



August 8, 2022

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Staff:

After a week on the Jersey shore with family and a long weekend in Charlotte for a cousin's wedding, I came back rejuvenated from vacation and family time; ready to plan for our next school year, one where we will ***Come Back to Community***. By taking time to look back and reflect on our work together, I found that one of the things I am most proud of, and see as our shared vision, is our work around equity and access for all students.

As I reflected on the past school year, it was an historic year for our community. When Groton Public Schools opened in the 2021-2022 school year, the Groton 2020 Plan came to full fruition with the opening of our two new elementary schools, the implementation of five intra-district elementary magnet schools, and the promise of an International Baccalaureate Campus at the top of Fort Hill Road. Groton Middle School and Fitch High School are now authorized as an International Baccalaureate (IB) Middle Years Program (MYP) for all students in grades 6-10.

This summer, our buildings buzzed with engaging activities. Each school hosted a program for our students – Town and City Parks and Rec camps at NEA and TRM, STEAM summer camps at CB and GMS, FHS summer school, Tree House at CK, Extended School Year (ESY) at MRM, and lots of tutoring throughout the district. Each school and the town/city libraries offered summer learning opportunities that included the Governor's Summer Reading Challenge and Summer Math Challenge. The idea is to keep reading this summer, solve daily math problems, play math games, and don't forget about those DreamBox lessons! Many teachers and staff have been busy learning too! There were courses for AP teachers, workshops for teachers and administrators, curriculum writing, book talks, and teaching at summer school and enrichment camps.

Thinking ahead to the next school year, I look forward to bringing everyone back to community; it's where we need to be. We will engage students in learning and help them explore their passions and proclivities, while also tending to social emotional learning. By accelerating learning, fine-tuning the support systems, and enhancing school life with enrichments, clubs, and sports, students will come back to their school community with a sense of belonging, as will all faculty and staff.

The core mission of Groton Public Schools is teaching and learning, ensuring a culture and climate that fosters growth for all students. Our most important work is to support our students with high-quality instruction, excellent caring teachers and staff, policies and procedures that support students, and budgets and grants that are sustainable. A key goal is to improve student performance and growth across Groton Public Schools.

I will continue to support the expansion of the work of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee to include all members of the school district, ensuring bias training and culturally responsive teaching. Communicating effectively with all stakeholders is key to accomplishing the goals of the district in a richness of cultures and with a respect for all. An important priority and action item this year is to continue to look at our class enrollment at the high school and plan for the expansion and access in our AP, IB, ECE advanced classes; ensuring equity at all levels. With the district's belief that all students can achieve at high levels, I will lead the work on student improvement and growth through rigorous and relevant teaching and learning.

Enjoy the remainder of the summer, and we look forward to seeing students in grades 1-12 back at school on August 30th and Pre-school, PK, TK and Kindergarten on September 6th. If you have any questions, please reach out to your school or call the central office.

Welcome back to Community,

Susan L. Austin

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Superintendent
Groton Public Schools