

## **Agenda School Committee Meeting 1.6.26**

### **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**

**Tuesday, January 6, 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. **Introduction of School Committee Members**
- D. **Reorganization of Committee - Officers**
  - Vice Chair
  - Finance Officer
  - Alternate Finance Officers (2)
  - Secretary
- E. **Consent Agenda**
  - a. Approval of Minutes: December 8, 2025
    - Warrant # 26-23, dated December 04, 2025, in the amount of \$821,818.90
    - Warrant # 26-24, dated December 11, 2025, in the amount of \$68,341.30
    - Warrant # 26-25, dated December 18, 2025, in the amount of \$504,767.74
    - Warrant # 26-26, dated December 24, 2025, in the amount of \$698,365.19
    - Donations –

## Agenda School Committee Meeting 1.6.26

F. **Subcommittee Report**  
Policy Subcommittee

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

H. **Discussion Items:**  
**New Business**

**Item #3746 First Reading of Policies (Information)**

**DBD** – Budget Planning

**DBJ** – Budget Transfer Authority

**DD** – Grants, Proposals, and Special Projects

**DGA** – Authorized Signatures

**DH** – Bonded Employees and Officers

**DI** – Fiscal Accounting and Reporting

**DIE** - Audits

**DJ** - Purchasing

**IJOA** – Field Trips

**IJOA-E** - Field Trip Approval Form

**Item #3747 Second Reading of Policies (Vote Required)**

**BGD** – School Committee Review of Procedures

**BHC** – School Committee – Staff Communications

**BIBA** – School Committee Conferences, Conventions, and Workshops

**CB** – School Superintendent

**CH** – Policy Implementation

**CHCA** – Approval of Handbooks and Directives

**CHD** - Administration in Policy Absence

**JBB** - Educational Equity

The Policy Subcommittee recommends acceptance of the above policies

I. **Communications**

J. **Final Comments of School Committee**

K. **Executive Session**

L. **Next Meeting:**

**Meeting date for the future School Committee (Organizational) meeting;**

Monday, February 9, 2026 @6:00PM

M. **Adjournment**

**Briefing  
School Committee Meeting 1.6.2026**

**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**BRIEFING**

**REGULAR MEETING OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

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    - Donations –
- F Subcommittee Report**  
Policy Subcommittee
- G. Student Advisory Board – Aiden Lospennato & Natalie Ruiz**
- H. Discussion Items:**  
**New Business**  
**Item #3746 First Reading of Policies (Information)**
  - DBD** – Budget Planning
  - DBJ** – Budget Transfer Authority
  - DD** – Grants, Proposals, and Special Projects
  - DGA** – Authorized Signatures
  - DH** – Bonded Employees and Officers
  - DI** – Fiscal Accounting and Reporting
  - DIE** - Audits
  - DJ** - Purchasing
  - IJOA** – Field Trips
  - IJOA-E** - Field Trip Approval Form

## **Briefing**

### **School Committee Meeting 1.6.2026**

#### **Item #3747 Second Reading of Policies (Vote Required)**

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The Policy Subcommittee recommends acceptance of the above policies

**I. Communication**

**J. Final Comments of School Committee**

**K. Executive Session**

**L. Next Meeting:**

**Meeting date for next School Committee (Organizational) meeting;**

Monday, February 9, 2026 @6:00PM

**M. Adjournment**

# **Gardner School Committee**

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

## **Regular Meeting – December 8, 2025**

Members present: Mayor Michael Nicholson  
Rachel Cormier  
Anne Hurst  
John LaFreniere  
Jennifer Pelavin  
Robert Swartz (arrived at 6:08)  
Shannon Ward-Leighton

School Personnel Present: Dr. Mark Pellegrino, Superintendent  
Brenda Smith, Recording Secretary  
Dr. Catherine Goguen, Chief Academic Officer  
Joyce West, Director of Pupil Personnel Service

### **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 was very excited to read off and recognize 53 students that were awarded the John & Abigail Adams Award. This year the school had a breakfast for the students and their families to honor them. They all received a recognition certificate from the district.

### **Consent Agenda**

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

- **Acceptance of Minutes, November 10, 2025**
- **Ratification of the following Warrants as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee:**
  - Warrant # 26-19, dated November 6, 2025, in the amount of \$170,510.57
  - Warrant # 26-20, dated November 13, 2025, in the amount of \$139,835.48
  - Warrant # 26-21, dated November 20, 2025, in the amount of \$268,644.06
  - Donations-  
Shun Fa Lan, Inc. (dba Yen Yen) \$2,500.00

**Seconded by Mrs. Jennifer Pelavin.**

**Vote - so voted.**

**Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting**

**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Finance Subcommittee**

Mr. LaFreniere, Chairperson, reported that the Finance Subcommittee met on December 4, 2025. Minutes of the meeting were presented.

The Subcommittee reviewed the year to date Expense Report. Mr. Hawke noted City Hall transferred \$30k for Athletic Director/Recreation Director salary.

There is a new line on the YTD report created for a new expense that was added through the collective bargaining process, Cell Phone Use. This account is negative because it was added after the budget process.

The Management & Information line is negative as the e-rate funding discount has not been applied to the bills yet so the encumbrance is showing as high.

The Out of District Tuition line is negative, and is substantially more than last month due to the addition of two now OOD students.

The Superintendent updated the Committee on a few changes that could be coming up in the Special Education area. Some of the restructuring will cost a significant amount of funds and will cause our OOD numbers to increase.

Revolving accounts were reviewed. All are healthy and operating as they should.

One donation was accepted and was referred to the full School Committee for approval - Shun Fa Lan Inc. dba Yen Yen \$2,500.

**Policy Subcommittee**

Mrs. Hurst, Chair of the Policy Subcommittee, reported that the Subcommittee met on November 19, 2025. Minutes of the meeting were presented.

The following policies were reviewed and no changes were required and they will be updated "Reviewed November, 2025":

- BID – School Committee Member Compensation
- CFA – School Building Administrative Coverage
- CL – Administrative Reports

Eight policies were recommended to the full School Committee for a first reading. See (Item #3737 on Agenda) – Six Policies for second read (Item#3738) and two for removal. (Item# 3739)

**Student Advisory Board**

Ms. Natalie Ruiz & Mr. Aiden Lospennato was not present this evening and there was no report.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Item #3737 – First Reading of Policies**

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

- BGD – School Committee Review of Procedures
- BHC – School Committee – Staff Communications
- BIBA – School Committee Conferences, Conventions, and Workshops
- CB – School Superintendent
- CH – Policy Implementation
- CHCA – Approval of Handbooks and Directives
- CHD - Administration in Policy Absence
- JBB - Educational Equity

Mayor Nicholson declared a short recess at 6:10. The meeting resumed at 6:11 pm.

**Item #3738 – 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:**

- **BDB** – School Committee Officers
- **BDD** – School Committee – Superintendent Relationship
- **BDF**A – School Council
- **BEDG** - Minutes
- **IGB** – Support Services Programs
- **JLCD** – Administering Medication

**Seconded by Mrs. Ward-Leighton.**

**Vote - so voted.**

**Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.**

**Item # 3739 – BDBB Duties of Vice Chair & BDBC Duties of Secretary**

**Mrs. Hurst moved that the Gardner School Committee vote to remove the following two policies from the Policy Manual as it has been found, by the MASC, to be redundant or unnecessary:**

- **BDBB** – Duties of Vice Chair and
- **BDBC** – Duties of Secretary

**Seconded by Mrs. Ward-Leighton.**

**Vote - so voted.**

**Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.**

**Item #3740 - School Improvement Plans - Gardner Academy & Gardner High School**  
**Michael Bartkus was not able to attend tonight and will be reschedule to present his Plan**

Dr. Carolyn Imperato, Principal of Gardner Academy, presented the Academy School Improvement Plan for 2024-2027. This year is to focus on the students with a deeper vibe. Shared a great story about a student and the second chance that can be accomplished with us having their back and encouraging them along the way. Looking at what are the biggest needs for our students. Holding our students accountable and showing what we can do to help them by being consistent. Gardner Academy is a restorative, alternative high school that meets the social, emotional, and academic needs of all our students in partnership with their families and the wider community. The Implementation Timeline was provided.

**Item #3741 – College & Career Readiness Coordinator Update**

The College & Career Readiness Program Coordinator Update was included in the members' packets Ms. Paula Bolger, was not present this evening.

**Item #3742 – Curriculum Coordinator’s Update**

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

**Item #3743 – Director of MTSS/PBIS Update**

The Director of MTSS/PBIS Update was included in the members' packets. Mrs. Casavant, Director of MTSS/PBIS, was not present this evening.

**Item #3744 - Grants Administrator Update**

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

**Item #3745 - 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.

**COMMUNICATIONS**

Dr. Pellegrino, I hope everyone has a wonderful holiday time, keep an eye on each other sometimes it’s a struggle for others.

**FINAL COMMENTS**

Mayor Nicholson, I would like to thank Shannon Ward-Leighton for being with us for the last four years tonight is her last meeting with us. I appreciate the opportunity to work with you. You have done a lot for us in our community. Good luck to you.

**Mrs. Ward-Leighton**

I missed the last meeting so I wanted to first congratulate Mrs. Hurst, Mrs. Pelavin and Mr. Cormier for winning the election. I want to thank everyone for what I have learned being on this committee it was more than what I thought it was going to be. A huge thank you to everyone who works in the school system I feel great about my children attending here. Happy Holidays to everyone.

**Mrs. Hurst.**

Wished Mrs. Ward-Leighton good luck. As an educator she sees things in a different way and we appreciate that. People need to realize kindness goes a long way especially at this time during the holidays.

**Mrs. Pelavin**

Thank you to Mrs. Ward-Leighton agrees with Mrs. Hurst she brought a lot to the committee as an educator. Do appreciate the input you had. Happy Holidays to everyone.

**Mr. Swartz**

Merry Christmas to everyone. Lots of luck to Shannon been a great four years.

**Mr. LaFreniere**

Thank you Shannon it isn't the easiest position; I will say for what we have for administration it's been a great four years for you to work with. Good luck Merry Christmas & Happy New Year.

**Mrs. Cormier**

Good luck Shannon, it's been nice having you on the committee these last four years. Along with on the Policy Subcommittee, I enjoy your input so much. I really enjoy the presentation on Gardner Academy tonight. Happy Safe Holidays, make great choices everyone.

**Mayor Nicholson**

The Rockwell Committee met and this year's applications are open for this round. The trustees met with the consultants and were told up to \$322,769.70 from the account can be used. The open application period will run from December 1, 2025 through January 30, 2026. We have extended it giving the feedback from staff during the busiest time of year it just wasn't enough time for them to get everything in on time. The applications will be reviewed in February by the committee and awards presented.

The Cities Inauguration will take place on Thursday, January 8, 2026 at 6:30 in City Hall, Perry Auditorium. Merry Christmas & Happy New year to you all.

The Next meeting will take place on Tuesday, January 6, 2025 6:00PM (Organizational Meeting)

**Regular Meeting**

**December 8, 2025  
Page 6**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Mr. LaFreniere moved to adjourn.  
Seconded by. Mrs. Ward-Leighton  
Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.**

**Vote – so voted.**

The meeting adjourned at 6:42 pm

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**Anne Hurst, Secretary**

B. Smith, Recording Secretary

**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 26-23

WARRANT DATE 12/04/25

Location	Office / General / Custodial Supplies	Curriculum / Assessment	Salary pd thru Vendor	IT	Athletics	Field Trip	Facilities	Utilities	TOTAL
High School		#####		#####	#####	\$ 575.00	\$ 31,622.85	\$ 205.93	\$ 70,127.90
Middle School			\$ 5,962.50	#####	\$ 2,800.76		\$ 24,034.98		\$ 34,241.27
Gardner Elementary School	\$ 4,669.40	\$ 356.21		#####			\$ 41,863.19		\$ 49,611.12
GALT	\$ 396.69						\$ 3,317.24		\$ 3,713.93
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$ 5,066.09</b>	<b>#####</b>	<b>\$ 5,962.50</b>	<b>#####</b>	<b>#####</b>	<b>\$ 575.00</b>	<b>\$ 100,838.26</b>	<b>\$ 205.93</b>	<b>#####</b>

Location	General Supplies	Legal	Medical Exams	Speech/OCC	IT	Prof Services	Tuition	Facilities	Prof. Dev.	TOTAL
Special Education	\$ 25.00	#####		#####	\$ 992.07	\$16,097.94	\$ 104,494.21			#####
Administration	\$ 79.98	#####	\$ 601.00		#####			\$ 5,184.52	\$ 2,750.37	\$ 25,677.83
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$ 104.98</b>	<b>#####</b>	<b>\$ 601.00</b>	<b>#####</b>	<b>#####</b>	<b>\$16,097.94</b>	<b>\$ 104,494.21</b>	<b>\$ 5,184.52</b>	<b>\$ 2,750.37</b>	<b>#####</b>

Student Activity Acct.	\$ 8,544.00
Revolving	\$ 296,638.40
Grants	\$ 96,458.59
Building Improvements	\$ 9,975.25
GMS ROOF	\$ 74,638.35
GHS Auditorium	\$ 19,900.00
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$ 506,154.59</b>

<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$821,818.90</b>
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**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 26-24

WARRANT DATE 12/11/25

Location	Office / General / Custodial Supplies	Curriculum / Assessment	Salary pd thru Vendor	IT	Athletics	Field Trip	Facilities	Utilities	TOTAL
High School							\$ 3,504.93	\$ 17,590.35	\$ 21,095.28
Middle School							\$ 4,381.87	\$ 9,477.85	\$ 13,859.72
Gardner Elementary School							\$ 1,742.86	\$ 12,817.76	\$ 14,560.62
GALT							\$ 420.77	\$ 3,538.61	\$ 3,959.38
<b>Sub-Total</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,050.43	\$ 43,424.57	\$ 53,475.00

Location	General Supplies	Legal	Prof. Dev.	Speech/OCC	IT	Prof Services	Tuition	Facilities	Utilities	TOTAL
Special Education										\$ -
Administration	\$ 17.40	#####	\$ 225.00					\$ 4,474.51	\$ 3,538.59	\$ 9,455.50
<b>Sub-Total</b>	\$ 17.40	#####	\$ 225.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 4,474.51	\$ 3,538.59	\$ 9,455.50

Grants	\$ 5,020.80
Student Activity Acct	\$ 390.00
<b>Sub-Total</b>	\$ 5,410.80

<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$68,341.30</b>
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**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 26-25

WARRANT DATE 12/18/25

Location	Office / General / Custodial Supplies	Curriculum / Assessment	Salary pd thru Vendor	IT	Athletics	Field Trip	Facilities	Utilities	TOTAL
High School					\$ 676.00		\$ 515.94	\$ 528.71	\$ 1,720.65
Middle School			\$ 5,872.50				\$ 1,196.27	\$ 1,836.96	\$ 8,905.73
Gardner Elementary School							\$ 1,394.96	\$ 2,549.36	\$ 3,944.32
GALT							\$ 180.21	\$ 277.20	\$ 457.41
<b>Sub-Total</b>	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,872.50	\$ -	\$ 676.00	\$ -	\$ 3,287.38	\$ 5,192.23	\$ 15,028.11

Location	General Supplies	Curriculum	Prof. Dev.	Transportation	IT	Prof Services	Tuition	Facilities	Utilities	Carry Forward	TOTAL
Special Education	\$ 25.00	\$ 838.95		#####		\$ 3,760.25	\$ 73,563.22				#####
Administration			\$ 400.00		\$3,851.45			\$ 1,230.17	\$ 277.20	\$ 2,545.93	\$ 8,304.75
<b>Sub-Total</b>	\$ 25.00	\$ 838.95	\$ 400.00	#####	\$3,851.45	\$ 3,760.25	\$ 73,563.22	\$ 1,230.17	\$ 277.20	\$ 2,545.93	#####

Revolving	\$ 21,740.49
Grants	\$ 194,897.98
Athletic field	\$ 3,100.00
GHS Auditorium	\$ 11,934.15
<b>Sub-Total</b>	\$ 231,672.62

<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$504,767.74</b>
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**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 26-26

WARRANT DATE 12/24/25

Location	Office / General / Custodial Supplies	Curriculum / Assessment	Salary pd thru Vendor	MTSS/PBIS	Athletics	Field Trip	Facilities	Utilities	TOTAL
High School	\$ 599.85	\$ 855.36				\$ 1,038.00	\$ 5,746.17	\$ 194.27	\$ 8,433.65
Middle School							\$ 924.69		\$ 924.69
Gardner Elementary School		\$ 14.36					\$ 4,256.75		\$ 4,271.11
GALT				\$ 640.50			\$ 420.77	\$ 2.20	\$ 1,063.47
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$ 599.85</b>	<b>\$ 869.72</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 640.50</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 1,038.00</b>	<b>\$ 11,348.38</b>	<b>\$ 196.47</b>	<b>\$ 14,692.92</b>

Location	Legal	Curriculum	Speech/OCC	Transportation	IT	Prof Services	Tuition	Facilities	Utilities	Dues & Mem	Carry Forward	TOTAL
Special Education	\$ 4,104.00	\$ 258.00	\$ 1,582.28	\$ 5,859.00		\$ 4,063.90	\$ 131,776.85					\$147,644.03
Administration	\$ 6,656.00			#####	\$3,112.50			\$ 2,519.27	\$ 2.20	\$ 741.02	\$ 3,429.20	\$116,927.69
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$ 10,760.00</b>	<b>\$ 258.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,582.28</b>	<b>#####</b>	<b>\$3,112.50</b>	<b>\$ 4,063.90</b>	<b>\$ 131,776.85</b>	<b>\$ 2,519.27</b>	<b>\$ 2.20</b>	<b>\$ 741.02</b>	<b>\$ 3,429.20</b>	<b>\$264,571.72</b>

Empl Medical Exams	\$ 960.00
Revolving Acct	\$ 175,421.34
Grants	\$ 172,113.38
GHS Auditorium	\$ 60,455.34
Student Activity Accounts	\$ 10,150.49
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>\$ 419,100.55</b>

<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$698,365.19</b>
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# GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Policy  
Subcommittee  
Meeting Minutes  
Wednesday, December 17, 2025  
4:30 PM  
Professional Development Room  
160 Elm Street, Gardner, MA  
01440

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

Absent:

Also in Attendance: Dr. Catherine Goguen, Chief Academic Officer; Ms. Courtney Dunn, Grants and Communications Manager

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

A motion was made by Mrs. Cormier and seconded by Ms. Ward to approve the minutes of the November 19, 2025 Policy Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

The following policies were reviewed and it was determined that no changes were required. Therefore, the policies will be updated as "Reviewed December 2025":

- ADF – Local Wellness Policy
- DCB – Fiscal Year
- DFG – Use of School Facilities and Equipment, Security and Management
- DJE – Bidding Requirements

Policies DD – Grants, Proposals, and Special Projects, DH – Bonded Employees and Officers, and DIE – Audits were reviewed and discussed. The Subcommittee recommended removal of the dates related to the source of the policies, consistent with the format of other policy source information. A motion was made by Mrs. Cormier and seconded by Ms. Ward to send the Policies with the recommended changes to the January full School Committee Meeting for a first read. The motion passed unanimously.

Policies DBD – Budget Planning, DBJ – Budget Transfer Authority, DGA – Authorized Signatures, and DJ - Purchasing were reviewed and discussed. The Subcommittee recommended the addition of the source to the policies. A motion was made by Ms. Ward and seconded by Mrs. Cormier to send the policies with the recommended changes to the January full School Committee Meeting for a first read. The motion passed unanimously.

Policy DI – Fiscal Accounting and Reporting was reviewed and discussed. Dr. Goguen stated that Mr. Mark Hawke, Director of Finance and Operations recommends replacing the District’s current language in this policy with the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) model Policy DI language. A motion was made by Ms. Ward and seconded by Mrs. Cormier to send the policy with the recommended changes to the January full School Committee Meeting for a first read. The motion passed unanimously.

Policy IJOA – Field Trips and IJOA-E – Field Trip Approval Form were reviewed and discussed. Dr. Goguen presented changes as recommended by Dr. Mark Pellegrino, District Superintendent and Ms. Becky McCaffrey, Director of Health Services regarding on campus trips not requiring transportation and bringing building medical behavioral emergency response plans on trips. A motion was made by Mrs. Cormier and seconded by Ms. Ward to send the policy with the recommended changes to the January full School Committee Meeting for a first read. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Ms. Ward and seconded by Mrs. Cormier to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 4:46 p.m.

## BUDGET PLANNING

A significant portion of income for the operation of the public school system is derived from local property taxes. The school committee will attempt to protect the valid interest of the taxpayers. However, the first priority in the development of an annual budget will be the educational welfare of the children in our schools.

Budget decisions reflect the attitude and philosophy of those charged with the responsibility for educational decision-making. Therefore, a sound budget development process must be established to ensure that the annual operating budget accurately reflects the goals and objectives of the Gardner Public School System.

In the budget planning process for the school system, the school committee will strive to:

1. Engage in thorough advance planning, in order to develop budgets and guide expenditures in a manner that will achieve the greatest educational returns and contributions to the educational program in relationship to dollars expended.
2. Establish levels of funding that will provide high quality education for all our students.
3. Use the best available techniques for budget development and management.

The superintendent will have overall responsibility for budget preparation, including the construction of, and adherence to, a budget calendar.

Source: MASC

[Adopted: October 1998]

[Reviewed: December 2003]

[Reviewed: May 2008]

[Reviewed: February 2019]

[Reviewed: December 2021]

[Reviewed: March 2023]

[Revised: 2026]

## **BUDGET TRANSFER AUTHORITY**

In keeping with the need for the periodic reconciliation of the school department's budget, the school committee will consider requests for transfers of appropriations of over \$10,000.00 as the superintendent recommends them.

The school business administrator is authorized to approve transfers of appropriations under \$1,000.00. The superintendent is authorized to approve transfers of appropriations between \$1,000.00 and 10,000.00.

The school committee shall be kept informed of these adjustments.

All funds in the general account not expended by the close of the fiscal year will be carried over to the next fiscal year.

| Source: MASC

[Reference: MGL 71, Section 37]

[Adopted: October 1998]

[Revised: October 2002]

[Reviewed: February 2019]

[Reviewed: December 2021]

[Reviewed: February 2023]

| [Revised: 2026]

## GRANTS, PROPOSALS, AND SPECIAL PROJECTS

In accordance with state law, all grants and gifts to the District must be reviewed and accepted by the School Committee before expenditure. The school committee will encourage the administration to seek and secure all possible sources of state, federal, and other special funds that will enhance the educational opportunities for the children of our schools.

The superintendent will keep informed of all possible funds available to the school system under the various state and federal programs, and in what manner these funds can best be used in the school system.

The Superintendent will be responsible for coordinating the development of proposals for all specially funded projects and for keeping the Committee apprised and updated on all such projects.

The Superintendent shall ensure the district has and follows a written set of procedures in grant administration that aligns with state and federal laws and regulations.

Source: MASC

[Reference: M.G.L. 44:53A;71:37A; 2CFR 200 Federal Uniform Administrative Requirements , MASC 2022]

[Adopted: October 1998]

[Reviewed: June 2002]

[Reviewed: February 2019]

[Reviewed: March 2022]

[Revised: January 2023]

[Revised: 2026]

## AUTHORIZED SIGNATURES

The Finance Officer of the School Committee is authorized to sign payrolls on behalf of the School Committee. In his/her absence, any member of the Finance Subcommittee of the School Committee is authorized to sign payrolls.

All School Committee members are encouraged to review and sign the warrants and vouchers prior to the School Committee meeting when the official vote is taken on the warrants. The minimum number of signatures required for processing a warrant is three: Superintendent or designee, one School Committee member, and one School Committee member who is also a member of the Finance Subcommittee.

| Source: MASC

[Reference: M.G.L. 41:52, 41:41, 41:56; Policy BDBD, Duties of Finance Officer]

[Adopted: October 1998]

[Revised: June 2002]

[Revised: January 2007]

[Reviewed: February 2019]

[Reviewed: December 2021]

| [Revised: 2026]

## BONDED EMPLOYEES AND OFFICERS

Each employee of the school system who is assigned the responsibility of receiving and/or dispensing school funds will be bonded individually or covered by a blanket bond. The cost of the bond will be paid by the city.

SOURCE: MASC ~~Updated 2022~~

[Reference: M.G.L. 40:5; 41:109A; 71:47]

[Adoption: October 1998]

[Reviewed: November 2003]

[Reviewed: February 2019]

[Reviewed: December 2021]

[Revised: April 2023]

[Revised: 2026]

## FISCAL ACCOUNTING AND REPORTING

-The Superintendent will be ultimately responsible for receiving and properly accounting for all funds of the school district, maintaining effective internal controls so as to assure the effectiveness and efficiency of operations; adequate safeguarding of property; assurance of expenditures in accordance with programs under which revenues are received; and compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

The accounting system used will conform with the Uniform Massachusetts Accounting System as well as good accounting practices, providing for the appropriate separation of accounts, funds, and special monies, to state requirements and to sound business practices. ~~The system will provide for the appropriate separation of accounts, funds, and special monies.~~

The school committee will receive monthly financial statements from the superintendent showing the financial condition of the school department. Such other financial statements as may be determined necessary by either the committee or the administration will be presented as deemed necessary.

SOURCE: MASC ~~Updated 2022~~

LEGAL REF.: MGL Ch. [44:38](#)  
603 CMR [10:00](#)  
2 CFR 200.303

CROSS REFS: [DBJ](#) Budget Transfer Authority

[DIE](#) Audits

[Adopted: October 1998]

[Revised: June 2002]

[Reviewed: February 2019]

[Reviewed: December 2021]

[Revised: April 2023]

[Revised: 2026]

## AUDITS

As a department of the City, an audit of the school department's accounts shall be conducted annually by external auditors within nine months of the close of the fiscal year. This review shall be conducted in accordance with the generally accepted accounting principles and the Government Auditing Standards issued by the U. S. Comptroller General.

Upon completion of the external audit, the Superintendent will share the resulting documentation with the Committee. The School Committee will consider the recommendations made by the auditor for maintaining an efficient system for recording and safeguarding the school department's assets.

Additionally, the district is also subject to the following:

- End of Year Financial Compliance Report: Every Massachusetts school district must submit the results of this report to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). This End of Year report must be submitted to the DESE on or before September 30 each year.
- Government Accounting Standards Board 34: The District is covered in these government financial statements of revenue and expenditures of the municipality.
- Federal grant audits: The District is subject to the Single Audit Act based on spending thresholds as dictated by law.
- Student Activity Account: As required by state law, student activity accounts are audited annually. For accounts that exceed \$25,000, the School Committee shall consider an audit conducted by an outside firm every three years

The Committee may request an additional audit of the school district's accounts at its discretion

SOURCE: MASC ~~Updated 2022~~

LEGAL REF: M.G.L. [44:38-40](#); [71:47](#); [72:3](#)

CROSS REFS: [DI](#), Fiscal Accounting and Reporting  
[JJF](#), Student Activity Accounts

[Adopted: October 1998]

[Reviewed: October 2002]

[Reviewed: February 2019]

[Reviewed: March 2022]

[Revised: October 2023]

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

## PURCHASING

The School Committee declares its intention to purchase competitively without prejudice and to seek maximum educational value for every dollar expended.

The acquisition of materials, equipment, and services will be centralized in the Superintendent's office of the school system.

The appropriate agent of the Business Office will coordinate, develop and administer the purchasing program for the schools in keeping with legal requirements and with the adopted school budget.

The City Purchasing Agent shall serve as the purchasing agent for the school department.

Source: MASC

[Reference: M.G.L. 7:22A; 7:22B; 30B; 71:49A]

[Adopted: October 1998]

[Reviewed: November 2002]

[Reviewed: February 2019]

[Reviewed: May 2022]

[Reviewed: April 2023]

[Revised: 2026]

## FIELD TRIPS

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

The Superintendent will establish regulations to assure that:

1. ~~All students have permission from a parent or guardian for trips.~~ For field trips on campus with no transportation required, all parents/guardians will be notified prior to the date/time of the trip. For field trips off campus with or without transportation, all students must submit a permission form signed by parents/guardians prior to the date/time of the trip.
2. All trips are properly supervised.
3. All safety precautions are observed.
4. All trips ~~contribute will enhance and/or supplement substantially to~~ the students' educational experience program.
5. All trips allow student access without regard of family ability to pay.

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

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

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

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

SOURCE: MASC October 2016

[Adopted: April 2001]

[Reviewed: September 2003]

[Revised: March 2004]

[Revised: January 2006]

[Revised: April 2008]

[Revised: October 2013]  
[Revised: November 2016]  
[Revised: February 2021]  
[Revised: April 2024]  
[Revised: September 2024]  
[Revised: 2026]

# Field Trip Approval Form

(This form must be completed for all field trips and signed by the building principal before it is forwarded to the Superintendent for approval.)

School \_\_\_\_\_

Person(s) Responsible for Organizing Trip \_\_\_\_\_

Grade or Class \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Students Attending \_\_\_\_\_

Destination \_\_\_\_\_

How does the trip relate to the curriculum or to the school-sponsored or school-approved extra-curricular activity (i.e., band, student council, and so on)?

Departure date/time/place \_\_\_\_\_

Return date/time/place \_\_\_\_\_

Transportation Provider \_\_\_\_\_ Cost of Transportation \_\_\_\_\_

Cost of Activity \_\_\_\_\_

How will the cost of transportation and activity be paid? \_\_\_\_\_

Ratio of chaperones to students \_\_\_\_\_

**On Campus trip without transportation**

**Sample Parent Notification Letter Attached: \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no**

**Off Campus trip with or without transportation**

**Sample Parent Permission Slip Attached: \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no**

Emergency Phone Contact List \_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

School Nurse \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Principal \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Superintendent \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Part Two: This section of the form must be completed for all overnight trips/activities, Out-of-State Trips, and Out-of-Country Trips. All trips of this nature must be submitted for School Committee review and approval sixty (60) days prior to the scheduled event.**

**Supervision plan (attach)**

**Behavior contract as necessary – principal’s decision (attach)**

**Medical release forms obtained \_\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_no**

**Daily Itinerary (attach)**

**Health Care Professional Attending \_\_\_\_\_**

**Administrator Attending \_\_\_\_\_**

*The procedures of this form are in accordance with the Policy of the Gardner Public School Committee on Field Trips. Staff supervising students will bring a copy of their building’s Medical Behavioral Emergency Response Plan to follow in the case of a medical or behavioral emergency.*

[Revised: January 2006]

[Reviewed: September 2013]

[Reviewed: October 2024]

[Revised: 20265]

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE REVIEW OF PROCEDURES

It is expected that the Superintendent and administrative staff will need to issue procedures implementing policies of the School Committee. Many of these will be routine from year to year; others will arise in special circumstances; some will be drawn up under specific directions from the Committee.

The Committee may review the procedures developed by the Superintendent for the school district whenever they appear inconsistent with policy, goals, or objectives of the District, but it will revise or veto such procedures only when, in the Committee's judgment, they are inconsistent with policies adopted by the Committee.

The Committee will not officially approve procedures except as required by state law or in cases when strong community attitudes, or possible student or staff reaction, make it necessary or advisable for a procedure to have the Committee's advance approval.

### Rules Pertaining to Staff and Student Conduct

Under Massachusetts law, the Superintendent is required to publish "rules and regulations pertaining to the conduct of teachers and students which have been adopted." Codes of discipline, as well as procedures used to develop such codes, shall be filed with the Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education for information purposes only. Standards of conduct will be included in staff and student handbooks. These handbooks will be reviewed and approved annually by the School Committee.

SOURCE: MASC ~~Reviewed 2022~~

LEGAL REF.: M.G.L. [71:37H](#)

**~~NOTE: It is important to point out that a School Committee is required to approve many regulations -- either by law (one example is cited above) or the dictates of good judgment.~~**

[Adopted: May 2023]

[Revised: 2026]

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE – STAFF COMMUNICATIONS

The Gardner School Committee wishes to maintain open channels of communication between itself and the staff. The main line of communication will, however, be through the Superintendent.

### Staff Communications to the School Committee

All communications or reports to the Committee or any of its subcommittees from principals, supervisors, teachers, or other staff members will be submitted through the Superintendent. This procedure does not deny the right of any employee to appeal to the Committee for administrative decisions on important matters, except those matters that are outside of the Committee's legal authority, provided the Superintendent has been notified of the forthcoming appeal and that it is processed in accordance with the Committee's policy on complaints and grievances. Staff members are also reminded that Committee meetings are public meetings. As such, they provide an excellent opportunity to observe first-hand the Committee's deliberations on problems of staff concern.

### School Committee Communications to Staff

All official communications, policies, and directives of staff interest and concern will be communicated to staff members through the Superintendent. The Superintendent will develop appropriate methods to keep staff fully informed of the Committee's concerns, and actions.

### Visits to Schools

Individual School Committee members interested in visiting schools or classrooms will inform the Superintendent of such visits and make arrangements for visitations through the principals of the various schools. Such visits will be regarded as informal expressions of interest in school affairs and not as "inspections" or visits for supervisory or administrative purposes. Official visits by Committee members will be carried on only under Committee authorization.

Source: MASC

[Adopted: April 2003]

[Revised: September 2012]

[Revised: May 2018]

[Revised: June 2019]

[Reviewed: March 2023]

[Revised: 2026]

## SCHOOL COMMITTEE CONFERENCES, CONVENTIONS, AND WORKSHOPS

To provide continuing in-service training and development for its members, the School Committee encourages the participation of all members at appropriate School Committee conferences, workshops and conventions. However, in order to control both the investment of time and funds necessary to implement this policy, the Committee establishes these principles and procedures for its guidance:

1. The School Committee shall be made aware of School Committee conferences, conventions and workshops. The Committee will periodically decide which meetings appear to be most promising in terms of producing direct and indirect benefits to the school district.
2. Funds for participation at such meetings will be budgeted for on an annual basis. When funds are limited, the Committee will designate which of its members would be the most appropriate to participate at a given meeting.
3. Reimbursement to Committee members for their travel expenses will be in accordance with the expense reimbursements policy.
4. When a conference, convention, or workshop is not attended by the full Committee, those who do participate will be requested to share information, recommendations and materials acquired at the meeting.

SOURCE: MASC [July-2016](#)

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. [40:5](#)

CROSS REFS.: [BID](#), School Committee Member Compensation and Expenses

[DKC](#), Expense Reimbursements

[Adopted: April 2020]

[Reviewed: March 2023]

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

## **SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT**

The Committee shall employ a Superintendent of Schools and ~~fix-set~~ their compensation. The Committee, upon the appointment of a candidate to be Superintendent, will enter into a written contract with the Superintendent that will meet the requirements of law and protect the rights of both the Committee and the Superintendent. In accordance with said contract or, in the absence of specific contract language, by vote of the members, the Committee may choose to negotiate a successor contract with an incumbent Superintendent.

The Superintendent shall act in accordance with Mass. General Laws and shall perform such other duties consistent with this section as the Committee may determine. They shall also prepare such reports as may be required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and shall submit materials for the Committee's annual report to the (Mayor) Select Board in sufficient time for printing in the annual report.

SOURCE: MASC

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 71:59, 72:3

[Revised: March 2002]

[Reviewed: January 2006]

[Revised: February 2019]

[Revised: April 2023]

[Revised: September 2025]

[Revised: 2025]

## POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

The superintendent has responsibility for carrying out, through regulations, the policies established by the school committee.

The policies developed by the committee and the regulations developed to implement policy are designed to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the school system. Consequently, it is expected that all school district employees and students will carry them out.

Administrators and supervisors are responsible for informing staff members in their schools or departments of existing policies and regulations and for seeing that they are implemented in the spirit intended.

Source: MASC

[Adopted: March 1999]

[Revised: March 2002]

[Reviewed: January 2019]

[Reviewed: March 2023]

[Revised: 2026]

## APPROVAL OF HANDBOOKS AND DIRECTIVES

Massachusetts General Law 71:37H directs that in each school building containing the grades nine through twelve, inclusive, the principal, in consultation with the school council, shall prepare and distribute to each student a handbook setting forth the rules pertaining to conduct of students. The school council shall review the handbook each spring to consider changes in the disciplinary policy to take effect in September.

It is essential that the contents of all handbooks conform to school committee policies. It is also important that all handbooks bearing the name of the school system or one of its schools be of a quality that reflects credit on the school department. Therefore, the committee expects all handbooks to be approved prior to publication by the committee and/or the superintendent.

Committee approval will be necessary for any handbooks that pertain to required standards of conduct for employees or students so that their contents may be accorded the status of committee-approved policy or regulation. The superintendent will use his/her judgment as to whether other specific handbooks need committee approval; however, all handbooks published will be made available to the committee for informational purposes.

See File CHCA-E, Approval of Handbooks and Directives, for procedures.

Source: MASC

[Reference: M.G.L. 71:37H]

[Adopted: June 1998]

[Reviewed: March 2002]

[Revised: March 2019]

[Revised: 2026]

## ADMINISTRATION IN POLICY ABSENCE

When action must be taken within the school system where the committee has provided no guidance for administrative action, the superintendent will have the power to act. The superintendent's decisions, however, will be subject to review by the committee.

Source: MASC

[Adopted: June 1998]

[Reviewed: March 2002]

[Revised: March 2019]

[Reviewed: April 2023]

[Revised: 2026]

## EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

The School Committee's goal is to strive to address the needs of every student in each of our schools, subject to budgetary, space and other limitations.

Educational equity for the purpose of this policy is defined as providing all students, as reasonably practical, the high quality instruction and support they need to reach and exceed a common standard.

To achieve educational equity, the district will commit to:

1. ~~1. Conduct an annual evaluation of all aspects of the K-12 school program to ensure that all students, regardless of race, color, sex, gender identity, religion, national origin, limited English proficiency, sexual orientation, disability, or housing status, have equal access to all programs, including athletics and other extracurricular activities.~~
2. ~~Systematically, when appropriate, u~~Use districtwide and individual school level data, disaggregated by race/ethnicity, gender/gender identity, national origin, language, special education, socioeconomic status and mobility to inform district decision making.
2. Raise the achievement of all students.
3. Graduate all students ready to succeed in a diverse local, national and global community.

In order to reach the goal of educational equity, as reasonably practical, for each and every student, the District shall:

1. Provide every student with access to high quality curriculum, support, and other educational resources.
2. Seek to promote educational equity as a priority in professional development.
3. Endeavor to create schools with a welcoming and inclusive culture and environment.
4. Provide multiple pathways to success in order to meet the needs of the diverse student body and actively encourage, support and expect high academic achievement for each student.

The Superintendent shall include equity practices in the district's strategic plan and goal strategies to implement this policy. The Superintendent, upon request, will periodically report to the Committee the progress of the implementation of this policy.

SOURCE: MASC

ADOPTED: September 12, 2019

[Adopted: April 2020]

[Revised: 2026]