

**GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING
OCTOBER 20, 2025 @6:00 P.M.
CENTRAL OFFICE, ROOM 11/HYBRID**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Beverly Washington – Chairperson, Adrian Johnson – Vice Chairperson, Andrea Ackerman (remote), Jay Weitlauf (remote/arrived at 6:20 p.m.), Jennifer White, Michael Whitney (remote)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dean Antipas, Sean Corcoran, Ian Thomas

ALSO PRESENT: Susan Austin, Anne Marie Mancini, Lauren Casini (remote)

I. CALL TO ORDER – Mrs. Beverly Washington – Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

II. Review of the October 14, 2025, MEETING MINUTES

The Board reviewed the minutes and notated the following correction:

- Item IV – add the Board is waiting for staff input on the 2026-2027 calendar.

III. Presentation of IB Personal and Professional Skills Course Revision (Attachment #1)

Anne Marie Mancini and Christopher Morth gave an overview of the IB Personal and Professional Skills Course Revision.

MOTION: Whitney, Ackerman: To approve the IB Personal and Professional Skills course.
PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY

IV. TRMS & MRMS Data Review and School Improvement Plans (Attachments #2)

Principals Steven Wheeler (MRMS) and Jamie Giordano (TRMS) gave an overview of their respective Data Review and School Improvement plans.

V. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ackerman, Weitlauf: To adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.
PASSED – UNANIMOUSLY



Groton Public Schools Request for Curriculum Modification

This information should be submitted to the Assistant Superintendent by September or October of each year so that it may be included for budgetary consideration and Board of Education approval, if required. Changes which do not create a significant financial impact may be processed and approved more quickly.

School submitting request:

Fitch High School

Department submitting request:

IB Career-related Programme

Staff submitting request:

Chris Morth and Jen Holberton

Anticipated date to begin proposed change:

Fall 2026

Check below:

- Major Modifications to existing curriculum
- New course

Indicate the Length, Credit, Grade Level(s), and Level

- 1.5 Years** Length (e.g. Half-Year, Full-Year)
- 1.5** Credit (e.g., 0.5, 1.0)
- 11 and 12** Grade Level (9-12)
- AP/IB** Level (College Prep, Honors, AP/IB)



Please respond to the following questions on this document. Be as thorough as possible.

1. Please provide the title and a brief description of the course.

IB Personal and Professional Skills

“The personal and professional skills (PPS) course is designed for students to develop a range of skills that can be applied in a variety of contexts to support their personal and professional growth both now and in the future. The course helps learners to develop not only as individuals but also as citizens within local and global communities and prepares students for their future pathways of higher education, further training or employment.

Through the development of intrapersonal and interpersonal skills, critical and ethical thinking, and intercultural understanding, the course supports student learning in the other core components and elements of the CP and prepares students for future pathways toward higher education, further training, or employment as well as for their personal lives.

The PPS is a compulsory component of the CP. It is a timetabled course of a minimum of 100 hours and is completed throughout the two years of the CP.”

- **From IBO Career-related Programme Core Brief**

Our version of the course will also integrate the other three elements of the IB Career-related Programme Core: Language and Cultural Studies, Community Engagement, as well as the Reflective Project.

We also plan to apply for UConn ECE credit with the course. Jen Holberton has a degree in Communications and her Oral Communications II course is already a UConn class. We believe our updated PPS course will be aligned with the UConn COMM 1000 course and would be a natural fit and another opportunity for our students to earn ECE credit.

2. Please include a list of some of the topics that students will learn about during this course.

Intrapersonal skills (self-awareness, emotional intelligence, adaptability, resilience)

Interpersonal and communication skills (collaboration, teamwork, leadership, negotiation)

Thinking skills (critical, creative, ethical, and reflective thinking)

Intercultural understanding (respect for diversity, global citizenship, empathy)

Ethical awareness (responsibility, integrity, and ethical decision-making)



How **language and culture shape identity and perspective**

The concepts of **communication, power, identity, and perspective**

The role of **multilingualism and intercultural understanding** in local and global contexts

Setting **personal learning goals** related to language and cultural engagement

Understanding **community systems** — personal, relational, and structural

Applying **dialogue, reciprocity, reflection, and reflexivity** in community contexts

Building relationships and **collaborating with others** for shared well-being

Developing **ethical and contextually responsive engagement**

Investigating **ethical dilemmas** in their chosen career-related area

Conducting **research, analysis, and synthesis**

Reflecting on their learning and personal viewpoints

Communicating findings effectively in diverse formats (written, oral, visual)

3. Please provide a rationale for this addition or change/revision. To what degree is the course consistent with the existing curricula and philosophy of the district or with one of GPS's existing pathways? If it is a "stand alone," explain why.

The PPS course is a compulsory part of the IB Career-related Programme and if we are going to offer the IB Career-related Programme to our students, we need to have the class in place. Our current course outline is outdated and doesn't fully integrate the other updated aspects of the IB CP Core (Language and Cultural Studies, Community Engagement, and the Reflective Project). If this program is going to succeed at Fitch High School, we need a course that gives students the time and support they'll need to make the most of their IB CP experience.

4. What data supports the need for the proposed change?

All four aspects of the IB CP Core were recently updated and our curriculum needs to reflect that. Additionally, having the course be 1.5 credits will bring it in line with our IB DP Theory of Knowledge course, allowing it to cover all aspects of the IB CP Core.

5. How many students do you anticipate enrolling in this course, and how will you generate this enrollment?

There are roughly 15 students enrolled for this upcoming year as juniors who will need the second half of the course again as seniors. The hope is that next year's junior class will be even larger as we build momentum.



6. What other course(s), if any, might find enrollment affected as a result of the proposed action?

By moving from 1.0 to 1.5 credits, students would be taking PPS in place of a 0.5 credit elective. Based on informal conversations with this year's students, this would not be a meaningful obstacle for any of them.

7. What kind of in-service or training will be needed to support staff who teach this course?

The PPS teacher(s) and IB CP Coordinator will need to receive training in aspects of the CP Core to continually enhance the experience for our students.

8. How will the effectiveness of the proposed change be measured?

Student feedback and enrollment numbers will tell the story. Creating a meaningful experience for students that helps them down the road in their college and career lives after high school is the goal.

9. What will be the timeline for the proposed project?

Updated curriculum will be written this winter and fully implemented in the fall of 2026.

10. Please outline the budget implications in terms of FTEs, instructional materials, teacher training, and equipment for a 3-year period.

Assuming a yearly cohort of 15-25 students, PPS would take up 1.5 credits in a teacher schedule. Instructional materials should be relatively limited outside of some teacher support books. Training in the various aspects of the CP Core would take place over time and be part of the IB training budget.



**TRMS/MRMS Data Review
&
School Improvement Plan**

October 20, 2025

GPS Strategic Plan Pillars

1



Accelerate Academic Achievement



2



Cultivate a Rich and Vibrant Learning Community



3

Strengthen Pathways that Develop Post Secondary Readiness



4

Attract and Grow A Skilled and Supported Workforce



5

Improve Operational Efforts and Increase Fiscal Responsibility



Key Performance Indicators

Academics	Attendance	Behavior	College and Career Readiness	Communications & Climate
<u>Accountability Index</u>	<u>Average Daily Attendance</u>	<u># of Incidents of In-School Suspensions</u>	<u>% On-track for Graduation</u>	<u>% of K-5 Students Who Can Identify a Trusted Adult</u>
<u>DPI- ELA</u>	<u>% of Students Chronically Absent</u>	<u># of Incidents of Out of School Suspensions</u>	<u>% Taking CCR Courses</u>	<u>% of 6-12 Students Who Can Identify a Trusted Adult</u>
<u>DPI- Math</u>	<u>Average # of Staff Absences</u>		<u>Postsecondary Entrance</u>	<u>% of Staff Reporting PD is Connected to Position</u>
<u>DPI- Science</u>			<u>4-Year Graduation Rate</u>	<u>% of Parents Who Believe there are Opportunities for Caregiver Involvement</u>

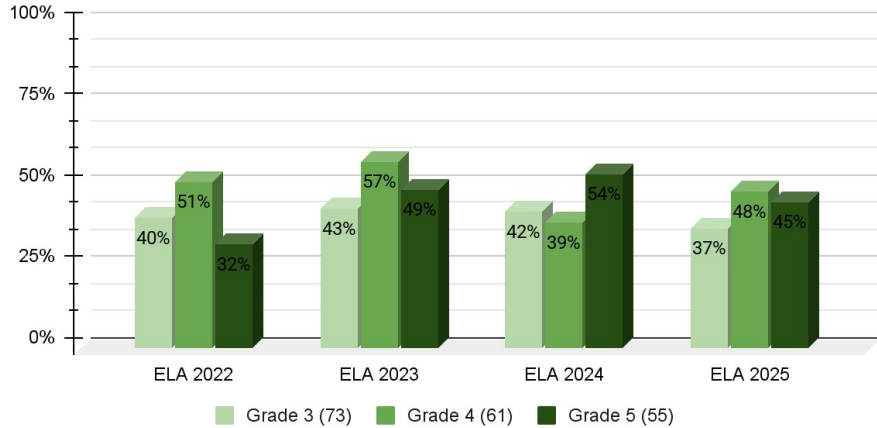
Mystic River Magnet School: Who We Are...

School Enrollment	509 (P3-5)
Special Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● District-wide Preschool- 3 Classrooms (AM/PM classes)● District-wide Pre-Kindergarten- 1 Classroom (Full Day)● District-wide Autism Program- 5 classrooms (Including 1 Preschool Autism Classroom)
Student Makeup	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 41% Free/Reduced Eligible● 28% Special Education● 7% Limited English Proficiency
Chronic Absenteeism Trend	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 2023- 22.6%● 2024- 17.2%● 2025- 19.7%
Theme/Theme Related Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Play and Ingenuity● Friday enrichment blocks● Friday student electives- Play Block

Accelerate Academic Achievement

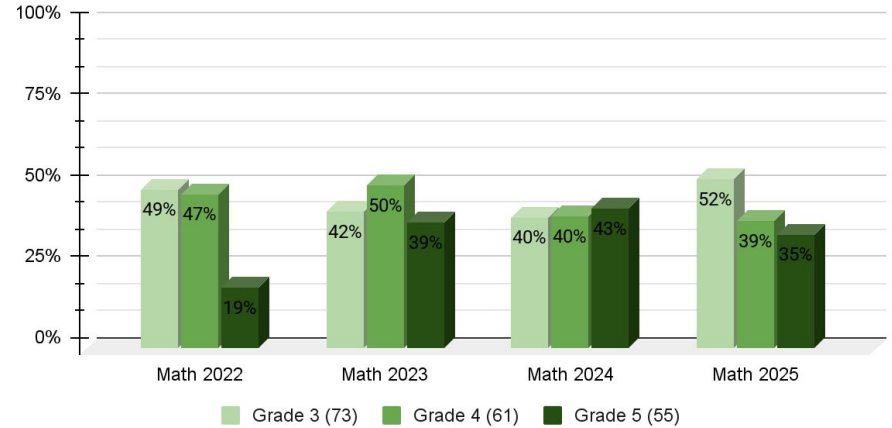
Mystic River SBAC Over Time

Students At or Above Benchmark



Mystic River SBAC Over Time

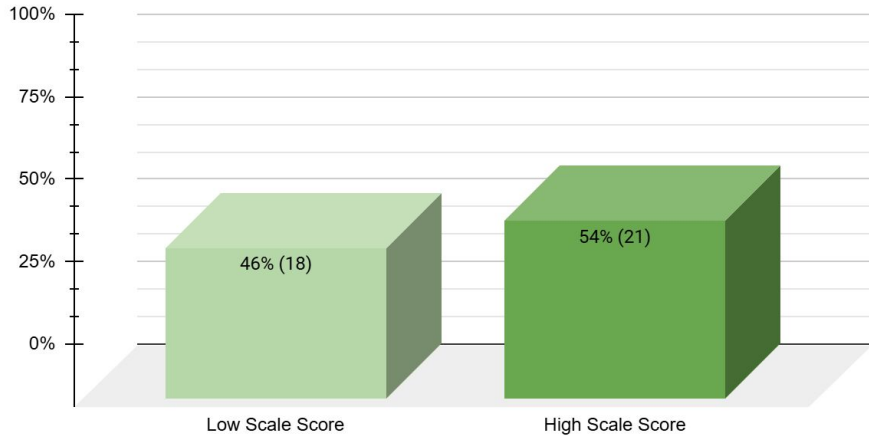
Students At or Above Benchmark



Accelerate Academic Achievement

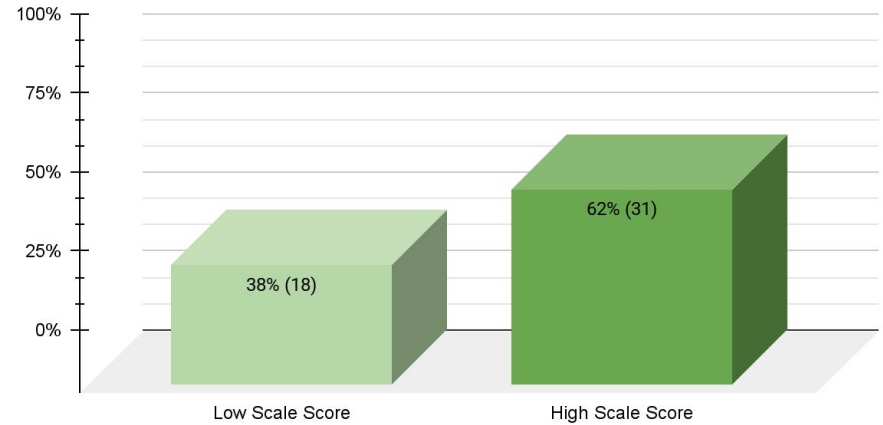
Mystic River ELA Performance

Students Approaching Benchmark (39)

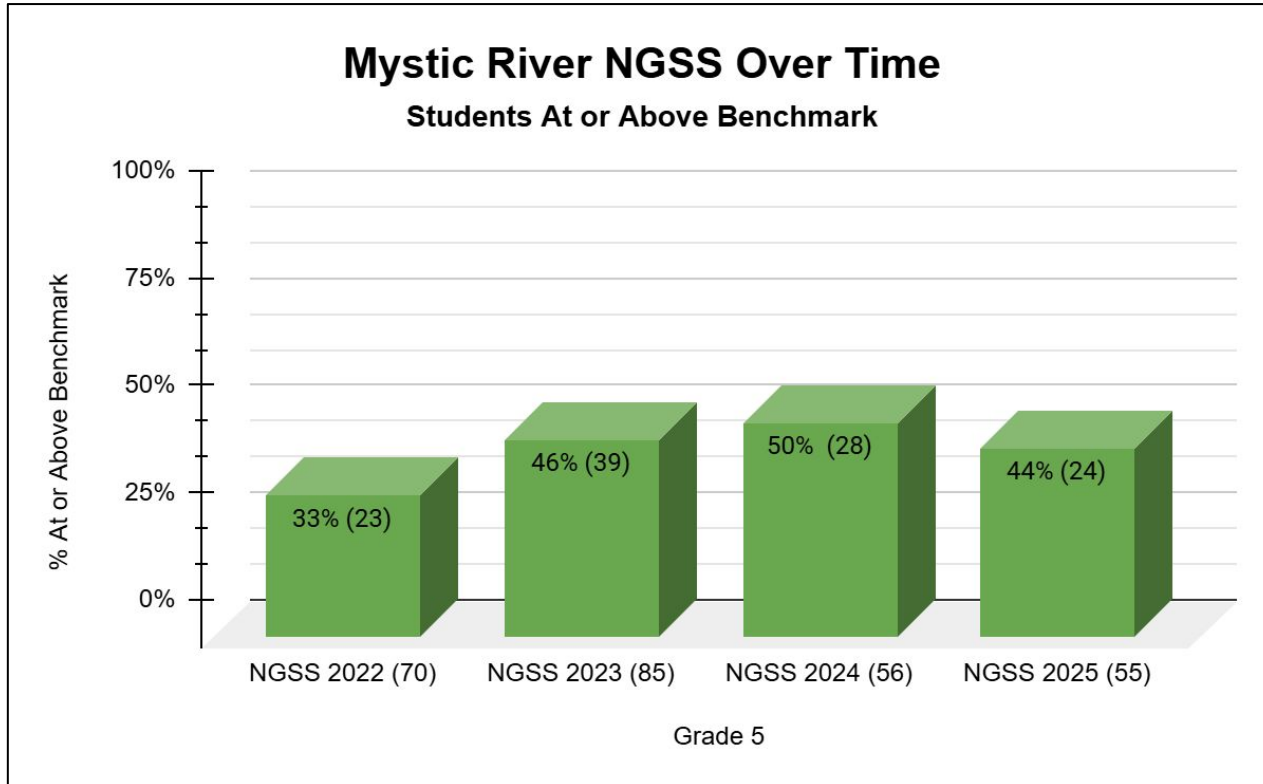


Mystic River Math Performance

Students Approaching Benchmark (49)



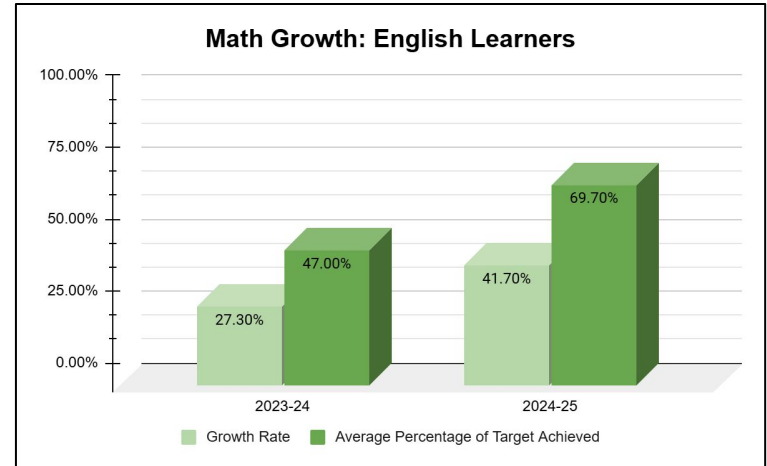
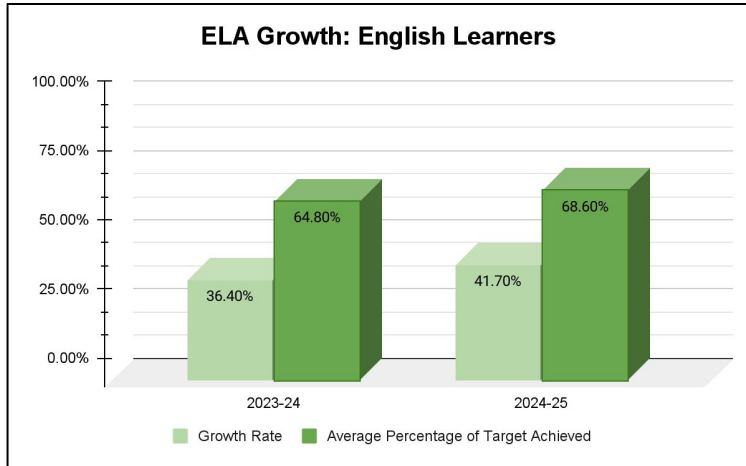
Accelerate Academic Achievement



Accelerate Academic Achievement

2024-2025 Action Step Focus: Ensuring consistent interventions in both EL services and remedial reading along with Tier 1 instruction. Progress monitoring and growth target focus. (Math and Reading)

Outcome:



Accelerate Academic Achievement

2024-2025 Action Step Focus: Ensuring consistent interventions in both EL services and remedial reading along with Tier 1 instruction. Progress monitoring and growth target focus. (Math and Reading)

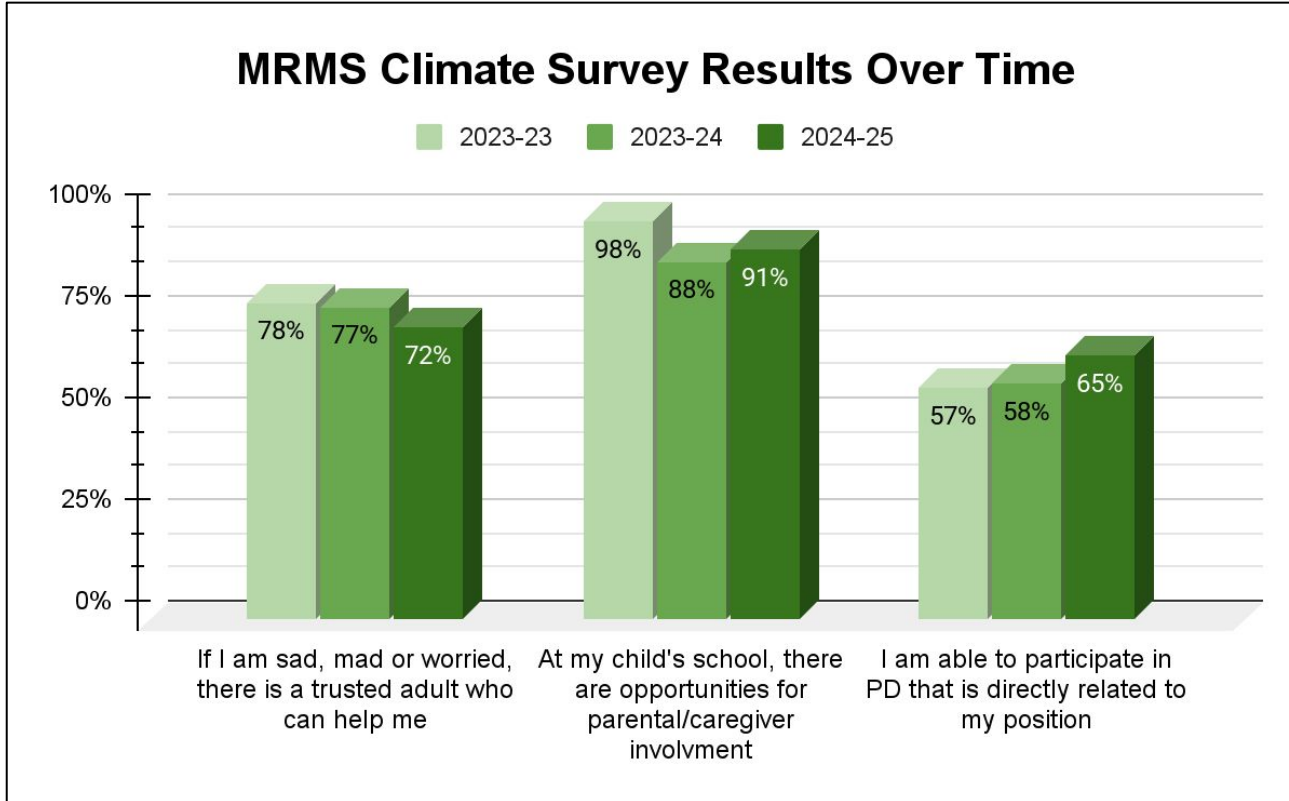
Outcome:

- ❖ Grade 3 – exceeding the district average in math. (53%)
- ❖ 69% of grade 4 targeted students in math exceeded growth target objectives and 39% increased in one full band to level 3 proficiency.
- ❖ In ELA, Grade 5 proficiency increased from 38% to 45% while grade 4 grew from 41% to 48%.
- ❖ In ELA targeted students – Grade 5- 71% achieved or exceeded growth target- Grade 4- 75% achieved/exceeded or made significant progress toward their growth targets.

Accelerate Academic Achievement

District Priorities	School Action Steps
<p>Ensure a comprehensive, standards-aligned curricula for all students, PreK-Grade 12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Utilize I-Ready diagnostic testing to inform small group instruction. Target students that are approaching benchmark/proficiency. ● Implement WIN block for ELA- Wit and Wisdom-target small group instruction for students approaching benchmark/proficiency - ELA
<p>Provide engaging, student-centered instruction that promotes active learning and meaningful connections</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ELA-WIN block, small group instruction focus- target fluency, comprehension. ● Math intervention will be push-in with math specialists/math tutor. Small group instruction will offer differentiation of targeted skills. (intervention and enrichment)
<p>Use district, school, and classroom assessment data to make informed decisions about instruction and improve student outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Math groupings in grades 3-5 based upon unit testing, I-Ready diagnostic assessments, IAB, and teacher recommendations. ● ELA small group instruction, intervention, and enrichment will utilize Dibels, IAB, phonics, and unit assessments to inform instruction and monitor progress
<p>Ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities, including differentiated interventions and multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● ELA and Math- Level 2 students (grades 3-5) targeted to ensure intervention in small group instruction. ● Individual Growth Targets will be tracked. ● Student work samples and district data will be used to inform instruction.

Cultivate a Rich & Vibrant Learning Community



Cultivate a Rich & Vibrant Learning Community

District Priorities	School Action Steps
Prioritize the physical and mental well-being of staff and students through supportive programs and initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Building wide, common language- Zones of Regulation. In addition, continue implementation of Second Step Program. ● Monthly community meetings, Super Power focus, spirit days.
Ensure students have at least one trusted adult who cares about them and knows their name, strengths, and story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SEL tutor support- daily check-ins, identifying any needs. Mentoring and building relationships.. Focus on Play Block electives to pair students and staff.
Foster meaningful family and community engagement through accessible, frequent, and welcoming communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partner with PTO- 4-5 family evenings. (Math night, family reading, games night, bingo) ● Literacy How- building in 2 nights to focus on fluency and comprehension for family involvement and support. ● ELA/Math Specialists present at conferences and open house to share resources with families.
Encourage students to use SEL strategies to build healthy identities, manage emotions, build empathy, maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and achieve goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue implementation of LIG super powers, Second Step program, building implementation of Zones of Regulation.
Empower student and educator agency by providing opportunities for voice, leadership, and celebrations of learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Student Senate ● Faculty meetings, building level committees getting input for climate, magnet theme, building data
Increase student and staff engagement by emphasizing the importance of daily attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Conduct weekly attendance meetings. ● Review Tier 1 attendance strategies with all staff. ● Peer mentoring/staff lunch bunches, weekly newsletters ● Direct parent contact

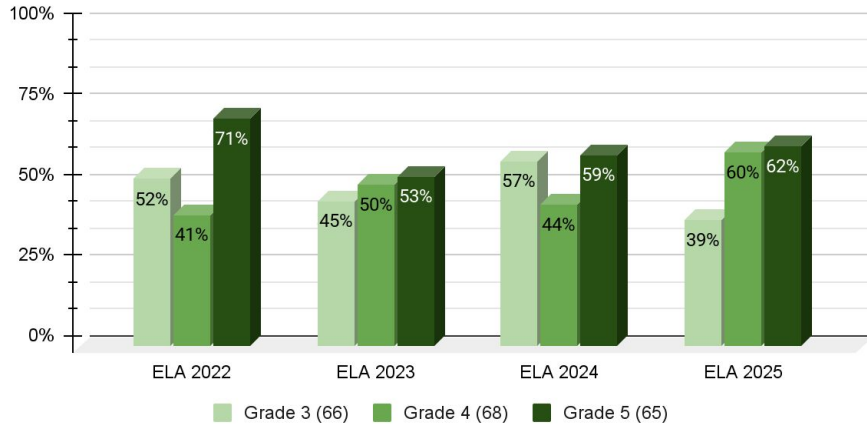
Thames River Magnet School: Who We Are...

School Enrollment	457 (P3-5)
Special Programming	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● District-wide Preschool- 3 Classes (AM/PM)● District-wide Pre Kindergarten/TK- 2 Classes (Full Day)● District-wide Academy Program - 2 Classes (K-1; 2-3)
Student Makeup	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 41% Free/Reduced Eligible● 24% Special Education● 4% Limited English Proficiency
Chronic Absenteeism Trend	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 2023- 19.4%● 2024- 14.3%● 2025-17.9%
Theme/ Theme Related Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Marine - Project O Educators at TRMS Thurs teaching hands-on lessons connecting to Project Based Learning and NGSS Standards● Partner with Mystic Aquarium -In-School Program connected to Science Units● Field Trips and Lab work with Project O leading to an Action Project per grade level● Field Trips and In-class lessons with NESS● Environmental- Recycling, Gardening, Plant Sale, Composting, Trails

Accelerate Academic Achievement

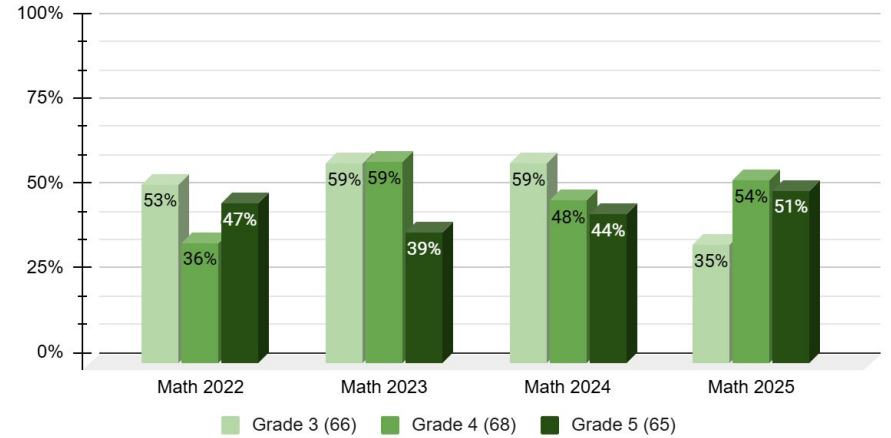
Thames River SBAC Over Time

Students At or Above Benchmark



Thames River SBAC Over Time

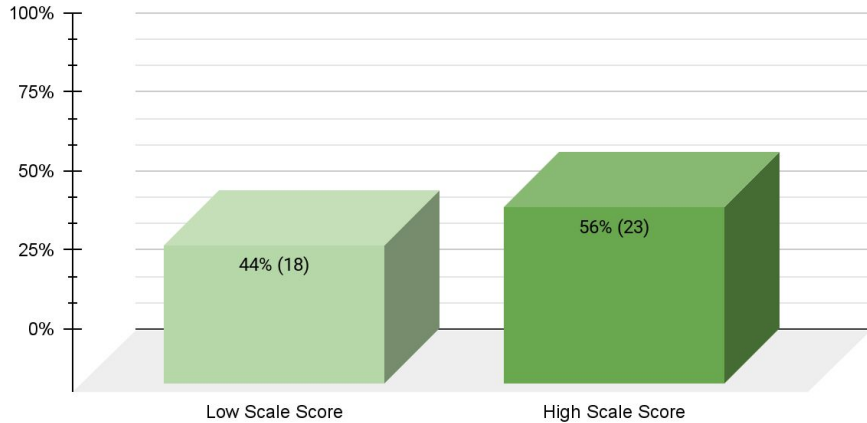
Students At or Above Benchmark



Accelerate Academic Achievement

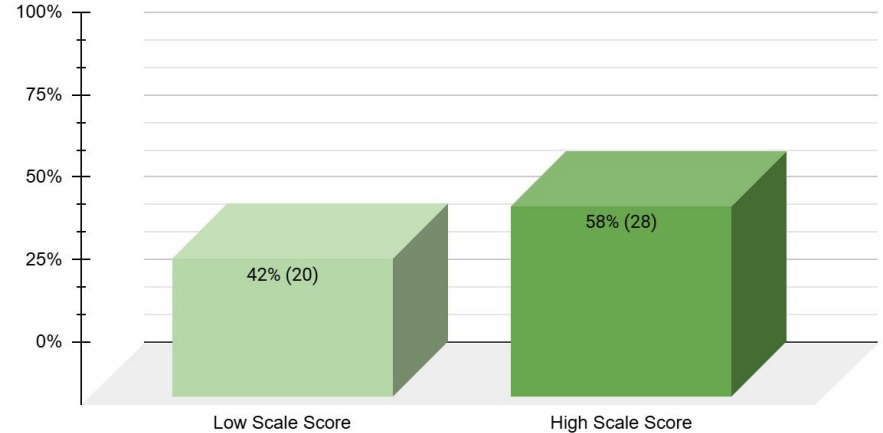
Thames River ELA Performance

Students Approaching Benchmark (41)

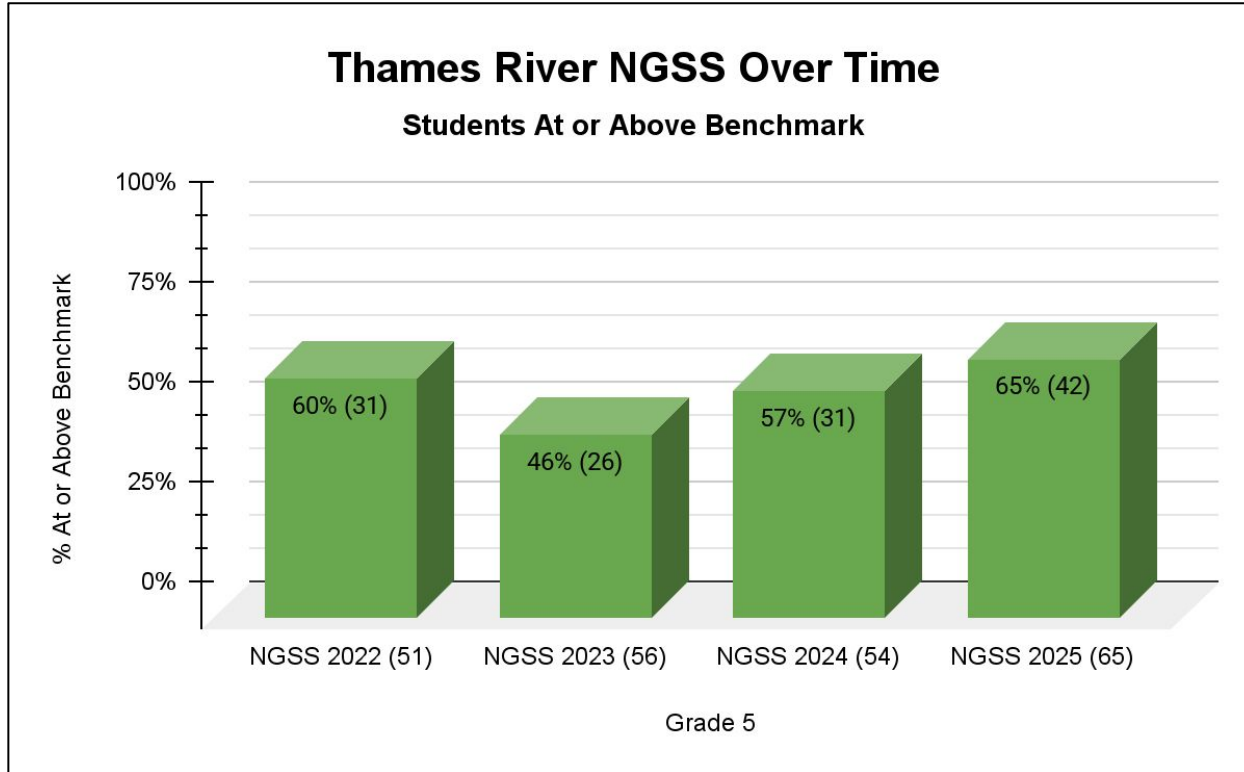


Thames River Math Performance

Students Approaching Benchmark (48)



Accelerate Academic Achievement

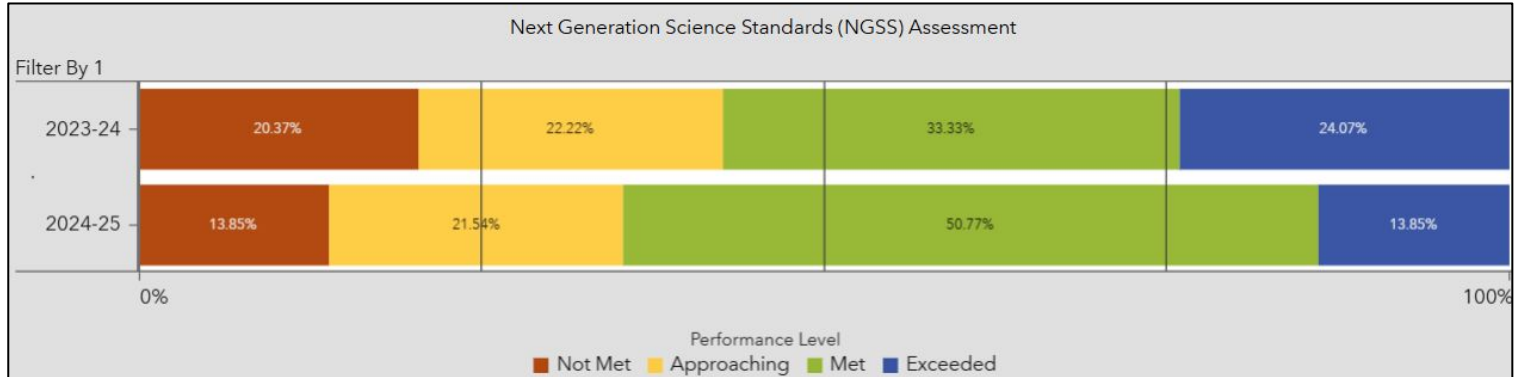


Accelerate Academic Achievement

2024-2025 Action Step Focus: Students will explain and communicate ideas and reasoning through varied representations such as: model, illustration, graphing, measurement, written and verbal forms (*GPS High Quality Science Instruction*). *[2 year focus]*

- Create opportunities for students to discuss their thinking around a science topic to provide students with different perspectives and ideas
- Teachers will use Mystery Science lessons to have students develop models, plan and carry out investigations and/or experiments. Additionally, Project O educators will take a deeper dive to enrich a topic.

Outcome:



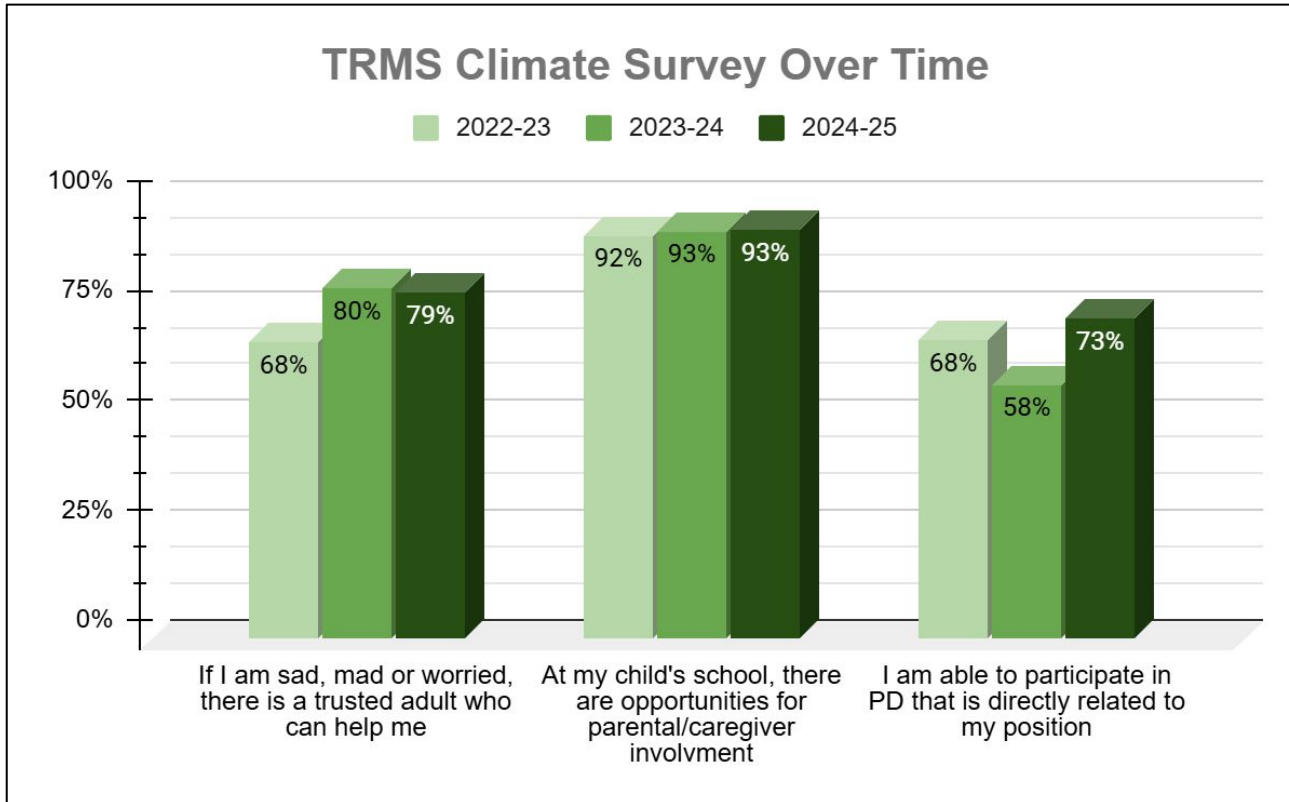
Accelerate Academic Achievement

District Priorities	School Action Steps
<p>Ensure a comprehensive, standards-aligned curricula for all students, PreK-Grade 12</p> <p>Provide engaging, student-centered instruction that promotes active learning and meaningful connections</p> <p>Use district, school, and classroom assessment data to make informed decisions about instruction and improve student outcomes</p> <p>Ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities, including differentiated interventions and multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS)</p>	<p><i>ELA</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increase Listening Comprehension opportunities to support language development and build reading skills -Increase small group support with fluency to build comprehension <p><i>Math</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Implement “Personalized Learning Path” in i-Ready to help accelerate all tiers of learners -Create i-Ready tiered groupings after diagnostic is administered <p><i>ELA and Math</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Ongoing practice with SBAC-style questions throughout the unit and on end of the unit assessments -Review SBAC IAB practice results to determine next steps -Implement school pacing guides and assessment calendar which includes scheduled formative and summative assessments, IABs, MTSS cycle (three cycle or student specific) <p><i>MTSS</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provide explicit tiered interventions K-5 -Meet with each teacher after each MTSS cycle to review students receiving intervention to determine next steps [Math, ELA, SLP, SEL, attendance]

Accelerate Academic Achievement

District Priorities	School Action Steps
<p>Ensure a comprehensive, standards-aligned curricula for all students, PreK-Grade 12</p> <p>Provide engaging, student-centered instruction that promotes active learning and meaningful connections</p> <p>Use district, school, and classroom assessment data to make informed decisions about instruction and improve student outcomes</p> <p>Ensure equitable access to resources and opportunities, including differentiated interventions and multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS)</p>	<p><i>Science</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Have collaborative meetings with Project O, Magnet Coordinator, Director of K-5 STEM & Magnet Programs, and classroom teachers to align science standards with Project O lessons, pacing, review assessment data, and look at student work -Administer Science common district assessments in grades 3, 4, 5; Mystery Science assessments (K-5) to monitor progress, and Science IABs -Continue to increase enrichment opportunities with classes taught by Magnet Coordinator -Continue partnership with Project O, Mystic Aquarium, and NESS to continue hands-on lessons that incorporate NGSS standards -Continue using Mystery Science lessons to have students develop models, plan and carry out investigations and/or experiments

Cultivate a Rich & Vibrant Learning Community



Cultivate a Rich & Vibrant Learning Community

District Priorities	School Action Steps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Prioritize the physical and mental well-being of staff and students through supportive programs and initiatives -Ensure students have at least one trusted adult who cares about them and knows their name, strengths, and story -Foster meaningful family and community engagement through accessible, frequent, and welcoming communication -Encourage students to use SEL strategies to build healthy identities, manage emotions, build empathy, maintain positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and achieve goals -Empower student and educator agency by providing opportunities for voice, leadership, and celebrations of learning -Increase student and staff engagement by emphasizing the importance of daily attendance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increase and continue opportunities for student leadership through the TRMS Peer Leadership Model. Some of the the opportunities are: Safety Patrol, Conservation Crew, Literacy Leaders, Math Mentors, Morning Announcements, A4L (Anchored for Life) -Obtain student input as to how to improve school goals targeting kindness and how to ensure all students have a trusted adult using a survey and focus groups -Teach and review who a trusted adult and when to go to them -Continue to hold and increase school and family events such as: Spirit days/week, Fall Field Day, Earth Day, One Book One School, Back to School Inside and Out Fair with a variety of community partners; TRMS Night (Thames Reading, Math, Science); Plant Sale, Storyteller PJ Night -Use our BELONG statement as monthly focused themes to foster our mission and celebrate it at Whole School Meetings. -Monitor Attendance daily holding weekly meetings to determine next steps, celebrate students and grade levels monthly

Our Roadmap to Success



District
Improvement
Plan



School
Improvement
Plan

Key Performance Indicators and State Data Measure Progress