



GOWANDA CENTRAL SCHOOL

Preparing our students to be leaders and citizens who are ready to be successful and embrace a changing world.

Dear Parents and Guardians,

At Gowanda, our students' safety and well-being are always our highest priority. To help families prepare for unexpected situations, we are sharing resources to help you consider creating a Family Preparation Plan.

A Family Preparation Plan can be helpful if circumstances ever prevent you from being immediately available to your child. While rare, these circumstances could include sudden illness or death, hospitalization, military deployment, arrest, deportation, natural disasters, or other emergencies.

Making a Family Preparation Plan is not **required**, it is entirely a family choice. Our goal is to provide information and resources for families who find it useful. By planning, you can give your child greater clarity and security, knowing who they can turn to and what steps will be taken if you are not available.

We also encourage you to include your child in these conversations in an age-appropriate way. This can help reduce fear and reassure them that these steps are meant to protect and support them.

To assist you, we are sharing and providing important links at www.gowcsd.org to the following helpful documents:

1. **Designation of a Person in a Parental Relationship (OCFS 4940)**
 - Not a legal guardianship form.
 - Allows a trusted person to make educational and medical decisions for your child if you cannot.
 - Does not involve child welfare investigations.
 - Temporary (up to one year, renewable).
2. **Designation of Standby Guardian (Surrogate's Court)** *(small filing fee required)*
 - Establishes temporary guardianship without parents losing parental rights.
 - Requires filing a petition and supporting documents with Surrogate's Court before the "triggering event."
 - Guardianship begins once the event occurs.
3. **Designation of Standby Guardian (Family Court)** *(no filing fee)*
 - Establishes temporary guardianship without parents losing parental rights.
 - Petition must be filed and approved by Family Court before guardianship begins.
4. **Power of Attorney (NYS Short Form)**
 - Grants a person authority over property and financial matters (e.g., bank accounts, assets needed for child care).
 - Usually paired with a guardianship order.
 - Becomes effective immediately upon signing, so use with care.

If you cannot access these forms at www.gowcsd.org, you may request printed copies by contacting **Kathy Ferneza, Secretary to the Superintendent**, at (716) 532-3325 (6300).

Additional support for new Americans is available through the **Office of New Americans** at **1-800-566-7636**, which can help connect families to resources during times of transition.

Please know that we share this information not to create worry, but to empower families with tools to make thoughtful decisions. Planning can provide peace of mind and help children feel secure, even in challenging circumstances.

Thank you for your continued partnership in keeping our students safe and supported.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Robert B. Anderson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" being the most prominent part.

Robert B. Anderson, Ed.D.

Superintendent of Schools