

Agenda School Committee Meeting 3.9.26

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, March 9, 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 – Paula Bolger – College & Career Readiness Coordinator**
- D. **Consent Agenda**
 - a. Approval of Minutes: February 9, 2026
 - Warrant # 26-31, dated January 29, 2026, in the amount of \$388,446.23
 - Warrant # 26-32, dated February 5, 2026, in the amount of \$583,438.49
 - Warrant # 26-33, dated February 12, 2026, in the amount of \$111,174.96
 - Warrant # 26-34, dated February 19, 2026, in the amount of \$354,242.67
 - Warrant # 26-35, dated February 26, 2026, in the amount of \$440,198.22
 - Warrant # 26-36, dated March 5, 2026, in the amount of \$240,448.22
 - Donations –
 - Scholarship \$75,000.00 from the First Congregational Church
- E. **Subcommittee Report**
Finance Subcommittee

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2026 MAR -4 A 11:21
CITY CLERK'S OFFICE
GARDNER, MA

Agenda School Committee Meeting 3.9.26

Policy Subcommittee

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

G. **Discussion Items:**

Item #3761 First Reading of Policies (Information)

ECAB – Access to Buildings and Grounds (For Adoption)

EAEAC – Student Conduct on School Buses

Item #3762 Program of Studies (Vote Required)

Item #3763 School Improvement Plans (GHS, GA, GMS & GES) (Vote Required)

**Item #3764 GMS Field Trip, Grade 7, Canobie Lake Park, Salem, NH – June 12 2026
(Vote Required)**

Item #3765 College & Career Readiness Coordinator (Presentation)

Item #3766 Superintendent’s Progress Report on Formative Goals (Information)

Item #3767 Keystone Quarterly Update (Information)

Item #3768 Curriculum Coordinator Update (Information)

Item #3769 Director of Multilingual Learners (Information)

Item #3770 Grants Administrator Update (Information)

Item #3771 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, April 13, 2026 @6:00PM

L. **Adjournment**

Briefing
School Committee Meeting 3.9.2026

GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

BRIEFING

REGULAR MEETING OF THE SCHOOL COMMITTEE

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 - Donations –
 Scholarship \$75,000.00 from the First Congregational Church
- E. Subcommittee Report**
Finance Subcommittee
Policy Subcommittee
- F. Student Advisory Board – Aiden Lospennato & Natalie Ruiz**
- G. Discussion Items:**
- Item #3761 First Reading of Policies (Information)**
 ECAB – Access to Buildings and Grounds (For Adoption)
 EAAEC – Student Conduct on School Buses
- Item #3762 Program of Studies (Vote Required)**
Item #3763 School Improvement Plans (GHS, GA, GMS & GES) (Vote Required)
Item #3764 GMS Field Trip, Grade 7, Canobie Lake Park, Salem, NH – June 12, 2026 (Vote Required)
Item #3765 College & Career Readiness Coordinator (Presentation)
Item #3766 Superintendent’s Progress Report on Formative Goals (Information)
Item #3767 Keystone quarterly update (Information)
Item #3768 Curriculum Coordinator Update (Information)
Item #3769 Director of Multilingual Learners (Information)

Briefing

School Committee Meeting 3.9.2026

Item #3770 Grants Administrator Update **(Information)**

Item #3771 Special Education Update **(Information)**

H. Communication

I. Final Comments of School Committee

J. Executive Session

K. Next Meeting:

Meeting date for next School Committee meeting;

Monday, April 13, 2026 @6:00PM

L. Adjournment

Gardner School Committee

City Council Chambers, 95 Pleasant Street, Gardner, Massachusetts

Regular Meeting – February 9, 2026

Members present: Mayor Michael Nicholson
Rachel Cormier
Paul Cormier
Anne Hurst
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
Mr. Michael Bartkus, Principal Gardner High School
Mr. Brian Cote, Principal Gardner Middle School
Mr. Earl Martin, Principal Gardner Elementary School

Student Advisor's: Natalie Ruiz
Aiden Lospennato - 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.

Consent Agenda

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

- **Acceptance of Minutes, January 6, 2026**
- **Accept Grant Funds on Grant listing dated February 9, 2026, in the amount of \$5,200.00**
- **Ratification of the following Warrants as recommended by the Finance Subcommittee:**
 - **Warrant # 26-27, dated December 31, 2025, in the amount of \$435,663.55**
 - **Warrant # 26-28, dated January 8, 2026, in the amount of \$328,903.50**

- **Warrant # 26-29, dated January 15, 2026, in the amount of \$83,900.29**
- **Warrant # 26-30, dated January 22, 2026, in the amount of \$158,601.57**
- **Donations –**

Seconded by Mrs. Pelavin

Vote - so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting

Mayor Nicholson asked the members if there would be any objection to taking Item #3752 - School Improvement Plans (GES, GHS and GMS) out of order. There were no objections.

Item #3752 - School Improvement Plans - Gardner Elementary School, Gardner High School and School Gardner Middle School

Mr. Earl Martin, Principal of Gardner Elementary School, presented the GES School Improvement Plan for 2024-2027. He outlined the Mission, Core Values, Vision, Theory of Action, Strategic Objectives, Action Steps and Outcomes by 2027. The Mission of Gardner Elementary School is to work side by side with our families to prepare students for their future social, emotional and academic success. This will be done in a safe, enjoyable, caring, just and equitable environment. An Implementation Timeline giving Activity/Outcome, Person(s) Responsible, Measurement Tool(s),

Strategic Objectives broken down, Joy & Care we have achieved all these objectives for social and emotional learning in all grades and we are very proud of this. **Academic Achievement** multi-tiered systems of support we have achieved partially all of these, still a work in progress. **Utilize academic and social /emotional data** to inform MTSS processes and tiered intervention. **Collaborate with families, students, and community partners** engage in Family Engagement to engage in shared decision-making for effective educational programming and to create an environment where families and their students feel a part of our positive, CARING, and JOYFUL school community.

Using High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM), Teachers will use their Common Planning Time (CPT) to design lessons that require Students with Disabilities (SWD) to participate in heterogeneously (mixed ability) grouped, academically productive discourse founded on grade level text, resulting in a written product to improve reading and writing and close equity gaps for SWDs.

All students will have equitable access and opportunities to achieve at their highest level, and become lifelong, collaborative, problem seekers and solvers who positively contribute to their future schools, the workforce, and their community. Dates to be Completed, and Outcomes by 2027 were provided.

Mr. Michael Bartkus, Principal of Gardner High School, presented the GHS School Improvement Plan for 2024-2027. Mr. Bartkus hared the goals they are working on. Teachers will regularly review school-wide expectations. One hundred percent of the teachers will regularly review school-wide expectations with their students multiple times a year and have school wide and classroom expectations posted in their classrooms. 80% of students in need of Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports will meet progress targets.

GHS will eliminate discipline disparities for all subgroups. MCAS –Goals in progress. Dates to be Completed and the Present Status were provided.

Mr. Brian Cote, Principal of Gardner Middle School, presented the GMS School Improvement Plan for 2024-2027. We will be the premier school of choice for our students and their families. There is a different environment in the building. He outlined the Mission, Core Values, Vision, Theory of Action, Strategic Objectives, Action Steps and Outcomes. Part of the Mission is to provide every student with equitable access to quality education in a safe, respectful and inclusive environment. An Implementation Timeline giving Activity/Outcome, Person(s) Responsible, Measurement Tool(s), Dates to be Completed and the Present Status were provided,

Mayor Nicholson asked the members if there would be any objection to taking Item #3755, 3756, & 3757 – Out of State Field Trips out of order. There were no objections.

Item #3755 - Field Trip | Gardner Middle School - Grade 7

Ms. Hurst moved that the Gardner School Committee vote to approve the request from the Gardner Middle School for Grade 7 to attend Outdoor Classroom, Groton, MA, leaving on May 5, 2026 and returning on May 8, 2026. Approximately 100 students will attend.

Seconded by Mr. Paul Cormier.

Vote - so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Item #3756 - Field Trip Gardner High School – Senior Class Trip

Ms. Hurst moved that the Gardner School Committee vote to approve the request from the Gardner High School for Grade 12 to attend Chucksters Family Fun Park, Chichester, NH – May 19, 2026

Seconded by Ms. Pelavin.

Vote - so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Item #3757 - Field Trip Gardner High School – Grades 8-12th

Mrs. Hurst moved that the Gardner School Committee vote to approve the request from Gardner High School ML Students, Grades 8-12th to attend, Canobie Lake Park, Salem, NH - May 18, 2026

Seconded by Mr. Swartz.

Vote - so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS

Facilities Subcommittee

Mr. Swartz, Chairperson, reported that the Facilities Subcommittee met on February 2, 2026. Minutes of the meeting were presented.

The subcommittee reviewed maintenance work orders presented by Mr. Anderson covering the period of May 6, 2025 to February 2, 2026. There were no preventative maintenance work orders. Many were orders that could be taken care of right away by our facilities staff.

Finance Subcommittee

Mr. LaFreniere, Chairperson, reported that the Finance Subcommittee met on February 2, 2026. Minutes of the meeting were presented.

The Subcommittee reviewed the Expense Report. Mark Hawke, Director of Finance & Operations, noted Comcast processed our e-rate discount and the Management & Information line is back to normal. The Out of District Tuition line is negative, and is about \$40k more than last month. Mrs. Pelavin noted that the GES electricity line item was negative and all the others were positive. Mr. Hawke will look into this. Mr. Swartz asked about the Acquisition of Equipment line. Mr. Hawke noted the district needs a new pickup truck as the 2012 GMC Sierra has over 100K miles and will not pass inspection. It was submitted as a Capital need on the latest Capital Improvement report and we are waiting to see if we get the funding from the City.

Mr. Hawke presented a preliminary budget preview showing the anticipated revenues and expenses. There is currently an anticipated \$2 million deficit the team is working to resolve.

Joyce West presented information and graphs depicting the rapid increase in Students with Disabilities (SWD). The information included charts showing how Gardner stands as compared to the state as well as other similar districts with regards to SWD population, autism rates and other sectors. Gardner is higher than the state averages and comparative districts averages, especially at the elementary level. All of this is going to lead to higher than normal Out of District (OOD) costs and a re-structuring of our Pre-K program.

Student Advisory Board

Ms. Natalie Ruiz gave her report, Mr. Aiden Lospennato was not present this evening.

Congratulations to our January Wildcat Winners: Larissa De Sousa Marinho, Prit Patel, Daniel Tadrous, and Devon DePaola.

- Gardner High School, in conjunction with our partners at College Affordable, held an information webinar session regarding financial aid and resources related to the college application process on January 15th.
- On January 15th, recent Gardner High School graduates came back to talk with some of our current seniors about life after high school in college and the workforce.
- On January 20th, sixteen new members were inducted to the National Honors Society during our annual ceremony in Landry Auditorium.
- A group of forty GHS juniors and seniors were taken to Fitchburg State University on January 21st. Students were able to attend an info session, completed a college tour, and then were able to eat lunch in the dining hall.
- Student Council members and class officers held their Annual Overnight Lock-in at GHS on January 23rd. Students were able to have a lot of fun while working together in many team building activities.
- Our winter athletic season is running on all cylinders. Our teams are working hard this season, with some of them already clinching playoff berths. Go Wildcats!

NEW BUSINESS

Item #3749 – 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:

- **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

Seconded by Mrs. Cormier.

Vote - so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Item #3750 CAPS Collaborative Second Quarterly Update

Quarterly Update for Member District School Committees -Second Quarter – FY25 was included in packet for review.

Item #3751 - Gardner High School Program of Studies

The Gardner High School Program of Studies for 2026-2027 was presented for review.

Item #3753 - 2026-2027 School Choice Acceptance

Mr. Cormier moved that the Gardner School Committee vote to approve the 2026-2027 School Choice Acceptance of students. It will remain Closed for (Grades K-7) Gardner Middle & Gardner Elementary, and Open for (Grades 8-12th) Gardner High & Gardner Academy.

Seconded by Mr. LaFreniere

Vote - so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Item #3754 – 2026-2027 School Committee Schedule of Meetings

Mr. LaFreniere moved that the Gardner School Committee vote to approve the Gardner School Committee Schedule of Meetings beginning September 8, 2026 through June 14, 2027, as presented

Seconded by Mr. Swartz.

Vote - so voted.

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

Item #3758 Curriculum Coordinator's Update

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

Item #3759 - Grants Administrator's Update

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

Item #3760 - 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 Informed the committee about this year's budget. It's a tough budget this year a tough one for the first time for me as a superintendent here. At this time, we are at a 2.5-million-dollar gap between what we would need to support our students and what we are going to be getting for minimum funding. Definitely going to be cuts to the budget this year and its very concerning to me. Meaning different cuts to the budget this year at all levels. Special Ed, has a lot more students, it's been going up steadily. Our Health Insurance increases could be over 10% we are very concerned; we are doing a lot of work around the budget. I will keep you updated.

FINAL COMMENTS

Mrs. Hurst.

People who think negatively about the district have to look at the big picture. We are ahead and doing so much better than other districts. I am proud of our district. I was able to attend and had a really good time at the National Honor Society Induction, very proud.

Mrs. Pelavin

I engage with a lot of different districts and was in a meeting last spring and I see where we are compared to other districts, and I'm very proud of Gardner. The financial situation is across all schools not just Gardner. It will be tough planning the budget this year.

Mayor Nicholson

The Rockwell Committee will be meeting in a couple weeks to review the applications. We hope to have great news for everyone.

The Next meeting will take place on Monday, March 9, 2026 6:00PM

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. LaFreniere moved to adjourn.

Seconded by. Mrs. Pelavin

Vote – so vote

Mayor Nicholson abstained from voting.

The meeting adjourned at 6:54 pm

Anne Hurst, Secretary

B. Smith, Recording Secretary

**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 26-31

WARRANT DATE 01/29/26

Location	Office / General / Custodial Supplies	Curriculum / Assessment	Salary pd thru Vendor	IT	ATHLETICS	Prof Dev	Facilities	Utilities	TOTAL
High School				\$ 2,701.22	\$ 7,171.72	\$ 99.00	\$ 1,523.32	\$ 209.61	\$ 11,704.87
Middle School	\$ 2,471.50		\$ 3,610.00	\$ 1,443.03			\$ 818.83		\$ 8,343.36
Gardner Elementary School	\$ 474.93	\$4,915.67		\$ 2,722.32			\$ 3,061.65		\$ 11,174.57
GALT							\$ 476.27		\$ 476.27
Sub-Total	\$ 2,946.43	\$4,915.67	\$ 3,610.00	\$ 6,866.57	\$ 7,171.72	\$ 99.00	\$ 5,880.07	\$ 209.61	\$ 31,699.07

Location	Office Supplies	IT	Speech/OCC	Transportation	Health Exams	Prof Services	Legal	Facilities	Tuition	Carry Forward	TOTAL
Special Education		\$ 992.07	\$ 4,125.26	\$ 10,690.50		\$ 2,185.15	\$ 2,184.00		\$ 28,251.20		\$ 48,428.18
Administration		\$8,293.65			\$ 576.00		\$ 286.00	\$ 18,798.93			\$ 27,954.58
Sub-Total	\$ -	\$9,285.72	\$ 4,125.26	\$ 10,690.50	\$ 576.00	\$ 2,185.15	\$ 2,470.00	\$ 18,798.93	\$ 28,251.20	\$ -	\$ 76,382.76

Revolving Acct	\$ 168,358.52
Grants	\$ 57,233.88
Improvements	\$ 4,772.00
North Central MA Leadership	\$ 50,000.00
Sub-Total	\$ 280,364.40

GRAND TOTAL	\$388,446.23
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**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 26-32

WARRANT DATE 02/05/26

Location	Office / General / Custodial Supplies	Curriculum / Assessment	Salary pd thru Vendor	IT	ATHLETICS	Prof Dev	Facilities	Utilities	TOTAL
High School		\$ 1,610.32			\$12,509.25		\$ 30,952.86		\$ 45,072.43
Middle School			\$ 3,310.00				\$ 27,917.04		\$ 31,227.04
Gardner Elementary School		\$ 815.00					\$ 43,211.58		\$ 44,026.58
GALT							\$ 3,328.09		\$ 3,328.09
Sub-Total	\$ -	\$ 2,425.32	\$ 3,310.00	\$ -	\$12,509.25	\$ -	\$ 105,409.57	\$ -	\$123,654.14

Location	Office Supplies	IT	Speech/OCC	Transportation	Nurse	Prof Services	Travel	Facilities	Tuition	Carry Forward	TOTAL
Special Education				\$ 52,697.70	\$ 2,385.00	\$ 3,898.75			\$139,654.84		\$198,636.29
Administration		#####		\$ 95,067.50			\$ 431.61	\$ 37,203.64			\$147,253.92
Sub-Total	\$ -	#####	\$ -	#####	\$ 2,385.00	\$ 3,898.75	\$ 431.61	\$ 37,203.64	\$139,654.84	\$ -	\$345,890.21

Revolving Acct	\$ 9,799.00
Grants	\$ 25,728.49
GMS Roof	\$ 78,366.65
Sub-Total	\$ 113,894.14

GRAND TOTAL	\$583,438.49
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**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 26-33

WARRANT DATE 02/12/26

Location	Office / General / Custodial Supplies	Curriculum / Assessment	Salary pd thru Vendor	IT	ATHLETICS	Prof Dev	Facilities	Utilities	TOTAL
High School					\$ 5,127.24			\$ 27,313.08	\$ 32,440.32
Middle School		\$ 348.95			\$ 736.46		\$ 2,842.46	\$ 18,883.08	\$ 22,810.95
Gardner Elementary School	\$ 999.75						\$ 1,486.29	\$ 27,190.85	\$ 29,676.89
GALT	\$ 257.44						\$ 6,723.01		\$ 6,980.45
Sub-Total	\$ 1,257.19	\$ 348.95	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 5,863.70	\$ -	\$ 11,051.76	\$ 73,387.01	\$ 91,908.61

Location	Office Supplies	IT	Speech/OCC	Transportation	Dues	Prof Services	Travel	Facilities	Utilities	Carry Forward	TOTAL
Special Education							\$ 173.83				\$ 173.83
Administration		\$ 3,458.32			\$ 50.00		\$ 89.76	\$ 190.13	\$ 6,723.01	\$ 5,343.10	\$ 15,854.32
Sub-Total	\$ -	\$ 3,458.32	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 50.00	\$ -	\$ 263.59	\$ 190.13	\$ 6,723.01	\$ 5,343.10	\$ 16,028.15

Revolving Acct	\$ 55.00
Grants	\$ 3,183.20
Sub-Total	\$ 3,238.20

GRAND TOTAL	\$111,174.96
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**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 26-34

WARRANT DATE 02/19/26

Location	Office / General / Custodial Supplies	Curriculum / Assessment	Salary pd thru Vendor	IT	ATHLETICS	Prof Dev	Facilities	Utilities	TOTAL
High School		\$ 170.00			\$ 5,895.82		\$ 1,369.48		\$ 7,435.30
Middle School		\$ 174.99	\$ 12,424.00		\$ 676.00		\$ 1,328.28		\$ 14,603.27
Gardner Elementary School							\$ 6,401.10		\$ 6,401.10
GALT									\$ -
Sub-Total	\$ -	\$ 344.99	\$ 12,424.00	\$ -	\$ 6,571.82	\$ -	\$ 9,098.86	\$ -	\$ 28,439.67

Location	Office Supplies	IT	Prof. Dev.	Transportation	Dues	Prof Services	Tuition	Facilities	Curriculum	Carry Forward	TOTAL
Special Education	\$ 25.00			\$ 18,907.13		\$ 6,749.75	\$ 17,687.70		\$ 658.90		\$ 44,028.48
Administration		#####	\$ 4,432.66		\$ 50.00			\$ 40,733.62			\$ 61,143.39
Sub-Total	\$ 25.00	#####	\$ 4,432.66	\$ 18,907.13	\$ 50.00	\$ 6,749.75	\$ 17,687.70	\$ 40,733.62	\$ 658.90	\$ -	\$105,171.87

Revolving Acct	\$ 10,000.00
Grants	\$ 26,611.74
Pathways/Gateway	\$ 159,125.00
Early College	\$ 24,894.40
Sub-Total	\$ 220,631.14

GRAND TOTAL	\$354,242.68
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**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 26-35

WARRANT DATE 02/26/26

Location	Office / General / Custodial Supplies	Curriculum / Assessment	Salary pd thru Vendor	IT	Student Activity	Prof Dev	Facilities	Utilities	TOTAL
High School					\$ 650.00	\$ 325.00	\$ 2,310.82	\$ 243.06	\$ 3,528.88
Middle School		\$ 870.00	\$ 2,395.50				\$ 978.50		\$ 4,244.00
Gardner Elementary School	\$ 90.55						\$ 4,470.95		\$ 4,561.50
GALT							\$ 597.74		\$ 597.74
Sub-Total	\$ 90.55	\$ 870.00	\$ 2,395.50	\$ -	\$ 650.00	\$ 325.00	\$ 8,358.01	\$ 243.06	\$ 12,932.12

Location	Office Supplies	IT	Legal	Transportation	Tuition	Prof Services	Nurse	Facilities	Health Exams	Carry Forward	TOTAL
Special Education			\$ 2,977.00		\$54,097.40	\$ 4,952.65	\$ 203.66				\$ 62,230.71
Administration	\$ 206.76	\$ 1,859.41	\$ 780.00	#####				\$ 5,728.26	\$ 192.00		\$109,723.93
Sub-Total	\$ 206.76	\$ 1,859.41	\$ 3,757.00	#####	\$54,097.40	\$ 4,952.65	\$ 203.66	\$ 5,728.26	\$ 192.00	\$ -	\$171,954.64

Revolving Acct	\$ 206,732.50
Grants	\$ 48,578.96
Sub-Total	\$ 255,311.46

GRAND TOTAL	\$440,198.22
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**GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SYNOPSIS OF WARRANT**

WARRANT #: 26-36

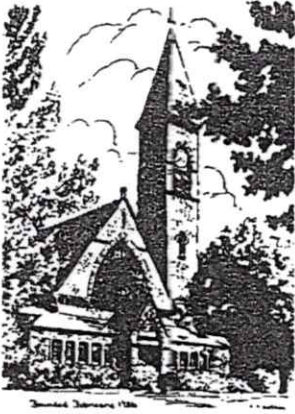
WARRANT DATE 03/05/26

Location	Office / General / Custodial Supplies	Curriculum / Assessment	Salary pd thru Vendor	IT	ATHLETICS	Prof Dev	Facilities	Utilities	TOTAL
High School				\$ 2,701.22	\$16,095.46		\$ 30,834.72		\$ 49,631.40
Middle School				\$ 1,443.03	\$ 1,352.00		\$ 24,709.26		\$ 27,504.29
Gardner Elementary School				\$ 2,722.32			\$ 41,665.31		\$ 44,387.63
GALT				\$ -			\$ 3,128.38		\$ 3,128.38
Sub-Total	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 6,866.57	\$17,447.46	\$ -	\$ 100,337.67	\$ -	\$124,651.70

Location	Office Supplies	IT	Legal	Transportation	Tuition	Prof Services	Travel	Facilities	Health Exams	Carry Forward	TOTAL
Special Education		\$ 992.07					\$ 303.64				\$ 1,295.71
Administration		#####						\$ 3,128.38			\$ 38,096.02
Sub-Total	\$ -	#####	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 303.64	\$ 3,128.38	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 39,391.73

Revolving Acct	\$ 9,845.67
Grants	\$ 10,449.12
GMS Roof	\$ 30,910.00
Insurance Claim	\$ 24,326.45
School Choice	\$ 873.55
Sub-Total	\$ 76,404.79

GRAND TOTAL	\$240,448.22
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FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

P.O. Box 323
GARDNER, MASSACHUSETTS 01440

Organized 1786

Creator, please shine your light in us, through us, over us. May we make a difference in this world, for your glory and purposes. Set your way before us. May all your plans succeed. We may reflect your peace and hope to a world that so desperately needs your presence and healing.

February 2, 2026

City of Gardner
95 Pleasant Street
Gardner, MA 01440

Dear Mark Fawke:

On January 28, 2024, a vote of the Active Members of the First Congregational Church of Gardner gave authority to the Officers to pursue dissolution of FCC Gardner. The petition to the General Court of Massachusetts was reviewed and the Interlocutory Order received on December 18, 2025.

Part of FCC Gardner's dissolution motion is to support area churches and organizations with close ties to the life of FCC Gardner. The City of Gardner is one of the beneficiaries. It is our express hope that the enclosed funds are used for scholarships for students with financial need.

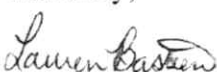
Enclosed please find: 1) a brief history of FCC Gardner, and 2) the full Interlocutory Order for your permanent files. In brief, the relevant authorizing language is:

That the transfer by the Plaintiff, the First Congregational Church of Gardner, Massachusetts, to the interested party the City of Gardner, of Seventy-five thousand dollars (\$75,000) of the Plaintiff's funds, assets and property remaining after satisfaction of its existing debts, obligations, gifts, liabilities and final expenses to be used for the Gardner High School Scholarship Fund, restricted to provide scholarships to students with financial need.


Also enclosed, please find an Affidavit of Receipt, which acknowledges receipt of these funds on behalf of City of Gardner. Please complete the Affidavit and return it as soon as possible.


On behalf of all the members of the First Congregational Church of Gardner, we offer our blessings on the future student beneficiaries of the Gardner High School Scholarship Fund.

Sincerely,


Lauren Bastien
Clerk


Calvin Brooks
Treasurer


Cynthia Henshaw
Moderator


Karen Lenthall
Trustee

GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Elm Street School
160 Elm Street, Gardner, MA 01440
Finance Sub-Committee Meeting
Tuesday, March 3, 2026 at 5:30pm

Minutes

Members Present: Mr. LaFreniere, Mrs. Pelavin, Mr. Swartz

Members Absent:

Others Present: Mr. Mark Hawke, Director of Finance & Operations

Mr. LaFreniere called the meeting to order at 5:40 p.m.

Motion to approve the minutes of the previous meetings was made by Mr. Swartz, seconded by Mrs. Pelavin. So Voted.

Expense Report Review:

Mr. Hawke reported that the GES Electric account which was questioned by Mrs. Pelavin last month is experiencing some difficulty in having its solar credits allotted to its account. Eileen Bristol is working on it. Mr. Hawke also noted that the OOD line only increased by \$6k over last month and that while the Plowing and Sanding line shows \$5k available, a bill for \$42k was just received and will push that line negative.

Mrs. Pelavin commented that the substitute teacher lines looked to be doing well since we properly budgeted for them. All show a positive balance with about 3 months to go. Mr. Swartz questioned the Home Instruction line and what it was used for. Mr. Hawke explained that this account is used when a student is unable to come to school, but still requires services, typically, if there is a hospitalization. Mrs. Pelavin inquired as to the high usage of the GES Building Maintenance account. Mr. Hawke explained that there are two elevators at the school and they have been worked on constantly this fiscal year.

Projects Update:

N/A

New Business:

\$75,000 donation from the First Congregational Church to form a scholarship for GHS seniors. The church has ceased operations and is dispersing its remaining funds. A motion to accept the donation was made by Mrs. Pelavin, seconded by Mr. Swartz. So Voted.

Mr. Hawke gave a brief budget update to the Committee. Mr. Hawke explained that all new funding for the schools totals \$1,469,020. However, salaries are increasing about \$900k, OOD tuition is up about \$650k, Collaboratives are up about \$700k, Indirect costs (mainly health insurance) is up about \$1.3 million and when you factor in last year's deficit of approximately \$800k. That equates to \$4,350,000 and an immediate deficit of \$2,880,980.

Motion to adjourn 6:15 pm, So Voted.

GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Policy
Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 11, 2026
4:30 PM
Professional Development Room
160 Elm Street, Gardner, MA
01440

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

Absent:

Also in Attendance: Dr. Catherine Goguen, Chief Academic Officer

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

A motion was made by Mrs. Cormier and seconded by Mrs. Hurst to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2025 Policy Meeting. So moved.

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

- EBB – First Aid
- Recording Policy

The following policies were reviewed and it was determined that no changes were required. Therefore, the policies will be updated as "Reviewed February 2026":

- DJEIA – Sales Calls and Demonstrations
- DK – Payment Procedures
- EB – Safety Program
- EBAB – Pest Management
- EBCD – Emergency Closings
- EBCFA – Face Coverings
- ECA – Buildings and Grounds Security
- ECABA – Staff and Visitor Identification
- ECAF – Security Cameras in Schools
- EEA – Student Transportation Services

Policy ECAB – Access to Buildings and Grounds was reviewed and discussed. Dr. Goguen stated that the District does not currently have this policy. She also stated that Mr. Mark

Hawke, Director of Finance and Operations, recommends adoption of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) model Policy ECAB with minor formatting and references changes aligned to the District. A motion was made by Mrs. Cormier and seconded by Mr. Cormier to send the policy to the March full School Committee Meeting for a first read for adoption. The motion passed unanimously.

Policy EEAEC – Student Conduct on School Buses was reviewed and discussed. The Subcommittee recommended that the File name “(also JICC)” be changed to “(also JIC)” which reflects the correct reference to the District Policy. A motion was made by Mrs. Cormier and seconded by Mr. Cormier to send the policy with the recommended changes to the March full School Committee Meeting for a first read. The motion passed unanimously.

The next Policy Subcommittee meetings will occur in the Central Office Professional Development Room as follows:

- Wednesday, March 18, 2026 at 4:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, April 15, 2026 at 4:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, May 13, 2026 at 4:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, June 10, 2026 at 4:30 p.m.

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

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

ACCESS TO BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

The buildings and grounds of the **Gardner Public Schools** represent a significant community investment. The primary purpose of that investment is for the students of the school district.

It is in the best interest of the public that this investment be secured while nonetheless providing maximum possible community use of the district buildings and grounds.

During school hours when school is in session, access to the buildings and grounds of the **Gardner Public Schools** are limited to district students, staff, and those with legitimate business with the school or district. Those visiting for recognized business must follow the district visitor policy and accompanying procedures. Access to school grounds during the school day, except for recognized school or district activities, is prohibited.

During outside of school hours and on non-school days, the public is welcome to use school grounds from dawn until dusk under procedures promulgated by the superintendent. Such use is secondary to use by any school or district activity or to any community use as provided through rental or donation.

Access to school buildings after school hours and on non-school days is only for attending school and district events or for uses authorized by the superintendent or their designee. Access within the building will be limited to only those participating in the authorized event. Such access will be limited to those rooms and spaces required by the event, including appropriate restroom access.

The superintendent will ensure that procedures enacting this and related policies are created and enforced.

CROSS REFS: ECA, Buildings and Grounds Management

IHBAA, Observations of Special Education Programs

KF, Community Use of School Facilities

KF-R, Community Use of School Facilities

KI, Visitors to the Schools

~~NOTE: Districts should ensure non-school-related access is shaped to suit local buildings and grounds and appropriate local expectations. Districts also should adapt language for school facilities not owned by, but used by, the district.~~

SOURCE: MASC ~~–rewritten 2025~~

[Adopted: 2026]

STUDENT CONDUCT ON SCHOOL BUSES

The school committee and its staff share with students and parents the responsibility for student safety during transportation to and from school. The authority for enforcing school committee requirements of student conduct on buses will rest with the principal.

To ensure the safety of all students who ride in buses, it may occasionally be necessary to revoke the privilege of transportation from a student who abuses this privilege. Parents of children whose behavior and misconduct on school buses endangers the health, safety, and welfare of other riders will be notified that their children face the loss of transportation privileges in accordance with regulations approved by the school committee.

[Reference: MGL Chapter 71, 37H]

[Adopted: August 2000]

[Reviewed: May 2003]

[Reviewed: December 2019]

[Revised: November 2023]

[Revised: 2026]

Gardner High School Program of Studies



2026-2027

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Gardner High School Mission Statement

VISION: We will be the premier school of choice for our students and their families.

MISSION: Gardner High School provides an enriched academic environment fostered through relevance, rigor and relationships and ensures that each student learns at a high level.

- In the classroom, we challenge all students in a supportive, positive environment that promotes scholarship and helps students develop the skills and characteristics to make them successful for their future.
- On the field, stage, or court, we create fun, engaging opportunities for students to excel in athletics, the arts, and co-curricular groups.
- We promote personal development and a sense of service to our community.

CORE VALUES: C.A.R.E.

- **Community:** We work together to achieve for all in a culture steeped in tradition
- **Appreciation:** We accept our roles, respect different perspectives, and acknowledge the good in others.
- **Responsibility:** We own our actions and honor our commitments by being prepared, involved community members.
- **Excellence:** We do our best and take pride in all we do in our community.

21ST CENTURY LEARNING EXPECTATIONS

- Communicate
- Critically Think and Problem Solve
- Collaborate
- Creatively Innovate

BELIEFS ABOUT STUDENT LEARNING

We believe that all students can learn at a high level with help and support if:

- All students are told over and over again in meaningful and compelling ways that academic achievement demands that same kind of hard work that is required to become the best in other arenas--at baseball, basketball, playing an instrument, etc...
- We know what excellent work looks like and what skills and competencies are needed for students to do excellent work, teaching the constitutive skills and competencies while providing examples of excellent work and careful guidance.
- We know where each student is academically and the skills, competencies and knowledge that are required for each one of them to access our challenging curriculum.

MOTTO: Omnia Labor Vincit (Latin for "Work Conquers All")

MAXIM: Good is not good enough

21ST CENTURY RUBRICS FOR CRITICAL THINKING & PROBLEM SOLVING

Expectation	Reaching 4	Expanding 3	Developing 2	Entering/Beginning 1/0
Understand the Problem Identify and define key issue/s and/or problem/s	Clearly, accurately, and appropriately identifies key issue/s and/or problem/s	Identifies most or all key issue/s and/or problem/s. Some minor inaccuracies or omissions may be present, but do not interfere with meaning.	Identifies some key issue/s and/or problem/s. May have some inaccuracies, omissions or errors present that interfere with meaning.	Most or all of key issue/s and or problem/s are not identified or defined, or are identified or defined inaccurately. Meaning is unclear.
Model the Problem/Look for Structure /Patterns Present and Analyze Data/Information	Presents relevant/appropriate, sufficient and credible data/information. Clearly analyzes information for accuracy, relevance, and validity. Information clearly relates to meaning.	Presents sufficient and relevant/appropriate data/information. Generally analyzes data/information for accuracy, relevance and validity. Minor inaccuracies or omissions do not interfere with analysis or meaning.	Presents some appropriate data/information. May miss or ignore relevant data/information. Analysis is limited or somewhat irrelevant/inappropriate. May contain inaccuracies or omissions that interfere with analysis and/or meaning.	Does not present relevant and appropriate data/information. Fails to analyze, or uses inaccurate or irrelevant/inappropriate analysis of data/information. Copies information with analysis.
Be Precise Apply a Multidimensional approach/Consider Context	Clearly applies a multidimensional approach. Synthesizes various perspectives. Correct answer with appropriate interpretation/description/units. Acknowledges limits of position or context - when appropriate.	Acknowledges multiple approaches. Some synthesis of perspectives. Correct answer with limited interpretation/description/units. Some acknowledgement that position may have limits. Acknowledgement context-when appropriate	Somewhat simplified position with some sense of multiple approaches. Minor or vague synthesis of perspectives. Incorrect answer with limited interpretation/description/units. Some acknowledgement positions may have limits. May not acknowledge context - when appropriate.	Student's position is grounded in a singular, often personal perspective. Position may be simplistic and obvious. Incorrect answer with no interpretation/description/units. Little or no awareness that position may have limits or context - when appropriate.
Communicate Answer with Reasoning Demonstrate Sound Reasoning and Conclusions	Reasoning is logical and creative, consistent, complete and often unique. Conclusion is complex and/or detailed, well supported, creative, complete, and relevant.	Reasoning is mostly logical, complete, and consistent. Demonstrates some unique or creative insight. Conclusion is generally complete, supported, and mostly consistent and relevant.	Reasoning contains elements of logic and/or creative insight, but not fully resolved. May have minor inconsistencies or omissions. Conclusion is relevant but abbreviated or simplified, not fully supported, and/or contains minor inconsistencies.	Reasoning is illogical, simplistic, and inconsistent or absent. Conclusion is simplistic and stated as an absolute, or inconsistent with evidence or reasoning. Lack of coherent or clear conclusion.

21ST CENTURY RUBRICS FOR CREATIVITY/INNOVATION

Expectation	Reaching 4	Expanding 3	Developing 2	Entering/Beginning 1/0
Defines the creative challenge	Develops insight about the particular needs and interests of the target audience	Understands the purpose driving the process of innovation (who needs this and why)	Understands the basic purpose for innovation but does not thoroughly consider the needs and interests of the target audience	May just follow directions without understanding the purpose for innovation or considering the needs and interests of the target audience.
Identify Sources of Information	Promotes divergent and creative perspectives during discussions	In addition to typical sources, finds, unusual ways or places to get information (adult, expert, community member, business or organization literature)	Finds one or two sources of information that are not typical Offers new ideas during discussions, but stays within narrow perspectives	Uses only typical sources of information (website, book, article) Does not offer new ideas during discussions
Generate and Select Ideas	Uses idea-generating techniques to develop several original ideas for product(s) Uses ingenuity and imagination, going outside conventional boundaries, when shaping ideas into a product. Seeks multiple sources of feedback and critique to revise the product to exceed the needs of the intended audience.	Uses idea-generating techniques to develop an original idea(s) for product(s) Carefully evaluates the quality of ideas and selects the best one to shape into a product. Asks new questions, takes different perspectives to elaborate and improve on the selected idea Seeks out and uses feedback and critique to revise the product to better meet the needs of the intended audience.	Develops some original ideas for produce(s), but could develop more with better use of idea-generating techniques. Evaluates ideas, but not thoroughly before selecting one Asks a few new questions but may make only minor changes to the selected idea Shows some imagination when shaping ideas into a product, but may stay within conventional boundaries Considers and may use some feedback and critique to revise a product, but does not seek it out	Stays within existing frameworks, does not use idea-generating techniques to develop new ideas for product(s) Selects one idea without evaluating the quality of ideas. Does not ask new questions or elaborate on the selected idea Reproduces existing ideas, does not imagine new ones Does not consider or use feedback and critique to revise product
Present Work to Uses/Target Audience	Creates visually exciting presentation that includes interactive elements	Creates visually exciting presentation media Includes elements in presentation that are especially fun, lively, engaging, or powerful to particular audience	Adds some interesting touches to presentation media Attempts to include elements in presentation that make it more lively and engaging	Presents ideas and products in typical ways (text-heavy PowerPoint slides, recitation of notes, no interactive features)
Originality	Is new, unique, surprising, offers a fresh perspective, expression, or point of view Successfully break rules and conventions, uses common materials or ideas in new, clever and unique ways	Is new, unique, surprising, shows a personal touch May successfully break rules and conventions, or use common materials or ideas in new clever and surprising ways	Has some new ideas or improvements, but some ideas are predictable or conventional May show a tentative attempt to step outside rules and conventions, or find new uses for common materials or ideas	Relies on existing models, ideas, or directions, it is not new or unique Follows rules and conventions, uses materials and ideas in typical ways
Effectiveness	Is seen as useful and valuable, it solves the defined problem and exceeds the identified need Improves quality of life for audience	Is seen as useful and valuable, it solves the defined problem or meets the identified need Is practical, feasible	Is useful and valuable to some extent, it may not solve certain aspects of the defined problem or exactly meet the identified need Unclear if product would be practical or feasible	Is not useful or valuable to the intended audience /user Would not work in the real world, impractical or unfeasible
Style	Is well-crafted, striking, designed with a distinct style and is appropriate for multipurpose Combines different elements into a coherent whole with a distinct style	Is well-crafted, striking, designed with a distinct style but still appropriate for the purpose Combines different elements into a coherent whole	Has some interesting touches, but lacks a distinct style Has some elements that may be excessive or do not fit together well	Is safe, ordinary, made in a conventional style Has several elements that do not fit together

21ST CENTURY RUBRICS FOR COOPERATIVE AND COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

Expectation	Reaching 4	Expanding 3	Developing 2	Entering/Beginning 1/0
Focus on Task and Participation	Consistently: -stays focused -works effectively with others	Usually: -stays focused -works effectively with others	Sometimes: -stays focused -works effectively with others	Rarely/Refuses: -stays focused -works effectively with others
Shared Responsibility and Dependability	Consistently: -follows through on task -evenly shares responsibility	Usually: -follows through on task -evenly shares responsibility	Sometimes: -follows through on task -evenly shares responsibility	Rarely/Refuses: -follows through on task -evenly shares responsibility
Listening, Questioning, and Discussing	Consistently & Respectfully: -listens, interacts, discusses and contributes to group	Usually: -listens, interacts, discusses and contributes to group	Sometimes: : -listens, interacts, discusses and contributes to group	Rarely/Refuse: -listens, interacts, discusses and contributes to group
Group/Partner Teamwork	Consistently: -make compromises -has a positive attitude -performs all duties and contributes to the group	Usually:: -make compromises -has a positive attitude -performs all duties and contributes to the group	Sometimes: -make compromises -has a positive attitude -performs all duties and contributes to the group	Rarely/Refuses: -make compromises -has a positive attitude -performs all duties and contributes to the group

21ST CENTURY RUBRICS FOR READING, WRITING, LISTENING AND SPEAKING

Reading for Understanding Rubric

Expectation	Reaching 4	Expanding 3	Developing 2	Entering/Beginning 1/0
<u>Claim</u>	<p>Claiming is clearly stated and responds directly to the prompt/question. Claim shows complete comprehension of the passage and thorough understanding of the question in an insightful manner</p> <p>Includes the passage title, genre, author's name</p>	<p>Claim is stated, mostly responds to the prompt</p> <p>Claim demonstrates understanding of the question being asked</p> <p>Includes some, but not all relevant authorship information</p>	<p>The claim does not respond directly to the question but makes a reference to it</p> <p>Shows partial comprehension of the passage and the question that was asked</p> <p>Makes a passing reference to the author or passage title, but does not include all relevant specifics</p>	<p>There is no claim, or it is too difficult to understand. The response to the prompt is inadequate or confusing</p> <p>Does not refer to the author, title, genre</p>
<u>Evidence</u>	<p>_____ pieces of perceptive evidence are used in the paragraph</p> <p>The evidence is strongly introduced and well-chosen to support the claim</p> <p>All evidence is properly cited (MLA)</p>	<p>_____ pieces of perceptive evidence are used in the paragraph</p> <p>The evidence is introduced and adequately supports the claim</p> <p>Most evidence is properly cited (MLA)</p>	<p>Fewer than _____ pieces of evidence are used in the paragraph</p> <p>The evidence may not support the claim and has not been carefully chosen</p> <p>Makes a passing reference to the author or passage title, but does not include all relevant specifics</p>	<p>Evidence is referenced but not directly quoted, and does not provide usable support for the claim</p> <p>Evidence is not introduced</p> <p>Evidence is not correctly cited or citations are missing</p>
<u>Analysis</u>	<p>Analysis is insightful and demonstrates understanding of topic/text</p> <p>Fully explains how the evidence supports the claim</p> <p>Analysis follows each piece of evidence</p>	<p>Analysis demonstrates understanding of topic/text</p> <p>Mostly explains how the evidence supports the claim</p> <p>Analysis follows most pieces of evidence</p>	<p>There is an attempt to analysis</p> <p>There is little explanation of how the evidence supports the claim Not all evidence is analyzed</p>	<p>Analysis does not support the claim</p> <p>Explanation of the evidence is inadequate</p> <p>Analysis/Explanation is missing</p>
<u>Knowledge and Understanding</u>	<p>The response shows detailed knowledge and understanding of, and perceptive insight into, the text/work used for the assignment</p> <p>Insightfully responds to all aspects of the prompt w/analysis/explanation</p>	<p>The response shows knowledge and understanding of, and some insight into, the text/work used for the assignment</p> <p>Adequately explains all parts of the prompt</p>	<p>The response shows some knowledge but little insight or understanding of the text/work used for assignment</p>	<p>The response indicates a misreading of the material, or confusion with the content or question/prompt</p>
<u>Main Idea (Gist)</u>	<p>Most important who/what</p> <p>All important information about who/what</p> <p>In your words</p> <p>10 or fewer words</p>	<p>Most important who/what</p> <p>Most important information about the who/what</p> <p>In your own words</p> <p>Between 11-15 words</p>	<p>Most important who/what may be unclear or not specific</p> <p>Some important information about the who/what</p> <p>Mostly in your own words</p> <p>Between 16-20 words</p>	<p>Most important who/what missing/incoherent</p> <p>Minimal important information about the who/what</p> <p>Somewhat in your own words may have too many quotes</p> <p>Over 20 words</p>

WRITTEN/ARGUMENTATIVE RUBRIC

Area/Standard	Reaching 4	Expanding 3	Developing 2	Entering/Beginning 1/0	Entering/Beginning 1/0
Focus/Claim	<p>Insightfully addresses all aspects of the prompt</p> <p>Introduces artful and precise claims(s) in a sophisticated thesis statement</p>	<p>Competently addresses all aspects of the prompt</p> <p>Introduces precise, knowledge claims(s) in a clear thesis statement</p>	<p>Superficially address all aspects of the prompt</p> <p>Introduces reasonable claims(s) in a thesis statement</p>	<p>Partially addresses aspects of the prompt</p> <p>Introduces superficial or flawed claim(s) in a weak thesis statement</p>	<p>Minimally addresses some aspects of the prompt</p> <p>Fails to introduce a relevant claim and/or lacks a thesis</p>
Organization Structure	<p>Skillfully orients reader to topic(s) in introduction</p> <p>Thoughtfully develops claims(s) with relevant body paragraphs</p> <p>Provides a meaningful and reflective conclusion which draws from and supports claim(s)</p> <p>Creates cohesion through skillful use of linking words, phrases and clauses within and between paragraphs</p> <p>Includes purposeful and logical progression of ideas from beginning to end</p>	<p>Orients reader to topic(s) in introduction</p> <p>Develops claim(s) with relevant body paragraphs</p> <p>Provides a conclusion that follows from and supports claim(s)</p> <p>Creates cohesion through use of linking words, phrases, and clauses within and between paragraphs</p> <p>Includes logical progression of ideas from beginning to end</p>	<p>Partially orients reader to topic(s) in introduction</p> <p>Superficially develops claim(s) with body paragraphs</p> <p>Provides a conclusion which repetitively or partially supports claim(s)</p> <p>Creates some cohesion through basic linking words, phrases, and clauses within and between paragraphs</p> <p>Includes adequate progression of ideas from beginning to end</p>	<p>Inadequately orients reader to topic(s) in introduction</p> <p>Inadequately develops claim(s) with minimal body paragraphs</p> <p>Provides an adequate conclusion</p> <p>Uses limited and/or inappropriate linking words, phrases, and clauses</p> <p>Includes uneven progression of ideas from beginning to end</p>	<p>Fails to orient reader to topic(s) in introduction or introduction is missing</p> <p>Fails to develop claim(s) with body paragraphs</p> <p>Omits conclusion</p> <p>Uses few or no transition/linking words, phrases, and clauses</p> <p>Includes little or no discernible organization of ideas</p>
Evidence/Support	<p>Provides substantial and pertinent evidence (4) to supports claims(s)</p> <p>Seamlessly and effectively introduces and cites credible sources and/or text evidence</p> <p>Convincingly refutes specific counterclaim(s)</p>	<p>Provides sufficient (3) and relevant evidence to supports claim(s)</p> <p>Competently introduces and cites credible sources and/or text evidence</p> <p>Competently refutes specific counterclaim(s)</p>	<p>Provides limited (2) and/or superficial evidence to supports claim(s)</p> <p>Ineffectively introduces or cites credible sources and/or text evidence</p> <p>Minimally refutes specific counterclaim(s)</p>	<p>Provides minimal (1) and/or irrelevant evidence to support claim(s)</p> <p>Incorrectly introduces or cites sources and/or evidence that may not be credible</p> <p>Acknowledges alternate or opposing claim(s)</p>	<p>Provides inaccurate, little or no evidence to supports claim(s)</p> <p>Does not use or cite sources and/or text evidence</p> <p>Fails to acknowledge alternate or opposing claim(s)</p>
Analysis	<p>Shows insightful understanding of topic or text</p> <p>Uses persuasive and valid reasoning to connect evidence with claim(s)</p>	<p>Shows competent understanding of topic or text</p> <p>Uses valid reasoning to connect evidence with claim(s)</p>	<p>Shows superficial understanding of topic or text</p> <p>Uses some valid and accurate reasoning to connect evidence with claim(s)</p>	<p>Shows limited and/or flawed understanding of topic or text</p> <p>Uses limited, simplistic and/or flawed reasoning to connect evidence with claim(s)</p>	<p>Shows no understanding of topic or text</p> <p>Reasoning is missing or does not connect evidence with claim(s)</p>
Language	<p>Uses purposeful and varied sentence structures</p> <p>Contains minimal (1) to no errors in conventions (grammar, punctuation, spelling, and capitalization)</p> <p>Strategically uses academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose</p>	<p>Uses correct and varied sentence structures</p> <p>Contains few (2-3) minor errors in conventions</p> <p>Competently uses academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for the audience and purpose</p>	<p>Uses mostly correct varied sentence structure</p> <p>Contains some (4-5) errors in conventions which may cause confusion</p> <p>Superficially uses academic and domain-specific vocabulary clearly appropriate for audience and purpose</p>	<p>Uses limited and/or repetitive sentence structure</p> <p>Contains numerous (6-7) errors in conventions which may cause confusion</p> <p>Inadequately uses academic and domain-specific vocabulary</p>	<p>Lacks sentence mastery (e.g. fragments/run-ons)</p> <p>Contains serious pervasive (8+) errors in conventions</p> <p>Fails to use academic or domain-specific vocabulary</p>

GHS LISTENING SKILLS RUBRIC

	Reaching 4	Expanding 3	Developing 2	Beginning/Entering 1/0
Following Directions	Follows all single and multi-step directions with self-initiated requests for clarification, as appropriate	Follows all single and multi-step directions, rarely requires repetition or prompting	Misses several single and multi-step directions, requires some repetition or additional prompting	Routinely misses most single and multi-step directions, requires frequent repetition and/or prompting
Focusing on the Speaker	Focuses on the speaker as evidenced by constant, respectful and interested attention	Focuses on the speaker as evidenced by consistent and respectful attention	Sometimes loses focus on the speaker as evidenced by periods of brief, observable distraction	Often loses focus on the speaker as demonstrated by periods of observable distraction and/or disruptions
Applying or Responding to Spoken Information	Responds relevantly (orally or in writing) through notes, reflections, commentaries or summaries which enhance the discussion	Responds relevantly and adequately (orally or in writing) through notes, reflections, commentaries or summaries	Responds inadequately and/or partially (orally or in writing) due to poor active listening	Does not respond appropriately (orally or in writing) due to lack of active listening

ORAL PRESENTATION RUBRIC

Skills	Reaching (4)	Expanding (3)	Developing (2)	Beginning/Entering (1/0)
TOPIC	Well focused topic w/ a well-developed argument. Full understanding of the purpose of the presentation.	Focused topic w/ a developed argument. Understanding of the purpose of the presentation.	Lack of focused topic. Partially demonstrated understanding of the purpose of the presentation.	Lack of focused topic. Vague sense of purpose for the presentation. Requires the audience to make assumptions.
EVIDENCE	Clear and convincing command of facts and information. Insightful explanations that help to illustrate the speaker's ideas.	Clear use of facts and information. Partially developed explanations in support of the speaker's ideas.	Partially clear use of facts. Partially developed explanations in support of the speaker's ideas.	Limited or confusing use of facts and information. Limited or incomplete explanations to support the speaker's ideas.
ORGANIZATION	Clearly and logically organized presentation. Engaging introduction. Logically sequenced body w/ appropriate transitions. Clear and convincing conclusion.	Clear attempt at organization w/ a beginning, middle, and end. Obvious transitions and a conclusion.	Some inconsistencies in organization and/or a lack of sustained focus throughout the presentation. Inconsistent use of transitions and a conclusion.	Some organization but lack of focus. Inconsistent or no transitions. Difficult to follow or rambling Confusing or incoherent conclusion.
LANGUAGE	Uses sophisticated and varied language that is suited to the topic and audience. Word choice is concise, original, and effectively conveys the appropriate tone given the purpose of the presentation.	Uses appropriate language and word choice. Less sophistication, expressiveness and/or originality.	Words are suited to the topic, audience, and purpose. Lack conciseness, originality, and/or fails to convey an appropriate tone and/or purpose of the presentation. May be overly wordy and rambling.	Words may be unsuited/inappropriate for the topic, audience, or purpose of the presentation. Word choice lacks originality. Fails to convey an appropriate tone and purpose of the presentation.
SUPPORTING MATERIALS	Skillful use of supporting materials with no mistakes in conventions or spelling errors. Presentation is well designed and visually appealing, enhancing the effectiveness of the presenter.	Effective use of supporting materials with only a few (1-3) errors in conventions or spelling. Presentation shows some elements of design and visual appeal, and is fairly effective in supporting the presenter.	Attempted use of supporting materials with excessive (more than 3) errors in conventions or spelling. Design and visual appeal may not support the presenter. Supporting materials may contain too much or too little information.	Limited/No attempt to use supporting materials. Errors in conventions or spelling make the supporting materials difficult to follow. Design of the presentation is ineffective and lacks visual appeal. Supporting materials contain too much or too little information.
EFFECTIVE DELIVERY	A combination of appropriate eye contact, clarity, and projection of voice, tone and pace, and gestures significantly enhance the speaker's words. Speaker remains enthusiastic, audience attention is maintained, and the purpose of the presentation is achieved successfully. Time > 5 min & < 15	A combination of appropriate eye contact, clarity, and projection of voice, tone, and pace, and gestures but w/o the smoothness required of "Reaching". Speaker shows some enthusiasm, the audience is mostly engaged. The purpose of the presentation is mostly achieved. Time >not met	A combination of eye contact, clarity and projection of voice, tone, pace, and gestures, but inconsistent in delivery and somewhat halting. Speaker shows inconsistent enthusiasm, and the audience may lose interest. The purpose of the presentation may be partially achieved. Time >not met	Inconsistent use of/lack of eye contact, clarity, and projection of voice, tone and pace, and/or gestures that interrupt the flow of speech. May read too much from paper/notes. Speaker shows limited enthusiasm, and audience interest is not sustained. The purpose of the presentation is minimally achieved. Time > not met

Mental Health Team

Gardner Public Schools has brought all Mental Health staff together to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of mental health interventions. The mental health team focuses on prevention through school wide screenings and implements interventions through integrated, data-based decision making and action planning. Using evidence based practices is a goal for the team. All mental health personnel are trained on the MTSS framework.

MTSS SEL/Behavior/Mental Health is an integrated system designed to provide equitable access to education and meet the needs of all students. Given the overlap between existing frameworks and practices, this integrated system is an emerging approach in education to build a single system to address academics, social-emotional well-being and mental health. MTSS SEL/Behavior/Mental Health is about how all systems in the school fit together to ensure that all students can access high quality education in a safe and supportive environment.

Goals of MTSS SEL/Behavior/Mental Health Teams are to support schools and the district to build social emotional and mental health MTSS models that are: Data-driven, Evidence-based, Comprehensive, Culturally responsive, and Sustainable.

The Mental Health Team at Gardner High School consists of School Counselors, School Adjustment Counselor, School Psychologist, Board Certified Behavioral Analyst, Bridge Coordinator, School Based Care Coordinator, Youth Mentor and Community Health Worker.

Universal Screening

BESS

The BESS (Behavioral and Emotional Screener System) is designed to assess behavioral and emotional strengths and weaknesses in children and adolescents (prek - high school). It consists of brief screening measures completed by teachers, parents, and/or students, used to quickly identify potential behavioral or emotional concerns in individuals or in large numbers of students. The BESS is not a comprehensive diagnostic assessment; it is a tool that can be used to determine a child's *risk level* for developing emotional and/or behavioral problems that require intervention.

Implementing a screening system for behavioral and emotional problems can provide schools with an:

- objective, efficient, and systematic way to identify children who may develop academic or other school-related problems as a result of poor behavioral or emotional functioning.
- Identify behavior concerns in need of intervention
- Show how students are responding to core (SEL) instruction
- Show how many students in a given population are at-risk
- Enable schools to catch a potential problems early in the year
- Provide data to teachers so that they can differentiate SEL instruction

SBIRT

SBIRT (Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment) is an evidence-based, comprehensive, integrated, public health approach to the delivery of early intervention and treatment services for persons with substance use disorders, as well as those who are at risk of developing these disorders. Primary care centers, hospital emergency rooms, trauma centers, and other community settings provide opportunities for early intervention with at-risk substance users before more severe consequences occur. Students are screened in 7th and 9th grade.

- Screening quickly assesses the severity of substance use and identifies the appropriate level of treatment.
- Brief intervention focuses on increasing insight and awareness regarding substance use and motivation toward behavioral change.
- Referral to treatment provides those identified as needing more extensive treatment with access to specialty care.

SCHOOL COUNSELORS

The School Counselors at Gardner High School work to help students understand themselves in light of their aptitudes, interests, and talents as indicated through testing, level performance, classroom lessons counseling sessions and data-base decision making. Our major objective is to assist each student in meeting appropriate academic and personal goals. To attain this, careful planning and cooperation on the part of parents, students and his/her counselor is essential.

Parents are encouraged to participate in parent meetings throughout the year for important information and to schedule appointments with counselors and/or teachers to ensure that each student is achieving the academic personal success available at Gardner High School. Please contact the student's counselor at 978-630-4066.

A packet explaining the college application process is available to juniors in the spring. Local scholarship packets are distributed to seniors in February of their senior year.

Students are advised to select the most challenging course program. Students who take full advantage of all opportunities available will realize the greatest success. Counselors meet frequently with students to discuss future plans and goals, proper course selection, school difficulties and other concerns that may interfere with school achievement.

GARDNER HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELOR CURRICULUM

The Gardner High School Counseling Department has created lessons and programs designed to expand a student's personal, social, academic and career skills and goals. At Gardner High School we are pleased to offer **SchoolLinks** as our all-inclusive college and career planning platform. This program offers intuitive tools designed to engage our students in exploring, planning, and preparing for college and careers. The program engages students in all grades with intuitive college and career exploration tools. It also helps streamline the college application process and tracks student outcomes from graduation to career placement. SchoolLinks is embedded into Gardner High School's school counselor curriculum at all levels.

All grades

MyCAP - MyCAP is a strategic planning tool intended to help youth identify and achieve goals after high school. It provides students opportunities for college and career development and exploration activities, and helps them choose high school courses that will prepare them to reach their postsecondary goals. Plans will be created through advisory lessons. Students will be setting academic and personal goals and will review these goals throughout the year.

Selecting Classes that are Best for Your Future - Students will understand how to select the best classes for them to prepare for their plans after high school.

College and Career Readiness-Students will understand the factors that contribute to not earning credit leading to being off-track for high school graduation. Students will learn how credit is accumulated for high school graduation. The link between high school credits, graduation requirements, and entry requirements for postsecondary options will also be reviewed.

Interests Career Lesson-Students will make the connection between what interests them on a daily basis and a future career.

Skills Career Lesson- Students will understand the connection between skills and possible careers based on those skills.

Learning Styles-Students will be able to identify their preferred learning style and know how to use the preferred learning style when studying and learning new things.

Things All Freshmen Should Know-Students will learn what they need to do to move on to 10th grade and to graduate. Students will also learn about their particular strengths contribute to my academic success

Signs of Suicide (SOS)-SOS Signs of Suicide, is a suicide prevention program that educates students about the relationship between suicide and depression. It encourages all students to seek help from trusted adults whether they have concerns about themselves or a friend using the ACT® message. This program is delivered during the Wellness 1 curriculum, usually by the Adjustment Counselor.

Grade 10

College & Career - Students will learn how to connect their skills, values and interests to a field of study (major) in college. Using the Myers Briggs personality inventory, students are able to connect future career opportunities with their personality.

Grade 11

College & Career - Students will be able to select colleges or postgraduate training programs based on the fields of study (major) they want to pursue. Students will learn about the college application process and timeline, as well as the financial aid process. Students learn about different post-secondary options and how to budget and financially plan for college.

PSAT Administration - All 11th grade students will be offered to take the PSAT exam at no charge to begin to prepare them for the SAT.

Grade 12

College & Career - Students complete Common Applications and state college applications online and receive assistance with writing a college essay.

Financial Aid Awareness - Students and parents will receive information regarding the process to apply for financial aid.

SAT Administration - All 12th grade students will be offered to take the SAT exam free of charge for college application purposes and to help determine if students are college & career ready.

Support Programs

Bridge Program: The Bridge Program provides clinical support, academic coordination, family support, and care coordination services to students who are reintegrating into a full schedule after missing extensive amounts of learning due to serious mental health, medical, and/or life transition challenges. The Bridge Program is a short-term program with supports customized to each student's needs that are culturally competent, clinically informed, and flexible. Program staff strive to coordinate resources within Gardner High School and the wider community - and partner effectively with families to help each participating student reintegrate and finish the school year on track for graduation.

Heywood Healthcare's Youth Tele Behavioral Health Program

Offers youth support with mental health needs, substance abuse treatment, mentors and community resource referrals. Our school based Community Health Workers and Youth Mentors work with our tele-clinicians, school staff, area providers, students and their families to coordinate care.

ACADEMIC LEVELS AT GARDNER HIGH SCHOOL

Gardner High School sets high standards and expectations for all students at all levels. Every course is designed to provide students with the knowledge and high level skills needed for post-secondary education, technical training, and employment. College preparatory, honors, and advanced placement course levels are offered at Gardner High School, as well as college level classes through our Early College Academy for which students can fulfill graduation requirements while also earning college credit.

Courses at Gardner High School develop literacy skills and teach students to think critically analytically. Classes are designed to prepare students for challenging and rigorous post-secondary learning and training at two and four year colleges and universities, vocational institutes, and/or career employment. All courses are based on rigorous and relevant content, which follow the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. Courses prepare students to demonstrate successful performance outcomes including proficiency on the Massachusetts comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) and standardized entrance exams such as SAT, SAT subject tests, and ACT.

Course level placement for students is determined on an individual basis by examining data including assessments, teacher recommendations, grades, and other relevant information. Students must work with their parents and school counselors to plan a course of study over four years that will help them reach their highest potential in achieving their goals after high school.

Students must be aware that colleges, technical schools, and employers seek students who have completed a rigorous academic program. Therefore, students in all academic levels are expected to exhibit behaviors that lead to maximum learning within all content areas. Students must work independently, take responsibility for their learning, engage in the learning process, demonstrate time-management skills, utilize effective study skills, be inquisitive, practice problem solving strategies, use technology effectively, accept feedback, and persevere with difficult tasks.

Students are encouraged to challenge themselves academically while at Gardner High School. Below is a list of courses offered at GHS for Honors and Advanced Placement.

All students who register for an AP course will be expected to complete the course and take the AP exam. If a student does not take the AP exam, the AP designation will be removed from the course name on the student's transcript and will be changed to honors level.

If not enough students sign up for particular Advanced Placement (AP) courses, they may not run or we may offer those selected courses every other year.

HONORS

Honors courses move at an accelerated pace, designed to extend and deepen study of a subject through class work and independent work on projects and research outside of class. Below is a list of honors courses offered at GHS.

English

Honors English (9-12)

Science

Honors Biology (9-10)

Honors Chemistry (10-12)

Honors Physics (10-12)

Honors Anatomy & Physiology (11-12)

World Language

Honors Spanish 2, 3, 4, 5

Honors French 2, 3, 4, 5

Mathematics

Honors Geometry

Honors Pre-Calculus

Honors Algebra 2

Social Studies

Honors Modern World
History 2 (9)

Honors US History 1
(10)

Honors US History 2
(11)

ADVANCED PLACEMENT

Advanced Placement courses provide students an opportunity for learning that goes beyond just facts and figures. The rich course material, classroom discussions, and demanding assignments typical of AP courses will help students develop the content mastery and critical thinking skills expected of college students. In addition, AP helps students to develop better study habits, improve their writing skills, and sharpen their problem-solving abilities, skills vital to college success.

Who should take AP courses?

The AP courses are intended for students who wish to take college courses while in high school. The offerings are college courses, which follow world or national curricula. The course work is rigorous and the pace is intense.

The students must:

- Have demonstrated high achievement in previous courses in that subject area
- Be motivated to achieve
- Have a very strong work ethic
- Be able to work well independently
- Agree to take the National AP Exam

AP courses offered at Gardner High School are approved annually by the College Board. The process for approval involves a review of the course syllabus each year along with a review of textbooks, resources and materials that will be used by the classroom teacher.

All students who register for an AP course will be expected to complete the course and take the AP exam at the AP level. If a student finds an AP class to be too challenging, they must drop the course in the first week, during the Add/Drop period. (If you don't complete the course in its entirety and take the AP exam, students' transcripts will be changed, the colleges' students have applied to will be notified (if applicable), and students will receive honors weighted credit for the courses.)

Below is a list of Advanced Placement courses offered at GHS. due to the small number of students who elect certain Advanced Placement (AP) courses, we may offer these selected courses every other year

English

AP English Language & Composition
AP English Literature & Composition

Science

AP Biology
AP Physics II
AP Chemistry
AP Environmental Science

Social Studies

AP Human Geography
AP Modern World
History
AP US History
AP US Government & Politics

Mathematics

AP Calculus AB
AP Calculus BC
AP Statistics

Art

AP Studio Art
AP Photography
AP Music

VHS AP offerings are available upon request.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT DISTINCTION AWARD

In order to recognize our students who go “above and beyond” with challenging coursework and who contribute to their school and community, we have created the **Advanced Placement Distinction Award**. To be awarded this distinction at graduation, students must meet the following criteria:

- Receive passing grades in a minimum of 5 AP Courses during their four years of high school.
- Maintain good attendance; display good behavior; and present integrity and good citizenship when representing Gardner High School in the community (This will be reviewed by administration and guidance prior to receiving this award.)

****The Collegeboard charges an AP exam.** There is a reduced fee for students on Free/Reduced Lunch. Many colleges offer credit to students who achieve a high score on the AP exam. Please refer to a college’s website to read their AP credit policy as it varies from institution to institution.

EARLY COLLEGE DISTINCTION AWARD

In order to recognize our students who have participated in our Early College Program and who have challenged themselves with taking multiple college level courses during their junior and/or senior years, we have created the **Early College Distinction Award**. To be awarded this distinction at graduation, students must meet the following criteria:

- Receive passing grades and earn a minimum of 12 college credits, the equivalent of five college classes.
- Maintain good attendance; display good behavior; and present integrity and good citizenship when representing Gardner High School in the community (This will be reviewed by administration and guidance prior to receiving this award.)

GARDNER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

Full-year classes are worth 5 credits Half-year (semester) classes are worth 2.5 credits	GHS Requirements may be different from State Universities Entrance Requirements Please refer to page 21
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GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

English	20
Mathematics	20
Science	15
Social Studies Including: W. History, US History I, US History II -AP Human Geography will satisfy the World History requirement. -Students enrolled in our Early College Program may receive permission from the principal to substitute certain social studies requirements while at MWCC. -Transfer students to GHS may receive permission from the principal to substitute certain Social Studies courses.	15
Health & Wellness	2.5
Fitness	5
The Arts**	5
Financial Literacy	2.5
Electives	30
Total Credits	115
**ART CLASSES INCLUDE: All Music and Art Classes, Drama, Dance, Makerspace & other approved art-related classes	MassCore description see page 21

In addition to meeting the above course graduation requirements, all students in the class of 2025 and beyond must sit for, and complete, all MCAS sections (English, Math, Science), along with meeting the following competency standards in order to meet the required Gardner Public Schools Competency Determination (CD) to earn a high school diploma.

For the classes of 2026, successful Competency Determination (CD) requires a qualifying score on the MCAS prior to December 5, 2024 **or** receiving a passing grade (60 or higher) in the following coursework or their course equivalents*:

- English 9 and English 10
- Algebra I and Geometry
- Biology, Chemistry, or Physics

The class of 2027 and thereafter, successful Competency Determination (CD) requires receiving a passing grade (60 or higher) in the following coursework **or** their course equivalents*:

- English 9 and English 10
- Algebra I and Geometry
- Biology, Chemistry, or Physics
- US History I or US History II

* - The principal shall be responsible for determining what courses satisfy “course equivalents.”

GARDNER HIGH SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS FOR GRADE PROMOTION

All students must successfully complete a certain number of credits in order to be promoted to the next grade level

Promoted to Grade 10	25 credits including 5 credits in Algebra I
Promoted to Grade 11	55 credits
Promoted to Grade 12	80 credits
Graduation	115 credits

GRADE 8 CLASSES

Gardner High School includes grades 8-12. Students in the 8th grade are required to take 7 classes which include: English, Math, Science, Civics, STEM and a Fitness class. Courses taken in the 8th grade are not included on the high school transcript and do not count towards their grade 9-12 graduation requirements and grade point average.

Grade 8 students are allowed to take some high school elective classes, but do not receive high school credit for them. However, successful completion of the 1st level of a world language does serve as the prerequisite for the 2nd year of Spanish or French. It does not, however, count towards the two years of world language required by four year colleges. Most students who successfully complete Algebra I in 8th grade will move on to Honors Geometry in grade 9. The Grade 8 curriculum continues to prepare students for the MCAS assessment which occurs in the spring of the school year.

Gardner High Schools offer honors level English Language Arts, Algebra 1, Science and Social Studies to 8th graders. This allows students to be challenged in a more rigorous class to prepare them for the honors and Advanced Placement levels in high school. The high school staff is looking forward to working with students and families throughout this process in order to create a schedule that meets the individual learning needs and interests of your child, while providing an appropriately challenging high school experience.

Good student habits in grade 8 are extremely important in the successful completion of grade 8. Student behavior, attendance, and grades are crucial factors in the preparation of becoming a responsible high school student. Parents are encouraged to communicate with teachers and use PowerSchool for grade information to be well informed of their child's progress.

In order to ensure that our students are ready and prepared for high school, students who are in 8th grade who fail two or more core classes (English, Math, Science, or Social Studies) will be asked to participate in a summer program (pending funding). Meetings with parents/guardians regarding possible retention in 8th grade will also be scheduled by our guidance department and will include the principal.

Please contact the grade 8 school counselor with any questions or concerns.

MassCore
Massachusetts High School Program of Studies

English	4 Units*
Mathematics	4 Units
	Including the completion of Algebra II or completion of the integrated Math equivalent. All students are recommended to take a math course during their senior year.
Science	3 Units of lab-based science
	In June 2012, the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (BHE) revised its admissions standards to count technology/engineering coursework based on academic standards and taken for science credit as meeting the science admission requirement.
History/Social Studies	3 Units
	Including US History and World History
Foreign Language*	2 Units
	Of the same language
Physical Education	As required by law
	State law (M.G.L., c. 71, s. 3) states: "Physical education shall be taught as a required subject in all grades for all students. Health can be integrated in Physical Education, science, or taught as a stand-alone course.
The Arts**	1 Unit
Additional Core Courses	5 Units
	Business Education, Career & Technical Education (CTE), Health, Technology (e.g., computer science, desktop publishing, multimedia and web design), or any of the subjects above. Note: Most students majoring in CTE will take more than 5 units in a CTE program of study
	22 Units - Is a minimum that students should take in high school
Additional Learning Opportunities	Complete as many of the following as possible
	Advanced Placement (AP); Capstone or Senior Project; Dual Enrollment courses taken for both high school and college credit; Online courses; Service Learning; and Work-Based Learning

*A unit represents a full academic year of study or its equivalent in a subject that covers all the standards contained in a specific Curriculum Framework. **Students enrolled in a state-approved Career and Technical Education program of studies have the option of opting out of Foreign Language and Art and still fulfill MassCore. MassCore is the recommended program of study that Massachusetts high school students need in order to be better prepared for college and a career. Developed by a statewide advisory group from the K-12, higher education and business sectors, MassCore maintains flexibility for students and high schools while allowing districts to set additional graduation requirements. Courses included in MassCore should be rigorous, engaging, and based on appropriate Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks high school level standards.

COURSE CHANGES

The selection of a student's schedule is a contract to be honored both by the students and school personnel. Counselors will consider a student's ability; a student's expressed career goals, and the graduation requirements of the school. The student must also acknowledge that the courses selected represent his/her preferred choice. NO subject should be chosen with the belief that a trial basis is possible. Changes are not encouraged during the school year. Some courses are offered only during alternating years. Student enrollment is considered when determining whether a course will be offered.

The add/drop period is during the first week of the first semester, and the first week of the second semester. Any requests for changes after the add/drop period must be approved by the Principal. Once scheduling is completed, changes are made only if there is a conflict in the student's schedule, if a course is eliminated, changed, or added or if a student fails a prerequisite course. Changes in course placement are extremely rare

once the initial requests are complete. No preference changes will be allowed. Partial credit will be awarded for full year classes if a student withdraws at the end of the semester with a passing grade, with the discretion of the Principal.

Students who drop a class after attending the class for one day will receive a withdrawal leave (W) on their transcript.

MARKING SYSTEM

60 is the lowest possible passing grade

HONOR ROLL

Honor Roll status is determined by the overall average provided there are no grades below 70, I's or F's. Students must pass four academic classes to obtain honor roll status.

Average of 80 or above - Honors

Average of 85 or above - High Honors

Average of 90 or above - Principals List

ELIGIBILITY FOR ALL EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: A student must pass (grade of 60 or above) a minimum of five (5) credit-bearing classes during the marking term preceding participation in order to be eligible to participate in all extracurricular activities. Fall participation is based on final grades issued in June from the previous academic year, and students must pass a minimum of five (5) credit-bearing classes as final grades. However, summer school credits can be counted if taken as makeup or to restore credit. Term grades that are issued during an athletic season will impact eligibility during that season.

For students who are enrolled in college programs (ie. Early College Program, Gateway, Pathways, etc.) and are not enrolled in a traditional high school schedule, the following requirements must be met for eligibility for extracurricular activities. Again this applies to the marking period prior to participation. For college classes, this will be a final grade if term grades are not issued.

If a student is enrolled in three (3) credit-bearing classes per semester, they must pass (grade of 60 or above) all three (3) classes.

If a student is enrolled in four (4) credit-bearing classes per semester, they must pass a minimum of three (3) classes.

If a student is enrolled in five (5) credit-bearing classes per semester, they must pass a minimum of four (4) classes.

If a student is enrolled in six (6) credit-bearing classes per semester, they must pass a minimum of five (5) classes.

If a student is enrolled in seven (7) credit-bearing classes per semester, they must pass a minimum of five (5) classes.

The above guidelines also apply to students who have a combined schedule of high school and college classes.

NCAA

NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association): If you plan on participating in intercollegiate athletics, please register with the NCAA at www.ncaa.com. This should be done in the spring of your junior year or early fall of senior year.

GRADE POINT AVERAGE

The final grade for a course appears on the student’s transcript. The transcript is a gauge of the student’s work, effort, commitment and level of motivation. In formulating a first impression of you, employers, the military, post-secondary institutions, and scholarship committees will rely on the transcript.

The level of the courses a student chooses affects their GPA and class rank, a critical item for college admissions and scholarship awards. The higher the course is weighted, the more it will contribute to your class rank and weighted GPA. Class ranks are always a weighted rank. UE classes are not weighted and have no bearing on class rank or the weighted GPA. Transcripts **may** have both a weighted and unweighted GPA and a weighted class rank. GPA and Class Ranks are calculated at the end of the school year.

COURSE WEIGHTING:

Advanced Placement 1.3	Honors 1.15	Dual Enrollment Classes All credit bearing 1.15	College Prep 1	UE (unweighted electives Count in simple GPA but not in weighted
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Weighted GPA and class rank will be used to determine the class valedictorian and salutatorian at the end of the 4th term senior year.

VALEDICTORIAN/SALUTATORIAN

To be considered eligible for Valedictorian or Salutatorian of a graduating class, a student must attend Gardner High School for a minimum of four (4) semesters.

ART

ART 1: This is a full year beginning art class that touches on a variety of art forms and techniques. Students will acquire various artistic skills and apply these skills to develop their own creative “voice”. The Elements of Art will be explored through basic drawing, painting, printmaking and design as well as sculpture and cultural influences. A basic study of art history will give important background information and meaning to classroom projects students explore artistic possibilities.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will demonstrate creativity.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1574
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ART 2: This is a full-year course intended for motivated students as they enhance and improve their own artistic style or “voice”. Students will experience and explore new areas of study and media as they apply a more developed

skill level in the production of their artistic work. They will choose a “theme” as an underlying focus of their work to unify and give meaning to their portfolio. Students will study the art movement and their influences on the art we experience today. The students will also experience a sampling of murals, fabric design, interior design and mixed media during the course.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Art I or equivalent or written permission of instructor.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will demonstrate creativity.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1575
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ART 3: This full year course is intended for highly motivated students to prepare Art portfolios for college, advanced placement, and personal development. This class is intended for students who wish to explore and experience new areas of study and media by applying these in a creative manner as a form of personal expression and development of a unique personal style. Work from this class may also be included in the breadth section of the AP Portfolio.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Art II or equivalent or written permission of instructor.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will demonstrate creativity.

Grade: 10-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1576
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ART 4: This full year course is intended for highly motivated students to prepare portfolios for college, advanced placement, and personal development. Students will explore and experience new areas of study and media by applying these in a creative manner as a form of personal expression. Students will have the opportunity to apply acquired skills and techniques in their creation of highly imaginative artwork that demonstrates ability to solve and to “think outside the box”. Students in this class will have input as to the direction of this class and production of work.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Art III or written permission of instructor.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will demonstrate creativity.

Grade: 10-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1577
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DRAWING: Introduction to Drawing is a foundation studio elective that will expose students to basic concepts, themes and materials of drawing. Drawing will teach the elements of art and principles of design. Students will use a variety of media including pencil, pen, charcoal, ink and pastel. Students will be drawing from observation; subjects to be studied will be gesture drawing, still life, contour and perspective drawing.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will demonstrate creativity.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1586
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CERAMICS: This class is designed for students who have an interest in working with clay, and gives students experiences in making functional as well as sculptural pieces, using a variety of techniques. As a basic course the emphasis is on hand-building construction, design, aesthetics, and the creative development of clay objects examining cultural, historical and personal modes of expression. Upon completion of this course, the students should be able to perform the three hand-building techniques, glazing and firing methods, and apply design concepts in creating ceramic forms.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will demonstrate creativity.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1594
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ADVANCED CERAMICS: This is an advanced course which builds on and further explores the traditional hand-building techniques through larger size and in-depth study of organic and biomorphic form. After using the three basic hand-building techniques of pinch, coil, and slab students will choose a theme to begin to develop their own person style. Historically based projects will reinforce the deeper study of the history of art and ceramics.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Ceramics I or written permission of instructor.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will demonstrate creativity.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1595
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PAINTING: Students will focus on techniques and mechanics while painting a variety of media, including watercolor, tempera, gouache, and acrylic. Projects will be based on the elements of Art and principles of design through the use of such themes as landscape, still life, portraits, and color theory.

Basic Learning Competencies:

- Create works using organizational principles and functions to solve specific visual arts problems.
- Create artwork demonstrating a purposeful use of the elements and principles to convey meaning and emotion.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will demonstrate creativity.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1556
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DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY: In this semester course, you will use digital cameras to learn how to compose better pictures, transfer photos from your camera to a computer, crop, retouch, modify images, correct color balance, organize your photos, eliminate red eye, scan images, and make photo presentations. Students will have the opportunity to have their photographic work published in the school yearbook and local newspaper. This course provides an introduction to “Photoshop CS3”, a powerful software application that allows you to use filters, effects and layers to enhance your photos and create digital art.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will think critically, listen actively and utilize technology effectively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1597
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ADVANCED PHOTOGRAPHY: In this course, you will build upon previous experiences in Digital Photography. Hands-on activities relating to portraiture, nature photography, and natural light and flash photography will enhance your understanding of composition and exposure, which will allow you to create quality photographs. Students will have the opportunity to have their photographic work published in the school yearbook and local newspaper. This course also uses “Photoshop CS3” to enhance your photos and create digital art.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Digital Photography and/or written permission of instructor.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will think critically, listen actively and utilize technology effectively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1598
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AP DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY: This is a full year course that is designed for those who demonstrate a strong proficiency in digital photography/2-D design. The course is designed for a personal expression through eight to twelve (8-12) completed works that will contribute to the AP portfolio requirements meant to be submitted in May. During the creation period, students should understand the art process and be trying to display their creative expression and specific art style. Art works should show evidence of synthesis of materials, processes, and ideation. The final submission of your portfolio (to be submitted online) should consist of fifteen (15) detail/ process images of work, and five (5) physical works of your choosing. Upon completion and passing of this AP course the student will gain college credit. In addition to the coursework, there is summer work that needs to be completed prior to the beginning of the school year, and any student who does not complete this work may be withdrawn from the course. There is a reduced cost for students on free/reduced lunch. Many colleges offer credit to students who achieve a passing score on the AP exam.

Students who enroll in this course must take the AP exam.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will demonstrate creativity.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 5	Level: Advanced Placement	Course#: 1540
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AP STUDIO ART: This is a full year course that is designed for those who demonstrate a strong proficiency in multiple art mediums (Drawing, 3-D, and non-photography 2-D). The course is designed for a personal expression through eight to twelve (8-12) completed works that will contribute to the AP portfolio requirements meant to be submitted in May. During the creation period, students should understand the art process and be trying to display their creative expression and specific art style. Art works should show evidence of synthesis of materials, processes, and ideation. The final submission of your portfolio (to be submitted online) will consist of fifteen (15) detail/ process images of work, and five (5) physical works of your choosing. Upon completion and passing of this AP course the student will gain college credit. In addition to the coursework, there is summer work that needs to be completed prior to the beginning of the school year, and any student who does not complete this work may be withdrawn from the course. There is a reduced cost for students on free/reduced lunch. Many colleges offer credit to students who achieve a passing score on the AP exam. **Students who enroll in this course must take the AP exam.**

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will demonstrate creativity.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 5	Level: Advanced Placement	Course#: 1530
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BUSINESS

ENTREPRENEURSHIP: This interactive course provides opportunities to learn the underlying principles of starting a business. Students will learn how to identify business opportunities, how to start a business and how to profit as a business owner. Students will participate in hands-on activities centered around creating their own businesses and products throughout the course. Students will learn about the different types of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurial strategies in the process.

Grade: 10-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1917
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BUSINESS: This course provides opportunities to learn and experience a variety of topics in the field of business. Students are exposed to various economies, their roles in our economy, entrepreneurship, marketing, managing financial and technological resources, and the use of social media. There will also be a focus on personal finance and money management.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1916
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BSAD 2040: FUNDAMENTALS OF MARKETING: This course discusses the role of marketing in our economic and social structure. It includes the planning, distribution, pricing and promotion of goods and services to consumer and industrial markets in the context of internal activities of the firm and environmental forces. This is a dual credit course through Fitchburg State University. This class will be taught on the GHS campus. Students who successfully complete the course with a passing grade will earn 5 high school credits and 3 college credits through Fitchburg State.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 5	Level: Honors	Course#: 2961
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ENGLISH

ENGLISH 9: The reading content of this course will introduce the student to the works of various authors to include a survey of world and American literature. The writing component will emphasize the writing process, and students will focus primarily on argumentative/analytical as well as narrative compositions. Critical thinking skills as well as practice in responding to open-ended questions will be stressed in preparation for the MCAS. Vocabulary development and application of literary concepts will be incorporated into the literature instruction.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will read and write effectively.

Grade 9	Credits: 5	Levels: Honors College Preparatory	Course#: 1011 1012
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ENGLISH 10: This full year course focuses on the continued development of critical thinking skills through the exploration of American and world literature. Standards based curriculum units center on the preparation for the Next Generation MCAS exam. Each unit helps to develop the writing process for all types of writing including those featured on the MCAS exam such as narrative, persuasive, and analytical writing. Language and vocabulary development are embedded into each curriculum unit. This course encourages curiosity and question asking while building upon students' reading and writing skills via the literary genres of the novel, short story, essay, poetry, and drama.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will read and write effectively.

Grade 10	Credits: 5	Levels: Honors College Preparatory	Course#: 1001 1022
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ENGLISH 11: This full-year course continues to refine writing, reading and analytical skills. The course covers the analysis and critical study of representative works in American literature. Additionally, research techniques and presentation, grammar and usage, SAT preparation, media literacy, vocabulary, and various types of writing are taught and studied. A research paper will be a major component of this year of study.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will read and write effectively.

Grade 11	Credits: 5	Levels: Honors College Preparatory	Course#: 1031 1032
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ENGLISH 12: The reading content of this course will consist of classical and modern world literature in poetry and prose. The aim is to prepare students for a liberal education with a wide variety of literature in both fiction and nonfiction. The writing component will emphasize effective expression, proper spelling, usage and refinement of individual skills. Organizational and critical thinking skills will be stressed in written assignments and oral discussion of the reading. Vocabulary development, critical analysis and the application of literary concepts will be incorporated into the literature instruction.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will read and write effectively.

Grade 12	Credits: 5	Levels: Honors College Preparatory	Course#: 1041 1042
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AP ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMPOSITION: This full-year course includes both reading and analysis of complex prose from various authors and periods with emphasis on nonfiction. The study of various types of discourse and active class participation are essential elements of this course. Students will engage in various writing experiences calling for the use of different styles, tone, and syntax. Through such study and practice, students will gain an understanding of the principles of effective writing and become proficient writers themselves. Students are required to take the official AP exam at the end of the year. With successful performance in the AP exam, up to one semester of college credit in an English Composition class may be granted from accepting colleges. Summer work is a mandatory part of this course. There is a reduced cost for students on free/reduced lunch. Many colleges offer credit to students who achieve a passing score on the AP exam. **Students who enroll in this course must take the AP exam.**

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will read and write effectively.

Grade 11	Credits: 5	Levels: Advanced Placement	Course#: 1030
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AP ENGLISH LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION: This full-year English course guides the student through classics of literature, poetry, and drama, which are considered the foundational basis of a liberal education. The student is taught in-depth close reading and critical analysis, not as an end in itself but as a useful tool in the study of the literature of life. Students are encouraged to expand their thinking processes with continued curiosity and question asking in the classroom. Students are expected to take an active and reflective role in class discussion of literature. As the students' literary and critical faculties are more clearly defined, they are encouraged to polish and refine their own style of writing.

Students are required to take the official AP exam at the end of the year. With successful performance on the AP exam, up to one semester of college credit in an English Composition class may be granted from accepting colleges. There is a reduced cost for students on free/reduced lunch. Summer work is a mandatory part of this course.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will read and write effectively at an advanced level of study.

Grade 11-12	Credits: 5	Levels: Advanced Placement	Course#: 1040
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HORROR AND FICTION: This course explores the fiction of the fantastic, the magical, the supernatural, and the horrific, including vampires, zombies, werewolves, and other frightening creatures. It also explores what it is about horror and fear that we are so drawn to, and how creators of horror play on our fears about the world and ourselves in order to make us think about important issues.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will read and write effectively.

Grade 8-12	Credits: 2.5	Levels: College Preparatory	Course#: 1054
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MYTHOLOGY: This semester course will focus on examining the gods, heroes and monsters of Greek mythology. Using both classic and modern stories, we will learn about the Olympians and investigate themes such as explaining natural phenomena, the quests and struggles of both immortals and mortals, and the role of fate. The course is designed for anyone who would like an introduction to Greek mythology and a look at its lasting influence.

Grade 8-9	Credits: 2.5	Levels: College Preparatory	Course#: 1055
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SPORTS WRITING: The sports world features diverse personalities, distinct narratives and intersects with numerous other disciplines. This semester-long course explores the world of sports through media. Students will use sports as the vehicle to discuss and explore these narratives through print, digital and social media.

Grade: 8-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1074
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HEALTH & WELLNESS

WELLNESS: This introductory course will focus on major life choices teens have to make concerning health care, disease prevention and health promotion. Students will learn and practice the skills needed to maintain or improve physical, mental and social wellbeing now and in the future. Topics will include health care, foundation of a healthy life, mental and emotional health, stress management, self-defense, drug and alcohol awareness, communicating needs, healthy relationships, safe dating and reproductive health.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1754
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LIFE MANAGEMENT: This course, designed for students in grades 10-12, will help develop the skills youth need to manage their lives after high school. Based on national health standards, students will learn and practice the health life skills of accessing health information, advocating for the needs of self and others, making healthy decisions and self-care. Topics will include first aid and CPR, the health care system, nutrition basics, food safety, prep and cooking, simple sewing techniques, drug and alcohol use, and personal care focusing on skin, dental and reproductive health. This is a project based, hands-on course that will require daily participation in classes.

Grade: 10-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1796
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DANCE: This semester's course is designed to keep the body moving. Students will explore many dances including ballet, jazz, folk dances and many different modern routines. Students will be encouraged to choreograph and teach to the rest of the class, participate in others' routines, with the goal that we keep moving each day. This course is open to all levels of dance from beginner to advanced. This class can be used as a Unified Art credit.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically. Students will work collaboratively and improve communication skills.

Grade: 8-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1548
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UNIFIED PE: This course brings together students with and without disabilities for physical activities and sports, with the goal of enhancing the physical, intellectual and social growth of all. This class focuses on increasing physical fitness and sport-specific skills, rules, and strategies, as well as reinforcing positive habits and reasoning to make better health and lifestyle choices.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically. Students will work collaboratively and improve communication skills.

Grade: 8-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1874
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OUTDOOR ADVENTURES is a fun and exciting elective course that covers physical education requirements. Students are taught lifelong skills through the integration of physical education, science, wildlife conservation, art and critical thinking. The focus is on being outdoors, participating in activities such as: challenge skills, hiking, plant identification, survival techniques, tracking, camping, trip planning and fort building. This class is designed to change young people's lives forever by exposing them to the Great Outdoors and its many physical and social opportunities.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically. Students will work collaboratively and improve communication skills.

Grade: 8-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1756
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TEAM SPORT: Will cover a Physical Education requirement and will include instruction of skills and active participation in a variety of sports and physical activities. Some of the sports and activities offered in this course will include: basketball, volleyball, pickleball, badminton, soccer, capture the flag, speedball, futsal, flag football, and a variety of other team centered games. This is a participation course that promotes respect, healthy competition, sportsmanship and cooperation. Emphasis is also placed on the physical performance of learned skills and various approaches to the game.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically. Students will work collaboratively and improve communication skills.

Grade: 8-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1757
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FARM TO TABLE: OUR FOOD SYSTEMS: In this course students will integrate the sustainable agricultural practices of farmers who grow our food and the people who prepare and consume it. Students will learn about supporting local economies, promoting biodiversity, encouraging sustainable farming practices, reducing the carbon footprint, and improving food quality and nutrition. In this class, students will work directly with local agencies and farmers while learning about the food to table social movement which promotes serving locally grown food directly from its origin to consumers.

Grade: 8-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1766
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MATHEMATICS

ALGEBRA 1: This course begins with a review of pre-algebra skills such as using variables, exponents, the order of operations, and tables & graphs. The remainder of the course will focus on operations with equations, inequalities, lines, and functions. It will also provide the opportunity for students to use data to find and display measures of central tendencies. Students studying at the college prep level will work at grade level pace, with an emphasis on the application of skills and justification of the steps in the problem solving process. They will investigate topics in depth with emphasis on critical thinking skills and applied problem-solving. Assessments are designed to evaluate students' ability to synthesize information according to Bloom's taxonomy.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1127
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GEOMETRY: This course begins with a brief review of algebra skills: such as solving equations, polynomials, and factoring. The remainder of the course is devoted entirely to geometry. Aspects of geometry that will be explored include: inductive and deductive reasoning with simple proof statements, lines, angles, polygons, circles, solids, congruence and similarity. Students studying at the honors level will work at an accelerated pace. They will investigate topics in depth with emphasis on critical thinking skills and applied problem-solving. Assessments are designed to evaluate students' ability to synthesize information according to Bloom's taxonomy. *Prerequisite: Successful completion of Algebra I*
Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 10-12	Credits: 5 Credits:10 w/Enrichment	Level: Honors College Preparatory	Course#: 1129 1172
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MATH ENRICHMENT: This course is taken in combination with Geometry to support a student's understanding of concepts covered. This course will not count towards Math credit required for graduation.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Level: Unweighted	Course#: 1174
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ALGEBRA 2: This course begins with a review of Algebra I skills such as solving and graphing equations and inequalities. The remainder of the course will focus on graphing linear, quadratic and absolute value functions, operations containing matrices, complex numbers, counting principles, and arithmetic and geometric series. Students studying at the honors level will work at an accelerated pace. They will investigate topics in depth with emphasis on critical thinking skills and applied problem-solving. Assessments are designed to evaluate students' ability to synthesize information according to Bloom's taxonomy.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Algebra I

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 10-12	Credits: 5	Level: Honors College Preparatory	Course#: 1191 1132
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ADVANCED ALGEBRA AND TRIGONOMETRY: This year long course is algebra based, with an emphasis on rational and radical functions and trigonometry. The course is designed for students whose background is not yet strong enough for pre-calculus, but intend to go on to college. There will be some SAT and ACT preparation before the exams in the fall.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Algebra II

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1162
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HONORS PRE-CALCULUS: Students successful in this course will be prepared for either calculus or Advanced Placement Calculus. Students are exposed to familiar Algebra II topics, at a deeper level. New topics are also included, such as difference quotients, graphing various functions by hand, and trigonometry. Students studying at the honors level will work at an accelerated pace, and more emphasis will be placed on graphing. Extensive use is made of the TI-83+ or the TI-84 graphing calculators. It is strongly recommended that the students have one of these calculators.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Algebra II

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 5	Level: Honors	Course#: 1151
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AP CALCULUS AB: This is a complete full-year course in differential and integral calculus. Extensive use is made of the TI-84 graphing calculators. It is strongly recommended that the students have one of these calculators. The course is comparable to many college courses. Summer work is a mandatory part of this course.

There is a reduced cost for students on free/reduced lunch. Many colleges offer credit to students who achieve a passing score on the AP exam. **Students who enroll in this course must take the AP exam.**

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Pre-Calculus

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 12	Credits: 5	Level: Advanced Placement	Course#: 1160
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AP CALCULUS BC: This is a complete full-year course in differential and integral calculus that is the equivalent of two semesters of college calculus. Topics include all content covered in AP Calculus AB plus: integration by parts, infinite series convergence and Taylor series, vector and polar functions, and limits of indeterminate forms. Extensive use is made of the TI-84 graphing calculators. It is strongly recommended that the students have one of these calculators. Summer work is a mandatory part of this course.

*There is a reduced cost for students on free/reduced lunch. Many colleges offer credit to students who achieve a passing score on the AP exam. **Students who enroll in this course must take the AP exam.**

Prerequisite: Successful completion of AP Calculus AB.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 5	Level: Advanced Placement	Course#: 1170
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AP STATISTICS: This advanced placement course in Statistics will cover the syllabus from the College Board. The purpose is to introduce students to the major concepts and tools for collecting, analyzing and drawing conclusions from the data. Students are exposed to four broad conceptual themes: Exploring Data, Sampling and Experimentations, Anticipating Patterns, and Statistical Inference. Students are required to take the official AP exam at the end of the year. Summer work is a mandatory part of this course.

There is a reduced cost for students on free/reduced lunch. Many colleges offer credit to students who achieve a passing score on the AP exam. **Students who enroll in this course must take the AP exam.**
Prerequisite: Successful completion of Algebra II

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 5	Level: Advanced Placement	Course#: 1150
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STATISTICS AND PROBABILITY: This course introduces basic statistical topics with real world mathematical applications. Statistical topics will include analysis of one and two variable data, study and experimental design, and analysis of data. Topics in personal finance will reinforce the general math topics (such as arithmetic, using rational numbers, measurement, ratio, and proportion) and applying these skills to consumer problems and situations. Applications may include budgeting, taxation, credit, banking services, insurance, buying and selling products and services, personal income and investment.

In this course students will be introduced to the basic concepts and logic of statistical reasoning and students will have an introductory-level practical ability to choose, generate, and properly interpret appropriate descriptive and inferential methods. This course introduces basic statistical topics with real world mathematical applications. Statistical topics will include analysis of one and two variable data, study and experimental design, and analysis of data.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1152
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MATH MODELING: This course is an introduction to mathematical modeling using graphical, numerical, symbolic, and verbal techniques to describe and explore real-world data phenomena. It is designed to prepare students to pass the 092 college math course at Mount Wachusett Community College. Emphasis is on the use of elementary functions to investigate and analyze applied problems and questions, supported by the use of appropriate technology, and on effective communications of quantitative concepts and results. Students who successfully complete this course and the final exam will receive a certificate of course completion and will be eligible for college level placement in math at MWCC.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 12	Credits: 5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1194
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TOPICS IN MATH: This course explores a number of important ideas and practical applications in contemporary mathematics. Required topics include: problem solving strategies; measurement and the metric system; set theory; equations and inequalities; graphing and linear functions: consumer applications such as interest, annuities and present value; and basic statistics. Teachers will select one or two additional topics (as time permits), such as, history of math, voting and apportionment, logic, probability, or geometry.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1177
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PERFORMING ARTS

CHORUS: Chorus provides an opportunity for interested students to sign music in a large mixed choir (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass) from a variety of styles including classical and contemporary. Students will be introduced to proper vocal tone productions and the fundamentals of singing. They will become more proficient in sight-reading as they are exposed to many different musical works throughout the course. Performances will include in school and outside-of school concerts, competitions, festivals, and community events. Students may take chorus for more than one year. *Prerequisite: Reasonable competency at singing, reading music, and previous experience in a school choral program, or enrollment approval by the GHS Choral Director.*

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will demonstrate creativity.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1506
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BAND: This is the largest instrumental ensemble at Gardner High School. The class does not require an audition and every student who plays a standard band instrument is expected to participate. Students will begin the year with the focus on Marching Band and transition to Symphonic Band during the second quarter. Students will be exposed to a variety of musical pieces and will be instructed on correct performance practices for each style. Performances will include in and out-of-school concerts, competitions, festivals, and community events. In addition, students may be required to attend summer rehearsals, band camp, and other out-of-school rehearsals during the Marching Band portion of the class. Students may take band for more than one year.

Prerequisite: Reasonable competency at singing, reading music, and previous experience in a school choral program, or enrollment approval by the GHS Choral Director.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will demonstrate creativity.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1505
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COLORGUARD (Fall Semester Only): This is a half-year performance-based class that will be offered during the 1st semester and will meet during the same period as the band. Students enrolled in this class will perform with the Gardner High School Wildcat Marching Band. Performances will include in and out-of-school events such as marching band shows, parades, Fall Concert, Winter Concert, football games and pep rallies. There is no prerequisite, however, students will be expected to commit to the full Marching Band schedule and attend summer rehearsals, band camp, and other out-of-school rehearsals with the color guard instructors. Students will learn the proper use of color guard equipment, rehearsal performance technique, basic dance movements and marching technique.

When the fall marching band season is complete halfway through the 2nd quarter students will work on individual technique with various types of color guard equipment and will work on a group performance project that will be featured as part of the Winter Concert. Students may take color guard more than once.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will demonstrate creativity.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1504
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GUITAR: This half year course is designed for all levels of abilities from beginners to advanced players. The curriculum will be designed to challenge the students at the level of ability they have at the beginning of the semester. More advanced players will serve as mentors to beginner players. Individual students will develop goals for improvement and work on repertoire that challenges their current level.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will demonstrate creativity.

Grade: 8-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1547
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PIANO: This half-year class is designed for students who have little to no experience playing the piano or reading music. Topics covered include reading music, piano keyboard technique, scales, and basic chords that can be used for harmonization. By the end of the course students will be able to play basic melodies with simple accompaniments in several keys. There is no prerequisite for this class; however, it is not appropriate for students who have taken private lessons or those who are already proficient pianists.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will demonstrate creativity

Grade: 8-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1545
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MUSIC TECHNOLOGY: This course is designed for student musicians to explore and create music through technology-based experiences. Students will use computer and tablet music notation, composition, and creation applications to develop musicianship in a 21st century environment. Creativity, experimentation, and collaboration will be a major focus of this course, and students will be expected to learn and work independently by taking initiative to try new things to grow as musicians.

Prerequisite: It is recommended that students taking this course have some type of musical background.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will demonstrate creativity.

Grade: 8-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1554
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HISTORY OF ROCK AND ROLL: This half year class begins with the history of how Rock music began in the early 1900's with its Blues roots and moves through Country music, Doo-Wop, and many styles of rock through the mid 1960's. We will discover the music of Elvis, Buddy Holly, Motown, the Beach Boys, the Beatles and many other rock legends.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will demonstrate creativity.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1546
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DANCE: This semester's course is designed to keep the body moving. Students will explore many dances including ballet, jazz, folk dances and many different modern routines. Students will be encouraged to choreograph and teach to the rest of the class, participate in others' routines, with the goal that we keep moving each day. This course is open to all levels of dance from beginner to advanced. This class can be used as either an Art or PE credit.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will demonstrate creativity.

Grade: 8-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1548
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DRAMA/THEATER: This is an elective course that focuses on basic acting techniques, interpreting dramatic literature, games, improvisation, pantomime, monolog, and script adaptations with performance. Students will develop vocal, physical and emotional control through analytical, creative and team building activities, as well as develop group and self-assessment skills to improve performance. Students will also be able to connect literature from a variety of cultures and historical time periods to develop 21st century perspective on theater and its connection to daily life to promote success after high school graduation. Reading, writing, rehearsing and memorizing are vital to success in this course. This class is interactive and energetic.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will read and write effectively.

Grade: 8-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1544
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AP MUSIC: This class is designed for students who want to learn about advanced music theory. Students will develop a working knowledge and understanding of music analysis and composition. Topics in this class will be related to the Advanced Placement Music Theory exam. That is given at the end of the school year in May. Students in this course who are currently enrolled in musical ensembles such as band or chorus will also gain a better understanding of the music they perform on a daily basis. Summer work is a mandatory part of this course. There is a reduced cost for students on free/reduced lunch. Many colleges offer credit to students who achieve a passing score on the AP exam. Students who enroll in this course must take the AP exam.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 5	Level: Advanced Placement	Course#: 1510
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SCIENCE

LIFE SCIENCE: This introduction to high school life science class will prepare students for 10th Grade CP Biology and the Biology MCAS exam.. Through this course, students will participate in lab activities that will reinforce essential science practices for future science classes. Topics include the interaction of organisms within their physical environment as well as with other organisms, the principles of inheritance and genetic variation, the principles of natural selection and evolution, and human body systems.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will work collaboratively, problem solve critically, and communicate effectively.

Grade: 9	Credits: 5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1202
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BIOLOGY: This course is geared towards preparing students for the Biology MCAS exam. Concepts will be introduced through lectures, discussions, activities, and will be reinforced through weekly laboratories. Topics in cellularity, biochemistry, genetics, evolution, body systems, diversity of life, and ecology are explored in the laboratory and the classroom. The same concepts taught in Honors Biology are taught in College Preparatory Biology, but in greater detail.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will work collaboratively, problem solve critically, and communicate effectively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Level: Honors College Preparatory	Course#: 1211 1212
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CHEMISTRY: This course is a developmentally appropriate, hands-on laboratory based program in which the basic chemical principles and skills students will need for college will be pursued. A variety of problem-solving techniques, laboratory activities, model building, and demonstrations are major components of this course. Both Honors Chemistry and College Preparatory Chemistry use algebraic principles throughout the course. College Preparatory Chemistry does so to a lesser extent.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will work collaboratively, problem solve critically, and communicate effectively.

Grade: 10-12	Credits: 5	Level: Honors College Preparatory	Course#: 1221 1222
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PHYSICS: This course will give students a solid understanding of the concepts in Classical Physics. The course covers topics such as Newtonian Mechanics, Thermal Physics, Waves, Electricity and Magnetism. The curriculum is designed as a thorough introduction to Physics and prepares students who are interested in medical fields, engineering and physical science. It is very mathematics intensive. It is recommended that students have completed Algebra II and be concurrently taking H. Precalculus.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will work collaboratively, problem solve critically, and communicate effectively.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 5	Level: Honors College Preparatory	Course#: 1231 1232
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ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE: This is a full-year laboratory course that will focus on present-day problems in the environment. The study of energy flow, population dynamics, biodiversity, air and water pollution and toxic waste is explored. An emphasis will be placed on collection field data and we will use current technologies to support and analyze the data. The same concepts taught in Honors Environmental Science are taught in Environment Science, but in greater detail.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will work collaboratively, problem solve critically, and communicate effectively.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 5	Level: Honors College Preparatory	Course#: 1271 1272
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ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY: This course is geared toward students interested in pursuing careers related to various fields in medicine, physical therapy, or sports medicine or for those interested in a more in-depth examination of the human body, which includes the study of the ten systems of the human body. Laboratory cats are dissected and serve as models of human anatomy and physiology. Demonstrations and laboratory experiments exemplify basic anatomy as well as physiological principles. Research papers and presentations integrate student learning to real life diseases and disorders. Interactive computer activities are conducted using Vernier, Physioex, and Interactive Physiology software. The same concepts taught in Honors Anatomy and Physiology are taught in College Preparatory Anatomy and Physiology, but in greater detail. Participation in dissections is mandatory.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will work collaboratively, problem solve critically, and communicate effectively.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 5	Level: Honors College Preparatory	Course#: 1261 & 1262
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TECHNOLOGY/ENGINEERING: Students who are highly motivated, work well independently, are interested in high-tech careers and enjoy hands-on learning experiences should consider taking Technology/Engineering. This course encourages students to pursue global engineering questions and technological solutions that emphasizes research and problem solving using mathematical and scientific concepts. Students achieve a more advanced level of skill in engineering design by conceptualizing a game and building a game board. The game will be played with machines designed and built by students. The machines will be designed to apply all of the areas of study within the area of Technology Engineering. Students will learn how to solve the problem they've conceptualized by developing possible solutions, designing and building prototypes or models, and making modifications if necessary. Students will explore engineering design, construction technologies, energy and power technologies including fluid systems, thermal systems, electrical systems, and communication and manufacturing technologies. Technology Engineering is designed to fully immerse the student in higher level problem solving activities that will require detailed lab reports that will include the following: proper research citations, orthographic drawings, test and evaluation analysis and redesign of the prototype. This class can be used toward science graduation requirements.

This class can be used toward science graduation requirements.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will work collaboratively, problem solve critically, and communicate effectively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1452
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BIOTECHNOLOGY: This full year biotechnology course provides students with dynamic and engaging exploration of the cutting-edge technologies shaping our world. Focusing on the scientific innovations that impact health, medicine, and society, students will investigate critical topics such as health equity, disease treatments, and recent scientific breakthroughs. Through hands-on experiments, case studies, and project-based learning, students will develop a deep understanding of biotechnology's role in advancing healthcare and addressing global challenges.

By the end of the course, students will not only gain a solid foundation in biotechnology but also develop the critical thinking and problem solving skills necessary to contribute to the future of science and technology. This course prepares students for further study in biotechnology, medicine, and related fields, while fostering an awareness of the ethical, societal, and global implications of biotechnology advancements.

Grade: 10-12	Credits: 5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1456
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AP BIOLOGY: AP Biology is designed for students who wish a vigorous extension of their biological knowledge and a deeper understanding of science as a process. The course will be taught to meet the standards of the College Board AP Biology Curriculum. The content of this course will involve 8 units of study, Chemistry of Life; Cell Structure and Function; Cellular Energetics; Cell Communication and Cell Cycle; Heredity; Gene Expression and Regulation; Natural Selection; and Ecology. Use of College Board AP Classroom, Case Studies, POGILs, website videos, and laboratory experimentation and design will be a vital part of the course.

There is a reduced cost for students on free/reduced lunch. Many colleges offer credit to students who achieve a passing score on the AP exam. **Students who enroll in this course must take the AP exam.**

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will work collaboratively, problem solve critically, and communicate effectively.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 5	Level: Advanced Placement	Course#: 1250
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AP CHEMISTRY: This AP Chemistry course is designed for students who wish to attain a depth of understanding of the fundamentals of chemistry. The course will be taught to meet the standards of the National AP Chemistry Curriculum. Topics covered will include kinetics, equilibrium, thermodynamics, and electrochemistry with a review of atomic theory, kinetic molecular theory, bonding and stoichiometry. The course places emphasis upon critical quantitative thinking and lab work. **Summer work is a mandatory part of this course.**

There is a reduced cost for students on free/reduced lunch. Many colleges offer credit to students who achieve a passing score on the AP exam. **Students who enroll in this course must take the AP exam.**

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will work collaboratively, problem solve critically, and communicate effectively.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 5	Level: Advanced Placement	Course#: 1290
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AP ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE: The Advanced Placement Environmental Science course is an interdisciplinary examination of the natural world. The goal of the course is to provide an understanding of the interrelationships among the various systems of the earth. Additionally, the course examines human impact of environmental changes to air, land, and water quality, biodiversity, and climate change. Students are challenged to evaluate and create solutions to the imbalance of natural resources necessary to maintain a sustainable planet for an exponentially growing global population from both a technological and political perspective. Students enrolled in the course will take the Advanced Placement Environmental Science exam. Summer work is a mandatory part of this course. There is a reduced cost for students on free/reduced lunch. Many colleges offer credit to students who achieve a passing score on the AP exam. **Students who enroll in this course must take the AP exam.**

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will work collaboratively, problem solve critically, and communicate effectively.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 5	Level: Advanced Placement	Course#: 1270
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AP PHYSICS II: This full-year course is equivalent to a second-semester college course in algebra-based physics. The course covers fluid mechanics, thermodynamics, electricity and magnetism, optics, and atomic and nuclear physics. 25% of instructional time is devoted to inquiry-based laboratory investigations that foster student engagement in the practice of science through experimenting, analyzing, making conjectures and arguments, and solving problems in a collaborative setting, where students direct and monitor their progress. Students who enrolled in this course must take the AP Physics 2 exam in May. Students should have successfully completed first-year introductory physics. Students should also have taken or be concurrently taking honors pre-calculus. Highly capable and motivated students could take Honors Physics and AP physics 2 simultaneously if getting permission from the instructor.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically

Grade: 12	Credits: 5	Level: Advanced Placement	Course#: 1260
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SCIENCE OF NATURAL DISASTERS: The ‘Science of Disasters’ course comprehensively explored the scientific foundations of a range of different extreme events. These encompassed earthquakes, hurricanes, tropical storms, flooding, tornadoes, wildfires, hazardous materials incidents, technological disasters, radiological incidents, and more. Students will gain a profound understanding of each disaster's mechanics, implications, and strategic responses.

Expectation for Student Learning: Students will work collaboratively, problem solve critically, and communicate effectively.

Grade:8-9	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1203
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MARINE BIOLOGY: Students will learn about the physical structure and chemistry of the ocean, the diversity of ocean life, marine ecology, and the scope and impact of human interactions with the oceans.

Prerequisite: Passing grade in Biology

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will work collaboratively, problem solve critically, and communicate effectively.

Grade: 10-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1205
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ASTRONOMY: This introductory Astronomy course explores the basics of celestial bodies and phenomena, such as planets, moons, stars, and galaxies and technology in space.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will work collaboratively, problem solve critically, and communicate effectively.

Grade: 8-9	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1204
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BOTANY: This course is the scientific study of plants and their relationship to the environment. Students will investigate the growth, reproduction, anatomy, morphology, physiology, biochemistry, taxonomy, genetics, and ecology of plants. Laboratory and outdoor experiences complement classroom activities.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will work collaboratively, problem solve critically, and communicate effectively.

Grade: 10-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1263
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FORENSICS: Forensic science is the application of science to law. This lab based course involves all areas of Science including: Biology, Anatomy, Chemistry, and Physics. There is an emphasis on complex reasoning and critical thinking. Topics will include: the basics of Forensic Science, crime scene analysis and reconstruction, impressions, prints (finger, lip and ear), blood splatter and typing entomology, teeth and toxicology. Due to the nature of the material, a certain level of maturity is required, as well as the ability to work in a safe manner.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will work collaboratively, problem solve critically, and communicate effectively.

Grade: 11-12 10th with approval	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1257
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SOCIAL STUDIES

MODERN WORLD HISTORY: The aim of this survey course is to provide a comprehensive study of the development of World History from the French Revolution (c. 1789) to the present day. All topics are aligned with the Massachusetts History and Social Sciences Curriculum Frameworks. Students are required to do essays and a research paper. A variety of assessments are used.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Level: Honors College Preparatory	Course#: 1311 1312
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AP HUMAN GEOGRAPHY: The purpose of this freshman full-year college-level course is to introduce students to the systematic study of patterns and processes that have shaped human understanding, use, and alteration of Earth's surface. Students learn to employ spatial concepts and landscape analysis to examine human socio economic organization and its environmental consequences. They also learn about the methods and tools geographers use in their research and applications, comprehensive survey of human geographical patterns, throughout history. Students are required to complete an extensive summer reading assignment, read nightly, write intensively, analyze primary source documents, actively participate in class, and will take the **AP Human Geography exam. Students should be prepared to spend at least an hour every night completing these requirements. This course will cover various topics within the Massachusetts History and Social Science Frameworks. Students interested in taking this course should be prepared to devote a great deal of time toward achieving success. Self-motivation is essential.

This course can be used to meet the World History requirement.

There is a reduced cost for students on free/reduced lunch. Many colleges offer credit to students who achieve a passing score on the AP exam. **Students who enroll in this course must take the AP exam.**

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 9	Credits: 5	Level: Advanced Placement	Course#: 1310
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UNITED STATES HISTORY 1: In year one of this two-year unified course, students will examine the historical and intellectual development during the Revolutionary and Constitutional era. In addition, industrialization, westward expansion, slavery, and the Civil War will be topics of focus. Students will study the social, political, intellectual, religious, and technological development of the United States through the Progressive Era and World War I. Students will study the global relations of the United States and other nations. All topics are aligned with the Massachusetts History and Social Sciences Curriculum Frameworks.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 10-12	Credits: 5	Level: Honors College Preparatory	Course#: 1321 1322
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UNITED STATES HISTORY 2: In the second year of the two-year unified course, students will analyze the causes and consequences of the Great Depression with a focus on principles of economics. Students will study the goals and accomplishments of the New Deal. Students will analyze the causes and contributing factors that led America into the Modern World stage through historical events of WWII, the Cold War, Vietnam, Civil Rights through September 11, 2001. Students will understand the relationship of the United States in recent events, trends, and beliefs that shape modern America. All topics are aligned with the current Massachusetts History and Social Sciences Curriculum Frameworks.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 10	Credits: 5	Level: Honors College Preparatory	Course#: 1331 1332
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AP UNITED STATES HISTORY: The purpose of this demanding college-level course is to provide a comprehensive survey of United States history from the arrival of the first Americans via the land bridge through the present. Students are required to complete an extensive summer reading assignment, read nightly, analyze primary source documents, write intensively, and will take the **United States AP exam. Students should be prepared to spend up to two hours per night completing these requirements. This course will cover topics listed in the Massachusetts History and Social Sciences Frameworks. Students interested in taking this course should be prepared to devote a great deal of time toward achieving success. Self-motivation is essential. All topics are aligned with the current Massachusetts History and Social Sciences Curriculum Frameworks. This course will take place during two periods each day throughout the year. Summer work is a mandatory part of this course.

There is a reduced cost for students on free/reduced lunch. Many colleges offer credit to students who achieve a passing score on the AP exam. **Students who enroll in this course must take the AP exam.**

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 11	Credits: 10	Level: Advanced Placement	Course#: 1330
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AP GOVERNMENT: The purpose of this full-year college-level course for seniors is to examine and evaluate the theories, organization, politics and policy concerns of the American government, with primary focus on the federal government. It is aligned with the Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Frameworks. Emphasis will be placed on written and oral communication; collection, organization, and analysis of data; problem-solving; and cooperative group work. The course will also prepare students to take the **AP U.S. Government & Politics exam. Students interested in this offering should be prepared to devote a great deal of time to the work of this course, and to active classroom participation. Self-motivation is essential.

There is a reduced cost for students on free/reduced lunch. Many colleges offer credit to students who achieve a passing score on the AP exam. **Students who enroll in this course must take the AP exam.**

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 12	Credits: 5	Level: Advanced Placement	Course#: 1340
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AP MODERN WORLD HISTORY: In this sophomore full-year college-level course, students will explore key themes of world history, including interaction with the environment, cultures, state-building, economic systems, and social structures from approximately 1200 C.E. to the present. Students will learn to apply historical thinking skills including the ability to craft arguments from evidence; describe, analyze and evaluate events from a chronological perspective; compare and contextualize historical developments; and analyze evidence, reasoning and context to construct and understand historical interpretations. Students are required to complete an extensive summer reading assignment, read nightly, write intensively, analyze primary source documents, actively participate in class, and will take the **AP World History exam. Students should be prepared to spend at least an hour every night completing these requirements. This course will cover various topics within the Massachusetts History and Social Studies Sciences Frameworks. Students interested in taking this course should be prepared to devote a great deal of time toward achieving success. Self-motivation is essential. Summer work is a mandatory part of this course.

There is a reduced cost for students on free/reduced lunch. Many colleges offer credit to students who achieve a passing score on the AP exam. Students who enroll in this course must take the AP exam.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically

Grade: 10	Credits: 5	Level: Advanced Placement	Course#: 1350
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CRIMINAL PSYCHOLOGY: This very interactive course studies criminal behavior. Criminal psychology is the study of the wills, thoughts, intentions, and reactions of criminals. The study goes into the criminal mind by researching and studying some of the most infamous cases in criminal history. Students apply their knowledge of psychology and sociology towards a theoretical solution for criminal behavior. Students learn to apply terminology of law, criminology and psychology to discuss and debate the principles of criminal activity and society's reaction through the criminal justice system.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 11-12 10th with approval	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1375
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PSYCHOLOGY: This course will examine the psychological, biological and societal influences on human behavior in modern day society. The topics will include: the brain, perception, states of consciousness, human development, mental disorders and conventional/alternative therapies. The emphasis will be placed on hands-on learning through projects, small group discussion, role-plays and presentations. This course will prove useful to students seeking a career in the helping fields such as: nursing, teaching, counseling, physical therapy, animal science and medicine.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1377
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SOCIOLOGY: In Introduction to Sociology students will examine the ways in which the environment and social institutions such as government, schools, family, socioeconomic status, and church affects a person's social development and socialization. The study of social behavior in interpersonal relationships, groups and the community will also be explored. Several instructional strategies, including: lecture, discussion and debate, guest speakers, and video will be utilized.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1378
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MILITARY HISTORY: This course is designed to educate students about significant developments in the history of human armed conflict. Emphasis will be placed on significant battles, the evolution of weaponry and tactics, and military leadership. Students selecting this course must be willing to participate in class discussion and debate, conduct research relating to military history, and take related notes. A multiplicity of teaching strategies will be employed including lectures, text, class discussion and debate, case studies, videos, websites, guest speakers and media information.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1376
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HISTORY OF FILM: The first talking films graced the big screen in the 1920's. Since then, it has become a classic American pastime. Movies are a great way to connect our lives to the lives of factual or fictional characters. Films can vary drastically, while some may carry a lighthearted message others may portray a more tragic narrative. This elective dives into films that guide students through major historical events and themes of the 20th century. Topics will be paired with Massachusetts History and Social Sciences Curriculum Frameworks in order to help develop context surrounding the film. Students will learn to evaluate the accuracy of films through a variety of assessment methods. Bring your own popcorn!

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1374
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INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY: This course provides an introduction to philosophical thought which looks at questions regarding human nature and the world around us. Students will learn how to discuss, analyze, clarify and create arguments that will help them to be successful in an academic context.

Grade: 8-10	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1353
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PHILOSOPHY & ETHICS: This course provides an introduction to philosophical thought which looks at questions regarding human nature and the world around us. Students will explore the major philosophical schools of thought which include Logic and Reason, Aesthetics, Epistemology, Ethics, Metaphysics, and Existentialism and investigate how great philosophers have addressed these throughout history. Students will learn how to discuss, analyze, clarify and create arguments that will help them to be successful in an academic context.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1354
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HISTORY OF HIP HOP & RAP: This half year class begins with a look at the historical roots of the genre, the cultural differences between different styles (East v West, NYC, "Gangster Rap" v Native Tongues, etc) as well as the "reasons"/inspirations behind songs, and influences on modern day. We will be looking at the music of artists such as Grandmaster Flash, Tupac Shakur, Notorious BIG, Public Enemy, Outkast, Run D.M.C, Beastie Boys, Ice Cube, Ice T, Missy Elliot, Nas, Jay-Z, Wu-Tang Clan, Eminem, Kendrick Lamar, and many more. Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 8-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1352
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MODERN HISTORY THROUGH POPULAR CULTURE: This half year class will use popular culture (music, movies, television, literature, video games) as a lens to interpret events in modern history starting in the 1970s and working our way to the present day. Expectations for Student Learning: Students will problem solve effectively and think critically.

Grade: 8-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1385
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TECHNOLOGY/ENGINEERING

TECHNOLOGY/ENGINEERING: Students who are highly motivated, work well independently, are interested in high-tech careers and enjoy hands-on learning experiences should consider taking Technology/Engineering. This course encourages students to pursue global engineering questions and technological solutions that emphasizes research and problem solving using mathematical and scientific concepts. Students achieve a more advanced level of skill in engineering design by conceptualizing a game and building a game board. The game will be played with machines designed and built by students. The machines will be designed to apply all of the areas of study within the area of Technology Engineering. Students will learn how to solve the problem they've conceptualized by developing possible solutions, designing and building prototypes or models, and making modifications if necessary. Students will explore engineering design, construction technologies, energy and power technologies including fluid systems, thermal systems, electrical systems, and communication and manufacturing technologies. Technology Engineering is designed to fully immerse the student in higher level problem solving activities that will require detailed lab reports that will include the following: proper research citations, orthographic drawings, test and evaluation analysis and redesign of the prototype. This class can be used toward science graduation requirements. *This class can be used toward science graduation requirements.*

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will think critically, listen actively and utilize technology effectively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1452
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HONORS ENGINEERING & TECHNOLOGY: This full-year Honors Level Engineering & Technology course is beneficial to any student interested in careers related to engineering, physical sciences, mechanics, transportation, technological fields, or any aspect of manufacturing. The principles of Honors Engineering & Technology review seven major topic areas: Forces, Work, Rate, Resistance, Energy, Power, and Force Transformers. In each of the seven major topic areas, students will study and gain a practical understanding of mechanical, fluid, electrical, and thermal systems as they relate to each topic area. This course has a heavy emphasis on application. Students will be engaged in creative lab activities through the course.

Grade: 10-12	Credits: 5	Level: Honors	Course#: 1451
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MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY: The purpose of this class is to introduce students to theory and operations of manufacturing including manufacturing processes and equipment overview, manufacturing design, production process and flow, materials, machine operations and logistics. Students will learn concepts of production monitoring and control processes. Students will also earn their OSHA Safety Certification and other industry recognized manufacturing credentials for preparation for future employment in the manufacturing field.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1437
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INTRODUCTION TO WOODWORKING: This is an introductory course in woodworking technology. It includes the following: safety in the shop, drawing and planning a project. This course teaches the fundamentals of woodworking. You'll learn how to safely operate all shop machines and the proper use of hand and portable power tools. Emphasis will be placed on the designing, planning and selection phases used to construct a quality wood product. Curriculum is guided by the Massachusetts State Frameworks for Science, Engineering and Technology.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will think critically, listen actively and utilize technology effectively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1464
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MAKERSPACE: MakerSpace at Gardner High School is a course where students will work collaboratively with other makers, creators, and designers to foster independent and creative problem solving through an authentic preparation for the real world from simulating real-world challenges. This hands-on course allows students to be creative, innovative, independent, and technologically literate. In addition, this course utilizes materials, tools, and equipment to allow students to combine engineering principles and artistic interests to take initiative, collaboration, persistence, and resourcefulness to produce the creation of engaging products.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will think critically, listen actively and utilize technology effectively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1454
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ROBOTICS: During this full-year course, students will engage in real-world applications of Science Technology/Engineering and Math (STEM) concepts through the use of the engineering design process. Through hands-on activities students will utilize engineering concepts including: Physics, programming, mechanical systems, and electrical & electronics systems. These concepts are delivered via a robotics platform through activities and projects using VEX Robotics hardware and easy C robotic programming software.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will think critically, listen actively and utilize technology effectively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1477
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ROBOTICS 2: During this full-year course, students gain knowledge of the programming process by creating a sequence of instructions that tell a computational device, such as the microcontroller on a VEX Robot, how to perform a task. Students utilize VEX Robots hardware and easy C robotic programming software to understand robotic programming code: Radio Control Code, Autonomous Code, and Mixed Autonomous & Radio Control Code. Radio control code allows you to configure the way in which the radio control transmitter controls the robot, allowing a human operator to provide input to the robot. Autonomous code allows a robot to perform behaviors without input from the radio control transmitter. The robot follows pre-programmed routines responding only to sensor inputs. Autonomous code can be integrated with radio control code to achieve even better robot performance for complex tasks.

Prerequisite: Students will have successfully completed Robotics.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will think critically, listen actively and utilize technology effectively.

Grade: 10-12	Credits: 5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1478
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ADVANCED WOODWORKING: This is an advanced level course in woodworking. It includes the following: safety in the shop, drawing and planning a project. Its purpose is to provide more extensive experience to students who desire to explore the woodworking field in greater depth. Emphasis will be placed on technology used in carpentry, cabinet and furniture making, as well as more abstract type woodworking. Students will be given the opportunity to advance skills learned in Wood Technology I in areas of materials, machines, and procedures. Students will be expected to design and develop plans for an advanced project of their choice. Curriculum is guided by the Massachusetts State Frameworks for Science, Engineering, and Technology. Students can take this course more than once.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Wood Technology I or Intro to Woodworking.

Expectations for Student Learning: Expectations for Student Learning: Students will think critically, listen actively and utilize technology effectively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1465
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INTRO TO AUTOMOTIVE/TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGY: This semester course is for students who want to learn about automotive ownership costs, how to perform routine maintenance, minor repairs and how to buy, sell, evaluate, modify, and personalize automobiles. Automotive theory, diagnosing common problems, performance, safety, pollution, insurance, hybrid designs, small engines, and societal impacts of all forms of transportation will be studied. The students will be involved in hands-on and theoretical learning.

Expectations for students learning: Students will think critically, listen actively, and utilize technology effectively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1436
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WORLD LANGUAGE

FRENCH 1: This full-year course is an introduction to the French language and culture. Its emphasis is on the skills of listening comprehension and speaking. This is accomplished by oral and written practice of modern, everyday language and the use of selected audio-visual materials. Students will learn thematic vocabulary focusing on everyday needs and activities as they learn to communicate orally, and in writing.

Expectation for Student Learning: Students will listen actively and communicate effectively.

Grade: 8-12	Credits: 5	Levels: College Preparatory	Course#: 1614
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FRENCH 2: This full-year course students will continue to increase their proficiency in the skills of listening comprehension and speaking. Students will also focus on reading and writing in communication topics of interest in the past, present and future. Students will study aspects of the Francophone world.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of French I or written permission of instructor.

Expectation for Student Learning: Students will listen actively and communicate effectively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Levels: Honors College Preparatory	Course#: 1624
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FRENCH 3: This full-year course of French, taught in the target language, is intended for students who have developed basic skills to a functional degree allowing for individual expression and some extensive reading. Continued development of skills includes review and advanced study of the structure of the language. Reading and cultural material emphasize the contemporary scene in terms of the historical, social and aesthetic development of the people.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of French II or written permission of instructor.

Expectation for Student Learning: Students will listen actively and communicate effectively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Levels: Honors	Course#: 1631
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FRENCH 4: this full-year course of French is recommended for the highly motivated student upon recommendation of the instructor. The content will vary depending on the ability and interests of the students. Emphasis will be placed on one or more of these areas: language, literature, culture.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of French III or written permission of instructor.

Expectation for Student Learning: Students will listen actively and communicate effectively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Levels: Honors	Course#: 1651
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FRENCH 5: This full-year course is taught exclusively in the target language. It is designed to provide highly motivated students with the ability to use spoken and written language in a wide variety of situations. Target language readings consist of newspapers, magazine articles as well as authentic literary texts. Students will discuss current events and examine and analyze cultural contributions of significant people and events in history. Throughout this course students will communicate both orally and in writing, with increasing fluency and accuracy.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of French IV or written permission of instructor.

Expectation for Student Learning: Students will listen actively and communicate effectively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Levels: Honors	Course#: 1691
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SPANISH 1: This full-year course of Spanish introduces the student to the basic elements of the four basic skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. Development of these skills is attained by oral and written practice of modern, everyday language and the use of selected audio-video materials. The student also acquires basic skills in reading and cultural concepts concerning everyday life in Spanish speaking countries.

Expectation for Student Learning: Students will listen actively and communicate effectively.

Grade: 8-12	Credits: 5	Levels: College Preparatory	Course#: 1615
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SPANISH 2: This full-year course of Spanish reviews the basic principles of the first year of Spanish. It expands on the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing, and deals with the various types of Spanish literature.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Spanish I or written permission of instructor.

Expectation for Student Learning: Students will listen actively and communicate effectively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Levels: Honors College Preparatory	Course#: 1625
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SPANISH 3: At this level the students continue to increase their ability to understand and speak the Spanish language. Throughout this course the students will incorporate more complex grammar structures and increase their vocabulary by reading, writing, listening and speaking Spanish in the classroom. Emphasis will be given to communication, both orally and in writing. Students will also explore the geography, history and culture of Spanish-speaking countries around the world. Most classroom business will be conducted in Spanish.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Spanish I or written permission of instructor.

Expectation for Student Learning: Students will listen actively and communicate effectively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Levels: Honors	Course#: 1631
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SPANISH 4: This course students will further define their communicative and grammatical skills as they explore various themes through authentic materials. Students will read, view, and interpret various works in Spanish. More emphasis will be given to reading, writing and speaking. Students will explore ancient civilizations and cultures of the Spanish-speaking world as well as contemporary trends of the Spanish-speaking population in and outside of the United States. Spanish will be used extensively during class.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Spanish III or written permission of instructor.

Expectation for Student Learning: Students will listen actively and communicate effectively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Levels: Honors	Course#: 1661
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SPANISH 5: This full-year course is taught exclusively in the target language. It is designed to provide highly motivated students with the ability to use spoken and written Spanish in a wide variety of situations. Readings such as newspapers, magazines as well as authentic literary texts will be used to help students to further develop their language skills. Students will discuss current events and examine and analyze cultural contributions of significant people and events in history. Throughout this course students will communicate both orally and in writing with fluency and accuracy.

Prerequisite: Successful completion of Spanish IV or written permission of instructor.

Expectation for Student Learning: Students will listen actively and communicate effectively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Levels: Honors	Course#: 1671
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SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Special Education Department provides students who have special needs with successful academic experiences through the development of individual education programs (IEPs) that may include both special and general education classes. The primary goal of the department is to encourage maximum student involvement, to the extent appropriate, in general education classes.

Placement of individual students in a special education program occurs only through the Team evaluation process, which involves exploring and documenting alternatives attempted in general classes before referral to special education. This process follows from a pre-referral (SST Committee) convened by the Guidance Department. It is the intent of the Massachusetts Special Education Regulations that a program be designed to include the student in general education while addressing unique needs that may require specialized instruction or related services in order for that student to access the curriculum. It is the purpose of the Special Education Department, therefore, to identify those students who are in need of modifications and support and to provide them with the specialized instruction necessary for successful inclusion in the general school structure. Students' participation in the evaluation process, including attendance at Team meetings, is critical to their programming. Therefore, it is understood that IEP development includes student participation in program planning

ACADEMIC SUPPORT: Students attend Academic Lab in support of English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, and/or elective classes according to the goals set forth in their IEPs. Students are instructed in learning strategies, and they receive academic instruction in areas identified by their special education and general education teachers, who collaborate to meet students' needs in the classroom. (Team recommendation)

Expectation for Student Learning: Students will problem solve, write, and communicate effectively, think critically, and listen actively.

Grade: 8-12	Credits: 5	Level: Unweighted	Course#: 1878 (10-12) 1877 (8-9)
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READING: This course is for selected students identified as needing additional reading support as per their IEPs. Students will receive support that will reinforce reading skills and strategies. This will be done through targeting instruction along with various engaging texts and online programs.

Grade: 8-12	Credits: 5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1875
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STUDENT SUPPORT CENTER (SSC): This class is designed to offer both academic and social emotional support for students as per their IEP or for other students identified in special situations. Multiple staff (teachers, clinicians, etc) work together to offer intensive support to students on a daily basis to meet the individual needs of each student in the class.

Grade: 8-12	Credits: 5.0	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1876
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R.I.S.E.

The RISE (Resources in Special Education) Program at Gardner High School is designed to provide academic and vocational training for students in grades 9-12 who are at academic levels substantially below grade level. The primary goal of RISE is to provide opportunities to gain academic, independent living, prevocational, and social interaction/communication skills within and outside of the school setting. Students in the RISE Program learn academic and functional skills through a combination of classroom instruction, and school-based work and community experience. Students complete modified assignments in inclusive environments according to their IEP (Team recommendation).

RISE ENGLISH: This course focuses on reading and literature, language, and composition strands in ELA on entry levels. There is emphasis on reading for information, comprehension of written materials, and using information across settings. A multi-sensory approach will be taken that allows students to more fully understand the main ideas, characters, and settings of topics.

Expectation for Student Learning: Students will problem solve, write, and communicate effectively, think critically, and listen actively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Level: Unweighted	Course#: 1869
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RISE MATH: This course focuses on the basic operations in mathematics and everyday applications of these skills including counting money, time concepts, and measurement, budget and calculator skills. These skills will be taught in the classroom and then utilized in community environments to best provide generalized learning.

Expectation for Student Learning: Students will problem solve, write, and communicate effectively, think critically, and listen actively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Level: Unweighted	Course#: 1865
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RISE HISTORY: This modified course will have the students explore and demonstrate a general understanding of central past events and select people who have made an impact on our political, economic and/or social development in the United States. The students will use a variety of materials in this historical exploration including textbooks, reference materials, literature and multimedia.

Expectation for Student Learning: Students will problem solve, write, and communicate effectively, think critically, and listen actively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Level: Unweighted	Course#: 1866
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RISE BIOLOGY: This course is intended to provide students with a better understanding of the scientific method, cell theory, characteristics and classification of living things and their relationship to the environment. The students will also have a better understanding of heredity and reproduction.

Expectation for Student Learning: Students will problem solve, write, and communicate effectively, think critically, and listen actively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Level: Unweighted	Course#: 1864
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RISE/PRE-VOCATIONAL EXPERIENCES: This course is designed to provide students with work experiences starting with opportunities that are closely supervised, in-school jobs in order to build on skills that will be necessary for transitioning from high school. The focus of this course is to gain an understanding of work expectations, and to use good work habits in order to best prepare for future work experiences. The school-based work includes group projects and individual assignments including paper recycling, restocking machines and coolers, as well as school based businesses along with individual assignments.

Expectation for Student Learning: Students will problem solve, write, and communicate effectively, think critically, and listen actively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Level: Unweighted	Course#: 1868
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MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS

EL ENGLISH 1: This ESL English class provides an in-depth study in vocabulary, language, grammar and literature to students who are placed into WIDA Level 1. This course will introduce the students to multiple genres of literature including novels, short stories, poetry and informational texts. Exploration of each genre's literary elements including determination of theme and intent and examination of vocabulary and semantics will be included in the course content. The writing component of the course will focus on expository, descriptive, expressive and narrative writing. Students will continue to develop their listening, reading, writing and speaking skills throughout this course.

Expectation for Student Learning: Students will problem solve, write, and communicate effectively, think critically, and listen actively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Level: Unweighted	Course#: 1894
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EL ENGLISH 2: This ESL English class provides an in-depth study in vocabulary, language, grammar and literature to students who are placed into WIDA Levels 2 and 3. The genre focus in this course will be fiction, poetry, drama and non-fiction. Students will develop reading strategies that will help them make connections to the readings and understand inferences. Along with reading, the students will explore expository, narrative and descriptive writing. There will be an additional focus on grammar, including verb tenses, adjectives and adverbs, and complex compound sentences. Students will continue to develop their listening, reading, writing and speaking skills throughout this course.

Expectation for Student Learning: Students will problem solve, write, and communicate effectively, think critically, and listen actively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Level: Unweighted	Course#: 1895
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EL ENGLISH 3: This ESL English class provides an in-depth study in vocabulary, language, grammar and literature to students who are placed into WIDA Levels 4 and 5. It emphasizes comprehension and critical thinking skills in the reading of texts and literature. Students will be exposed to literary techniques such as irony, symbolism and tone, through the genres of short story, nonfiction, drama and poetry. In order to develop critical thinking and analytical skills, students' writing assignments will focus on autobiographical essays, persuasive essays and literary analysis. Students will continue to develop their listening, reading, writing and speaking skills throughout the course.

Expectation for Student Learning: Students will problem solve, write, and communicate effectively, think critically, and listen actively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Level: Unweighted	Course#: 1896
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EL ENGLISH 4: This course is designed for students designated as an English learner at WIDA's English language proficiency level 4. Various instructional materials are used, as in the ELD class, yet aligned to WIDA's Can Do Descriptors for levels 4, which highlight what ELs can do at levels 4 of language development. Students work on more complex language across all domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, while expanding their vocabulary to include key terms used across the content area in their mainstream classes. This course is offered as a full year course.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Level: Unweighted	Course#: 1898
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EL ENGLISH 5: This course is designed for students at the expanding level of English language proficiency. All four areas of second language acquisition, listening, speaking, reading and writing, are emphasized through content-based instruction. This course focuses on the explicit teaching of reading and listening strategies appropriate for students at the expanding level of English language proficiency. The course utilizes theme-based literature instruction and includes authentic texts. Focus is given to vocabulary development while facilitating reading fluency and comprehension. Students apply reading strategies to literature and other texts to increase comprehension.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 5	Level: Unweighted	Course#: 1899
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ADDITIONAL COURSE OFFERINGS

ADVISORY: The Advisory block is designed to assist students with their academic, social and future-planning. This is done with the assistance of the Advisory Teacher and in turn, helps students make a connection with an adult in the building. The primary focus of the Advisory time is to work on the Individual Learning Plan (ILP). The ILP is a tool the student and advisor use to help the student identify academic, career and social goals for the school year. As part of their ILP, the advisor and student complete quarterly reviews of progress towards these goals.

FINANCIAL LITERACY: Using project-based instruction and real-world situations this course will give students the knowledge and general understanding of all key aspects of personal finances necessary to be successful now and throughout their adult lives. The structure of this class will reflect real-world situations as closely as possible.

Various opportunities to take this class will be made available to students to meet the graduation requirement.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1154
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LIFE STRATEGIES: This class is designed to increase student knowledge and necessary skills for everyday living. This course will emphasize goal-setting, decision making and problem solving, effective communication, healthy lifestyles and relationships, personal safety, citizenship, and consumerism.

Grade: 8-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1873
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AUT 110. INTRODUCTION TO AUTOMOTIVE TECHNOLOGY: Introduction to Automotive Technology examines the role and opportunities of the automotive service professional in today's automotive industry. Shop environment, tools/equipment, and personal safety are emphasized. Students will experience typical job-entry service skills and vehicle maintenance inspections. The necessary resources providing service information are examined. An introduction of vehicle operation and support systems will be presented. This course provides the background information required to continue in the automotive technology program. This is a dual credit course through Mount Wachusett Community College. This course is taught off campus. Classes will be held at the MWCC Autotech facility (42 Linus Allain Ave, Gardner). Upon successful completion of this course students will earn 5 high school credits towards graduation and 4.5 college credits towards their automotive technician certification/degree.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 5	Level: Honors	Course#: 2451
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AUT 123. ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS I: This course covers the fundamentals of electricity and magnetism, along with exploring the relationship of volts, ohms, and amps. The course will apply these two series, parallel, and series-parallel circuits. Semiconductor components such as diodes and transistors will be explored. Students will learn to use digital volt-ohm meters and oscilloscopes. Battery design and testing will be explored along with starting and charging systems. Prerequisites: ENG 098, FYE 101, MAT 092 (or corequisite), RDG 098, or placement; AUT 110 (or corequisite). This is a dual credit course through Mount Wachusett Community College. This course is taught off campus. Classes will be held at the MWCC Autotech facility (42 Linus Allain Ave, Gardner). Upon successful completion of this course students will earn 5 high school credits towards graduation and 4.5 college credits towards their automotive technician certification/degree.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 5	Level: Honors	Course#: 2461
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CERTIFIED NURSE ASSISTANT THEORY AND PRACTICUM (CNA CERTIFICATION): This course provides students with the theory and laboratory practice to safely care for clients in healthcare settings under the guidance and alliance with the states CNA Certification. This course provides students the opportunity to learn the nurse assistant theory and skills and provide safe, basic care to clients in long term care settings. Combined with successful completion of the theory and practicum components of the course, these students can safely care for clients in various healthcare settings. This is a dual credit course. This course may be taught on the GHS and/or MWCC campus. Successful completion on this course will earn students 5 high school credits to their diploma and 5 college credits through MWCC. Students will be eligible to take the CNA exam upon completion of this course.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 5	Level: Honors	Course#: 2251
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STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS: This course is designed to help students develop study skills crucial for success in their academic classes. Specific skills taught include; organization, completing assignments, effective reading of textbooks, test taking, following directions, outlining and note taking skills. This course will also prepare students for the English/Language Arts portion of the MCAS exam. Students will review literary and poetic terms, review grammar skills, practice reading comprehension skills, work on open response questions, and practice writing for the long composition. Students will also prepare for the Mathematics portion of the MCAS exam, receiving tutoring to reinforce algebra and geometry concepts.

Expectations for Student Learning: Students will read and write effectively.

Grade: 9-12	Credits: 2.5	Level: Unweighted	Course#: 1905
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FIRST YEAR EXPERIENCE (FYE): This course is designed to help prepare students, who are considering attending a two or four year college after graduation, with the transition to college life by teaching essential academic, personal, and social skills. Topics will include time management, study strategies, campus resources, self-advocacy, career planning, and critical thinking to foster a sense of belonging and prepare for a successful college career. A great deal of college and career research is embedded into this course and will include visits to college campuses. The SchoolLinks Program will be used to support research and information gathering.

Grade: 10	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1931
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FRESHMAN SEMINAR: This course is designed to develop students' academic, personal, and social skills as they prepare for high school and beyond into college or a career. Topics will include setting and achieving goals, improving self-image, and building positive relationships. This course is also designed as a check-in and monitor system of students grades and academic progress. Students will also complete interest and skills inventories and will engage in college and career research. The SchoolLinks Program will be used to support research and information gathering.

Grade: 9	Credits: 2.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1913
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MONTACHUSETT VOCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (MVP ACADEMY):

Gardner Public Schools and Monty Tech have a unique partnership program that allows our students the opportunity to enroll in a vocational program during their junior and senior years. This program will run during the traditional school day. GPS students will attend their academic classes for one week at Gardner High School, followed by a shop week on the Monty Tech MVP Campus. This alternating weekly schedule will continue for the entire school year. Students who apply and are accepted into the MVP Academy are making a two-year commitment for their junior and senior years. At the end of their high school career, students will graduate from Gardner High School with a high school diploma, 900 vocational training hours, industry credentials, and some will have co-op experience. Our goal is to provide our students with vocational training while they are still enrolled at Gardner High school to better prepare them for careers in these vocational fields after graduation.

Interested students may apply for one of the following programs:

- Carpentry
- Electrical
- Plumbing

Academic Courses Include:

- MVP English 11/12 (two blocks each)
- MVP Algebra 11/12 and MVP Advanced Algebra Topics 11/12 (two blocks each)
- MVP US History II 11/12
- MVP Technology Applications 11/12

* Please note that in order to be eligible for the MVP Academy, students cannot be credit deficient going into their junior year. If there are more applications than there are spots available, there will be a blind lottery to fill the allotted spots and to produce a waitlist.

MWCC Automotive Courses: In conjunction with MWCC, Gardner High School offers college-level automotive courses free of charge. These courses are taught during the school day by licensed automotive instructors at the new state of the art MWCC Automotive Center. Students will simultaneously earn both high school and college credits with a passing grade in these courses. These credits will transfer directly into the MWCC Autotechnology certificate or associates degree programs for students who wish to pursue further coursework in automotive technology after graduation. Students must meet eligibility requirements to enroll in these classes and should see their school counselor or the College and Career Program Coordinator for more information. Typically, the first two classes in the program are:

- Introduction to Automotive Technology
- Electrical Systems I

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 17.5	Level: College Preparatory	Course#: 1436 & 2461
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INTERNSHIP OFFERINGS

YEARBOOK: This internship is intended to facilitate the completion of the Argus Yearbook. The goal is to gain experience in organizing and producing a yearbook as well as managing and training new staff members. The objective is to have the student experience putting together a yearbook which has real world applications in both the managerial and finance aspects. The program is graded as pass/fail and is unweighted. Acceptance is at the permission of the instructor only.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 2.5 or 5	Level: Unweighted	Course#: 1587
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INTERNSHIP: This internship is designed as a semester or full-year elective course for juniors and seniors to assist a GHS teacher and to give students insight into the educational process. Teachers and students will establish an agreement/contract as to their responsibilities for the internship. Active participation and motivation is essential for this internship experience. The program is graded as pass/fail and is unweighted. The principal may approve students from different grades for internships.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 2.5 or 5	Level: Unweighted	Course#: 1994
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SCHOOL TO CAREER INTERNSHIP: Students enrolled in this internship program gain first-hand experience in their chosen career field. Students are placed in various classrooms within the Gardner Public Schools, local business, industry and community-based organizations. Students participating in the internship program will continue to take classes in math, English, science, social studies and unified arts. At the work site, students recognize the applicability and importance of these academic and technical subjects. Most importantly, students will develop skills needed for lifelong learning and future success in the workplace. Students who have developed a strong career interest through participation in career awareness and planning programs, and are in good academic standing may apply for the internship. Students can earn up to 5 credits per semester depending on length of participation and must be approved by the principal. Site supervisors and students will establish an agreement/contract as to their responsibilities for the internship. The program is graded as pass/fail and is unweighted.

Grade: 11-12	Credits: 2.5 or 5	Level: Unweighted	Course#: 1998
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EARLY COLLEGE ACADEMY (ECA)

Through our Early College Academy and in conjunction with Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC), Gardner High School offers eligible junior and seniors access to college courses, free of charge. While enrolled in these classes, students with passing grades will earn five credits per class towards fulfilling high school graduation requirements, while at the same time earning three college credits. Classes are taught by college professors at both the high school and also on the MWCC campus. ECA course offerings are extensive. Please refer to the [MWCC Course Catalog](#) for a list of possible courses to be offered. Students must meet eligibility requirements and should consult with their school counselors or the College and Career Program Coordinator.

EARLY COLLEGE DISTINCTION AWARD

In order to recognize our students who have participated in our Early College Program and who have challenged themselves with taking multiple college level courses during their junior and/or senior years, we have created the **Early College Distinction Award**. To be awarded this distinction at graduation, students must meet the following criteria:

- Receive passing grades and earn a minimum of 12 college credits, the equivalent of five college classes.
- Maintain good attendance; display good behavior; and present integrity and good citizenship when representing Gardner High School in the community (This will be reviewed by administration and guidance prior to receiving this award.)

ALTERNATIVE COURSE OFFERINGS

(with prior written approval of administration)

MAKE UP CREDIT/SUMMER SCHOOL

In order to receive full credit for courses taken elsewhere as a result of failing a regular Gardner High School course, the student must satisfy the following criteria:

In order to participate in a summer school program the student must have achieved a final grade of at least 50% in the failed course or the principal's discretion. Students earning a 60 or above in a makeup/summer school course will earn a "P" for the course. The course must be submitted for approval to the principal prior to registering.

CREDIT RECOVERY

Credit Recovery Courses are designed to provide students who had previously lost partial or all credit, due to varying issues. Students will regain that credit through satisfactorily completing coursework including readings, discussions, and comprehension of main concepts, writings, study guides, and quizzes. Students will perform tasks and learn on their own time at their own pace. Students will be required to periodically meet with teachers to discuss goals and objectives as well as progress. Subjects offered vary, but include English, Social Studies, Science, and Math.

Expectations for student learning: Students will think critically, read, write, and communicate effectively, demonstrate creativity, utilize technology effectively, and problem solve effectively.

OUTSIDE COURSES

Courses for make-up credit may be taken, but the cost is the student's responsibility. Outside courses must be pre-approved by the student's guidance counselor, and principal. It is the student's responsibility to make sure their official grades are forwarded to the Gardner High School Guidance Office.

GARDNER ACADEMY FOR LEARNING AND TECHNOLOGY (GALT)

With purpose and direction, the GALT Program is available for students faced by challenges within traditional academic and curriculum programming. The GALT School is committed to promoting both academic and personal growth for students to prepare them for post-secondary endeavors, or the eventual reintegration into traditional educational settings. The ultimate mission of the program is to enhance the learning abilities of each student and bring them to a point of realization relevant to those abilities.

The Gardner Public School's GALT Program supports students in recognizing their strengths through individualized programming while providing the opportunity to participate in an alternative education setting.

ONLINE COURSES: Gardner High School offers online programming to meet a variety of needs for our students. Classes are offered in a variety of subjects and levels. All online classes are provided through an online platform and have no live instruction. Classes are offered As such, this type of class is only recommended for students who can work independently and have self motivation and organizational skills. Parents and students can reach out to their School Counselor for more information. The Principal makes the final decision on whether online classes are appropriate for the student.

GENERAL INFORMATION

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

Chapter 622 of the Acts of 1971 guarantees access to all public schools and public school programs, courses, advantages, and privileges without regard to race, color, sex, religion, or national origin.

TITLE IX OF THE EDUCATION AMENDMENTS OF 1972 PUBLIC LAW 92-318

“No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefit of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving federal financial assistance”.

PARENT-TEACHER COOPERATION

The school wishes to offer the richest possible educational experience for each student. This cannot occur without full communication between parents and the school. Parents are urged to maintain close contact with teachers, counselors, and administration. This process begins with careful review of the courses available to the student each year, and signature approval by parents on the course selection sheet in this booklet. The e-mail addresses for teachers are available by visiting the www.gardnerk12.org website. Parents are encouraged to contact teachers directly with concerns about their child’s academic progress and use Plus Portal to check student’s grades weekly.

ONLINE GRADES AND ATTENDANCE

Parents and students should access student grades online. PowerSchool allows individuals to see current information regarding a student’s grades (homework, quizzes, classwork, and exams), attendance, and assignments. In addition, it allows teachers to post questions for online discussions. Please email our guidance secretary for your login information.

REPORT CARDS

Report cards are issued four (4) times per year; approximate time - every ten weeks (November, January, April and June). Report cards are distributed through the student’s homeroom. If you do not receive a report card from your child within two weeks after the marking period ends, please contact the school.

INCOMPLETES

The student must make up all incomplete grades on a report card, and grades submitted by their teacher within ten (10) school days from the day report cards are issued. The principal must approve any exceptions to this time limit in advance.

PROGRESS REPORTS

Progress Reports are given to the student midway through each term to indicate the present status of a student’s work. Progress reports are another way of communicating between parents and teachers, in order to assist the student in improving his/her performance. With close cooperation between parents and the school, the number of unsatisfactory grades can be considerably reduced. **A passing grade on a progress report does not necessarily assure a passing grade at term’s end.** Please contact the teacher if you have any questions.

TRANSFERRING FROM GHS

In the event a student transfers to another school, students will be provided with updated earned marks from their current courses. Partial credit is not awarded upon transferring. Credit is awarded at the completion of the course or at the end of the semester.

Gardner High School School Improvement Plan 2024-2027

Mission

Gardner High School provides an enriched academic environment fostered through relevance, rigor and relationships and ensures that each student learns at a high level. In the classroom, we challenge all students in a supportive, positive environment that promotes scholarship and helps students develop the skills and characteristics to make them successful for their future. On the field, stage, or court, we create fun, engaging opportunities for students to excel in athletics, the arts, and co-curricular groups. We promote personal development and a sense of service to our community.

Core Values

Our Core Values (**C.A.R.E.**) are:

Community - We work together to achieve for all in a culture steeped in tradition;

Appreciation - We accept our roles, respect different perspectives, and acknowledge the good in others;

Responsibility - We own our actions and honor our commitments by being prepared, involved community members; and

Excellence - We do our best and take pride in all we do in our community.

Vision

We will be the premier school of choice for our students and their families.

Every child, in every classroom, every day, will:

feel welcomed, safe, and included in our community;

- Adults will personally welcome each child as they enter the school and each classroom.
- The layout of the school and each classroom will be inviting and conducive to learning.
- Students will learn social-emotional skills through direct instruction, supports, and institutional practices.
- Our school will actively engage families in the education of their children and community.

have adults consistently interact in ways that foster positive, supportive relationships;

- School expectations, practices, and rules will be informed by the chronological and actual developmental levels of the children we serve.
- Adult responses to children's behaviors will be empathetic and caring, considering their comprehensive knowledge of the child's development and any possible trauma or stressors.
- The school will work proactively and collaboratively with families to support the whole child.
- Disciplinary practices will be done through a restorative approach.

and be engaged in relevant, academically rigorous instruction, informed by data.

- Each lesson will incorporate rigorous student tasks that engage all learners, provoke higher-order thinking, monitor each student’s progress, and provide feedback to students for improvement.
- The school will monitor and adapt its instruction to ensure students learn the skills and knowledge to prepare them for their own future.

Theory of Action

If we:

- **Create** a clear set of expectations and strategies that are shared across every classroom to assess, monitor, and utilize academic, behavioral and social emotional data to inform our instruction and interventions,
- **Then** there will be continuity of practices across all classrooms and grade levels where the same high level of rigorous instruction is provided to all students, which is aligned with objectives and state standards.
- **And**, if we implement challenging learning activities and differentiated instructional strategies that support students’ academic, behavioral and social emotional growth while developing positive relationships,
- **Then** students will develop higher order thinking skills, and the ability to articulate their thinking, while utilizing appropriately challenging resources.
- **And**, if we work in collaboration with families and community partners to engage in shared decision making for effective educational programming while giving all students equitable access and opportunities to achieve at their highest level,
- **Then** students will become lifelong, collaborative, problem solvers who positively contribute to the workforce and their community.

Strategic Objectives

Academic:	Behavioral:	Social Emotional Learning:	Collaboration with Families and Community Partners:
Create and implement a standards-aligned curriculum across all grades and disciplines utilizing data to inform instruction, lessons and interventions while supporting equity:	Create and implement clear expectations and strategies across all grades utilizing data to inform behavioral supports and interventions while supporting equity:	Utilize data to inform social emotional interventions and provide tiered supports to all students while supporting equity:	Collaborate with families and community partners to engage in shared decision-making for effective educational programming while supporting equity:

Action Steps

Comprehensive professional development for staff and common planning time based on an MTSS tiered approach	Comprehensive professional development for staff based on an MTSS tiered approach	Comprehensive professional development for staff based on an MTSS tiered approach	Produce and administer student, staff, and parent feedback surveys
Create a school-wide written curriculum in a common format by department and subject area that is aligned with state standards and that is reviewed regularly	Develop, utilize and enforce a system of school-wide behavioral expectations	Monitor social-emotional data and through an MTSS approach and incorporate appropriate tiered interventions accordingly	Regularly utilize Gardner High School website page, digital newsletters and social media to share information, activities and achievements

Develop and incorporate rigorous and engaging instruction and lessons aligned with state standards and MCAS specific questions	Monitor discipline data, and through our MTSS system, incorporate appropriate interventions and progressive discipline accordingly	Incorporate an SEL curriculum into our Advisory period, which addresses students' social emotional needs	Maintain School Council meetings and voice for parent/community concerns and feedback
Monitor academic data that will drive future instruction, assessments (formative and summative) and interventions	Create and maintain a restorative approach to discipline with empathetic personal interactions which supports student behavioral growth		Further develop and expand our Early College and vocational programming.
Utilize teacher observation and evaluation system as well as the rigor rubric and the classroom instructional checks rubric to gather learning walk data for analysis and sharing to improve instructional outcomes			

Outcomes

- 1) Teachers in classrooms will incorporate Tier 1 academic, behavioral and social-emotional interventions with 80% fidelity
- 2) 100% of the teachers will regularly review school-wide expectations with their students multiple times a year and have school-wide and classroom expectations posted in their classrooms
- 3) 80% of students in need of Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports will meet progress targets
- 4) GHS will eliminate discipline disparities for all subgroups
- 5) GHS will eliminate attendance disparities for all subgroups
- 6) Students with disabilities and multi-lingual learners will have an increase of 10% meeting or exceeding on MCAS
- 7) All subgroups will meet MCAS targets in ELA, math and science
- 8) A minimum of 50% of seniors graduating from GHS will be enrolled in either our Early College Program or vocational offerings through the MWCC Autotech Program, the MWCC CNA Program, the MT MVP Program, our Manufacturing Program, or other developed vocational programs
- 9) Drop-out rates for all subgroups will be no higher than the aggregate
- 10) Parents and students will rate school relationships as at least 90% satisfactory

Implementation Timeline

Activity/Outcome	Person(s) Responsible	Measurement Tool(s)	Date to be Completed	Status
1) Use of common planning time in ELA,	Administration	Curriculum Map	June 2025	

Math, Science and Social Studies to complete standards-aligned curriculum mapping for all classes.	Building Leadership Team Faculty	Templates		
2) Use of common planning time in ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies to create rigorous lessons with a focus on instructional practices utilizing the district's CPT Meeting Agenda	Administration Building Leadership Team Faculty	Observation/ Feedback Lesson Plan Templates CPT Agendas and Evaluations	Weekly Ongoing Target Completion June 2026	
5) Regular monitoring of formative assessment data (ongoing checks for understanding) and summative assessment data (interim assessments, STAR benchmark testing, MCAS) to identify student needs and the instructional strategies necessary for addressing identified deficiencies	Administration Building Leadership Team Faculty	MCAS Data STAR Data Various Formative/ Summative Assessment Tools	Weekly Ongoing	
3) Regular professional development for faculty on MTSS to better understand and address academic, behavioral and social-emotional needs of our students	MTSS Administrator Building Administration Tier 1, 2 & 3 Teams	MTSS Data Collection Tools (academic, SEL, behavioral data)	Yearly Ongoing	
4) Use of observation/evaluation data to reinforce best teaching practices focusing on instructional practices and academic, behavioral and social-emotional needs of students	Administration	Observation/ Feedback Teachpoint Rigor Rubric Instructional Checks Rubric	Yearly Ongoing	
6) Ongoing professional development on empathetic personal interactions with students, de-escalation techniques, and a restorative practice approach to discipline	Administration MTSS Administrator	Discipline Data Observation/ Feedback	Yearly Ongoing	
7) Regular monitoring of student discipline, attendance, and academic data and continued identification of tiered interventions	Administration MTSS Tier 1, 2 & 3 Teams	GHS Tracker & Progress Monitoring Tool	Monthly Ongoing	
10) Regular monitoring of social-emotional data to identify students in need of tiered supports	Administration Tier 1, 2 & 3 Teams	GHS Tracker & Progress Monitoring Tool BESS Data	Monthly Ongoing	
11) Regular review of school-wide expectations; professional development for teachers; and a system for reviewing expectations in every classroom	MTSS Administrator Building Administration	School-wide expectations fidelity check-list	Quarterly Ongoing	

	Faculty			
12) Use scheduled advisory time for social-emotional programming utilizing the Character Strong curriculum, and academic monitoring and interventions	MTSS Administrator Building Leadership Team Faculty	MTSS Data, Collection Tool Check & Connect Data	Weekly Ongoing	
13) School Council meetings to share information and receive parent input into decision-making regarding school activities, policies and programs; supplemented by the annual Climate & Culture Survey	Administration School Council	Monthly Agenda & Meeting Notes Climate & Culture Survey	Monthly Ongoing	
14) Regularly use social media platforms, emails and one-call system to disseminate pertinent information to students and families	Administration Media Specialist	Facebook PlusPortals Newsletters	Ongoing	
15) Continue development of Early College Academy and Vocational Programs	College & Career Readiness Coordinator Building Administration School Counselors	DESE and EC Data Collection Tools	Yearly Ongoing	

Gardner Academy School Improvement Plan 2024-2027

Mission

Gardner Academy is a restorative school that focuses on relationships and building a community of learners who care for and support each other. Restorative practices are embedded in all aspects of our community on a daily basis.

We are learners, not finishers!

Core Values

Community

Compassion

Responsibility

Integrity

Vision

Gardner Academy will be a model of 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.

Every student, in every classroom, every day, will:

feel welcomed, safe, and included in our community;

- Adults will personally welcome each student as they enter the school and each classroom.
- Students will learn social-emotional skills through direct instruction, supports, and institutional practices.
- Our school will actively engage families in the education of their students and community.

have adults consistently interact in ways that foster positive, supportive relationships;

- School expectations, practices, and rules will be informed by the chronological and actual developmental levels of the children we serve.
- Adult responses to student's behaviors will be trauma-informed and restorative and provide opportunities for students to learn from their mistakes, take accountability, and make amends.
- The school will work proactively and collaboratively with families to support the whole child.
- Disciplinary practices will be done through a restorative approach.

and be engaged in relevant, academically rigorous instruction, informed by data.

- Each lesson will incorporate rigorous student tasks that engage all learners, support higher-order thinking, monitor each student's progress, and provide feedback to students for improvement.
- The school will monitor and adapt its instruction to ensure students learn the skills and knowledge to prepare them for their own future.

Theory of Action

If we:

- ***Create*** a clear set of expectations and strategies that are shared across every classroom to assess, monitor, and utilize academic, behavioral, and social emotional data to inform our instruction and interventions,
- ***Then*** there will be continuity of practices across all classrooms and grade levels where the same high level of rigorous instruction is provided to all students that is aligned with objectives and state standards.

- **And**, if we implement challenging learning activities and differentiated instructional strategies that support students’ academic, behavioral, and social emotional growth while developing positive relationships,
- **Then** students will develop higher order thinking skills and the ability to articulate their thinking, while utilizing appropriately challenging resources.
- **And**, if we work in collaboration with families and community partners to engage in shared decision making for effective educational programming while giving all students equitable access and opportunities to achieve at their highest level,
- **Then** students will become lifelong, collaborative, problem solvers who positively contribute to the workforce and their community.

Strategic Objectives

Academic:	Behavioral:	Social Emotional Learning:	Collaboration with Families and Community Partners:
Create and implement a standards-based curriculum across all grades and disciplines utilizing data to inform instruction, lessons, and interventions while supporting equity:	Create and implement clear expectations and strategies across all grades utilizing data to inform behavioral supports and interventions while supporting equity:	Utilize data to inform social emotional interventions and provide tiered supports to all students while supporting equity:	Collaborate with families and community partners to engage in shared decision-making for effective educational programming including students social, emotional, and academic development while supporting equity:

Action Steps

Comprehensive professional development for staff and common planning time based on an MTSS tiered approach	Comprehensive professional development for staff based on an MTSS tiered approach	Comprehensive professional development for staff based on an MTSS tiered approach	Produce and administer student, staff, and family feedback surveys
Create a school-wide written curriculum in a common format by subject area that is aligned with state standards and that is reviewed regularly	Develop, utilize and enforce a system of school-wide behavioral expectations	Monitor social-emotional data and through an MTSS approach and incorporate appropriate tiered interventions accordingly	Increase our use of digital platforms including social media and digital newsletter to share information and celebrate student achievement
Develop and incorporate rigorous and engaging instruction and lessons aligned with state standards.	Monitor referral data through our MTSS system to create and maintain a restorative approach to behavioral interventions and discipline.	Incorporate an SEL curriculum into our Advisory period, which addresses students’ social emotional needs	Establish and maintain School Council meetings and voice for family/community concerns and feedback

Monitor academic data that will drive future instruction, assessments (formative and summative) and interventions		Integrate Tier 1 SEL and restorative practices into all classes across all grades	Expand community partnerships
Utilize teacher observation and evaluation system as well as the rigor rubric and the classroom instructional checks rubric to gather learning walk data for analysis and sharing to improve instructional outcomes		Formalize the process for college and career planning and begin in 9th grade or whenever a student enrolls to include path during high school	

Outcomes

- 1) Teachers in classrooms will incorporate Tier 1 academic, behavioral, and social-emotional interventions with 80% fidelity
- 2) 100% of the teachers will regularly review school-wide expectations with their students multiple times a year and have school-wide and classroom expectations posted in their classrooms
- 3) 80% of students in need of Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports will meet progress targets
- 4) GA will eliminate discipline disparities for all subgroups
- 5) GA will eliminate attendance disparities for all subgroups
- 6) Students with disabilities and multilingual learners will have an increase of 10% meeting or exceeding on MCAS
- 7) All subgroups will meet MCAS targets in ELA, math, and science
- 8) Drop-out rates for all subgroups will be no higher than the aggregate
- 9) At least 75% of our students will identify a post high school goal and will take the necessary steps to achieve it including steps taken during high school (ex. MVP, Gateway, after school jobs, etc)
- 10) Families and students will rate school relationships as at least 90% satisfactory

Implementation Timeline

Activity/Outcome	Person(s) Responsible	Measurement Tool(s)	Date to be Completed	Status
1) Use of common planning time for ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies to complete standards-based curriculum mapping for all classes.	Administration Building Leadership Team Faculty	Curriculum Map Templates	June 2025	Partially completed and continuing to work on

2) Use of common planning time in ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies to create rigorous lessons with a focus on instructional practices utilizing the district's CPT Meeting Agenda	Administration Building Leadership Team Faculty	Observation/ Feedback Lesson Plan Templates CPT Agendas and Evaluations	Weekly Ongoing Target Completion June 2026	
3) Regular monitoring of formative assessment data (ongoing checks for understanding) and summative assessment data (interim assessments, STAR benchmark testing, MCAS) to identify student needs and the instructional strategies necessary for addressing identified deficiencies	Administration Building Leadership Team Faculty	MCAS Data STAR Data Various Formative/ Summative Assessment Tools	Weekly Ongoing	
4) Regular professional development for faculty on MTSS to better understand and address academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of our students	MTSS Administrator Building Administration Tier 1, 2 & 3 Teams	MTSS Data Collection Tools (academic, SEL, behavioral data)	Yearly Ongoing	
5) Use of observation/evaluation data to reinforce best teaching practices focusing on instructional practices and academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs of students	Administration	Observation/ Feedback Teachpoint Rigor Rubric Instructional Checks Rubric	Yearly Ongoing	
6) Ongoing professional development on de-escalation techniques and restorative practices to address behavior and discipline	Administration MTSS Administrator School Counselor	Discipline Data Observation/ Feedback	Yearly Ongoing	
7) Regular monitoring of student discipline, attendance, and academic data and continued identification of tiered interventions	Administration MTSS Tier 1, 2 & 3 Teams	MTSS Tracker & Progress Monitoring Tool	Monthly Ongoing	
8) Regular monitoring of social-emotional data to identify students in need of tiered supports	Administration Tier 1, 2 & 3 Teams	MTSS tracker & Progress Monitoring Tool BESS Data	Monthly Ongoing	
9) Regular review of school-wide expectations; professional development for teachers, and a system for reviewing expectations in every classroom	MTSS Administrator Building Administration Faculty	School-wide expectations fidelity check-list	Quarterly Ongoing	
12) Use scheduled advisory time for	MTSS	MTSS Data,	Weekly	

social-emotional programming utilizing the Second Step curriculum, and academic monitoring and interventions	Administrator Building Leadership Team Faculty	Collection Tool Check & Connect Data	Ongoing	
13) Survey families to determine effective modes of communication and to establish a robust School Council to share information and receive family input into decision-making regarding school activities, policies and programs. This work will be supplemented by the bi-annual School Climate Survey	Administration School Council	Monthly Agenda & Meeting Notes School Climate Survey	Spring 2025	Not completed and expect to be completed Spring 2026
14) Regularly use social media platforms, emails and one-call system to disseminate pertinent information to students and families	Administration	Facebook Newsletters	Ongoing	
15) Create a program for robust planning for students path during high school and beyond high school	College & Career Readiness Coordinator Building Administration School Counselors Job Coach	DESE and EC Data Collection Tools	Yearly Ongoing	

Gardner Middle School School Improvement Plan 2024-2027

Mission

Our mission is to provide every student with equitable access to quality education in a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment. We strive to recognize and nurture each student’s unique talents, equip them with the skills and knowledge to achieve their goals, and challenge them with rigorous, supportive instruction that fosters success.

Core Values

At Gardner Middle School, we are:

Safe

Responsible

Respectful

Kind

Vision

We will be the premier school of choice for our students and their families.

Every child, in every classroom, every day, will:

feel welcomed, safe, and included in our community;

- Adults will personally welcome each child as they enter the school and each classroom.
- The layout of the school and each classroom will be inviting and conducive to learning.
- Students will learn social-emotional skills through direct instruction, supports, and institutional practices.
- Our school will actively engage families in the education of their children and community.

have adults consistently interact in ways that foster positive, supportive relationships;

- School expectations, practices, and rules will be informed by the chronological and actual developmental levels of the children we serve.
- Adult responses to children’s behaviors will be empathetic and caring, considering their comprehensive knowledge of the child’s development and any possible trauma or stressors.
- The school will work proactively and collaboratively with families to support the whole child.
- Disciplinary practices will be done through a restorative approach.

and be engaged in relevant, academically rigorous instruction, informed by data.

- Each lesson will incorporate rigorous student tasks that engage all learners, provoke higher-order thinking, monitor each student’s progress, and provide feedback to students for improvement.
- The school will monitor and adapt its instruction to ensure students learn the skills and knowledge to prepare them for their own future.

Theory of Action

IF we have a culture of dignity and inclusion for all;
AND we hold high expectations that are aligned with grade level district and state standards & objectives for the social/emotional, mental health, and academic outcomes for our students;
AND we collect, analyze, and respond to relevant data for all students individually and collectively, providing tiered supports based on that data;
AND we provide teachers with adequate time, training, support, leadership, and resources focused on equity;
AND we work in collaboration with families and community partners to engage in shared decision making for effective educational programming;
THEN All students will achieve academic success and career readiness; and will develop the social emotional wellness required to thrive as contributing members of their community and workplace.

2025-2028 District Priority

Grades K-7 will implement inclusive Tier 1 lessons using HQIM with fidelity and integrity to ensure Students with Disabilities have access to grade-level instruction and collaborative, active engagement with their peers.

Strategic Objectives

Academic:	Behavioral:	Social Emotional Learning:	Collaboration with Families and Community Partners:
Implement High-Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) across core content areas to enhance student engagement, equitable access, and academic achievement for all students:	Create and implement clear expectations and strategies across all grades and disciplines utilizing data to inform behavioral supports and interventions while supporting equity:	Utilize data to inform social emotional interventions and provide tiered supports to all students while supporting equity:	Collaborate with families and community partners to engage in shared decision-making for effective educational programming while supporting equity:

Action Steps

Identify HQIM for all core content areas.	Provide comprehensive professional development for staff based on MTSS tiered approach	Provide comprehensive professional development for staff based on MTSS tiered approach	Produce and administer student, staff and parent feedback surveys
Provide comprehensive professional development for staff to ensure HQIM is implemented with fidelity.	Monitor all data and through our MTSS system to incorporate	Monitor social-emotional data and through an MTSS approach incorporate appropriate interventions	Regularly utilize Gardner Middle School website page, digital newsletters and social media to share

	appropriate interventions accordingly	accordingly	information, activities and achievements
Develop and incorporate rigorous and challenging learning activities and instructional strategies that support academic growth of all students.	Monitor referral data through our MTSS system to create and maintain a restorative approach to behavioral interventions and discipline.	Review and analyze our SEL curriculum and Advisory schedule to ensure we are addressing students' social emotional needs.	Establish and maintain a Principal Advisory Group for students to voice concern and provide feedback.
Monitor academic data that will drive future instruction, assessments (formative and summative) and interventions		Plan and implement tiered small group learning supports based on data analysis	Maintain School Council meetings and voice for parent/community concerns and feedback
Utilize teacher observation and evaluation system as well as the rigor rubric and other district fidelity check tools for analysis and sharing to improve instructional outcomes.			Expand community partnerships

Outcomes

- 1) Teachers in core academic classes will incorporate HQIM, aligned with grade level state standards with 80% fidelity.
- 2) Teachers in classrooms will incorporate Tier 1 academic, behavioral and social-emotional interventions with 80% fidelity.
- 3) Reduce the gap with SWD and all students for MCAS by 5% each year.
- 4) GMS will eliminate discipline and attendance disparities for all subgroups
- 5) GMS will decrease office referrals (majors) by 5% each year.
- 6) Meet state accountability targets for chronic absenteeism each year.
- 7) Parents and students will rate school relationships as at least 90% satisfactory

Implementation Timeline

Activity/Outcome	Person(s) Responsible	Measurement Tool(s)	Date to be Completed	Status
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1) Admin will create and implement a more robust and organized Common Planning Time schedule for teachers	Administration Building Leadership Team Faculty	Schedule	Weekly Ongoing	
2) Use of common planning time (CPT) in ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies to create rigorous lessons based on HQIM with a focus on evidence based instructional practices	Administration Building Leadership Team Faculty	CPT Agendas Lesson Plan Templates Fidelity Checklists	Weekly Ongoing	
3) Regular monitoring of formative assessment data (ongoing checks for understanding) and summative assessment data (interim assessments, STAR, MCAS) to identify student needs and teacher strategies necessary for addressing identified deficiencies	Administration Building Leadership Team Faculty	Formative Assessment Data Collection Tool MCAS Data STAR Data	Weekly Ongoing	
4) Regular professional development for faculty on MTSS to better understand and address academic, behavioral and social-emotional needs of our students	Administration MTSS Teams	MTSS Data Collection Tools (academic, SEL, behavioral data)	Yearly Ongoing	
5) Use of observation/evaluation data to reinforce best teaching practices focusing on academic, behavioral and social-emotional needs of students	Administration	Observation/ Feedback Teachpoint Rigor Rubric	Yearly Ongoing	
6) Ongoing professional development on empathetic personal interactions with students and a restorative practice approach to discipline	Administration	Discipline Data Observation/ Feedback	Yearly Ongoing	
7) Regular monitoring of student discipline and attendance data and continued identification of tiered interventions	Administration Tier 1, 2 & 3 Teams	Discipline & Attendance Data MTSS Data	Quarterly Ongoing	
8) Regular monitoring of social-emotional data to identify needs which will drive interventions and future program development	Administration Tier 1, 2 & 3 Teams	MTSS SEL Data	Quarterly Ongoing	

9) Increase reading and comprehension skills in all students.	Administration, Tier 1, 2, 3 teams Academic Coaches	DIBBLS Data STAR Data UFLI Literacy RTI	Weekly Ongoing	
10) Regular monitoring of 18 new hires to identify needs, provide support, and stabilize the learning environment at GMS	Administration/	1:1 Meetings	Ongoing	
11) Use scheduled advisory time for social-emotional programming and academic interventions	Administration Building Leadership Team Mental Health Team	MTSS Data Collection Tools (academic, SEL, behavioral)	Weekly Ongoing	
12) Regularly use social media platforms, emails, one call system and School Newsletter	Administration	Facebook PlusPortals Newsletters	Weekly Ongoing	



Gardner Elementary School - G.E.S. - Improvement Plan - 2024-2027

Mission

Gardner Elementary School will work side by side with our families to prepare students for their future social, emotional, and academic success. This will be done in a safe, enjoyable, caring, just, and equitable environment.

Core Values

Safe, Respectful, Responsible, and Kind

Vision

At Gardner Elementary School, we are committed to being a place where all community members experience joy, achievement, and care.

- Experiencing JOY:
 - Students look forward to attending school and joyfully come home every day with knowledge to share, skills to demonstrate, and a smile on their face!
 - Staff derive joy from the incredibly important and rewarding work they do every day.
 - Families should be filled with confidence that their child will have a positive school experience.
- Experiencing ACHIEVEMENT:
 - Socially, Emotionally, and Behaviorally (S.E.B.) -
 - Learning and practicing what it means to be a safe, respectful, responsible, and kind Gardner Elementary School citizen - these four words make up our school mantra. We teach and live these values daily.
 - Students will be cooperative, resourceful, growth-oriented, and skilled at regulating themselves when inevitable struggles arise.
 - Academically:
 - All students will attain skills and knowledge necessary to succeed not only on the major assessments and in the next grade-level, but in future life occupations.
 - Students will be curious, resourceful, cooperative, and critical thinkers.
- Experiencing CARE:
 - Students should be filled with a sense of belonging and pride in their school. Go GES Wildcats!
 - Positive relationships between the staff, students, and families will be formed and cultivated.
 - Students should feel that adults and peers care about them.
 - Families should feel that staff care about them.



Gardner Elementary School - G.E.S. - Improvement Plan - 2024-2027

Theory of Action

If we:

- Focus on **equity** as a driving force at our school - the idea that every student has a different level of need - and work to address these varying levels of needs *through*
- a **Multi-Tiered System of Support (M.T.S.S.)** which creates a system to support common, rigorous, standards-based, high quality instruction - both SEB and academic - for all students (Tier 1) and implements additional interventions and supports for those who require more support (Tier 2 & 3) *and*
- Continually and proactively evaluate **data** to inform, and adjust these tiered academic, social, behavioral and emotional MTSS processes and interventions *and*
- Work in **collaboration with families and community partners** to engage in shared decision making for effective educational programming, *then*

All students will have equitable access and opportunities to achieve at their highest level, and become lifelong, collaborative, problem seekers and solvers who positively contribute to their future schools, the workforce, and their community.

2025-2026 School (and District) Priority

Using High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM), Teachers will use their Common Planning Time (CPT) to design lessons that require Students With Disabilities (SWD) to participate in heterogeneously (mixed ability) grouped, academically productive discourse founded on grade-level text, resulting in a written product to improve reading and writing and close equity gaps for SWDs.

Strategic Objectives



Gardner Elementary School - G.E.S. - Improvement Plan - 2024-2027

<p>1. Utilizing an equity lens, create a school where all members experience JOY and CARE by implementing Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (M.T.S.S.) for social and emotional learning (S.E.L.) success.</p>	<p>2. Utilizing an equity lens, create a school where all students experience ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT by implementing A Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (M.T.S.S.) to enable common, high quality, curriculum and instruction.</p>	<p>3. Utilize academic and social/emotional data to inform MTSS processes and tiered interventions.</p>	<p>4. <u>Collaborate with families, students, and community partners</u> to engage in shared decision-making for effective educational programming and to create an environment where families and their students feel a part of our positive, CARING, and <u>JOYFUL school community</u>.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Action Steps</p>			



Gardner Elementary School - G.E.S. - Improvement Plan - 2024-2027

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Implement the Tier I S.E.L. curricula for all students with fidelity B. Create fidelity monitoring systems around Tier I progress and use of High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) for S.E.L. C. Create Fidelity monitoring systems for each schools' Tier 2 and Tier 3 systems for SEL interventions and supports D. Align and implement SST process with more fidelity E. Monitor effectiveness of tier 1, 2, and 3 practices and continually adjust accordingly to enable S.E.L. achievement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Create a common process for effective implementation of academic M.T.S.S. systems, particularly around foundational literacy B. Create and implement a process for monitoring and improving the fidelity of our Tier I instructional planning, practice and use of High Quality Instructional Materials (HQIM) C. Provide professional development to deepen practices and implement HQIM with fidelity D. Create systems and interventions for students not achieving academically (Tier 2 and 3 interventions and practices) E. Create Fidelity monitoring systems for each schools' Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions and supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Align and identify the school's criteria to determine progress and success towards meeting Strategic objectives 1 and 2 B. Identify which assessments and data will be used to monitor how well the school is progressing towards meeting criteria for S.E.L. and academic improvement C. Create a common process/system for collecting, analyzing, and proactively responding to the data D. Utilize observation and assessment data to determine fidelity and effectiveness of tier I S.E.L. and Academic practices E. Utilize data to determine which students might need additional interventions (Tier 2 and 3) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Build on the efforts of the Family and Community Engagement Committee in prior years to create events that bring joy and a sense of belonging to the school, while also incorporating opportunities for family and school academic connection and improvement B. Increase the School Council's membership to include parents/guardians as well as community members and business leaders C. Continually assess and improve communication and transparency through social media, web-sites, newsletters, meetings, and other outlets D. Create partnerships with community
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Gardner Elementary School - G.E.S. - Improvement Plan - 2024-2027

<p>(See Strategic Objective #3)</p>		<p>F. Continually monitor the effectiveness of the Tier 1, 2, and 3 systems, curriculum, practices, and interventions, and adjust when necessary utilizing the cycle and processes alluded to in strategic objectives 1 and 2.</p> <p>G. Create systems to better analyze attendance data and make strategic improvements in this area</p>	<p>organizations and businesses</p> <p>E. Increase participation of student, staff and family feedback</p> <p>F. Continue to focus on identifying, assessing, and implementing approaches to help families help their students achieve academically, socially, and behaviorally.</p>
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Outcomes - by 2027

1. Academic MTSS Tiers 1, 2, 3 will be developed and Tiers 1 & 2 will be implemented
 - a. Establish an MTSS Academic Team with a regular meeting schedule, purpose, self assessment, agreement on school data sources/points, a progress monitoring schedule and written action plan.
 - b. Identify and develop fidelity measures for building level Tiers 1 & 2 teaming, instructional practices, data and systems with 70% fidelity across all buildings
 - c. Establish a fidelity measure and monitoring schedule for Grades K-4 implementation of inclusive Tiers 1 & 2 lessons using HQIM with fidelity and integrity to ensure Students with Disabilities have access to grade-level instruction and collaborative, active engagement with their peers with 70% fidelity across all buildings
 - d. Students with Disabilities (SWD) for MCAS growth targets will be met
 - e. 10% increase of SWD meeting or exceeding MCAS
 - f. 85% of students will read at or near grade-level (i.e. yellow or above on DIBELS assessment)
 - g. Number of students meeting or exceeding on MCAS will grow by 15%



Gardner Elementary School - G.E.S. - Improvement Plan - 2024-2027

2. MTSS SEL Tier 1
 - a. 80% of building classrooms will meet classroom support system high leverage practices goal of 80% engaged and on task.
 - b. 90% of students will say they enjoy coming to school (end of year survey)
 - c. 100% of students will say that at least 3 adults in the building care about them.
3. Close equity gaps, specifically:
 - a. Gap between SWD and all students for MCAS will be reduced by 5% each year or 15% by 2027
 - b. Chronic absenteeism rate for SWDs and MLL will be no higher than annual state accountability targets for elementary schools
 - c. GES office referrals (major) will decrease by 5% each year or 15% by 2027
 - d. Reduce suspensions, restraints, and time-out usage for SWD by 25% by 2027
4. Improve School Climate and Partnerships
 - a. Increased participation on Climate Survey by 25% by the end of 2027
 - b. Increased total and sub scores on Climate Survey at or above comparison age national averages
 - c. Parent and Staff attendance average will increase by 25% at school wide events from 2024-25 SY baseline attendance as compared to 2026-2027 SY average attendance.

Implementation Timeline					
	Activity/Outcome	Person(s) Responsible	Measurement Tool(s)	Date to be Completed	Status
1	Establish clear expectations for tier 1 academic systems/structures/ practices	Building academic MTSS Team	Expectations/ Implementation Manuals/Tools	Fall 2024	
2	Establish and implement a structured Common Planning Time (CPT) to plan high level student tasks and evidence-based instructional practices for all learners	MTSS District and Building Teams/BLT	Fidelity Check Protocols and Checklist Tools	Fall 2024	
3	Establish and implement a structured system for observing/monitoring CPT meetings and classroom instruction	MTSS District and Building Teams/BLT	Fidelity Check Protocols and Checklist Tools	Fall 2024	



Gardner Elementary School - G.E.S. - Improvement Plan - 2024-2027

4	Establish and implement a structured system for feedback and follow-up of CPT meetings and classroom instruction	MTSS District and Building Teams/Admin Teams	Ed Eval Observation/ Feedback Tools	Fall 2024	
5	Support use of data dashboard of district-level/grade level student academic/SEL achievement/growth and social/emotional/behavioral wellness for improved analysis and decision-making. Create & implement a structure for analyzing data to create targeted, specific instructional strategies for struggling learners	MTSS Academic and SEL Teams/BLT/Admin	Learning Walk/ Observation Data (Rigor Rubric), DIBELS (foundational reading assessment), Star Assessments (Math and ELA), MCAS Open Architects Powerschool	Fall 2024	
6	Create strategies to encourage parent participation on PTO, Surveys, and Parent input Council (a.k.a. School Council)	Admin/BLT	Attendance Logs; Newsletter Views; Survey participation and results	Spring 2025	
7	Fully implement MTSS Tier 1 academic systems/practices/supports using HQIM with regard to reading, with fidelity.	MTSS Academic District and Building Teams	Learning Walk/Observation Data/Fidelity Check Data	Spring 2025	
8	Identify and align standards-based lessons for ALL ELA and Math curricula and ensure these lessons are common and quality (Standards-aligned, rigorous and engaging student task through discourse and students bearing most of the cognitive load, assessed, and inclusive)	Teachers/BLT	Learning Walk/ Observation Data (Rigor Rubric), DIBELS (foundational reading assessment), Linkit Benchmark Assessments (Math and ELA), MCAS	Spring 2025	
9	Assess academic/SEL achievement and growth by grade level and by subgroups at least 3 times per year for adjustment of supports/practices	MTSS Teams/Admin/BLT	STAR, DIBELS, SWIS, BESS, District Data SEL Tool/Open Architects Dashboard	June 2025	In Process
10	Facilitate building leadership teams (BLTs) to provide systems, support and training for effective facilitation of CPTs; and to identify/plan PD for building staff with a focus on SWDs and MLs	MTSS Teams/Admin/BLT	Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI)/Office Discipline Referral data/Paths and RTI assessments/Learnin	June 2025	In Process



Gardner Elementary School - G.E.S. - Improvement Plan - 2024-2027

			g Walk/ Observation Data (Rigor Rubric), DIBELS (foundational reading assessment), Linkit Benchmark Assessments (Math and ELA), MCAS		
11	Establish and implement a structured system for data-informed PD to improve facilitation of CPT meetings and implementation of evidence-based classroom instructional practices focused on SWDs and MLs	MTSS District and Building Admin/BLT/ Tiered Teams	Fidelity Check Data of CPTs and Tier 1 HQIM Instruction/Learning Walk Data	June 2025	In Process
12	Measure fidelity of current practices, increase alternatives, and training to reduce suspension rates	Building Admin Teams/District Team	Bi-Annual District Data Review of SDR	June 2025	
13	Progress Monitor fidelity and accountability measures of CSS practice to ensure system in place	District MTSS SEL/Building MTSS SEL	Existing spreadsheet	June 2025	
14	District wide CPT practices incorporate high leverage accommodations for SWD and MLs using tools from HQIM and professional development	Special Education Administrators/ Principals/ML Admin/BLT Teams	Learning Walk Data/Fidelity tool	June 2025	
15	Establish clear expectations for Tier 2 academic assessment & data and instructional systems/structures/ practices	MTSS District and Building Tier 2 Teams	Expectations/ Implementation Manuals/Tools	June 2026	
16	Develop and initiate MTSS Tier 2 academic assessment & data/instructional systems/practices/supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a robust structure that connects specific skill deficits with targeted, research-based & specific skill supports/interventions 	MTSS District and Building Tier 2 Teams	Student Outcome Data, Learning Walk/ Observation Data/ Fidelity Check Data (Rigor Rubric)	June 2026	



Gardner Elementary School - G.E.S. - Improvement Plan - 2024-2027

17	Assess academic/SEL achievement and growth by grade level and by subgroups at least 5 times per year for adjustment of supports/practices	Building MTSS Teams	STAR, DIBELS, SWIS, BESS, District Data SEL Tool/Open Architects Dashboard	June 2026	
18	Establish clear expectations for tier 3 academic assessment & data/instructional systems/structures/practices	MTSS District and Building Tier 2 Teams	Expectations/ Implementation Manuals/Tools	June 2027	

S. Committee (Vote)

ITEM# 3764

File: IJOA-E

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 Gardner Middle School

Person(s) Responsible for Organizing Trip Heather Friend Francoeur

Grade or Class Grade 7, Options, RISE, & Project Support Programs

Number of Students Attending ~160 ✓

Destination Canobie Lake Park Salem, NH

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 June 12, 2026 ~ 7:30 am

Return date/time/place June 12, 2026 ~ 5:00 pm

Transportation Provider NRT Cost of Transportation \$3452.44

Cost of Activity \$100/student (includes admission, busing, lunch money,

How will the cost of transportation and activity be paid? Students & fundraising (yearbook)

Ratio of chaperones to students ~ 10:1

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 Haley Dancy, RN Date 2/13/26

Principal [Signature] Date 2/19/26

Superintendent [Signature] Date 2/27/26

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 TBD

Administrator Attending TBD

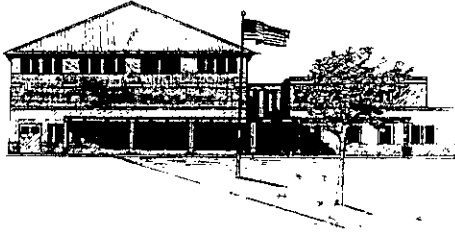
The procedures of this form are in accordance with the Policy of the Gardner Public School Committee on Field Trips. Staff supervising students will bring a copy of their building’s Medical Behavioral Emergency Response Plan to follow in the case of a medical or behavioral emergency.

[Revised: January 2006]

[Reviewed: September 2013]

[Reviewed: October 2024]

[Revised: February 2026]



Gardner Middle School

297 Catherine Street
Gardner, MA 01440
Telephone 978 632-1603
Fax 978 632-4234

Brian Cote, Principal
Sherry Gelinis, Assistant Principal
Stephanie St. Joseph, Assistant Principal

March XX, 2026

Grade 7 Field Trip & Yearbook

Where: Canobie Lake Park, Salem, NH

Canobie Lake Park is an amusement and water park located in New Hampshire, about a 90 minute drive from Gardner. Students can enjoy rides, attractions, and games. There are also multiple dining options in the park. For more information, visit: <http://www.canobie.com/>

When: Friday, June 12, 2026

Please note: The buses will be leaving at 7:30 am promptly, and arriving back in Gardner at approximately 5:00 pm. Students will need to arrange to be picked up at GMS at 5:00 pm.

Who: *All seventh grade students are eligible to attend, and will be supervised by Gardner Middle School staff.*

Why: *To celebrate completing middle school!*

Cost: \$100 per student

This cost includes park admission, transportation, and \$25 to spend on food, games, and merchandise. The cost also includes the GMS Yearbook! Students will have a fundraising opportunity to earn money towards their trip.

To reserve a spot on the trip, a cash-only, non-refundable deposit of \$40 is due no later than Tuesday, April 14, 2026. The remaining balance is due no later than May 20th. Please plan ahead!

Please return the bottom portion of this form with \$40 cash deposit by April 14th.

-
- I give my permission for my student to attend the field trip to Canobie Lake Park on June 12, 2026.
I understand that all students will be expected to abide by both Gardner Middle School's Student Handbook and the Canobie Lake Park's Code of Safety and Conduct.
I understand and agree to abide by all payment deadlines to ensure my student's eligibility for the field trip (deposit of \$40 cash by April 14, remainder due by May 20).
- Yearbook only**—my student will not attend the field trip but would like to purchase a yearbook for \$20 (cash-only payment due no later than April 14th)

Student Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Grade 7 Field Trip Supervision Plan

Tier 1

The majority of students will be assigned to a chaperone in a ratio about 14:1. Students will check in with their chaperone in the morning at GMS and walk to the bus together, where attendance will be taken again. Upon arriving at the park, students will walk with their chaperone through security and to our designated meeting spot (The Trellis). Students will then be permitted to visit anywhere in the park, as long as they are with at least one other person from GMS. At lunchtime (specific time to be determined), students will check in with their chaperone at the designated meeting spot. At this point, chaperones will distribute lunch money to each student, and students will again be permitted to visit anywhere in the park provided they are with at least one other person from GMS. Throughout the day, chaperones will walk around the park and check in with students as they see them and remind them of check-in times. Students will then return to the designated meeting spot around 3:00 (specific time TBD) and check in with their chaperone. Once a chaperone's entire group is present, they will escort their students back to the bus and take attendance a final time.

Tier 2

Identified students will be assigned to a chaperone in a ratio about 5:1, depending on the students and their needs. These students will follow the attendance procedures above, but will remain with their chaperone throughout the day.

Tier 3

Identified students will be assigned to a chaperone in a ratio of 2:1 or 1:1. These students will follow the attendance procedures above, but will remain with their chaperone throughout the day. These chaperones will be familiar with the identified students and are CPI trained.



Gardner High School



Gardner Public Schools

Michael Bartkus *Principal*
 Lauren Davis, *Assistant Principal*
 Melissa Paine, *Assistant Principal*

www.gardnerk12.org

200 Catherine Street, Gardner, MA 01440

P: (978) 632-1600

F: (978) 630-4040

GHS College & Career Programs School Committee Report March 2026

GHS Early College Programs

The GHS Early College Academy continues to thrive. We have 89 students enrolled in the program. Although most of the students in the program take classes on the MWCC campus, many of them return to GHS in the afternoons to take additional high school classes. This year we also have a cohort of 16 juniors who take two college classes at the high school, which are taught by MWCC professors. Those students are also enrolled in three afternoon high school classes. Of note this year is that we have five current seniors who are on track to graduate from the Academy with full associate's degrees. All these classes continue to be free of charge for our students. An Open House for the Early College Academy was held on February 11th at MWCC, and a virtual session was held on February 26th for those who could not attend in person. Applications for the 26-27 school year are currently open through March 20th.

Early College Academy Enrollment Data

White - 65%
Hispanic - 20%
Black/African American - 7%
Multi-Racial - 8%
Low Income - 42%
IEP/504 - 6%
EL - 1%

Community • Appreciation • Responsibility • Excellence

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

The Gardner Public Schools prohibit sex discrimination in any education program or activity that it operates. Individuals may report concerns or questions to the Title IX Coordinator. The notice of nondiscrimination is located at www.gardnerk12.org

The Pathways and Gateway to College Programs are undergoing a bit of a change with the creation of some new MOUs with other districts. Pathways currently has 41 students enrolled who will be receiving GPS diplomas and all those students are on track to earn a full associate’s degree by their graduation.

Gateway to College currently has 37 students enrolled in the program and those students will be earning a Gardner Academy diploma. Those students are enrolled in college classes that are used towards earning their diplomas while covering all GPS graduation requirements.

MVP Academy

The MVP Academy, our partnership program with Monty Tech, currently has 15 students enrolled. There are 5 seniors (two in carpentry and three in electrical) and 10 juniors (five in carpentry and five in electrical) in the program. We are very excited to be adding plumbing to the trades offered through this program for next year. Although we are waiting for official notification, all indications from DESE are that our application will be approved and we will be adding 10 additional students in this new trade (five juniors and five seniors) for the 2026-2027 school year. Next year we should have a total of 30 students enrolled in the program. An information session for families on the MVP Program was held on February 25th and applications are now open through March 27th.

MVP Enrollment Data

White - 40%
Hispanic - 49%
Black/African American - 20%
Multi-Racial - 0%
Low Income - 67%
IEP/504 - 40%
EL - 13%

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Building Resilience for the Future: Navigating Challenges and Shaping Success



2024-2025
ANNUAL REPORT

Keystone Educational Collaborative

2 Shaker Road, Suite D215

Shirley, MA 01464



www.keystonecollaborative.org

OUR MISSION

The mission of Keystone Educational Collaborative is to unite our communities together to strengthen each individual students' growth for the future.

OUR VISION

The focus of Keystone Educational Collaborative is to *lock-in the foundation of our students' future with the tools of today* by developing and providing high quality, cost effective, educationally related programs for special needs students, professional development and other services that strengthen and enhance the educational offerings of our member districts.

OUR PRINCIPLES

- We believe our programs and services should be of the highest quality and should continue to be responsive to the changing needs of our member districts.
- We believe that our students should be provided with the highest level of quality programs and services that will allow each of them opportunities to reach their highest potential and demonstrate ongoing, measurable progress and independence.
- We believe that all students should be challenged to learn in a caring, inclusive environment that respects diversity and values life-long learning.
- We believe all students should be provided educational programs and services in the least restrictive environment and we work closely with each district to return students to their home district whenever it is appropriate.
- We believe high quality; ongoing and relevant professional development is essential for growth and the success of the educational process.
- We recognize the need to involve and support families to facilitate the educational process.
- We believe student assessment and program evaluation are essential for continuous improvement.
- We recognize the need to support the social and emotional well-being of our students.
- We embrace collegiality and a sense of shared commitment and recognize that we accomplish more collectively than separately.
- We recognize and celebrate the unique contributions and accomplishments of everyone in our collaborative community.
- We encourage and accept a diversity of opinions to stimulate innovative and creative ideas and effective solutions.

“The best way to predict the future is to build it”

-Peter Drucker-

Dear Friends and Families,

As Keystone Educational Collaborative proudly concludes its 49th year as an educational institution dedicated to supporting students and families, we reflect with gratitude on the journey that has brought us here. For nearly five decades, Keystone has remained steadfast in its mission to provide exceptional specialized programming that meets the evolving therapeutic and educational needs of the students we serve. This continued success has been made possible through the unwavering support of our twelve member districts, our devoted families, and our community partners, all working together to ensure every student has the opportunity to grow and thrive.

As we close this remarkable chapter and look toward our 50th year, the organization has taken significant steps in laying the path for the future. Among the most exciting milestones is the opening of our second stand-alone building, owned by the Collaborative and its member districts, which represents both our collective investment in students’ futures and our commitment to expanding access to high-quality educational opportunities. This achievement stands as a symbol of progress, stability, and a shared vision for continued growth.

The challenges of recent years have underscored the importance of adaptability, collaboration, and resilience within the educational landscape. As technology and societal shifts continue to influence how our students learn and connect, Keystone remains dedicated to developing the therapeutic and educational tools needed to meet these changes head-on. Our staff’s passion and professionalism, coupled with the strength of our partnerships, have allowed us to continue serving our most vulnerable learners with care and innovation.

As we reflect on our past and plan for our future, our focus remains clear: to nurture each child’s potential and support every family that places their trust in us. The spirit of the Keystone community, including our families, friends, districts, and staff, continues to be the foundation of everything we do.

We hope this year’s annual report captures not only the essence of our work but also the vision that guides us forward. Together, we will continue to grow, evolve, and inspire as we move into our 50th year and beyond, stronger, more united, and more committed than ever to the success of our exceptional students.

Thank you for your continued support and unwavering commitment to our shared mission.

Sincerely,
John J. Demanche,
M. Ed, BCBA, LABA
Executive Director

KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS



School Committee Member
Ms. Kim Russo
Ashburnham-Westminster
Regional School District



Superintendent Dr. Adam Renda
Ayer-Shirley Regional
School District



Superintendent Dr. Steven Meyer
Clinton Public School



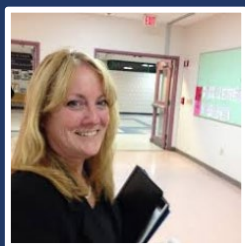
School Committee Member
Ms. Rosemary Reynolds
Fitchburg School District



Superintendent Dr. Mark Pellegrino
Gardner Public Schools



Superintendent Ms. Robin Desmond
Leominster Public Schools



Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Burnham
Lunenburg Public Schools



Superintendent Dr. C. Casavant
Narragansett Regional School District



Superintendent Brad Morgan
North Middlesex Regional School
District



Superintendent Ms. Colleen Mucha
Quabbin Regional School District



Superintendent Richard Meagher
West Boylston Public Schools



Superintendent
Dr. Marc Gosselin
Winchendon Public Schools

Keystone Educational Collaborative Special Education Advisory Board

Ashburnham-Westminster RSD	Ms. Jennifer Ramsdell
Ayer Shirley RSD	Ms. Tara Bozek
Clinton Public Schools	Ms. Loretta Braverman
Fitchburg Public Schools	Ms. Alicia Berrospe
Gardner Public Schools	Ms. Joyce West
Leominster Public Schools	Ms. Laura VanDorn
Lunenburg Public Schools	Ms. Julianna Hanscom
Narragansett RSD	Mr. Corey Rogers
North Middlesex RSD	Ms. Erin Upton
Quabbin RSD	Mr. Jill Langlois
West Boylston Public Schools	Ms. Sherri Traina
Winchendon Public Schools	Ms. Charlotte King

Keystone Educational Collaborative

Executive Board Sub-Committees

Budget	<p>Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Burnham</p> <p>Superintendent Dr. Steven Meyer</p> <p>Superintendent Dr. Mark Pellegrino</p>
Personnel	<p>Superintendent Ms. Colleen Mucha</p> <p>Superintendent Dr. Mark Pellegrino</p>
Governance	<p>Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Burnham</p> <p>Superintendent Dr. Adam Renda</p>
Space	<p>Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Burnham</p> <p>School Committee Member, Ms. Rosemary Reynolds</p>
Warrant Committee	<p>Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Burnham</p> <p>School Committee Member, Ms. Kimberly Russo</p> <p>Superintendent Dr. Adam Renda</p>

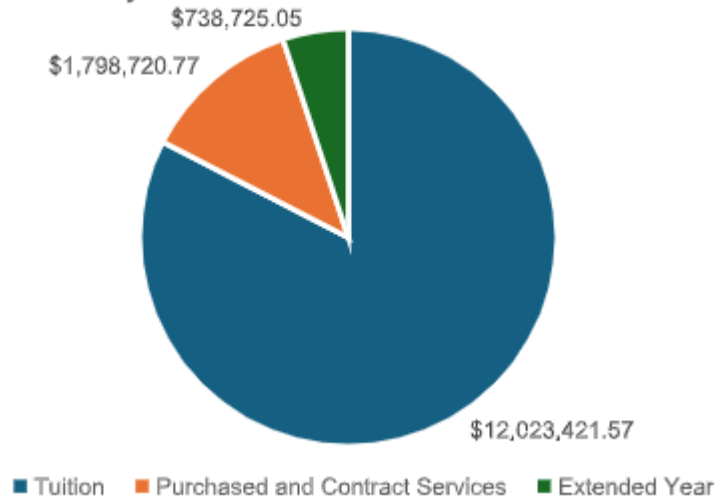
Keystone Education Administration

Executive Director	Mr. John J Demanche
Business Manager	Ms. Terri Burchfield
KEY Program Administrator	Ms. Megan Ritter
KEY Program Administrator	Ms. Amy Foley
Keystone Elementary/Middle School Assist. Program Administrator	Ms. Kerry McCann
Keystone Academy Program Administrator	Mr. Rick Booth

FINANCIAL AND ENROLLMENT DATA

Over 97% of the Collaborative’s revenue comes from the student programs described elsewhere and the contract service staff we provide to our districts. The graphical display represents the organization percentage breakdown of the primary revenue sources. The Collaborative provides group purchasing opportunities that make up the remaining revenue stream, but the nature of such transactions is considered revenue neutral, meaning expenses are covered, but no additional income is derived so is not considered when measuring the results of operations. The Collaborative saw a 17% increase over the previous year, which was slightly short of projections.

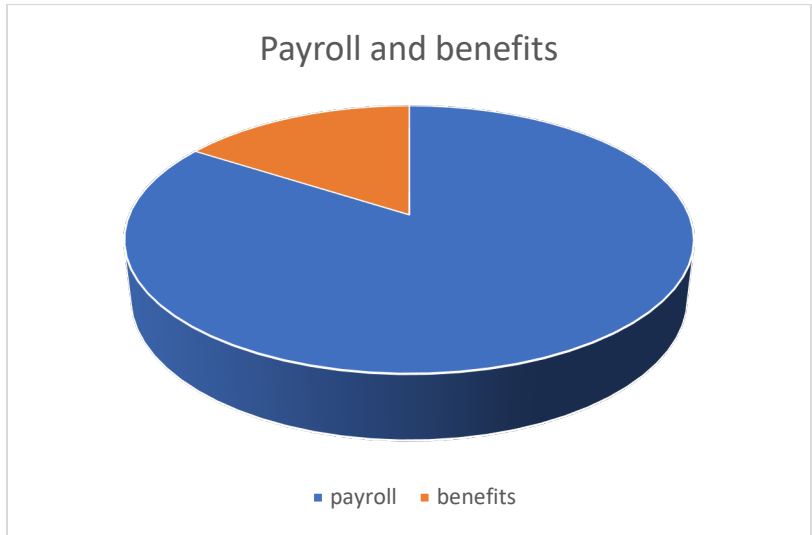
Primary Revenue Breakdown 2024-2025



Primary Revenues 2023-2024		Primary Revenues 2024-2025	
Tuition	\$10,808,503	Tuition	\$12,023,422
Purchased & Contract Services	\$1,387,999	Purchased & Contract Services	\$1,798,721
Extended Year	\$631,868	Extended Year	\$738,725
TOTAL	\$12,828,365	TOTAL	\$14,560,868

EXPENSES

In a marked change from last year, the Collaborative was only short on projected revenues by 1.9%, or about \$245,000. Part of the reason for the improvement was the Collaborative’s ability to recruit and maintain staffing sufficient to support the students enrolled. The improved employment statistics meant there was no related effect on accepting new referrals. Operational expenses ran about \$237,000 below projections.



OPERATIONAL OCCUPANCY

To address ongoing space needs, the Collaborative purchased a second building during the fiscal year. Most of the year was spent getting the RFPs and contracts set up to renovate the building to our requirements, which will occur over the next year. Expenditures related to these activities will be capitalized once the building is completed, but the effect on our cash position is being monitored. We were able to use some of the space to temporarily house students from our program effected by the flooding in Leominster in the fall of 2023. This was the first building requiring the Collaborative to incur debt for purchase and renovation. The purchase price was \$1,950,000 requiring a reduction in our Capital Reserve of \$411,280 to meet the deposit and closing requirements. The remainder of the \$5,377,000 loan, \$3,427,000, is expected to be spent doing renovations during the 2024/2025 school year. Debt service beyond monthly interest payments will begin once the building is completed and we take occupancy. This is expected to occur in December 2024. We continue to expect reductions on lease and rental agreements to help defray the debt service costs.

STAFFING INFRASTRUCTURE

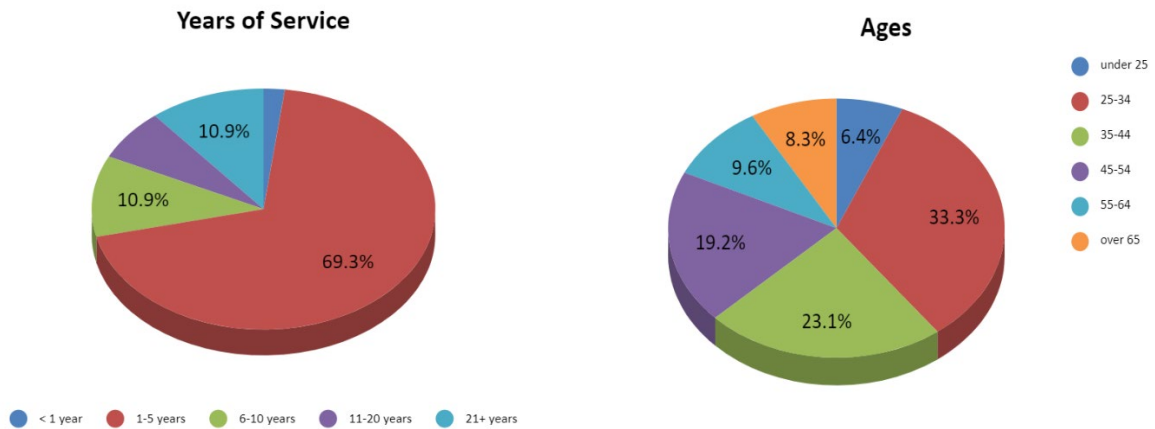
The collaborative remains steadfast in recognizing that the essence of the program lies in the caliber of our staff and their influence on our students. To this end, the collaborative consistently assigns organizational roles that directly impact student outcomes. As indicated in the graphical representation below, an impressive 93% of our staff positions involve daily, direct interaction with the student population we serve, with the remaining staffing percentage focused on providing crucial ancillary services.

Administrative/Support staff	10%	16
Psychologist/BCBAs/Counselors	10%	16
Teachers	24%	33
Paraprofessionals	45%	70
Allied Health (PT, OT, SLP)	19%	25
		157



STAFFING TENURE

The collaborative's deliberate investment in our students, particularly in the form of human capital, has not only shown a correlation with positive student outcomes but has also run parallel to employee tenure. According to the graphical representation, approximately 32% of our employees have demonstrated their commitment by dedicating over five years of service to upholding the mission and philosophy of our program.



Employee Tenure		
< 1 year	2%	4
1-5 years	70%	104
6-10 years	11%	17
11-20 years	7%	11
21+ years	11%	17
		157

EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The collaborative maintains its well-earned reputation for delivering high-quality and cost-effective programs and services to our member districts. As part of our commitment to transparency and alignment with our mission, we provide an annual cost comparison survey to our Board of Directors. This survey serves to demonstrate that we remain on course with our mission.

Additionally, the collaborative conducts an annual satisfaction survey among our Special Education Administrators to ensure that our vision of cost-effectiveness is harmoniously balanced with our mission of providing quality programming. This annual survey gathers feedback from our members to gauge their satisfaction with our programs and to assess how effectively the collaborative has been in meeting the needs of our districts and families.

COST COMPARISON

The special education programs offered by the collaborative continue to demonstrate exceptional cost-effectiveness when compared to private special education programs catering to students with similar special educational needs. Annually, the collaborative conducts a comprehensive cost analysis, comparing our programs with similar private special education options located within a one-hour radius of north-central Massachusetts (where possible).

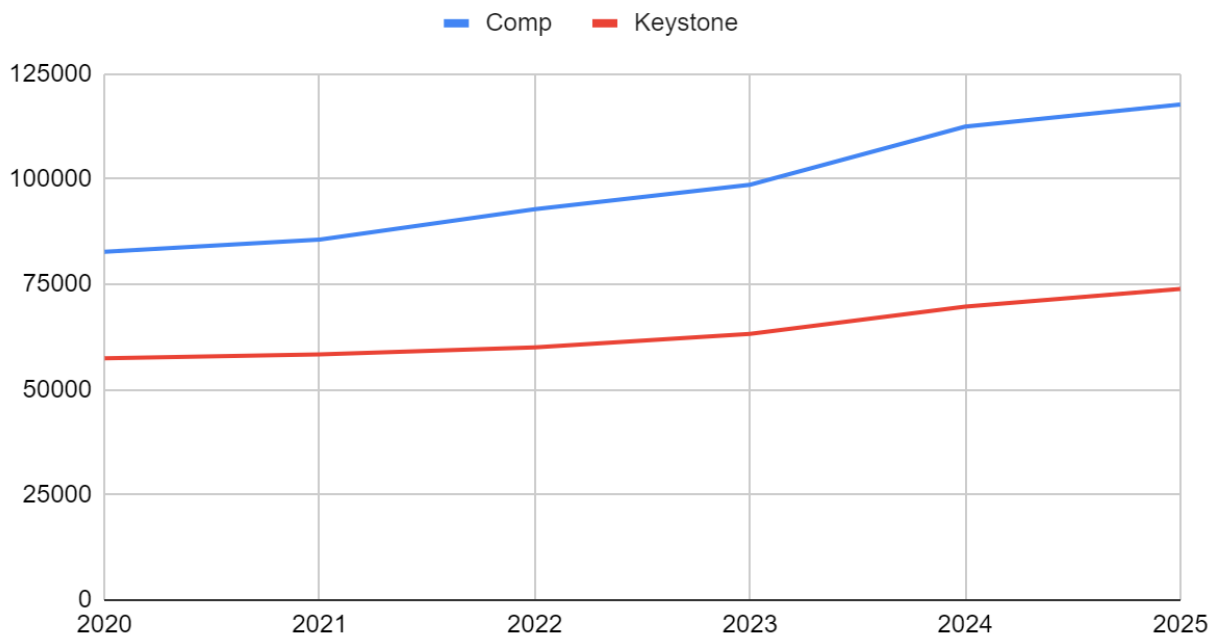
Before making these comparisons, the collaborative collaborates with the Special Education Advisory Board to ensure that the comparisons are equitable and accurately reflect private schools that districts might have considered if our collaborative programs were not available. The following graphical representation provides a breakdown of the daily and annual rates for each of the programs within our organization. The selection of comparison programs is based on factors such as a similar student population, educational and therapeutic methodologies, and historical comparisons.

The final graphical display illustrates the overall cost benefits that both our member and non-member districts enjoy when they refer students to the collaborative.

KEY PROGRAM

Cost Analysis

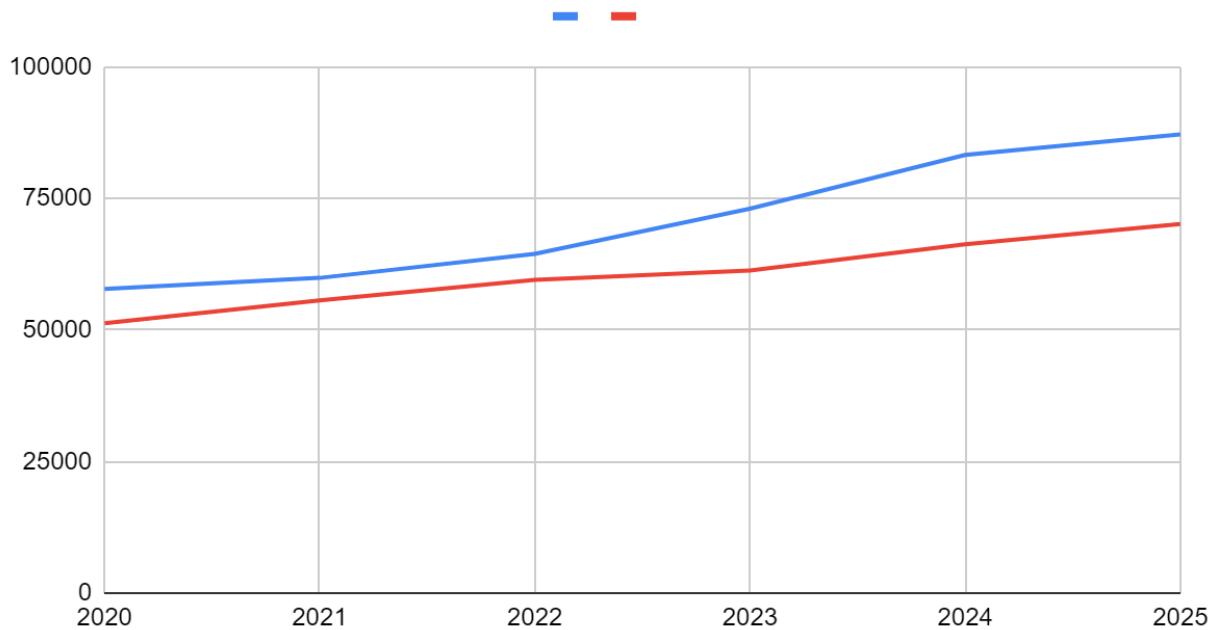
Comp and Keystone Key



Annual average rate for MAAPS comparable programs within a 1 hr. radius \$117,740 per annual year (180). Keystone Educational Collaborative supplies annual savings of \$43,810.

KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL ELEMENTARY MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM Cost Analysis

Comp and Keystone Elementary

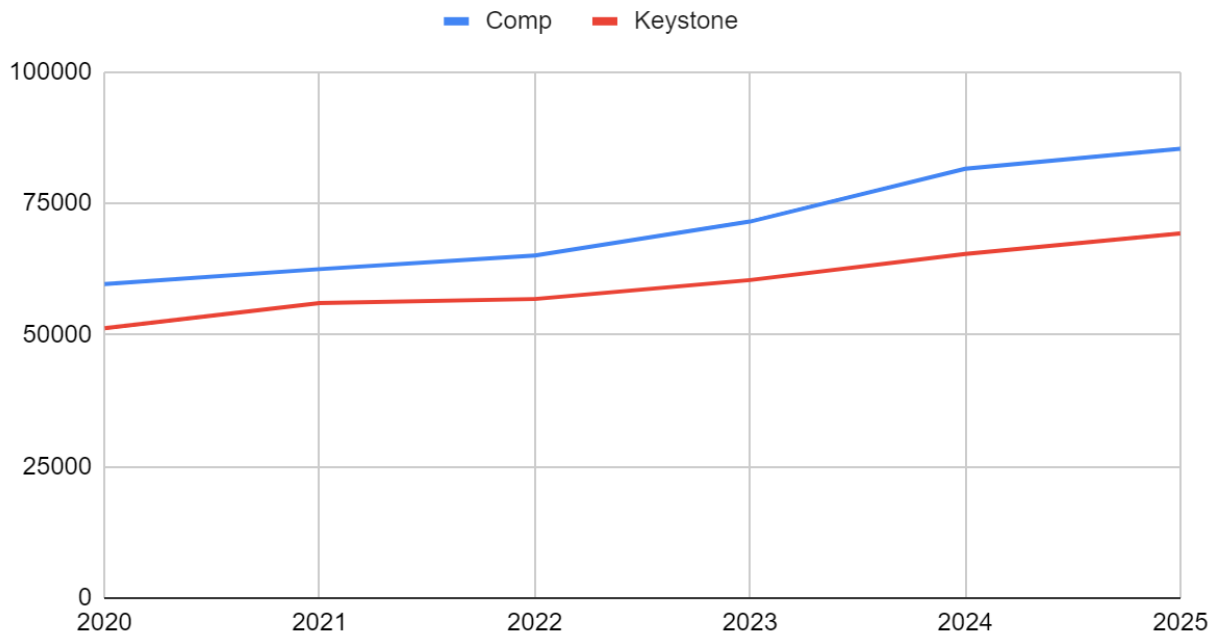


Annual average rate for MAAPS comparable programs within a 1 hr. radius is \$87,185 per annual year (180). Keystone Educational Collaborative supplies savings of \$17,029.00.

KEYSTONE ACADEMY PROGRAM

Cost Analysis

Comp and Keystone Academy



Annual average rate for MAAPS comparable programs within a 1 hr. radius is \$85,400.00. Keystone Educational Collaborative supplies annual savings of **\$16,090.00.**

FINANCIAL AND ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

MEMBER DISTRICTS

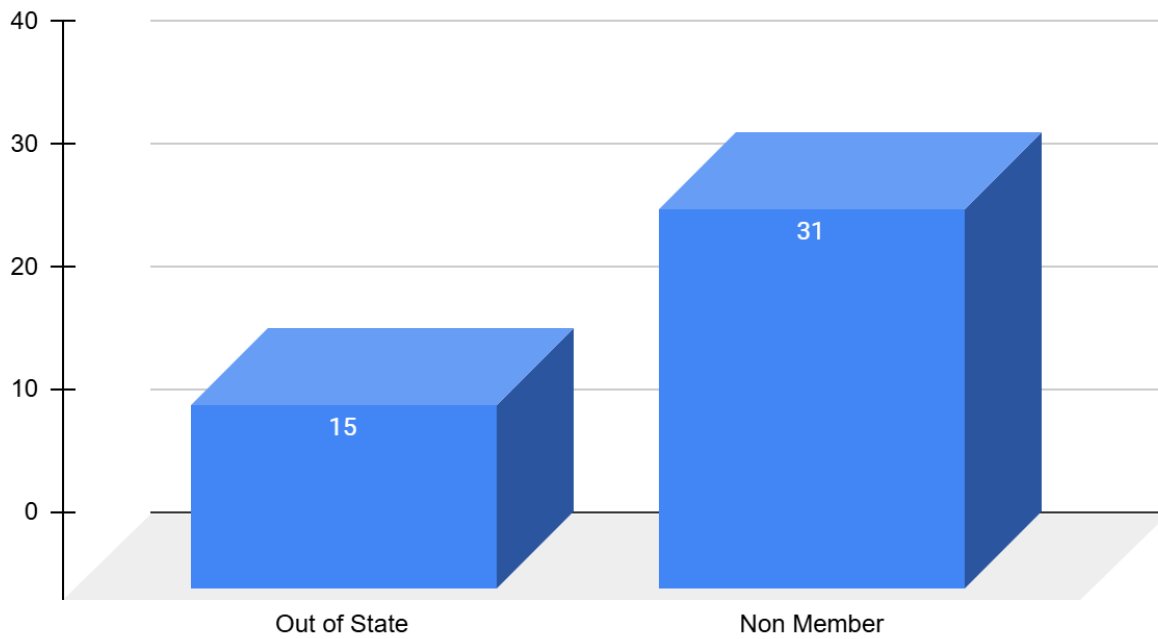
One of the core missions of the Collaborative is to provide our member districts with programs that enhance and reinforce their educational offerings, specifically tailored to address the intensive therapeutic and educational needs of students with disabilities. Currently, we serve a student population where approximately 88% come from our twelve member districts, underscoring the strong integration and alignment of our highly specialized programs within their educational systems. Eleven of the twelve member districts have effectively incorporated these programs, demonstrating that our specialized program design meets the requirements and aspirations of our members and significantly strengthens their educational offerings.

NON-MEMBER DISTRICTS

Our specialized programming is meticulously designed to cater to the intensive therapeutic and educational requirements of students with disabilities, and it has remained a central focus for both our member districts and the collaborative as a whole. While our members play a significant role within our organization, as a collaborative, we steadfastly endeavor to create the least restrictive environment for all students with specialized needs.

Irrespective of town boundaries, the needs of our students have consistently been the focal point of this collaborative's mission. Therefore, we, as a collaborative, are unwavering in our commitment to supporting students and families from neighboring non-member districts. In the past year, the collaborative has been able to provide assistance to 12% of our population comprising non-members and out-of-state students, with the goal of enabling these students to remain closer to their own communities.

Out of State vs Non Member 24-25

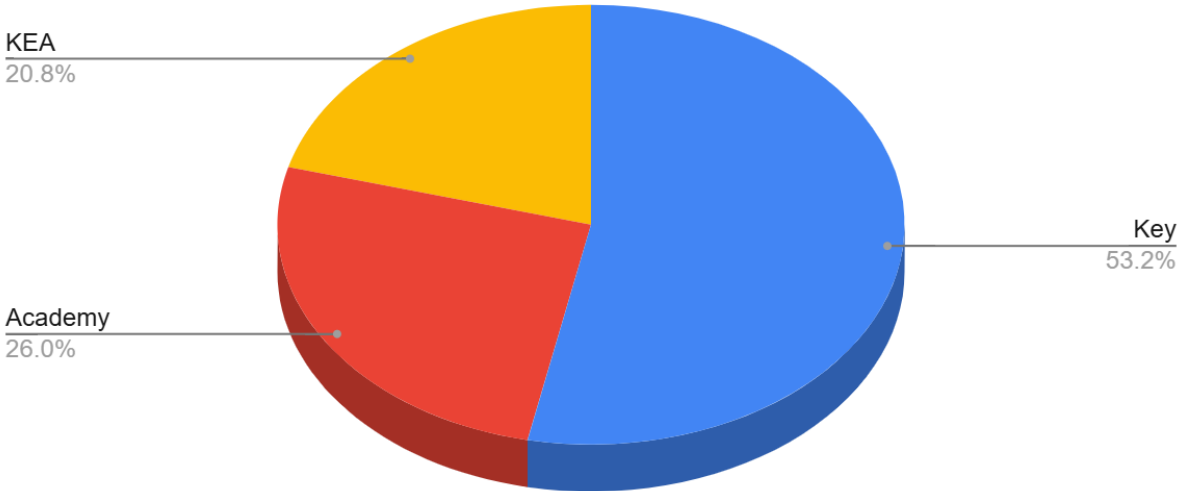


PROGRAM BREAKDOWN

Our specialized programming is crafted in response to the specific needs of our member districts, offering support for students with a diverse array of disabilities. The visual representation below provides an overview of the distribution of disabilities that we have accommodated within our programs and the corresponding distribution of students in those programs that we have identified.

Moving forward, the collaborative remains committed to ongoing analysis and support for our member districts in discerning the most suitable disability categories, with the aim of better identifying and addressing future programmatic needs.

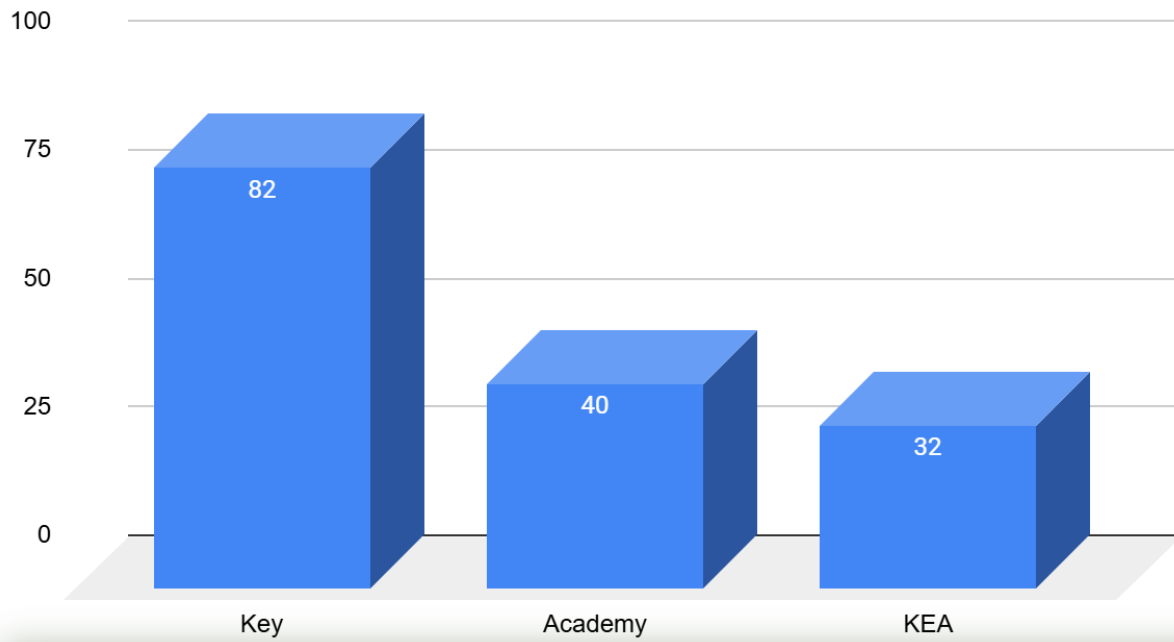
Program Breakdown 24-25



PROGRAM ANALYSIS

The breakdown of our program offerings and the accompanying graphical display of the average student census provide essential insights into the diverse range of educational services we provide and the extent to which they meet the needs of our student population. These visual representations enable us to tailor our programs effectively, ensuring they align with best practices and cater to the unique requirements of our students. Additionally, they help us track and analyze the average student enrollment within each designated program, guiding our efforts to continuously enhance the quality and accessibility of our educational services.

Program Census Average



"The future influences the present just as much as the past."



REVENUE BREAKDOWN

KEY PROGRAM

Tuition	
Member	\$ 4,860,830.00
Non-Member	\$ 1,313,137.00
Total Tuition	\$ 6,173,967.00
Budgeted Tuition	\$5,988,298.00
Difference	185,669.00

KEYSTONE ACADEMY PROGRAM

Tuition	
Member	\$ 2,073,800.00
Non-Member	\$ 846,492.00
Total Tuition	\$ 2,920,292.00
Budgeted Tuition	\$ 2,980,322.00
Difference	-\$60,030.00

KEYSTONE ELEMENTARY MIDDLE SCHOOL PROGRAM

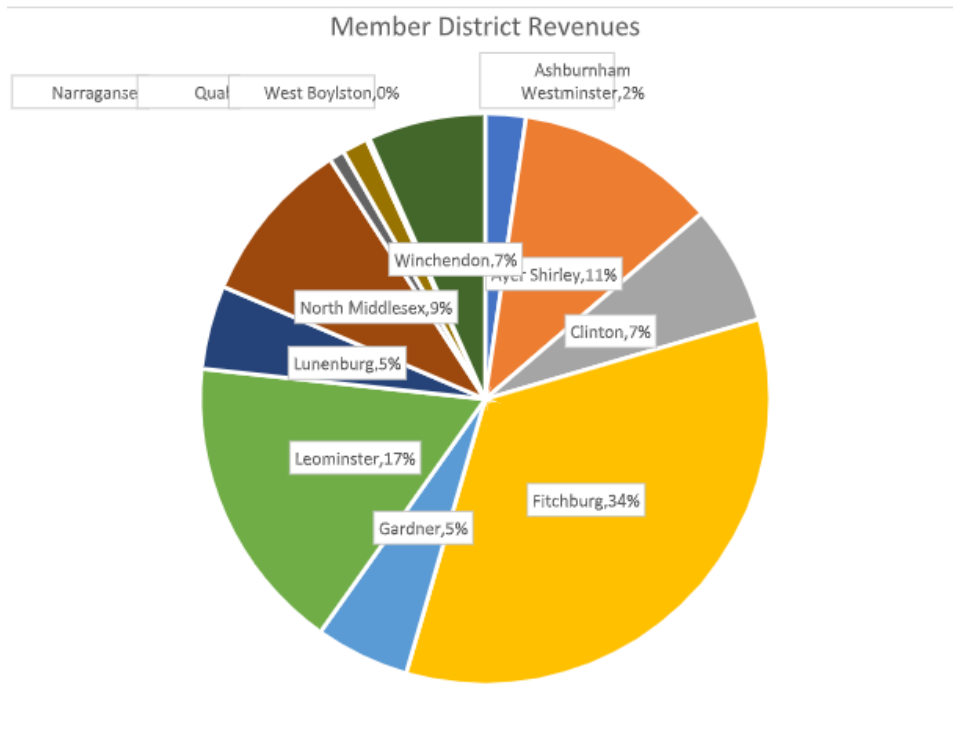
Tuition	
Member	\$ 1,773,945.00
Non-Member	\$ 1,063,285.00
Total Tuition	\$ 2,837,230.00
Budgeted Tuition	\$ 3,577,979.00
Difference	-\$740,749.00

EXTENDED EVALUATION

Total Tuition	
Member	\$438,956
Non-Member	\$ 120,528
Total Tuition	\$ 559,484

TUITION REVENUE

The variance between the budgeted and actual tuition revenue is attributed to both staff and space availability for those programs where some student referrals could not be accommodated. Several key licensed positions were affected by leaves and vacancies which are no longer issues. To address space concerns, the Collaborative continues to purchase and develop program sites.



FINANCIAL POSITION

Financial Position

The 2025 financial position statement for Keystone Educational Collaborative reflects strategic fiscal management amid significant capital investments and stable operational performance. Total assets amounted to approximately \$10.8 million, demonstrating the Collaborative's commitment to enhancing its physical and educational infrastructure. A key long-term liability is the \$5.2 million OPEB obligation, highlighting a proactive approach to securing employee post-employment benefits to support workforce stability. Additionally, the acquisition and renovation of property at 135 and 143 Joslin Street, backed by a loan exceeding \$6 million, underscores the capital investment strategy focused on creating a strong foundation for student services.

Despite these investments, the Collaborative's net position as of June 30, 2025, was negative \$3,233,219, primarily due to the increase in long-term liabilities including property debt and OPEB obligations. This reflects a net swing of approximately \$6,635,000 from 2024 as it is the first appearance of both liabilities on the Collaborative's financial statements. This reflects the organization's capital-intensive growth phase rather than operational weakness. Tuition and service fee revenues exceeded budget by \$418,864, showing strong operational revenue generation. Expenditures were slightly over budget by \$59,000, representing improved expense control compared to the prior year.

The capital assets valued at over \$9 million and a positive fund balance support operational flexibility and ongoing service delivery. The Collaborative's financial strategy, especially in its 50th year, emphasizes facility ownership and investment in long-term employee benefits to build equity and stability. While this results in short-term negative net position, it positions the Collaborative for sustainable growth by avoiding lease uncertainties and maintaining quality educational services. Historical net position gains and strong revenue management reinforce the Collaborative's overall financial resilience and its ability to continue fulfilling its mission and supporting member districts effectively.

Key summarized financials include:

- Total assets: approx. \$10.8 million
- OPEB liability: \$5.2 million
- Property loans for 135 and 143 Joslin Street: over \$6 million
- Tuition/service revenue surplus: \$418,864
- Expenditure over budget: \$59,000
- Net position: negative \$3,233,219 at June 30, 2025
- Capital assets: over \$9 million

This comprehensive financial position demonstrates a capital-intensive yet balanced approach designed to support Keystone Educational Collaborative’s mission and provide a strong foundation for future growth and service excellence.



SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR SURVEY RESULTS

In our ongoing commitment to provide high-quality services and programs, the collaborative conducts an annual satisfaction survey among our member district Special Education Administrators every September. The reference tool has been expanded from previous surveys to ensure accuracy in measuring satisfaction not only from direct service providers but also in terms

of administrative support provided by the collaborative to its members. Since collaboration is a cornerstone of our work, feedback from Special Education Administrators is invaluable in gauging our overall effectiveness as an organization.

Out of the twelve Special Education Administrators in our member districts, five were able to respond to the survey, and the results are outlined below. We acknowledge that the current environment, with its focus on school reopening plans, has made it challenging for some of our members to respond promptly, and their feedback will be accommodated in an alternative format.

The collaborative fully embraced the comprehensive program recommendation and recognized the imperative for member districts. As a result, the collaborative undertook various initiatives during the 2024-2025 school year. Although the pandemic posed some limitations, the collaborative provided valuable support to districts by conducting evaluations of special educational services and reviewing multi-tiered support protocols. Leveraging the evaluation outcomes, the collaborative continued to offer training and support for multi-tiered support and best practice protocols for students with special education needs and programs.

Regarding the suggestion to expand vocational opportunities within the collaborative, we made significant strides. We welcomed an additional wood shop teacher, a Rehabilitation Counselor, and a Transition Specialist to bring their vocational expertise and assessment knowledge to our team. This enhancement enables us to better guide students toward future vocational opportunities. Currently, approximately 75% of working-age students are engaged in activities

beyond regular school hours, including volunteer work, job sampling, and other vocational opportunities that expose them to future career prospects.

Furthermore, the collaborative joined the Autism Higher Education Foundation and initiated the PLAT program (Paralegal Assistant Training Program). We are actively supporting the Fitchburg Court House and will soon extend our services to the Ayer/Shirley Court House, providing students with opportunities within the court system. We have one student already enrolled in the program, and we are exploring options to include students with varying disability demographics.

Regrettably, we have encountered challenges in meeting the demand for specialized services such as school psychologists. This predicament is exacerbated by a longstanding shortage of qualified candidates, which has been further compounded by the ongoing pandemic. Throughout the school year, we managed to assist some of our members in cases where the collaborative's school psychologist provided support in the evaluation and analysis of data collected by the district teams.

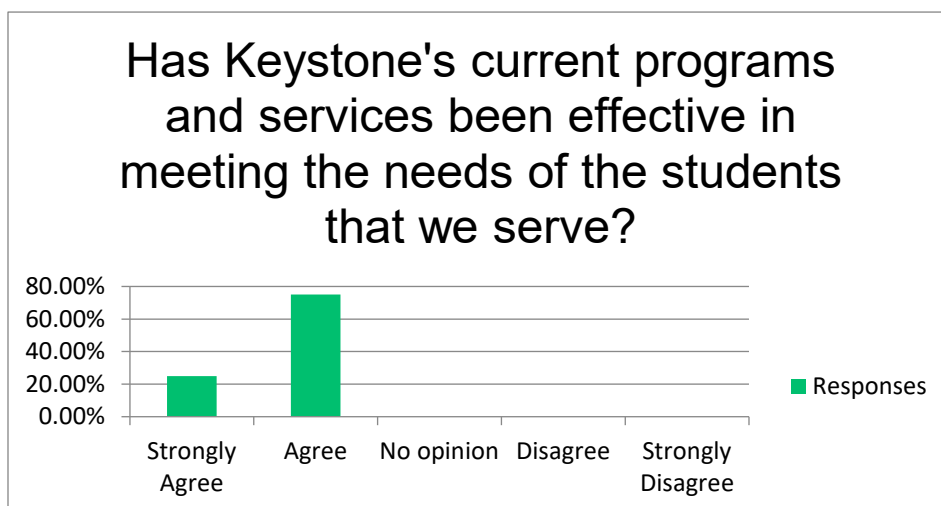




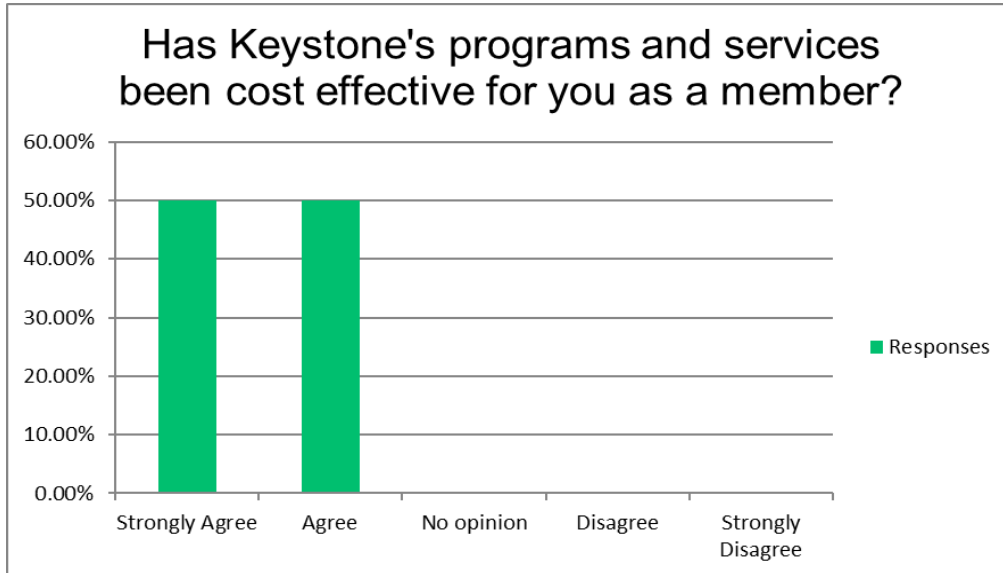
SURVEY QUESTIONS

The summary results of this annual survey indicate that in 2024-2025 there was a high level of satisfaction with our special education programs and services and equally important, the collaborative continues to be a caring, responsive and effective organization that meets the demands of districts for efficient, effective and as a local educational option for quality services.

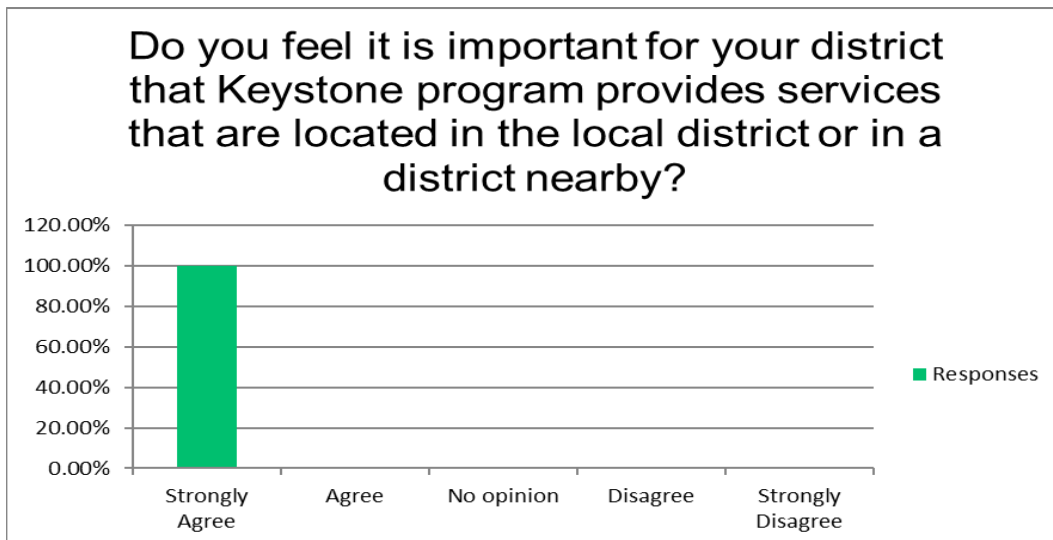
QUESTION 1:



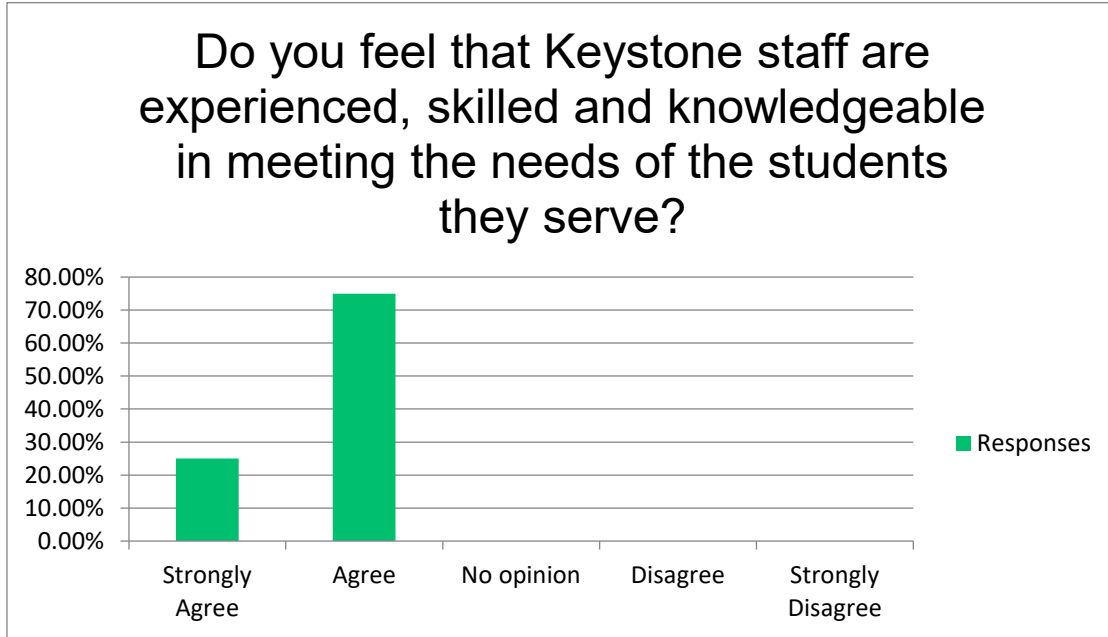
QUESTION 2:



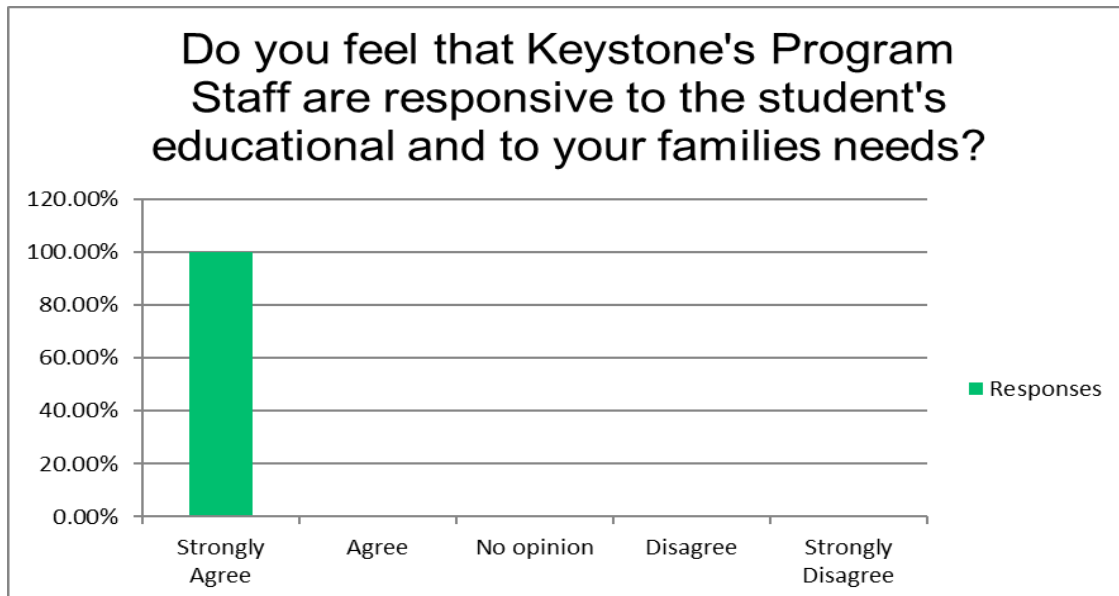
QUESTION 3:



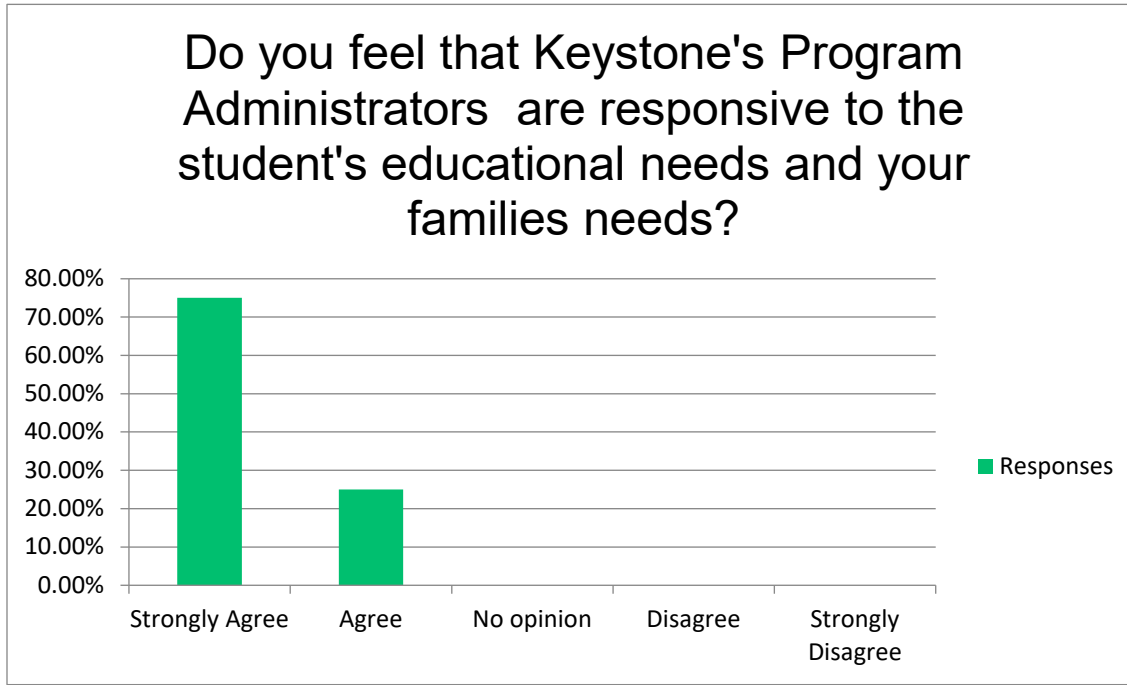
QUESTION 4:



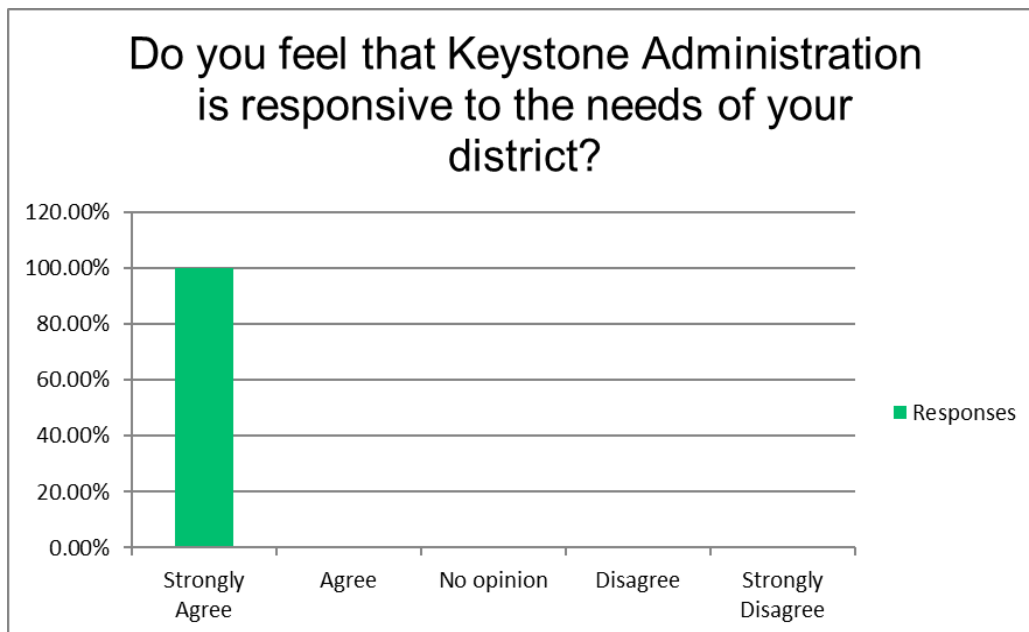
QUESTION 5:



QUESTION 6:



QUESTION 7:

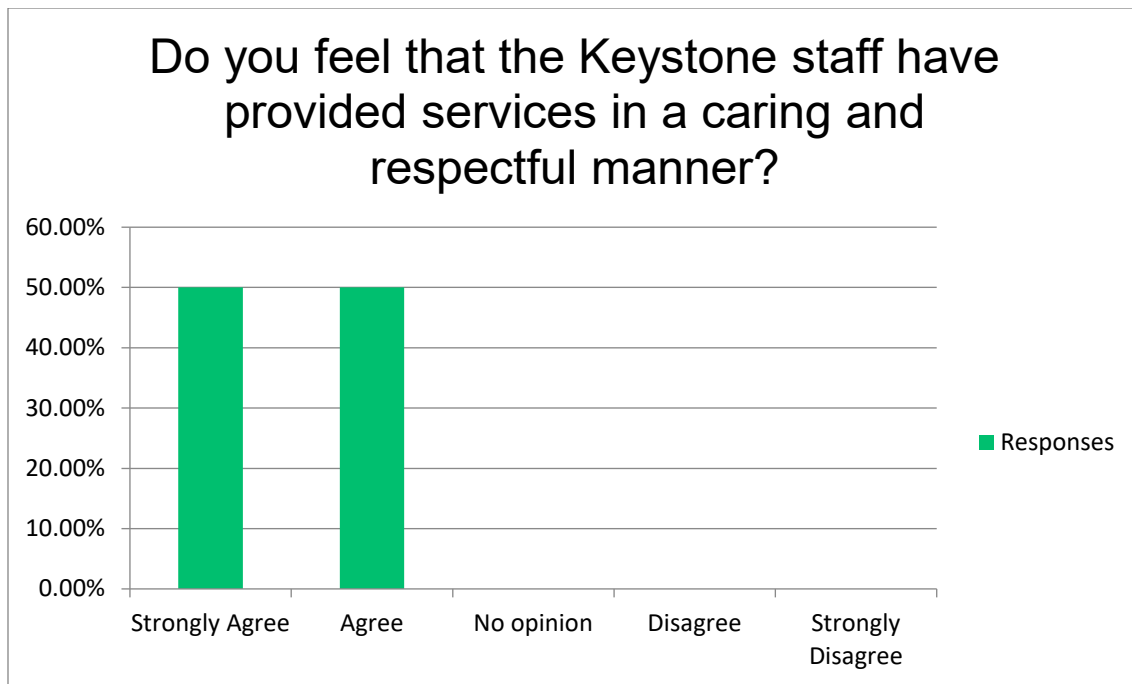


QUESTION 8:

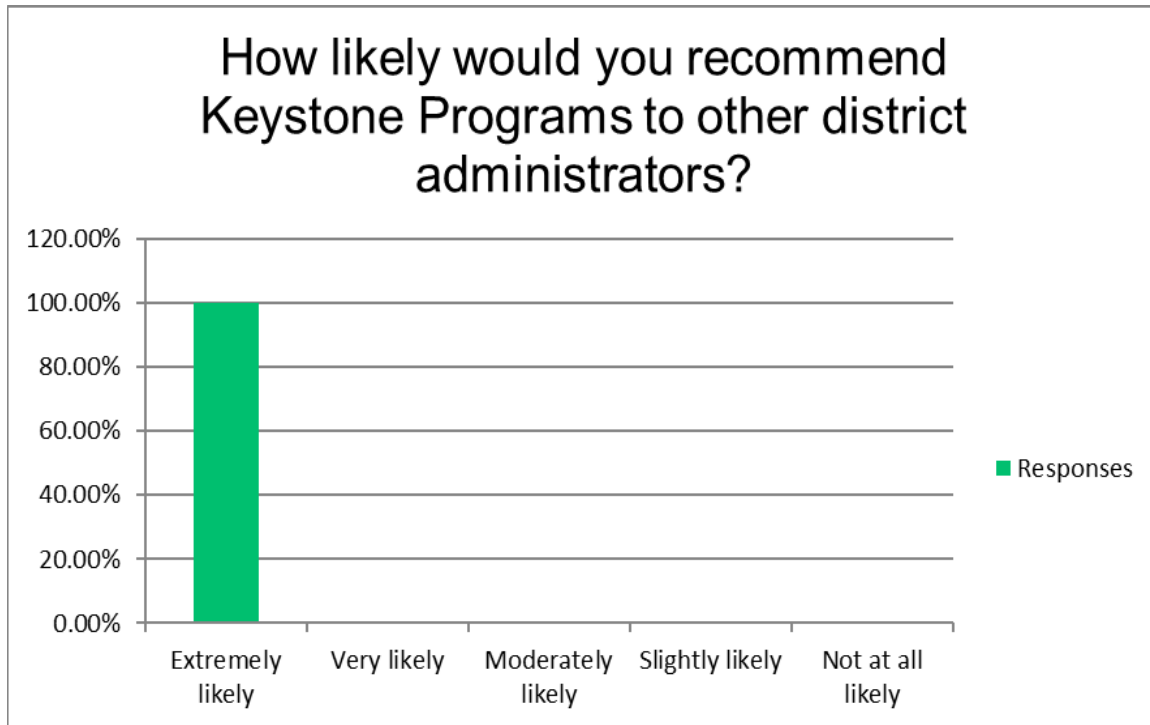
What would you suggest that our Keystone's Program Administrators could do differently to strengthen your program needs?

- I feel continuing with timely responses and transparency are key.
- Nothing that I can think of-everyone is always responsive and helpful!

QUESTION 9:



QUESTION 10:



QUESTION 11:

Are you currently pleased with the new changes that the collaborative has made, and the new services projected in the upcoming year? Please comment.

- We are very pleased.

QUESTION 12:

Can you suggest any services, supports or resources that would strengthen Keystone any further?

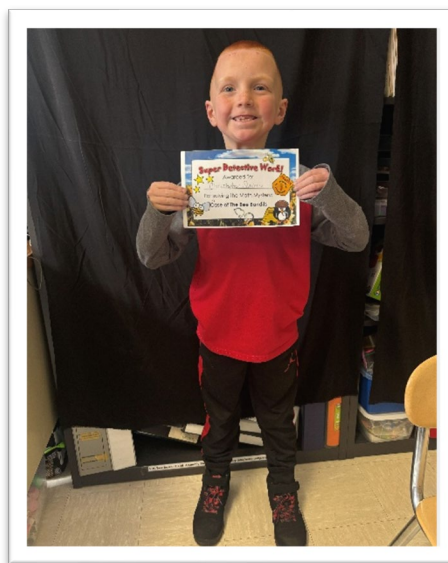
- School psychologist for use of testing.
- I'm very happy with the support Keystone provides, nothing additional I can think of right now.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

During the **2024-2025** academic year, the collaborative offered four unique programs designed to meet the needs of a specific student population, which complement and augment the educational programs and services of the member districts in a cost-effective manner.

- Keystone Alternative Elementary- Middle School (gr. K-7), is a Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education approved Public Day Programs. The program provides therapeutic and educational programming for students with learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral obstacles, and complex mental health issues. Students within this program have been identified as needing special education services.
- Keystone Academy (gr. 7-12) is also a Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education approved Public Day Programs. This specialized program provides therapeutic and educational and vocational programming for students with learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral obstacles, and complex mental health issues. Students within this program have been identified as needing special education services.
- Key Program: ICAN, PREP PROGRAM & Learning for Life

The Key Program serves students who are aged 5-22 who are educated within public school settings and are substantially separate from member districts programming but have access to the least restrictive environment. The program serves students who have more complex, low incidence, cognitive, communication, related services, behavioral, academic, medical, and self-help needs that districts are unable to meet within the individual district. All the students in the Key Program have been found eligible for special education services.



- Extended Year Services: All three of the collaborative's specialized Special Education Programs offer extended year services and programming that are appropriate for the specific student's needs.

- Extended Evaluation Program: The collaborative provides extended evaluation services to students who were referred by school districts. Students in the program attend either Keystone Academy or Keystone Elementary and Middle School and receive therapeutic and educational services as part of the school program. In addition, students in the Extended Evaluation Program received evaluation and assessment services as identified by the student's educational team and as requested by the sending district. During the extended evaluation period, the collaborative provides weekly updates to the sending district as well as the student's family regarding social, emotional, behavioral, and academic functioning within the new school environment. Students who completed the program received an evaluation package designed to help the district determine the appropriate placement and support for that student. Students referred to the program may have previously been found in need of special education services, but others have not been found to need such services. While in the program, students are typically provided with educational evaluations, psychological, and behavioral evaluations and other assessments as determined by the referring team. Students attending the Extended Evaluation program are provided with evaluations designed to answer those referral questions brought forth by the sending district. Such evaluations might include assessment in the following areas: academic, behavioral, social/emotional, cognitive, speech and language, occupational therapy, physical therapy, executive functioning, attention, and/or adaptive behavior. The overall goal for the Extended Evaluation Programs is to prepare students to return to the least restrictive environments and to provide districts with recommendations on how to provide services in such a setting.

Keystone Alternative Elementary- Middle School Program

Philosophy

We believe that every child can learn and acquire the social skills required for success in school and in the community. We further believe that each child is unique, and that each child has the potential to make progress academically and emotionally.

Mission Statement

The mission of the KEA Program is to help each child discover his or her strengths, improve coping mechanisms and develop social and academic skills. The goal of the program is to provide each student with the behavioral and academic skills required to return to a less restrictive educational setting.



Student Population

The KEA Program's strengths are in its small size and high staff/student ratio. Students are placed in multi-age classrooms according to their developmental needs and academic skills. Students are referred to the program because they demonstrate challenging emotional and/or behavioral concerns. Students also present with learning and psychological challenges including but not limited to ADD/ADHD, Learning Disabilities, PTSD, PDD, OCD and Oppositional Defiant Disorder.

Referrals

Referrals are made to the Program through the Special Education Directors of the sending school districts. Students may be placed within the Program on a long-term basis or for an Extended Evaluation Assessment.

Referrals for Keystone Alternative Elementary/Middle School 2024-2025

Total referrals	62
Not a fit for program:	15
Accepted but selected other placement:	3
Never toured program and placed elsewhere:	13
Referral closed out by district:	8

Placement Referrals for 2024-2025

Students enrolled:	6
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Extended Evaluation Referrals for 2024-2025

Students enrolled:	17
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Transitions from Placement 2024-2025

Transition to Other Keystone Program:	3
Transition back to in-district public school	8

Transitions from Extended Evaluation 2024-2025

Transition to long-term placement at Keystone:	16
Transition back to in-district public school:	1

Program Staffing

Each classroom is staffed with a certified licensed teacher and an appropriate number (average = 2) of teacher assistants to allow for a low ratio of students to adults. The program staff includes several related service providers: Three School Counselors, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, and BCBA. These individuals provide individual and/or group therapy to each student, as well as consultation to staff based on student need and IEP service delivery. The clinician acts as a liaison to the sending school districts and is available to provide support to parents and guardians.

The Keystone Elementary program is now located in Fitchburg, MA on Electric Ave and was previously located within the former Squannacook Elementary building in Townsend in the beginning of the year. We have an onsite Licensed Practical Nurse available to our students who is overseen by the collaborative Registered Nurse. Program Supervisor has overall administrative operational responsibilities for the Keystone Elementary- Middle School Program and works collaboratively with the Member District Administrative team and the Executive Director of the collaborative.



Academic

Our elementary-middle school classes are taught in self-contained classrooms, which are K-8th grade students. All subject areas and specials are taught by the classroom teacher except for health and fitness classes. The middle school program comprises students in grades 5th, 6th, and 7th grade. This model provides homeroom as a base classroom and include a rotating schedule for ELA, Math and Science. This model helps to prepare students to move from a self-contained classroom model to a model that helps students navigate more transitions and challenges of subject specific classrooms. These students continue to receive therapeutic support to meet the demands of a less restrictive middle school program.

All students are taught per their IEP and at their individual instruction level. The curriculum of the KEA Program is aligned with the MA Curriculum Frameworks with appropriate modifications and/or adaptations to meet the needs of individual students. Related services such as speech or occupational therapy are provided according to each student’s IEP. Our students also participate in the MCAS process with appropriate modifications and/or adaptations for each student.

Behavior Management Social Emotional Learning

Behavior Management at KEA Program is based on respect for everyone, setting appropriate and consistent limits, and reasonable and positive expectations. Students will be given as much positive reinforcement as possible to promote prosocial behaviors. A variety of positive reinforcement strategies are employed. Students receive reinforcement and awards on both individual and group levels.

Each class has a daily behavior chart point system, which enables the student to earn points or stickers for appropriate behaviors in the areas of academics, behaviors and adult and peer interactions. If the student has achieved 80% of possible points or stickers for the day, he or she may choose a prize/activity.

If needed, individual behavioral support plans are developed by each child's team in consultation with the Program Supervisor and/or counselor. The services of contracted Behavioral Psychologists are available on an as needed basis. Behavioral support plans and data are reviewed and updated routinely by the program staff.

Community Based Instruction

We are continuing to safely develop plans to provide community-based instruction for all our students. This initiative will allow the students to learn and perform skills, from the beginning, in the natural setting and will eliminate the need for a student to have to generalize the skill from only one setting, or with one person, in the real-life setting.

Keystone Academy



The Keystone Program strives to educate students to possess the social skills required for success in school and in the community while creating a learning environment where students can feel comfortable and confident so they can be the best version of themselves.

Keystone offers a 180-day school program in addition to a five-week extended school year program.

Description

Our *Keystone Academy* is an educational program that supports students between grades 7-12, who present with significant social, emotional, and learning disabilities. These disabilities affect overall ability for academic success or ability to participate within the educational community available within their home districts. The Keystone *Academy* is a substantially separate school that focuses on the *whole child approach* regardless of the disability category. We acknowledge that some of our children today carry a larger emotional burden than students of the past, and that to navigate life's many challenges they may need more specialized support and guidance than was historically provided the goal of this full day program is to assist children in developing healthy relationships, skills to self-regulate their emotions, communication skills to advocate for themselves and their needs, working toward their full academic potential.

Within our trauma-sensitive community, Keystone focuses on the areas of *safety*, *respect* and *effective learning* as a foundation to participate in the daily routines and expectations of student life.

Philosophy

We believe at the Keystone Academy that we need to focus on the whole child approach regardless of the disability category. We acknowledge that some of our children today carry a larger emotional burden than students of the past, and that to navigate life's many challenges we may need to supply them with more specialized support and guidance than what was historically provided. The goal of this full day program is to assist children in developing healthy relationships,

skills to self-regulate their emotions, communication skills to advocate for themselves and their needs, working toward their full academic potential.

Mission Statement

The mission of the Keystone Academy is to provide an educational experience for students with special needs that fosters academic growth, social responsibility, and emotional health. Keystone orients its programming and instruction around the three areas of safety, respect, and effective learning.

Student Population

Students are referred to Keystone Academy because of being unsuccessful in general education, or as a step-down from a more restrictive setting. Students present with a variety of academic, social and behavioral challenges and/or emotional impairments requiring instruction in an adult-intensive, highly structured setting with small class sizes and consistent support, encouragement and praise. Typical conditions seen in the school population include but are not limited to general and specific learning disabilities, attention deficit/ hyperactivity disorder, suicidal ideation, depression, anxiety disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar, oppositional defiant disorder, autism spectrum disorder or a combination of these.

Program Staffing

Each classroom is staffed with a certified licensed teacher and an appropriate number (average = 2) of teacher assistants to allow for a low ratio of students to adults. The program staff includes several related service providers: Three School Counselors, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Therapist, and BCBA. These individuals provide individual and/or group therapy to each student, as well as consultation to staff based on student need and IEP service delivery. The clinician acts as a liaison to the sending school districts and is available to provide support to parents and guardians.

The Keystone Academy program is located in Leominster, MA. We have an onsite Licensed Practical Nurse available to our students who is overseen by the collaborative Registered Nurse. Program Supervisor has overall administrative operational responsibilities for the Keystone Academy Program and works collaboratively with the Member District Administrative team and the Executive Director of the collaborative.



Referrals

Referrals are made to the Program through the Special Education Directors of the sending school districts. Students may be placed within the Program on a long-term basis or for an Extended Evaluation Assessment.

Total referrals	72
Not a fit for program:	33
Accepted but selected other placement:	3
toured program and placed elsewhere:	10
Referral closed out by district:	9

None

Placement Referrals for 2024-2025

Students enrolled:	7
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Extended Evaluation Referrals for 2024-2025

Students enrolled:	10
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Transitions from Placement 2024-2025

Graduated:	6
Transition to Other Keystone Program:	2
Transition back to in-district public school	4

Transitions from Extended Evaluation 2024-2025

Transition to long-term placement at Keystone:	4
Transition back to in-district public school:	3

Student withdrew during Ext Evaluation:	2
Student moved out of catchment area during Extended Evaluation:	1

Extended Evaluation

Extended Evaluation: Program students enrolled in the Evaluation Program are assigned to Keystone Academy classrooms and participate in daily school programs to facilitate assessment while with their peers. The full-time School Psychologist/Lead Clinician continued to be pivotal in evaluating all students enrolled in in the Extended Evaluations and continued defining the assessment process and oversight of the written reports.

Program Services

Individualized Academic and Behavioral Programming

Keystone Academy adheres to the delivery of services accommodations and modifications described in a student IEP. The Academy’s tier one behavior system: students are monitored under a generalized reinforcement system. The Middle school utilizes a daily point earning system as a gage for students to determine success. Students earn points for success in the areas of effective learning, respect, and school safety. Point sheets are tabulated daily and converted into “school dollars” to be spent at a school store or saved up for a higher value reward.

Keystone Academy high school community utilizes a Level System as the fundamental structure to promote behavioral, social, and academic growth. The six (6) levels are sets of clear standards for an effective student. This system is instrumental in assisting students in setting and meeting goals, and in allowing students to monitor their own progress on a day-to-day basis in school.

Daily Literacy Instruction

Keystone Academy continues to devote daily instructional time for the enhancement of skills in the areas of listening, reading comprehension, speaking, and writing. Students on or near grade-level skills participate in a novel-based curriculum. Struggling readers continue to benefit from the Lexia program as well as have access to a Reading Specialist that is housed part time within the program.

Academically, the Academy works closely with the referring districts to assure our high school students are taking and succeeding in the required course work and requirements to receive a district high school diploma.

Technologically and Standards Based Academic Curriculum

With the move to our new location, Keystone Academy was able to acquire existing technology equipment (interactive whiteboards, computer network), increase access to online learning and bring technology into the classroom. This allowed the program to deliver standards-based curriculum with a wider variety of strategies and programming.

With the school closure as the result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the collaborative joined the state and the nation in supporting educators to develop and assemble high-quality educational materials to provide students with effective remote learning resources. Simultaneously with selecting educational platforms and programs, came training and implementation of distance learning strategies while working with families and caretakers to create manageable routines in the home that assured safety and well-being, materials and equipment and predictable on a weekly basis.

Technologically and standards based academic curriculum is offered throughout the year.



Clinical Services

Two full-time School Counselors provide therapeutic clinical/mental health services through individual counseling, social skills groups, mediation, and conflict-resolution/problem solving skills. All students receive a 1:1 session as well as a social skills group weekly based on student need and IEP service delivery. Social Skill groups are co-facilitated by the two School Counselors.

Keystone Academy continued to benefit from ongoing psychiatric consultation.

- Student centered clinical reviews increased our knowledge and understanding of nature of an individual student and how to develop a clinically informed intervention plan.
- Professional Development and Program development consultation.

Crisis Intervention

All staff are trained and certified in CPI Nonviolent Crisis Intervention. The program supports a hands-off policy unless indicated. Staff focus on identifying students' baseline character/traits, escalation cycles and disability-indicated features as a means to intervene early and de-escalate students early.

Health and Wellness Awareness Education

In addition to health classes being offered, Keystone Academy also offers a variety of opportunities for physical education. In seasonally good weather, Keystone Academy visits local parks for hiking and exploration.

We have an outdoor area with a basketball hoop for movement breaks and pick-up games. Through membership at the local YMCA and affiliation with the Boys and Girls Club of Fitchburg and Leominster we have sites in colder weather to offer sports, exercise and workouts.

Functional Life Skills

To prepare students for post-high school pursuits, Keystone Academy provides instruction to ensure a successful transition to college, career/trade training, world of work and/or independent living. Curriculum in Career Education and Math is geared to acquisition of financial literacy, including personal finance and budgeting skills. Development of student mastery in the area of activities of daily living are supported through cooking opportunities, meal planning and preparation; community exploration through field trips to local establishments, restaurants, reading a bus schedule planning a local trip utilizing public transportation.



Expansion in Program Services

This year a half-time BCBA has been added to consult with staff and oversee development of behavior support plans for Tier II and III students.

KEY Program

Philosophy

Our philosophy is to ensure that your child experiences a year full of success through specialized instruction designed to foster growth in key areas:

- Develop self-advocacy skills to communicate effectively and at their highest level of complexity.
- Cultivation of self-reliance skills to support independence to the greatest extent possible.
- Academic achievement in literacy and mathematics, presented in a way that challenges while remaining attainable.
- Building the endurance and positive attitude necessary to engage in meaningful and productive work.

Mission Statement

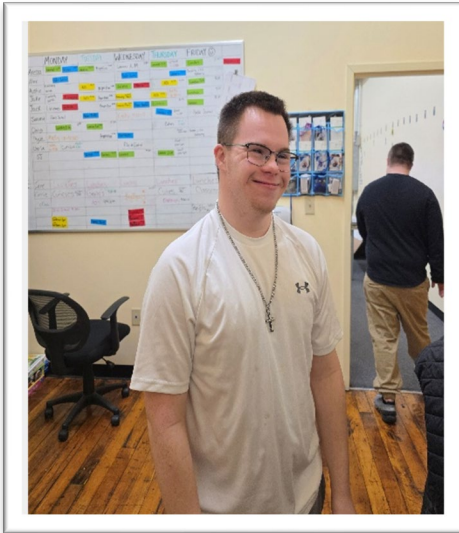
The mission of Key Programs is to partner with parents, professionals from sending school districts, and community members to nurture confident, capable, and self-motivated learners who are prepared to transition to a less restrictive school setting. Our programming and instruction are guided by three core principles: safety, respect, and effective learning.

Key Programs promote, support, and celebrate the pursuit of learning and critical thinking as lifelong endeavors, challenging students to acquire the skills necessary to meet the evolving technical, social, and economic demands of the world. Additionally, we are committed to fostering individuals who respect and honor the diversity of race, color, age, gender, religion, sexual orientation, or cognitive challenges.

Student Population

The KEY Program continues to provide specialized services to students with special needs, in a public day school setting. These students often face significant challenges that hinder their ability to function independently and make effective progress in a general education environment. Referrals to our classrooms are made through the child-study process, where it is determined that a more intensive educational setting is necessary for the student to achieve meaningful progress.

Students present with a wide range of academic, social, and behavioral challenges. While some students are academically competitive, the majority face significant delays in cognition, self-regulation skills, motor skills, as well as expressive and receptive language. Additionally, some students have significant medical needs that require ongoing nursing support throughout the school day. A high level of adult supervision and assistance is essential to ensure their safety and to support the implementation of their educational goals and objectives.



Standard diagnoses include:

- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Developmental Delay
- Down Syndrome
- Intellectual Disability
- Rare Genetic Disorders (Chromosomal disorders, GRIN1-NDD, IQSec2, etc.)
- Multiple Disabilities (Autism/ADHD/Sensory

Processing, Autism/ODD, Autism/Cerebral Palsy/ADHD)

Program Staffing

Each classroom is staffed with a certified teacher and an appropriate number of paraprofessionals to maintain a low student-to-adult ratio (2:1). The staff supporting the KEY programs are professionally licensed, highly qualified, CPI certified and deeply committed to our students and their families. Additionally, the KEY program features dedicated job coaches who assist students in developing vocational skills essential for life after graduation.

DESE licensed staff

- 2 Administrator
- 12 Teachers

Professionally licensed staff

- 8 Therapists, 4 SLPs, 1 OT, 1 PT, 2 TVI
- 3 Therapy Assistant, 2 COTAs, 1 PTA
- 6 (1 RN & 5 LPN)
- 1 Rehabilitation Counselor
- 2 BCBA

Highly Qualified Support Staff

- 19 Registered Behavioral Technicians (RBT's)
- 26 Paraprofessionals
- 2 Job Coaches
- 1 Program Secretary

Referrals

Referrals to the school are made by Directors of Special Education, Educational Team Leaders (ETL) or Out-of-District Coordinators from the student's home school district's Special Education Department. Upon receiving the referral package (which includes all relevant testing and IEP), a KEY Program Administrator will contact the district. If the student is deemed an appropriate fit, an observation will be scheduled at the student's current educational setting, and an appointment will be arranged for the parent/guardian to visit the KEY Program and participate in an intake interview. The final decision regarding enrollment is made by the referring school personnel, the KEY Program staff, and the student's current team, and the parents/guardians. All students must have a current IEP and provide immunization records before starting at the KEY Program.



Placement Referrals for 2024-2025

Total Referrals:	40
Students enrolled:	8
Extended evaluation students enrolled:	6
Extended evaluation transition to long term placement at Keystone:	5
Transitioned to a more restrictive environment:	1
Accepted but selected other placement	1
Never toured program and placed elsewhere:	5
Not a fit for program	16
Programs were full (waiting list)	3
Referral closed out by district	1

Transitions from Placement 2024-2025

Transition to another Keystone Program	1
Transition to a more restrictive environment	6
Graduated/Transition to adult services:	4

Moved Out-of-Catchment Area:	1
Student returned to District:	4
Student passed away:	1

Program Services

Individualized academic and behavioral programming

The KEY Program is an intensive language-based program that integrates applied behavior analysis (ABA) with an interprofessional, collaborative approach to support children with special needs. Each classroom employs a variety of instructional techniques, including discrete trials, small group sessions, hands-on activities, and multi-sensory learning experiences, all enhanced by behavioral modification and positive behavioral supports. Daily living skills, such as safety, self-awareness, and independence, are woven into the daily routine, fostering these essential skills in real-world contexts.

Instruction in the KEY Program is highly individualized to meet each student’s needs, as outlined in their Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and is delivered in a low student-to-teacher ration (2:1) setting. Students engage in the MCAS process with modifications and adaptations suited for their unique needs, participating either through computer-based testing or the MCAS-Alt Portfolio. Possible MCAS modifications include shorter testing sessions with frequent breaks, small group settings, direction reading by a test administrator, tracking support for test items, and scribing. For students unable to participate in standard paper-and pencil tests, the MCAS Alt Portfolio Assessment provides a structured alternative to demonstrate their learning and progress.

Related Services

Related services encompass developmental, corrective, and other supportive services essential for students with disabilities to thrive in their educational setting. These services include speech-language pathology and audiology, physical and occupational therapy, orientation and mobility services, and medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes.

The KEY Program employs an integrated therapy model for delivering therapeutic services to students. This approach, similar to “push-in” therapy, enhances collaboration with teachers, adding structure to both the process and professional relationships. Through this model, therapy support is delivered directly in the classroom, aligning with the student’s instructional environment. By providing therapy in a less restrictive setting, the model allows students to generalize their skills beyond traditional pull-out therapy and offers broader benefits to both students and teaching staff.

Additional related services include school health and nursing services, social work, and parent counseling and training. All Keystone related service providers are fully licensed to practice in Massachusetts and serve as essential members of each student’s educational team. Services are provided in accordance with each student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Behavior management and social emotional learning

Each classroom teaching team meets weekly to discuss student progress toward educational goals and positive behavioral developments. Classroom data is analyzed and reviewed to determine if any adjustments are needed in a student's academic instruction or behavioral protocols.

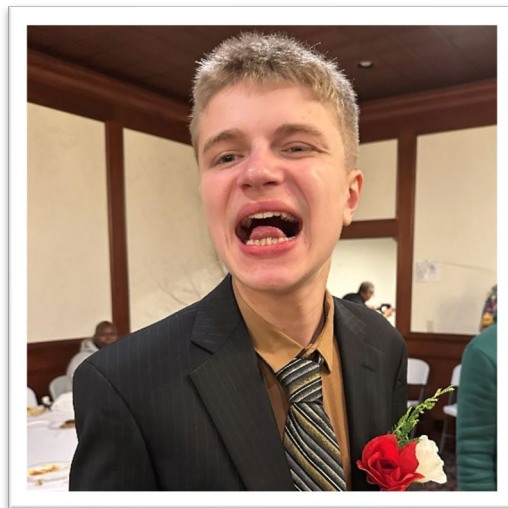
Behavior management within the KEY programs is individualized, with positive expectations and reinforcement strategies tailored to each child to encourage future positive behaviors. A variety of reinforcement methods are used, including token economies, self-monitoring systems, and specific contingency plans.

Individual behavior support plans are developed and implemented for each student, with ongoing data reviews conducted by program staff and the in-program board certified behavior analyst (BCBA).

Community based instruction:

The KEY programs provide vocational training activities designed to foster a positive work ethic, job skills, and work endurance. These activities include a mail run and delivery service between program sites, along with community-based opportunities at locations such as Gardner's Spot, Growing Places, AIS, Harvard Alpaca Farm, Tiny's Restaurant, Ginny's, Oliver's Café, Cutie Patooties, Cutiques furniture boutique, Pit Stop Barber Shop, Ayer Police Station, First Concern, Custom Billing, and Bright Eyes.

Students also engage with the local community to enhance safety skills, community awareness, social interaction, and career exploration.



COLLABORATIVE PROGRAM SERVICES

Services and Supports

In alignment with our mission to continuously address the evolving needs of our member districts, the collaborative has extended its support through a range of services designed to complement and fortify district programs and resources. Our commitment to assisting districts has resulted in cost-effective and flexible long-term and short-term related services, the provision of extended year services, the coordination of a virtual learning initiative utilizing the Edgenuity platform, offering cost savings through cooperative purchasing agreements for INTERFACE mental health referral services, cooperative procurement and management of Tobi Boardmaker, and the delivery of ongoing, high-quality professional development opportunities.

Staff Training and Consultation

The collaborative's staff members continue to be recognized and sought after for their expertise across various disciplines by local school districts. Throughout the 2022-2023 school year, our staff has officially provided valuable support to our member districts in several key areas. This support includes consultation and evaluations for district staff in verbal de-escalation and physical management techniques, guidance in working with paraprofessionals, and the utilization of the ACES Curriculum tool for task analysis and data collection, offering a curriculum that allows staff to become Registered Behavioral Technicians. We have also offered support and consultation to district experts on AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) needs, educational-based adaptive equipment, and family-based support and training.

Furthermore, the collaborative has extended clinical and academic consultation services to member districts, facilitated by our Board Certified Behavior Analysts and School Psychologists, addressing both individual student needs and larger program reviews. Additionally, we have provided mentoring services to districts with newly acquired BCBA's, SLP-CF's (Speech-Language Pathologists in their Clinical Fellowship Year), and PTA supervision.

Extended Year Services

Many of the students served by the collaborative necessitate extended year services to meet their educational needs. To optimize efficiency and offer a wider range of activities, the collaborative organizes a five-week summer program that brings together students from our KEY programs and those from our member districts. Students in our Academy Program and KEA Programs attend



summer sessions at our Fitchburg and Townsend facilities, respectively. These programs operate from Monday through Thursday, offering continuous academic instruction, related services, and a blend of enjoyable yet functional activities.

The collaborative's Extended Year Services are available to any student from our districts who are enrolled and require the services provided by our programs and meet the acceptance criteria. The rates for the Extended Year Program are based on daily rates, prorated for shorter days, and are highly competitive with private schools and other service providers.

Related Services

The collaborative remains committed to delivering related services to our member districts, covering a broad spectrum of areas that include physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, vision and orientation and

mobility services, BCBA (Board Certified Behavior Analyst), and psychological/educational evaluation services. Our dedicated related service staff, working within local districts, play a vital role in supplementing district-related service providers, addressing short-term needs, and, in certain cases, fulfilling all therapy service requirements mandated by the district.

Throughout the 2023-2024 school year, our collaborative-related service providers have been actively engaged in various districts, including Ayer-Shirley, Leominster, Gardner, Fitchburg, Narragansett, Clinton, and Winchendon, extending their support and expertise to meet the diverse needs of our member districts.

Virtual Education

The collaborative continues to oversee the coordination of the Edgenuity Virtual Learning platform for districts engaged in the regional virtual learning initiative. This encompasses handling billing with Edgenuity, which is based on district usage, and facilitating meetings and training sessions with the designated district administrators. Throughout the 2024-2025 school year, a total of 159 students capitalized on Edgenuity courses.



Participating in the collaborative-sponsored cooperative purchasing agreement with Edgenuity has enabled districts to offer a wider array of courses that they might not have had the individual capacity to provide. This has allowed them to retain students who might have considered leaving the district due to unique academic requirements, such as student-athletes participating at a level requiring them to be absent for portions of the regular school calendar. Furthermore, districts have had the opportunity to provide their staff with valuable experience in teaching within a virtual learning environment, equipping them with the necessary skills to manage larger cohorts of students engaged in virtual education.

Edgenuity: Number of Students in attendance per semester

Edgenuity 2024-2025		
Ashburnham/Westminster	1 semester courses 1 full-year courses	\$825.00
Ayer/Shirley	29 semester courses	\$7,975.00
Clinton	52 semester courses	\$14,300.00
Gardner	50 semester courses	\$13,750.00
West Boylston	29 semester courses 2 full-year courses	\$9,075.00
		\$45,925.00

PROGRESS TOWARD MEETING THE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE AGREEMENT

Improving the academic achievement of all students in the least restrictive environment:

The collaborative remains committed to delivering programs that feature a robust curriculum and instructional practices tailored to meet the distinct needs of each student, all while adhering to the comprehensive requirements outlined in an individual student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP). Our collaborative services are administered by appropriately licensed and highly trained staff, always with a focus on providing education within the least restrictive environment, as determined by the student's dedicated IEP team.

Our KEY programs are strategically situated within public school settings, ensuring that all students have opportunities for interaction within the least restrictive environment, which may include participation in general education settings, depending on the specific needs of the student. Students in the KEA programs benefit from educational and counseling services that equip them with the necessary skills and knowledge to facilitate their return to less restrictive educational settings, whenever that is a viable option. Keystone students actively participate in MCAS or MCAS Alternative Assessments, with tailored accommodations determined by their educational teams.

In our ongoing commitment to excellence, the collaborative continues to develop strategies related to behavior management, transition support, and integration efforts, all aimed at ensuring that Keystone students can fully and effectively benefit from educational services within less restrictive settings

To develop and offer a variety of quality professional development opportunities to general and special education teachers, paraprofessionals, school administrators and related service providers that are designed to enhance instructional practices:

Every year, the collaborative tailors its Professional Development offerings to meet the specific needs of our member districts and the collaborative's own staff. These needs are identified through input from the Advisory Board, comprised of Special Education Administrators, our internal staff, and our Board of Directors, which includes Superintendents.

In the previous year, the collaborative provided a range of valuable training sessions, including two legal trainings led by an experienced and highly respected school attorney. We also conducted training on effective strategies for addressing anxiety in educational settings, offered insights into the ACES curriculum package, and conducted numerous restraint training sessions for our staff. These trainings were facilitated by one of our four CPI certified instructors. The collaborative maintains its commitment to being both responsive and proactive in addressing the specialized training requirements of our member districts.

Furthermore, we maintain an active partnership with the Federation for Children with Special Needs' Recruitment and Training Support Center (RTSC), specifically the LEA Special Education Surrogate Parent Recruitment Training Project. This partnership enables Keystone staff and personnel from our member districts to benefit from discounted rates when attending RTSC training programs.

Moreover, the collaborative is a proud member of the Massachusetts Organization of Educational Collaboratives (MOEC), consistently sharing information with member districts about

professional development opportunities offered by various other collaboratives in the region. Many of these opportunities are the result of joint planning efforts within MOEC regional committees.

To provide other educationally related programs, supports and services to our member districts and surrounding communities that are of high quality and cost effective, as directed by the Keystone Board of Directors:

The collaborative remains flexible and responsive in meeting the needs of our districts by providing high quality professional development offerings that are local, are cost effective and are presented by knowledgeable and respected experts. We have been able to meet the needs for both short- and long-term related service providers of our districts and provide licensed, skilled and experienced physical therapists, teachers of the visually impaired and orientation and mobility therapists, speech pathologists, and BCBA's. The collaborative remains committed to offering a range of educationally related programs, support services, and public day programs, catering to the diverse needs of our students. These programs include The KEA Programs, which serve students with social-emotional and learning disabilities, as well as substantially separate programs within public schools, such as the KEY Program, designed for students on the autism spectrum or those with significant intellectual or developmental disabilities. We continue to provide extended year services across our programs, ensuring ongoing support and educational opportunities.

In response to the complex needs of students with significant mental health challenges, the Board approved the creation of two new positions for the 2023-2024 school year. These include a Transition Specialist who collaborates with districts to facilitate successful transitions of students to and from appropriate placements, and an Integration Specialist who works with collaborative classroom teachers in the KEY Program and district staff to integrate students with significant developmental and behavioral issues into general education classrooms.

Our collaborative maintains its flexibility and responsiveness to the evolving needs of our member districts. We offer high-quality professional development programs that are locally accessible, cost-effective, and led by knowledgeable and respected experts. This approach allows us to effectively address the short- and long-term requirements of our member districts by providing licensed, skilled, and experienced professionals, including physical therapists, teachers of the visually impaired and orientation and mobility therapists, speech pathologists, and BCBA's.



PROGRESS TOWARD STRATEGIC PLAN

The Collaborative Strategic Plan is a strategic roadmap that positions our organization to create new growth opportunities, maintain financial stability, and remain highly responsive to the needs of our students, their families, and our member districts. This plan serves as a guiding blueprint to ensure that the collaborative continues to function as a dynamic and adaptable entity, dedicated to addressing the unique requirements of our member districts.

The planning process involved a strong commitment from the Executive Board and administrative team, who were dedicated to providing ample opportunities for stakeholders and public-school districts to contribute to the plan's design. This inclusive approach encompassed focus group sessions with the Executive Board, Advisory Board, Keystone staff, and administrators. These sessions allowed for individual, small group, and large group participation, yielding both qualitative and quantitative data. This diverse input culminated in the approval of five Strategic Target Goal Areas by the Executive Board.

Strategic Goal 1: Program Development and Student Support

Objective:

- Expand and strengthen programming that addresses the academic, behavioral, and social-emotional well-being of students.
- Strengthen specialized education and mental health supports across programs.
- Develop a full continuum of services for medically fragile and high-need students.
- Use program outcome data to guide decisions and ensure continuous improvement.

Measures of Success:

- Increased capacity in therapeutic and specialized programs.
- Documented improvement in student growth measures and functional outcomes.

- Annual program evaluation reports reflecting district satisfaction and need alignment.

The Collaborative has continued to enhance programs serving students with complex academic, behavioral, and social-emotional needs. The Mental Health Study Committee, composed of district representatives, a consulting psychiatrist, a school psychologist, a Department of Mental Health liaison, and Collaborative staff, conducted an extensive review of available supports and system gaps within member districts. Those findings initially led to the creation of the Transition Specialist and Integration Specialist positions, which were approved and incorporated into the FY 2020 budget.

While the establishment of these positions provided valuable insight and coordination for students transitioning between programs or back to their home districts, implementation revealed a more immediate need within the day-to-day instructional and clinical framework. Specifically, data showed heightened demand for additional counseling capacity and targeted literacy interventions within programs prior to expanding transitional services externally. In response, the Collaborative prioritized internal program development by increasing access to counseling, therapeutic consultation, and reading specialist support to ensure that foundational academic and emotional needs were adequately addressed early in a student’s placement.

The organization’s continued collaboration with district and community providers also strengthened its understanding of the regional mental health landscape. Through its previous partnership with the INTERFACE Referral Service at William James College, the Collaborative and participating districts demonstrated the value of coordinated referral systems. While INTERFACE was later discontinued as more towns and districts built internal resources, the initiative established a crucial framework that continues to inform new partnerships, including emerging collaborations with other vendor-based and community mental health supports.

Further structural progress has been achieved in developing a comprehensive continuum of services responsive to student needs through the acquisition of the Fitchburg facility and, more recently, the Leominster Joslin property. These strategic facility investments have expanded classroom space, enhanced accessibility, and created opportunities for more cohesive integration of therapeutic, academic, and transitional services across grade levels and program types. Together, these efforts ensure that students are supported holistically—academically, socially, and emotionally—through all phases of their educational journey.

Strategic Goal 2: Facilities and Capital Planning

Objective:

- Ensure facilities and infrastructure support program quality, expansion, and safety.
- Complete a three-year facilities review and capital plan for Central Office and Public Day Programs.
- Explore purchasing or leasing new spaces to support growth, including relocation of ED/BD programs.

- Implement facility upgrades that enhance accessibility, technology integration, and learning environments.

Measures of Success:

- Approved multi-year facilities plan by the Executive Board.
- Site enhancements or relocations aligned with capital priorities.
- Improved health and safety standards across classrooms and offices.

The Collaborative has made major advancements in facilities, expanding its capacity to support students, staff, and programs. In October 2021, the Collaborative purchased its Fitchburg facility, consolidating multiple previous sites and optimizing program space, technology infrastructure, and accessibility. This strategic investment allowed more students to be served at a central, modern location, improving resource allocation and facilitating larger-scale educational and therapeutic services.

Further progress came with the recent acquisition of the Leominster Joslin property, formerly known as Apple Hill Farm. With this addition, the Collaborative now operates two permanent program sites, supporting both alternative education programs and extended vocational, academic, and therapeutic services. These property investments, combined with ongoing capital planning and partnerships, have enabled the Collaborative to consolidate programs, maximize occupancy expenditures, and build a strong foundation for future growth in alignment with member district needs.

Efforts continue to focus on evaluating future facility ownership, expansion, and adaptive renovation opportunities. These strategic actions support both immediate program needs and the long-term vision of delivering quality, cost-effective, and accessible services for students and families across the districts.

Strategic Goal 3: Workforce Recruitment, Retention, and Professional Growth

Objective:

- Build a highly skilled, supported, and collaborative workforce.
- Strengthen recruitment strategies to attract high-quality professional and paraprofessional staff.
- Provide relevant, research-based professional development aligned with district priorities.
- Establish a coordinated inter-district professional learning network and advisory committee.

Measures of Success:

- Reduction in turnover rates for key professional roles.
- Annual participation metrics in staff and inter-district PD sessions.
- Positive trends in staff satisfaction and professional growth surveys.

The Collaborative recognizes the critical importance of recruiting and retaining a highly skilled workforce to effectively serve its students and member districts. A key component of this effort has been the utilization of a part-time Human Resources (HR) assistant who has significantly contributed to both organizational and member district hiring processes. This HR assistant has played a valuable role in sourcing and screening quality candidates for Keystone’s diverse educational and clinical positions, thereby improving the timeliness and quality of staff recruitment.

Beyond supporting the Collaborative’s own recruitment needs, the HR assistant has acted as a resource for member districts, assisting them in identifying and acquiring internal personnel aligned with district-specific requirements. This shared service model has fostered stronger collaboration within the network and helped address regional workforce challenges more efficiently.

Keystone’s broader recruitment strategy includes reclassification of paraprofessional roles to Registered Behavior Technicians (RBTs), supporting professional development to achieve Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) certification with a 90% pass rate, and hiring doctoral-level specialists to provide consistent, evidence-based care. Partnerships with higher education institutions further strengthen pipelines for new educators and clinicians.

Despite statewide specialty staff shortages, Keystone’s combination of targeted recruitment, professional growth opportunities, mentorship, supportive culture, and the strategic HR assistant position sustains a resilient, engaged workforce committed to advancing student success.

Strategic Goal 4: Marketing, Branding, and Communication

Objective:

- Increase organizational visibility and stakeholder engagement through strategic communication.
- Refine the Keystone brand message to reflect excellence and regional collaboration.
- Develop and implement a targeted marketing and communication plan.

Measures of Success:

- Completion and launch of strategic branding and communication plan.
- Increased digital engagement and external partnership inquiries.
- Consistent district and stakeholder feedback reflecting improved awareness of services.

The Collaborative has successfully established a clear and compelling brand identity that aligns with its mission to unite communities and empower student growth. The focus now is on maintaining the integrity and consistency of this brand and mission while adapting to evolving educational landscapes and stakeholder expectations.

Efforts to sustain and evolve the brand include maintaining authentic, transparent communication that reflects Keystone’s core values and achievements, ensuring consistent messaging across digital platforms, print materials, and community engagement efforts. Maintaining a cohesive visual identity and tone reinforces recognition and trust among member districts, families, and partners.

The Collaborative continues to refine its marketing strategies by leveraging emerging digital tools and storytelling techniques that highlight student successes, community impact, and program innovations. Regular evaluation of engagement metrics and stakeholder feedback informs ongoing adjustments to keep the brand relevant and responsive to new challenges and opportunities.

By balancing brand preservation with thoughtful evolution, Keystone positions itself as a trusted, innovative leader in collaborative education, prepared to meet future needs while honoring its foundational mission and vision.

Strategic Goal 5: Financial and Organizational Sustainability

Objective:

- Maintain fiscal health and operational excellence to ensure long-term viability.
- Align financial management with strategic and capital planning priorities.
- Diversify revenue through grants, tuition-based programs, and partnerships.
- Strengthen internal systems, technology, and data use to improve efficiency and accountability.

Measures of Success:

- Balanced annual operating budget with maintained reserves.
- Documented growth in alternative funding sources.
- Annual review of strategic and fiscal alignment outcomes by the Executive Board.

The Collaborative is committed to ongoing evaluation and strategic planning for long-term capital projects following the significant acquisitions of two school facilities—in Fitchburg and Leominster—as well as the central office facility. These acquisitions represent key milestones in Keystone’s goal to secure permanent spaces that support expanded academic, therapeutic, and administrative functions. By owning these properties, the Collaborative enhances its control over program environments, operational stability, and future growth potential. Continuous assessment of facility needs, renovation opportunities, and capital financing options will guide decision-making to ensure sustainable, cost-effective infrastructure that meets evolving district and student requirements.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S SUMMARY

Keystone Collaborative, a venerable educational resource with over four decades of service to our communities, member districts, students, and families, understands the importance of adapting and evolving in an ever-changing world. As an educational institution, embracing change is not a choice but a necessity; obsolescence is not an option.

Having been a part of this organization for four years, I can proudly say that, even in the face of challenges posed by a global health pandemic, we remain resolute in our mission. We are committed to consistently providing high-quality education while continuously adjusting to meet the evolving needs of the students we serve.

Keystone Educational Collaborative's primary focus remains unwavering in its dedication to enhancing the academic, social, emotional, and self-help skills of our students, enabling them to lead meaningful and productive lives within their own communities. We honor the foundations laid by our predecessors and pledge to adapt and restructure to better support our students as we navigate the future. Our unwavering dedication to excellence and our students' success drives us to redefine and fortify the foundation upon which we build the future.

John Demanche, M. Ed, BCBA, LABA,
Executive Director

Keystone Educational Collaborative
2 Shaker Road, Suite D215

Shirley, MA 01464



www.keystonecollaborative.org



KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE

BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2025

(WITH INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT THEREON)

KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE

BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2025

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**KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE
MANAGEMENT'S DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS - UNAUDITED
JUNE 30, 2025**

As Management of Keystone Educational Collaborative (the Collaborative), we offer readers this narrative overview and analysis of the financial activities of the Collaborative for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2025. We encourage readers to consider the information presented here in conjunction with additional information that we have furnished in our basic financial statements and notes to the basic financial statements.

The Collaborative

The Collaborative is a regional public, multi-service agency authorized by State statute to develop, manage and provide services to local educational agencies. More specifically, the collaborative creates programs and provides services for children with a wide range of special education needs. Pursuant to the provisions of Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 40, Section 4E as most recently amended, the Collaborative is an Agreement entered into in 1975 by the school committees of Fitchburg, Leominster and Clinton acting for and on behalf of their respective cities, towns or regional school districts. This agreement has been reaffirmed over time adding Lunenburg, Gardner, West Boylston, Winchendon, the Ayer Shirley Regional School District, the Quabbin Regional School District, North Middlesex Regional School District, the Ashburnham/Westminster Regional School District and the Narragansett regional School District as members. It was last reaffirmed and modified in FY2022.

OVERVIEW OF THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

This overview is intended to serve as an introduction to the Collaborative's basic financial statements. The Collaborative's basic financial statements consist of three components: 1) government-wide financial statements; 2) fund financial statements; and 3) notes to the financial statements.

Government-Wide Financial Statements

The government-wide financial statements are designed to provide readers with a broad overview of the Collaborative finances, in a manner similar to a private sector business.

The statement of net position presents information on all of the Collaborative's assets and liabilities, with the difference between the two as net position. Over time, increases or decreases in net assets may serve as a useful indicator of whether the financial position of the Collaborative is improving or deteriorating.

The statement of activities presents information showing how the Collaborative's net position changed during the most recent fiscal year. All changes in net position are reported as the underlying event giving rise to the change occurs, regardless of timing of

related cash flows. Thus, revenues and expenses are reported in this statement for some items that will only result in cash flows in future fiscal periods.

Both of the government-wide financial statements distinguish functions that are principally supported by member tuitions and intergovernmental revenues (government activities). The governmental activities include general government, pension benefits, property and liability insurance, employee benefits, claims and judgments, and interest.

Fund Financial Statements

A fund is a grouping of related accounts or a single account that is used to maintain control over resources that have been segregated for specific activities or objectives. Fund accounting is used to ensure and demonstrate compliance with finance-related legal requirements. All of the funds are governmental funds.

Governmental funds are used to account for essentially the same functions reported as governmental activities in the government-wide financial statements. However, unlike the government-wide financial statements, governmental fund financial statements focus on near-term inflows of spendable resources, as well as on balances of spendable resources available at the end of the fiscal year. Such information may be useful in evaluating a government's near-term financing requirements.

Because the focus of governmental funds is narrower than that of the government-wide financial statements, it is useful to compare the information presented for governmental activities to the government-wide financial statements. By doing so, readers may better understand the long-term impact of the government's near-term financing decisions. Both the governmental fund balance sheet and the governmental fund statement of revenues, expenditures, and changes in fund balance provide a reconciliation to facilitate this comparison between governmental funds and governmental activities.

The Collaborative adopts an annual appropriated budget for its general fund. A budgetary comparison schedule has been provided for the general fund to demonstrate compliance with this budget.

Notes to the Financial Statements

The notes provide additional information that is essential to a full understanding of the data provided in the government-wide and fund financial statements.

Other Information

In addition to the basic financial statements and accompanying notes, this report also presents certain required supplementary information which is supposed to be disclosed based on accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

- The assets of the Collaborative were lower than its liability by \$3,233,219 and higher than its liability by \$3,401,771, at June 30, 2025 and 2024, respectively.
- The Collaborative's net position decreased by \$971,444 and increased by \$5,256 for the years ended June 30, 2025 and 2024, respectively.
- The Collaborative's lease liability at June 30, 2025 is \$40,387 and the corresponding lease asset is \$33,248.
- No provision was made in the budget to reflect non-cash activities, such as depreciation and amortization. Depreciation was \$178,027 and \$102,181 for the years ended, June 30, 2025 and 2024, respectively.

GOVERNMENT-WIDE FINANCIAL ANALYSIS

As noted earlier, over time net position may serve as a useful indicator of a government's financial position. The Collaborative's assets were lower than its liability by \$3,233,219 and higher than its liability by \$3,401,771, at June 30, 2025 and 2024, respectively.

At June 30, 2025 and 2024, the net position of (\$3,484,294) and \$3,150,696 was unrestricted, respectively. The Collaborative secured a loan for the purchase and renovations of 143 Joslin Street. No payments are expected until FY26.

Key factors in the change in net position are as follows:

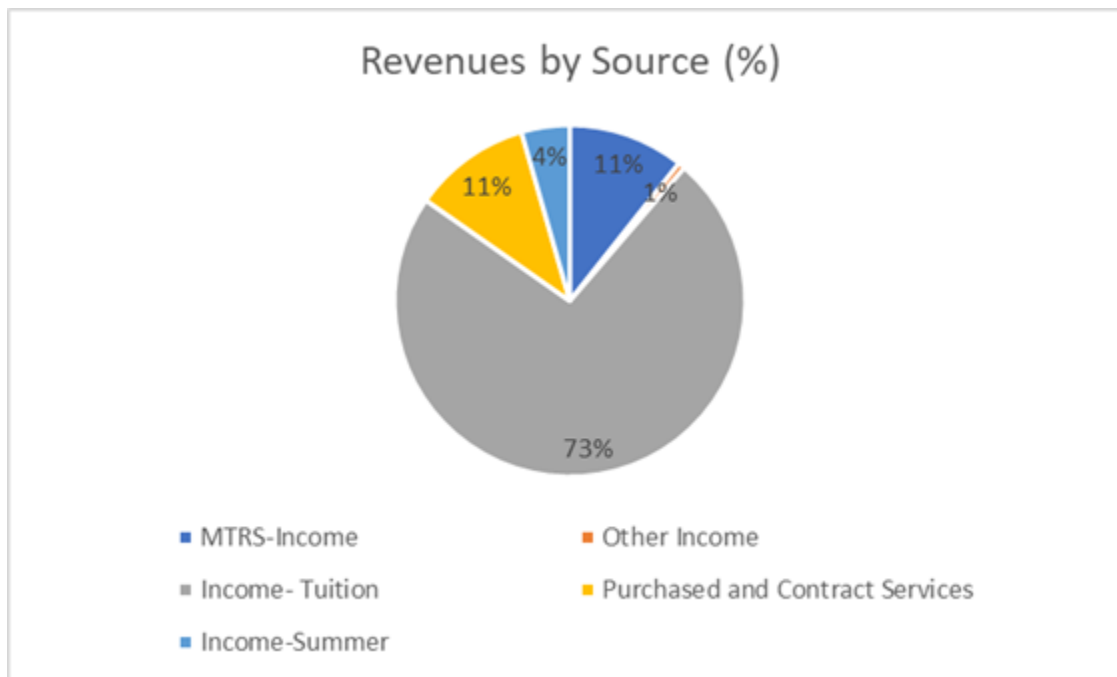
- Expenditures were \$59,184 more than budgeted for the year ended June 30, 2025 and \$517,210 more than budgeted for the year ended June 30, 2024.
- Tuition and service fees revenues were \$418,864 more than budgeted for the year ended June 30, 2025 and \$593,059 more than budgeted for the year ended June 30, 2024. Total operating revenue was \$440,733 more than budgeted for the year ended June 30, 2025 and \$609,745 more than budgeted for the year ended June 30, 2024.

State payments-on-behalf of the teacher retirement program totaling \$1,772,116 and \$1,843,537 were made directly to the Commonwealth for the benefit of Collaborative teachers for the years ended June 30, 2025 and 2024, respectively.

Revenues

Total operating revenue increased in 2025 versus 2024 by \$1,873,676 (15%).

Nonoperating revenue Increased in 2025 versus 2024 by \$2,683 (14%).



Budgetary Highlights

The approved budget of the Collaborative for the 2025 fiscal year end anticipated revenue of approximately \$14.3 million. The budget anticipated that, with full use of services, there would be no change in net position. The actual result was an decrease in net position of approximately \$6,635,000. This was due to the implementation of OPEB where there is a \$5,224,931 liability. The net position, for the fiscal year end 2025 is \$(3,233,219). The Collaborative did not exceed the 25% cap on our fund balance (603 CMR 507.07(9)). The surplus calculation shows that the amount of funds under the cap is \$1,370,896.

REQUIRED DISCLOSURES PER MASSACHUSETTS GENERAL LAWS CHAPTER 40, SECTION 4E

Under Massachusetts General Law and its regulations pertaining to Collaboratives, Keystone Collaborative must disclose certain information. For the year ended June 30, 2025, refer to the following information:

1. The Collaborative did not enter into any transactions with related for-profit or non-profit organizations.
2. The Collaborative leases office and classroom space as described in Note 7 of the financial statements.
3. The names, duties and total compensation of the five most highly compensated employees are disclosed below:

<u>Employee Name</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>Total Compensation</u>
John Demanche	Executive Director	\$161,679
Jean Sauer	Teacher of Visually Impaired and Orientation and Mobility Instructor	\$152,349
Richard Booth	Program Supervisor	\$123,000
Terri Burchfield	Business Manager	\$122,907
Megan Ritter	Program Supervisor	\$122,200

4. The Collaborative expended the following amounts on administration and overhead:

The total amount expended on administration and overhead for the fiscal year 2025 was \$900,698. This amount was for payroll related, administration and occupancy.

The Collaborative did not hold any accounts that may be spent at the discretion of another person or entity.

5. The Collaborative did not expend any funds on services for individuals age 22 or older.
6. The Collaborative makes all information from audits available publicly online through their individual website.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

The financial report is designed to provide the reader with a general overview of finances and to show the accountability for the funds received. If you have questions about this report or need additional financial information, contact the business office of the Keystone Educational Collaborative, 2 Shaker Road D215, Shirley, Massachusetts

Bruce D. Norling, CPA, P.C.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT

To the Board of Directors
Keystone Educational Collaborative
Shirley, MA

Opinions

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the governmental activities of the Keystone Educational Collaborative (the Collaborative) as of and for the year ended June 30, 2025, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the Collaborative's basic financial statements as listed in the table of contents.

In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities of the Collaborative as of June 30, 2025, and the respective changes in financial position thereof for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of the Collaborative and to meet our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinions.

Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Collaborative's ability to continue as a going concern within one year after the date that the financial statements are available to be issued.

Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to

issue an auditors' report that includes our opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if there is a substantial likelihood that, individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Collaborative's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about the Collaborative's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

Required Supplementary Information

Accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America require that the Management's Discussion And Analysis (pages 1-5) and budget and actual General Fund (page 35), schedule of changes in the total OPEB liability and related ratios and the schedule of pension contributions (page 35) be presented to supplement the basic financial statements. Such information is the responsibility of management and, although not a part of the basic financial statements, is required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board, who considers it to be an essential part of financial reporting for placing the basic financial statements in an appropriate operational, economic, or historical context. We have applied certain limited procedures to the required supplementary information in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America, which consisted of inquiries of management about the methods of preparing the information and comparing the information for consistency with management's

responses to our inquiries, the basic financial statements, and other knowledge we obtained during our audit of the basic financial statements. We do not express an opinion or provide any assurance on the information, because the limited procedures do not provide us with sufficient evidence to express an opinion or provide any assurance.

Other Information

Management is responsible for the other information included in the annual report. The other information comprises the introductory and statistical sections but does not include the basic financial statements and our auditors' report thereon. Our opinions on the basic financial statements do not cover the other information, and we do not express an opinion or any form of assurance thereon.

In connection with our audit of the basic financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and consider whether a material inconsistency exists between the other information and the basic financial statements, or the other information otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work performed, we conclude that an uncorrected material misstatement of the other information exists, we are required to describe it in our report.

Other Reporting Required by Government Auditing Standards

In accordance with Government Auditing Standards, we have also issued our report dated December 4, 2025, on our consideration of the Collaborative's internal control over financial reporting and on our tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, grant agreements and other matters. The purpose of that report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control over financial reporting and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the Collaborative's internal control over financial reporting or on compliance. That report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with Government Auditing Standards in considering the Collaborative's internal control over financial reporting and compliance.

Bruce D. Norling, CPA, P.C.

Sudbury, Massachusetts
December 4, 2025

**KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE
STATEMENT OF NET POSITION
JUNE 30, 2025**

ASSETS	<u>Governmental Activities</u>
Current Assets	
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 897,557
Accounts receivable	576,914
Prepaid expenses	<u>64,457</u>
Total current assets	<u>1,538,928</u>
Noncurrent Assets	
Lease asset, net of accumulated amortization	33,248
Capital assets, net of accumulated depreciation	<u>9,225,299</u>
Total noncurrent assets	<u>9,258,547</u>
Total assets	<u>10,797,475</u>
LIABILITIES	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts payable	146,521
Accrued payroll	832,565
Other accrued liabilities	23,901
Current portion of note payable	363,391
Line of Credit	250,000
Short term lease liability	<u>37,653</u>
Total current liabilities	<u>1,654,031</u>
Noncurrent Liabilities	
Note payable	5,696,138
OPEB Liability	5,224,931
Long term lease liability	<u>2,734</u>
Total noncurrent liabilities	<u>10,923,803</u>
Deferred inflows of resources related to OPEB	<u>1,452,860</u>
Total Liabilities and Deferred Inflows of Resources	<u>14,030,694</u>
NET POSITION	
Committed to capital reserve	148,571
Restricted	102,504
Unrestricted	<u>(3,484,294)</u>
Total net position	<u>(3,233,219)</u>
Total Liabilities and Net Position	<u>\$ 10,797,475</u>

See accompanying notes to financial statements

**KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE
STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2025**

Functions/Programs	Program Revenue			Net (Expense) Revenue and Changes in Net Position	
	Expenses	Charges for Services	Operating Grants and Contributions		Capital Grants and Contributions
Primary government					
Governmental Activities					
Tuition and service fees	\$ -	\$ 14,702,866	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 14,702,866
Student support services	141,756	-	-	-	(141,756)
Payroll	10,743,337	-	-	-	(10,743,337)
Pension-on-behalf payments	1,772,116	-	1,772,116	-	-
Admin	141,260	-	-	-	(141,260)
Virtual learning consortium	45,925	45,925	-	-	-
Rent	441,425	-	-	-	(441,425)
Professional Development	55,005	-	-	-	(55,005)
Maintenance	236,903	-	-	-	(236,903)
Telephone and utilities	151,707	-	-	-	(151,707)
Employee benefits	3,099,409	-	-	-	(3,099,409)
Fixed assets/technology	139,016	-	-	-	(139,016)
Interest Expense	293,620	-	-	-	(293,620)
Insurance	112,214	-	-	-	(112,214)
Wages and benefits - technicians	-	-	-	-	-
Wages and benefits - transportation	-	-	-	-	-
Transportation	-	-	-	-	-
Depreciation	178,027	-	-	-	(178,027)
Total governmental activities	\$ 17,551,720	\$ 14,748,791	\$ 1,772,116	\$ -	\$ (1,030,813)
General revenues:					
Member assessments and other					44,467
Interest Income					14,902
Total general revenues					59,369
Change in net position					(971,444)
Reclass from Restricted Net Assets					
Unrestricted Net position - beginning of year, as reported					3,150,696
Adjustment to Net Position due to implementation of OPEB					(5,663,546)
Unrestricted Net position - end of year					\$ (3,484,294)

**KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE
GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS
BALANCE SHEET**

JUNE 30, 2025

	<u>General Fund</u>	<u>Capital Reserve</u>	<u>Total Governmental Funds</u>
CURRENT ASSETS			
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 897,557	\$ -	\$ 897,557
Accounts receivable	576,914	-	576,914
Prepaid expenses	64,457	-	64,457
Total current liabilities	1,538,928		1,538,928
OTHER ASSETS			
Total other assets	-		-
TOTAL ASSETS	\$ 1,538,928	\$ -	\$ 1,538,928
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Liabilities:			
Accounts payable	\$ 146,521	\$ -	\$ 146,521
Accrued expenses	832,565	-	832,565
Loan Payable	-		-
Deferred revenue	23,901	-	23,901
Total current liabilities	1,002,987	-	1,002,987
OTHER LIABILITIES			
Total other liabilities	-	-	-
FUND BALANCES:			
Committed	-	144,150	144,150
Assigned	-	-	-
Unassigned	391,791	-	391,791
Total fund balances	391,791	144,150	535,941
Total liabilities and fund balances	\$ 1,394,778	\$ 144,150	\$ 1,538,928

See accompanying notes to financial statements

KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE

RECONCILIATION OF GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS BALANCE SHEET
TO THE STATEMENT OF NET POSITION
JUNE 30, 2025

Total fund balance, governmental funds \$ 535,941

Amounts reported for governmental activities in Statement of Net Position are different because:

Capital assets (net of accumulated depreciation) used in governmental activities are not current financial resources and, therefore, are not reported in this fund financial statement, but are reported in the governmental activities of the Statement of Net Position. 9,225,299

Certain other long-term assets are not available to pay current period expenditures and, therefore, are not reported in this fund financial statement, but are reported in the governmental activities -

Some liabilities (such as Notes Payable, Lease Payable (net of the effect of lease assets), Long-Term Compensated Absences, and Bonds Payable) are not due and payable in the current period and are not included in the fund financial statement, but are included in the governmental activities of the Statement of Net Position. (12,994,459)

Net Position of Governmental Activities in the Statement of Net Position. \$ (3,233,219)

**KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE
GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2025**

	General Fund	Capital Reserve	Total Governmental Funds
REVENUES			
Tuition and service fees	\$ 14,702,866	\$ -	\$ 14,702,866
Pension-on-behalf payments	1,772,116	-	1,772,116
Virtual learning consortium	45,925	-	45,925
Assessments	37,500	-	37,500
Other revenue	21,869	-	21,869
	<u>16,580,276</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>16,580,276</u>
EXPENDITURES			
Personnel expenses	12,957,241	-	12,957,241
Pension-on-behalf payments	1,772,116	-	1,772,116
Occupancy	831,750	-	831,750
Operations	211,021	-	211,021
Consultants	47,608	-	47,608
Capital purchases	183,948	106,925	290,873
Interest Expense	293,620	-	293,620
Professional development	55,005	-	55,005
	<u>16,352,309</u>	<u>106,925</u>	<u>16,459,234</u>
Excess of revenues over expenditures	<u>227,967</u>	<u>(106,925)</u>	<u>121,042</u>
OTHER FINANCING SOURCES (USES)			
Transfers in	-	-	-
Transfers (out)	(979,105)	-	(979,105)
Total other financing sources and uses	<u>(979,105)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(979,105)</u>
Excess (Deficiency) of revenue over expenditures	(751,138)	(106,925)	(858,063)
Fund balances - beginning of year, as reported	1,142,929	251,075	1,394,004
Fund balances - end of year	<u>\$ 391,791</u>	<u>\$ 144,150</u>	<u>\$ 535,941</u>

See accompanying notes to financial statements

**KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE
GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS
RECONCILIATION OF THE STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES AND CHANGES
IN FUND BALANCES OF GOVERNMENTAL FUNDS TO THE STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2025**

Excess of revenues over expenditures	\$	121,042
<p>Amounts reported for Governmental Activities in Statement of Activities are different because:</p> <p>Governmental funds report outlays for capital assets as expenditures because such outlays use current financial resources. In contrast, the Statement of Activities reports only a portion of the outlay as expenses. The outlay is allocated over the assets' estimated useful lives as depreciation expense for the period.</p>		
		106,925
Depreciation (-178,027) plus lease adjustemt (7,139)		(185,166)
OPEB expense not reflected on Governmental funds		(1,014,245)
		(971,444)
Change in net position of governmental activities	\$	(971,444)

**KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE
STATEMENT OF FIDUCIARY NET POSITION
FIDUCIARY FUNDS
JUNE 30, 2025**

ASSETS

		OTHER POSTEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS TRUST
CURRENT:		
Cash	\$	-
Investments:		
Money Market		269
Mutual Funds- Equity		3,720
Mutual Funds - Fixed Income		7,574
Total Assets		<u><u>11,563</u></u>

LIABILITIES

CURRENT:		
Amounts Held for Students	\$	-
Total Liabilities		<u>-</u>

NET POSITION

Net position held in trust for other purposes		11,563
Total net position	\$	<u><u>11,563</u></u>

**KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE
OTHER POSTEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS TRUST
STATEMENT OF CHANGES IN FIDUCIARY NET POSITION**

JUNE 30, 2025

Additions:

Contributions	\$	-
Investment Return		819
		819
Total Additions		819

Deductions:

Retiree health insurance expense		-
Total Deductions		-

Change in Net Position		819
Net Position - Beginning of Year		10,744
Net Position - End of Year	\$	11,563

**KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE
NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
JUNE 30, 2025**

1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

A. General Statement

Keystone Educational Collaborative (the Collaborative) is an association of school committees formed for the purpose of conducting education programs and services to complement and strengthen the school programs of member school committees and increase educational opportunities for children. The Collaborative provides pre-school, elementary and secondary education for students ages 3 to 21 with significant disabilities. The Collaborative is governed by an Executive Board of Directors comprised of Superintendents or their designees from each member school committee. For financial reporting purposes, the Collaborative is a stand-alone entity, not a component unit of another entity and there are no component units included in its financial statements. The Collaborative was formed by agreement on November 11, 1975. The agreement is changed from time to time to accommodate member changes, and the most recent modification was in 2020.

The accounting and reporting policies of the Collaborative relating to the funds included in the accompanying basic financial statements conform to accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America applicable to state and local governments.

B. Basis of Presentation

Government-Wide Financial Statements:

The government-wide financial statements report information on all of the activities of the Collaborative. The Collaborative has only governmental-type activities.

The statement of activities demonstrates both the gross and net cost per functional category. Direct expenses are those that are clearly identifiable with the specific function, and program revenues must be directly associated with that function. Program revenues include charges for services as well as grants and contributions that are restricted to meeting operational requirements of the function. Other revenue sources such as member assessments, investment income, and miscellaneous revenues not properly included among program revenues are reported as general revenues.

Separate financial statements are provided for the governmental funds. The major individual governmental funds are reported in separate columns in the fund financial statements.

**KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE
NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
JUNE 30, 2025**

Fund Financial Statements statements are presented for governmental and fiduciary funds. These statements present each major fund as a separate column on the fund financial statements; all non-major funds are aggregated and presented in a single column.

Governmental funds are those funds through which most governmental activities typically are financed. The measurement focus of governmental funds is on the sources, uses and balance of current financial resources. The Collaborative has presented the following

The Collaborative segregates transactions related to certain functions or activities in separate funds in order to aid financial management and to demonstrate legal compliance. Separate major governmental funds:

General Fund – This fund is the main operating fund of the Collaborative. It is used to account for all financial resources not accounted for in other funds. All member tuitions and other fees that are not restricted by law or contractual agreement to some other fund are accounted for in this fund. General operating expenditures, insurance and benefits, and other costs that are not paid through other funds are paid from the General Fund. The general fund is always considered a major fund.

Nonmajor governmental funds consist of other special revenue, capital projects and permanent funds that are aggregated and presented in the nonmajor governmental funds column on the governmental funds financial statements. For example, a special revenue fund is used to account for the proceeds of specific revenue sources (other than capital projects or permanent funds) that are restricted by law or administrative action to expenditures for specified purposes. The Collaborative determined it has no nonmajor governmental funds.

Fiduciary funds are used to report assets held in a trustee or agency capacity for others and therefore are not available to support Collaborative programs. The reporting focus is on net position and changes in net position presented in fiduciary fund statements. The Collaborative determined it has no fiduciary funds.

C. Measurement Focus/Basis of Accounting

Measurement focus refers to what is being measured; basis of accounting refers to when revenues and expenditures are recognized in the accounts and reported in the financial statements. Basis of accounting relates to the timing of the measurement made, regardless of the measurement focus applied. The government-wide statements and fund financial statements for fiduciary funds are reported using the economic resources measurement focus and the accrual basis of accounting.

**KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE
NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
JUNE 30, 2025**

The economic resources measurement focus means all assets and liabilities (whether current or non-current) are included on the statement of net position, and the operating statements present increases (revenues) and decreases (expenses) in net total position. Under the accrual basis of accounting, revenues are recognized when earned, including unbilled water and sewer services, which are accrued. Expenses are recognized at the time the liability is incurred.

Governmental and fiduciary fund financial statements are reported using the current financial resources measurement focus and are accounted for using the modified accrual basis of accounting. Under the modified accrual basis of accounting, revenues are recognized when susceptible to accrual; i.e., when they become both measurable and available. "Measurable" means the amount of the transaction can be determined and "available" means collectible within the current period or soon enough thereafter to be used to pay liabilities of the current period.

The Collaborative applies the susceptible-to-accrual criteria to inter-governmental revenues. In applying the susceptible-to-accrual concept to intergovernmental revenues, there are essentially two types of revenues. In one, moneys must be expended for a specific purpose or project before any amounts will be paid to the Collaborative; therefore, revenues are recognized as expenditures are incurred. In the other, moneys are virtually unrestricted and are usually recoverable only for failure to comply with prescribed requirements. These resources are reflected as revenue when cash is received, or earlier if the susceptible-to-accrual criteria are met.

Expenditures are recorded when the liability is incurred except for 1) interest on long-term debt, which is recorded when due; and 2) claims, judgments, and compensated absences, all of which are recorded as expenditures to the extent that they have been paid or are expected to be paid with expendable available financial resources.

The Collaborative reports the following funds as major governmental funds:

- The general fund is the Collaborative's primary operational fund. It accounts for all financial resources except those required to be accounted for in a separate fund.
- The capital reserve fund is used for the acquisition, maintenance, and improvement of capital assets including real property and equipment, pursuant to an established capital plan in accordance with 603 CMR 50.07 (10).

The effect of interfund activity has been eliminated from the government-wide financial statements.

**KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE
NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
JUNE 30, 2025**

Amounts reported as program revenues include 1) charges for services provided, and 2) operating grants and contributions. General revenues are those that cannot be associated directly with program activities.

D. Use of Estimates

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect certain reported amounts and disclosures. Accordingly, actual results could differ from those estimates.

E. Cash and cash equivalents

The Collaborative considers cash and cash equivalents to be cash on hand, demand deposits, and short-term investments with an original maturity of three months or less from the date of acquisition.

F. Compensated Absences

Employees are granted sick and vacation leave in varying amounts. Upon retirement, termination, or death, employees generally are not compensated for unused sick and vacation leave. At June 30, 2025, there was no material unused vacation time.

G. Accounts Receivable

All assessments are shown net of any allowance for doubtful accounts. Member assessments are assessed on August 1 every year. Bills are sent quarterly and are due on August 1, November 1, March 1, and May 1, or thirty days subsequent to the mailing date.

H. Pension Plans

For purposes of measuring the net pension liability, deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions and pension expense, information about the fiduciary net position of the Massachusetts State Employees' Retirement System (MSERS) and Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System (MTRS), and additions to/deductions from MSERS' and MTRS' fiduciary net position have been determined on the same basis as they are reported by MSERS and MTRS. For this purpose, benefit payments (including refunds of employee contributions) are recognized when due and payable in accordance with the benefit terms. Investments are reported at fair value.

**KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE
NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
JUNE 30, 2025**

I. Net Position and Fund Balances

Net position is reported as restricted when amounts are specified by outside parties for a specific future use. The Collaborative has net position restricted for various specific purposes due to donor intent.

The following fund balance classifications describe the relative strength of the spending constraints:

- “Nonexpendable” – Represents amounts that are not in spendable form.
- “Restricted” – Represents amounts that can be spent only for specific purposes because of constitutional provisions or enabling legislation or because of constraints that are externally imposed by creditors, grantors, contributors, or the laws or regulations of other governments.
- “Committed” – Represents amounts that can be used only for specific purposes imposed by a formal action of the Board of Directors, which is the highest level of decision-making authority for the Collaborative. Committed amounts may be established, modified, or rescinded only through actions approved by the Board of Directors.
- “Assigned” – Represents amounts that do not meet the criteria to be classified as restricted or committed but are intended to be used for specific purposes.
- “Unassigned” – Represents the residual fund balance for the general fund and the negative residual fund balance of any other governmental fund that cannot be eliminated by offsetting assigned fund balance amounts. In circumstances when an expenditure is made for the purpose for which amounts are available in multiple fund balance classifications, fund balance is depleted in the order of restricted, committed, assigned and unassigned.

J. Deferred Revenue

Deferred revenue consists of funds received in advance for tuition and service credits for paid tuition not yet used.

K. Capital Assets

Equipment and other fixed assets are capitalized when the initial cost is \$5,000 or greater and the estimated useful life is in excess of two years. Assets are recorded at cost. Depreciation is computed using the straight-line method over the estimated lives of the assets.

**KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE
NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
JUNE 30, 2025**

Estimated useful lives are as follows:

Leasehold Improvements	15 Years
Furniture and Equipment	5-10 Years

L. Accrued Expenses

Accrued expenses are primarily payroll that is paid over the summer.

M. Reconciliation of Government-Wide and Fund Financial Statements

A summary reconciliation of the difference between total fund balances as reflected on the governmental funds balance sheet and total net position for governmental activities as shown on the government-wide statement of net position is presented in an accompanying schedule to the governmental funds balance sheet. The asset and liability elements, which comprise the reconciliation difference, stem from governmental funds using the current financial resources measurement focus and the modified accrual basis of accounting while the government-wide financial statements use the economic resources measurement focus and the accrual basis of accounting.

N. Upcoming Accounting Pronouncements

The GASB has issued the following statements, which require adoption subsequent to June 30, 2025 and may be applicable to the Collaborative. The Collaborative has not yet adopted these statements, and the implication on the Collaborative's fiscal practices and financial reports is being evaluated.

Statement No.		Adoption Required in Fiscal Year
103	<i>Financial Reporting Model Improvements</i>	2026
104	<i>Disclosures of Certain Capital Assets</i>	2026

2. PENSION PLANS

Massachusetts State Employees' Retirement System

Plan Description - The Massachusetts State Employees' Retirement System (MSERS) is a public employee retirement system (PERS) that administers a cost-sharing multi-employer defined benefit plan as defined by Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement No. 67, *Financial Reporting for Pension Plans*, covering substantially all employees of the Commonwealth, and certain employees and retirees became members of MSERS upon the creation of MassDOT. Other employees who transferred to MassDOT had been, and remain, members of

**KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE
NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
JUNE 30, 2025**

MSERS. MSERS is part of Commonwealth's reporting entity and does not issue a standalone audited financial report.

Management of MSERS is vested in the Massachusetts State Retirement Board (the MSRB) which consists of five members - two elected by current and active MSERS members, one by the remaining members of the MSRB, one who is appointed by the State Treasurer, and the State Treasurer, who serves as ex-officio and is the Chair of the MSRB.

Benefits – MSERS provides retirement, disability, survivor and death benefits to members and their beneficiaries. Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) established uniform benefit and contribution requirements for all contributory PERS. These requirements provide for superannuation retirement allowance benefits up to a maximum of 80% of a member's highest three-year average annual rate of regular compensation.

Benefit payments are based upon a member's age, length of creditable service, group creditable service, and group classification. The authority for amending these provisions rests with the Legislature.

Members of the system become fully vested after 10 years of creditable service. A superannuation retirement allowance may be received upon the completion of twenty years of creditable service or upon reaching the age of 55 with ten years of service. Normal retirement for most employees occurs at age 65; for certain hazardous duty and public safety positions, normal retirement age is at 55. Most employees who joined the system after April 1, 2012 cannot retire prior to age 60.

The MSERS' funding policies have been established by Chapter 32 of the MGL. The Legislature has the authority to amend these policies. The annuity portion of the MSERS retirement allowance is funded by employees, who contribute a % of their regular compensation. Costs of administering the plan are funded out of plan assets.

Contributions – Member contributions for MSERS vary depending on the most recent date of membership.

<u>Hire Date</u>	<u>% of Compensation</u>
Prior to 1975	5% of regular compensation
1975 – 1983	7% of regular compensation
1984 to 6/30/1996	8% of regular compensation
7/1/1996 to present	9% of regular compensation
1979 to present	An additional 2% of regular compensation in excess of \$30,000

Pension Liabilities, Pension Expense and Deferred Outflows of Resources and Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to Pensions – Collaboratives contribute amounts equal to the normal cost of employees' benefits at a rate established by the Public Employees' Retirement Administration Commission (PERAC), currently 5.6%

**KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE
NOTES TO THE BASIC FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
JUNE 30, 2025**

of covered payroll. Legally, the Collaboratives are only responsible for contributing the annual normal cost of their employees' benefits (i.e., the present value of the benefits earned by those employees in any given year) and are not legally responsible for the past service cost attributable to those employees or previously retired employees of the Collaboratives. The Commonwealth as a non-employer is legally responsible for the entire past service cost related to the Collaboratives and, therefore, has a 100% special funding situation. Therefore, the Collaborative does not report a liability for its proportionate share of the net pension liability.

The net pension liability of the Plan was measured as of June 30, 2025, and the total pension liability used to calculate the net pension liability was determined by an actuarial valuation as of January 1, 2024 rolled forward to June 30, 2024. The Collaborative's proportion of the net pension liability was based on the Collaborative's and related Commonwealth's share of actual contributions to the pension plan relative to the actual contributions of all participating governmental entities, adjusted for any non-employer contributions. At June 30, 2025, the Collaborative's proportion was .05136%, which was an increase of .04369% from its proportion measured as of June 30, 2024.

For the year ended June 30, 2025, the Collaborative recognized pension expense of \$1,772,116, including an expense and related on behalf of revenue by the Commonwealth of \$748,897.

Massachusetts State Employees' Retirement Plan as a Whole

The following table summarizes the changes in deferred outflows of resources of the Plan excluding employer specific amounts (change in proportion) (amounts in thousands):

	Balance July 1, 2024	Additions	Deletions	Balance June 30, 2025
<u>Deferred Outflows of Resources:</u>				
Difference between expected and actual experience	\$ 520,322	\$ 486,506	\$ (298,882)	\$ 707,945
Change of assumptions	<u>246,176</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(144,808)</u>	<u>101,367</u>
Total deferred outflows of resources	<u>766,498</u>	<u>486,506</u>	<u>(443,690)</u>	<u>809,312</u>
<u>Deferred Inflows of Resources:</u>				
Difference between expected and actual experience	<u>(361,938)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>180,969</u>	<u>(180,969)</u>
Difference between projected and actual earnings on investments	<u>394,208</u>	<u>(876,174)</u>	<u>298,305</u>	<u>(183,663)</u>
Total deferred inflows of resources	<u>\$ 32,270</u>	<u>\$ (876,174)</u>	<u>\$ 479,274</u>	<u>\$ (364,632)</u>

Amounts reported as deferred outflows of resources related to pensions will be recognized in the collective pension expense as follows (amounts in thousands):

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Fiscal Year ending June 30, 2025	
2025	\$ (472,751)
2026	909,746
2027	101,837
2028	<u>(94,150)</u>
New Outflows of Resources	<u>\$ 444,682</u>

Actuarial Assumptions – The total pension liability for the June 30, 2024 measurement date was determined by an actuarial valuation as of January 1, 2024 rolled forward to June 30, 2024. This valuation used the following assumption:

1. (a) 7% investment rate of return, (b) 3.50% interest rate credited to the annuity savings fund and (3) cost of living increase on the first \$13,000 per year.

Salary increases are based on analyses of past experience but range from 4.00% to 9.00% depending on group and length of service.

2. Mortality rates were as follows:

- Pre-retirement – reflects RP-2014 Blue Collar Employees Table projected generationally with Scale MP-2016 and set forward one year for females.
- Post-retirement – reflects RP-2014 Blue Collar Healthy Annuitant Table projected generationally with Scale MP-2016 and set forward one year for females.
- Disability – For disabled retirees, mortality reflects the post-retirement mortality described above, set forward 1 year.

3. Experience studies were performed as follows:

- Dated February 27, 2014 and encompasses the period January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2011.

Long-Term Expected Rate of Return – Investment assets of MSERS are with the Pension Reserves Investment Trust (PRIT) Fund. The long-term expected rate of return on pension plan investments was determined using a building-block method in which best-estimate ranges of expected future rates of return are developed for each major asset class. These ranges are combined to produce the long-term expected rate of return by weighting the expected future rates of return by the target asset allocation percentage. Best estimates of geometric rates of return for each major asset class included in the PRIT Fund’s target asset allocation as of June 30, 2024 are summarized in the following table:

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<u>Target Asset Class</u>	<u>Allocation (%)</u>	<u>Long-Term Expected Real Rate of Return</u>
Global Equity	36.00%	4.60%
Core Fixed Income	15.00%	2.10%
Private Equity	16.00%	7.40%
Portfolio Completion Strategies	10.00%	3.70%
Real Estate	10.00%	3.90%
Value Added Fixed Income	9.00%	5.10%
Timber/Natural Resources	<u>4.00%</u>	4.40%
Total	<u>100%</u>	

Discount Rate – The discount rate used to measure the total pension liability was 7%. The projection of cash flows used to determine the discount rate assumed that plan member contributions will be made at the current contribution rates and the Commonwealth’s contributions will be made at rates equal to the difference between actuarially determined contribution rates and the member rates. Based on those assumptions, the net position was projected to be available to make all projected future benefit payments of current plan members. Therefore, the long-term expected rate of return on pension plan investments was applied to all periods of projected benefit payments to determine the total pension liability.

Sensitivity of the Net Pension Liability to Changes in the Discount Rate – the following presents the State’s proportionate share of the net pension liability associated with the Collaborative calculated using the discount rate of 7%, as well as what the proportionate share of the net pension liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is 1 percent point lower (6%) or 1 percent point higher (8%) than the current rate.

	<u>1% Decrease to 6%</u>	<u>Current Discount Rate 7%</u>	<u>1% Increase to 8%</u>
State’s proportionate share of the net pension liability with the Collaborative	\$ 19,844,000	\$ 14,125,143	\$ 9,287,000

Massachusetts Teachers’ Retirement System:

Plan Description - The Massachusetts Teachers’ Retirement System (MTRS) is a public employee retirement system (PERS) that administers a cost-sharing multi-employer defined benefit plan, as described in Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Statement No. 67, *Financial Reporting for Pension Plans*. MTRS is managed by the Commonwealth on behalf of municipal teachers and municipal teacher retirees.

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The Commonwealth is a non-employer contributor and is responsible for all contributions and future benefit requirements of the MTRS. The MTRS covers certified teachers in cities (except Boston), town, regional school districts, charter schools, educational Collaboratives and Quincy College. The MTRS is part of the Commonwealth's reporting entity and does not issue a stand-alone audited financial report.

Management of MTRS is vested in the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement Board (MTRB), which consists of seven members - two elected by the MTRS members, one who is chosen by the six other MTRB members, the State Treasurer (or their designee), the State auditor (or their designee), a member appointed by the Governor, and the Commissioner of Education (or their designee), who serves ex-officio as the Chairman of the MTRB.

Benefits – MTRS provides retirement, disability, survivor and death benefits to members and their beneficiaries. Massachusetts General Laws (MGL) established uniform benefit and contribution requirements for all contributory PERS. These requirements provide for superannuation retirement allowance benefits up to a maximum of 80% of a member's highest three-year average annual rate of regular compensation. For employees hired after April 1, 2012, retirement allowances are calculated on the basis of the last five years or any five consecutive years, whichever is greater in terms of compensation. Benefit payments are based upon a member's age, length of creditable service, and group creditable service, and group classification. The authority for amending these provisions rests with the Legislature.

Members become vested after ten years of creditable service. A superannuation retirement allowance may be received upon the completion of twenty years of creditable service or upon reaching the age of 55 with ten years of service. Normal retirement for most employees occurs at age 65. Most employees who joined the system after April 1, 2012 cannot retire prior to age 60.

The MTRS funding policies have been established by Chapter 32 of the MGL. The Legislature has authority to amend these policies. The annuity portion of the MTRS retirement allowance is funded by employees, who contribute a percentage of their regular compensation. Costs of administering the plan are funded out of plan assets.

Contributions – Member contributions for MTRS vary depending on the most recent date of membership:

<u>Hire Date</u>	<u>% of Compensation</u>
Prior to 1975	5% of regular compensation
1975 – 1983	7% of regular compensation
1984 – 6/30/1996	8% of regular compensation
7/1/1996 to present	11% of regular compensation (for teachers hired after 7/1/2001 and those accepting provisions of Chapter 114 of Acts 2000)

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1979 to present An additional 2% of regular compensation in excess of \$30,000

Pension Liabilities, Pension Expense and Deferred Outflows of Resources, and Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to Pensions – The Commonwealth is a non-employer contributor and is required by statute to make all actuarially determined employer contributions on behalf of the member employers. Therefore, these employers are considered to be in a special funding situation as defined by GASB State No. 68, *Accounting and Financial Reporting for Pensions*, and the Commonwealth is a non-employer contributing entity in MTRS. Since the employers do not contribute directly to MTRS, there is no net pension liability to recognize for each employer. At June 30, 2024, the Collaborative’s proportionate share of the Plan’s net pension liability was 0.055555%, which was an increase of 0.00576% from its proportion measured as of June 30, 2022.

For the year ended June 30, 2025, the Collaborative recognized a pension expense and on behalf of revenue of \$1,772,116.

	<u>Balance July 1, 2024</u>	<u>Additions</u>	<u>Deletions</u>	<u>Balance June 30, 2025</u>
Deferred Outflows of Resources:				
Difference between expected and actual experience	\$ 181,308	\$378,415	\$ (155,241)	\$ 404,482
Change of assumptions	<u>802,907</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(363,497)</u>	<u>439,410</u>
Total deferred outflows of resources	<u>\$ 984,215</u>	<u>378,415</u>	<u>(518,738)</u>	<u>\$ 843,892</u>
Net differences between projected and actual earnings on plan investments				
	<u>430,646</u>	<u>(931,151)</u>	<u>304,167</u>	<u>(196,338)</u>
Deferred Inflows of Resources:				
Difference between expected and actual experience	<u>(553,295)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>158,070</u>	<u>(395,225)</u>
Total deferred inflows of resources	<u>\$ (122,649)</u>	<u>\$ (931,151)</u>	<u>\$ 462,237</u>	<u>\$ (591,563)</u>

Massachusetts Teacher’s Retirement Plan as a Whole (in thousands)

Amounts reported as deferred outflows of resources and deferred inflows of resources related to pensions of the Plan will be recognized in the collective pension expense as follows (amounts in thousands):

2025	(348,672)
2026	729,960
2027	(80,139)
2028	(106,544)
2029	<u>57,724</u>

Net outflows of Resources \$252,329

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Actuarial Assumptions – The total pension liability for the June 30, 2024 measurement date was determined by an actuarial valuation as of January 1, 2024 rolled forward to June 30, 2024. This valuation used the following assumptions:

1. (a) 7% investment rate of return, (b) 3.50% rate credited to the annuity savings fund and (c) 3.00% cost of living increase on the first \$13,000 per year.
2. Salary increases are based on analyses of past experience but range from 4.00% to 7.50% depending on group and length of service.
3. Mortality rates were as follows:
 - Pre-retirement – Reflects RP-2014 White Collar Employees Table projected generationally with MP-2016 (gender distinct).
 - Post-retirement – Reflects RP-2014 White Collar Healthy Annuitant Table projected generationally with MP-2016 (gender distinct).
 - Disability – Assumed to be in accordance with the RP-2014 White Collar healthy Annuitant Table projected generationally with Scale MP-2016.
4. Experience study was performed as follows:
 - Dated July 21, 2014 and encompasses the period January 1, 2006 to December 31, 2011, updated to reflect post-retirement mortality through January 1, 2017.

Long-Term Expected Rate of Return – Investment assets of MTRS are with the Pension Reserves Investment Trust (PRIT) Fund. The long-term expected rate of return on pension plan investments was determined using a building-block method in which best-estimate ranges of expected future rates of return are developed for each major asset class. Those ranges are combined to produce the long-term expected rate of return by weighting the expected future rates of return by the target asset allocation percentage. Best estimates of geometric rates of return for each major asset class included in the PRIT Fund’s target asset allocation as of June 30, 2024 are summarized in the following table:

<u>Asset Class</u>	<u>Target Allocation (%)</u>	<u>Long-Term Expected Real Rate of Return</u>
Global Equity	36.00%	4.6%
Core Fixed income	15.00%	2.1%
Private Equity	16.00%	7.4%
Portfolio Completion Strategies	10.00%	3.7%
Real Estate	10.00%	3.9%
Value Added Fixed Income	9.00%	5.1%
Timber/Natural Resources	4.00%	4.4%
Total	<u>100.00%</u>	

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Discount Rate - The discount rate used to measure the total pension liability was 7.15%. The projection of cash flows used to determine the discount rate assumed that plan member contributions will be made at the current contribution rates and the Commonwealth's contributions will be made at rates equal to the difference between actuarially determined contribution rates and the member rates. Based on those assumptions, the net position was projected to be available to make all projected future benefit payments of current plan members. Therefore, the long-term expected rate of return on pension plan investments was applied to all periods of projected benefit payments to determine the total pension liability.

3. CAPITAL ASSETS

Capital assets for the year ended June 30, 2025:

	Beginning Balance	Acquisitions (Disposals)	Balance 6/30/2025
Capital Assets			
Vehicles	\$ 155,975	\$ -	\$ 155,975
Leasehold Improvements	221,644	27,648	249,292
Furnishings & Equipment	-	152,924	152,924
Buildings	3,066,984	5,446,483	8,513,467
Land	<u>531,667</u>	<u>193,601</u>	<u>725,268</u>
 Total Capital Assets	 <u>3,976,270</u>	 <u>5,820,656</u>	 <u>9,796,926</u>
Less Accumulated Depreciation for:			
Vehicles	111,174	31,195	142,369
Leasehold Improvements	210,985	-	210,985
Furniture & Equipment	-	5,097	5,097
Buildings	<u>71,442</u>	<u>141,734</u>	<u>213,176</u>
 Total Accumulated Depreciation	 <u>393,601</u>	 <u>178,026</u>	 <u>571,627</u>
 Total Capital Assets, Net	 <u>\$ 3,582,669</u>	 <u>\$ 5,642,630</u>	 <u>\$ 9,225,299</u>

Depreciation expense for the year ended June 30, 2025 was \$178,027.

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4. LONG-TERM DEBT

Lone term debt consists of the following:

Loan payable for 135 Joslin St. to Main Street Bank in monthly installments including principal and interest of \$ 5,662.77 for 226 months. The annual interest rate is 7.375%.

\$ 690,302

Loan payable for 143 Joslin St. to Main Street Bank in monthly installments including principal and interest of \$ 35,788. The loan accrues interest at 6.25% for the first 5 years, afterward the interest rate shall be adjusted to 2% above the Federal Home Loan Bank of Boston 5-year Classic Advance Rate. This is a 26 year loan.

5,369,227

6,059,529

Less Current Portion

(363,391)

\$ 5,696,138

No principal payments on 143 Joslin Street are expected until FY26.

5. LINE OF CREDIT

The Collaborative has a \$700,000 line of credit with Main Street Bank. The interest rate on the line is 8.5% . The outstanding balance at June 30, 2025 was \$250,000.

6. CONTINGENCIES

In the normal course of operations, the Collaborative may be subject to certain claims and litigations. In the opinion of management, the outcome of any such matters will not have a material effect on the financial position of the Collaborative.

7. LEASE COMMITMENTS AND RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The Collaborative leases classroom space from member municipalities, which are considered related parties, under operating leases which expire at various times

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through June, 2025. Lease payments under these leases was \$376,923 for the year ended June 30, 2025.

The Collaborative leases office space under an operating lease which expires in May of 2025. Lease payments were \$55,823 for the year ended June 30, 2025. The Collaborative also leases office equipment. Expense under these leases amounted to \$10,080 for the year ended June 30, 2025.

Future lease payments are as follows:

Fiscal Year	Equipment	Space	Total
2026	5,080	32,000	37,080
2027	3,060	-	3,060
Total	<u>8,140</u>	<u>32,000</u>	<u>40,140</u>

In accordance with GASB No. 87, "Leases," the Organization recorded lease liabilities at the present value of the future minimum lease payments. The corresponding assets are being amortized on a straight-line basis over the term of the leases. Below is the amortization schedule for the remaining lease terms.

Lease amortization schedule:

<u>Operating Leases</u>							
Fiscal Year	Cash Lease Payment	Interest Expense	Liability reduction	Liability Balance	Lease Expense Straight Line	Asset Balance	Accumulated Amortization
Prior Periods	920,971	126,775	794,196	110,940	807,833	97,303	807,833
2025	87,823	6,930	80,893	30,047	70,706	26,597	878,539
2026	32,000	1,953	30,047	0	26,597	-	905,136
2027	-	-	-	(0)	-	-	905,136
Total	<u>1,040,794</u>	<u>135,658</u>	<u>905,136</u>	-	<u>905,136</u>		

<u>Finance Leases</u>							
Fiscal Year	Cash Lease Payment	Interest Expense	Liability reduction	Liability Balance	Lease Expense Straight Line	Asset Balance	Accumulated Amortization
Prior Periods	35,688	6,860	28,828	16,338	30,090	15,073	30,090
2025	10,080	1,071	9,009	7,329	8,422	6,651	38,512
2026	5,080	485	4,595	2,734	4,165	2,486	42,677
2027	3,060	326	2,734	-	2,487	-	45,164
Total	<u>53,908</u>	<u>8,742</u>	<u>45,166</u>	-	<u>45,164</u>		

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8. RISK FINANCING

The Collaborative is exposed to various risks of loss related to torts; theft of, damage to, and destruction of, assets; workers compensation claims; errors and omissions; and natural disasters for which the Collaborative carries commercial insurance.

9. POSTEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS OTHER THAN PENSIONS (OPEB)

General Information about the OPEB Plan

Plan Description – The Collaborative’s defined benefit Other Post Employment Benefit (OPEB) plan (hereinafter referred to as the “Plan”) provides OPEB for all permanent full-time employees. The Plan is a single-employer defined benefit OPEB plan administered by the Collaborative. Chapter 32B of the Massachusetts General Law (MGL) assigns authority to establish and amend benefit provisions. Changes to plan design and contribution rates must be accomplished through the collective bargaining process. The Plan does not issue a standalone financial report, since there are no assets legally segregated in a trust for the sole purpose of paying benefits under the Plan.

Benefits Provided – The Plan provides medical insurance coverage for its retirees and their survivors. The benefit terms provide for payment of 50% of health insurance premiums. An employee is eligible to retire under this plan upon attainment of age 55 and 15 years of service.

Employees Covered by Benefit Terms.

At July 1, 2024, plan membership consisted of the following:

Active employees	148
Inactive employees or beneficiaries currently receiving benefits	<u>3</u>
Total	<u>151</u>

Funding Policy – The contribution requirements of plan members and the Collaborative are established, and may be amended, through Collaborative ordinances. The Collaborative currently contributes enough money to the Plan to satisfy current obligations on a pay-as-you-go basis.

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Total OPEB Liability

The Collaborative's total OPEB liability of \$5,236,494 was measured as of June 30, 2025, and was determined by an actuarial valuation as of that date.

Actuarial assumptions and other inputs - The total OPEB liability in the June 30, 2025 actuarial valuation was determined using the following actuarial assumptions and other inputs, applied to all periods included in the measurement, unless otherwise specified:

Inflation	2.50%
Salary increases	3.5%
Investment rate of return	6.00%
Single equivalent discount rate	5.2%, net of OPEB investment expense, including inflation
Healthcare cost trend rates	8% for non-Medicare plans and 10% for Medicare plans
Retirees' share of benefit related costs	50% of projected health care premiums

Mortality rates were based on the RP-2014 Employee and Healthy Annuitant Tables projected generationally with scale MP and a base year 2014 for males and females.

Actuarial valuations of an ongoing plan involve estimates of the value of reported amounts and assumptions about the probability of occurrence of events far into the future. Examples included assumptions about future employment, mortality, and the healthcare cost trend.

Sensitivity of the OPEB Liability to Changes in the Discount Rate

The following presents the Net OPEB Liability as of the June 30, 2025 measurement date calculated using the discount rate of 5.2%, as well as what the Net OPEB Liability would be if it were calculated using a discount rate that is 1-percentage-point lower (4.2%) or 1-percentage-point higher (6.2%) than the current discount rate:

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	1% Decrease	Current Discount Rate	1% Increase
	4.2%	5.2%	6.2%
OPEB liability as of 6/30/25	\$6,429,518	\$5,224,931	\$4,299,901

Sensitivity of the OPEB Liability to Changes in the Healthcare Cost Trend Rates

The following presents the net OPEB liability as of June 30, 2025, calculated using the current healthcare cost trend rates as well as what the net OPEB liability would be if it were calculated using healthcare cost trend rates that are 1–percentage point lower (7%/9% year 1 decreasing to 3%) or 1-percentage point higher (9%/11% year 1 decreasing to 5%) than the current healthcare cost trend rates:

	3.00%	4.00%	5.00%
OPEB liability as of 6/30/25	\$4,118,269	\$5,224,931	\$6,742,966

OPEB Expense and Deferred Inflows of Resources Related to OPEB

For the year ended June 30, 2025, the Collaborative recognized OPEB expense of \$1,056,461. The Plan’s deferred (inflows) of resources arise from the recognition of the effects of differences between actual and expected experience. The amount reported as deferred inflows of resources related to OPEB will be recognized in OPEB expense as follows:

Fiscal Year ended June 30:	
2026	(137,343)
2027	(137,343)
2028	(137,343)
2029	(137,342)
2030	(137,308)
Thereafter	(766,181)
Total	\$ (1,452,860)

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GASB Statement #74

GASB Statement #74 is associated with reporting of the OPEB plan as of the reporting date, June 30, 2025. As of June 30, 2025, the Collaborative maintained \$11,563 in the OPEB Trust Fund. For the Plan’s fiscal year ending June 30, 2025, contributions and benefit payments have been reported on the pay-as-you go basis.

Net OPEB Liability

In Accordance with GASB Statement #74, the Collaborative recognizes a net OPEB liability measured as the portion of the actuarial present value of projected benefit payments that is attributable to the past periods of employee services, net of the OPEB plan’s fiduciary net position. The Collaborative’s net OPEB liability recognized as of the Plan reporting date of June 30, 2025 is presented in the following table:

Total OPEB Liability	\$ 5,236,494
Fiduciary Net Position	<u>(11,563)</u>
Net OPEB Liability	<u>\$ 5,224,931</u>

10. FUND BALANCES

Fund balance is classified as non-spendable, restricted, committed, assigned and/or unassigned based primarily on the extent to which the Collaborative is bound to observe constraints imposed upon the use of the resources in the governmental funds. The constraints placed on fund balance for the major governmental funds and all other governmental funds are presented below:

<u>Fund Balances</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>Capital Reserve</u>	<u>Total</u>
Committed:	\$ -	144,150	\$ 144,150
Unassigned:	<u>391,791</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>391,791</u>
Total Fund Balances	<u>\$ 391,791</u>	<u>\$ 144,150</u>	<u>\$ 535,941</u>

11. EVALUATION OF SUBSEQUENT EVENTS

The Collaborative has evaluated subsequent events occurring through December 4, 2025, the date the financial statements were available to be issued.

REQUIRED SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE
SCHEDULE OF REVENUES, EXPENDITURES AND CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES -
BUDGET AND ACTUAL - GENERAL FUND
FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2025

	<u>Budgeted Amounts</u> <u>Final</u>	<u>Actual Amounts,</u> <u>Budgetary Basis</u>	<u>Variance with</u> <u>Final Budget -</u> <u>Position</u> <u>(Negative)</u>
REVENUES			
Tuition and service fees	\$ 14,329,927	\$ 14,748,791	\$ 418,864
Assessments	37,500	37,500	-
Other revenue	-	21,869	21,869
Total revenues	<u>14,367,427</u>	<u>14,808,160</u>	<u>440,733</u>
EXPENDITURES AND OTHER USES			
Personnel expenses	12,524,801	12,957,241	(432,440)
Occupancy	1,315,382	816,848	498,534
Operations	176,140	211,021	(34,881)
Consultants	59,300	47,608	11,692
Equipment	185,600	290,873	(105,273)
Interest Expense	-	293,620	(293,620)
Professional development	68,220	55,005	13,215
Amortization	-	14,902	(14,902)
Total expenditures and other uses	<u>14,329,443</u>	<u>14,687,118</u>	<u>(357,675)</u>
EXCESS (DEFICIENCY) OF REVENUES AND OTHER SOURCES OVER EXPENDITURES AND OTHER USES	<u>\$ 37,984</u>	<u>\$ 121,042</u>	<u>\$ 83,058</u>

Notes to schedule:

The Board of Directors annually determines the amount to be raised (after deducting the amount of anticipated revenues from other sources, including surplus revenue, if any) to maintain and operate the Collaborative during the next fiscal year and then, based upon enrollment data, assesses the member and non-member districts in accordance with the terms of the agreement. An annual budget is adopted for the general fund in conformity with the guidelines described above. The original fiscal year 2025 approved expenditure budget for the general fund was \$14,329,443. The above schedule presents a comparison of budgetary data to actual results. The differences between the Government-Wide (Statement of Activities) and the budget basis primarily is the recognition in the General Fund of grossing up of revenues and expenses to reflect On Behalf Teacher's Retirement paid by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Deficits, if any, are addressed in the subsequent year's budget process.

Reconciliation of the Budget basis to GAAP basis

	Revenues	Expenditures	Excess (Deficit)
Budget Basis	\$ 14,808,160	\$ 14,687,118	\$ 121,042
Recognized on-behalf pension payments	1,772,116	1,772,116	-
	<u>\$ 16,580,276</u>	<u>\$ 16,459,234</u>	<u>\$ 121,042</u>

See independent auditors' report on supplementary information.

KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE
SCHEDULE OF PENSION CONTRIBUTIONS
JUNE 30, 2025

	30-Jun-25		30-Jun-24		June 30, 2023		June 30, 2022		June 30, 2021		June 30, 2020		June 30, 2019	
	MTRS	MSERS	MTRS	MSERS	MTRS	MSERS	MTRS	MSERS	MTRS	MSERS	MTRS	MSERS	MTRS	MSERS
Contractually required contribution	\$ 1,436,266	\$ 220,219	\$ 1,193,716	\$ 188,519	\$ 1,162,529	\$ 154,037	\$ 939,828	\$ 149,939	\$ 698,131	\$ 133,806	\$ 626,455	\$ 121,236	\$ 579,452	\$ 110,644
Contributions in relation to the contractually required contribution	\$ 1,193,716	\$ 188,519	\$ 1,193,716	\$ 188,519	\$ 1,162,529	\$ 154,037	\$ 939,828	\$ 149,939	\$ 698,131	\$ 133,806	\$ 626,455	\$ 121,236	\$ 579,452	\$ 110,644
Contribution deficiency (excess)	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -
Collaborative's covered-employee payroll	\$ -	\$ 3,610,148	\$ -	\$ 3,090,475	\$ -	\$ 2,525,197	\$ -	\$ 2,458,016	\$ -	\$ 2,193,541	\$ -	\$ 1,987,475	\$ -	\$ 1,813,836
Contributions as a percentage of covered-employee payroll	0%	6.1%	0%	6.1%	0%	6.1%	0%	6.1%	0%	6.1%	0%	6.1%	0%	6.1%

Notes to Required Supplementary Information

MTRS is the Massachusetts Teachers' Retirement System
MSERS is the Massachusetts State Employees' Retirement System

Measurement Date

The amounts presented in this schedule were determined as of June 30, 2025, 2024, 2023, 2022, 2021, 2020 and 2019.

Schedule Presentation

This schedule is intended to present information for 4 years.

Contributions

The Collaborative is required to pay an annual appropriation as established by the Public Employees' Retirement Administration Commission (PERAC) for MSERS. No contribution is required for MTRS. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts as a nonemployer is legally responsible for the entire past service cost related to the collaborative and therefore has a 100% special funding situation.

FY25 Cumulative Surplus Worksheet

To activate the worksheet double click inside the table below, or right-click, then choose "Open Worksheet Object." Enter the values and corresponding page numbers from the FY25 financial statements (FS) into the worksheet. Formulas have been embedded within certain fields, to assist with the calculation of the FY25 cumulative surplus and its corresponding percentage of the collaborative's reported FY25 general fund expenditures. When completed, and prior to uploading it to the Department's Security Portal, the worksheet should reflect both the collaborative board's determination of surplus (amount), and the assignment of any cumulative surplus, in excess of the 25 percent limitation. The FY25 Annual Independent Audit Report submission and all requested documents must be submitted to the Department **no later than January 1, 2026.**

KEYSTONE

Surplus Calculation

Fiscal Year 2025

Enter values below

Page in
FY25 FS

(A) Surplus as of June 30, 2024	\$ 1,142,929	(A) pg 13
<i>(Breakdown of use of 2024 surplus)</i>		
B(1) used to support the FY24 budget	-	
B(2) issued as credits to member districts	\$ -	
B(3) issued as a check(s) to member district(s)	\$ -	
B(4) deposited to a restricted account(s)	\$ -	
(B) Board voted uses of surplus funds during FY25	<i>(total from B1:B4)</i> \$ -	(B) p.
(C) Unexpended FY25 General Funds	\$ 227,967	(C) pg 13
(D) Cumulative Surplus as of June 30, 2025	(A) - (B) + (C) = (D) \$ 1,370,896	(D) pg 13
(E) FY25 Total General Fund Expenditures	\$ 14,388,627	(E) pg 35
(F) Cumulative Surplus Percentage	(D) ÷ (E) 9.53%	(F) p.

CUMULATIVE SURPLUS REDUCTION

Allowable uses of surplus - in excess of the 25% limit

(G) Cumulative surplus as of June 30, 2025	\$ 1,370,896	
	25% limit (allowed)	\$ 3,597,157
(H) Cumulative Surplus REDUCTIONS		
(H)1 Credited to member districts for tuition, services, etc.	\$ -	
(H)2 Deposited to an established trust and/or reserve fund	\$ -	
(H)3 Returned (check) to school districts/towns	\$ -	
	Total Reductions	\$ -
	FY25 Cumulative Surplus Percentage after Reductions	9.53%

APPENDIX D Certification of Board Acceptance

ACCEPTANCE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We, the Board of Directors of the **Keystone Educational Collaborative**, have voted to accept the representations of management and the expression of the opinions made by **Bruce D. Norling, CPA, P.C.** as embodied in the financial statements, required supplementary schedules and independent auditor's reports for the year ended June 30, 2025.

We also certify that the representations made by management and the disclosures in the financial statements are accurate and have been correctly and completely disclosed as required by accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America and under Commonwealth of Massachusetts laws for the year ended June 30, 2025.


Board Chairperson

12/4/2025
Date of Board Vote

KEYSTONE EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE

**Determination of Cumulative Surplus (Board Vote)
For the Year Ended June 30, 2025**

We, the Board of Directors of the **Keystone Educational Collaborative**, have determined the FY25 cumulative surplus to be \$ 1,370,896 and have voted to accept/reduce said surplus as presented in the Cumulative Surplus worksheet (Appendix B)

We also certify that the representations made by management and the disclosures in the financial statements are accurate and have been correctly and completely disclosed as required by accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America and under Commonwealth of Massachusetts laws for the year ended June 30, 2025.


Board Chairperson

12.5.2025
Date of Board Vote

Bruce D. Norling, CPA, P.C.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT ON INTERNAL CONTROL OVER FINANCIAL REPORTING AND ON COMPLIANCE AND OTHER MATTERS BASED ON AN AUDIT OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS PERFORMED IN ACCORDANCE WITH GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS

To the Board of Directors
Keystone Educational Collaborative
Shirley, MA

We have audited, in accordance with the auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America and the standards applicable to financial audits contained in *Government Auditing Standards* issued by the Comptroller General of the United States, the financial statements of the governmental activities of Keystone Educational Collaborative, as of and for the year ended June 30, 2025, and the related notes to the financial statements, which collectively comprise the Collaborative's basic financial statements, and have issued our report thereon dated December 4, 2025.

Internal Control Over Financial Reporting

In planning and performing our audit of the financial statements, we considered the Collaborative's internal control over financial reporting (internal control) to determine the audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances for the purpose of expressing our opinions on the financial statements, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Collaborative's internal control. Accordingly, we do not express an opinion on the effectiveness of the Collaborative's internal control.

A deficiency in internal control exists when the design or operation of a control does not allow management or employees, in the normal course of performing their assigned functions, to prevent, or detect and correct, misstatements, on a timely basis. *A material weakness* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control, such that there is a reasonable possibility that a material misstatement of the entity's financial statements will not be prevented, or detected and corrected, on a timely basis. *A significant deficiency* is a deficiency, or a combination of deficiencies, in internal control that is less severe than a material weakness, yet important enough to merit attention by those charged with governance.

Our consideration of internal control was for the limited purpose described in the first paragraph of this section and was not designed to identify all deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses or significant deficiencies. Given these limitations, during our audit we did not identify any deficiencies in internal control that we consider to be material weaknesses. However, material weaknesses or significant deficiencies may exist that were not identified.

Report on Compliance and Other Matters

As part of obtaining reasonable assurance about whether the Collaborative's financial statements are free of material misstatement, we performed tests of its compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements, noncompliance with which could have a direct and material effect on the financial statements. However, providing an opinion on compliance with those provisions was not an objective of our audit, and accordingly, we do not express such an opinion. The results of our tests disclosed no instances of noncompliance or other matters that are required to be reported under *Government Auditing Standards*.

Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is solely to describe the scope of our testing of internal control and compliance and the results of that testing, and not to provide an opinion on the effectiveness of the Organization's internal control or on compliance. This report is an integral part of an audit performed in accordance with *Government Auditing Standards* in considering the Organization's internal control and compliance. Accordingly, this communication is not suitable for any other purpose.

Bruce D. Norling, CPA, P.C

Sudbury, Massachusetts
December 4, 2025

Topic: Executive Board Meeting
Time: February 5, 2026, 8:30 AM Eastern Time (US and Canada)
Meeting ID: 826 0554 5652 Passcode: 801784

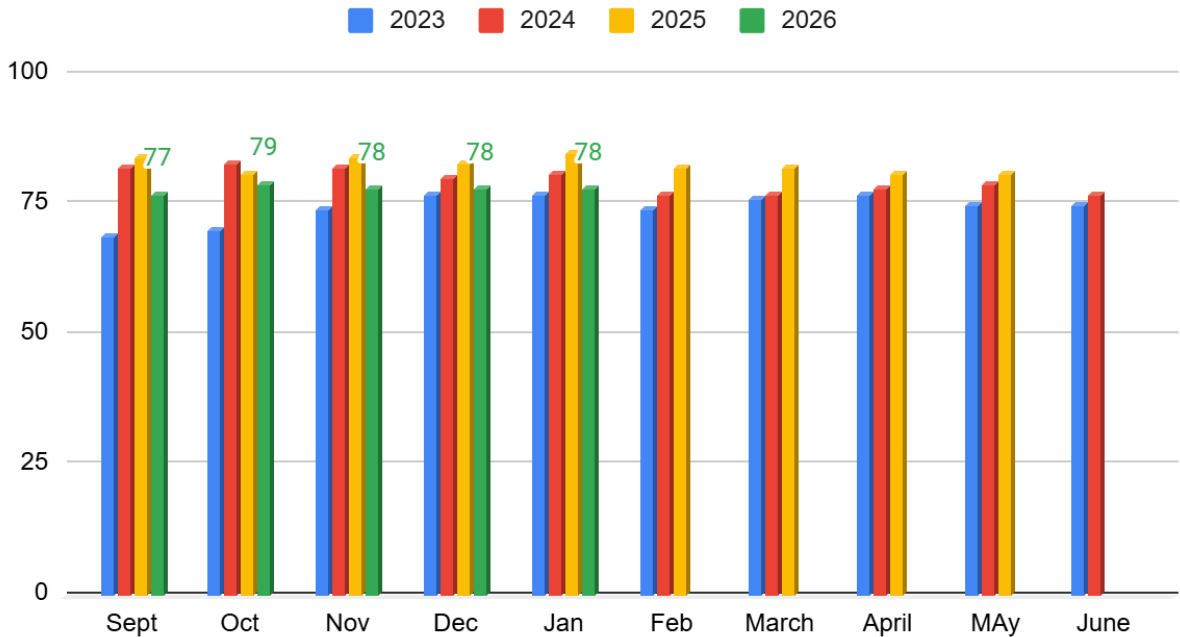
Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82605545652?pwd=bn3NfaCX6Mha2VMGjGyJfZxiyeaJ7.1>

Census

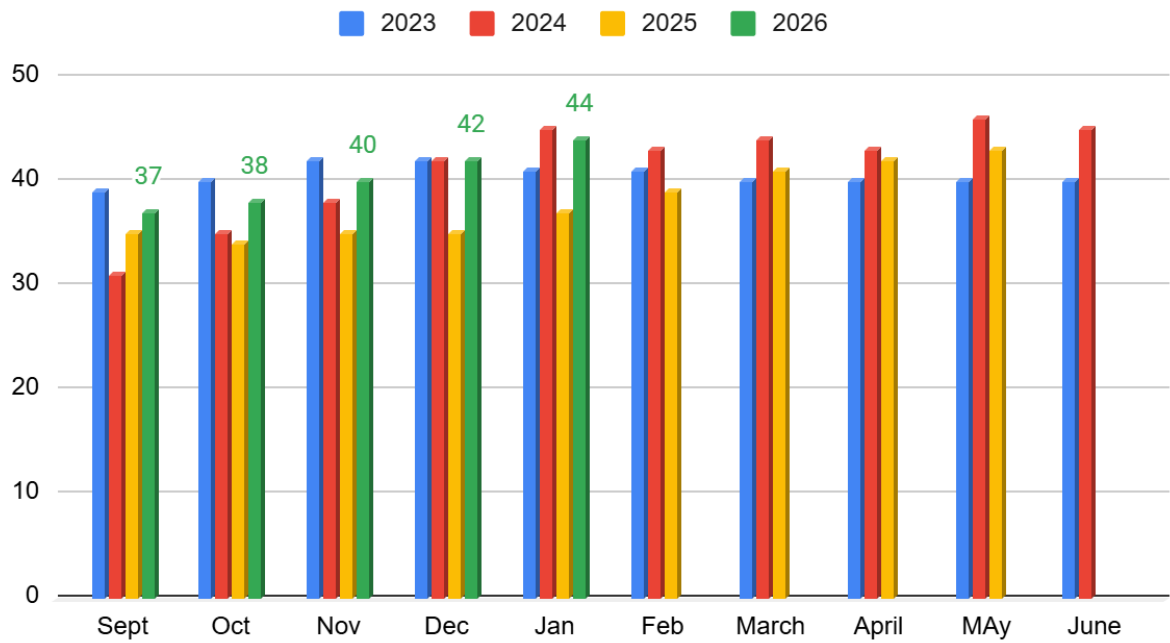
Program	Current Census	Projected Census
Key Program	78	88
KEC Elementary	44	52
Keystone Academy	39	43
Total	161	183

KEY Program Census



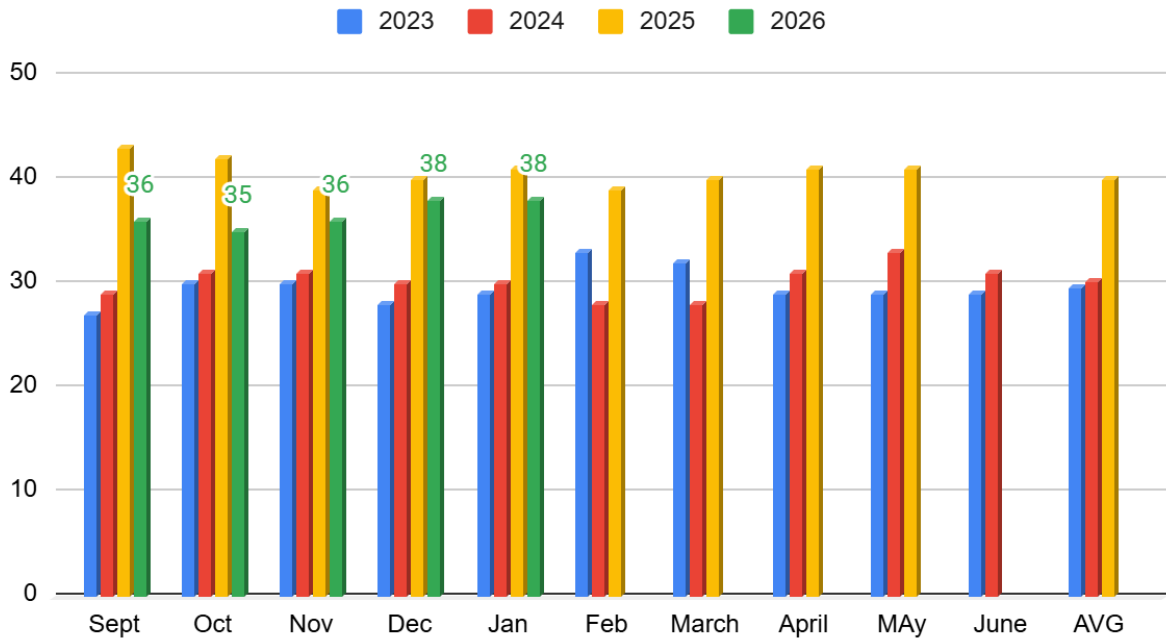
KEY Program: No changes to report. The Key Program continues to have student referrals and tours being conducted as well as students that have graduation and/or have aged out of the program.

KEA Program Census



KEA Program: No changes to report. The Program has had an uptick of referrals and some students that have been able to return back to the district.

Academy Program Census



Key Academy: No changes to report. The census has fluctuated with students relocating outside of this catchment area. We are seeing growing issues with students that should have had guardianship delegated but parents delayed or did not want to take on responsibility.

Status Update Keystone

143 Joslin Property

- No news to report.

360 Electric Ave

- No news to report.

98 Adams Street (Lease/Property)

- No news to report.

Staffing

- Currently, staffing is proportional with student enrollment and will continue to be monitored with the influx of or decrease of student services needed.

DESE Annual Audit

- The DESE Annual Audit is currently in progress.

Independent Annual Audit

- The Independent Annual Audit has been completed and approved by DESE on 1/20/2026. The report has been uploaded to DESE and publicly posted on our website.

Annual Report

- The Annual Report has been uploaded to DESE and publicly posted on our website.

Budget 2026 -2027

- We are currently working on the 2026-2027 budget with the business department with proposals during March Sub Committee Meeting.

Advisory Board Attendance

Date	Sept 18	Oct 30	Jan 22	Mar 19	May 21
%	58%	58%	50%		

Topic Discussions

- New Seclusion guidelines
- License Preschool with or without disability
- New IEP timeline
- Sub separate Program design for districts



Gardner Public Schools

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

www.gardnerk12.org

160 Elm Street, Gardner, MA 01440

(978) 632-1000

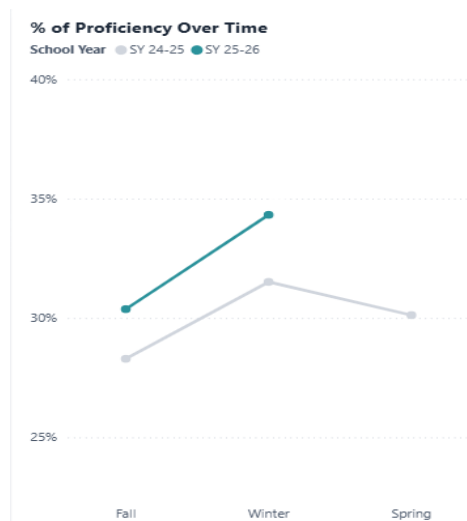
February 27, 2026

Data Driven Instruction:

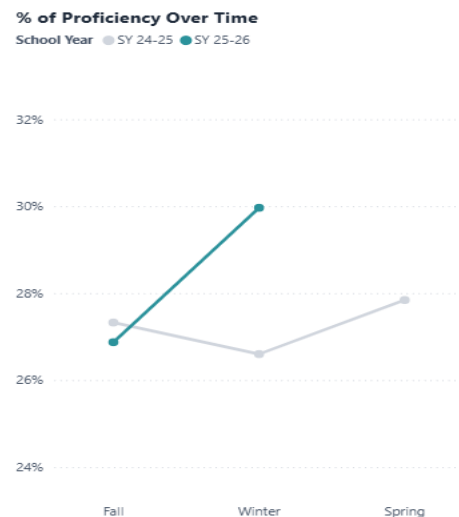
As part of implementing the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) model throughout the district, we are utilizing the STAR Reading and Math assessment tool from Renaissance to administer universal assessments for monitoring progress on student reading and math achievement three times per year. We are also utilizing a comprehensive Data Dashboard to triangulate student progress data in SEL and academics, and to inform adjustments to SEL and instructional practices to meet the needs of all learners. Below, you will see the aggregate results of the STAR benchmark assessments for reading and mathematics.

STAR benchmark assessments reveal growth in the acquisition and mastery of reading and mathematics standards. Results measure conceptual understanding and procedural fluency, identifying specific skill strengths and deficiencies unique to each grade level. The assessments are also predictive of MCAS success. We now have two years of data within the STAR testing platform to compare as can be seen below.

District STAR Reading Results BOY to MOY



District STAR Math Results BOY to MOY



STAR Math Benchmark Assessment Data By Grade Level

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
	Winter Data	Winter Data	Winter Data	Winter Data	Winter Data	Winter Data	Winter Data	Winter Data	Winter Data
	Percent of Students Meeting Expected Benchmark								
Actual Results 2025-2026	36%	40%	24%	29%	30%	32%	21%	28%	30%
Actual Results 2024-2025	34%	32%	21%	25%	23%	27%	26%	25%	42%

STAR Reading Benchmark Assessment Data By Grade Level

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 10
	Winter Data	Winter Data	Winter Data	Winter Data	Winter Data	Winter Data	Winter Data	Winter Data	Winter Data
	Percent of Students Meeting Expected Benchmark								
Actual Results 2025-2026	N/A*	41%	30%	26%	28%	28%	25%	36%	46%
Actual Results 2024-2025	N/A*	40%	32%	24%	22%	17%	23%	46%	54%

*Grade 1 does not take STAR reading test as they are tested using DIBELS

The STAR Reading and Math line graph results above indicate the change in percent of students who were meeting expected benchmarks for the 2024-2025 through mid-year 2025-2026 school year. The two tables above show longitudinal middle of year % of students meeting benchmark for specific grade levels. The tables are also color coded to show progress by cohort.

For both math and reading, the District is currently monitoring the proficiency percentage of students with a specific focus on students with disabilities and multilingual learners. To improve outcomes for all students, especially our lowest performing subgroups of students, district/building administrators, instructional coaches, and other staff members are utilizing this information to identify specific areas of challenge for each grade level, content area and for each student, and to create action plans for implementing effective targeted student supports/interventions throughout the school year.



Gardner Public Schools

Lori Simpson, Ed.D., *Director of Multilingual Learner Education*

www.gardnerk12.org 70 Waterford Street, Gardner, MA 01440 (978) 632-1000

Multilingual Learners Update –March 9, 2026

New Enrollments

The district has seen an increase of 60 students identified as English Language Learners since the start of the school year. This brings the total number of students identified as multilingual learners to 395 with 256 of them currently enrolled in ESL classes. There has been a lot of movement into and out of the district, so this represents a relatively steady number of students identified as English Learners.

Parent Engagement

The Multilingual Learner Department hosted Bingo for Books on November 13.. There were about 10 families in attendance. We will continue to talk about ELPAC at family events and hold meetings throughout the year both virtually and in person. Our next family event will be our End of Year Celebration/Potluck on May 18. Each year, we take this opportunity to celebrate our students who have successfully completed the ESL program as measured by the ACCESS test.

Adult ESL started back up in January. There are around 10 adults regularly attending classes. Classes are held on Wednesday evenings and taught by one of our middle school ESL teachers, Joseph Lillie. We have used this as another opportunity to gain input from our parents by holding mini ELPAC meetings periodically at the start of these classes.

ACCESS Testing

All ESL students enrolled in the Gardner Public Schools, have just finished taking their ACCESS assessment. This state-mandated test is given each year in January and February. Students are tested in each of the four domains of language acquisition, reading, writing, speaking and listening. This assessment determines whether the student has reached English proficiency and we use the scores to schedule students in classes for the next school year.

Professional Development

The ML Department has offered Professional Development this year to teachers in all buildings with our work focusing on building academic language for ALL students. The ESL teachers are currently participating in a book study using *Academic Language: Engaging Multilingual Students in Content Area Learning* and teachers at Gardner Academy are taking a deep dive into *The Shift to Student-Led* to help build their capacity to meet students' needs.

Community • Appreciation • Responsibility • Excellence



Gardner Public Schools

Courtney Dunn, *Grants & Communications Manager*

www.gardnerk12.org

160 Elm Street, Gardner, MA 01440

(978) 632-1000

Grants & Communications Update to School Committee – March 9, 2026

Grants

The district has applied for 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 district has completed the IDEA Fiscal LEA Cyclical Monitoring Submission for the first time. This required monitoring submission was issued by DESE to collect information about the district's processes and procedures as they related to federally-issued IDEA grants that include the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Federal Special Education Entitlement Grant (Fund Code 240), the Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Program Federal Entitlement Grant (Fund Code 262), and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part B (IDEA) Federal Targeted Special Education Program Improvement Grant (Fund Code 274). This monitoring will occur every six years.

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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

March 7, 2026

Report to the School Committee Pupil Services/Special Education Updates

SPECIAL EDUCATION DEPARTMENT:

In November 2025 the District became involved with DESE Special Education Designation work for school districts listed as Needs Assistance. Gardner was deemed Needs Assistance specifically due to students with disabilities not meeting state targets for proficiency percentages on the MCAS in grades 4, 8, and 10. The District is required to participate in technical assistance which has been provided through DESE hired vendor, SPED STRATEGIES.

During the last 3 months the elementary school and high school have participated in root cause analysis and improvement planning specific to MCAS scores. Building teams under the facilitation of Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Chief Academic Officer, and Principal have engaged in meaningful deep analysis of data and practices. The District's action plan is due to DESE in two weeks. Buildings will be implementing and monitoring their actions through the next school year.

As part of the work with teachers to improve student with disabilities outcomes, the District has contracted with consultant Kelly Mertens to support all schools to prioritize high impact evidence based practices in Universal Design for Learning (UDL) IEP accommodations and integrated planning with HQIM, lesson design for learner variability, and data-informed decision making. Ms. Mertens will be supporting all schools and with guidance from central office and principals she will focus her coaching and consultation for the identified grades/content areas. Ms. Mertens has begun work with the elementary school. She is scheduled to start with the middle and high schools this month.

This year the District participated in an Integrated Monitoring Review (IMR) which occurs every three years and is conducted by DESE. The standards that are monitored every three years alternate. This year Special Education and Civil Rights evaluation were on the following Universal Standards:

- Licensure/professional development
- Parent/student/community engagement
- Facilities and classroom observations
- Oversight
- Time and learning
- Equal access

Special Education had 11 standards evaluated and Civil Rights had 18 standards evaluated for this three year cycle. The next IMR Special Education will have more standards and Civil Rights will have less.

DESE found the District in compliance with all standards and criteria reviewed. No further action is needed. DESE does not generate a lengthy report as compliance was met in all areas.