

Addendum A to Gardner Public Schools Student Handbook:

Middle School Pathway Exploration Policy

Policy Overview

Gardner Public Schools is committed to ensuring that all middle school students and their families are well-informed about the wide range of educational options available to them for high school, including Career and Technical Education (CTE) and vocational programs. In compliance with Massachusetts state regulations (603 CMR 4.00) and guidance from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), this policy outlines how our district provides students with awareness and exposure to CTE and vocational opportunities at local, regional, and agricultural public high schools.

High School Pathway Options

The following CTE school is available to students based on their town of residence:

For residents of Ashburnham, Ashby, Athol, Barre, Fitchburg, Gardner, Harvard, Holden, Hubbardston, Lunenburg, Petersham, Phillipston, Princeton, Royalston, Sterling, Templeton, Westminster and Winchendon:

- o Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School District -
<https://www.montytech.net/>
 - 1050 Westminster Street, Fitchburg, MA 01420

CH74 Programs: Advanced Manufacturing, Automotive Body & Collision Repair, Automotive Technology, Business Technology, Cabinetmaking, CAD Drafting & Design, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Dental Assisting, Early Childhood Education, Electrical, Engineering Technology, Graphic Communications, Health Occupations, House Carpentry, HVAC & Property Maintenance, Information Technology, Masonry, Plumbing, Veterinary Science, Welding Metal Fabrication

Middle School Career Exploration

The district's implementation of My Career and Academic Plan (MyCAP) directly connects the exploration of CTE schools and programs to a student's broader academic and career goals. MyCAP is a structured process that helps students explore their interests, skills, and values starting in middle school. This self-discovery process guides students as they research high school pathways and make informed decisions about which school environment, whether a traditional high school or a specialized CTE program or vocational program, that best aligns with their emerging goals.

Collaboration with Member Vocational Schools

Gardner Middle School, Gardner High School, and Gardner Academy will actively collaborate with Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School District to inform students about the CTE/vocational opportunities available to them. This collaboration includes:

- **Information Sharing:** Annually middle schools will provide member CTE/vocational schools with the names, addresses, and email addresses of all enrolled seventh, and eighth-grade students.
- **On-Campus Lunch Visits:** Each fall, all eighth-grade students will have the opportunity to attend lunch visits at the middle/high school hosted by the CTE/vocational school. These events will provide students with information about CTE programs and the application process.
- **School Tours:** Eighth-grade students will be provided with the opportunity to tour their regional vocational school. Transportation expenses will be covered by the vocational school. These tours will be scheduled during the school day and will be considered an excused absence (marked as a field trip).
- **Middle School After School Exploratory Program:** All 7th and 8th grade students will have the opportunity to participate in Monty Tech's free Vocational Interest Program (VIP). Students are provided with transportation to and from Monty Tech on one afternoon per week during a specific four-week session. During that session, all participants will have the opportunity to explore a different shop each week.
- **Promotion of Events:** We will share information about vocational school Open House and informational events on the district website and through regular communication channels, such as principal newsletters.
- **Online Resources:** By October 15th each year, the district website will publish pertinent information about vocational school options, including links to admission applications, admissions policies, and open house/informational event schedules.
- **Providing Admissions Records to CTE Schools:** Middle schools will provide relevant information to member vocational schools for students who have applied. This may include documentation of attendance records in accordance with the vocational school's approved admissions policy and DESE guidance.

Maintenance of Records

Our district middle schools will maintain a record of all on-site presentations, assemblies, and student tours to CTE schools, along with other relevant information about collaboration between the district and member CTE/vocational schools. These records will be made available to DESE upon request.