

**GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 18, 2024 @ 6:00 P.M.
CENTRAL OFFICE, ROOM 11**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jay Weitlauf – Chairperson, Beverly Washington – Vice Chairperson, Dean Antipas, Adrian Johnson, Matthew Shulman, Ian Thomas, Jennifer White, Michael Whitney

MEMBERS ABSENT: Andrea Ackerman

ALSO PRESENT: Susan Austin, Anne Marie Mancini, Denise Doolittle, Clint Kennedy, Lauren Casini, Peter Bass, Jemal Davis, Keith Danieluk, Samantha Singleton

I. CALL TO ORDER – Mr. Jay Weitlauf, Chairperson called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.

II. Review of October 21, 2024, Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Shulman, Antipas: To approve the minutes of October 21, 2024.
PASSED – UNANIMOUSLY

III. REVIEW OF GMS DATA, ACTION PLANS, AND INTERVENTION SUPPORT
(Attachment #1)

Mr. Bass, Mr. Davis, Mr. Danieluk, and Mrs. Singleton gave an overview of the PowerPoint presentation of GMS Data Reporting: Goals and Action Steps.

Mr. Shulman read a statement of his opinions on the data presented as well as what he perceives as the needs of Groton students.

IV. DISCUSSION RE: SPECIAL EDUCATION OFFERINGS AND PROGRAMS (Attachment #2)

Mrs. Doolittle gave an overview of the Special Education Offerings and Programs noting that the number of students needing special education services has gone up by 1% from last year.

V. DISCUSSION RE: ADDING REPORT OF COMMUNICATIONS TO ALL BOE, COW & SUBCOMMITTEE MEETINGS

Mr. Thomas explained his request to add a report on Communications to all BOE, COW, and subcommittee meetings.

The Board discussed the pros and cons of adding a report on Communications to all BOE, COW, and subcommittee meetings. The consensus of the Board was to leave the procedure as is.

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Washington, White:

To adjourn at 9:13 p.m.
PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY



GMS Data Reporting: Goals & Action Steps

November 18, 2024



School Enrollment	884
Special Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● A continuum of supports including special educators, speech pathologists, school psychologists, school social workers, school counselors, OTs, and PTs, and are available to meet the needs of all students with disabilities.
Student Makeup	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 44% Free/Reduced Eligible● 18% Special Education● 5% Multilingual learners
Chronic Absenteeism Trend	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 2022- 28.5%● 2023- 26.1%● 2024- 20.2%
Noteworthy Happenings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● High Dosage Tutoring in Math● MYP● Increased Multilingual Learner Population



GMS Special Education Programs

Resource

Special Education Teachers assigned to grade level teams to provide academic instruction, curriculum modifications, and accommodations in core classes and the resource room to students with disabilities. Paraeducators are assigned to small groups and individual students to review, re-teach and provide additional practice on content.

SEAL Academy

2 Specialized classrooms for students with more significant cognitive disabilities and autism spectrum disorders. 2 special education teachers, 1 Board Certified Behavior Analyst, 2 Registered Behavior Technicians and paraeducators provide additional support and intervention.

Toledo Academy

Specialized classroom for students with social, emotional & behavioral disabilities that focuses on developing skills such as self-regulation, utilizing coping strategies, and pro-social skills. Program staff include 2 special education teachers, 1 school psychologist, and paraeducators .



Smarter Balanced Assessment

Achievement Levels
(According to Grade Level Standards)



Benchmark



	ELA: Building Level									
	Performance Distribution - Percents					Performance Distribution - Counts				
Student Count	Does Not Meet	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	At/Above	Does Not Meet	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	At/Above
Total: 866	27%	26%	32%	14%	47%	233	229	279	125	404

	ELA: Grade Level									
	Performance Distribution - Percents					Performance Distribution - Counts				
Grade Level	Does Not Meet	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	At/Above	Does Not Meet	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	At/Above
Grade 6 (300)	24%	33%	28%	15%	43%	73	99	83	45	128
Grade 7 (297)	32%	23%	33%	12%	45%	96	67	98	36	134
Grade 8 (269)	24%	23%	36%	16%	52%	64	63	98	44	142

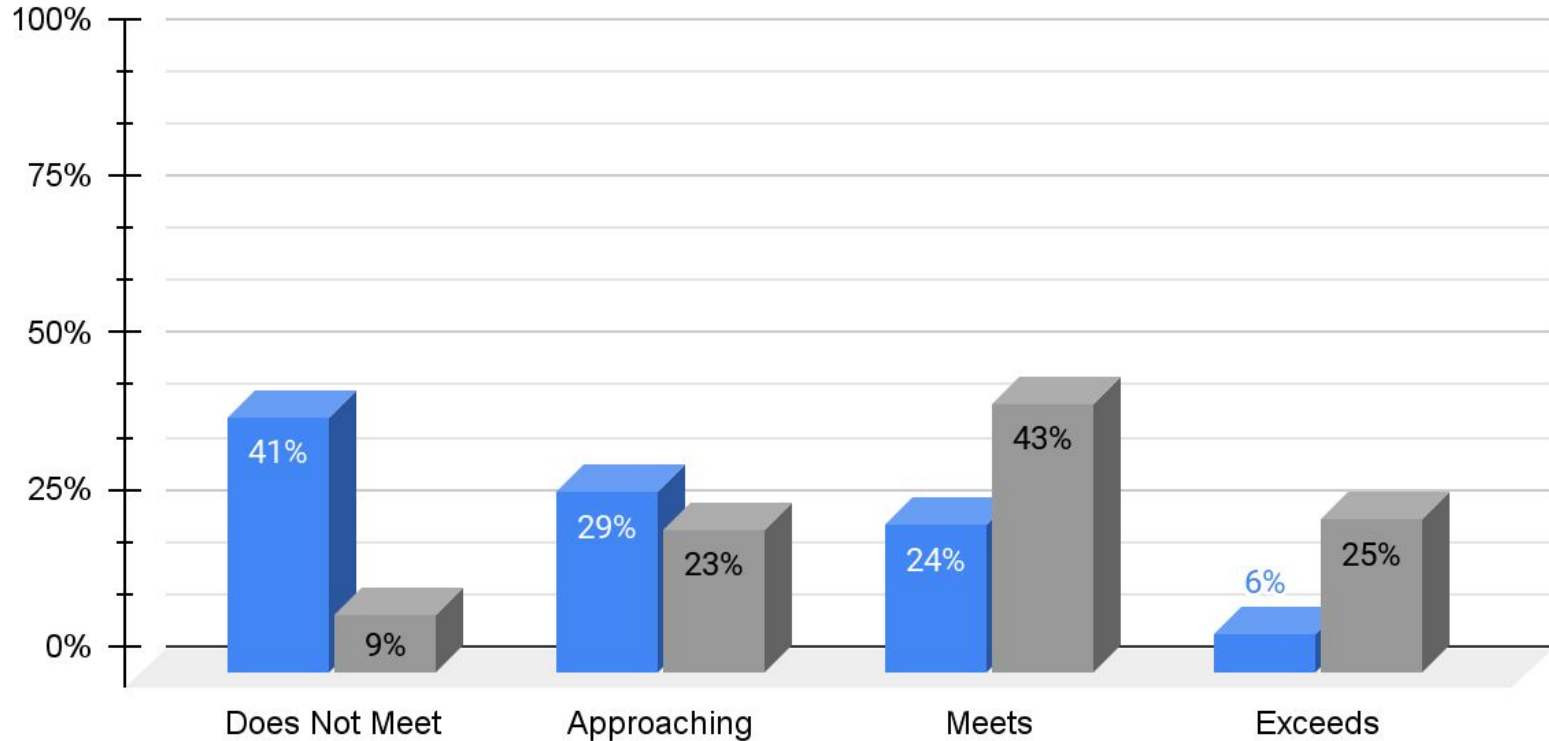


Students in the “**high needs**” group belong to one or more of the following subgroups:

- Special Education
- Multilingual Learners
- Economically Disadvantaged
(Qualify for Free/Reduced Lunch)

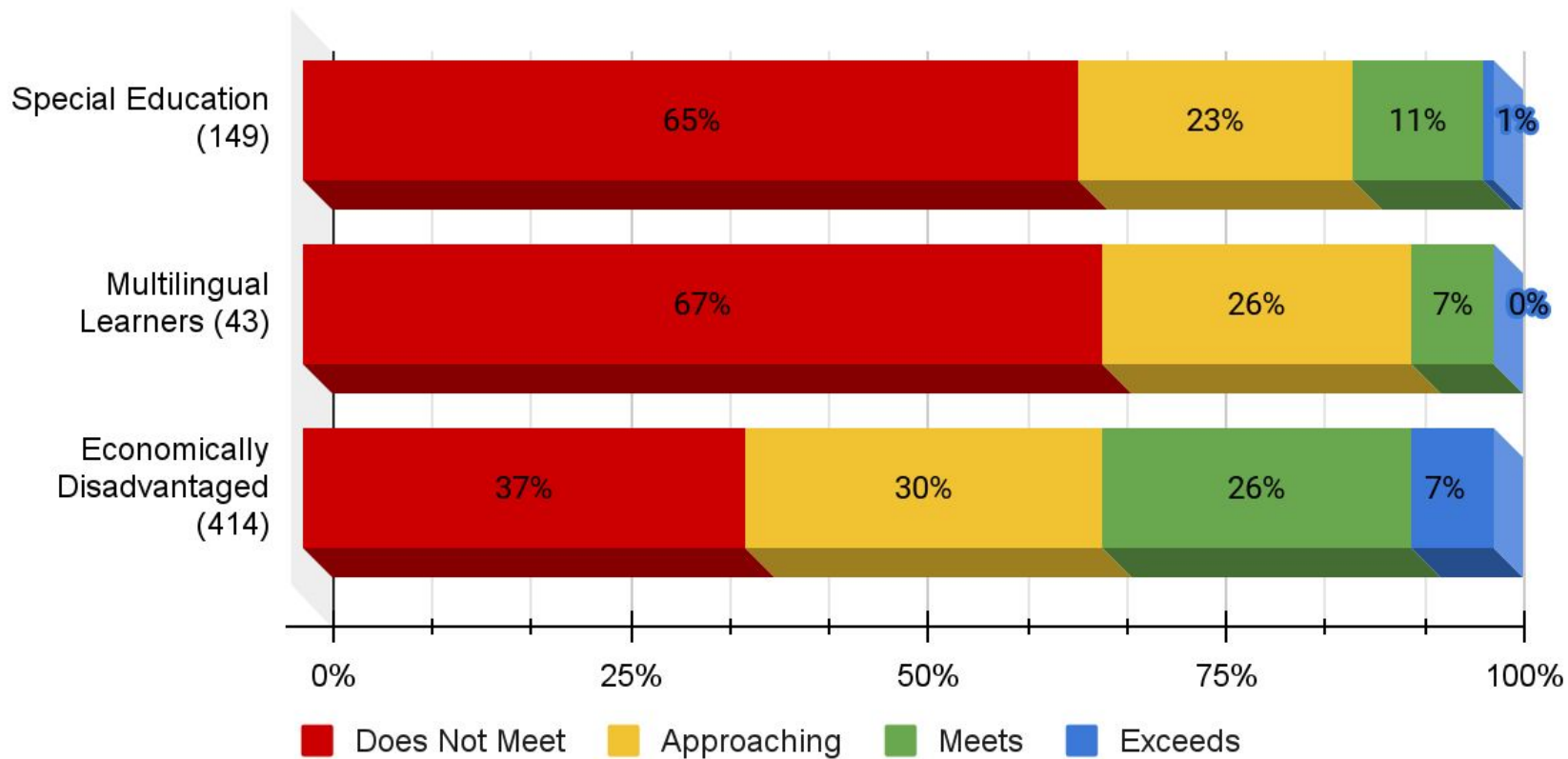
GMS ELA Performance by Needs

■ High Needs (485/ 56%) ■ Non-High Needs (381/ 44%)



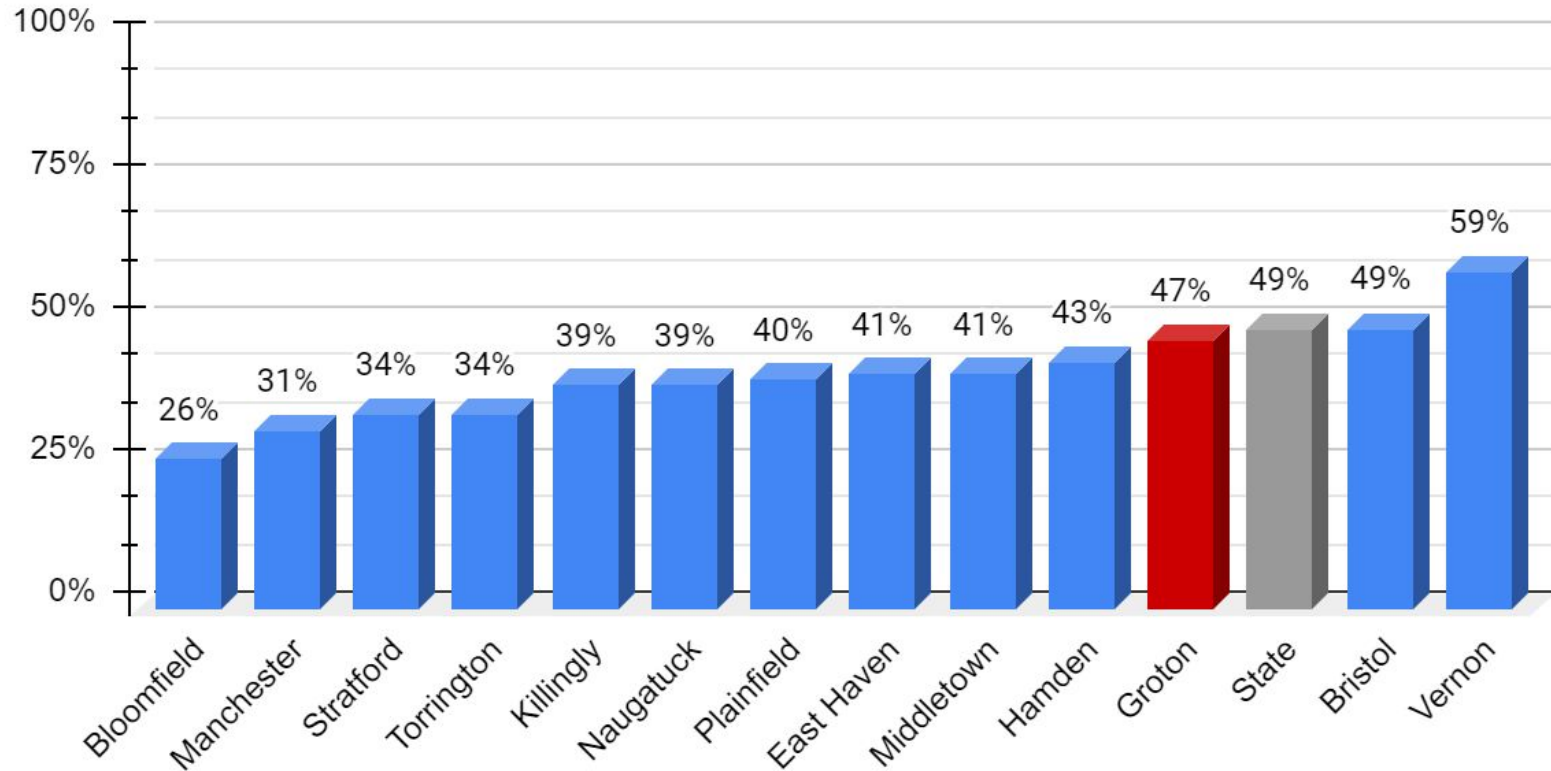
GMS ELA Performance

"High Needs" Subgroups



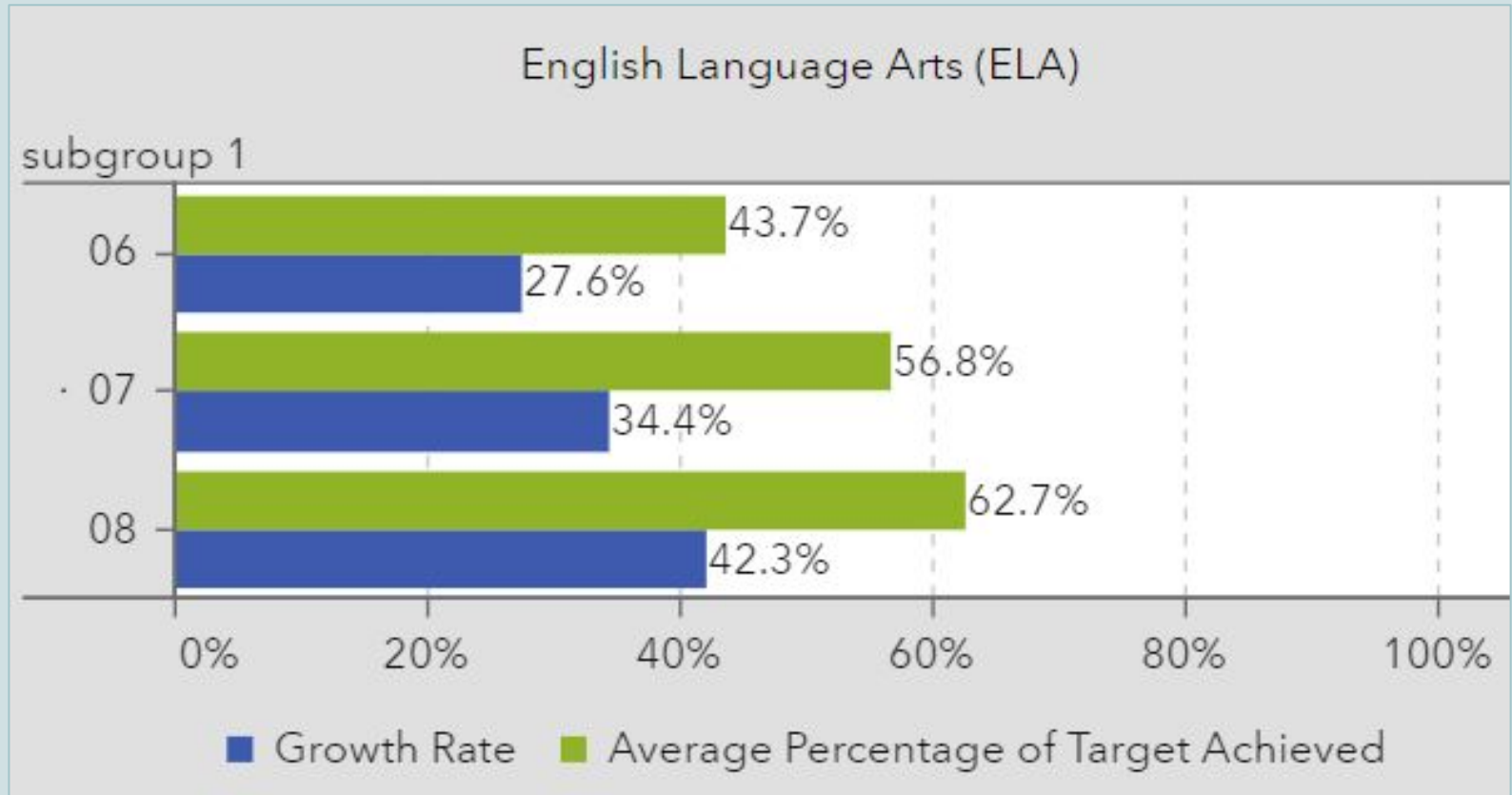
Grade 6-8 ELA Performance "DRG G"

Students At or Above Benchmark





ELA Growth



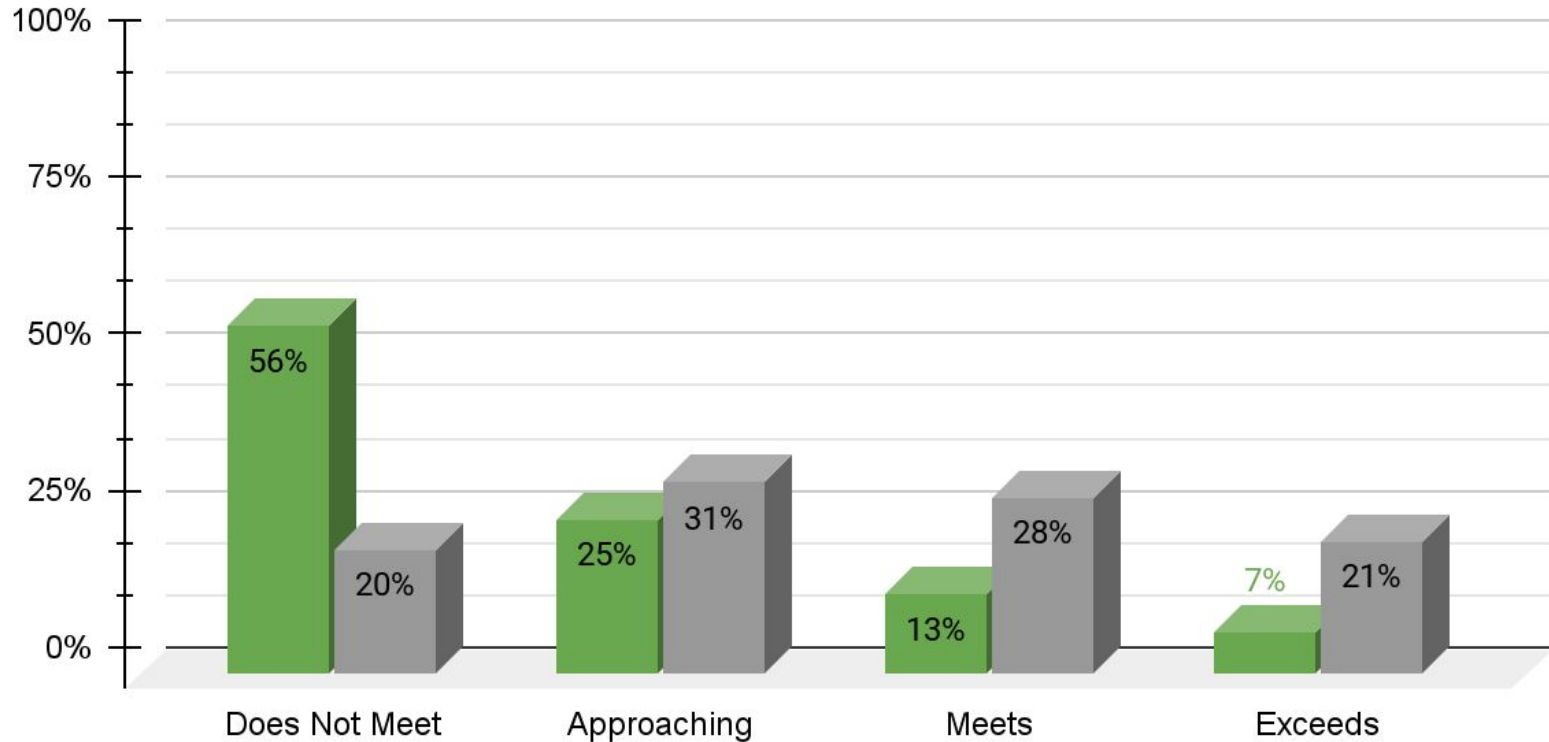


	Math: Building Level									
	Performance Distribution - Percents					Performance Distribution - Counts				
Student Count	Does Not Meet	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	At/Above	Does Not Meet	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	At/Above
Total: 862	40%	27%	20%	13%	33%	344	235	169	114	283

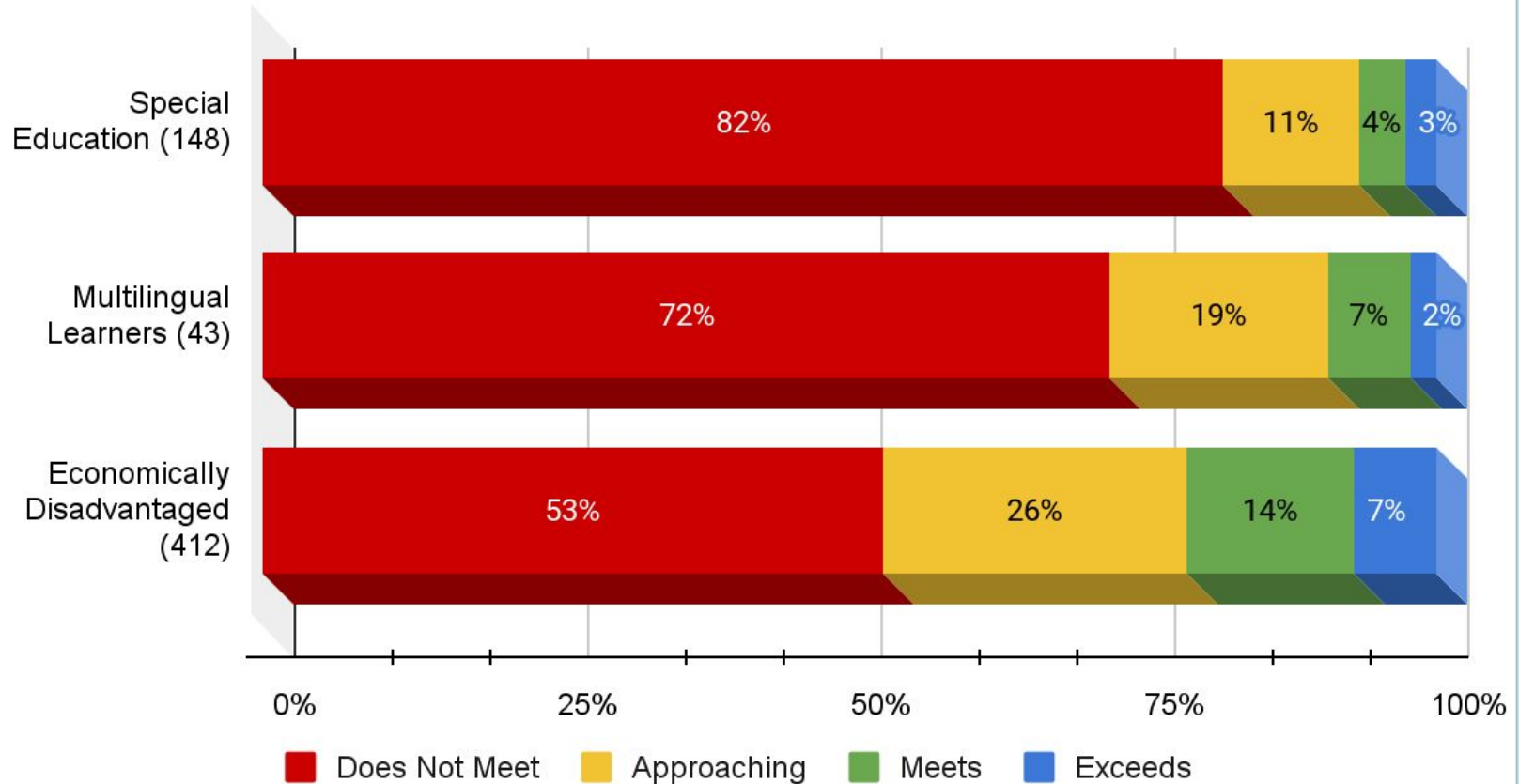
	Math: Grade Level									
	Performance Distribution - Percents					Performance Distribution - Counts				
Grade Level	Does Not Meet	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	At/Above	Does Not Meet	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	At/Above
Grade 6 (299)	40%	29%	19%	12%	31%	119	86	57	37	94
Grade 7 (295)	39%	27%	20%	14%	34%	114	80	59	42	101
Grade 8 (268)	41%	26%	20%	13%	33%	111	69	53	35	88

Grade 6-8 Math Performance by Needs

■ High Needs (482/ 56%) ■ Non-High Needs (380/ 44%)

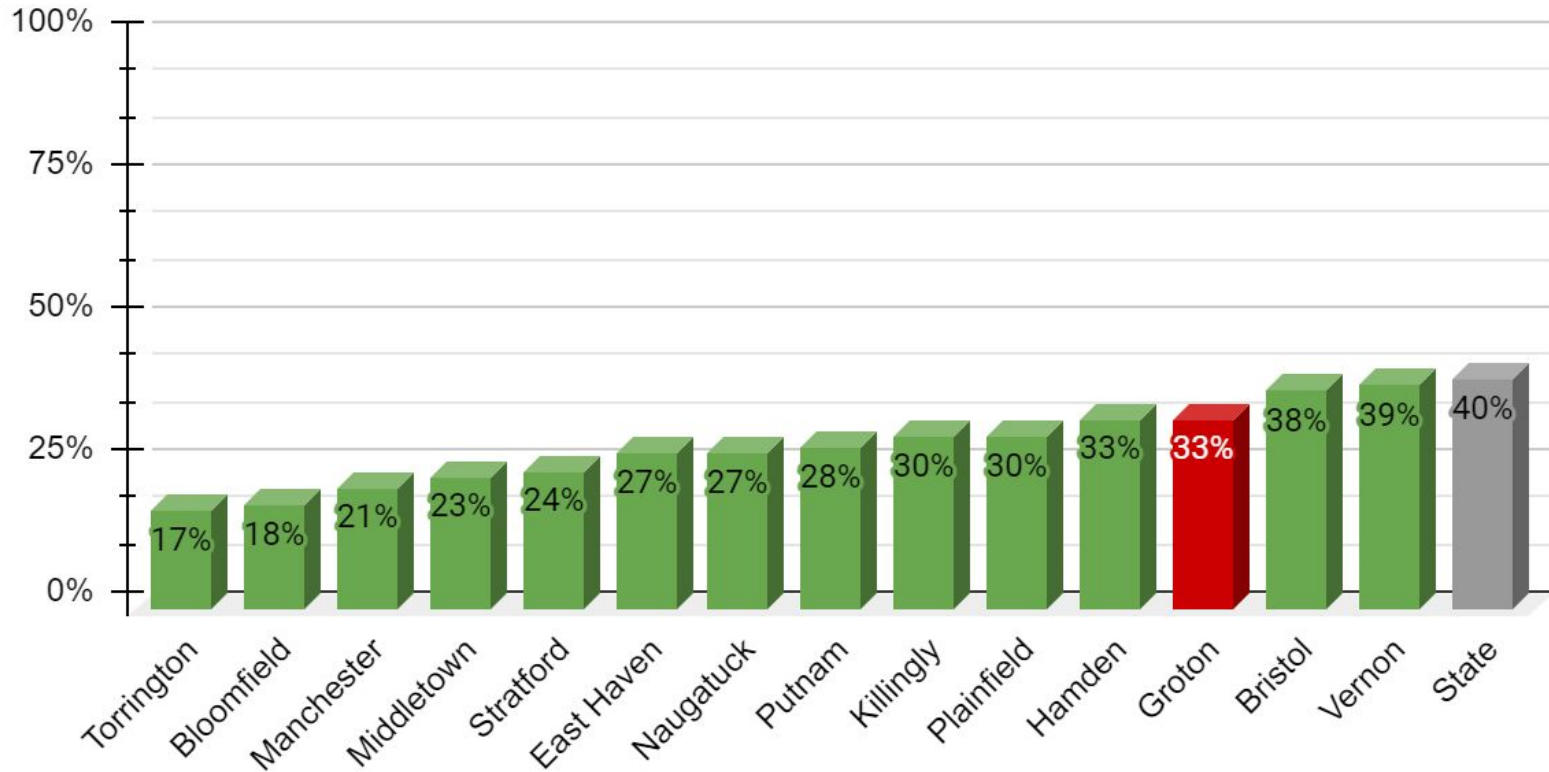


Grade 6-8 Math Performance by Needs

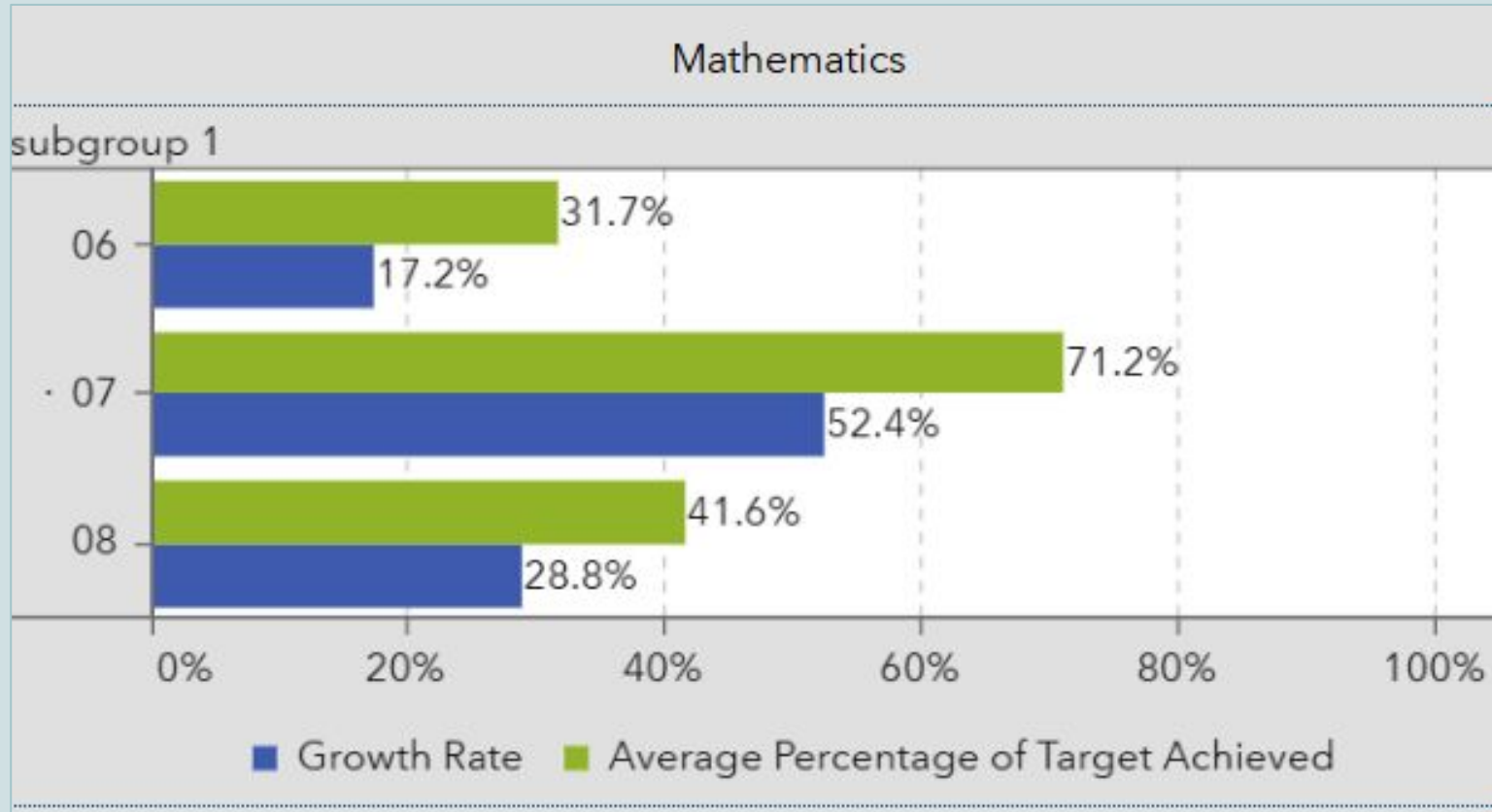


Grade 6-8 Math Performance "DRG G"

Students At or Above Benchmark



Math Growth



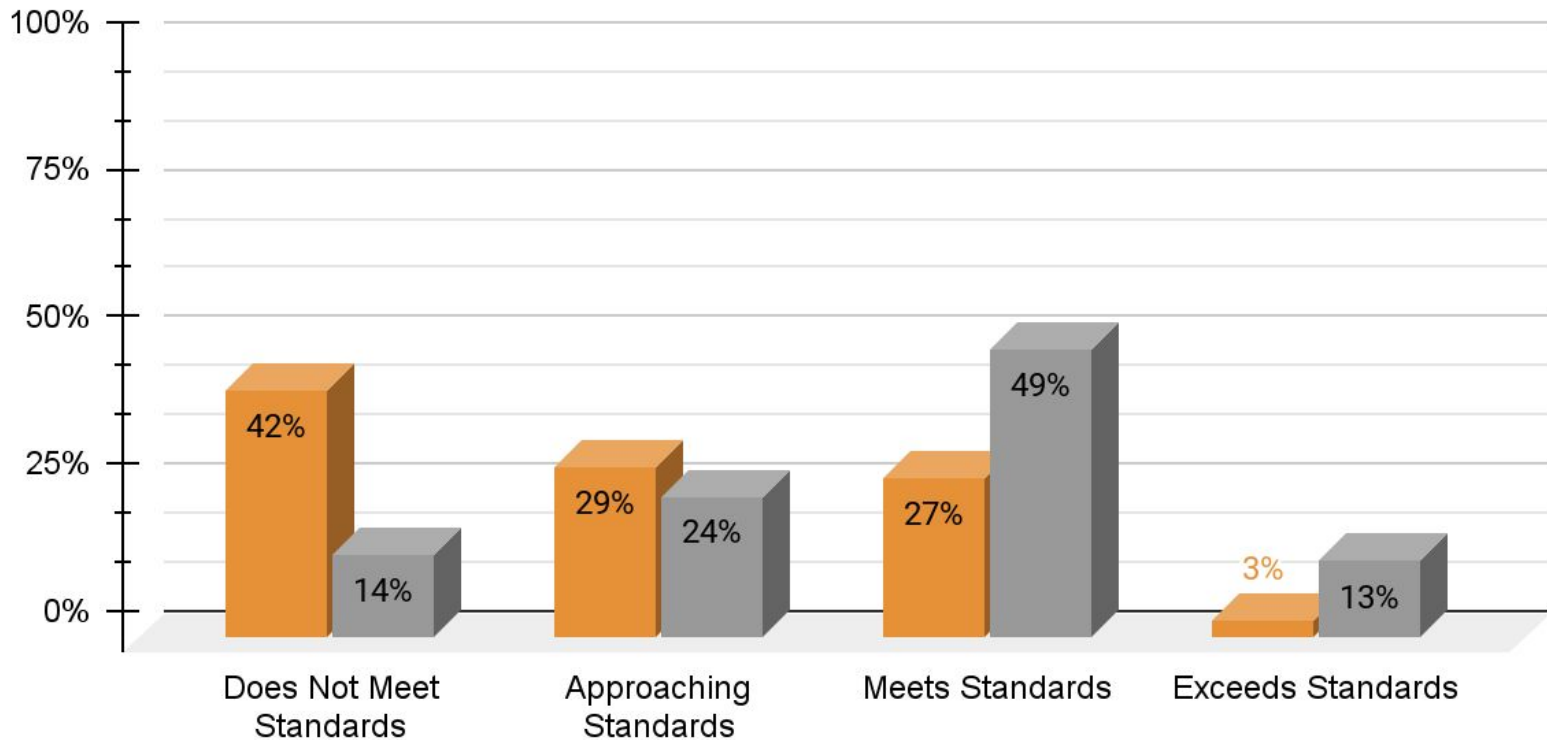


Grade 8 Data	Does Not Meet Standards	Approaching Standards	Meets Standards	Exceeds Standards	At or Above	Does Not Meet Standards	Approaching Standards	Meets Standards	Exceeds Standards	At or Above
Grade 8 (269)	29%	27%	37%	7%	44%	79	72	99	19	118

Next Generation Science Standards Assessment 2023-2024

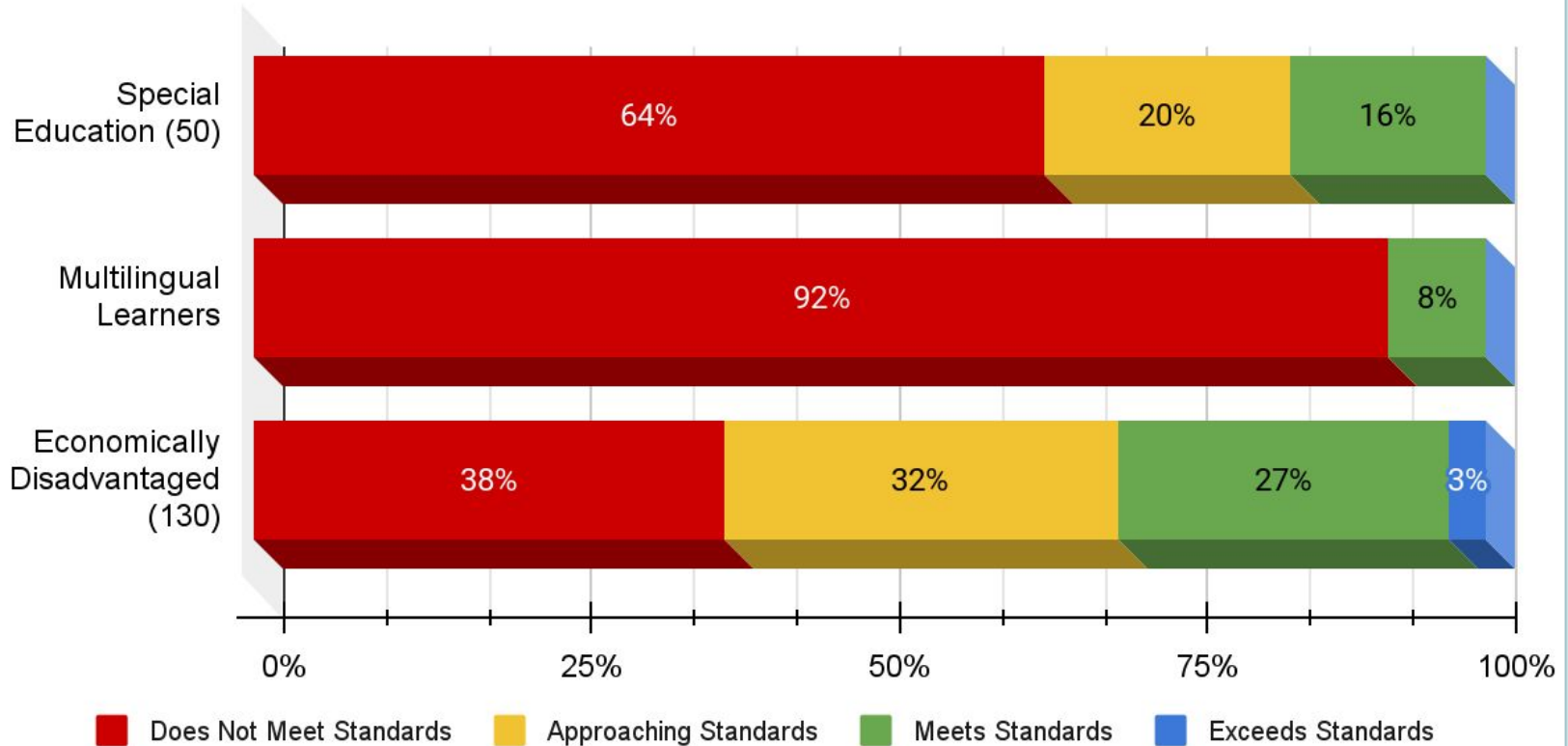
Grade 8 NGSS Performance

High Needs (149/ 55%) Non-High Needs (120/ 45%)



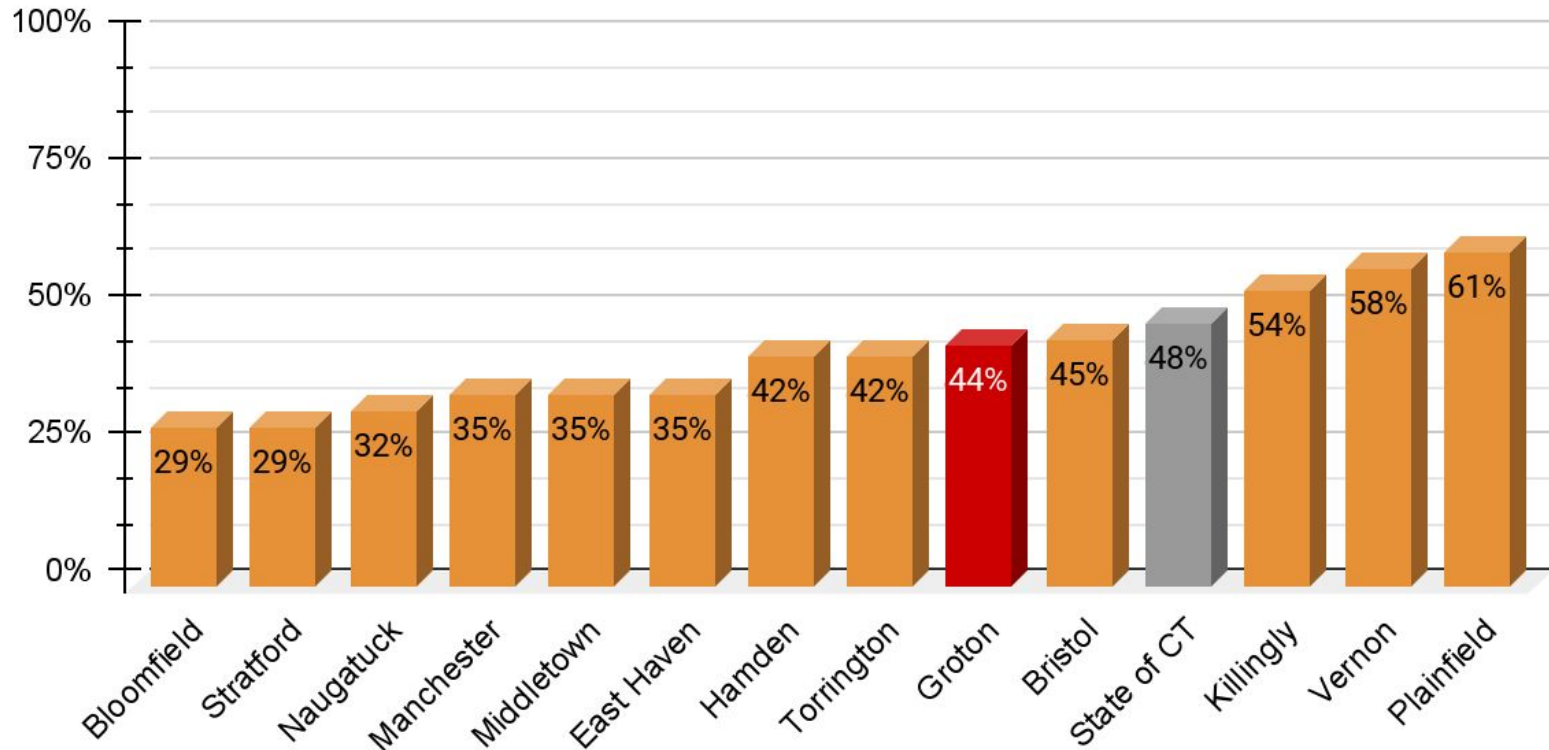
Grade 8 NGSS Performance

High Needs Subgroups



Grade 8 NGSS "DRG G"

Students At or Above Benchmark





Groton Middle School Action Plan

Areas for Focused Growth

Supporting Teaching and Learning

- Focused Data Team Meetings in Language Arts, Math, and Science
 - To review results of periodic SBAC Interim Assessments in Math and Language Arts which have been selected based upon summative scores and curricular relevance, and then determine next instructional steps
 - Expand NGSS Interim Assessments to sixth and seventh grade
- Further expansion / implementation and support of Building Thinking Classrooms in Math classes
- Continued usage of *DreamBox* for all students
- High Dosage Tutoring in Math



Groton Middle School Action Plan

Supporting Teaching and Learning (continued)

- Cornelius Minor is working with Language Arts and Social Studies teachers on visible thinking strategies which align with MYP and *Building Thinking Classrooms* work (Math)
- Ongoing work to review and improve the GMS MTSS process and practices, supported by Dr. Mahri Wrightington
 - Streamlined data collection and Child Study Team process for more timely and appropriate intervention
 - Quarterly Tiered Data Review Meetings
 - Tiered Intervention Classes aligned with PowerUp Classes



Groton Middle School Action Plan

Supporting Teaching and Learning (continued)

- Work to identify a progress monitoring resource to support Language Arts instruction / intervention
- Professional Development for all teachers in multilingual learner strategies, and increased classroom resources, such as Google Slides Translator
- Continue Falcon Academy Tutoring and After School Learning Center



Groton Middle School Action Plan

Areas for Focused Growth (continued)

Climate and Culture

- Professional Development in Restorative Practices with Kris Wraight
- Continued work with GMS Safe School Climate Committee on Communication, Faculty Mental Health and Well Being, and Student Behaviors and Needs
- Emphasis on Academic Achievement, the Importance of Attendance, and Celebrating Successes

Groton Public Schools

SPECIAL EDUCATION OVERVIEW

Groton Public Schools designs and conducts individualized evaluations for children who are experiencing learning delays and if eligible, collaborates with families in the development of an individualized educational plan to meet the child's needs. The Planning and Placement Team, with parent input, determines the level of support required for students to progress in the general education setting. If appropriate, programs are available to provide students with more intensive specialized instruction and supports.



Denise Doolittle
Director, Pupil Personnel

Karen Hyatt
Amy Ruotolo
Katie Vanasse
Special Education Supervisors

Department and Program Highlights:

- 6 Integrated Preschool Classrooms
- 11 Intensive Learning Classrooms
- 7 Social Emotional/Behavioral Academy Classrooms
- Transition Program for students ages 18-22
- Alternative Educational Program
- Medical Director to advise school staff
- Nursing and School Health Aides in every school
- Social Emotional Learning Curriculum
- Mental Health Consultant
- Assistive Technology

821 Students = 20%

**of Groton Public Schools'
total student enrollment are receiving
special education support(s)**

Certified Staff: 119.6

- Special Education Teachers 63.0
- Speech and Language Pathologists 14.0
- School Psychologists 11.0
- School Social Workers 11.0 (5.5 BOE, 5.5 Grants)
- School Counselors 12.6
- Board Certified Behavior Analyst 1.0
- Dyslexia Specialists 7.0

Contracted Staff: 10.8

- Occupational Therapists 3.0
- Certified Occupational Therapy Assistants 2.6
- Physical Therapists 1.4
- Board Certified Behavior Analyst 1.8
- Nurse's Aide 1.0
- Dyslexia Specialists 1.0

Non-Certified Staff: 272

- 198 Paraprofessionals
- 11 Registered Behavior Therapists



Early Childhood Program

DID YOU KNOW?

- Increases occurred in the percentage of students with disabilities for the 12th year in a row, with 17.1% of students receiving special education services, according to the Connecticut State Department of Education.
- In the 23-24 school year Groton Public Schools screened 215 three and four year-old children for Preschool or Pre-K eligibility.
- Connecticut continues to experience an increase in homelessness, impacting the number of students experiencing housing insecurity and in need of student support services and transportation.