **b. Procedure for the School to Notify Parents When an Athlete Has Been Removed From Play for a Head Injury or Suspected Concussion**

The athletic director, athletic trainer, or school nurse/~~physician~~ will be responsible for contacting the athlete's parents and providing follow-up instructions. If the athlete is injured at an away event or if the athletic director or school nurse is unavailable, the coaching staff are responsible for notifying the athlete's parents of the injury and, if warranted, call for emergency care. The student should be sent home with the "Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form" as well as the "Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form".

c. Protocol for Parents/Students to Obtain Medical Clearance for Return to Play and Academics After a Diagnosed Concussion (see also #8 above)

Parents and students are oriented about the protocol on obtaining medical clearance for return to play after a diagnosed concussion. In addition, our athletic handbook under the section for “Sports Concussion” includes our policies regarding sports concussion including obtaining medical clearance after a concussion. The website of the school at [www.gardnerk12.org](http://www.gardnerk12.org) under the Athletic Department tab has a page on sports concussion that also details these protocols. Finally, parents and students can always call the athletic department office at 978-632-1600, ext. 1800 or the school nurse’s office at 978-632-3934 (high school) or 978-632-3324 (middle school) to get further clarification or ask questions. No student will be allowed to return to play until the medical clearance form is signed by authorized medical professional, submitted and reviewed by the school nurse.

d. Parent’s Responsibility for Completion of the Pre-Participation Form

At the schools’ annual meeting in the fall, parents and students are oriented about the requirement to submit the pre-participation form, signed by both student and parent, which provides a comprehensive history with up-to-date information relative to concussion history. It is the parent’s responsibility to tell all the student’s coaches and school nurse if the student has ever had a concussion via this form. In addition, our athletic handbook under the section for “Sports Concussion” includes our policies regarding sports concussion including the requirement to complete the pre-participation form by student and parent at the start of every sports season. The website for the school at [www.gardnerk12.org](http://www.gardnerk12.org) under the Athletic Department tab has a page on sports concussion that also details these protocols. Finally, parents and students can always call the athletic department office at 978-632-1600, ext. 1800 or the school nurse’s office at 978-632-3934 (high school) or 978-632-3324 (middle school) to get further clarification or ask questions. These forms should be submitted to the athletic department office which copies and reviews them and then forwards them to the school nurse’s office for review. No student will be allowed to participate in athletic activities until the pre-participation form is signed, submitted by parent and student and reviewed by designated staff annually.

e. Parent’s Responsibility for Completion of the Report of a Head Injury Form

At the schools’ annual meeting in the fall, parents and students are oriented about the requirement to submit all forms including the Report of Head Injury Form signed by parent if their child has a head injury related to athletic activities. In addition, our athletic handbook under the section for “Sports Concussion” includes our policies regarding sports concussion including the requirement to complete and sign. The website for the school at [www.gardnerk12.org](http://www.gardnerk12.org) under the Athletic Department tab has a page on sports concussion that also details these protocols. Finally, parents and students can always call the athletic department office at 978-632-1600, ext. 1800 or the school nurse’s office at 978-632-3934 (high school) or 978-632-3324 (middle school) to get further clarification or ask questions. These forms should be submitted to the athletic department office which copies and reviews them and then forwards them to the school nurse’s office for review. No student will be allowed to participate in athletic activities until all required forms including the report of head injury form has been signed, submitted by parent and student and reviewed by school nursing and athletic department staff.

### **Inclusion of Sport-Related Head Injury Policy in the Student and Parent Handbook**

We have recently modified our student, parent handbook, and athletic handbook that are distributed at the beginning of the school year and now contain:

- Most recent Concussion information fact sheet
- Links and information about annual training
- Gardner Public Schools' protocol/policies on sports-related head injuries
- **Pre-participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form for Extracurricular Activities, Report of Head Injury During Sports Season report form, and Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization forms.**

Our handbooks with information on sports-related concussions are updated every other year and are available at the school's website or within the school's website under the Athletic Department directory. Hard copies of these manuals are also available at the Athletic Director's Office at 978-632-1600, ext. 1800 and/or School Principal's Office at 978-632-1600 (high school) or 978-632-1603 (middle school).

### **Communicating With Parents With Limited English Proficiency**

Because of limited English skills, some parents may be unable to communicate with school personnel and may feel isolated from the school community. We make every attempt to communicate effectively with parents with limited English proficiency. We have translated school policies on head injury and concussions in extracurricular athletic activities and the on-line training classes and the mandated forms ~~into Spanish and Portuguese. (should we consider other languages?)~~ These documents are listed on the Gardner High School's Athletic Department website at [www.gardnerk12.org](http://www.gardnerk12.org) in these languages. We will translate other materials as requested. In the event a student receives a concussion or is suspected of having a concussion, the Athletic Director's office should notify the parent in the appropriate language. Interpreters are available by contacting the Principal's office.

### **Outreach to Parents for Form and Training Completion**

Student athletes will not be permitted to participate in extracurricular sport until both the parent and student have completed and returned the signed Pre-Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form for Extracurricular Activities *before the start of each sports season*. In the event the school has not received the Pre-Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form or other required forms, including documentation of an annual physical examination and documentation that both the student athlete and their parent/guardian have completed the required annual training, we will make three attempts to contact parent using the school's typical communication methods to parents (email, snail mail, telephone, etc.). The student athlete will not be allowed to play or practice until the appropriate required signed and completed forms are returned to the Athletic Department.

### **Sharing Concussion-Related Health Information**

Informal collaboration occurs on a temporary, as-needed basis for information exchange, as when the school nurse informs (while adhering to protocols for confidentiality) the physical education teacher that a particular student may not participate in athletic activities because of a recent injury. There may be circumstances in which there is a need to share information in the student health

record with authorized school personnel – either to enhance the educational progress of the student or protect his/her safety or well-being. For example, staff may need to be alerted to signs or symptoms of a medical problem on a need to know basis and offered a course of action. This type of disclosure should be made only to those authorized school personnel who work *directly with* the student in an instructive (academic or athletic), administrative, or diagnostic capacity. Finally, authorized school personnel should be instructed not to re-disclose the information.

~~If there is any question about the sensitivity of the information, the school nurse should seek the permission of the parent/guardian and student, if appropriate, prior to disclosure to authorized school personnel. Ultimately, however, federal regulations permit information in the student health record to be seen by authorized school personnel on a need to know basis, and the basis for such sharing seems even more compelling when necessary to protect the well-being or safety of the student.~~

~~There may be times when a school nurse has a legal obligation to disclose health or related information to protect a student's health or safety. Public policy requires the protection of a patient's right to privacy by medical professionals, unless there is an immediate threat or serious harm to the student or others. This statement sounds like HIPPA and we are covered under FERPA. I would take this statement out and maybe the whole paragraph because its redundant to what the previous paragraph states.~~

### **Requirement that Coaches, Athletic Trainers, Trainers and Volunteers**

#### **Teach Strategies That Minimize Sports-Related Head Injury and Prohibit Dangerous Play**

Coaches of Gardner Public Schools are expected to be current with best practices in their sport that reduce the likelihood of head injury. In addition, coaches are prohibited from teaching or promoting dangerous practices such as using a helmet as a weapon. It is expected that all coaches and athletic department staff teach techniques that minimize sports injury and/or concussion such as proper fitting, certified (especially helmets) equipment and protective equipment.

### **Penalties**

Gardner Public Schools takes the safety of student athletes seriously. All members of the school staff are expected to follow these policies and protocols to support the health and safety of student athletes. The underlying philosophy of these policies is “when in doubt, sit them out”. Failure to comply with the letter or spirit of these policies could result in progressive discipline for staff and/or forfeiture of games. If students or parents have concerns that the policies are being violated, they should contact the Principal and also place their complaint in writing with a request for resolution.

[Adopted: 2/2012]

[Revised: April 2016]

[Reviewed: November 2020]

[Revised: 2024]

## STUDENT CONDUCT

~~Discipline is the dual responsibility of the home and school.~~

The Massachusetts General Laws require the school committee to adopt written policies, rules and regulations not inconsistent with law, which may relate to study, discipline, conduct, safety and welfare of all students, or any classification thereof, enrolled in the public schools of the District.

The implementation of the general rules of conduct is the responsibility of the principal and the professional staff of the building. In order to do this, each school staff in the District shall develop specific rules, not inconsistent with the law nor in conflict with District policy. These building rules shall be an extension of the District policies by being more specific as they relate to the individual schools.

The purpose of disciplinary action is to restore acceptable behavior. When disciplinary action is necessary, it shall be administered with fairness and shall relate to the individual needs and the individual circumstances.

Students violating any of the policies on student conduct and control will be subject to disciplinary action. The degree, frequency, and circumstances surrounding each incident shall determine the method used in enforcing these policies. Most of the situations which require disciplinary action can be resolved within the confines of the classroom or as they occur by reasonable but firm reprimand, and/or by teacher conferences with the student and/or parents or guardians.

If a situation should arise in which there is no applicable written policy, the staff member shall be expected to exercise reasonable and professional judgment.

[Reference: M.G.L. 71:37H; 71:37L; M.G.L. Chapter 76, S. 16 and 17; Chapter 380 of the Acts of 1993; Massachusetts Department of Education, Advisory Opinion on Student Discipline, January 27, 1994]

[Adopted: March 1999]

[Reviewed: June 2003]

[Reviewed: June 2014]

[Revised: February 2021]

[Revised: 2024]

## PHYSICAL RESTRAINT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Physical restraint shall mean direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement. Physical restraint does not include: brief physical contact to promote student safety, providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing comfort, or a physical escort.

Physical restraint shall be considered an emergency procedure of last resort and shall only be used when a student's behavior poses a threat of assault, or imminent, serious, physical harm to self or others and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful and less intrusive behavior interventions, or such interventions are deemed to be inappropriate under the circumstances.

In the event that physical restraint is required to protect the safety of school community members, the Gardner School District has enacted the following policy and procedures to ensure the proper use of restraint and to prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of restraint.

The use of time-out is a behavior support strategy in which a student temporarily separates from the learning activity or the classroom either by choice or direction from staff, for the purpose of calming. During a time-out the student must be continuously observed by a staff member. -Staff shall be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times. The space used for time-outs must be clean, safe, sanitary, and appropriate for the purposes of calming. Time-out shall cease as soon as the student has calmed. A student will not remain in time-out for more than 30 minutes (based on continued agitation) without principal approval. ~~The Staff will seek the principal's approval should a student require a time-out lasting more than 30 minutes due to continued agitation.~~

These procedures shall be annually reviewed, provided to school staff, and made available to parents of enrolled students.

**NOTE:** None of the foregoing paragraph or the policy/procedures that follow, precludes any teacher, employee or agent of the Gardner School District from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.

### DEFINITIONS

Consent: agreement by a parent who has been fully informed of all information relevant to the activity for which agreement is sought, in his or her native language or other mode of communication, that the parent understands and agrees in writing to carrying out of the activity, and understands that the agreement is voluntary and may be revoked at any time. The agreement describes the activity and lists the records (if any) which will be released and to whom. In seeking parental consent, a public education program shall not condition admission or continued enrollment upon agreement to the proposed use of any restraint.



*Mechanical Restraint:* the use of any physical device or equipment to restrict a student's freedom of movement. The term does not include devices implemented by trained school personnel, or utilized by a student that have been prescribed by an appropriate medical or related services professional, and are used for the specific and approved positioning or protective purposes for which such devices were designed. Examples of such devices include: adaptive devices or mechanical supports used to achieve proper body position, balance, or alignment to allow greater freedom of mobility than would be possible without the use of such devices or mechanical supports; vehicle safety restraints when used as intended during the transport of a student in a moving vehicle; restraints for medical immobilization; or orthopedically prescribed devices that permit a student to participate in activities without risk of harm.

*Medication Restraint:* the administration of medication for the purpose of temporarily controlling behavior. Medication prescribed by a licensed physician and authorized by the parent for administration in the school setting is not medication restraint.

*Physical Escort:* a temporary touching or holding, without the use of force, of the hand, wrist, arm, shoulder, or back for the purpose of inducing a student who is agitated to walk to a safe location.

*Physical Restraint:* direct physical contact that prevents or significantly restricts a student's freedom of movement. Physical restraint does not include: brief physical contact to promote student safety, providing physical guidance or prompting when teaching a skill, redirecting attention, providing comfort, or a physical escort.

*Principal:* instructional leader of a public school education program or his or her designee.

*Prone Restraint:* a physical restraint in which a student is placed face down on the floor or another surface, and physical pressure is applied to the student's body to keep the student in the face-down position.

*Seclusion:* involuntary confinement of a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving. Seclusion does not include a time-out as defined below.

*Time-Out:* a behavioral support strategy, developed pursuant to 603 CMR 46.04(1), in which a student temporarily separates from the learning activity or the classroom, either by choice or by direction from staff, for the purpose of calming. During time-out, a student must be continuously observed by a staff member. Staff shall be with the student or immediately available to the student at all times. The space used for time-out must be clean, safe, sanitary, and appropriate for the purpose of calming. Time-out shall cease as soon as the student has calmed.

## 1. Staff Training

- A. All staff/faculty will receive training regarding the school's restraint policy within the first month of each school year, and employees hired after the school year begins will



receive training within one month of starting their employment. Each principal or director shall determine a time and method to provide all program staff with training regarding the program's restraint prevention and behavior support policy and requirements when restraint is used.

- B. Required training for all staff will include review of the following:
1. The program's restraint prevention and behavior support policy and procedures, including use of time-out as a behavior support strategy distinct from seclusion;
  2. Interventions which may preclude the need for restraint, including de-escalation of problematic behaviors; and other alternatives to restraint in emergency circumstances;
  3. Types of restraints and related safety considerations, including information regarding the increased risk of injury to a student when an any restraint is used; in particular, a restraint of extended duration;
  4. Administering physical restraint in accordance with known medical or psychological limitations known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans applicable to an individual student; and
  5. Identification of program staff who have received in-depth training (as set forth below in section C) in the use of physical restraint.
  6. The role of the student, family, and staff in preventing restraint
- C. Designated staff members shall participate in at least sixteen hours of in-depth training in the use of physical restraint, with at least one refresher training occurring annually thereafter
1. At the beginning of the school year, the principal will identify those staff who will participate in in-depth training and who will then be authorized to serve as school-wide resources to assist in ensuring proper administration of physical restraint.
  2. In-depth training will include:
    - Appropriate procedures for preventing the need for physical restraint, including the de-escalation of problematic behavior, relationship building, and use of alternatives to restraint.
    - A description and identification of specific dangerous behaviors on the part of a student that may indicate the need for physical restraint and methods for evaluating the risk of harm in individual situations in order to determine whether the use of restraint is warranted;
    - The simulated experience of administering and receiving physical restraint, instruction regarding the effect(s) on the person restrained, including instruction on monitoring physical signs of distress and obtaining medical assistance;
    - Instruction regarding documentation and reporting requirements and investigation of injuries and complaints; and
    - Demonstration by participants of proficiency in administering physical restraint; and

- Instruction regarding the impact of physical restraint on the student and family, recognizing the act of restraint has impact, including but not limited to psychological, physiological, and social-emotional effects
- D. Staff/faculty will review any behavior plans pertaining to special techniques for identified students.
- E. Staff/ faculty will review the uses of time-out as a behavioral strategy for applicable programs. Staff/faculty will review the program procedure for obtaining principal approval of time-out for more than 30 minutes based upon a student's continuing agitation.
2. Administration of physical restraint
- A. Physical restraint shall be used only in emergency situations of last resort, after other lawful and less intrusive alternatives have failed or been deemed inappropriate, and with extreme caution. Staff will use physical restraint with two goals in mind:
1. To administer a physical restraint only when needed to protect a student and/or a member of the school community from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm; and
  - B. To prevent or minimize any harm to the student as a result of the use of physical restraint. Physical restraint is prohibited in the following circumstances:
    1. As a means of discipline or punishment;
    2. As a response to property destruction, disruption of school order, a student's refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive, or verbal threats that do not constitute a threat of imminent, serious, physical harm. However, if the property destruction or the refusal to comply with a school rule or staff directive could escalate into, or could itself lead to serious, imminent harm to the student or to others, physical restraint is appropriate.
    3. As a standard response for any individual student. No written behavior plan or individualized education program (IEP) may include use of physical restraint as a standard response to any behavior
    4. When the student cannot be safely restrained because it is medically contraindicated for reasons including, but not limited to, asthma, seizures, a cardiac condition, obesity, bronchitis, communication-related disabilities, or risk of vomiting
- C. Only school personnel who have received required training or in-depth training pursuant to this policy shall administer physical restraint on students with, whenever possible, one adult witness who does not participate in the restraint. The training requirements, however, shall not preclude a teacher, employee or agent of the school from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm.
- D. Physical restraint shall be limited to the amount of force necessary to protect a student or others from, physical injury or harm.

- E. A person administering physical restraint shall use the safest method available and appropriate to the situation. Restraints, including prone restraints otherwise permitted under 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b) may only be administered by a staff member who has received in-depth training as specified in this policy and, when in the judgment of the trained staff member, such method is required to provide safety for the student or others.
- F. Physical restraint shall be discontinued as soon as the student is no longer an immediate danger to himself or others, or the student indicates that he or she cannot breathe, or if the student is observed to be in severe distress, such as having difficulty breathing, or sustained or prolonged crying or coughing.
- G. Additional safety requirements:
  - 1. No restraint shall be administered in such a way that the student is prevented from breathing or speaking. A staff member will continuously monitor the physical status of the student, including skin temperature color and respiration, during the restraint.
  - 2. If at any time during a physical restraint the student expresses or demonstrates significant physical distress, including but not limited to, difficulty breathing, the student shall be released from the restraint immediately, and school staff shall take steps to seek medical assistance.
  - 3. Program staff shall review and consider any known medical or psychological limitations, known or suspected trauma history, and/or behavioral intervention plans regarding the use of physical restraint on an individual student.
  - 4. If a student is restrained for a period longer than 20 minutes, staff shall obtain the approval of administration. The approval shall be based upon the student's continued agitation during the restraint justifying the need for continued restraint.
- H. At an appropriate time after release of a student from physical restraint, a school administrator or other appropriate school staff shall:
  - 1. Review the incident with the student to address the behavior that precipitated the restraint;
  - 2. Review the incident with the staff person(s) who administered the restraint to discuss whether proper restraint procedures were followed; and
  - 3. Consider whether any follow-up is appropriate for students who witnessed the incident.

3. Limitations on Specific Typers of Restraints ~~prohibited~~

- A. Medication restraint – the administration of medication for the purpose of temporarily controlling behavior.– is prohibited unless prescribed by a licensed physician and authorized in writing by the parent for administration in the school setting.
- B. Mechanical restraint – the use of any device or equipment to restrict a student's freedom of This does not include devices implemented by trained school personnel, or

utilized by a student that have been prescribed by an appropriate medical or related services professional, and are used for the specific and approved positioning or protective purposes for which such devices were designed. Examples of such devices include: adaptive devices or mechanical supports used to achieve proper body position, balance, or alignment to allow greater freedom of mobility than would be possible without the use of the device or mechanical supports; vehicle safety restraints when used as intended during the transport of a student in a moving vehicle; restraints for medical immobilization; or orthopedically prescribed devices that permit a student to participate in activities without risk of harm.

- C. Seclusion restraint - the involuntary confining a student alone in a room or area from which the student is physically prevented from leaving without access to school staff is prohibited.
  - D. Prone restraint - a physical restraint in which a student is placed face down on the floor or another surface, and physical pressure is applied to the student's body to keep the student in the face down position is prohibited except under the following circumstances:
    - 1. The student has a documented history of repeatedly causing serious self-injuries and/or injuries to other students or staff;
    - 2. All other forms of physical restraints have failed to ensure the safety of the student and/or the safety of others;
    - 3. There are no medical contraindications as documented by a licensed physician;
    - 4. There is psychological or behavioral justification for the use of prone restraint and there are no psychological or behavioral contraindications, as documented by a licensed mental health professional;
    - 5. The program has obtained consent to use prone restraint in an emergency as set out in 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b), and such use has been approved in writing by the principal; and,
    - 6. The program has documented 603 CMR 46.03(1)(b) 1 - 5 in advance of the use of prone restraint and maintains the documentation.
  - E. The use of "time out" procedures during which a staff member remains accessible to the student, and the student is continuously observed by a staff member shall not be considered "seclusion restraint."
4. Reporting requirements
- A. Staff will report any incidence of physical restraint to their building administrator. Program staff shall provide a written report no later than the next school working day to their building administrator after administration of a physical restraint.

- B. The staff member who administered such a restraint shall verbally inform the principal of the restraint as soon as possible and by written report no later than the next school working day.
1. The written report shall be provided to the principal or his/her designee, except the principal shall prepare the report if the principal administered the restraint;
  2. The principal or his/her designee shall maintain an on-going record of all reported instances of physical restraint, which shall be made available for review by the parent or the Department of Education, upon request.

~~C.~~ 3. The principal or his/her designee shall make reasonable efforts to verbally inform the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) of such restraint as soon as possible and within 24 hours of the restraint, and by written report postmarked no later than three school working days following the use of such restraint or to an email address provided by the parent for communication about the student i

~~4.~~ 4. ~~If~~ the school customarily provides school-related information to the parent(s)/guardian(s) in a language other than English, the written restraint report shall be provided in that language.

~~5.~~ 5. The school will provide the student and the parent an opportunity to comment orally and in writing on the use of the restraint and on information in the written report.

~~D.C.~~ The written report required by both sections B and C above shall include:

1. Names and job title of the staff who administered the restraint, and observers, if any;
2. Date of restraint and time restraint began and ended;
3. Name of administrator who was verbally informed following the restraint; and as applicable, the name of the administrator who approved continuation of the restraint beyond 20 minutes.
4. Description of the activity the student, other students, and staff in the area were engaged in immediately preceding the use of physical restraint;
5. Student's behavior that prompted the restraint;
6. Efforts made to de-escalate the situation and alternatives to restraint that were attempted;
7. Justification for initiating physical restraint;
8. Description of administration of restraint including:
  - The holds used and reasons such holds were necessary
  - The student's behavior and reactions during the restraint
  - How the restraint ended and
  - Documentation of injury to the student and/or staff, if any, during the restraint and any medical care provided;
9. For extended restraints (restraints lasting more than twenty minutes), description of the alternatives to extended restraint that were attempted, the outcome of those efforts, and the justification for administering the extended restraint; Information regarding any further action(s) that the school has taken or may take, including any disciplinary sanctions that may be imposed on the student; and

10. Information regarding opportunities for the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss with school officials the administration of the restraint, any disciplinary sanctions, and/or other related matters.

E.D. Individual student review. The principal shall conduct a weekly review of restraint data to identify students who have been restrained multiple times during the week. If such students are identified, the principal shall convene one or more review teams as the principal deems appropriate to assess each student's progress and needs. The assessment shall include at least the following:

1. Review and discussion of the written reports submitted in accordance with 603 CMR 46.06 and any comments provided by the student and parent about such reports and the use of the restraints;
2. Analysis of the circumstances leading up to each restraint, including factors such as time of day, day of the week, antecedent events, and individuals involved;
3. Consideration of factors that may have contributed to escalation of behaviors, consideration of alternatives to restraint, including de-escalation techniques and possible interventions, and such other strategies and decisions as appropriate, with the goal of reducing or eliminating the use of restraint in the future;
4. Agreement on a written plan of action by the program.

If the principal directly participated in the restraint, a duly qualified individual designated by the superintendent shall lead the review team's discussion. The principal shall ensure that a record of each individual student review is maintained and made available for review by the Department or the parent, upon request.

F.E. Administrative review. The principal shall conduct a monthly review of school-wide restraint data. This review shall consider patterns of use of restraints by similarities in the time of day, day of the week, or individuals involved; the number and duration of physical restraints school-wide and for individual students; the duration of restraints; and the number and type of injuries, if any, resulting from the use of restraint. The principal shall determine whether it is necessary or appropriate to modify the school's restraint prevention and management policy, conduct additional staff training on restraint reduction/prevention strategies, such as training on positive behavioral interventions and supports, or take such other action as necessary or appropriate to reduce or eliminate restraints.

G.F. Report all restraint related injuries to the Department of Secondary and Elementary Education (DESE). When a physical restraint has resulted in an injury to a student or program staff member, the program shall send a copy of the written report required to the Department postmarked no later than three school working days of the administration of the restraint. The program shall also send the Department a copy of the record of physical restraints maintained by the principal for the 30-day period prior to the date of the reported restraint. The Department shall determine if additional

action by the program is warranted and, if so, shall notify the program of any required actions within the 30 calendar days of receipt of the required written report(s).

H.G. The district will report all physical restraints to the Department. Each school shall collect and annually report data regarding the use of physical restraints in a manner and form directed by the Department.

5. Grievance procedures

A. Parents will notify the principal or designee of any concerns regarding restraint practices and procedures. If a designee receives the complaint or concern that designee shall notify the principal within the school day. The principal shall notify the Superintendent within twenty-four hours of a school \_working day of receiving a concern. The Superintendent shall at his or her discretion order an investigation.

The District has developed and implemented specific procedures regarding appropriate responses to student behavior that may require immediate intervention.

6. *Methods to prevent student violence, self-injurious behavior, and suicide (individual crisis planning, de-escalation techniques)*

Through the implementation of MTSS/PBIS frameworks and the District Accommodation Plan (DCAP) the District strives to ensure all students' social, emotional, behavioral and academic needs are met while in the school setting. All school buildings implement Student Support Teams and Tiered Support Teams for universal, supplemental and intensive student supports. These teams are able to support individual students, consult with teachers and assist families. Through these supports the District provides necessary training and planning with the goal of minimizing negative consequences when a student crisis occurs. Each building also has counseling staff/staff available to support social, emotional and behavioral needs that may impact a student during the school day. All buildings implement a universal social emotional learning curriculum, universal mental health screening, and student check in procedure. Additionally, subject to eligibility under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") and/or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 ("Section 504") students individual needs can be addressed through the identification, evaluation and placement process, which provides for individual services and/or accommodations for eligible students.

Some of the ways District staff are trained to prevent violent, self-injurious behavior and suicide are as follows:

Training of all staff on Suicide Prevention, Training provided to staff on De-escalation Strategies, Phases of De-escalation and Managing Staff Behavior, Training provide to staff on Threat Assessments, Training provided to select building staff on in-depth Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI), Training on Documentation in the District Curriculum Accommodation Plan (DCAP)

**Alternatives to physical restraint (verbal prompting, physical escort, time-out, de-escalation techniques)**

Through the implementation of MTSS/PBIS frameworks and Student Support Teams/Tier 3 Teams students may be provided with individual behavior support plans, direct instruction and/or special education supports. The District's goal is to teach students the social, emotional, and behavioral regulation skills they require to access and progress in the curriculum. Each building has staff members identified who have received the in-depth restraint training with a curriculum that includes extensive de-escalation strategies. This training also provides staff with an understanding of challenging behaviors and specific strategies for prevention or changing the negative behavior (s).

**Description of physical restraints used in emergency situations**

Through the training provided to staff through Crisis Prevention Intervention the following restraints may be used as an emergency procedure of last resort:

- Seated low level restriction
- Seated medium level restriction
- Seated high Level restriction

- Standing low level restriction
- Standing medium level restriction
- Standing high level restriction

For more ~~information~~information, please see the Crisis Prevention and Intervention Training Curriculum located on gardnerk12.org website

**Methods to engage parents in discussions about restraint prevention and the use of restraint solely as an emergency measure**

Parents will be provided an opportunity to respond to the written incident report either in writing or in person. They should contact the principal directly who can arrange this. Information on the District's restraint procedures will be shared at/through the district website and student/parent handbook. –Parents can always request to meet with the building Principal or the District Restraint Coordinator if they have more questions regarding restraint prevention or the use of restraint.

A. \_\_\_\_\_

~~6.7.~~Other interventions. Nothing in this policy prohibits:

- A. The right of any individual to report to appropriate authorities a crime committed by a student or another individual;



- B. Law enforcement, judicial authorities or school security personnel from exercising their responsibilities, including physical detainment of a student or other person alleged to have committed a crime or posing a security risk; or
- C. The exercise of an individual's responsibilities as a mandated reporter or to deter any individual from reporting neglect or abuse to the appropriate state agency.
- D. Policies and Procedures shall not preclude the use of school violence prevention techniques or procedures i.e., counseling, DARE, etc.

[Reference: M.G.L. 69 Section 1B and C71, S37G, Regulation 603 CMR 46.00 Physical Restraint]

[Adopted: December 2001]

[Revised: October 2003]

[Revised: March 2006]

[Revised: April 2008]

[Reviewed: June 2014]

[Revised: March 2016]

[Reviewed: April 2021]

[Reviewed: 2024]

**CONTRACT AMENDMENT  
BETWEEN  
THE CITY OF GARDNER SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
AND  
THE GARDNER EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

This CONTRACT AMENDMENT is entered into by and between the Gardner School Committee (hereinafter, the “Committee”) and the Gardner Education Association (hereinafter, the “Association”).

WHEREAS, this amendment sets forth the mutually agreed upon changes to the Collective Bargaining Agreement for Unit A members as outlined below:

**Article XIV – Safe Workplace**

Staff will report incidents using district based programs. On a monthly basis, building leadership will meet with union representatives to report student discipline referrals, student and staff acts of aggressions, and outcomes. The school principal will meet with union representatives when requested to discuss discipline referrals and acts of aggression.

A building administrator will meet with the staff member, conduct an inquiry based on the report, and communicate his/her findings in writing, within 5 working days of receipt of the initial report. Any incident involving sustained injuries will be immediately reported to the Superintendent, Association, and School Committee.

The information collected will be reviewed by the building administration and shared with the Association quarterly, or when requested by the association.

Any concern regarding this process, or the general safety/welfare of staff, should be reported to a union representative, who will escalate the concern to Union Executives and the Superintendent.

Gardner School Committee

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Gardner Education Association, Unit A

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**CONTRACT AMENDMENT  
BETWEEN  
THE CITY OF GARDNER SCHOOL COMMITTEE  
AND  
THE GARDNER EDUCATION ASSOCIATION**

This CONTRACT AMENDMENT is entered into by and between the Gardner School Committee (hereinafter, the “Committee”) and the Gardner Education Association (hereinafter, the “Association”).

WHEREAS, this amendment sets forth the mutually agreed upon changes to the Collective Bargaining Agreement for Unit B members as outlined below:

**Article XXXIV – Safe Workplace**

Staff will report incidents using district based programs. On a monthly basis, building leadership will meet with union representatives to report student discipline referrals, student and staff acts of aggressions, and outcomes. The school principal will meet with union representatives when requested to discuss discipline referrals and acts of aggression.

A building administrator will meet with the staff member, conduct an inquiry based on the report, and communicate his/her findings in writing, within 5 working days of receipt of the initial report. Any incident involving sustained injuries will be immediately reported to the Superintendent, Association, and School Committee.

The information collected will be reviewed by the building administration and shared with the Association quarterly, or when requested by the association.

Any concern regarding this process, or the general safety/welfare of staff, should be reported to a union representative, who will escalate the concern to Union Executives and the Superintendent.

Gardner School Committee

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Gardner Education Association, Unit B

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# MCAS 2024



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WORKING  
DISTRICT!*



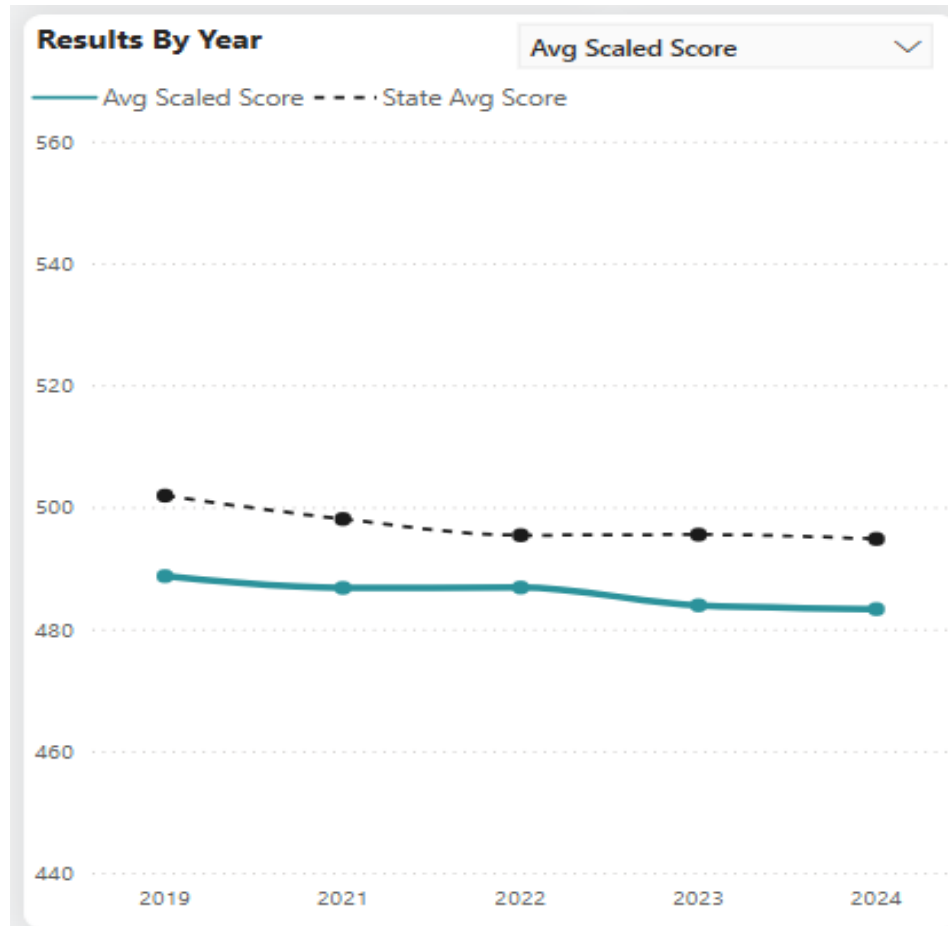
# Accountability

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- The District's Accountability Status is “Not requiring assistance or intervention”, however:
  - Gardner Elementary School's, Gardner Middle School's and Gardner Academy's accountability status is “Requiring assistance or intervention”



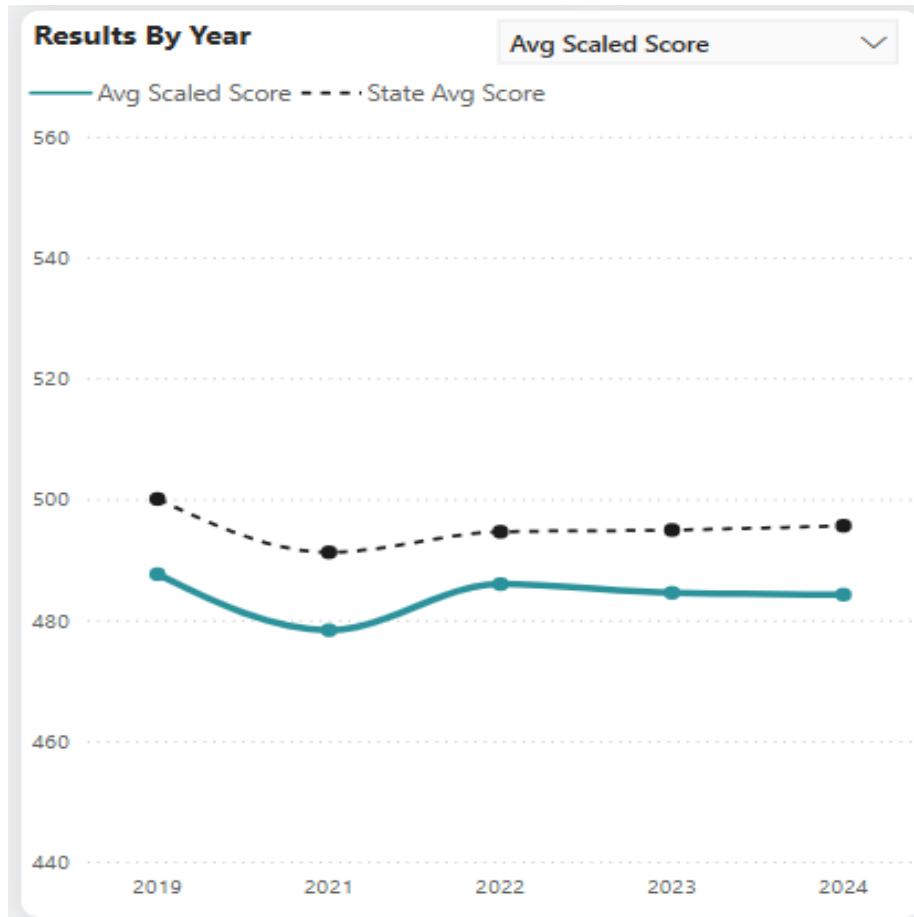
# Trends – ELA



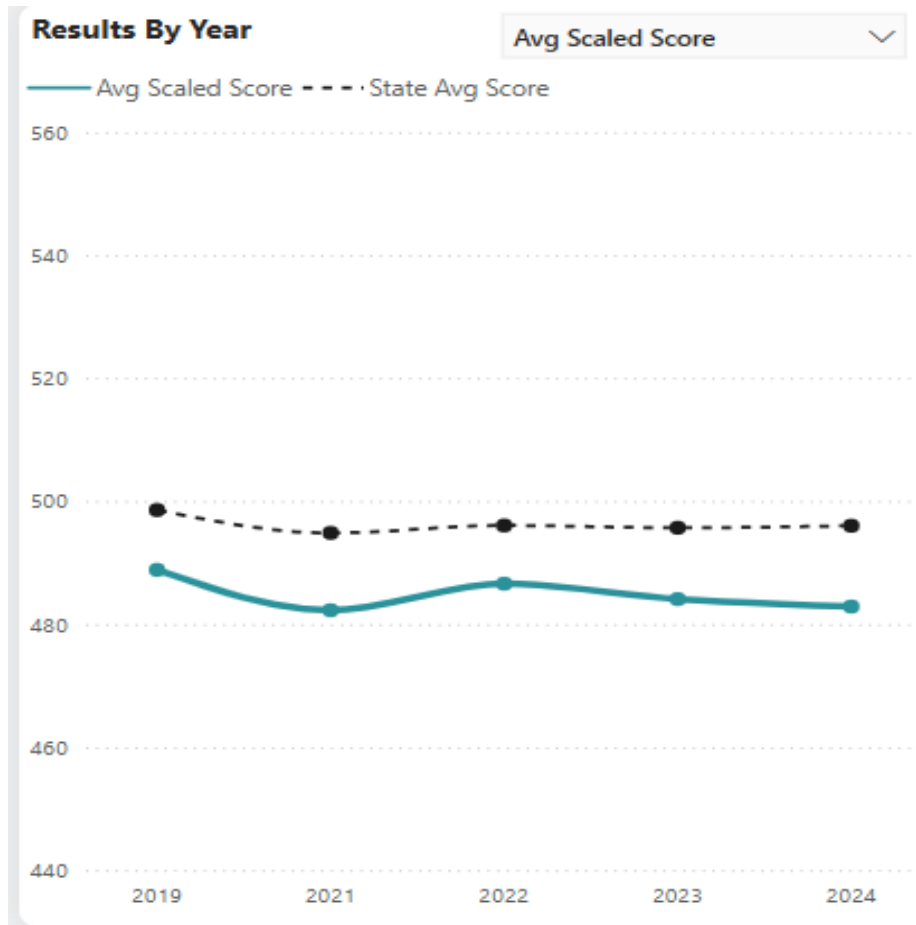




# Trends – MATH



# Trends – Science





# Data Analysis Findings

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## General Findings

Students in the following subgroups performed consistently lower than the aggregate in both ELA and Math at all grade levels:

- Students with Disabilities
- English Learners
- Economically Disadvantaged

In both ELA and Math students performed lower in areas where reasoning, explanation, and critical thinking are required



# Action Steps

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## Next Moves

- The District has contracted with Lynch Leadership Academy to provide professional development for all administrators and teacher leaders to support improved instructional planning and implementation
- The District will work with The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Statewide System of Support Team (SSoS) to provide additional support in instructional leadership, planning and implementation at GES and GMS
- All staff are in the process of the following activities during common planning time
  - Reviewing and updating Unit/Lesson Plans to include grade level instructional practices and student tasks that meet the level of rigor aligned with MCAS/Benchmark Assessments
  - Implementing formative assessments to monitor student progress
  - Calibrating grading/evaluation of standards mastery at each grade level and in each content area
  - Identifying student groupings and implementing instructional supports/interventions based on progress monitoring data

# Questions or Thoughts?

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# Gardner Public Schools

Rebecca McCaffrey, *Director of School Health Services*

[www.gardnerk12.org](http://www.gardnerk12.org)

160 Elm St, Gardner, MA 01440

(978) 410-7468

## School Health Services Update to School Committee – November 12, 2024

### Designing School Wellness Leadership Taskforce

The Massachusetts School Nurse Organization asked for board members to apply to be part of a taskforce to Design School Wellness Curriculum through the Teachers Collaborative. I was accepted to the taskforce and am working along with other health professionals to design a toolkit that aligns with the new DESE health curriculum standards. It is exciting work that I am glad to participate in!

### CPR/AED/First Aid trainings:

- First Aid training for REC Camp Staff June 2024
- Trained 20 Food Service Staff in CPR/AED, Choke Safety September 2024

**State Mandated Health Screenings:** The Lion's Club assisted our Elementary School with our State Mandated Health Screenings at Gardner Elementary. With the help of their trained volunteers, we were able to screen the preschool and kindergarten students during the last week of September. We will continue with state mandated health screenings after the 1st of the year. Nursing staffing has been stretched thin with 2 nurses out on leave this Fall.

**Wellness Committee:** First meeting of the year is being planned for 11/26/24

**Staff Flu and COVID vaccines during the school day:** Price Chopper Pharmacy visited GPS schools with Flu and COVID vaccines on 9/25, ½ day PD day, so that our staff could be vaccinated during the work day after students left.

- 60 GPS staff received Flu Vaccine
- 48 GPS staff received COVID Vaccine

**Comprehensive Health Needs Assessments for ELL and Homeless students:** We are continuing to conduct Comprehensive Health Needs Assessments on our ELL and Homeless students as we know that these populations may have additional barriers to accessing health services. We do a complete chart review on these students and reach out to the parent to discuss the findings and to see if there are any healthcare needs that we can assist with. Many of these conversations require the use of translators. Tina Rusak, our Nurse Care Coordinator, has been leading this project and working with the school nurses. We will be adding in attendance in our chart review and working with MTSS teams.



# Gardner Public Schools

Courtney Dunn, *Grants & Communications Manager*

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(978) 632-1000

## Grants & Communications Update to School Committee – November 12, 2024

### Grants

The district has been awarded the following grant and submitted it for School Committee Approval:

- FY25 Fund Code 460: Early College Support Grant to further support the Early College Program at Gardner High School and the Gateway Program at Gardner Academy.

The district has been awarded the following grant, but is currently awaiting final funding approval:

- FY25 Fund Code 348: Multilingual Newcomer and Homeless Support Grant to support multilingual newcomer students who are also homeless.

This grant will be sent to the school committee for final fiscal approval at the December meeting.

The district completed and submitted the following grants in October:

- FY25-FY27 Barr Foundation Grant to continue to work in partnership with Leominster and Winchendon Public Schools to strengthen school leadership in the region through professional development, coaching and capacity building of new and current leaders as well as teacher leaders. The 36-month opportunity will total \$925,000 if awarded.
- FY25 Fund Code 311: Supporting Students' Social Emotional Learning, Behavioral & Mental Health, and Wellness Grant to continue to develop SEL strategies within the MTSS system at all buildings. The district applied for \$100,000.

If awarded, the district will submit these grants for final fiscal approval at the December meeting as well.

Community • Appreciation • Responsibility • Excellence

# Gardner Public Schools

Joyce West, Director of Pupil Personnel Services



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November 4, 2024

## Report to the School Committee Special Education Updates

### **DISTRICT MENTAL HEALTH:**

The first of four annual meetings for the District Mental Health Team was held on Monday October 28, 2024. Approximately 35 district staff were in attendance. The session was presented by Joyce West and topics included annual goals/activities, professional development and resources, and roles and responsibilities. The District Team will be working together to expand our assessments, curriculum, and progress monitoring tools specific to small group counseling based on student needs and trends.

Advancing Telebehavioral Health in Schools: A Symposium on the Brookline Center school-Based Telebehavioral Health Pilot was held at the Hogan Center at Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts. Gardner Public Schools participated in a school panel discussion with Lowell, Pittsfield, Haverhill, and Fitchburg Public Schools. The purpose of the session was to discuss the implementation process, challenges, and successes of having a telebehavioral health program in the district.

School Counselor Karen McCrillis was selected by the Massachusetts School Counselor Association (MASCA) to take part in the promotional ad “Become a School Counselor”. Similar to special education staffing shortages, school counselors are experiencing shortages in the field. As a previously awarded MASCA School Counselor of The Year, Ms. McCrillis is well respected and an asset to the District. To view the advertisement please click the link [Massachusetts School Counselors Association](#) and the video can be found on the home page.

### **DISTRICT MTSS SEL:**

Superintendent Dr, Mark Pellegrino, Pupil Personnel Director Joyce West, and MTSS Director Amber Casavant attended the annual National PBIS Leadership Forum held in Chicago, Illinois on October 9-11, 2024. The National PBIS Leadership Forum is a technical assistance activity of the Center on PBIS and provides an opportunity for the Center to share with leaders the latest applications in PBIS.

Gardner Public Schools presented during two sessions at the Leadership Forum:

- 1) Building Capacity for District Implementation Across all Three Tiers (Mark Pellegrino, Joyce West, and Amber Casavant Gardner Public Schools, Bob Putnam, May Institute) This session was recorded and will soon be made available to view.
- 2) Using PBIS to Build Staff Capacity for De-escalating Student Behaviors (Brian Meyers, Midwest PBIS Network and Amber Casavant, Gardner Public Schools). This session was full and standing room only.



To view the sessions and find out more information about the National Leadership Forum go to [www.pbisforum.org](http://www.pbisforum.org)

**SEPAC:**

The first SEPAC Meeting was held virtually on October 17, 2024 from 6 to 7 pm. SEPAC Officers Katie Donovan and Laurie Davis welcomed attendees and provided an overview of the SEPAC. It was a positive, well received meeting and those in attendance offered ideas and suggestions to further the efforts of the council. The November meeting will be held virtually, at the request of attendees from the first meeting. On November 14, 2024 from 6 to 7, Assistant Director Tasha Gamble will present Parent and Student Basic Rights which is a required annual presentation for the SEPAC.

Ashburnham-Westminster and Lunenburg Public Schools will be joining Gardner Public Schools for this presentation. Gardner SEPAC is ready to welcome parents and community members and a flier is forthcoming.

**SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT:**

Currently, all Special Education Teacher and Related Service positions are filled. There are recent openings for Registered Behavior Technicians in substantially separate classrooms.