



NOVEMBER 2022

The Griswold Times

GRISWOLD PUBLIC SCHOOLS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

SUPERINTENDENT'S LETTER

Dear Griswold Public Schools:

Griswold students continue to shine. Our students are making steady progress with academic achievement, with balanced involvement in extracurricular activities, and with enjoying their GPS experiences with friends and family. We salute and support our students in doing their best to make the most of their experiences. There are many recognitions and celebrations in this newsletter that should trigger Wolverine Pride.

As we move further into the '22-'23 school year, we conclude our fall sports season and begin our winter sports season, we start a new series of extracurricular activities for our students, and we continue to provide our students with engaging teaching and learning experiences so that they can thrive. As we transition from Thanksgiving into the winter holiday season, I encourage any parent and/or guardian to contact GPS if you need personalized guidance, support, and help during this time of year. We are here for you, as we are partners with one another to move **Griswold forward**.

Sincerely yours,

Sean P. McKenna
Superintendent of Schools

DISTRICT NEWS

GRISWOLD BRINGS HOME THE LECLAIRE TROPHY

Griswold Wolverines beat the Plainfield Panthers 34-0 at the Thanksgiving Day Football Game, held at Griswold High School. Watch the game on SNSN's YouTube channel [here](#).

Learn more about the rivalry that dates back to 1937 [on our website](#).

Find more updates from Griswold athletics and Booster Club inside.



WELCOME SCOTT FREYER TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Scott Freyer was selected as the new BOE member at the regularly scheduled meeting on November 14. Mr. Freyer is filling a vacant spot formerly filled by Shannon Webster.

In addition to now serving on the BOE, Mr. Freyer is also a GPS parent. His first BOE meeting was November 28. For more information on the Board of Education, please visit [our website](#), where all meeting agendas and minutes are posted.

Let's Get Social:

 Griswold Public Schools

  @griswoldschools

 griswoldpublicschools.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

**GES PTO Family Movie Night -
*Polar Express***

Friday, December 2, 6pm

**GMS PTO Holiday Bazaar & Basket
Raffle**

Saturday, December 3, 9am-4pm

Board of Education Meeting

Monday, December 12, GMS Cafe

GMS Grades 7 & 8 Winter Concerts

Wednesday, December 14, 6 & 7pm
GHS Auditorium

GHS Holiday Spirit Week

December 19-23

GHS Holiday Choral Concert

December 20

GHS Instrumental Concert

December 22

Shortened Day

Friday, December 23

NO SCHOOL: Holiday Recess

December 26-January 2, 2023

Board of Education Meeting

Monday, January 9

**NO SCHOOL: Martin Luther King
Jr. Day**

Monday, January 16

GMS Grade 6 Winter Concert

Wednesday, January 18, 7pm
GHS Auditorium

GHS PTO Winter Formal

January 21

Board of Education Meeting

Monday, January 23

Tri-M Faculty Talent Show

February 9

Board of Education Meeting

Monday, February 13

**NO SCHOOL: Staff Professional
Development**

February 17

**NO SCHOOL: Presidents Day
Recess**

February 20 & 21

Board of Education Meeting

Monday, February 27

GHS Music Trip to Disney World

March 1-4

**Shortened Days for Parent-
Teacher Conferences**

March 2 & 3

GMS Exploratory Night

Wednesday, March 8, 6pm

**NO SCHOOL: Staff Professional
Development**

March 10

Board of Education Meeting

Monday, March 13

SAT Day

Wednesday, March 22

Booster Club Dinner Dance

March 25

UPDATES ON THE MULTI-PURPOSE ATHLETIC FIELDS PROJECT

Board of Education Chair MaryBeth Malin and Superintendent Sean McKenna were on SNSN Radio on November 17 to give an update on Griswold Public Schools, including the Multi-Purpose Athletic Fields project. Watch the video on [SNSN's Facebook here](#).

The Board also gave an update on the fields project on the District Partnership Advisory Council meeting the evening of November 17 on Zoom. These DPAC meetings are open to students, families, GPS staff, and community members interested in hearing updates about GPS. The next DPAC meeting will be held on February 16, 2023. Stay tuned for the invitation and link on our social media channels and via email.

On the DPAC meeting Zoom, members of the community asked about the benefits of a Turf Field vs. a natural grass field. Turf fields have become a popular alternative to grass fields in professional, university, and now high school sports arenas. Griswold is one of the only sports complexes in eastern Connecticut that does not have a turf field, and our current field is 35 years old. Games have had to be canceled or moved to another town when the field is wet, whereas turf fields are not limited by climate. They can be used daily and in all types of weather with no concern of damaging the surface. Turf fields have come a long way since the 1960s, and they are softer with cushioned support. Studies have shown that injuries on turf vs. natural grass are comparable, or even less likely and less extreme. Turf fields are more cost effective over time because it requires less resources to maintain the fields. The proposed turf field at Griswold Public Schools will be available to GHS Football, GHS Cheer, GHS Soccer, GHS Lacrosse, GHS Track, GMS Track, and Griswold Youth Football and Cheer. A new 8-lane track is also proposed, which will impact many of our teams and members of the community who train on it. The proposed upgrades would also be a driver for sending town students to choose Griswold for its athletic programs and facilities, and allow for state competitions to be held at GHS - both prospective income for the town.

DISTRICT NEWS

TEACHER OF THE YEAR

GPS's 2023 Teacher of the Year, Hannah McNeil, was recognized at the Connecticut Teacher of the Year ceremony in Hartford on November 16. She was initially surprised with the Teacher of the Year announcement in our district in June.

Ms. McNeil is a Griswold High School history teacher and also co-advises the Student Leadership Council. Additionally, she was recently awarded the Connecticut Council for the Social Studies Excellence in Teaching Award for grades 9-12. Congratulations again to Ms. McNeil for this much-deserved recognition!



AFFORDABLE INTERNET

You can still sign up for the Affordable Connectivity Program, an FCC benefit program that helps ensure that households can afford the broadband they need for work, school, healthcare and more. Learn more and [sign up here](#).

COLLEGES ATTENDED BY GHS GRADS

We are so proud of our students and what they achieve after graduation. Whether it's beginning a career journey, serving our country, or attending a post-secondary institution, we love hearing what our alumni are up to. [View a list of colleges and universities attended by our recent graduates \(classes of 2019-2022\) here.](#)

BEFORE & AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

WOLVERINES FORWARD



In need of before and/or after school care for your GES student? [Learn more or enroll your child in the Wolverines Forward Before & After School Program on our website.](#)

- Benefits of the program include:
- Affordable and high-quality care
 - Exciting Enrichments rotated monthly
 - Academic Skill-building and homework help daily
 - Fitness activities daily
 - Low staff-to-student ratios

NOW HIRING:

GPS is hiring for the following positions (as of 11/29/22):

- Wolverine Forward Before & After School Program Instructors
- GES School Health Assistant
- Full-time Paraeducators
- Full-time Head Custodian
- Coaches: Indoor Track Coach, Outdoor Track Assistant Coach
- Substitutes: Custodians, as well as Teachers, Paraeducators, Cafe Service Providers, Health Assistants, and Nurses

Find all open positions at applitrack.com/griswold/onlineapp/

ATHLETICS



GRISWOLD BOOSTER CLUB ATHLETES OF THE WEEK:

October 23-29

Maxwell Brown '24 - Max placed 21st at the CIAC Class SS Cross Country meet on Saturday 10/29. He came in 5th for Griswold, but his finish overall played a crucial role in edging Griswold over Suffield, 56-58. Max, scoring points alongside seniors Jackson Collins, Jacob Strain, Lucas Strain, and Michael Strain, helped Griswold take home the Class SS State Championship Title!

Ryley Hubert '26- led the lady Wolverines again at States running a 24:14, beating her personal best by almost a minute!

October 30-November 5

Makayla Neilson '23, Volleyball - Makayla had a strong attack, with 16 kills in 2 matches vs. NFA and Fitch. She also played outstanding defense at the net, with 2 statistical blocks, and blocked numerous attacks back into the opponent's court. She currently has 114 kills and 29 blocks so far this season.

Luke Cassidy '25, Football Quarterback - Luke led the charge against Stonington (Griswold won 22-13) with a solid ground game that controlled the play clock for a large portion of the game, which disabled Stonington from getting into a flow.

November 6-11

Katelyn Pasieka '23, Volleyball - Coach submitted that Katelyn had strong play at the net in the State Quarterfinals against Lyman last Friday. She had 5 blocks!

KinKade Rubino '24, Football - KinKade broke 1,000 yards rushing last week in the win against Montville. Kade had two touchdowns and one interception during Thursday's win. He has been a consistent performer and leader on the field.

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MORE BOOSTER CLUB EVENT NEWS:

POWDER PUFF FOOTBALL

Congratulations to the 2022 Powder Puff Champions, the Juniors, who defeated the seniors 18-6! The pre-game featured Sophomores vs. Freshmen, and the sophomores prevailed! Over 70 students participated in the event.

SPAGHETTI DINNER & TURKEY DIP

Thanks for coming out to support the Griswold Booster Club at the Spaghetti Dinner and the Turkey Dip. The Turkey Dip had a great turnout; the Club raised \$3,300!

Follow [Griswold Booster Club on Facebook](#) for more Griswold sports info!

ECC ALL-STARS

Congratulations to Griswold's ECC All-Star Fall Athletes:

Boys XC Division II: First Team: seniors Michael Strain, Jacob Strain, Lucas Strain, and Jackson Collins (also Scholar-athlete); Sportsmanship: Maxwell Brown '24

Girls XC Division II: Sportsmanship: Kendall Larkin '23; Scholar-athlete: Laila Bakhsalizadeh '23

Volleyball Division II: First Team: Kuranda Ruggiero '23, Emily Aviles '23, Abigail Matheson '25; Honorable Mention: Gretta Dombroski '24; Sportsmanship: Kaitlyn Fasula '23; Scholar-athlete: Makayla Neilson '23

Football Division III Griswold/Wheeler: Offense: Liam Gervais, Daniel Sims, KinKade Rubino; Defense: Logan Davis; Honorable Mention: Aiden Peltier, Kiyle Montigny; Sportsmanship: Tyler Skowron; Scholar-athlete: Jacob Hamel

Boys Soccer Division III: First Team: Evan Merchant '23, Dylan Fryer '23 (also Sportsmanship), Justyn Blanchard '24 (also Scholar-athlete)

Girls Soccer Division III: First Team: Sophia Wooten '26, Natalie Becotte '24; Sportsmanship: Sydney Churchill '26; Scholar-athlete Paige Allard '24

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ATHLETIC CALENDAR

Visit eccathletics.org/griswold for the GHS and GMS Sports schedules.



GHS VOLLEYBALL

Congratulations to our Volleyball team on a remarkable season! Though the outcome of the State Semi-Final game vs. East Hampton was not in our favor ([watch here](#)), our team gave us an incredible season filled with so much energy and excitement.

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ECC DIVERSITY COUNCIL

Michael Strain '23 represents Griswold in the ECC Diversity Council, a committee made of over 50 student athletes representing 13 schools. This is the second year of the ECC Diversity Council, spearheaded by Wheeler High School's principal. The committee met on November 18 at Saint Bernard High School to update ECC school principals on their work, including their mission statement, music playlists that balance pumping up a team while ensuring everyone feels comfortable, community radio ads, and more.

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GRISWOLD ESPORTS RANKED TOP IN THE EAST

Griswold's Valorant Green Team finished 7th out of 150 teams in the High School Esports League East regular season and has earned a spot in the East Regional Tournament! Bracket coming soon.

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GSPN: GRISWOLD SPORTS NETWORK LIVE STREAMS

Subscribe to the [Griswold Sports Network's \(GSPN\) YouTube Channel](#) to watch live streamed home games all winter long!

GHS NEWS

MOCK INTERVIEWS

November 15, the GHS Business Department hosted Mock Interviews for Juniors. Students dressed for success and had practice interviews in the Learning Commons. Thank you to our volunteer interviewers:

- Tech Sgt. Daniel Wool, U.S. Air Force
- Mike Minarsky, SNSN Radio
- John Murphy, Eastern Connecticut Workforce Investment Board (EWIB)
- Hector Sanchez, EASTCONN & EWIB
- Eileen Ego, CT Dept. of Transportation
- Missy Waite, Jewett City Savings Bank
- Mary Brown, Backus Hospital

They had great things to say about our students! [Learn more in The Day.](#)



MANUFACTURING CAREER EXPO

On November 4, GHS students enrolled in the Advanced Manufacturing course attended the Greater Norwich Area Chamber of Commerce's Manufacturing and Health & Wellness Career Expo. [Learn more about the expo here.](#) Learn more about the Advanced Manufacturing course on our website [here.](#)



LEADERS IN ADVANCED TECH

December 7, Griswold High School will be hosting a LEARN Scholastic Esports event for Connecticut educators. These visiting educators will receive tours of the Nexus lab at GHS and Launch Pad lab at GMS, as well as hear from guest speaker Dr. Michael Russell from Generation Esports, who will be traveling from Kansas to speak on the topic. He is one of the authors of *Gaming Concepts*, and is widely credited as creating the first for-credit high school scholastic esports course in the country. Following this program, LEARN will be hosting a focus group about educational programming at the new United States Coast Guard Museum Association.



THE MEMORY PROJECT

As part of [The Memory Project](#), students in Mrs. Baker's advanced drawing class have created portraits of Ukrainian refugee children. The Project pairs GHS students with children in war-torn or impoverished countries. These portraits will be sent as gifts to the children from Ukraine.



PRINCIPAL PALONEN'S WEEKLY MEMOS

Are you receiving Principal Palonen's weekly memos via email on Fridays? If not, please contact the GHS Main Office at 860-376-7640.

AWARDS & HONORS

SUPERINTENDENT'S STUDENT AWARDS

Congratulations to Madilyn Wooten and Jack Zagarenski, our Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents Student Award recipients! Madi and Jack were selected among a competitive group of juniors for their academic achievements, extracurricular involvement, and leadership responsibilities.

HOBY LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Sophomore Naely Diaz was selected to represent Griswold High School at the HOBY Leadership Conference this spring! Naely will attend this multi-day seminar along with other sophomores from across the state of Connecticut to continue working on becoming effective, ethical leaders in all facets of their lives.

NATIONAL SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AWARDS

Congratulations to Kendall Larkin and Summer Milette on being selected for the National School Development Council Award for Academic Growth and Student Leadership in Learning. They are being recognized for having consistently pursued a high level of academic effort and serving as positive role models for the GHS student body.

FALL PERFORMANCES

Congratulations to students who participated in GHS's fall play *Play On!* on November 11 and 12, and to the students who performed in and competed at the Madrigal Dinner on November 19.

MR. GHS CROWNED

Congratulations to Michael Strain (Mr. No Strain on the Eyes) for winning the Mr. GHS pageant on November 22. Seven seniors competed for the title of Mr. GHS.

GMS NEWS

VETERANS DAY ASSEMBLY

GMS hosted its annual Veterans Day assembly and breakfast on November 10. Students and staff members brought in members of their families who have served or are currently serving our country.

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GMS PARENT COALITION

The GMS Parent Coalition hosted Yale School of Medicine Senior Research Assistant, Tricia Dahl, on November 15 to discuss "What you Should Know about Youth Vaping." Special thanks to Griswold PRIDE's Miranda Mahoney for collaborating to bring this essential programming to our community.

The new GMS Parent Coalition meets once a month with a different topic and time for discussion. This is meant to be a way for school administration and parents to become informed about the community and issues that face middle school students, such as anxiety, vaping, bullying, social media, and more.

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ACTIVITY PERIOD

GMS launched Activity Period on November 18. Activities range from hiking, reading by candlelight, Harry Potter Trivia, and much more!

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STUDENT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

The GMS Student Leadership Council raised \$300 for Make a Wish CT on their Anything But A Backpack Day. The Council also hosted a Thanksgiving Food Drive for St. Mary's Food Pantry, and will be hosting a Hat and Mitten Drive in December in collaboration with Slater Library for students at GMS and people in the community.

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TELLABRATION

Carolyn Stearns of the CT Storytelling Center shared stories with our 5th graders as part of *Tellabration* on November 21. Students listened intently to stories centered around the Revolution and eastern Connecticut. This program is sponsored by the Eastern CT Performing Arts Association.

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HARVARD FOREST SCHOOLYARD ECOLOGY

Mr. Dyer's 6th grade science classes began their participation with Harvard Forest Schoolyard Ecology Program by adopting Charter Oak Acorns from the tree behind GMS. This project is a continuation of the work started by Griswold High School science teacher Mrs. Devlin-Perry with Harvard's Our Changing Forests Program. Earlier this month, students from the GHS stayed after school to help mark the 10-meter-square study plot for the GMS students with the help of Kate Bennett from Harvard Forest.

Mr. Dyer and Mrs. Devlin Perry are currently brainstorming ideas for more collaborative activities between GHS and GMS students through their participation in the GPS Catalyst Teachers Program.

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THANKSGIVING TOWN MEETING

During a school-wide Town Meeting on November 23, the GMS community celebrated each other's academic, leadership and athletic achievements, and had some fun with staff and student pie eating contests.

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GMS NOW

Get daily updates from Griswold Middle School on the [GMS NOW Blog!](#)



Hiking Group is lead by Mrs. Larkin and Mrs. Fitzgerald



GES NEWS

READ FOR THE RECORD

On October 25, Griswold Elementary School collaborated with the United Way of Southeastern Connecticut in their fall "Read for the Record" community guest reader program. Dana Bennett, First Selectman of Griswold, read to third graders in our Library Media Center. Other readers included Robert Burnside, Samantha Bryan, and Grisham Bryan. Thank you for sharing your time with our students!



FUNDRAISER

GES raised \$1,500 via a Penny Challenge, where people brought in their spare change. It's proof that even a little can go a long way!



PRESCHOOL

Do you have a concern about your child's development?

Griswold Preschool is hosting a **free Developmental Screening on December 9** for families who have concerns about their child's development.

Children must be at least 3 years old on or before the screening date, and must live in Jewett City or Griswold to be eligible. Request a screening by filling out [this Google Form](#).

[Learn more about Griswold Preschool on our website.](#)



GRISWOLD FORWARD

OUR MISSION

Griswold Public Schools educates for excellence by ensuring our students are connected, by nurturing individual student talents, and by fostering a future-focused mindset.

OUR VISION

Graduates of Griswold Public Schools journey into the future as engaged citizens, effective communicators, critical thinkers, and resilient problem solvers.

DISTRICT GOALS

District Goal #1: Social and Emotional Learning

Griswold Public Schools commits to the advancement of social and emotional competencies in inclusive and equitable learning environments so that all of our students can grow and thrive.

District Goal #2: Blended and Personalized Learning

Griswold Public Schools will focus on promoting the implementation and expansion of Blended and Personalized Learning in all PreK-12 learning environments.

District Goal #3: Research-Based Instruction

Griswold Public Schools will explore and implement research-based instruction to improve outcomes for all Griswold students.