

The Executive Committee of the Garden City PTA thanks the Administration for your time, care, and tireless effort in preparing the budget for the 2025-2026 school year. We also thank the Board of Education for your diligence in reviewing the budget. We appreciate the engaging and thoughtful presentations explaining this year's budget and the presentations provided to address the concerns of our community.

Thank you to the members of our community who attended these budget presentations, asked questions of the Administration and the Board, 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 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 of 2.42%. This year, the budget achieves those goals. It is at once fiscally conservative and academically ambitious, guided by the district mission statement, with a focus on students at its core.

As parents, we are excited for the capital projects already in progress and proposed for the upcoming fiscal year, including the Athletic addition and new turf fields at the High School. Planned boiler work at the High School and Middle School and the installation of air conditioning in the large gathering spaces in all our schools will help to get all buildings modernized to deal with temperature issues more effectively. We also commend the district for planned modernization of our technology as well, including cybersecurity protection, advisory groups to address emerging AI issues, and a thoughtful balance between limiting and incorporating student devices in the learning environment.

We appreciate that over 75% of this budget, and most of our past budgets, is dedicated to student programs and promises exciting instructional

additions and enhancements for all students in grades K through 12. We look forward to receiving the Literacy Review recommendations in the coming months and commend the Administration for including Literacy Enhancement as a K-5 priority for the 2025-2026 school year.

We are pleased to see the thoughtful consideration of parent concerns regarding class size at the Middle School with the planned addition of teaching personnel at the Middle School and a change to the longstanding Master Schedule process to permit greater flexibility. We also appreciate the attention given to the diverse learners in our community, with the planned increase in ICT classes at the Kindergarten and High School levels, the hiring of 2 in-house Occupational Therapists to provide support to our students, and the continued provision of mental health services to our students and families.

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 2025-2026 school budget. We urge all community members to vote "YES" for the budget on May 20th, 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.