

**GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
JULY 13, 2026 @ 6:00 P.M.
CENTRAL OFFICE, ROOM 11/HYBRID**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Beverly Washington – Chairperson, Adrian Johnson – Vice Chairperson, Andrea Ackerman (remote), Sean Corcoran (arrived at 6:04 p.m.), Mitch Shinbrot, Ian Thomas (remote), Jennifer White, Michael Whitney (remote)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Jay Weitlauf

ALSO PRESENT: Susan Austin, Anne Marie Mancini, Rita Parciak, Clint Kennedy (remote), Shannon Weigle

I. CALL TO ORDER – Mrs. Beverly Washington, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

II. Superintendent Austin acknowledged the new Principal for Catherine Kolnaski, Dr. Lisa Schultz.

III. Discussion and possible action regarding FY26 budget transfers between functions in the amount of \$894,491

MOTION: Shinbrot, White: To approve the FY26 budget transfers between functions in the amount of \$894,491.

PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY

IV. Discussion and possible action regarding the approval of the T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program

Shannon Weigle gave an overview of T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program.

MOTION: White, Shinbrot: To approve the T-Mobile Hometown Grant Program in the amount of \$50,000.

PASSED – UNANIMOUSLY

V. Discussion and possible action regarding approval of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection Grant - Attachment #1

Dr. Kennedy gave an overview of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection Grant.

MOTION: Johnson, Shinbrot: To approve the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection Grant in the amount of \$191,030.

PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY

VI. Tiered II & III Interventions – Attachment #2

Dr. Mancini gave an overview of the Tiered II & III Interventions.

VII. Discussion re: World Language

Dr. Mancini gave an overview of the world languages offered in the district. Mr. Johnson explained the reason for the referral – the need to determine how many students are signing up for foreign languages. The referral list should indicate that this topic was discussed on July 13, 2026.

Mr. Whitney left at 7:47 p.m.

VIII. Discussion re: Long-term plan for Technology – Attachment #3

Dr. Kennedy gave an overview of the long-term plan for Technology.

IX. Discussion re: AI Advisory Committee – Attachment #4

Dr. Kennedy gave an overview of the AI Advisory Committee.

X. Discussion re: Food Service Program Meal Pricing

Superintendent Austin reported on the information she received for Mr. Koschmieder which included the proposed price increases. She indicated the breakfast will be universal next year. The CEP (Community Eligibility Program schools are CK, TRMS, MRMS and GMS will get free lunch.

XI. End Year Celebrations – Attachment #5

Superintendent Austin gave an overview of the End Year Celebrations.

XII. REVIEW OF REFERRAL TRACKING SHEET

Mr. Johnson made referrals:

- Attendance policy revision – referred to Policy
- Other metrics to measure student success – referred to Curriculum
- World Language – referred to Curriculum

XIII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ackerman, Shinbrot: The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES & PUBLIC PROTECTION
 Division of Emergency Management & Homeland Security
 1111 Country Club Road, 3rd Floor North
 Middletown, CT 06457



NOTICE OF GRANT AWARD

The Department of Emergency Services & Public Protection hereby makes the following grant award in accordance with Section 2002 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Pub. L. No.107-296, as amended) (6 U.S.C. § 603) and in accordance with the grant solicitation and the attached grant application, if applicable.		
Sub-recipient:	Groton Public Schools	
Address:	1300 Flanders Road	
City/State/Zip:	Mystic, CT 06355	
UEI #:	LC62MYHYNMN7	
Federal Employer ID No.:	06-6001619	
DEMHS Grant No.:	23C059B	
Project Title:	Town of Groton Public Schools EDR, Active Directory, and SOC	
Period of Award:	From: 12/01/2023	To: 11/30/2027
Amount Of Award:	Federal Share: \$177,363.00 State Match: \$0.00 Interest: \$0.00	Sub-recipient Match: \$44,341.00 Other: _____ Specify
Total Budget:	\$221,704.00	R&D Award (2CFR200.331) ___ yes ☒ no
Awarding Agency: US Department of Homeland Security Fed Grant No.: EMW-2023-CY-00033-S01 Assistance Listing No.: 97.137		Total Federal Award Amount: \$5,465,875.00 Total Local Passthrough Requirement: \$4,372,700 Award Date: 4/27/2026 Sub-recipient/ Fiscal Year: From: July 1 To: June 30
<i>My signature below, for and on behalf of the above-named sub-recipient, indicates acceptance of the above referenced award and further certifies that:</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ I have the authority to execute this agreement on behalf of the sub-recipient; and ▪ The sub-recipient will comply with the attached General and Special Grant Conditions, and Standard Assurances, Reporting Schedule, and other requirements contained within this Grant Award Package. 		
By:	_____ Signature of Authorized Official	_____ Date
	_____ Typed Name and Title of Authorized Official	

FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES & PUBLIC PROTECTION

By:	_____ Signature of Authorized Official	_____ Date
	_____ DESPP Commissioner or Designee Typed Name and Title of Authorized Official	

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF FUNDING

Through this accord, the Groton Public Schools will use grant funding in the amount of \$177,363.00 from the 2023 State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program for costs related to the sub-recipient's approved budget items in accordance with the State of Connecticut Cybersecurity Strategy and priorities identified by the Chartered Planning Subcommittee of the Connecticut Cybersecurity Committee. This program provides funding to state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) governments to address cybersecurity risks and cybersecurity threats to SLTT-owned or operated information systems.



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City/State/Zip:	Mystic, CT 06355	
UEI #:	LC62MYHYNNMN7	
Federal Employer ID No.:	06-6001619	
DEMHS Grant No.:	23C059C	
Project Title:	Town of Groton Public Schools MFA	
Period of Award:	From: 12/01/2023	To: 11/30/2027
Amount Of Award:	Federal Share: \$13,667.00 State Match: \$0.00 Interest: \$0.00	Sub-recipient Match: \$3,417.00 Other: _____ Specify
Total Budget:	\$17,084.00	R&D Award (2CFR200.331) ☐ yes ☒ no
Awarding Agency: US Department of Homeland Security Fed Grant No.: EMW-2023-CY-00033-S01 Assistance Listing No.: 97.137		Total Federal Award Amount: \$5,465,875.00 Total Local Passthrough Requirement: \$4,372,700 Award Date: 4/27/2026 Sub-recipient/ Fiscal Year: From: <u>July 1</u> To: <u>June 30</u>
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	_____ Typed Name and Title of Authorized Official	

FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY SERVICES & PUBLIC PROTECTION

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**MTSS in Groton Public Schools:
Ensuring Success for Every Student**

July 13, 2026

AGENDA



- About MTSS
 - Essential Elements
 - Three Tiers
 - Strengths of the Process
 - Monitoring MTSS
 - Success for All Learners
 - GPS MTSS Models
 - Q&A
-

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

Defining MTSS

- Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) is a **proactive and preventative framework** that organizes and delivers support to **ALL students**.
- MTSS is not a specific program or curriculum. It's about making sure every child gets what they need to succeed.
 - **A Whole-Child Approach:** Academics + Attendance + Behavior/SEL
 - **A Shift from Reactive to Proactive**
- MTSS is a **general education initiative** that actually serves as a safety net, ensuring only students with true disabilities are referred for Special Education evaluations.

Essential Elements of MTSS

- Student screenings
- Tiers of interventions that can be modified based on student need
- Ongoing data collection and assessment
- District-wide approach to expectations and supports
- Parent involvement

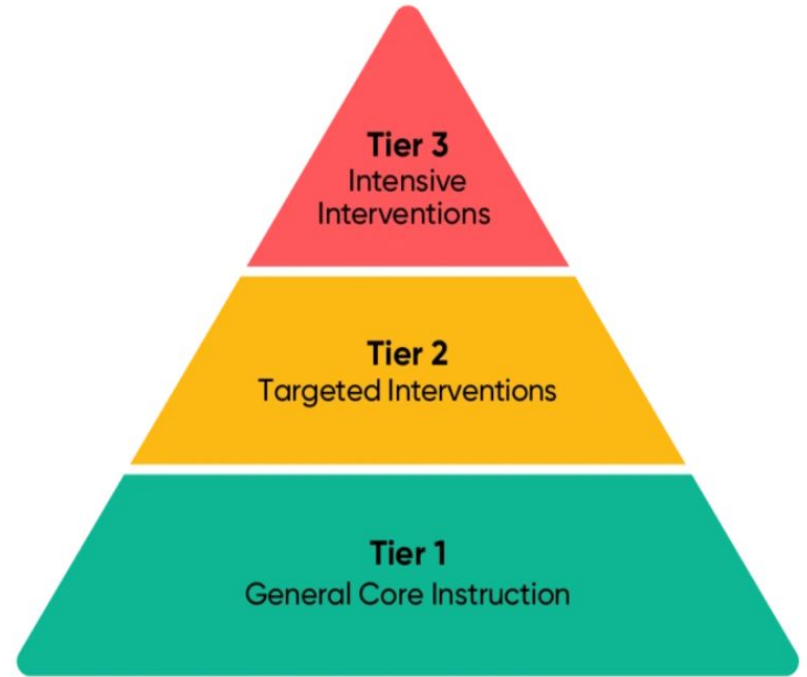
The Three MTSS Tiers

MTSS typically involves **THREE TIERS OF SUPPORT**, each offering a different level of intensity.

TIER 3: (Approx. 1-5%) Intensive support to a small percentage of students who require more individualized and comprehensive interventions.

TIER 2: (Approx. 10-15%) Targeted interventions for students who need more support than what Tier 1 alone provides. These are often delivered in small groups and focus on specific skills.

TIER 1: (All Students) High-quality curriculum and differentiated instruction for all students in the general education classroom.



Strengths of the MTSS Process

- **Early Identification:** Potential learning or behavioral challenges are identified early, allowing for timely support.
- **Tailored Support:** Each child receives interventions that are specifically designed to meet their unique needs.
- **Data-Driven Decisions:** Interventions are based on evidence and data, ensuring they are effective.
- **Prevention, Not Just Reaction:** MTSS aims to prevent problems from becoming larger issues.
- **Collaborative Approach:** Teachers, specialists, and families work together to support every child's success.

Monitoring MTSS

GPS staff monitor our MTSS process by administering assessments and reviewing the data that is collected.

- **Universal Screeners:** Three times a year, we take the "educational temperature" of all students using tools like i-Ready, DIBELS, or a behavioral or SEL screener.
- **Progress Monitoring:** For students in Tier 2 and 3, we frequently check if the intervention is actually working. If it isn't, we change the strategy—we don't wait until the end of the year.
- **Data Teams:** School-based teams meet regularly to look at the numbers and adjust student groupings.

Success for All Learners

MTSS is designed to ...

- **Close Opportunity Gaps:** MTSS ensures that a student's race, socioeconomic status, or language background does not dictate their access to support.
- **Support Acceleration:** MTSS isn't just for remediation. Tiered support also applies to extending and enriching learning for advanced students.

GPS MTSS Model: Attendance

Focus Area/Tier	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Attendance	Design school-wide initiatives, incentives, and communications to support regular student attendance	Develop a Student Success Plan with the family and the student. Include specific interventions as needed (e.g., daily check in with trusted adult)	Conduct one or multiple home visits to identify any student or family needs; provide a list of district and/or community resources (e.g., SBHC)

BOE Attendance Regulation Addendum

GPS MTSS Model: Behavior

Focus Area/Tier	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Behavior (Social and Emotional)	Explicitly teach expectations Deliver one directive at a time Provide positive reinforcement	Hold an informal (individual) meeting with a student Create a Behavior Contract Develop a Check In/Check Out System	Develop and implement a formal Behavior Support Intervention Plan Engage the student in a formal counseling group

Universal Screener: Student Risk Screening Scale (SRSS)

GPS MTSS Model: Literacy

Focus Area/Tier	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Literacy	Wit & Wisdom (K-5) UFLI (K-2) 120-150 min 5 days/week All Students	Push In and/or Pull Out 2-3 days/week 30 minutes (WIN Block) Small Groups (3-6 students)	Push In and/or Pull Out 3-5 days/week 15-30 minutes (WIN Block) Small Groups (1-3 students)

Universal Screener: DIBELS-8

GPS MTSS Model: Math

Focus Area/Tier	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3
Math	<p>Illustrative Math (K-5)</p> <p>60 min 5 days/week</p> <p>All Students</p>	<p>Push In and/or Pull Out (i-Ready <i>Tools for Instruction</i> Lessons)</p> <p>2-3 days/week 30 minutes (WIN Block)</p> <p>Small Groups (3-6 students)</p>	<p>Push In and/or Pull Out (i-Ready <i>Tools for Instruction</i> Lessons)</p> <p>3-5 days/week 15-30 minutes (WIN Block)</p> <p>Small Groups (1-3 students)</p>

Universal Screener: i-Ready Inform

Questions?



Our Roadmap to Success



District
Improvement
Plan



School
Improvement
Plan

Key Performance Indicators and State Data Measure Progress

Memorandum

To: Groton Board of Education

From: Dr. Clint Kennedy, Director of Technology

Date: June 30, 2026

Subject: Long Term Technology Purchasing Timeline (FY 2027–FY 2029)

As part of our ongoing commitment to maintaining a secure, reliable, and innovative technology environment for students and staff, the Technology Department has developed the following three-year purchasing timeline. This plan identifies anticipated major funding sources and purchasing priorities to support infrastructure sustainability, device replacement cycles, cybersecurity, and instructional technology needs.

Technology Purchasing Timeline

FY 2027

Federal Funds / Impact Aid (Expected Aug/Sept 2026)

- Year 1 of 3(or 4) laptop leasing for all certified staff (approx. \$225k)
- Repair parts for purchased certified staff laptops (approx. \$25k)
- Two grade levels of student Chromebooks - GMS and FHS (approx. \$240k)

IT Operating Budget

- N/A

FY 2028

Federal Funds / Impact Aid

- Year 2 of 3(or 4) laptop leasing for all certified staff (approx. \$225k)
- Two grade levels of student Chromebooks - GMS and FHS (approx. \$240k)

IT Operating Budget

- Firewall upgrades needed - end of life approaching (cost depends on future of erate program)

- Cybersecurity additions (see grant opportunity)

FY 2029

Federal Funds / Impact Aid

- Year 3 of 3(or 4) laptop leasing for all certified staff (approx. \$225k)
- Two grade levels of student Chromebooks - GMS and FHS (approx. \$240k)

IT Operating Budget

- Year 1 of "Smart board" replacement cycle

This timeline is intended to provide a high-level planning framework and will be reviewed annually to align with district priorities, available funding sources, and evolving technology needs.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Clint Kennedy

Director of Technology

Groton Public Schools

Possible Discussion Topics

- Student devices
 - Lease versus buy
 - Elementary technology - grade level and type
- Classroom devices
 - "Smart board" replacement
 - FHS PA upgrade (CIP) -> Other Schools
- Generative AI
 - See work of AI Committee
 - Possible budget impact

FCC Votes to Review E-Rate Program

From E-RATE ONLINE <msagnella@erateportal.com>

Date Tue 6/30/2026 1:04 PM

To Clint Kennedy <ckennedy@groton.k12.ct.us>

Warning: Unusual link

This message contains an unusual link, which may lead to a malicious site. Confirm the message is safe before clicking any links.



E-RATE eNEWS

June 2026

FCC Votes to Review E-Rate Program

As you may have seen, the FCC recently released a [Notice of Proposed Rulemaking \(NPRM\)](#) that includes questions regarding the future scope and structure of the E-Rate program.

At this stage, no changes have been adopted, and the NPRM is part of the FCC's process for gathering public input before making any decisions.

While we believe the complete sunseting of the E-Rate program remains highly unlikely, the fact that the FCC is actively seeking comments on the future of the program makes stakeholder engagement critically important.



The future of E-Rate should not be determined without the government hearing directly from the schools, libraries, educators, administrators, and community leaders who rely on it every day!

We'd like to strongly encourage all of our clients to do the following:

- Visit SaveOurERate.com! This site is filled with resources, advocacy materials, and guidance on filing comments and contacting decision-makers.
- Submit comments once the window opens. The FCC is asking whether to end or limit E-Rate funding; make sure they hear what you think! Comments do not need to be lengthy or technical to be effective.
- Share specific stories about how E-Rate has benefited students, educators, library patrons, and your community. Personal stories move the needle when it comes to public support.
- Contact local, state, and federal elected officials to explain why continued E-Rate support matters.
- Encourage colleagues, board members, and community partners to do the same.

The coming weeks represent a critical opportunity for stakeholders to make their voices heard. Policymakers need to understand not only the financial impact of E-Rate, but the educational and community benefits that the program makes possible every day.

Memorandum

To: Superintendent Susan Austin and the Groton Board of Education

From: GPS AI Committee (Dr. Clint Kennedy & Committee Members)

Date: July 1, 2026

Subject: GPS AI Committee Spring 2026 Findings and Strategic Recommendations

As part of the district's ongoing commitment to ensuring the responsible integration of emerging technologies, the GPS AI Committee has completed its Spring 2026 review of stakeholder feedback, current practices, and future implementation considerations related to Generative Artificial Intelligence (gAI). The findings below provide a summary of committee work completed during the 2025-26 school year and identify key priorities moving forward.

Executive Summary

- The committee's guiding philosophy is that effective generative AI integration must be grounded in education, transparency, and responsible use rather than full and immediate adoption, outright bans, surveillance, or punitive controls. Successful implementation depends on methodical review, trust, integrity, and clear expectations for students and staff.
- Four guiding principles emerged as the foundation for district planning:
 - Equitable Access
 - Safety and Age Appropriateness
 - Authentic Learning and Academic Integrity
 - Staff Readiness and Professional Learning

Key Findings

Parents and Community

- Parents generally expressed significant concern regarding student use of generative AI, particularly its potential impact on foundational academic skills, critical thinking, and academic integrity.

- Many parents support strict guardrails and believe direct student interaction with generative AI should be limited, especially at the elementary level.
- Primary concerns included:
 - Cognitive offloading and dependency
 - Student privacy and data security
 - Transparency regarding AI-enabled learning activities
 - Availability of opt-out opportunities for families

Teachers and Certified Staff

- Staff members reported interest in using generative AI to improve productivity and instructional planning while remaining cautious about student-facing applications.
- Educators expressed concern that generative AI may allow students to bypass essential reading, writing, and problem-solving processes.
- Key staff recommendations included:
 - Clear academic integrity expectations
 - Age-appropriate implementation guidance
 - Teacher control over classroom generative AI access
 - Ongoing professional development and hands-on exploration opportunities
 - Thorough review of privacy and environmental impacts prior to full adoption

Paraprofessionals and Tutors

- Support staff reported limited awareness of district generative AI expectations and requested inclusion in future training initiatives.
- Concerns focused on:
 - Student overreliance on technology
 - Development of learned helplessness
 - Appropriate use with students receiving special education services
 - Need for practical implementation guidance and vetted resources
- Respondents emphasized that human relationships and direct instructional support remain essential components of student success.

Strategic Priorities for 2026-27

Professional Learning

- Provide differentiated AI professional development based on staff readiness and role. Provide opportunities for parents whenever possible.
- Expand opportunities for educators to explore approved AI tools through structured "sandbox" experiences.
- Continue districtwide conversations focused on ethical, transparent, and instructional uses of generative AI.

Curriculum and Instruction

- Align generative AI implementation with curriculum goals, instructional practices, and assessment design.
- Promote process-based assessments and student reflection instead of reliance on generative AI detection tools.
- Maintain highly guided experiences in elementary grades while increasing student agency and AI literacy opportunities at the secondary level.

Governance and Compliance

- Continue review of district policies and procedures related to generative AI.
- Ensure all generative AI platforms meet Connecticut student data privacy requirements before classroom implementation.
- Reinforce prohibitions against entering personally identifiable student information into AI systems and maintain parental transparency regarding AI-enabled tools.

Summer/Fall 2026 Next Steps

- Conduct curriculum and assessment alignment reviews.
- Complete formal evaluation of instructional AI platforms, including but not limited to:
 - MagicSchool.ai
 - SchoolAI
 - Brisk Teaching
 - EDUAIDE
- Develop implementation guidance and recommended toolsets for the 2026-27 school year.
- Prepare for the November 2026 district professional development initiative focused on teaching and learning with AI.

This memorandum is intended to provide a high-level summary of committee findings and recommendations. As generative AI technologies continue to evolve, the committee will continue reviewing tools, stakeholder feedback, and emerging best practices to ensure implementation aligns with district values, educational goals, and student needs.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Clint Kennedy

Director of Technology

GPS AI Committee

Groton Public Schools

Possible Discussion Topics

- Academic integrity in an AI-enabled environment
- Age-appropriate student access and expectations
- Parent communication and transparency
- Vendor evaluation and approved AI toolset selection



**Groton Public Schools
End of Year 2026 Celebrations!**

GPS Strategic Plan Pillars

1



**Accelerate
Academic
Achievement**



2



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Vibrant Learning
Community**



3



**Strengthen Pathways
that Develop Post
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A Skilled and
Supported Workforce**



5



**Improve Operational
Efforts and Increase
Fiscal Responsibility**



Hats off to FHS class of 2026 – Falcons RISE!



We are all so proud of you and can't wait to see what you do next!



Promotions to High School
Promotions to GMS
Promotions to K



Work Hard and Be Kind!

- ❖ Throughout the graduation and promotion ceremonies, one message stood above all others: success is not measured solely by grades, awards, or accomplishments. True wisdom is reflected in how we treat one another.
- ❖ The wisest person in the room is often the kindest person in the room.
- ❖ I am proud to see these attributes in our students PK-12.

TEAM WORK Matters - Thank you TEAM Groton!

I am grateful to our students, families, staff, Board of Education members, community partners, and volunteers who work together every day to support student success. Whether in classrooms, on stages, athletic fields, robotics competitions, community service projects, or countless other activities, our students have continued to inspire us with their talents, determination, and resilience.

Groton Proud of our Students' Successes

- We are pleased to share that preliminary results from the recent state assessments indicate positive growth across our district, with improvements in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics, and Science.
- Please note that these initial data points are currently under state embargo.
- We look forward to sharing the comprehensive, finalized results with the Board and the public as soon as they are officially released.
- Targeted attendance improvement initiative has yielded exceptional outcomes this academic year.
- Marking a vital step forward in ensuring consistent student engagement and academic success.

Thank you to our community for your support!

- **Groton Public Schools Receives \$50K T-Mobile Community Grant:** Thank you to T-Mobile and the Hometown Grants program for this incredible investment in Groton and in the young people of our community. This grant will support the establishment of South Eastern Connecticut's first competition-grade robotics and engineering hub, providing students with hands-on STEM learning opportunities aligned with high-demand regional career opportunities here in Groton.





Field of Dreams – Supports a Robotics Field

- D.R.E.A.M. Dept of Robotics, Engineering Architecture and Manufacturing/Machining
- We are grateful to T-Mobile for their generous \$50,000 Hometown Grant and for their partnership in supporting communities like Groton. Their investment helps advance our mission of preparing the next generation of innovators, problem-solvers, and skilled workforce.



Click on above picture to view video

Wishing everyone a safe,
relaxing, and enjoyable summer
filled with opportunities to learn,
explore, and create lasting
memories.



Remember - Falcons RISE, Falcons SOAR, and no matter where life takes you, you can always come home to the Nest.