

# Gardner Public Schools

Joyce West, Director of Pupil Personnel



www.gardnerk12.org

130 Elm Street, Gardner MA 01440

(978) 630-4076

August 30, 2021

Dear Families,

Welcome back to a new school year! I hope you all were able to take a much needed break away from technology and enjoyed the outdoors despite the recent heat. The Special Education Department is excited for the return to a regular school schedule and remains vigilant for the safety and well-being of our students.

During the last year, many parents embraced the option to attend IEP meetings virtually. Virtual meetings will still be offered to parents. Of course, parents may opt for in person meetings. Please be aware that we are currently following safety protocols in school in regards to mask wearing and social distancing. If parents prefer an in-person meeting, it is possible that some team members may still need to participate virtually. If this situation arises, you child's liaison or administrator will notify you.

The Special Education Department would like to share changes for staffing and the addition of positions. The department's continuous commitment to improving practices has resulted in the addition of positions in the district. We welcome two additional positions to the District:

Speech and Language Pathologist, Toniann Grossman, at Waterford Street School  
District-wide Occupational Therapist, Dana Morgan

Each district building has a Special Education Administrator assigned to the building to oversee the development and implementation of special education services. Special Education Liaisons continue to be the primary contact and resource for families.

Special Education Administrator contact information for each building:

Susan Ecklund, Waterford Street School (978) 632-1605 ext. 5011

Sharon Sarcinelli, Elm Street School (978) 630-4076 ext. 4508

Tasha Gamble, Gardner Middle School (978) 632-1603 ext. 2003

Arvid Tenney, Gardner High School/Gardner Academy (978) 632-1600 ext. 1131

For students in out-of-district programs, please contact the special education office.

As in the past, we will be sending home parent survey's along with your child's annual IEP proposals. When you receive the IEP document, please take a few minutes to complete the survey. These surveys help the district improve IEP practices.

Enclosed you will find the Parent's Notice of Procedural Safeguards. In accordance with federal special education law, IDEA 2004, school districts may distribute these Safeguards once per year to parents/guardians of students in special education. Please maintain these Safeguards for your reference throughout the school year. Should you need an additional copy at any point during the school year, we will be happy to provide that for you upon request. In an effort to be as cost effective as possible, we are enclosing one copy per family even if more than one child in your household receives special

education services. If you have any questions regarding the contents of these Safeguards, please contact the appropriate special education administrator assigned to your child's building.

Also enclosed with this letter is information regarding The Gardner Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC). Please take a few minutes to review the information. The SEPAC is a parent run organization and has been an important resource to many families in Gardner and also to my department in the role of school and family liaison.

Katie Abbott, SEPAC President, is seeking additional members willing to either hold a co-chair or secretary position on the council. The first meeting of the year will be announced in September and Parents Basic Rights will be reviewed. Further information on meetings can be found on the district website along with a Special Education Parent Questionnaire. Please take a minute to complete this questionnaire so the SEPAC can provide you with the support and resources you need to assist in the success of your child in/out of school.

Please take a minute to check out the district's website [www.gardnerk12.org](http://www.gardnerk12.org) and facebook page.

I look forward to this new school year. Best wishes for a smooth beginning! Go Wildcats!

Sincerely,

Joyce West  
Director of Pupil Personnel Services





### Gardner SEPAC Meeting Schedule

Gardner SEPAC meetings are held the last Wednesday of every month unless otherwise noted. All meetings are open to the public. Please attend to learn more about Special Education at Gardner Public School.. Check [gardnerk12.org](http://gardnerk12.org) or Facebook for more information regarding meeting dates.

**SEPAC Contact : Katie Abbott**  
**[kabbottGSEPAC@gmail.com](mailto:kabbottGSEPAC@gmail.com)**  
**[facebook.com/gardnerSEPAC](http://facebook.com/gardnerSEPAC)**

### Important Contacts

Gardner Public School 978-630-1000  
On the web : [www.gardnerk12.org](http://www.gardnerk12.org)  
Special Education Office 978-630-4076

**Schools in the district**  
Gardner High School 978-632-1600  
Gardner Middle School 978-632-1603  
Elm Street School 978-632-1673  
Waterford Street School 978-632-1605  
Gardner Academy f 978-632-1606

The Gardner Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is a volunteer organization that serves as a resource and advisor to parents of children with disabilities ages 3-22. Our membership is open to parents and care givers of children who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP), 504 or anyone interested in special education in Gardner. Raising a child with learning differences can be very challenging. Our group offers the opportunity for networking, support and to hear important speakers. By working together with Gardner Public School and the Special Education department we advocate for and support our children with learning differences in order to help them be successful in school and beyond.

For more information about our group, meeting dates and general information check us out at [www.facebook.com/gardnerSEPAC](http://www.facebook.com/gardnerSEPAC)

Support for caregivers and parents of children with learning differences.



**Gardner SEPAC**  
Gardner Public School  
Special Education Parent Advisory Council



Working together for our children's future.

The mission of the Gardner Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPPAC) is to work for the understanding of, respect for, and support of all children with special needs in the community.

### What is a SEPPAC?

SEPPAC is a formally organized group of individuals committed to the best possible services for children with special needs. A SEPPAC:

- Promotes a network of parents and forum to share information
- Advises the school district on special education programs, training needs, and policy
- Promotes communication between PAC members; local, state and national organizations, councils and groups
- Promotes understanding, acceptance and inclusion within the community
- Provides informational forums for parents, students, educators, and professionals

### Why get involved?

- To network with other parents in the community.
- To share your own expertise and experiences with other parents.

- To learn about the services available for children with learning issues or differences.
- To learn to advocate for your child's needs more effectively

### How SEPPAC helps:

SEPPAC provides a network of resources and support for parents of students with disabilities in Gardner. Some of those supports include:

- Offering advice parent-to parent about navigating educational services
- Monthly meetings that include family support and informational presentations.
- Helping understanding special education laws, IEPs, 504s, and other available support services
- Collaborating with school administrators, teachers, and school committee to improve the educational opportunities available that promote positive educational outcomes for children with disabilities.

MASSACHUSETTS STATUTTE Chapter 71B: Section 3 The School Committee shall establish a parent advisory council on special education. Membership shall be offered to all parents of children with disabilities and other interested parties.

Chapter 71B: Section 1C Each school district shall conduct, in cooperation with the local parent advisory council, at least one workshop annually within the school district on the rights of students and their parents/guardians under the special education laws of the commonwealth.

MASSACHUSETTS REGULATION 603 CMR 28:07 (4) Each school district shall create a district-wide parent advisory council offering membership to all parents of eligible students, and other interested parties.

