

**GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 20, 2023 @ 6:00 P.M.
CENTRAL OFFICE, ROOM 11**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Kim Shepardson Watson-Chairperson, Andrea Ackerman-Vice Chairperson (remote), Dean Antipas, William Horgan (remote), Liz Porter, Matthew Shulman, Beverly Washington (remote), Jay Weitlauf

MEMBERS ABSENT: Rita Volkmann

ALSO PRESENT: Susan Austin, Phil Piazza, Laurie LePine, Shannon Weigle, David Fleig, David Hautege

1. CALL TO ORDER - Chairperson Kim Shepardson Watson called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.
2. REVIEW NOVEMBER 13, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

MOTION: Horgan, Antipas – to approve the COW minutes of November 13, 2023.
MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

3. REVIEW GRANTS (Attachment #1)

Superintendent Austin gave an overview of the grant report, which lists federal and state grants that have been awarded to GPS between June 9, 2023 and November 16, 2023, grants that have been submitted and are awaiting award announcements, upcoming grants, and grant funded projects in progress. Shannon Weigle reported on the following grants that we have been awarded:

- ARP Grants - two for mental health, one to expand our dual credit offerings at the high school, and one for a high dose tutoring program for students in grades 6 through 9.
- DoDEA 5-year grant which will support the continuation of our magnet programs at the elementary level and will also support the work in literacy and STEM in all grade levels.

Mrs. Weigle stated that over the past year, we applied for three security grants – two through the state (one of which we were awarded) and one through the US Department of Justice to pay for equipment and services related to safety and security for the district.

She also discussed two upcoming Farm to School Grants; one for \$250,000, which will support a hydroponic system at Thames River Magnet School, and the second grant for \$100,000 would support the installation of an orchard on the Groton campus to help support the expansion of our Farm to School program.

4. REVIEW STAFFING/MINORITY RECRUITMENT (Attachment #2)

Laurie LePine gave an overview on what the district's diversity profile looks like, the work that has been done, and what our future work looks like in that area. Currently, 53% of our student body are of color, and we have seen incremental growth in diversifying our workforce over the last few years.

5. UPDATE FROM FINANCE/FACILITIES COMMITTEE (Attachment #3)

David Fleig gave an overview of the FY24 financial challenges being monitored, which includes health insurance claims, property costs, transportation costs, utility budgets, lunch program collection, contractual & wage inflation, legal fees, and prior year expenses.

6. REVIEW REFERRAL TRACKING SHEET

The Board reviewed the tracking sheet and made the following changes:

- R2021-6 under Finance/Facilities – delete “SpEd”
- R2021-25 under Finance/Facilities – delete
- R2023-8 under Communications – move to Board of Education Meeting Template for an annual discussion at a COW meeting in either June or July
- R2020-20 under Policy – delete

7. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ackerman, Weitlauf - to adjourn at 7:27 p.m.
MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY

GROTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS GRANT REPORT – OCTOBER

I. Federal and State Grants Awarded to Groton Public Schools Between June 9, 2023 – Nov 16, 2023		
Grant	Description	Award
ARP Mental Health Specialist (CSDE Bureau of Nutrition)	To extend the Early Childhood School Social Worker position for two years. Professional development for staff who work with students ages 3-6.	\$228,872 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2026)
ARP Summer Mental Health Support (CSDE Bureau of Nutrition)	For additional social workers / psychologists to assist with ESY and FHS summer school programs.	\$46,801 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2026)
ARP Dual Credit Expansion (CSDE Performance Office)	To work with UCONN and other CT colleges to accredit additional FHS courses as dual enrollment courses.	\$40,000 (July 1, 2023 – June 30, 2024)
National School Lunch Program (NSLP) Equipment (CSDE)	To purchase a new blast chiller, cryovac machine and electric cutter to expand the Farm-to-School Program and provide fresh local food to students year-round.	\$38,364
High Dose Tutoring (CSDE)	For a 12-month High Dose Tutoring program for students in grades 6-9 to recoup pandemic learning loss. To include additional tutors in-school and out-of-school (afterschool, on Saturdays and during the summer).	\$543,123 (January 2025)
Military Connected Academic and Support Program (DoDEA)	For elementary magnet themed programming and K-12 culturally responsive curriculum development.	\$1.25 million
MMSGP (DESPP)	To add Mutualink service at TRMS. FHS and CO. The 2023 CIP awarded to GPS in the amount of \$150,000 will be used to provide matching funds for this project and supply the remaining schools with the Mutualink service.	\$48,654
Online Abuse (DESPP)	For in-school and out-of-school student and community programs on healthy screen habits.	\$30,000 (May 2025)
Nature Everywhere	To draft an equitable Open Space Access Plan for Groton students and families, in partnership with the Town of Groton and the Groton Open Space Association. First year planning grant awarded. GPS is now eligible to apply for a \$100k implementation grant in year 2.	\$10,000

II. Submitted Grant Applications (Award Announcements Pending)		
Grant	Description	Award
ARP Right to Read (CSDE)	To purchase supplies and provide professional development to teachers around the new GPS K-3 Literacy Plan.	\$191,000 (Nov 21, 2022 – Dec 31, 2024)
ARP Afterschool (CSDE)	To continue and expand the FHS Afterschool Center.	\$217,743

III. Upcoming Grants		
Grant	Description	Award
21 st Century Learning Center Program (21 st CCLC) (CSDE)	To expand GPS' 21 st CCLC afterschool program to the high school.	TBD (6 year grant)
Stronger Connections (CSDE)	For Social Worker and Community Coordinators and to expand Restorative Justice programming.	\$147,744 (2 year grant)
HVAC (CT DAS)	To improve HVAC at FHS and CB.	TBD
CT Grown for CT Kids Grant (CT Dept of Ag)	To expand Farm to School program. Funds would be used to purchase and install a hydroponics shipping container system.	\$250,000
Farm to School Grant (USDA)	To expand Farm to School program. Funds will be used to support two coordinator positions and plant 1-2 school orchards and berry patches.	\$100,000
Fund for Teachers (FFT)	For summer fellowships for CT teachers supported by the Dalio Foundation.	\$5000/teacher, \$10,000 per team
PEGPETIA (CT PURA)	For new school-related technology.	TBD

IV. Grant Funded Projects in Progress		
Grant	Description	Award
ARP ESSER Afterschool (CSDE)	To enhance and expand FHS Afterschool Program. Funding for an Afterschool Director, supplies and teacher stipends.	\$180,000 (May 2024)
21 st CCLC (CSDE)	For new afterschool program at GMS to engage uninvolved students with an emphasis on teamwork and leadership. Students are given opportunity to participate in Counselor-in-Training program at Tree House.	\$59,986/year (July 1, 2021 - June 30, 2026)
PEGPETIA (CT PURA)	For new equipment for each school to live stream events, including funds for interns to procure new online video collection.	\$86,360 (May 2024)
Military Connected Academic and Support Program (DoDEA)	To develop a K-12 Career Pathway Program with focus on health science.	\$750,000 (Until May 2026)
World Language Advancement and Readiness Program (DoDEA)	For professional development for all world language teachers and to expand the WL program to the elementary level.	\$1 million (June 2027)
Courtney Community Grant (US Dept of Ed)	For expansion of Career Pathway Program with focus on manufacturing and health science.	\$150,000 (May 2024)
Pfizer	For STEM supplies for GPS Mentor Program and TRMS.	\$4,000 (May 2025)

DIVERSITY PROFILE & EDUCATORS OF COLOR



GROTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR

DIVERSITY PROFILE 2023-2024

District Demographic Diversity Profile 2023-2024

Groton Public Schools

	American Indian or Alaska native		Asian		Black or African American		Hispanic or Latino		Pacific Islander		Two or more		White		Non-White	Non-White Goal	Position Total	Educators of Color Total	No Race Data	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	%	%				
District Level Administrators Central Office Staff, Superintendent(s) and Department Chairs	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	7.1%	1	7.1%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	12	85.7%	14.3%		District Level Administrators	14	2	
School Level Administrators Principals and Assistant Principals	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	19.0%	1	4.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	16	76.2%	23.8%		School Level Administrators	21	5	
General Education Teachers Non-Central Office Curriculum Coaches	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%		General Education Teachers	0	0	
General Education Teachers Teachers and Instructors (PK-5)	0	0.0%	4	3.0%	4	3.0%	3	2.2%	0	0.0%	3	2.2%	121	89.6%	10.4%		General Education Teachers (PK-5)	135	14	
General Education Teachers Teachers and Instructors (6-8)	0	0.0%	1	1.0%	0	0.0%	3	3.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.0%	94	94.9%	5.1%		General Education Teachers (6-8)	99	5	
General Education Teachers Teachers and Instructors (9-12)	0	0.0%	2	2.3%	2	2.3%	5	5.8%	0	0.0%	1	1.2%	76	88.4%	11.6%		General Education Teachers (9-12)	86	10	
Non-Instructional Support Staff Counselors, Social Workers, Psychologists, and Speech and Language Pathologists	0	0.0%	4	2.8%	4	2.8%	1	0.7%	0	0.0%	3	2.1%	129	91.5%	8.5%		Non-Instructional Support Staff	141	12	
Non-Certified Staff Paraeducators, custodians, cafeteria staff, secretarial staff, etc.	1	0.2%	10	1.9%	48	9.2%	48	9.2%	5	1.0%	9	1.7%	401	76.8%	23.2%		Non-Certified Staff	522	121	

STUDENT DATA

Students of Color equal
53% of student body
district wide

<u>Total in Grade</u>	<u>(I) American Indian or Alaska Native</u>	<u>(A) Asian</u>	<u>(B) Black or African American</u>	<u>(P) Native Hawaiian / Other Pac Islander</u>	<u>(W) White</u>	<u>Hispanic/Latino</u>	<u>Two or More Race Categories</u>
4402	27	262	309	13	2064	1135	592

DIVERSITY PROFILE 2022-2023

District Demographic Diversity Profile 2022-2023

Groton Public Schools

	American Indian or Alaska native		Asian		Black or African American		Hispanic or Latino		Pacific Islander		Two or more		White		Non-White	Non-White Goal	Position Total	Educators of Color Total	No Race Data	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%	%	%				
District Level Administrators Central Office Staff, Superintendent(s) and Department Chairs	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	10.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	9	90.0%	10.0%		District Level Administrators	10	1	
School Level Administrators Principals and Assistant Principals	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	15.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	16	84.2%	15.8%		School Level Administrators	19	3	
General Education Teachers Non-Central Office Curriculum Coaches	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0.0%		General Education Teachers	0	0	
General Education Teachers Teachers and Instructors (PK-5)	0	0.0%	2	1.4%	3	2.1%	3	2.1%	0	0.0%	3	2.1%	132	92.3%	7.7%		General Education Teachers (PK-5)	143	11	
General Education Teachers Teachers and Instructors (6-8)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	2.4%	3	3.5%	0	0.0%	3	3.5%	77	90.6%	9.4%		General Education Teachers (6-8)	85	8	
General Education Teachers Teachers and Instructors (9-12)	0	0.0%	3	3.1%	2	2.1%	4	4.2%	0	0.0%	1	1.0%	86	89.6%	10.4%		General Education Teachers (9-12)	96	10	
Non-Instructional Support Staff Counselors, Social Workers, Psychologists, and Speech and Language Pathologists	0	0.0%	2	1.4%	6	4.1%	1	0.7%	0	0.0%	2	1.4%	137	92.6%	7.4%		Non-Instructional Support Staff	148	11	
Non-Certified Staff Paraeducators, custodians, cafeteria staff, secretarial staff, etc.	1	0.2%	9	1.7%	41	7.6%	56	10.3%	2	0.4%	9	1.7%	424	78.2%	21.8%		Non-Certified Staff	542	118	

PROGRESS IN TOTAL WORKFORCE AND CLASSROOM TEACHER DIVERSITY

School Year	Workforce Diversity Percent	Teacher Diversity Percent
2023-2024	16.1%	9.9%
2022-2023	15.5%	9.8%
2021-2022	15.2%	9.1%
2019-2020	14.5%	8.3%

WHAT DOES THE DATA TELL US?

- We have less diversity amongst;
 - Prior Elementary educators PK-5 Teachers of color, and now shifted to Middle School
 - Non-Instructional Support Staff/Providers of color (Speech Language Path/Counselors/Social Workers/Psychologists) continues
- Continue to establish recruitment goals aligned to improving workforce diversity in our weakest areas, amongst a national and state educator shortage
- We hired 6 additional educators of color for the 23-24 school year
- Overall increase of 3 educators of color from last year

STATE OF CT DATA

EdSight Educator Diversity Dashboard

Educator Race/Ethnicity Trend Report - State of Connecticut

[Export .csv file](#)

District	Race	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
		% of Total	% of Total	% of Total	% of Total	% of Total
State of Connecticut	American Indian Or Alaska Native	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
	Asian	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.3
	Black Or African American	3.8	4.0	4.1	4.3	4.6
	Hispanic Or Latino	3.8	4.1	4.3	4.6	4.9
	Native Hawaiian Or Other Pacific Islander	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
	Not Reported	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2
	Two Or More Races	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2
	White	90.5	90.4	89.9	89.2	88.7

NATIONAL SHORTAGE

- AASPA National Educator Shortage report

Traditional Call to Action	Comprehensive & Systemic Action
Create pathways to careers in education.	Reduce barriers to careers in education while preserving standards of excellence.

Traditional Call to Action
Comprehensive and Systemic Actions

- 01 Create pathways to careers in education.
Reduce barriers to careers in education while preserving standards of excellence.
- 02 Provide educators with more resources.
Design comprehensive human capital management systems.
- 03 Increase educator pay.
Establish transparent and equitable total rewards systems.
- 04 Support employee wellness.
Strengthen educators' sense of purpose, belonging, and connection.
- 05 Promote the profession.
Deliver exceptional employment experiences.

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ACTION PLANS

- Continued focus on elementary educator development programs (i.e., Teacher in Resident program)
- New! HBCU Recruitment – We have joined NASHA (National Association of HBCU Students and Alumni). NASHA provides a K-12 specialized job recruiting service reaching over 2 million students and Alumni across the country at HBCUs, HSIs (Hispanic Serving Institutions) and Tribal Colleges
- Recruitment will focus on diverse recruitment efforts and supports to expand the workforce diversity and prepare future educators of color
- Find ways to reduce financial barriers (accelerated routes to certification, tuition assistance) for non-certified staff to have a pathway to teaching
- Continued support with FHS students enrolled in a teacher pathway



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HBCU STUDENTS AND ALUMNI
Network. Advance.



FY24 Financial Challenges Being Monitored

Health Insurance Claims

- Health insurance claims are up ~30% or ~\$680K over the prior year
- Health insurance budget was reduced ~\$725K during the budget process
- Insurance reserve is nearly depleted

Property Costs

- Incurred five new property damage events and one ADA Compliant investment
- YTD expense of ~\$51K and expected to reach ~\$100K

Transportation Costs

- The mix of standard buses has changed costing us ~\$22K (six add'l mid-day buses and one less regular bus)
- Out of town athletic event bus costs are 2.25x the budgeted amount

Utility Budgets

- 38% of the Electricity Budget already spent (pre-winter)
- Natural Gas & Oil budgets ~25%-40% lower than FY23 actual expense

Lunch Program Collection

- Averaging ~\$8K of unpaid student lunch charges per month (primarily @ CB, NEA, FHS)
- Incurred ~\$16K of charges YTD and estimating \$80K for the full year

Contractual & Wage Inflation

- Para Union Contractual Agreement TBD (*only budgeted ~6% rate increase*)
- CT State Minimum Wage Increase Effective January 1st (*\$15 to \$15.69 hour*)

Legal Fees

- Contractual Negotiations, Robotics and SPED fees rising quickly
- Only \$29K remaining in the Legal Fees Budget

Prior Year Expenses

- ~\$624K of prior year expenses deferred to FY24
- ~\$83K of FY23 related invoices not received until FY24
- DOD Supplemental balance at risk