

GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
SEPTEMBER 21, 2020 @ 6:00 P.M.
REMOTE MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kim Shepardson Watson-Chairperson, Andrea Ackerman-Vice Chairperson, Jane Giuliani, Liz Porter, Rita Volkmann, Jay Weitlauf, Lee White

MEMBERS ABSENT: Gretchen Newsome, Rosemary Robertson

ALSO PRESENT: Mike Graner, Susan Austin, Ken Knight, Sam Kilpatrick

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairperson Kim Watson called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. BOE REGULAR BUSINESS

MOTION: Porter, White: To approve the COW meeting minutes of September 14, 2020.
PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY

III. UPDATE RE: HYBRID AND DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAM

- Technology Devices – Susan Austin gave an overview of the Hybrid and Distance Learning Program. (ATTACHMENT #1) Ms. Austin noted that Dennis Colclough will be meeting with the Principals regarding the Destiny data. Ms. Austin noted that we have had to recycle computers at the high school. All freshmen will get a lap top.
- Live Streaming Procedures – Susan Austin stated that 200 document cameras have been ordered.

IV. UPDATE RE: FALL ATHLETICS

- Dr. Graner stated that today was the first day of full team activities, i.e. Field Hockey, Volleyball is playing with masks with limited spectators. Dr. Graner noted that Football has been cancelled; the CIAC is considering the spring season; there could be a league playing flag football. Dr. Graner stated that Ledge Light has been extremely supportive.

V. DISCUSSION OF THE THREE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS (CC, SBB & MM) SCHEDULED TO BE CLOSED IN JUNE 2021

Dr. Graner noted that he and Sam Kilpatrick have been discussing the continued use of the three elementary school scheduled to be closed in June 2021. They determine that the Board should be a part of that discussion. Dr. Graner and Sam Kilpatrick noted the value of keeping MM for over flow and/or use by Robotics or Groton Technology Center.

This item was referred to the Facilities Committee to determine whether to keep some or all of these buildings for upcoming programs.

VI. FINANCE-RELATED ISSUES

- Overview of COVID-related Finances and Resources - Mr. Knight reviewed the CARES/CRF Funds (**ATTACHMENT #2**) Mr. Knight noted that all the CRF funds have to be expended by December 30, 2020. If more funds is needed an opportunity will be available to do so.
- Discussion of the Budget Timeline (**ATTACHMENT #3**) – Ken Knight noted that the Board needs to begin to think about budget timeline.
- Alliance District Funding for FY 21 – Dr. Graner noted that he was told a year ago that Groton would be allocated \$300,000. However, because the session ended prematurely funds were not allocated. In talking with legislators he was told that it is being worked on. Chris Connolly stated she was confident that Groton would receive the funds.

VII. REVIEW OF THE REFERRAL LIST

The Board reviewed the Referral List.

R2020-11 Review of the fields in the district was removed.

IX. SUGGESTED FUTURE TOPICS

Mr. Watson requested that a report on the fields in the district be added to regular agenda.

Mrs. Volkmann requested a report on what is happening with clubs. Dr. Graner responded that he will investigate and report back to the Board.

Sam Kilpatrick gave a brief update on sports stating that he received a request to have the lines drawn on the football field for a JV Football competition (7 on 7 versus 11 on 11) that will be held on Thursday at 4:30 p.m. There will be no full contact. Dr. Graner will report on the planned flag football games in the Board Notes.

X. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ackerman, Giulini: To adjourn at 7:20 p.m.
MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Groton Public Schools (GPS) Hybrid Learning Plan

Fall Re-entry 2020

“We will start slow and grow”!

Groton Public School reopened schools September 8, 2020 for grades 1-12 and September 14, 2020 for the entire district PK-12 with a Hybrid Learning Plan. Groton Middle School students started the year with remote learning and orientations from September 8 – 11, 2020. All families were offered two options at this time; face-to-face in the classroom (in small groups) two days a week, with the rest of the week distance learning with their teacher, OR they could choose total remote learning. Several families decided to homeschool their children. This plan will be continuously monitored with the Groton Board of Education and will be reassessed in four to six weeks. GPS will follow the Governor and State Health department guidelines as well as Connecticut State Department of Education recommendations. Whether students are face-to-face with their teacher or at home learning remotely, teachers will engage students in high quality instruction and accelerated learning, following the fall re-entry curriculum plan. On Wednesdays, all students will be provided with remote learning and teacher support during their established office hours and/or Zoom meetings. The “Distance Learning” component of the GPS fall re-entry plan provides the opportunity for planned teaching and learning with assessment and feedback, and allows time for students (parents) and teachers to communicate. Some of the best practices and highest level of engagement comes when teachers and students can synchronize teaching and learning face-to-face, in live video conferencing settings, and when students and teachers connect in person or remotely.

Highlights of the Hybrid Learning Plan and the Full Distance Learning Plan (Remote Learning):

- Provide instruction and assessment using GPS Learning Management Systems (LMS: SeeSaw PK-2, Google Classroom grades 3-8, or Schoology grades 9-12) with daily/weekly planning, assessing, monitoring student participation (attendance), communication, and established office hours. Teachers work their normal 7 hour days per the school schedule on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, however on Wednesdays’ teachers work remotely, with established office hours between 9 AM – 3 PM. Teachers and students/parents will communicate via email, REMIND, and LMS systems. On Wednesdays, beyond the established office hours for communication and support with students, which could include livestream and recorded lessons, the day will also be used for planning for the next week, both personally and collaboratively. Students will have the opportunity to work remotely on assigned independent work on Wednesdays.
- In the Hybrid Learning Plan, teachers will meet with a small cohort of students face-to-face on two days a week, and teachers and students will work together remotely in a blended synchronous and asynchronous way for three days a week. With our “start slow and grow motto,” we will begin with establishing relationships, taking care of social emotional learning, establish routines at school and remotely, and review health protocols, and move to academic lessons, both livestream and recorded.
- Some students and families have opted for full remote learning in the beginning of school year. These students will be part of the class, to attend Zoom meetings, and fully engage in the class through the learning management system. They will be able to communicate and work with the teacher and classmates.

- Teachers will provide mini lessons that are pre-recorded or livestreamed on Zoom (or other livestreaming technology) and then recorded for students learning remotely and face-to-face. The recommendation is for grade level teams and departments to collaborate; slides with voice over along with other engaging videos are also recommended. Document cameras will be utilized to support livestreaming.
- Live video conferencing is available on Zoom (or other livestreaming technology), and can be recorded by the teacher. The expectation is to increase student engagement with the understanding that there should be a blend of asynchronous and synchronous learning, therefore taping those lessons at the time of livestream, and pre-recording lessons will offer a balanced approach and more opportunity for students.
- Attendance will be monitored through student participation, work completion and established check in points (i.e. can take during the homeroom period, check-in LMS, and/or answer a question of the day). CSDE provides guidelines to districts on attendance.
- Virtual PD is available to staff (i.e. Virtual Professional Development recorded from 8/28 and future events can be seen on the faculty/staff curriculum site under Professional Development, such as Google Classroom, Zoom and digital platform resources; as well as Social Emotional Learning; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Literacy with TCRWP, etc.).
- Continue Curriculum Compacting around Priority standards for accelerated learning: Elementary Leadership team with teacher representatives and Secondary Department meetings at the high school, middle school led by administration, department chairs, and math and literacy specialists occur remotely; **See Fall re-entry 2020** on grotionschools.org. GPS Curriculum maps will be made available to the public this fall.
- Communications with families, and their support to students, is a key ingredient to student success in schools, whether we are full face-to-face, hybrid, or remote.

Communication and Interactive Time tips to grow student engagement:

- Classroom set up in SeeSaw, Google Classroom, or Schoology; include admin/evaluator, and special education or support staff as needed.
- Email or text students and parents regularly with a greeting and message that new work is posted, using platform or REMIND.
- Post assignments on the Learning Management System (LMS).
- Communication and Interactive Time through Office Hours:
 - Time for students to ask questions and for teachers to clarify assignments, which at minimum can be done through student school email exchange and/or within the LMS
 - We recognize that teachers may want to use the other features within the LMS program to instruct, communicate, and gather student feedback. In order to engage students in learning, it is recommended to present lessons face-to-face and record livestream lessons; also record slide show with voice over or pre-record a lesson (Zoom and other broadcasting technology)
 - The purchase of additional resources, online texts and libraries, as well as additional software will provide more student engagement during both face-to-face and distance learning. Columbia University TCRWP remote learning units of studies were purchased under the DoDEA literacy grant and made accessible to all teachers and students K-8.
 - The purchase of toolkits, workbooks, journals, books, calculators, and manipulatives will enhance both learning at home and at school.

- Using Zoom and other broadcasting technology, teachers are able to use Live Video Conferencing, which can be recorded during the day so that it will be accessible to all students. It is recommended to collaborate with colleagues to support live video conferencing.

Per Connecticut State Department of Education **Adapt, Advance, Achieve Addendum 4 on Interim Guidance for Decision Making Regarding the Use of In-Person, Hybrid (Blended), or Remote Learning Models in Connecticut Schools during COVID-19**: “Therefore, in collaboration with the school district, parents who decide to opt into voluntary remote learning will also be expected to supervise and engage their children to fully and effectively access the remote learning programming that is offered through the public school district.”

As our motto goes, Start Slow and Grow; this is an opportunity for learning new techniques while implementing the hybrid model, which blends face-to-face instruction in schools with highly engaging distance learning. We will do the best to meet the needs of our students during this challenging time in education. By grade level and department, continue to review the GPS curriculum; identifying the scope of what needs to be taught in each unit, compacting curriculum and focusing on priority standards. Flexibility is very important as each student has varying levels of support at home. By giving extensions, modifying assignments, and connecting with your students to see what supports are needed, you encourage more engagement in learning. Know that the Board of Education, Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent, Administration, colleagues, students, and families are greatly appreciative of your hard work and dedication in providing the highest quality of learning during these challenging times.

Attachment #2

Groton Public Schools
Usage of CARES/CRF funds

	Allocated	Comment
Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF)		
<i>Personnel Related Supports</i>		
Academic	893,759	COVID related subs - see schedule LT Subs - see schedule 2 Add'l Building Subs per school ATL teacher PE teacher Curriculum Instruction/Development Distance Learning Tech Coach Add'l substitute personnel <i>SubTotal</i>
Student Supports	97,328	Social Worker Community Coordinators <i>SubTotal</i>
Cleaning/PPE/Health/Safety	11,204	Additional building custodian
Transportation	50,000	Additional bus aides/OT
Subtotal Personnel Related	1,052,291	
<i>Non-personnel Related Supports</i>		
Cleaning/PPE/Health/Safety	175,000	Desk Shields Additional PPE (clear masks, shields, etc) Additional custodial supplies (soap, gloves, etc) <i>SubTotal</i>
Subtotal Non-personnel	175,000	
Total CRF	1,227,291	
CARES Act - ESSER fund		
	664,406	Food service Additional building custodians Social Worker At Home School Supplies FHS Scientific calculators Document cameras Distance Learning softwares Add'l substitute staff <i>SubTotal</i>
Total Relief	1,891,697	

FY2021/2022 BUDGET CALENDAR

Monday, October 5, 2020	Administrators' meeting/Business Office begins preparing budgets for 2021/2022 school year
Friday, November 20, 2020	Principals submit budget data to Business Manager
Monday, November 30, 2020	Business Office enters 2021/2022 budget data and prepares draft documents
December 1 - 18, 2020	Superintendent and administrators review and discuss
Monday, December 7, 2020	Review with BOE Finance/Facilities Committee
Monday, January 4, 2021	Superintendent presents budget to the Board of Education
Monday, January 11, 2021	2021/2022 budget work session
Tuesday, January 19, 2021	Public Hearing/Board of Education Special Meeting on the budget & 2021/2022 budget work session
Monday, February 1, 2021	2021/2022 budget work session
Wednesday, February 3, 2021	Joint BOE/Town Council/RTM budget meeting & 2021/2022 budget work session
Monday, February 8, 2021	2021/2022 budget work session
Wednesday, February 17, 2021	2021/2022 budget work session
Monday, February 22, 2021	Board of Education adopts 2021/2022 budget
Friday, February 26, 2021	Business Office makes revisions and prepares adopted budget for submittal to Town Manager
By March 15, 2021	Printed budget book to Town Council & RTM (Town Manager transmits to Town Council by March 15)
March - April, 2021	Town Council budget review
By April 28, 2021	Town Council adopts 2021/2022 budget
April – May, 2021	RTM budget review
By May 25, 2021	RTM adopts 2021/2022 budget