

May 5, 2020

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The Executive Committee of the Garden City PTA thanks Dr. Sinha and the Administration for your time, care, and effort in preparing the 2020-2021 School Budget. We also thank the Board of Education for your time and care in reviewing the budget.

We thank all members of the community who attended the budget presentations, either in person or virtually, and showed an active interest in continuing the tradition of excellence in Garden City public schools. The role of parents as education advocates cannot be overstated, and one of the ways that we demonstrate this advocacy is by engaging in the school budget process. We also thank all community members who supported our “Don’t Pass the Flash” bus safety campaign, those who participated in our advocacy campaign for better dyslexia legislation, and those who support our continuing efforts to increase school safety by removing public polling from schools. We are confident that grassroots efforts such as these raise awareness within our community and alert our elected representatives about the critical issues that continue to face public education.

We understand that many considerations go into school budget preparation and formation, but even with the best planning, unexpected challenges arise. This year’s budget process was affected by the COVID-19 outbreak, statewide stay-at-home orders, and the unprecedented extended school closures. Indeed, the budget itself has been amended since it was first presented in March. We thank the Administration for quickly and innovatively responding to the potential challenges that students may encounter when school resumes in the fall by allocating reserve funds for one-time support services related to the extended closures.

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 2020-2021 School Budget emphasizes student safety and emotional security, particularly during this unique time; maintains and expands exciting academic programs; implements the district’s Special Education Strategic Plan, reimagines school libraries as dynamic media centers, and ensures that technology infrastructure will continue to meet district needs. The budget also promises to maintain the district’s commitment to enriching professional development, our fine extracurricular and athletic programs, and facilities that are safe and well-maintained.

Looking ahead, parents continue to be concerned about the challenges facing our district, including increasing enrollment and student needs, education mandates that may outpace available funding sources, reduced state aid to the district, and the permanent 2% property tax cap. Garden City’s record of spending less per pupil than comparable districts while maintaining overall academic excellence is admirable but, perhaps, not sustainable. Accordingly, as district needs increase and tax revenues shrink, piercing the tax cap may be necessary to maintain the quality education for which the Village of Garden City and the Garden City School District are revered.

The Executive Committee of the Garden City PTA supports the 2020-2021 School Budget and urges all community members to vote “Yes” by returning their ballots by mail by June 9th.

The Executive Committee of the Garden City PTA