

GARFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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To All Members of the Garfield School Community :

WELCOME TO THE 2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR!

We look forward to the opening of school with in-person instruction for all students on Wednesday, September 7th. The school year will begin with one-session days on September 7, 8, and 9 and the full day schedule will begin on Monday, September 12th.

As we continue to prioritize health and safety in our schools, the district will follow the recommendations of the CDC, local Health Department, and NJDOE when implementing protocols regarding Covid-19. The district will implement the **Test to Stay** model, which combines contact tracing and immediate testing for Covid-19 to allow individuals who are close contacts and asymptomatic to remain in school. Parental permission to test in school is required and a permission slip will be posted on the portal along with additional information regarding Test to Stay (TTS) so parents can make an informed decision.

The Garfield District has revised and posted a plan on the district website entitled, *Garfield District Plan for Safe Return to In-Person Instruction and Continuity of Services*, updated July 2022, which provides the school community with our specific protocols for the new school year. This plan is a living document and subject to immediate revisions in the event of unexpected occurrences with the number of Covid-19 and variant cases in our district, community, county, and state. The wearing of masks remains optional for staff, students, and visitors in our schools and offices.

A new Athletic Complex will be constructed at Garfield High School! The project will include a complete renovation of the current Athletic Complex. These improvements include the installation of synthetic multi-purpose turf fields for football, soccer, baseball, and softball, an 8-lane track that includes long jump, triple jump, pole vault, and high jump, designated areas for javelin throw, discus throw, and shot put, newly constructed tennis courts, ADA compliant stadium bleachers, field lighting, a digital video scoreboard, and a new field house with bathrooms, locker rooms, and storage. Once completed, the state-of-the-art complex will serve as the hub for Garfield athletics and recreation and will be available for district and city-wide events, as well as for use by community organizations, and the Garfield residents.

A new K-5 Elementary School is coming to Garfield!

The New Jersey School Development Authority (SDA) recently announced the approval of new projects in its 2022 Capital Plan that addresses facility needs in the state's most overcrowded districts. The exciting news is that Garfield will be receiving a new K-5 elementary school with the capacity to educate 750 -800 students. The property designated for this project is the current Woodrow Wilson School #5 site located on Outwater Lane in Garfield. The anticipated opening date for the new school is September 2026.

The Success Academy will open at Garfield High School! This new program will provide our students with nontraditional opportunities that are designed to meet their specific needs and be conducive to individual learning styles. The Success Academy will allow students at risk of academic failure to recover credits while addressing challenges such as truancy, lack of motivation, and social-

emotional issues. We seek to find personalized pathways for our students to achieve their goals and meet success.

The ESSER funding continues to afford the district the opportunity to place an intentional focus on social-emotional learning (SEL), mental health, learning loss that occurred during the pandemic, and health and safety issues. Additional counselors have been hired to provide emotional support and mentoring to our students while aiming to promote positive school climate for our students to thrive. Funding will be utilized to provide academic and social-emotional support and enrichment through tutoring, extended day programs and summer programs. Technology will be upgraded as needed to provide our students the opportunity for personalized learning and building essential 21st century skills. Teachers will continue to receive ongoing and relevant professional development to empower them to teach more effectively and address the needs of our students.

Facilities upgrades for this school year includes the new HVAC system at Garfield High School, which is a total renovation of the current system to meet environmental standards, including air conditioning. The Middle School will see the completion of the theater project, which includes state of the art technology and lighting to encourage student participation in the arts. Ongoing maintenance is essential at our elementary schools that includes painting, paving, and repairs as needed.

The Garfield district prioritizes school security and will continue to have armed security guards at every school. Security personnel are responsible for maintaining a safe environment, conducting the mandatory monthly drill requirements as well as screening all visitors entering the school using the Raptor management system. Every school is equipped with security cameras that are strategically placed as well as alarm systems and panic buttons for emergencies.

Handbooks for Pre-K, Elementary Schools, Middle School, and High School will be posted on the district and school websites with information regarding attendance procedures, school schedules, disciplinary codes, and other relevant information. It is important to familiarize yourself and your child with the school's policies and protocols prior to the start of the school year.

Check the district and school website for information on curriculum. Parents have the right to opt their children out of instruction on various topics, so it is important that you review the information available to make the best decision for the education of your child.

Two-way communication is essential to the success of student learning. Remember to check the district and school websites regularly, as well as district social media accounts and reach out to the principal, teachers, and counselors if you have any questions or concerns. We are working together as a team to educate our students.

I extend my best wishes to our students, staff, and families for a safe, healthy, successful, and happy school year as we continue to pursue our ***Vision of Champions, "to Encourage, Inspire, and Support every individual to achieve more."*** Enjoy the rest of the summer and be well.

Kind Regards,

Anna Sciacca

Superintendent of Garfield Public Schools

