

GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
JANUARY 29, 2024 @ 6:00 P.M.
CENTRAL OFFICE, ROOM 11/HYBRID

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jay Weitlauf-Chairperson, Andrea Ackerman, Dean Antipas, Adrian Johnson, Robert Meade, Matthew Shulman, Ian Thomas, Jennifer White

MEMBERS ABSENT: Beverly Washington-Vice Chairperson

ALSO PRESENT: Susan Austin, Phil Piazza, David Fleig, Denise Doolittle, Laurie LePine, Rebecca Beyus, Lauren Casini, Clint Kennedy, Sam Kilpatrick, Peter Bass, Matt Brown, Mark Romano

I. CALL TO ORDER – Chairperson Weitlauf called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

II. BUDGET WORK SESSION

- Dr. Kennedy noted that he was happy to announce that Groton has obtained the new PEGPETIA 2023 grant that allowed us to have the new mikes and he proceeded to instruct the Board in their operations. Superintendent Austin explained that the Board should have new budget pages with function codes.
- Chapter 3 – Instruction
 - Mr. Bass gave the history of Groton Middle School since 2020 noting that West Side Middle School became STEM and Cutler Middle School became Arts and Humanities and came together as one school. Mr. Bass noted that MYP involves a lot of teacher collaboration and MYP unit planning. Mr. Bass reviewed the Groton Middle School budget.
 - Mr. Brown gave an overview of the Fitch High School budget. Mr. Brown noted that AP and IB are options offered to students as well as Career Pathways and Nursing. Mr. Brown shared that the high school is bringing back Falcon Pride and that the goal this year is to get kids involved. RISE (Resilience, Innovation, Social Awareness, Engaged) are the attributes of the vision of the graduate. Mr. Brown also noted:
 - Student attendance meetings with Principals
 - Consistency and accountability
 - Exposing students to pathways
 - Having high school students visiting the middle school and having middle school students visit the high school.
 - Increase the number of students who take higher level classes, clubs, and activities, i.e. Debate Team, Dungeons and Dragons
 - Mr. Romano gave an overview of the Middle School and High School Athletic staff, teams, and the highlights of each program.
 - Mrs. Doolittle gave an overview of the Special Education program:
 - She highlighted the department and some of the programs at the middle school and high school:
 - Staff
 - Contracted Staff
 - Certified Staff total and the registered behavior therapists
 - She noted that increases occurred in the percentage of students with disabilities for the eleventh year in a row, with 16.7% of students receiving special education services, according to the Connecticut State Department of Education.

- In the 2022-2023 school year, Groton Public Schools screened 236 three- and four-year-old children for Preschool or Pre-K eligibility.
- The number of students experiencing housing insecurity has increased, which impacts student support services and transportation needs. Nationally, 1 in 20 youth will experience homelessness.
- Mrs. Doolittle stated that the VNA will no longer support the Groton Public Schools. She noted that there are grants to support Curtain delivery. Mrs. Doolittle also reviewed the following budget lines:
 - Teaching and Learning
 - Adult Education
 - Summer School
 - Improvement of Instruction

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ackerman, Jennifer White:

To adjourn at 9:20 p.m.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY