GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
FINANCE/FACILITIES COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
MAY 6, 2025 @ 6:00 P.M.
CENTRAL OFFICE, ROOM 11/HYBRID

Members Present: Dean Antipas, Jennifer White

Members Absent: Jay Weitlauf

Also Present: Susan Austin, Ernie Koschmieder, Kristina Roberge, Ray Engle (remote)

Chairperson Antipas called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

1. Review April 1, 2025 Meeting Minutes – The committee reviewed the minutes; no corrections were submitted.

2. CEP Review – Ernie Koschmieder led a discussion regarding the Community Eligibility Provision, which allows eligible schools to offer free breakfast and lunch to all student (see attached presentation).

3. Director of Finance Report – Ray Engle stated that current and prior year budgets, aggregate spending reports, and current grants can be viewed on the Finance Office page of the district's website.

4. Director of Buildings & Grounds Report – Sam Kilpatrick reported that the Charles Barnum roof replacement project submission to the state got kicked back. He and Mr. Engle will meet to review the submission. Mr. Kilpatrick will be seeking quotes regarding the HVAC adjustments/repairs that need to be made at CK & NEA. The EV stations at the schools as well as the outside lighting at the schools, which appear to be on late at night, have been checked. The computer-generated lighting schedule seems to get disrupted, possibly due to brown outs or other electrical outages. The nighttime custodians will now manually turn the lights off and the daytime custodians will manually turn the lights on in the morning. Mr. Kilpatrick will be reviewing the summer school camps/sessions schedule with the maintenance and custodial supervisors and discuss how it will affect the custodial work schedule. He stated that he continues to look for budget reductions.

The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

What is CEP? (Community Eligibility Provision)

- CEP is a USDA program that allows eligible schools to offer **free breakfast and lunch to all students—no applications needed**.
- **How It Works:**
- Instead of household forms, eligibility is based on the percentage of students **directly certified** through programs like:
  - SNAP (food stamps)
  - TANF
  - Foster care
  - Migrant, homeless, or runaway status
- **Key Term – Identified Student Percentage (ISP):**
- The **ISP** is the % of enrolled students directly certified.
- To qualify for CEP, a school (or group) must have an **ISP of 25% or higher** (as of SY 2023–2024).

CEP Eligibility Update

Original Rule (2014–2023):

- Minimum ISP to qualify: **40%**
- Schools needed 40% of students directly certified (SNAP, foster, homeless, etc.)

New USDA Rule (Effective SY 2023–2024):

- **New minimum ISP: 25%**
- Final rule published **Sept. 26, 2023**
- **Expands access** to more schools, especially those just below the former threshold

Reimbursement Formula:

- Free meal reimbursement = **ISP × 1.6**
  - *Example:* 25% ISP × 1.6 = 40% of meals reimbursed at free rate
  - Remaining 60% reimbursed at **paid rate**, which may not cover full cost

Schools with 25–39.99% ISP may still opt out if reimbursement is too low

Lost Revenue Overview

Category	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	2025/2026	Lost Revenue
Supply Chain Funds	$149,252.76	$132,795.50	—	—	**–$132,795.50**
Catering	$61,000.00	$45,108.00	$16,730.00	—	**–$28,378.00**
USDA Commodities	$232,000.00	$232,000.00	$232,959.00	$198,885.00	**–$34,074.00**
Unpaid Meal Balances	—	—	$21,000.00	—	**–$21,000.00**
USDA Farm to School (Produce Grant)	—	—	$42,000.00*	$42,000.00	**–$66,000.00**
USDA Farm to School (Labor, GH, etc.)	—	—	—	$100,000.00	**–$100,000.00**
TOTAL LOST REVENUE	—	—	—	—	**–$382,247.50**

*Of the $42,000 grant for 2024/2025, $18,000 was used before cancellation; $24,000 was lost.

School Meal Status Timeline

March 2020 – June 2022

All students received free meals under federal COVID-19 waivers.

CEP Reimbursements: $729,239

Cash: $48,493

September 2022 – January 2023

Free meals continued for all students (extended state/federal waivers)

January 2023 – March 2023

Free meals ended; students paid based on eligibility (free, reduced, or paid).

CEP Reimbursements: $416,882

Cash: $56,201

April 2023 – June 2023

Free meals resumed for all students (additional state funding).

September 2023 – June 2024

Free breakfast for all students; lunch eligibility applied (free, reduced, or paid).

CEP Reimbursements: $458,855

Cash: $229,424

September 2024 – June 2025

Students eligible for reduced-price meals now receive both breakfast and lunch for free; others continue to pay based on eligibility.

CEP Reimbursements: $332,915

Cash: $57,565

Fitch High School CEP Comparison

Revenue Comparison (2023/2024 vs. 2024/2025)			
Current CEP Percentage - 58%			
Revenue Type	**2023/2024**	**2024/2025**	**Difference**
Reimbursement Revenue	$458,855.00	$332,915.00	**–$125,940.00**
Cash Revenue (Paid Meals, etc.)	$229,424.00	$57,565.00	**–$171,859.00**

Category (Severe Need)	Rate Type	2024/2025 Rate
Lunch	Paid	$0.44
	Free	$4.45
Breakfast	Paid	$0.39
	Free	$2.84

Fitch High School – CEP vs. Non-CEP Comparison (March)

CEP Participation Reimbursement

Meal Type	Category	# Meals	Rate	Total ($)
Lunch – CEP	Paid	5,307	$0.44	$2,335
	Free	7,812	$4.45	$34,763
	CEP Lunch Total			**$37,098**
Breakfast – CEP	Paid	2,428	$0.39	$947
	Free	3,574	$2.84	$10,150
	CEP Breakfast Total			**$11,097**
	CEP Total (Lunch + Breakfast)			**$48,195**

Non-CEP Participation Reimbursement

Meal Type	Category	# Meals	Rate	Total ($)
Lunch – Non-CEP	Paid	4,107	$0.44	$1,807
	Reduced	1,200	$4.05	$4,860
	Free	7,812	$4.45	$34,763
	Non-CEP Lunch Total			**$41,430**
Breakfast – Non-CEP	Paid	1,628	$0.39	$635
	Reduced	800	$2.54	$2,032
	Free	3,574	$2.84	$10,150
	Non-CEP Breakfast Total			**$12,817**
	Non-CEP Total (Lunch + Breakfast)			**$54,247**

Difference (CEP – Non-CEP)	**–$6,052**

CEP participation results in $6,052 less reimbursement for March compared to Non-CEP.

Potential State and Federal Legislative Changes

2014 - 2023

- ISP Threshold 40%
- Original Requirement

Sept 2023 - Present

- ISP Threshold 25%
- Final rule effective SY23-24 and ongoing

Federal proposal to raise ISP to 60% is under consideration — no updates yet.

Key Legislative Proposals (State Level)

•**Bill #6229** – *An Act Concerning a Reduction of Single-Use Plastics and Polystyrene Waste*
Focuses on reducing plastic and polystyrene use in schools and public institutions.

•**Bill #6238** – *An Act Concerning Food Waste Management and Composting in Public Schools*
Aims to implement composting programs and improve food waste handling.

Summer School/Camps 2025

Location: FHS
High School Summer School
June 23-July 18 (4 days/week)
9:00 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. (Lunch: 12:00-12:30 p.m.)
Program Director: Adam Diskin
$25.00 Registration Per Course (Up to 2 Courses)

Location: Groton Middle School
Middle School Summer STEAM Camp
June 16-July 27 (4 days/week)
9:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.
Program Director: TBD
$25.00 Registration

Location: Charles Barnum
STEM Camp
July 7-10, 2025
Program Director: Ben Moon & Christy Post
9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
$25.00 - Non-refundable registration fee

Location: Catherine Kolnaski
Robotics and Drone Racing Mini Camp
Grades 4 and 5
June 23-26th
9:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.
Program Director: Ben Moon
$50.00 Registration

Location: Northeast Academy
Discover Camp (Ages: 5-12)
June 23- August 8 (5 days/week)
8:00 a.m. -3:00 p.m.
Directors: Asya Kerr (860-912-7923) and Jackson Buffmack (860-961-6521)

Location: Catherine Kolnaski
GPS Treehouse
June 23 - Aug. 15
Hours: 7-5:30
Program Director: Jeff Nichols

Thames River Magnet School
City of Groton P&R Camp:
June 23 - Aug.8
8:00am - 3:00pm

Mystic River Magnet School
Town of Groton P&R Camps:
Camp Button
July 7-August 15 (5 days/week)- Age 5-14
11:45 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Program Directors: Erin Challinor (860-303-8476) and Amanda Moore (860-885-3744)

Locations: Mystic River Magnet and CO Transition Academy
ESY Program
July 7-August 14 (4 days/week)
8:30 a.m.- 11:30 p.m.
Program Director: Abby Gouvin
No Registration Fee