

# THE GARDNER NEWS

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## Plenty of exciting times ahead for Winchendon students

Steve Haddad

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As I move into my second year as Superintendent of the Winchendon Public Schools there is a noticeable change in the air. For the first time in many years the schools and the town are working together to make Winchendon a great place to live, work, and go to school.

Last year was a transition year with a new superintendent and school committee, and a new town manager and select board. This year, with a solid working relationship established, we are ready to make the changes necessary to bring pride back to our town.

We have opened our new police station; we have acquired through trade the Ingleside property; we have opened and dedicated the new Bike Path that connects our town.

We are holding a dedication ceremony of The Grand Army of the Republic Park next Sunday, and we are offering many great programs through the Winchendon Public Schools; the Winchendon School; the Beals Memorial Library, and the Clark YMCA. There is something to do for everyone.

My priorities are focused on creating positive changes in our Winchendon Public Schools.

My vision is to move our district to Level 1 by improving academic performance of all students, preparing our students for success and their future, improving school pride and culture, keeping our students and staff safe, and creating a positive learning environment. We are dedicated and committed to preparing our students for a successful future.

With the strong support of a positive, hardworking administrative team, and the over the top efforts, of our highly qualified staff, we are moving our district in the right direction.

We are improving academics by continuing to align our curriculum from Pre-K to grade 12. We are providing important professional development opportunities in areas such as universal design for learning (UDL), Response to Intervention (RTI), and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS). We are also working hard to improve common planning time and co-teaching.

We have made great strides in a short amount of time. We have created a new initiative known as "Blue Devil Cool".

We want our students to be proud of their schools, so we have created some new traditions. Friday is "Blue and White Day" throughout the school year.

At Christmas, Santa brings our Kindergarten Students blue t-shirts with the Winchendon Public Schools logo on the front, and the message "Class of 2029" on the back (the number represents the year they will graduate from Murdock High School).

The school spirit song is taught to our students in our elementary schools.

Our 2016 graduates dressed in cap and gown on "Class Day," and marched over to Memorial Elementary where the students held congratulatory signs, cheered for them, and sang the school spirit song.

Toy Town Elementary School was painted blue, and a new sign was added for the Central Office.

Through the efforts of our very committed and loyal parents, the Toy Town Playground was repaired, cleaned up, and painted, and our children are out playing every day.

There have been many positive changes, and we continue to find ways to make things better in our community.

The Winchendon Public Schools: "where students enter to learn, and leave ready to achieve." We are on our way to Level 1.