

**GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
JULY 17, 2023 @ 6:00 P.M.
CENTRAL OFFICE, ROOM 11**

Mission Statement: Our mission is teaching and learning.

Board Goals: In a richness of cultures and with a respect for all, (1) Provide Dynamic Rigorous Curriculum, (2) Ensure Effective and Engaging Instruction, and (3) Embrace Excellent Learning Environment.

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Review June 12, 2023 Meeting Minutes (Attachment #1)
3. Update re: the High School Principal Search
4. Discussion re: Communications Plan (Attachment #2)
5. Discussion & Reflection on the 2022-23 School Year
6. Adjournment

GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
 COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
 JUNE 12, 2023 @ 6:00 P.M.
 CENTRAL OFFICE, ROOM 11

MEMBERS PRESENT: Andrea Ackerman-Vice Chairperson, Dean Antipas, William Horgan, Elizabeth Porter, Matthew Shulman, Rita Volkmann (remote), Beverly Washington (remote), Jay Weitlauf (remote)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Kim Shepardson Watson-Chairperson

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

I. CALL TO ORDER – Vice Chairperson Ackerman called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

II. BOE REGULAR BUSINESS

MOTION: Porter, Shulman: To approve the COW minutes of May 15, 2023.
PASSED – UNANIMOUSLY

III. REVIEW OF TUITION RATES (ATTACHMENT #1)

Mr. Ken Knight gave an overview of the proposed FY 2023-2024 Tuition Rates.

IV. GRANT WRITER REPORT (ATTACHMENT #2)

Ms. Weigle gave an overview of the grants that were applied for and awarded to the Groton Public Schools. She also reviewed the grants applied for and that are still pending, grants that have been announced and are due in July, and the grants that are still underway.

Mr. Shulman asked if it was possible to make a referral to the Curriculum Committee regarding what bench marks the Board would need to add a language, i.e., Russian, Chinese, to the World Language offerings. Ms. Austin stated that she would discuss this item with her Superintendent's group and report back to the Board.

V. REVIEW OF THE REFERRAL TRACKING SHEET

The Board reviewed the Referral Tracking Sheet and added the following:

- What can the Board do to attract families to the Groton Area (MS) – to Communications
- Update on One Card collaboration (MS) – to COW
- Artificial Intelligence on Teaching and Learning (MS) – to COW
- Cursive Writing (BW) – to COW

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Volkmann, Porter: To adjourn at 6:57 p.m.
PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

Groton Public Schools
 FY24 Proposed tuition rates for non-Groton resident students

	Approved FY2022-2023 Tuition Rates	Proposed FY2023-2024 Tuition Rates
General Education Tuition Rates		
Pre-K	\$ 6,193	\$ 6,443
Elementary School	\$ 12,386	\$ 12,885
Middle School	\$ 12,551	\$ 13,008
High School	\$ 15,653	\$ 15,255

	Approved FY2022-2023 Tuition Rates	Proposed FY2023-2024 Tuition Rates
--	--	--

ADDITIONAL COSTS

Special Education Program Costs

Self-contained (Academy/NBA Program/Transition Academy)	\$ 31,424	\$ 32,370
ABA Program	\$ 29,515	\$ 33,188
Multiple Disabilities Program	\$ 27,266	\$ 30,510
Resource Room	N/A	\$ 11,940

General Education Program Costs

International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Program	Add \$ 3,202	\$ 2,725
AP Classes	Add Cost of test	Cost of test

Additional Services

OT/PT	Add	Based on LEARN	Based on LEARN
Speech	Add	Related Services	Related Services
Counseling/Social Skills	Add	Hourly Rate	Hourly Rate
BCBA	Add	Schedule	Schedule
Evaluations		Based LEARN Student Support Services Fee Schedule	Based on LEARN Student Support Services Fee Schedule
Paraprofessionals		Based LEARN Student Support Services Fee Schedule	Based on LEARN Student Support Services Fee Schedule

Grants (competitive) report for the GPS Board of Education by S. Weigle**6/8/2023**

The following competitive grants were awarded between the period of July 1, 2022 – June 8, 2023 totaling approximately \$1.35 million. Grant program name, award amount, and project completion date included.

World Language Advancement and Readiness Program (DoDEA)	\$1million (June 2027)
- Professional development for all world language teachers. New elementary level WL teacher.	
ARP ESSER Afterschool (CSDE):	\$180k (May 2024)
- New Afterschool Director at FHS. Funding for supplies and teacher stipends for new and ongoing afterschool activities with focus on chronically absent students.	
PEGPETIA (CT PURA)	\$86,360 (May 2024)
- New equipment for each school to live stream events. Funding for interns to procure new online video collection.	
Online Abuse (DESPP)	\$30,000 (May 2025)
- Professional development, student and community programs on healthy screen habits.	
Pfizer	\$4,000 (May 2025)
- STEM supplies for GPS Mentor Program and TRMS.	
Fund for Teachers	\$10,000 (Aug 2023)
- Michelle Manning (NEA) will be traveling to Africa to study libraries and hike Mount Kilimanjaro. Jon Koziatek will travel to Antarctica to conduct studies on CO2.	

The following grant applications were submitted. Award announcements still pending.

Military Connected Academic and Support Program (DoDEA)	\$1.25 million
- For elementary magnet themed programming and K-12 culturally responsive curriculum development.	
ARP Mental Health Specialist (CSDE)	\$86,000
- To extend the Early Childhood School Social Worker position for another year. Professional development for staff who work with the age group.	
ARP Summer Mental Health Support (CSDE)	~\$15,000
- For additional social workers / psychologists to assist with ESY and FHS summer school programs.	
SGPP (DESPP)	\$190,337
- To purchase new security cameras, radios, and window film.	
MMSGP (DESPP)	\$129,746
- To add Mutualink service.	
SVPP (US Dept of Justice)	\$450,000
- To purchase new security equipment, including lighting for several schools and call boxes for FHS parking lot and fields.	

The following competitions have been announced and are due in July.

ARP Right to Read

ARP Afterschool

Dual Expansion

The following grant funded projects are still underway:

Military Connected Academic and Support Program (DoDEA) (until May 2026)
- For expansion of K-12 Career Pathway Program with focus on health science.

Courtney Grant (US Dept of Ed) (until May 2024)
- For expansion of Career Pathway Program with focus on manufacturing and health science.

21st CCLC (US Dept of Ed / CSDE) (until June 2026)
- For afterschool program at GMS.

Farm to School (CT Dept of Ag) (until Sept 2023)
- New equipment for GPS Farm to School program.

Farm to School (US Dept of Ag) (until June 30, 2023)
- New equipment for GPS Farm to School program.



Groton Public Schools

Strategic Communications Plan

2023-2024

Approved June 26, 2023 by the Communications Committee





Table of Contents

District Mission and Goals	2
Communications Committee Introduction	3
Communications Vision	4
Communications Committee Guiding Principles	5
District Communications Guiding Principles	6
Audiences	7
Communication Methods / Tools	8
Communications Strategies	9-14

Groton Public Schools Board of Education Communications Committee gratefully acknowledges Oxford Public Schools for graciously sharing their communications plan with us.



Groton Public Schools Mission and Board of Education Goals

Groton Public Schools Mission Statement

The mission of Groton Public Schools is teaching and learning.

Board of Education Goals

In a richness of cultures and with a respect for all,

- Provide Dynamic Rigorous Curriculum,
- Ensure Effective and Engaging Instruction, and
- Embrace Excellent Learning Environment.



Board of Education Communications Committee Introduction

Communications Committee Statement of Purpose

The Groton Public Schools Board of Education Communications Committee shall build and strengthen positive, interactive relationships with our entire community about Groton Public Schools.

Communications Plan Overview

The FY 2023-2024 Groton Public Schools Communications Plan prioritizes the District's specific communications strategies. The purpose of the Communications Plan is to present a clear and concise strategic framework for communicating with our school community, including internal and external audiences. The intended outcome is a flexible and inclusive communications strategy that will engage constructive community conversation to benefit the children of Groton.



Communications Vision

Groton Public Schools Board of Education recognizes and values the importance of effective communication with internal and external stakeholders. We will foster awareness of our district mission, and enhance the communities understanding of the educational opportunities being provided to all students within the district, and the work being done by the Board of Education, Administrators, and Staff. The district will also actively pursue two-way communications by listening to its internal and external community, with the goal of continuous improvement.



Board of Education Communications Committee Guiding Principles

1. The Board of Education Communications Committee will identify internal and external stakeholders.
2. The Board of Education Communications Committee will establish annual communication goals that support and align with the Board and Superintendent's goals.
3. The day-to-day execution of the Board of Education Communications Committee Communications Plan is the responsibility of the District Administration and staff.
4. The Board of Education Communications Committee will serve as ambassadors to the community and seek opportunities to engage stakeholders and gather input. To ensure stakeholders have an active voice in communications, the Board of Education Communications Committee will continue to ensure accessibility to all public meetings and include time for Citizens' comments at the Board of Education monthly meeting.
5. The Board of Education Communications Committee will evaluate the implementation of the communications plan annually. A full revision of the plan shall occur no less than 5 years from adoption.



Groton Public Schools Communications Guiding Principles

- Understand and meet our audiences' preferences
- Ensure accessibility to all
- Establish regular and timely communication
- Convey consistent, accurate, messages and information
- Streamline communications platforms
- Communicate with brevity and bundle multiple messages
- Embrace a mobile-friendly mindset
- Create relevant, interesting content to engage audiences
- Promote open, two-way communication, (invite feedback and be responsive)
- Monitor platforms and measure their effectiveness



Audiences

Internal and External Stakeholders

- Faculty and Staff
- Students
- Parents
- PTO
- General Community Population
- Education Partners
- Community Organizations
- Businesses
- Town and City Leaders
- State and National Representatives
- Alumni
- Prospective Faculty and Staff
- Prospective Students/Families
- Media



Communications Methods/Tools

Groton Public Schools staff and the Board of Education Communications Committee will evaluate and revise the use of communication tools that best match the needs of external and internal stakeholders in achieving the school district's vision, mission, and goals.

The communication tools used include the following:

- District and School websites
- Email, Texts, and Posts
- Phone Calls
- Social Media (Facebook)
- GPS 19 Media (Cable Channel 19, YouTube, Video on Demand)
- Print Communications (Letters, Flyers, Postcard, Posters, Banners, Signage)
- Media Coverage (Print, Radio, TV)
- Advertising (Print, Radio, Public Service Announcements)
- In-Person and/or Virtual Events, Meetings, Forums



Communications Strategies

The Groton Board of Education Communications Committee has identified five communication strategies to enhance stakeholder engagement and improve internal and external communications.

1. Engage the community in understanding the mission of Groton Public Schools through transparency and robust internal and external communications.
2. Promote the Groton Public Schools' achievements, improvements, and initiatives to families, students, staff, and the general community.
3. Allocate appropriate district and school personnel and resources to support the successful implementation of the communications plan.
4. Create and implement feedback opportunities to engage stakeholders in meaningful and interactive communications.
5. Proactively plan to provide communications support during an emergency or crisis, to ensure efficient, clear, and timely information is shared with the community.



Strategy 1

Engage the community in understanding the mission of Groton Public Schools through transparency and robust internal and external communications.

ACTIONS/TACTICS

- Broadcast Board of Education meetings live, and share links to videos on demand.
- Share Board agendas, minutes, budgets, presentations, and other documents on the Board of Education website and other district media platforms.
- Provide consistent messaging about Board of Education activities, presentations, policy work, and decisions.
- Publish and continuously update a Board of Education email list for efficient community communication with the board.
- Inform internal and external stakeholders about the effects of state and/or federal legislation on the school district.



Strategy 2

Promote achievements, improvements, and initiatives in Groton Public Schools to families, students, staff, other stakeholders, and the general community.

ACTIONS/TACTICS

- 'Tell our story' by sharing news and highlighting achievements, initiatives, and improvements in our schools across district platforms.
- Provide insight into the student opportunities across the district, and a glimpse into Groton classrooms and the school community by:
 - Creating staff and student-produced short videos of events, programs, student learning, and interviews.
 - Sharing virtual galleries featuring student creative and academic work.
- Counter myths and misconceptions about the schools and the district with accurate information, personal testimonials, and evidence of progress.
- Highlight the stories of staff, students, and alumni and engage them as ambassadors of the district.
- Maintain open relationships with local reporters and media to share information and be a source for news coverage.
- Engage with parent organizations, including PTOS and Booster Clubs.



Strategy 3

Allocate appropriate district and school personnel and resources to support the successful implementation of the communications plan.

ACTIONS/TACTICS

- Develop communications policies and/or procedures to ensure timely and accurate communication to stakeholders.
- Provide training to district and school administration, faculty, and staff, in marketing, public and media relations, and other communication skills as appropriate to ensure information is shared in a consistent and user-friendly manner.
- Develop and share district templates for documents, letters, presentations, online media, and other publications to brand the district.
- Develop protocols for establishing and monitoring all school and district social media accounts and ensure all accounts appropriately represent the district.
- Outline the purpose of each communication tool for stakeholders and provide parents with resources and support.



Strategy 4

Create and implement feedback opportunities to engage stakeholders in meaningful and interactive communications.

ACTIONS/TACTICS

- Facilitate focus groups or other opportunities to have in-depth conversations with stakeholders to gather more input on topics.
- Gather information, insights, and data from stakeholders through surveys. Include QR codes for stakeholders to provide quick and easy feedback.
- Report data collected on polls and surveys to stakeholders and demonstrate how the insights shared informed decision-making.
- Engage with experts when necessary to respond to stakeholder input.
- Utilize social media platforms to engage in 2-way dialogue with stakeholders.
- Respond to questions and comments by stakeholders in a positive and helpful manner and establish a welcoming tone for constructive dialogue.



Strategy 5

Proactively plan to communicate news and information to ensure clear, and timely information is shared with the community during an emergency or crisis.

ACTIONS/TACTICS

- Develop district expectations and processes outlining how time-sensitive and/or critical information will be communicated to stakeholder groups.
- Create a communications flowchart and/or decision tree, for varied scenarios to identify roles and responsibilities within Groton Public Schools.
- Develop protocols for communication with officials and stakeholders.
- Provide crisis communications training for district administration.
- Develop a “library” of messages that are ready to be customized for crisis, emergency, and urgent situations.

