

**GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
JUNE 16, 2025 @ 6:00 P.M.
CENTRAL OFFICE, ROOM 11/HYBRID**

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

ALSO PRESENT: Susan Austin, Anne Marie Mancini, Clint Kennedy, Sam Kilpatrick

- I. CALL TO ORDER – Mrs. Beverly Washington – Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:07 p.m.
- II. REVIEW OF May 19, 2025, MEETING MINUTES – The minutes were approved.
- III. REVIEW of June 9, 2025, MEETING MINUTES – The minutes were approved with the correction of Dean Antipas as being in attendance.
- III. STRATEGIC PLAN – THE FIVE PILLARS OF PROGRESS – (Attachment #1)

Superintendent Austin noted that she, Anne Marie Mancini, and Beverly Washington participated with the committee on the Strategic Plan. Anne Marie Mancini gave an overview of the Strategic Plan.

- IV. DISCUSSION RE: PROPOSED PARK/OPEN SPACE BEHIND THE FORMER MARY MORRISSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL (attachment #2)

Superintendent Austin and Sam Kilpatrick gave an overview of the request from John Burt regarding the concept of establishing a public park/open space in the field located behind the former Mary Morrisson Elementary School.

The Board reached a consensus of the Board on requesting a topographical map of the open space behind the former Mary Morrisson Elementary School. YES – 9; NO – 0; ABSTAINED – 0

The Board to a consensus of when they should discuss this request:

- At another COW – YES – 2
- Talk with the Town – YES -1
- Slowing down and getting public input – YES – 3
- Discuss a written agreement – YES - 1

- V. REVIEW REFERRAL TRACKING SHEET

REMOVE:

- R2024-3 Discussion re: archiving all historical Board meetings back to the 2026-27 school year to the GPS YouTube channel (IT)
- R2024-11 Full review of the state testing data and state report card (AJ)

MOVE TO CURRICULUM:

- R2024-12 Discussion re: the foreign language survey from two years ago and what we currently offer (AJ)

V. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ackerman, Whitney:

To adjourn at 8:24 p.m.

PASSED UNANIMOUSLY



GPS STRATEGIC PLAN: THE FIVE PILLARS OF PROGRESS
PRESENTATION TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
JUNE 16, 2025



PRESENTATION OBJECTIVES

1. Share the (nearly) finalized 5-year strategic plan, “The Five Pillars of Progress”
2. Build shared understanding and ownership
3. Outline a path for implementation

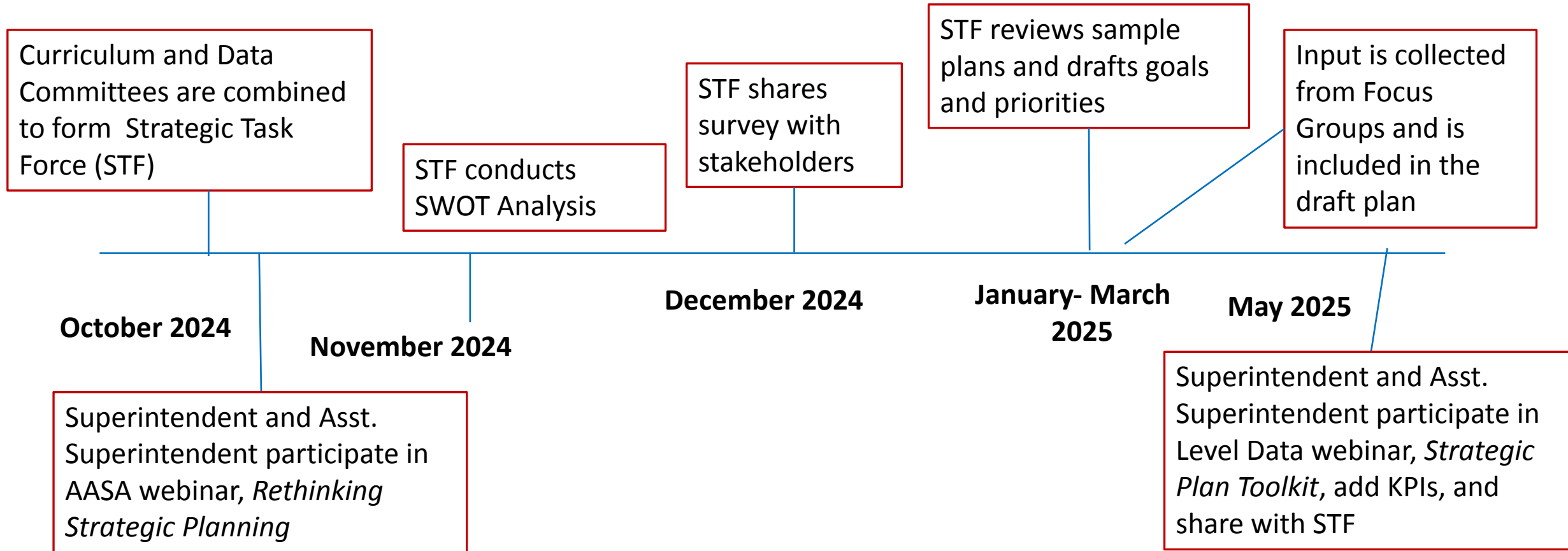
PURPOSE AND CONTEXT

- **Purpose:** To develop a strategic plan that will guide the district's overall direction and outline key goals, priorities, and action steps that will result in improved student outcomes
- **Context:** Current five-year strategic plan was developed in 2017 and was extended due to COVID

RATIONALE

Research conducted by Marzano & Waters (2006) indicates that the highest performing school districts demonstrate eight hallmarks, with the #1 being a shared vision and goals.

PROCESS OVERVIEW: TIMELINE



SWOT Analysis

STF used the SWOT Analysis as a tool for analyzing GPS' existing Strategic Plan (2017-2025).

Survey

A survey captured the opinions and attitudes from the GPS community.

Focus Groups

Focus groups allowed staff and students to provide additional insights in an interactive discussion format.

DATA COLLECTION

SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

Student Diversity
Staff Quality
Military Connection
Diversity of Programming
Technology Integration
Extracurricular Activities
School Choice
SBHCs in Schools

WEAKNESSES

Staff Diversity
MTSS Programming and Staffing
Space Concerns in New Buildings
Support for ELs/MLs
Transient Student Population
Building Community in Large Schools

SWOT ANALYSIS

OPPORTUNITIES

Increase Opportunities for Dual Enrollment

Enhance Career Pathways

Increase Mental Health Supports

Expand Community Connections

THREATS

District Funding

Federal and State Mandates

Mental Health

Attendance

Family Engagement

Scheduling Constraints

Transportation Costs

Staffing Reductions

SURVEY RESULTS

Q: My relationship to Groton Public Schools is as a ...

Parent/Guardian	69.4%	(n=237)
Faculty Member	39.2%	(n=213)
Community Member	6.8%	(n= 39)
BOE Member	0.5%	(n= 3)

SURVEY RESULTS

Q: I have been involved with Groton Public Schools for ...

0-1 Years	10.8%
1-4 Years	30.3%
5-7 Years	11.0%
7+ Years	47.9%

SURVEY RESULTS

Q: How satisfied are you with GPS' educational programs?

(Very Dissatisfied → Very Satisfied)

Very Dissatisfied	1.4%	(n= 8)
Dissatisfied	6.6%	(n= 37)
Neutral	19.9%	(n=111)
Satisfied	42.9%	(n=240)
Very Satisfied	29.2%	(n=163)

SURVEY RESULTS

Q: What do you believe should be a top priority for GPS?

High Quality Instruction	54.8%	(n= 308)
Safe and Supportive Environment	51.4%	(n= 289)
Mental Health and Wellness	46.4%	(n= 261)
Literacy and Numeracy Skills	41.8%	(n= 235)
Family Engagement	31.3%	(n=176)
College and Career Readiness	30.6%	(n=172)
Support for Special Populations	27.4%	(n=154)

SURVEY RESULTS

Q: What do you believe should be a top priority for GPS?

Allocation of Resources	24.9%	(n=140)
Educator Development	23.1%	(n= 130)
Partners with Business and Industry	20.5%	(n= 115)
Character Education	19.6%	(n=110)
Technology Integration	18.9%	(n= 106)
Cultural Responsiveness	18.0%	(n=101)

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

- What are the top priorities for our district?
- What skills and dispositions do our students need when they graduate?
- What actions need to be taken to achieve our identified goals?

FOCUS GROUP FEEDBACK

STAFF FOCUS GROUPS

Academics: Literacy

MTSS: Differentiated Interventions

- ❑ ELs/MLs: increase in population--> increase in needs/supports
- ❑ SEL: Mental health of students and colleagues, embedding standards into regular instruction, online resource hub

STUDENT FOCUS GROUPS

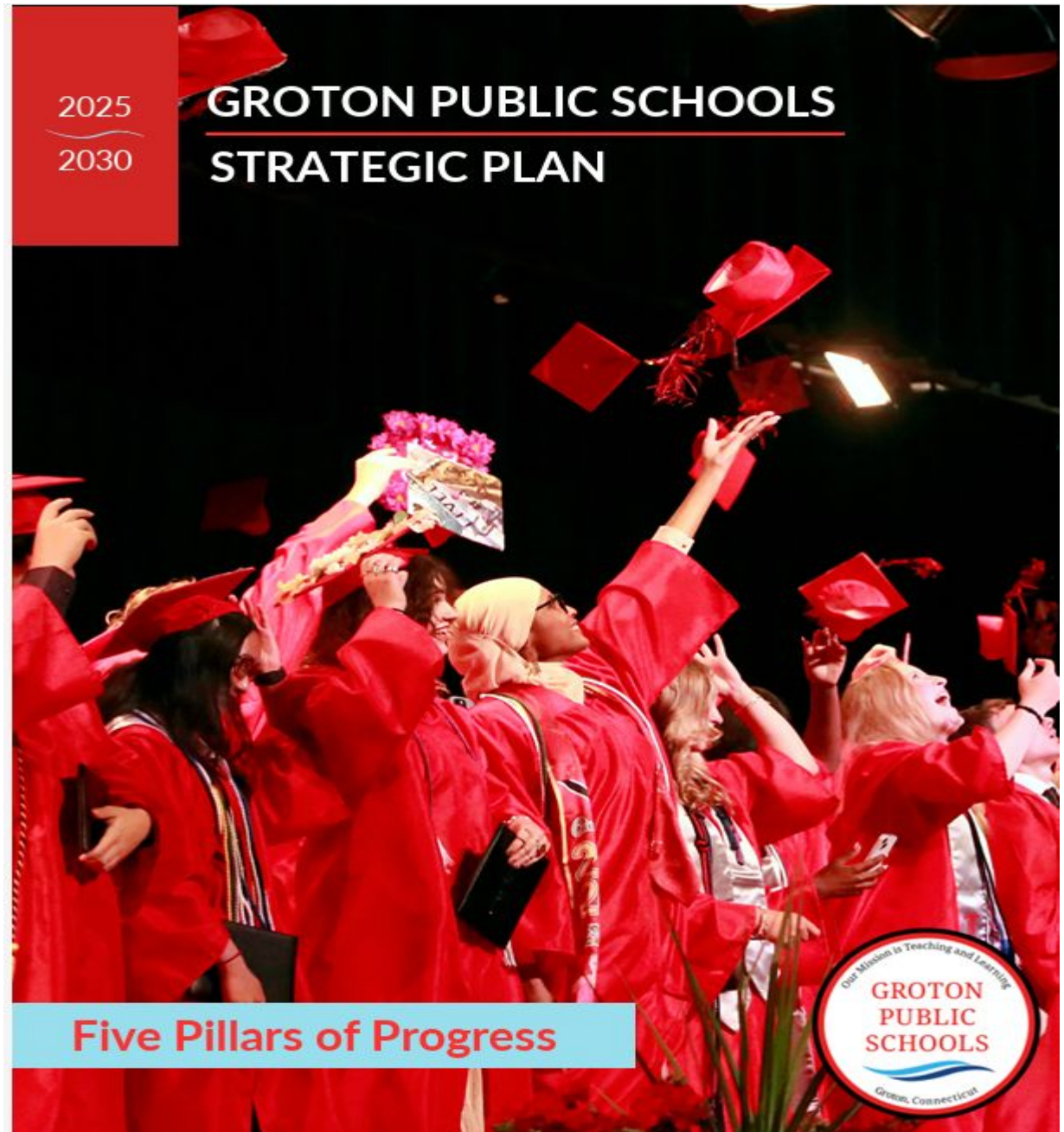
Career Pathways: Increase communication and expand offerings

Staff: Connectedness to students

Academics:

- ❑ Student-to-student communication and experiences
- ❑ Offerings (e.g., World Language, Business Management)
- ❑ Interactive, student-centered lessons

**GPS Strategic
Plan:
The Five Pillars
of Progress
(2025-2030)**



MOST COMMON GOALS (n= 100)

1. Academic Achievement
2. Post-Secondary Readiness
3. Individual and Collective Wellbeing
4. Skilled and Supportive Workforce
5. Community Engagement and Support
6. Operational Excellence and Fiscal Responsibility

THE FIVE PILLARS and KPIs

THE FIVE PILLARS

1. Accelerate Academic Achievement
2. Cultivate a Rich and Vibrant Learning Community
3. Attract and Grow a Skilled and Supportive Workforce
4. Strengthen Pathways that Promote Post-Secondary Readiness
5. Improve Operational Systems and Increase Fiscal Responsibility

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

1. DPI and Indicators for ELA, Math and Science
2. ADA, Chronic Absenteeism, and Staff Attendance AND Incidents of ISS and OSS
3. % of students On Track, % of Students Taking College Courses, Post-Secondary Entrance, 4-Year Graduation Rate
4. % of Students Who Can Identify a Trusted Adult, % of Staff Reporting PD is Connected to Position, % of Caregivers Who Believe there are Opportunities for Involvement



NEXT STEPS

NEXT STEPS

CO LEADERSHIP TEAM

- Identify member ownership for each pillar
- Develop an action plan for each of the priorities identified in the Five Pillars

SCHOOL TEAMS

- Develop school improvement plan using the Five Pillars of Progress by creating an action plan for each one of the priority areas for the Five Pillars

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN: TEMPLATE

PILLAR #1: ACCELERATE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT			
District Priorities	School Action Steps (In Process/Completed Work)	Mid-Year Report (In Process/Completed Work)	EOY Report (In Process/Completed Work)
- Ensure a comprehensive, standards-aligned curricula for all students, PreK-Grade 12 - Provide engaging, student-centered instruction that promotes active learning and meaningful connections - Use district, school, and classroom assessment data to make informed decisions about instruction and improve student outcomes - Ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities, including differentiated interventions and multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) Mid-Year Report EOY Report			

Questions and Feedback



MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Education for the Groton Public Schools
FROM: John Burt, Town Manager / Groton Town Council
DATE: June 11, 2025
SUBJECT: Request for Conceptual Concurrence – Proposed Park/Open Space behind the Former Mary Morrison Elementary

Dear Madam Superintendent and the Board of Education,

I am writing to request the Board of Education's concurrence on the concept of establishing a public park/open space in the field located behind the former Mary Morrison Elementary School.

The Town has previously identified a deficit of open space in District 4, which encompasses the northwest portion of Town. A recently completed study for District 4 highlighted a particular need for small pocket parks, multi-use walking trails and paths to improve connectivity, and a dedicated dog park.

To help address this gap, the Town is exploring the possibility of utilizing the open field (see Attachment 1) behind the former Mary Morrison Elementary School as a community park. We are currently collaborating with management at Balfour Beatty on the potential for public parking and access via Locust Circle, which already features a path connecting to the field.

As part of the planning process, the Town will undertake a public input effort to determine the most appropriate and desired uses for the space. Possible uses may include, but are not limited to: Maintaining open space for passive recreation, creating a sports field, establishing a community event space, developing a playground, building a dog park, or a combination of these elements, as well as other ideas that emerge through community engagement.

At this time, I am requesting the Board's concurrence with the general concept of using this location for a Town park/open space. Should there be support, we would return at a later date to request formal approval as planning progresses.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please let me know if there are any questions or additional information needed.

Respectfully,



John Burt

Attachment 1
Location Map

