

Agenda School Committee Meeting 6. 8..26

Mission Statement

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

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

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

GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

REGULAR MEETING OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Monday, June 8, 2026, 6:00 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 – Senior Student Advisors**
- D. **Consent Agenda**
 - a. Approval of Minutes: May 11, 2026
 - Warrant # 26-45, dated May 7, 2026, in the amount of \$310,394.58
 - Warrant # 26-46, dated May 14, 2026, in the amount of \$245,256.26
 - Warrant # 26-47, dated May 21, 2026, in the amount of \$387,701.31
 - Warrant # 26-48, dated May 28, 2026, in the amount of \$382,606.36
 - Warrant # 26-49, dated June 4, 2026, in the amount of \$305,182.46
 - Donations –
 - Donation, Sauter Family, GHS \$2,000.00
- E. **Subcommittee Report**
 - Facilities Subcommittee
 - Finance Subcommittee

Agenda School Committee Meeting 6. 8..26

F. **Student Advisory Board - Aiden Lospennato & Natalie Ruiz**

G. **Discussion Items:**

Item #3788 Second Reading of Policies (Vote Required)

GBEC – Drug Free Workplace

GBJ – Personnel Records

GCRD – Tutoring for Pay

ID – School Day

JKAA – Physical Restraint Policy and Procedures (For Adoption)

KBG – Parent Advisory Councils (For Adoption)

The Policy Subcommittee recommends acceptance of the above policies

Item #3789 Donation, Sauter Family (Vote Required)

Item #3790 Superintendent Evaluation (Vote Required)

Item #3791 Curriculum Coordinator Update (Information)

Item #3792 Grants Administrator Update (Information)

Item #3793 Special Education Update (Information)

H. **Communications**

I. **Final Comments of School Committee**

J. **Executive Session**

K. **Next Meeting:**

Meeting date for the future School Committee meeting;

Monday, September 14, 2026 @6:00PM

L. **Adjournment**

GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BRIEFING

REGULAR MEETING OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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 - Finance Subcommittee
 - Policy Subcommittee
- F. Student Advisory Board – Aiden Lospennato & Natalie Ruiz**
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Briefing
School Committee Meeting 6.8.2026

H. Communication

I. Final Comments of School Committee

J. Executive Session

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Meeting date for next School Committee meeting;
Monday, September 14, 2026 @6:00PM

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Gardner School Committee

City Council Chambers, 95 Pleasant Street, Gardner, Massachusetts

Regular Meeting – May 11, 2026

Members present: Mayor Michael Nicholson, Chairperson
Rachel Cormier, Vice Chairperson
Anne Hurst, Secretary
Paul Cormier
John LaFreniere
Jennifer Pelavin
Robert Swartz

School Personnel Present Dr. Mark Pellegrino, Superintendent
Brenda Smith, Recording Secretary
Dr. Catherine Goguen, Chief Academic Officer
Joyce West, Director of Pupil Personnel Service
Lori Simpson, Director of Multilingual Learners
Mark Hawke, Director of Finance & Operations

Student Advisor's: Aiden Lospennato (Absent)
Natalie Ruiz – (Absent)

Call to Order

Mayor Nicholson, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:00 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 welcomed Marisa Coviello and Corey Tawczynski, 4th Grade Student Council Co-Advisors, they recognized the members of the 4th Grade Student Council for 2025-2026. The nineteen students were very busy this year by helping organize and collect food and toys for the Gardner CAC, served as tour guides for the Parent/Teacher conferences. Gardner CAC Thanksgiving Food Drive. Sold raffle tickets at GES Harvest Festival. Helped with grounds cleanup, cataloged books in the Library, and other helpful acts that they do for the school and the community throughout the year. They are looking forward to having lunch with the Mayor at the end of this month at Dunn Pond.

Mayor Nicholson declared a brief recess to allow for a photo opportunity - 6:06 pm. The meeting resumed at 6:10 pm.

PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Nicholson, Chairman, opened the Public Hearing on the proposed FY 2027 School Budget at 6:10 pm in accordance with MGL Chapter 71, Section 38N.

Dr. Pellegrino presented the FY 2027 Level Services Budget for the Gardner Public Schools.

Student enrollment trends from 2015 to now were presented. Enrollment decreased in 2021 and then increased through 2025. They dropped slightly in 2026. The High Needs, Low Income, Students with Disabilities and English Learner demographics of the district were presented and they follow a similar pattern to enrollment, increasing from 2021 to 2025 and a slight drop in 2026. There are increased costs associated with these demographics requiring more funding. Staff is needed to support these students.

Dr. Pellegrino spoke to some success the district has had, particularly at Gardner High School. He also presented slides of Elementary school testing that is improving. He explained that preparation for the FY 2027 Budget began with the Principals and Administrators having continued meetings with the Superintendent and the Director of Finance. The budget was developed to address the needs of all students and in a collaborative format.

Mark Hawke, Director of Finance & Operations, explained the Chapter 70 funding formula, Required Contribution formula and the Foundation budget formula. He went on to explain and compare the FY2027 revenue, salaries and expenses.

Mr. Hawke described the largest cost drivers as Out of District tuition, Collaborative tuition, transportation and Indirect Costs (specifically Health Insurance).

Dr. Pellegrino expounded on the specific position cuts. He asked the Committee to approve a budget of \$38,937,359. This number has a revenue shortfall of \$793,669. He expressed hope that the City would fund the shortfall.

After the presentation, Mayor Nicholson asked if there were any questions from School Committee members

Mr. Cormier asked about teachers retiring. If what we are saving can we hire teachers back? Dr. Pellegrino responded sometimes, we cut 18 positions it depends on who we are hiring the top teachers cost the same amount to hire back so it's hard.

Mayor Nicholson asked three times if anyone else from the school committee had any questions on the FY 2027 Level Services Budget. There were no further questions.

Mayor Nicholson asked if anyone from the general public had any questions. There were no further questions.

Mayor Nicholson asked three times if anyone else from the general public had any questions on the FY 2027 Level Services Budget. There were no further questions.

Mayor Nicholson moved that the Public Hearing on the FY 2027 Level Services Budget be closed.

The Public Hearing closed at 6:33 pm.

FY 2027 SCHOOL BUDGET (Vote)

Mr. Swartz moved that the Gardner School Committee vote to approve the FY 2027 Gardner Public School's Budget at \$38,937,359 includes a shortfall of \$793,669 as presented.

Seconded by Mr. LaFreniere.

Roll Call Vote - Mrs. Cormier, yes; Mr. LaFreniere, yes; Mr. Swartz, yes, Mrs. Pelavin, yes; Mrs. Hurst, yes; yes, Mr., Cormier, yes; and Mayor Nicholson, yes. Count - 7 yes. Unanimous.

Consent Agenda

Mr. LaFreniere moved to accept the Consent Agenda as presented:

- **Acceptance of Minutes, April 13, 2026**
- **Ratification of the following Warrants as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee:**
 - **Warrant # 26-41, dated April 9, 2026, in the amount of \$304,120.59**
 - **Warrant # 26-42, dated April 16, 2026, in the amount of \$253,323.79**
 - **Warrant # 26-43, dated April 23, 2026, in the amount of \$184,239.17**
 - **Warrant # 26-44, dated April 30, 2026, in the amount of \$457,641.27**

Seconded by Mr. Swartz

Vote - so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Finance Subcommittee

Mr. LaFreniere, Chairperson, reported that the Finance Subcommittee met on May 5, 2026. Minutes of the meeting were presented to the committee. The Subcommittee reviewed the Expense Report.

Mr. Hawke reviewed the line items in the negative with the committee.

Mr. Hawke updated the committee on the Gardner Middle School Roof bid, it has been received and the contracts are awaiting signatures.

Under New Business, the Pre-K Tuition fees have not increased in several years. On a recommendation of the Program Director, Special Education Director, Finance Director and Superintendent, a motion was made to increase the full day annual cost from \$2,600 to \$2,840 and increase the half day cost from \$1,300 to \$1,480.

FY27 Budget presentation. Superintendent Pellegrino and Mr. Hawke went over the presentation with the Committee. A presentation to the full School Committee will take place on Monday, May 11. A presentation to the City Council will take place on Tuesday, May 12.

Policy Subcommittee

Mrs. Hurst reported that the Policy Subcommittee met on April 29, 2026. Minutes of the meeting were presented.

The following policies were tabled to the May Policy Subcommittee meeting for further review and discussion:

- **EBB, IKF, IKFE, Recording Policy**

The following Policies were reviewed and deemed be redundant to other District Policies and/or state federal regulations, Therefore, they were not recommended to be sent to the full school committee for adoption.

- **JJE, KI**

Six policies were approved for a first read by the School Committee

- **GBEC, GBJ, GCRD, ID, JKAA, KBG**

Student Advisory Board

Neither Student Advisors were present tonight.

NEW BUSINESS

Item #3780 – First Reading of Policies

The Policy Subcommittee recommends the following policies for a first read:

- **GBEC –Drug Free Workplace**
- **GBJ – Personnel Records**
- **GCRD – Tutoring for Pay**
- **ID – School Day**
- **JKAA – Physical Restraint Policy and Procedures (For Adoption)**
- **KBG – Parent Advisory Councils (For Adoption)**

Item #3781 – 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:

- **EEAG – Student Transportation in Private Vehicles**
- **EEAJ – Motor Vehicle Idling on School Grounds**
- **FF – Naming New Facilities**
- **GBA – Equal Employment Opportunity**
- **GBEA – Staff Ethics/Conflict of Interest**
- **GBEB – Staff Conduct**
- **GBEBC –Gifts to and Solicitations by Staff**
- **GBEBD – Online Fundraising and Solicitations**

- **EFBA – School Food and Nutrition (For Adoption)**
- **EFE Civil Rights Complaint Policy for Child Nutrition Programs (For Adoption)**

Seconded by Mr. Cormier.

Vote - so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Item #3782 Pre-k Tuition

Mr. Lafreniere moved that the Gardner School Committee vote to accept the increase of full day annual cost to \$2,840.00 and increase half day annual cost to \$1,480.00.

Seconded by Ms. Pelavin

Vote - so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Item #3783 – CAPPS Collaborative Third Quarter-FY26 Report Update

Quarterly Update for Member District School Committees -Third Quarter – FY26 was included in packet for review.

Item #3784 Curriculum Coordinator's Update

The Curriculum Coordinator's Update was included in members' packets. Dr. Goguen, Chief Academic Officer, was present this evening.

Item #3785 Director of Health Services Update

The Director of Health Services Update was included in members' packets. Ms. McCaffrey, Director of Health Services, was not present this evening.

Item #3786 - Grants Administrator's Update

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

Item #3787 - Special Education Update

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

COMMUNICATIONS

Dr. Pellegrino updated the committee on Kindergarten enrollment for the 2026-2027 school year, we are at 165 enrolled and are expecting 200. English Language Learners students went from 29 students last year to 40 this year.

FINAL COMMENTS

Mrs. Hurst

Congratulations to the 4th grade Student Council, my favorite part seeing the younger kids coming in, it's great to hear all the good things they're doing. A lot to be proud of in Gardner.

Thank you for the budget presentation I appreciate it this it’s not easy. People need to understand and it’s hard to not take it personally. Very proud of the work everyone does here,

Mrs. Pelavin

I ditto what Ms. Hurt said about student council’s accomplishments and what they do every year. Budget, I echo, none of us want to see any cuts, we wish we weren’t dealing with this. Hoping for better outcomes

Robert Swartz

Accolades to the Director of Health Services. I praise Becky and her team running around every day doing what they do its very hard work. Tomorrow night I hope the City Council really hears and understands the presentations and comes up with questions on the doubts they might have and pass the budget as presented.

Mr. LaFreniere

I like to thank the staff and everyone working on the budget, it was really hard to do. I really appreciate the talent that we have and support staff is incredible in this district. Very confident we can get through this. it wasn’t easy and we will get through it.

Mayor Nicholson

Thank you to the teachers that joined us here tonight. The City Council meeting will be tomorrow night May 12, 2026 at 7:30 here in the Council Chambers for the Presentation for the School Budget following with a June vote. Graduation up next, Saturday, May 30th, Congratulations to all our graduates. The next School Committee meeting will be the last meeting of this school year as we don’t meet during the summer months.

The Next meeting will take place on Monday, June 8, 2026 6:00PM

ADJOURNMENT

**Mr. LaFreniere moved to adjourn.
Seconded by. Mr. Swartz
Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.**

Vote – so vote

The meeting adjourned at 6:57 pm

Anne Hurst, Secretary

B. Smith, Recording Secretary

**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 26-45

WARRANT DATE 05/07/26

Location	Office / General / Custodial Supplies	Curriculum / Assessment	Salary pd thru Vendor	IT	Athletics	Student Act/Field Trips	Facilities	Utilities	TOTAL
High School		\$ 428.43					\$ 31,924.10		\$ 32,352.53
Middle School			\$ 3,579.93				\$ 24,192.23		\$ 27,772.16
Gardner Elementary School			#####				\$ 41,690.42		\$ 54,909.17
GALT							\$ 3,267.50		\$ 3,267.50
Sub-Total	\$ -	\$ 428.43	#####	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 101,074.25	\$ -	\$118,301.36

Location	Office Supplies	IT	Speech/OCC	Tuition	Transportation	Prof Services	Legal	Facilities	Prof. Devel.	Carry Forward	TOTAL
Special Education			\$ 3,157.63	\$ 55,526.69	\$ 78,637.32	\$ 13,098.32					\$150,419.96
Administration		\$ 995.27						\$ 3,267.50			\$ 4,262.77
Sub-Total	\$ -	\$ 995.27	\$ 3,157.63	\$ 55,526.69	\$ 78,637.32	\$ 13,098.32	\$ -	\$ 3,267.50	\$ -	\$ -	\$154,682.73

Grants	\$ 26,747.93
Student Activity Acct	\$ 10,662.56
Sub-Total	\$ 37,410.49

GRAND TOTAL	\$310,394.58
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**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 26-46

WARRANT DATE 05/14/26

Location	Office / General / Custodial Supplies	Curriculum / Assessment	Salary pd thru Vendor	IT	Athletics	Student Act/Field Trips	Facilities	Utilities	TOTAL
High School					\$ 4,543.98		\$ 1,362.94	\$ 16,755.70	\$ 22,662.62
Middle School					\$ 338.00		\$ 88.00	\$ 6,449.85	\$ 6,875.85
Gardner Elementary School			\$ 1,320.00				\$ 3,585.21	\$ 33,509.98	\$ 38,415.19
GALT							\$ 55.50	\$ 3,199.43	\$ 3,254.93
Sub-Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 1,320.00	\$ -	\$ 4,881.98	\$ -	\$ 5,091.65	\$ 59,914.96	\$ 71,208.59

Location	Office Supplies	IT	Speech/OCC	Tuition	Transportation	Prof Services	Utilities	Facilities	Prof. Devel.	Travel	TOTAL
Special Education	\$ 25.00			\$ 22,678.70	\$ 2,320.00	\$ 12,354.42				\$ 214.01	\$ 37,592.13
Administration		\$ 301.16					\$ 3,199.44	\$ 3,655.69	\$ 400.00		\$ 7,556.29
Sub-Total	\$ 25.00	\$ 301.16	\$ -	\$ 22,678.70	\$ 2,320.00	\$ 12,354.42	\$ 3,199.44	\$ 3,655.69	\$ 400.00	\$ 214.01	\$ 45,148.42

Grants	\$ 124,551.25
Student Activity Acct	\$ 800.00
Revolving	\$ 3,548.00
Sub-Total	\$ 128,899.25

GRAND TOTAL	\$245,256.26
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**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 26-47

WARRANT DATE 05/21/26

Location	Office / General / Custodial Supplies	Curriculum / Assessment	Salary pd thru Vendor	IT	Athletics	Student Act/Field Trips	Facilities	Utilities	TOTAL
High School	\$ 999.75				\$ 3,264.83		\$ 853.66		\$ 5,118.24
Middle School			\$ 3,574.68				\$ 252.09		\$ 3,826.77
Gardner Elementary School			\$ 3,951.25				\$ 880.20		\$ 4,831.45
GALT									\$ -
Sub-Total	\$ 999.75	\$ -	\$ 7,525.93	\$ -	\$ 3,264.83	\$ -	\$ 1,985.95	\$ -	\$ 13,776.46

Location	Office Supplies	IT	Speech/OCC	Tuition	Transportation	Prof Services	Legal	Facilities	Prof. Devel.	Curriculum	TOTAL
Special Education	\$ 245.09		\$ 4,412.06	\$ 45,777.14	\$ 6,696.00	\$ 20,584.67					\$ 77,714.96
Administration		#####			\$ 99,957.50		\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,262.76	\$ 600.00	\$ 1,124.95	\$194,641.04
Sub-Total	\$ 245.09	#####	\$ 4,412.06	\$ 45,777.14	\$ 106,653.50	\$ 20,584.67	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,262.76	\$ 600.00	\$ 1,124.95	\$272,356.00

Grants	\$ 69,297.30
GHS Locker Room	\$ 410.28
GHS Tennis Court	\$ 4.13
Athletic Field	\$ 14,508.94
Student Activity Accts	\$ 17,348.20
Sub-Total	\$ 101,568.85

GRAND TOTAL	\$387,701.31
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**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 26-48

WARRANT DATE 05/28/26

Location	Office / General / Custodial Supplies	Curriculum / Assessment	Salary pd thru Vendor	IT	Athletics	Travel	Facilities	Utilities	TOTAL
High School	\$ 1,324.08	\$ 85.99		\$ 2,701.22	\$ 3,967.54		\$ 1,852.32		\$ 9,931.15
Middle School			\$ 7,026.25	\$ 1,443.03		\$ 181.25	\$ 818.83	\$ 1,808.48	\$ 11,277.84
Gardner Elementary School	\$ 2,399.40			\$ 2,722.32			\$ 5,437.33		\$ 10,559.05
GALT							\$ 420.77		\$ 420.77
Sub-Total	\$ 3,723.48	\$ 85.99	\$ 7,026.25	\$ 6,866.57	\$ 3,967.54	\$ 181.25	\$ 8,529.25	\$ 1,808.48	\$ 32,188.81

Location	Office Supplies	IT	Medical Exams	Tuition	Transportation	Prof Services	Legal	Facilities	Prof. Devel.	Utilities	TOTAL
Special Education		\$ 992.07		\$ 8,955.94	\$ 54,261.74	\$ 7,645.96	\$ 4,202.20				\$ 76,057.91
Administration	\$ 89.00	\$ 735.88	\$ 217.00				\$ 792.00	\$ 420.77	\$ 600.00	\$ 549.11	\$ 3,403.76
Sub-Total	\$ 89.00	\$ 1,727.95	\$ 217.00	\$ 8,955.94	\$ 54,261.74	\$ 7,645.96	\$ 4,994.20	\$ 420.77	\$ 600.00	\$ 549.11	\$ 79,461.67

Grants	\$ 49,451.46
Revolving	\$ 211,604.42
GHS Locker	\$ 9,900.00
Sub-Total	\$ 270,955.88

GRAND TOTAL	\$382,606.36
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**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 26-49

WARRANT DATE 06/04/26

Location	Office / General / Custodial Supplies	Curriculum / Assessment	Salary pd thru Vendor	IT	Athletics	Field Trips / Extra Curricular	Facilities	Utilities	TOTAL
High School						\$ 3,429.15	\$ 32,589.57		\$ 36,018.72
Middle School					\$ 5,893.25		\$ 24,336.70		\$ 30,229.95
Gardner Elementary School	\$ 1,456.05		\$ 2,040.00				\$ 42,423.42		\$ 45,919.47
GALT	\$ 297.00						\$ 3,327.00		\$ 3,624.00
Sub-Total	\$ 1,753.05	\$ -	\$ 2,040.00	\$ -	\$ 5,893.25	\$ 3,429.15	\$ 102,676.69	\$ -	\$115,792.14

Location	Office Supplies	IT	Medical Exams	Tuition	Transportation	Prof Services	Dues & Mem	Facilities	Prof. Devel.	Utilities	TOTAL
Special Education				\$ 46,222.87	\$ 2,520.00	\$ 11,871.75					\$ 60,614.62
Administration		#####					\$ 55.00	\$ 3,372.48	\$ 151.84		\$ 17,159.53
Sub-Total	\$ -	#####	\$ -	\$ 46,222.87	\$ 2,520.00	\$ 11,871.75	\$ 55.00	\$ 3,372.48	\$ 151.84	\$ -	\$ 77,774.15

Grants	\$ 101,266.44
Revolving	\$ 675.00
Student Activity Account	\$ 9,674.73
Sub-Total	\$ 111,616.17

GRAND TOTAL	\$305,182.46
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DRUG- FREE WORKPLACE POLICY

DRUG-FREE WORKPLACE POLICY

The School District will provide a drug-free workplace and certifies that it will:

1. Notify all employees in writing that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensing, possession or use of a controlled substance, is prohibited in the District's workplace, and specify the actions that will be taken against employees for violation of such prohibitions.
2. Establish a drug-free awareness program to inform employees about the dangers of drug abuse in the workplace; the District's policy of maintaining a drug-free work-place; and available drug counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs; and the penalty that may be imposed on employees for drug abuse violations occurring in the workplace.
3. Make it a requirement that each employee whose employment is funded by a federal grant be given a copy of the statement as required.
4. Notify the employee in the required statement that as a condition of employment under the grant, the employee will abide by the terms of the statement, and will notify the District of any criminal drug statute conviction for a violation occurring in the workplace no later than five days after such conviction.
5. Notify the federal agency within ten days after receiving notice from an employee or otherwise receiving notice of such conviction.
6. Take one of the following actions within 30 days of receiving notice with respect to any employee who is so convicted; take appropriate personnel action against such an employee, up to and including termination; or require such employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program approved for such purposes by a federal, state or local health law enforcement, or other appropriate agency.
7. Make a good faith effort to continue to maintain a drug-free workplace through implementation of all the provisions of this policy.

SOURCE: MASC ~~Updated 2022~~

[Reference: 41 USC 81]

[Adopted: May 1997]

[Revised: January 2003]

[Revised: October 2019]

[Revised: December 2023]

[\[Revised: 2026\]](#)

PERSONNEL RECORDS

Information about staff members is required for the daily administration of the school district, for implementing salary and other personnel policies, for budget and financial planning, for responding to appropriate inquiries about employees, and for meeting the School Committee's education reporting requirements. To meet these needs, the Superintendent will implement a comprehensive and efficient system of personnel records maintenance and control under the following guidelines:

1. A personnel record for each present and former employee will be accurately maintained in the central administrative office. In addition to the application for employment and references, the records will contain information relative to compensation, payroll deductions, evaluations, and any other pertinent information.
2. The Human Resources Manager will be the official custodian for personnel records and will have overall responsibility for maintaining and preserving the confidentiality of the files within the provisions of the law.
3. Personnel records are considered confidential under the law and will not be open to public inspection. Access to personnel records will be limited to persons authorized by the Human Resources Manager to use the files for the reasons cited above.
4. Each employee will have the right, upon written request, to review the contents of their own personnel record.
5. Employees may make written objections to any information contained in the file. Any written objection must be signed by the staff member and will become part of the employee's personnel record. Further, no negative comment will be placed in a staff member's file unless it is signed by the person making the comment and the staff member is informed of the comment and afforded the opportunity to include their written response in the record.
6. Lists of school district employees' names and home addresses will be released only to governmental agencies as required for official reports or by law.

SOURCE: MASC ~~Updated 2022~~

LEGAL REFS.: Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, Sec. 438, P.L. 90-247

Title IV, as amended

88 Stat. 571-574 (20 U.S.C. 1232g) and regulations

M.G.L. [4:7](#); [71:42C](#)

Teachers' Agreement

CONTRACT REF.: All Agreements

CROSS REF.: [KDB](#), Public's Right to Know

[Adopt: December 2023]

[\[Revised: 2026\]](#)

TUTORING FOR PAY

Definition: "Tutoring" means giving private instruction or help to an individual or group for which the teacher receives remuneration other than through the School Committee.

A teacher cannot recommend that one of students get tutoring, and then be paid to tutor that same student in a second job.

A teacher may not tutor students who are currently in - class. Even if the teacher does not recommend that the current student receive private tutoring, the teacher should not tutor current students.

Teachers and other public employees may not approach a student, or the student's parents, seeking private tutoring work. A teacher may provide tutoring when the relationship is initiated by the parents or a student, but, if the student is, or in the future may be, under the teacher's authority, the teacher will need to provide a written disclosure.

A teacher cannot use school resources such as classrooms or materials in connection with a private tutoring business. A public school employee cannot use a school or district website to advertise private tutoring services. Schools cannot send home brochures for a particular tutoring service with the children.

Tutoring is not to be recommended for a student unless the appropriate teacher of the student involved is consulted and agrees that it will be of real help. If tutoring seems advisable, the Principal may give the parents a list of persons who are willing to tutor. This list may include teachers, but not the student's teacher of the subject in which he or she is to be tutored.

Tutoring for pay is not to be done in the school building.

A teacher cannot tutor in their own district if the district is going to pay for the tutoring unless the district has included a provision in the teachers' collective bargaining agreement providing a set amount of extra pay for tutoring by teachers that will be included in the teachers' regular paychecks.

Source: MASC

[Reference: M. G. L. 268A Mass. Ethics Commission FAQs for Public School Teachers]

[Revised: November 2015]

[Revised: September 2019]

[Reviewed: November 2023]

[Revised: 2026]

SCHOOL DAY

The length of the school day is established in the collective bargaining agreements with the various school unions. The specific opening and closing times of the schools will be recommended by the Superintendent and set by the Committee.

The Superintendent is authorized to make minor changes in opening and closing times to simplify transportation scheduling; however, major changes in schedules will be subject to Committee approval.

Parents and guardians will be informed of the opening and closing times set by the Committee. To help insure the safety of all children, parents/guardians will also be notified that students will not be admitted into the school building until the start of the official day unless circumstances require earlier admittance.

SOURCE: MASC [April 2019](#)

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [15:1G](#); [69:1G](#); [71:59](#)

603 CMR [27.00](#)

~~**NOTE: Each Committee should verify the specific times set in the handbook for allowing students into the school building. In some cases, this may be established in the collective bargaining agreements.**~~

[Adopted: June 2020]

[Reviewed: December 2023]

[\[Revised: 2026\]](#)

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.~~

~~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 Types of Restraint~~

~~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 movement is prohibited. 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.~~

~~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~~

~~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. 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.~~

~~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.~~

- ~~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.~~

- ~~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.~~

- ~~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).~~

~~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") student's 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, 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.

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.~~

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The Gardner Public Schools is committed to maintaining safe, secure and orderly school environments that support academic achievement while respecting the rights of the individuals comprising the school community. Maintaining an orderly, safe environment conducive to learning is an expectation of all staff members of the school district. At times, physical restraint and/or emergency seclusion of a student may be necessary to protect that student or other individuals from assault or imminent physical harm. This policy establishes the standards and procedures governing the use of restraint in accordance with 603 CMR 46.00 (as amended effective August 17, 2026.) Its purpose is to ensure the safety of students and staff while safeguarding students' legal rights and restricting the use of physical restraint or seclusion to emergency situations only. Students are protected by law from the unreasonable or unlawful use of restraint and seclusion, and the District adheres to all state requirements governing the safe, appropriate, and legally permissible use of physical restraint and seclusion in district schools.

Physical restraint, including prone restraint where permitted under 603 CMR 46.03, and seclusion are emergency procedures of last resort and are permitted only when a student's behavior poses a threat of assault or imminent, serious physical harm to the student or others, and the student is not responsive to verbal directives or other lawful, less intrusive interventions. Any use of physical restraint shall be limited to the degree of force necessary to protect a student or another person from assault or imminent, serious physical harm.

The Superintendent will develop procedures identifying:

- Methods for preventing student violence, self-injurious behavior, and suicide, including individual crisis planning and de-escalation of potentially dangerous behavior occurring among groups of students or with an individual student;
- Methods for engaging parents in discussions about prevention of physical restraint and seclusion and the use of restraint and/or seclusion solely as an emergency procedure;
- Descriptions and explanations of alternatives to physical restraint or seclusion as well as the school's method of physical restraint or seclusion for use in emergency situations;
- A statement prohibiting: medication restraint, mechanical restraint, prone restraint unless permitted under the state regulations, seclusion unless permitted pursuant under the regulations, and the use of physical restraint in a manner inconsistent with 603 CMR 46.00;
- Descriptions of the school's training requirements and procedures to comply with the reporting requirements of 603 CMR 46.06, including, but not limited to, making reasonable efforts to inform a parent of the use of restraint or seclusion within twenty-four (24) hours and providing written notice to the parent within three (3) school working days;

- Procedures for conducting the required follow-up after each physical restraint or use of seclusion, including debriefing, review of the incident, and implementation of any necessary behavioral supports, consistent with 603 CMR 46.06(4);
- Procedures for conducting periodic review of data and documentation on the use of physical restraints and/or seclusion as described in 603 CMR 46.06(5) and (6);
- Procedures for receiving and investigating complaints regarding restraint and seclusion practices;
- Procedures governing the use of time-out within District schools; and
- A process for obtaining Principal approval for seclusion or time out exceeding 30 minutes.

These procedures will be reviewed annually, provided to program staff, and made available to parents and guardians of enrolled students.

The use of mechanical restraint and medication restraint is strictly prohibited. Prone restraint is prohibited except in the limited circumstances expressly permitted by 603 CMR 46.03. Seclusion is prohibited except in the limited circumstances expressly permitted under 603 CMR 46.07(2), and only in accordance with the specific conditions and safety requirements set forth in the regulations. Physical restraint or seclusion may never be used: as a means of discipline or punishment; when the student cannot be safely restrained or secluded because it is medically contraindicated; as a response to property destruction or disruption of school order; in response to a student's refusal to comply with a public education program rule or staff directive, or in response to verbal threats, when those actions do not constitute a threat of imminent assault, or imminent serious, physical harm or as a standard response for any individual student. No written individual behavior plan or individualized education program ("IEP") may include use of physical restraint or seclusion as a standard response to any behavior.

Nothing in this policy or 603 CMR 46.00 prohibits a staff member from using reasonable force to protect students, other persons, or themselves from assault or imminent, serious, physical harm. This policy shall not be construed to limit the protection afforded to publicly funded students under other federal and state laws, including those laws that provide for the rights of students who have been found eligible to receive special education services.

Legal Ref.: M.G.L. c. 71:37G; 603 CMR 46.00 (as amended effective August 17, 2026)
Adopted:

~~[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]

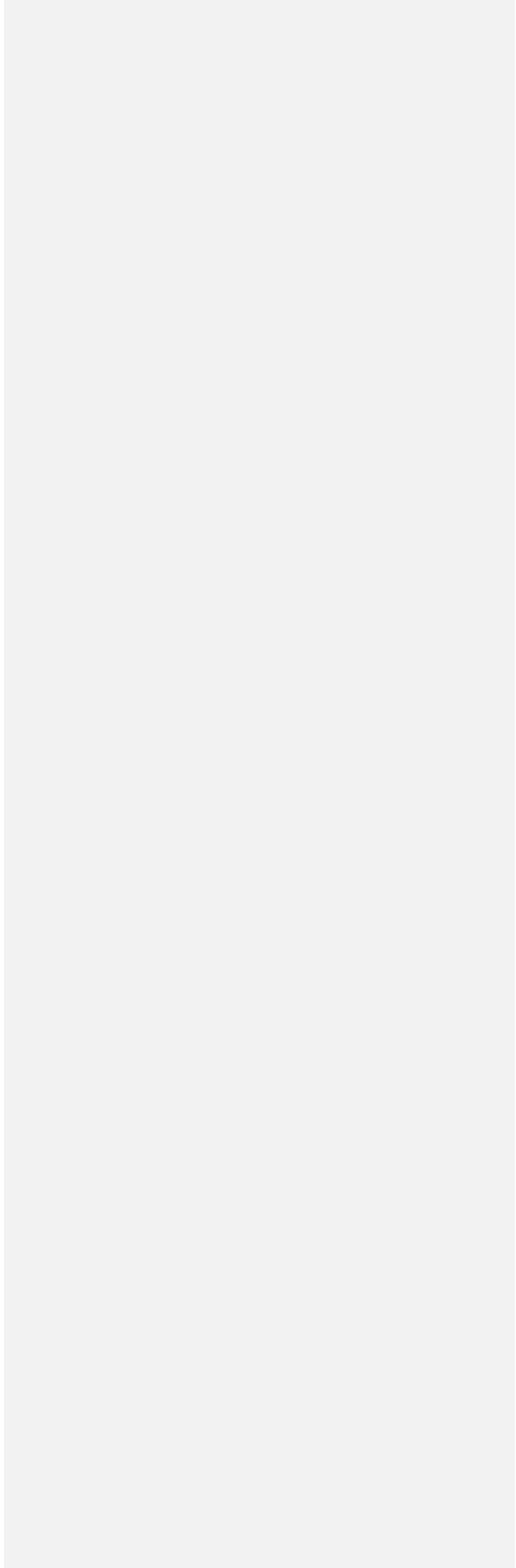
[Reviewed: June 2014]

[Revised: March 2016]

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[Reviewed: April 2021]
[Reviewed: November 2024]
[Revised: April 2025]
[\[Revised: 2026\]](#)

File: JKAA



PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS (PACs)

Massachusetts General Law requires the formation and support of specific Parent Advisory Councils. These PACs can provide valuable feedback for School Committees. Committees should engage with their PACs to encourage stakeholder feedback by both designating liaisons to their PACs as with other groups and inviting the PACs to present updates on their activities to the Committee on a regular basis.

PACs must be granted access to district resources to assist them in their operations and activities where available, including but not limited to spaces for meetings and the ability to communicate with parents in the manner most accessible. PACs will not be charged for using district facilities.

Special Education Parent Advisory Councils

Every district in Massachusetts and their school committee are responsible for the establishment and support of a Special Education Parent Advisory Council, or SEPAC, in their city or town.

The "duties of the SEPAC, shall include but not be limited to: advising the school committee on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities: meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school committee's special education programs."

If a district does not have an established SEPAC, the School Committee, in conjunction with the district, shall solicit volunteers to form an interim SEPAC board. The interim board shall then work independently to create bylaws following the guidance put forth by DESE and hold formal elections by the end of the current school year.

In the absence of a SEPAC, the Student Services Department will hold the required annual Basic Rights workshop until one is established.

English Learner Parent Advisory Councils and Multilanguage Learner Parent Advisory Councils

ELPACs, or MLPACs, are required in Massachusetts under the following conditions:

"School districts or charter schools operating a language acquisition program for ELs serving 100 or more ELs or in which ELs comprise at least five percent of the school district's or charter school's student population, whichever is less; and/or

"Schools designated as underperforming or chronically underperforming and operating a program for ELs

ELPACs and MLPACs "are intended by law to advise school districts and schools regarding matters that impact ELs, such as providing advice on English learner education programs, meeting regularly with school officials about educational opportunities for ELs, and providing input on school or district improvement plans as they relate to ELs."

Schools and/or districts will provide notification to parents/guardians annually in a language that is accessible to them.

LEGAL REFS: MGL [Ch 71B, Section 3](#)

603 CMR [28.07](#) (4)

603 CMR [28.03](#) (1) (a) (4)

"Act Relative to Language Opportunity for Our Kids,"

[Chapter 138 of the Acts of 2017](#) (The LOOK Act)

OTHER REFS: Guidance for Special Education Parent Advisory Councils - DESE 2010

Guidance for English Learner Parent Advisory Councils - DESE 2018

| [\[Adopted: 2026\]](#)



**NON MINISTRARI SED
MINISTRARE**

May 3, 2026
Gardner High School
Michael Bartkus, Principal
200 Catherine St
Gardner, MA 01440

Dear Mr. Bartkus,

Hello, my name is Peter Sauter. My family has had a long connection to the City of Gardner. My dad, Dr. Charles W. Sauter II and my mother, Helen Mae Sauter were very supportive of the Gardner Public schools. I have enclosed a RMD donation of two thousand dollars. I would like the funds to be used for students in need. It is up to you on how this money will best serve the students of Gardner High School. If needed, please contact Paula Bolger as to how she distributed the funds last year.

Thank you,

Peter T. Sauter
911 Halstead Ter
The Villages, Fl 32162



Gardner Public Schools

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

www.gardnerk12.org

160 Elm Street, Gardner, MA 01440

(978) 632-1000

May 28, 2026

Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment Update

Professional Development:

There will be a mixture of virtual and in person Professional Development opportunities for administration and staff during the 2026 summer months. Administrators will meet for strategic planning and professional development for two full days on June 24th and June 25th, and two additional days on August 18th and August 19th. At these meetings administrators will review 2025-2026 SEL, Academic, and School Culture/Climate data. Using this data, District goals will be updated for the 2026-2027 school year, assessment and professional development calendars will be developed, and school improvement plans will be updated. Additionally, administrators will plan next steps for the implementation of the Massachusetts Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) for academic, behavioral, and social emotional supports and interventions.

Other professional development opportunities related to District and school goals regarding tiered supports for academic and social emotional learning and supports will be offered as follows:

- June- August Mentor Curriculum Planning (District-wide)
- July - August Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS) Planning (District-wide)
- August Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) Training for Classroom Teachers (District-wide)
- August Crisis Prevention Intervention Training (CPI) for Administrators and SEL related staff (District-wide)

Curriculum, Instruction, & Assessment

Gardner Middle School Science teachers of grades 6 & 7 are receiving continued training in a new science curriculum endorsed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) entitled Open Sci-Ed. This curriculum is deemed by DESE to be a high quality instructional material and is aligned to the most recently updated DESE Science curriculum framework standards.

To adequately fund the purchase of this new curriculum, grade six Science teachers implemented the curriculum during the 2025-2026 school year, and grade seven Science teachers will implement it during the 2026-2027 school year. Grade eight Science teachers will be trained in 2026-2027 for implementation during the 2027-2028 school year.

I would like to wish everyone a relaxing and healthy summer break!

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Gardner Public Schools

Courtney Dunn, *Grants & Communications Manager*

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160 Elm Street, Gardner, MA 01440

(978) 632-1000

Grants & Communications Update to School Committee – June 8, 2026

The district was not awarded the following grant:

- [Massachusetts Clean Energy Center's Green School Works Implementation Grant](#) to replace Gardner Middle School air handling units with energy efficient units on the new MSBA-funded roof. The district applied for any amount up to the full cost of replacing the air handling units (\$1,961,000).

The organization has [announced](#) grant awards, which were largely focused on ground source or air-to-water heat pump projects.

The grants office is actively working on processing final purchase orders as FY26 comes to a close, amending applications as needed in collaboration with program staff.

As briefly noted in the previous month's report, the state is expecting a 7-10% decrease in Title I and Title II funding in FY27, as well as level funding in Title III, and an increase in Title IV funding. The district is expecting level funding in the federal IDEA (Special Education) grants. While official district allocations are not available until late July, the district is preparing for these statewide shifts by cutting the Title I summer program and some available professional development offerings in order to ensure level-funding for positions that are maintained through federal dollars. Since these grants are allocated for 27-month periods, FY26 funding can still be used into next year, if needed, to ensure a smooth transition. District leadership is attending the DESE-sponsored Federal Grants Conference on June 9th, and will gain some insight into how these cuts may impact Gardner.

The district is entering the third and final year of the Barr Foundation-funded [Strengthening School Leadership Grant](#), which funds the North Central MA School Leadership Pipeline partnership with Leominster and Winchendon. This summer, the districts will work together to formulate a plan for sustaining the program locally.

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Gardner Public Schools

Joyce West, Director of Pupil Personnel Services

Tasha Gamble, Assistant Director of Pupil Personnel Services



www.gardnerk12.org

160 Elm Street, Gardner MA 01440

(978) 630-4076

June 1, 2026

Report to the School Committee Pupil Services/Special Education Updates

SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT ADVISORY COUNCIL (SE PAC):

A virtual workshop on Suspension and Discipline provided by the Federation for Children with Special Needs in partnership with Gardner Public Schools was held on May 19th, 2026. There were 7 attendees, including parents and community members.

SPECIAL EDUCATION:

The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) recently released the 2025–2026 Local Education Agency (LEA) Special Education Determinations under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Gardner Public Schools received a determination status of “Meets Requirements (MR)” for the 2025–2026 school year. This designation reflects the District’s compliance with state and federal special education requirements and demonstrates progress in the District’s special education systems, practices, and student support efforts.

During the 2024–2025 school year, Gardner Public Schools received a determination status of “Needs Assistance (NA).” District determinations are based on multiple data sources and indicators reviewed by DESE, including compliance monitoring activities, student performance data, graduation and dropout rates, timelines for evaluations and services, least restrictive environment data, dispute resolution information, and other State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report indicators. Specifically the District was in compliance in all areas except assessment results (MCAS) and drop out rates.

This year, Central Office partnered with the elementary and high schools’ building leadership teams to identify corrective actions and began systemic improvements designed to address performance results, specifically the MCAS proficiency percentage of students with disabilities. These efforts included strengthening internal enhancing collaboration between special education and general education staff, and increasing building ownership specific to students with disability outcomes. The teams also continued to prioritize inclusive practices and student-centered programming to improve outcomes for students with disabilities.

Regardless of the recent designation, the District remains committed to continuous improvement and will continue to review student outcome data and strengthen instructional and support practices for students with disabilities.