

The Executive Committee of the Garden City PTA thanks the administration for your time, care, and tireless effort in preparing the budget for the 2023-2024 school year. We also thank the Board of Education for your time and care in reviewing the budget.

We also want to express our gratitude to the members of our community who attended these budget presentations, asked questions of the administration, and showed an active interest in the future of our schools. As parents, our role as public education advocates cannot be overstated, and we must remain engaged in the school budget process by speaking on behalf of our students here in Garden City, and with our elected representatives in Albany. We also want to express our appreciation for the engaging and thoughtful presentations explaining this year's budget and the presentations provided to address school safety concerns of our community.

We understand that there are many challenges in preparing a school budget and submitting it for inspection and approval via a public vote. The school's budget must uphold our community's high expectations for quality public education while maintaining the Board's commitment to not exceed the allowable tax levy. This year, the budget does just that. It is at once fiscally conservative and academically ambitious, guided by the district mission statement, with a focus on students at its core.

This budget promises exciting instructional additions and enhancements for all students in grades K through 12, and found the additional funding to continue to offer universal pre-k to our students. We appreciate that 75% of this budget, and most of our past budgets, is dedicated to student programs, and are excited to see capital projects going forward, especially the replacement of the bleachers in the high school gym. We understand how inflation has affected this year's budget, and appreciate the careful thought that went into balancing the needs of the students with the increased costs of the administration.

Looking ahead, we understand that our district, like many others, is not without its challenges. We are still dealing with the aftermath of the pandemic, increased safety concerns to our schools, and managing the mental health and emotional well being of our children who need increased support to process these stressful issues. We support the continued efforts of the administration and the Board to nimbly address and respond to safety concerns, and the continued provision of mental health services to our students and families. Additionally, as our student enrollment continues to grow, we must continue to investigate ways to expand our school buildings to include more usable classroom space and ways to lower class sizes. It is imperative for the success of our students that we avoid the implications of overcrowding and less teacher-student attention. Finally, we support the continued focus on increased opportunities to learn and work with new technologies for our students and support the administration's dedication to innovation and the steps necessary to prepare our students to be leaders of the future.

This budget continues the Garden City School District's commitment to inspire and challenge students to accomplish their personal best, while also maintaining the Board's commitment to fiscal responsibility. The Executive Committee of the Garden City PTA strongly supports the

2023-2024 school budget. We urge all community members to vote “YES” for the budget on May 16th, in support of our children, public education, and community.

We appreciate all of the Board of Education’s current and continuing efforts to meet the challenges ahead, and we encourage you to continue to work collaboratively with parents through PTA and SEPTA to tackle future challenges to our budget together.

Thank you on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Garden City PTA.