

GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE  
JULY 18, 2022 @ 6:00 P.M.  
REMOTE MEETING

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kim Shepardson Watson-Chairperson, Andrea Ackerman, Dean Antipas, Liz Porter, Matthew Shulman, Rita Volkmann, Beverly Washington, Jay Weitlauf

ALSO PRESENT: Susan Austin, Phil Piazza, Ken Knight, Sam Kilpatrick, Shannon Weigle

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairperson Shepardson Watson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. BOE REGULAR BUSINESS

MOTION: Antipas, Ackerman: To approve the COW minutes of June 20, 2022 with correction on page 1, section III with the addition of “s” to “Board member”.

**YES – Shepardson Watson, Ackerman, Antipas, Shulman, Volkmann, Washington, Weitlauf**

**ABSTAINED – Porter**

**PASSED**

III. GRANTS UPDATE (Attachment #1)

Ms. Austin gave a brief overview of the grants and the efforts of Shannon Weigle.

- DoDEA World Language Advancement and Readiness Program (WLARP) – Mrs. Weigle noted that it is very likely the district will receive this grant. The grant will require the hiring of a consultant who recommends that the project begins with the middle school and high school teachers. This grant, if awarded, will be in the amount of \$1,000,000 over 5 years beginning October 1<sup>st</sup> of this year.
- Town of Groton ARPA Fund (School Safety & Security) – Dr. Kennedy gave a brief overview of the grant noting the proposed upgrade in video surveillance systems at six facilities unifying all buildings in the Groton Public Schools. Mr. Kilpatrick stated that protective film is being put on the windows to provide security. The film functions as a mirror from the outside.
- CT Department of Education 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) – Mrs. Weigle noted that this is a federal grant in the amount of \$300,000 over 5 years administered by the CT Department of Education and CREC.
- ARP ESSER Afterschool – Mrs. Weigle gave a brief overview of the ARP ESSER Afterschool grant noting that this is an eighteen month grant to establish a FHS Afterschool Center. GPS Administration will work with the Tree House Afterschool Program to develop the FHS Afterschool Center.

Mrs. Shepardson Watson stated that the Tree House Program activities would be a good future topic for a COW meeting.

- USDA Farm to School – Mrs. Weigle noted that Groton Public Schools was awarded a \$50,000 Turnkey Grant via the competitive USDA Farm to School grant program in June 2022. This grant will be utilized at Thames River Magnet School.
- CT Department of Agriculture CT Grown for CT Kids Grant (CTG4CKG) – Mrs. Weigle noted that Groton Public Schools was awarded a \$26,000 CTG4CKG grant via the competitive CT Department of Agriculture grant program in April 2022.

IV. TUITION FOR OUT-OF-TOWN STUDENTS (Attachment #2, 3)

Mr. Knight gave an overview of the proposed FY 23 Tuition rates for non-resident students, which is calculated at 85% of the average cost per student for elementary, middle and high school. Mr. Knight also gave an overview of comparison rates of area Towns, which showed some of the tuition rates charged by local schools.

V. DISCUSSION RE: THE FORMAT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT'S EVALUATION

Dr. Ackerman gave an overview of the process used for the Superintendent's evaluation.

VII. SUGGESTED FUTURE TOPICS

- Tree House Activities
- Naming of one of the new elementary school libraries in honor of Dr. James E. Mitchell; Rita Volkmann suggested that this item be placed on the July 25 Regular Board agenda for a Board vote

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Volkmann, Ackerman: To adjourn at 7:43 p.m.  
**PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

**DODEA World Language Advancement and Readiness Program (WLARP)**

**Award amount:       \$1,000,000**

**Project period:               Sept 2022 – June 2027**

In April 2022, GPS submitted a proposal to DoDEA’s new world language grant program. In order to qualify for this funding, applicants must have an ROTC or Navy National Defense Cadet Corps (NNDCC) program. GPS’ submitted an NNDCC application to the Department of Defense in 2021. Even though it is still pending approval, it was confirmed by DoDEA that GPS is eligible to receive DoDEA WLARP funds. In early July, DoDEA notified GPS that the district is a finalist in this year’s competition and can expect final award notification by September 30, 2022.

The following is a description of the program from the grant proposal:

“With support from DoDEA, Groton Public Schools will improve and expand its world language program. All GPS world language teachers will engage in a multi-year onsite professional development program with expert trainers from the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). The purpose of this training is to shift the current mode of instruction toward the preferred proficiency-based method aligned with ACTFL’s World-Readiness Standards for Learning Languages. GPS will also hire two new world language teachers to expand the program to all five elementary schools. The goal of this effort is to improve students’ world language proficiency and foster a deeper understanding and appreciation for cultures other than their own. Using standardized quantitative educational metrics and qualitative teacher surveys, GPS will study the impact of these efforts on the academic achievement and social-emotional wellbeing of our students, with a focus on our military-connected population.”

**\*\*Pending Application\*\***

**Groton ARPA Fund (Economic Development and Resiliency Category)**

**Amount Requested: \$514,182**

**Project Period: September 2022 – December 2023**

In June 2022, GPS applied for a grant via Groton's ARPA Fund. The following is a description of the proposed project from the grant proposal:

“With support from Groton's ARPA fund, GPS will expand and upgrade the *video surveillance systems* at six facilities: Fitch High, Groton Middle, Northeast Academy, Catherine Kolnaski, Charles Barnum and Central Office. At this time, each school has its own unique system and several are 20+ years old. Current safety standards recommend a unified system for school districts with a centralized surveillance and control center connected to the town's emergency management departments, including the police and fire department. Groton's Police and Fire Departments have requested this, along with a unified *access control* system to expedite incident response times. The first step in creating a unified access control system is to establish a first responder *emergency communication system*. GPS is developing a comprehensive plan for this system to include a fiber optic cable network between the schools and town. In the meantime, the GPS system requests funding to purchase 24 two-way radios with emergency response buttons to be supplied to district and school administration, school security guards, and the town police and fire departments. This approach will be modeled after Ohio's Multi-Agency Radio Communication System, which has proven to be effective. GPS has also purchased and installed shatter and ballistic proof *mirrored film* for the main offices at Mystic River and Thames River Elementary Schools. With support from ARPA, we will hire a contractor to install additional film on the two cafeterias at these schools. The All-Hazards Plan is an essential guide for Groton administrators but a cumbersome document for teachers, especially in emergency situations. During a recent visit to Middletown High School, Fitch High School administrators learned that all Middletown teachers have an easy-to-use *quick reference emergency flipbook* developed by Environmental Health and Safety Consultation (EHSC). With support from ARPA, we will partner with EHSC to create customized flipbooks for all Groton teachers and staff.”

## **21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC)**

**Award amount:**       **\$300,000 (\$60,000/yr) for five years**

**Project period:**               **Sept 2021 – June 2026**

GPS was awarded a \$60,000 grant (renewable per year) via the competitive 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center (21<sup>st</sup> CCLC) grant program in May 2020. 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC is a federal grant program administered by the CT Department of Education and CREC. Due to the pandemic, the program start date was delayed by one year and began in September 2021.

The following is a description of the program from the grant proposal:

“With support from the 21st CCLC program, Groton Public Schools will partner with the Tree House Program to provide students with academic and enrichment opportunities outside of regular school hours. During program hours, students will receive homework assistance from certified teachers and engage in social learning activities aimed at strengthening bonds with their families, neighbors, and school community. Inspired by the Amelia Earhart quote, “a single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees,” the program will be called the Groton Middle School Roots Project. Team-building and self-esteem will be the common theme of all extracurricular activities. Despite being within close proximity to premier educational institutions, recreational opportunities, and the state parks and coastal waterways of Long Island Sound, many Groton students have never visited them due to lack of time, resources, and transportation. 21st CCLC students will have the opportunity to participate in engaging, hands-on activities at these sites. On early dismissal and vacation days, students will also visit the elementary school sites to lead community service projects. The Tree House administration will work closely with the CT Afterschool Network to develop a comprehensive professional development program, aimed at training program staff in the latest methods of student academic and social-emotional support.”

Approximately 30 middle school students regularly participated in the GMS afterschool program held on Tuesdays – Thursdays. Attendance data was collected throughout the year and submitted to CREC. CREC staff visited the site in March for a formal assessment to which GPS received excellent reviews. Due to the pandemic, staff and students did not participate in off-site programming as planned. Funds were reallocated to support summer programming with GMS Roots students.

## **ARP ESSER Afterschool**

**Award Amount:     \$183,183**

**Project Period:                 July 2021 – December 2023**

As a 21<sup>st</sup> CCLC participant, GPS was invited to apply for an ARP ESSER Afterschool grant in January 2022. GPS was awarded an 18 month grant to establish a FHS Afterschool Center. Funds will be used to hire new staff and purchase supplies to expand and enhance FHS afterschool clubs that focus on underserved populations. Funds should also be used to provide afterschool academic support for students.

The following is a description of the program from the grant proposal:

“Groton Public Schools will partner with the Tree House Afterschool Program to develop the FHS Afterschool Center...GPS will hire a Tree House trained staff member to be the Site Coordinator for the new FHS Afterschool Center. The GPS Afterschool Director will work closely with the Tree House Director and Tree House leadership to incorporate their practices and policies into the FHS Afterschool Center. Like the Tree House Program and the Roots Project, students participating in the FHS Afterschool Center will have access to academic support from certified teachers and tutors, receive a snack and also have time to participate in various clubs and activities. On early dismissal days, students will have the opportunity to participate in field trips focused on experiential learning, team-building and community service.

GPS recognizes that “involvement in high-quality afterschool programs improves students’ education outcomes, attendance and social-emotional learning.” Therefore, with support from ARP Afterschool funds, GPS will hire additional staff to evaluate, enhance, and expand FHS’ afterschool program. We will expand the variety of activities offered, add new hot snacks and provide more transportation options with the goal of increasing student participation, especially among the target population. During the 18 month project period, we will evaluate these interventions to determine which have the greatest impact on attracting and retaining the target population. The new staff members, including the Afterschool Center Director and Site Coordinator, will participate in the GPS DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) Committee to learn new strategies for engaging the target population. For example, the FHS Social Studies Department Chair, who participates in the GPS DEI Committee and also leads the Black Student Union, plans to attend the College Board's three-day "A Dream Deferred" Conference. The conference is "focused on the state of college readiness for African American students and provides a forum for sharing best practices, key data, and research to drive measurable actions to ensure access to opportunity." One of the goals of the FHS BSU is to partner with other school districts with BSUs. The closest BSUs to Groton are in New Haven and Hartford. Funds from this grant will enable FHS BSU students to meet with students from these other districts.”

## **USDA Farm to School**

**Award Amount:      \$50,000**

**Project Period:                      July 2022 – June 2023**

GPS was awarded a Turnkey Grant via the competitive USDA Farm to School grant program in July 2022. GPS was ineligible to apply to the larger Implementation Grant this year because GPS was a 2019 recipient. The following is a description of the program from the grant proposal:

“Using the Farm-to-School (F2S) program established at Charles Barnum Elementary School as a model, the F2S Coordinator will work with the F2S Committee and TRMS to create a work plan and schedule for garden assembly, greenhouse construction, and student lesson implementation. Lessons will occur afterschool and, when feasible, be integrated into the in-school Environmental Science curriculum. The F2S Coordinator will conduct training sessions with TRMS staff and parents about the program. The F2S Coordinator, TRMS Enviro Science Coordinator and TRMS Principal will meet with district Administrators to ensure that the F2S program continues to align with the strategic plans of both the school and district for long-term sustainability. The Food Service Director will share GPS accomplishments with regional and state representatives, including the Lighthouse Co-Op of southeastern CT and the SNA of CT. The local farms that partner with GPS via the Lighthouse Food Co-Op or F2S program all follow Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). The Food Services Director will review the latest Good Handling Practices (GHP) with TRMS kitchen staff. The F2S Coordinator will ensure that F2S TRMS Committee members are familiar with and also practice GAP and GHP when growing and handling food from the gardens and greenhouse. The F2S Coordinator will source and purchase grant-funded supplies and schedule installation. The F2S Coordinator will contact CT-based Levo International to purchase hydroponic equipment (funded by the Food Service Department) to be installed in the greenhouse.”

**CT Dept of Agriculture “CT Grown for CT Kids Grant” (CTG4CKG)**

**Award Amount:       \$24,946**

**Project Period:               April 2022 – September 2023**

GPS was awarded a CTG4CKG grant via the competitive CT Department of Agriculture grant program in April 2022. The following is a description of the program from the grant proposal:

“The intended outcome of this project is to expand our successful Farm to School program to elementary students at Thames River Magnet School to encourage greater enjoyment and consumption of healthy whole foods. In order to accomplish this outcome, we will build new garden beds and construct a greenhouse with a hydroponic system and deliver lessons on agriculture, plant life cycles, nutrition, and healthy choices. Students will engage in experiential F2S classroom lessons and outdoor activities. They will also receive personal hydroponic systems to bring home to practice growing their own food with their families. With support from the CT Dept of Agriculture, we will also increase our efforts to educate students during mealtimes. As the F2S Coordinator, Rotner organized regular taste tests of local produce, engaging hundreds of students at multiple elementary schools. As a result, cafeteria staff have reported an increase in fruit and vegetable consumption among students who participate in taste tests and other F2S education. Teachers report that more students are bringing in produce as snacks. Koschmeider is hiring a new F2S Coordinator. One of their first tasks will be to expand the F2S curriculum to include lessons and activities for GPS’ pre-school students, to be piloted at TRMS.”



Groton Public Schools  
 FY23 Proposed tuition rates for non-Groton resident students

	Approved FY2021-2022 Tuition Rates	Proposed FY2022-2023 Tuition Rates
Pre-K	\$ 6,106	\$ 6,193
Elementary School	\$ 12,211	\$ 12,386
Middle School	\$ 12,628	\$ 12,551
High School	\$ 14,387	\$ 15,653

Approved  
FY2021-2022  
Tuition Rates

Proposed  
FY2022-2023  
Tuition Rates

**ADDITIONAL COSTS**

**Special Education Program Costs**

Self-contained (Academy/NBA Program/Transition Academy)  
 ABA Program  
 Multiple Disabilities Program

\$ 31,006
\$ 29,508
\$ 27,259

\$ 31,424
\$ 29,515
\$ 27,266

**Regular Education Program Costs**

International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program  
 AP Classes

Add \$ 2,210
Add Cost of test

\$ 3,202
Cost of test

**Additional Services**

OT/PT  
 Speech  
 Counseling/Social Skills  
 BCBA

Add \$ 3,100
Add \$ 3,100
Add \$ 3,100
Add \$ 3,100

Based on LEARN Related Services Hourly Rate Schedule
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Evaluations

Based LEARN Student Support Services Fee Schedule
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Based on LEARN Student Support Services Fee Schedule
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Groton Public Schools  
Regular Education Tuition Rates  
FY2023

		Comparisons						
	Groton FY2022	Ledyard 2023	Stonington 2022	Waterford 2022	NFA 2023	St Bernards 2023	Williams School 2023	
PK	6,106	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Provided	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	
K-5	12,211	11,816	16,030	17,895	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	
6-8	12,628	11,816	16,030	17,895	Not Applicable	8,900	30,150	
9-12	14,387	14,490	18,325	17,895	13,643	14,000	31,150	
IB DP	16,597	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	

	Groton cost per pupil	Groton Proposed Tuition @ 85% of cost per pupil
PK	7,286	6,193
K-5	14,572	12,386
6-8	14,765	12,550
9-12	18,415	15,653
IB DP		18,855

FY22 IB DP Budget (funct #1117)	67,250
FY22 IB DP Students	21
Proposed IB DP Surcharge	3,202