

**GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
JULY 27, 2026 @ 6:00 P.M.
CENTRAL OFFICE ROOM 11, HYBRID**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Beverly Washington – Chairperson, Adrian Johnson – Vice Chairperson, Andrea Ackerman (remote), Sean Corcoran, Mitch Shinbrot (arrived at 6:05 p.m.), Ian Thomas, Jay Weitlauf (remote), Jennifer White, Michael Whitney (remote)

ALSO PRESENT: Anne Marie Mancini, Denise Doolittle, Sam Kilpatrick, Shannon Weigle

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

A. Pledge of Allegiance – The first order of business was the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

II. RECOGNITION AND PARTICIPATION OF VISITORS AND DELEGATIONS

NONE

III. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

1. Mrs. Marcy Cieplik read a statement she sent to the Superintendent and that she has not received a response, about her son who was in need of special education services that he has not received. (Attachment #1)

2. Mrs. Liz Bumgardner, 583 Shennecossett Road, read a statement regarding her positive experience with special education. (Attachment #2)

IV. RESPONSE TO COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

Mr. Thomas thanked the citizens who spoke.

Mr. Johnson stated that he agrees with the comments made by Mr. Thomas.

V. STUDENT LIAISON REPORT

NONE

VI. SUPERINTENDENT AND ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

A. Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Report

1. Restorative Practice (Attachment #3)

Denise Doolittle and Jennifer Theriault gave an overview of the Restorative Practice.

B. Reports and Information from Staff

1. Director of Facilities – Mr. Kilpatrick reported on the following:
 - a. Solar Carport project noting that the purchase agreement has been signed by Mr. Burt;
 - b. MM – all material from TRMS and MRMS has been delivered;
 - c. On 8/4 the maintenance department will assist with the move of material to MM;
 - d. The Fire Marshal will conduct a review of MM next week;
 - e. Mrs. Weigle has sent a list of items to the Town for auction;
 - f. Machine Shop – 5 machines have been delivered and 2 more will be delivered next week.

Board members noted that it was asked on social media if donations will be accepted. Mrs. Weigle stated that it was her understanding that no donations would be accepted as mentioned on social media.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Policy Committee – There was no report.
2. Curriculum – There was no report.
3. Finance/Facilities – Mrs. White noted that the Finance/Facilities Committee met on July 7, 2026, and received the financial report and the Director of Facilities report, discussed the lunch price increases, grants, and took a tour of MM.
4. Communications – There was no report.
5. LEARN – There was no report.
6. Athletic Fields – There was no report.
7. AGSA/GEA/BOE Liaison – Mrs. Washington reported that the AGSA/GEA/BOE Liaison Committee met in May and discussed ear buds, a cell phone policy written one way and implemented another, student discipline, accountability for parents, Staff morale, lack of information in from registrar to teachers, special education teachers case load and space issues, attendance policy and the need for pouches for cell phones, special education teachers being injured, less emphasis on testing scores, more teeth in the attendance policy, trusting educators, less information on test scores.
8. Library – There was no report.
9. Military Superintendent Liaison – NONE

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

A. Consent Agenda

MOTION: Corcoran, Shinbrot: To approve the Consent Agenda with the addition to the May 26th minutes under Superintendent reports add “and projects.”
PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY

B. Old Business

NONE

B. New Business

1. Discussion and possible action regarding the food Service Program meal pricing.

MOTION: Corcoran, Shinbrot: To approve the proposed meal price increase of \$.25 for breakfast and \$.25 for lunch at Northeast Academy, Charles Barnum, and Fitch High School
YES – Weitlauf, Washington, Ackerman, Shinbrot, Johnson, Corcoran White Whitney
NO - Thomas
PASSED

2. Discussion and possible action regarding the USDA Farm to School Implementation Grant

MOTION: Shinbrot, White: To approve the USDA Farm to School Implementation Grant
PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY

3. Discussion and possible action regarding a first reading of policy P 3542.43 Food Service Charging Policy (Attachment #4)

MOTION: Corcoran, White: To approve policy P 3542.43 Food Service Charging Policy as a first reading.
YES – Washington, Shinbrot, Johnson, Corcoran, White, Whitney
NO – Thomas, Weitlauf
ABSTAINED – Ackerman
PASSED

4. Discussion and possible action regarding a first reading of policy P5144.12 Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practice Response in Student Discipline (Attachment #5)

MOTION: Johnson, Whitney: To approve policy P 5144.12 Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline as a first reading.
YES – Weitlauf, Washington, Ackerman, Johnson, Corcoran, Thomas, White, Whitney
PASSED

Mr. Shinbrot was out of room for this vote.

5. Discussion and possible action regarding a first reading of policy P 1330 Use of School Facilities (Attachment #6)

MOTION: White, Corcoran: To approve policy P 1330 Use of School Facilities as a first reading.
PASSED – UNANIMOUSLY

6. Discussion and possible action regarding a first reading of policy P 1110.1 Parent Involvement (Attachment #7)

MOTION: Shinbrot, White: To approve policy P 1110.1 Parent Involvement as a first reading
PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY

IX. INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS

- A. Letters, communications, and comments by Board members on meeting items and any other items in the jurisdiction.
 - Mr. Johnson noted the discussion on building subs at the June 10th COW meeting and he read a statement (Attachment #8) as well as noting the email not received on June 23, 2026.
 - Mr. Whitney noted that the Board should be informed of the Superintendent's response to letters from citizens.
 - Mr. Thomas agreed with comments made by Mr. Whitney.
 - Dr. Ackerman also agreed with comments made by Mr. Whitney.
 - Mrs. Washington noted her and Dr. Ackerman's attendance at Rotary where they received the Paul Harris award.
 - Mr. Weitlauf acknowledged all the efforts of Mrs. Washington in her leadership as Chair of the Board of Education.

X. ADVANCE PLANNING

- A. Future Meeting Dates and Calendar Items for Board Attention

As noted in the agenda.

Negotiations on August 5, 2026 is cancelled.
Finance/Facilities will meet on August 4, 2026

B. Suggested Agenda Items

Finance/Facilities referral by Mr. Whitney to explore strategies for fuel use.

Mr. Johnson referred:

To measure student success

Attendance policy revision

Credit card for lunches to Finance

World Language to Curriculum

Need for an ASL teacher

XI.. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ackerman, Shinbrot:

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

PASSED – UNANIMOUSLY

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to express my deep disappointment with the Special Education Department at Groton Public Schools regarding the services and support provided to our son, Jacob.

Jacob attended Charles Barnum Elementary School, where he had an excellent experience. The teachers and administrators were supportive, caring, and committed to helping him succeed, because of that positive experience, we entered middle school with high hopes. Unfortunately, our experience changed dramatically once Jacob transitioned to the middle school level.

For years, we repeatedly requested conversations about Jacob's disabilities and the supports he needed. Time and time again, we were denied assessments, accommodations, and meaningful discussions regarding his struggles. We found ourselves fighting every step of the way just to have our concerns heard.

When it came time for high school, we chose the Marine Science Magnet High School because we believed the smaller environment would better support Jacob's needs. Early on, staff recognized that Jacob required additional support, and for the first time, we felt hopeful that someone understood our concerns. However, despite those conversations, we continued to face resistance from our home district, Groton. We attended numerous meetings and spent years advocating before Jacob finally qualified for special education services in the 10th grade—far later than when we knew he needed support.

During Jacob's senior year, Groton Public Schools finally agreed to fund an independent evaluation. The evaluation resulted in recommendations that included consideration of an out-of-district placement. As a senior preparing for graduation, that recommendation was not practical for Jacob or our family. Instead, we were told that a transition program could be developed to help him build the skills he would need for adulthood and future success.

As graduation approached, however, it felt as though the district's primary goal was simply to move Jacob through the system. During our final meetings, I specifically asked what supports could be provided as Jacob prepared to attend college. I was told there was nothing more that could be done. Through my own research and understanding of special education services, I know that statement was not entirely accurate. There were options that could have been explored, discussed, or considered.

What is most troubling is not simply that services were denied, but that meaningful communication and collaboration were often lacking. Rather than openly discussing available options and helping us make informed decisions, it felt as though opportunities were withheld until Jacob graduated. As a result, he is now entering adulthood without access to many of the supports he should have received years ago.

As an educator myself, I understand the challenges school districts face, including budget constraints and competing priorities. However, to a parent, this is not about budgets or paperwork—it is about a child. I spent years advocating for my son and fighting for services that should have been considered much earlier. If navigating this process was difficult for someone with an educational background, I can only imagine how overwhelming it must be for families who do not have that knowledge or experience.

I believe the Board of Education should be aware of the experiences families encounter within the Special Education Department. My hope is that by sharing our story, future students and families will receive the support, communication, and advocacy they deserve without having to fight every step along the way.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Marcie and Tim Cieplik

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of Marcie and Tim Cieplik.

Good evening, members of the Board of Education, Superintendent Susan Austin, and members of the Groton Public Schools community.

My name is Liz Bumgardner, I live at 584F Shennecossett Road Groton and tonight I am here not as an educator as I often present as a principal in my own school district's meetings, however, I am here speaking with you tonight as a grateful mother.

I want to take a moment to sincerely thank Groton Public Schools for the partnership our family has experienced over the years in supporting my son, Benjamin, who has profound autism. Although Benjamin's needs required an outplacement, he has always remained a Groton student. Throughout his educational journey, Groton worked collaboratively with our family to ensure he received the specialized services and supports he needed to learn, grow, and thrive.

Benjamin attended programs through LEARN, our local RESC before eventually transitioning to River Street School in Windsor. Every placement was made thoughtfully and with one goal in mind—to provide him with the best opportunity to reach his fullest potential.

I would especially like to recognize Denise Doolittle, Director of Pupil Services, for her unwavering dedication and partnership with our family. I also want to thank the many special education teachers, related service providers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and support staff who worked with Benjamin during his early years in Groton. They built the foundation that allowed him to continue growing throughout his school career. Their patience, expertise, compassion, and belief in him made an immeasurable difference in his life and in ours.

Last month on June 24th, Benjamin graduated from River Street School and at 22 years old officially aged out of Connecticut's public education system. While graduation is a milestone we are incredibly proud of, it also marks the beginning of a new chapter—one where the needs do not end simply because school does. Families of individuals with profound disabilities continue to navigate significant challenges as we transition into adult services, searching for meaningful opportunities, appropriate supports, and safe, sustainable futures for our loved ones.

Tonight, I simply wanted to say thank you. Thank you for investing in children with complex needs. Thank you for recognizing that every student deserves an education that meets them where they are. And thank you for being partners with families like ours throughout this journey.

Benjamin's success belongs to many people, and Groton Public Schools will always be an important part of his story.

Thank you for everything you have done for our family and for so many others. Every decision you make as a Board Member, Superintendent, administrator, or school educational staff has an impact on students and on the family that loves and supports them. I appreciate the opportunity given to me tonight to express my gratitude.



**Challenging Behavior Prevention
Restorative Practices Response
Policy**

July 27, 2026

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**



Introduction to Policy (Public Act - PA 23-167 Sec 74)

Related to all matters of **student discipline**, schools should make every effort to

- Correct student challenging behavior through school-based resources
- Minimize the use of In-School & Out of School suspensions, expulsions, & referrals to law enforcement

School districts must adopt a **Restorative Practices Response** policy

- must implement for incidents of challenging behavior or student conflict that is nonviolent and not a crime
- must not include the involvement of school resource officers or law enforcement — unless the conduct escalates to violence or constitutes a crime.

School Discipline - Disproportionality & Suspension

Exclusionary Discipline is linked to missed instruction, **disengagement**, higher risk of future misbehavior, dropout and later incarceration, especially for Black & Latino students

Positive relationships & sense of belonging improve engagement, mental health, and long term health outcomes while **punitive discipline/school exclusion** are associated with depression, lower self-confidence, and high risk behaviors.

A recent Statewide analysis: 119,000 CT youth ages 14-16 (about 1 in 5) are at-risk or **disconnected from school** or work

Disconnected youth in CT are more likely to have a **criminal record**, experience homelessness, and face severely **limited lifetime earnings**

What are Restorative Practices?

Evidence and research-based system-level practices that focus on

building high-quality,
constructive
relationships among
the school community

holding each student
accountable for any
challenging behavior

ensuring each student
has a role in **repairing**
relationships and
reintegrating into the
school community

4 Main Goals of Restorative Practices



**Relationship
Building**

Accountability

**Community
Safety**

**Competency
Development**

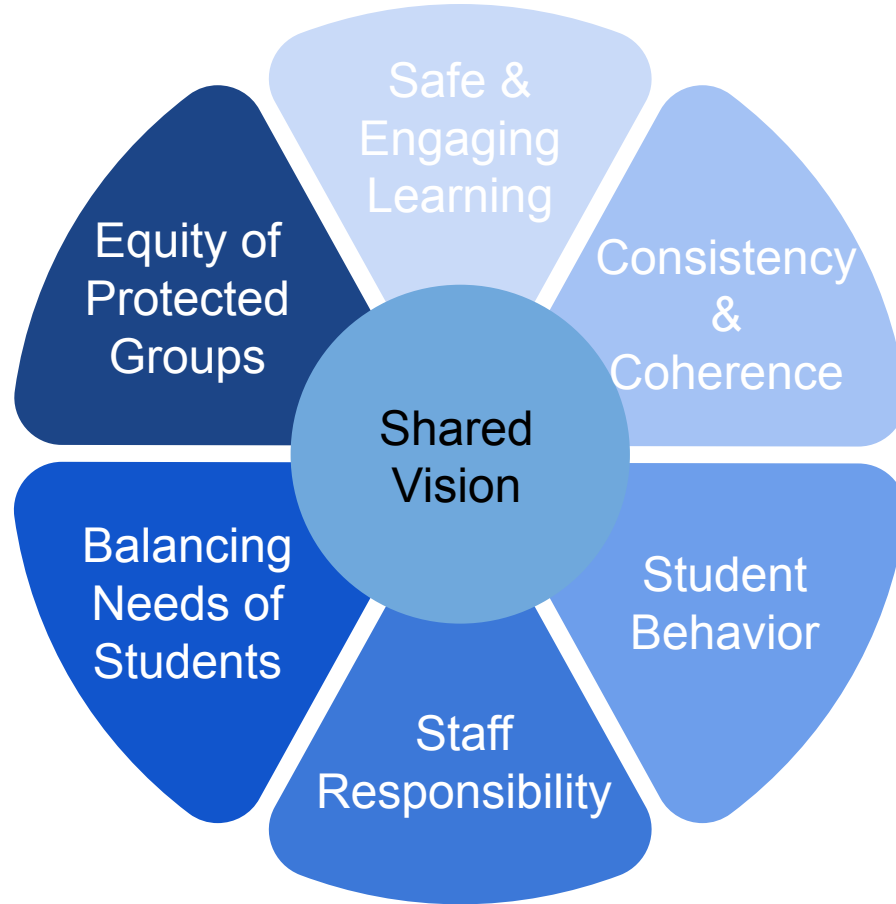
- Create an environment where everyone is safe, welcomed, supported
- Focus on high-quality, constructive relationships among school community members

- Use response strategies that hold each student accountable for challenging behavior

- Use strategies that ensure all students have a role in repairing relationships affected by challenging behavior

- Increase SEL skills of those who have harmed others
- Address underlying factors that lead students to engage in challenging behavior
- Build on student strengths

Purpose - To Support School Discipline



General Principles

Positive school climate:
By **preventing** challenging
behavior & Using Restorative
Practices in **response** to
challenging behavior

School Safety + Academic Success
are strengthened when ALL staff
build **positive relationships** with
students & families

Maximize time spent **learning** &
Minimize time students cause
disruption/removal

Discipline includes
providing meaningful
instruction & guidance,
opportunity to learn from
mistakes

Restorative process that
engages **all** school
community members.
Majority of challenging
behavior addressed at
classroom level

Build cultural
competence & eliminate
discrimination and
barriers to success

Challenging behavior
might be subject to
disciplinary action and
includes **classrooms**,
extra-curricular
activities, school
vehicles

General Policy Guidelines

The District's system of **school climate improvement** is built on the incorporation of restorative practices. Restorative practices should be guided by the **Connecticut School Climate Standards**:

Shared **vision and plan** for promoting and sustaining a positive school climate

Focuses on **prevention, identification, and response** to challenging behaviors.

Policies promoting:

A sound school environment that develops and sustains academic, social, emotional, ethical, civic, and intellectual skills; and

A **restorative school environment** focused on overcoming barriers to teaching and learning by building and supporting meaningful school-wide relationships, and intentionally reengaging any disengaged students, educators, and families of students in the school community.

Practices supported to:

Promote learning and the positive academic, social, emotional, ethical, and civic development of students.

Enhance engagement in teaching, learning, and school-wide activities.

Address barriers to teaching and learning; and

Develop and sustain a **restorative infrastructure** that builds **capacity, accountability, and sustainability**.

School environment where everyone is **safe, welcomed, supported, and included** in all school-based activities.

Restorative system that cultivates a **sense of belonging** through norms and activities that promote social and civic responsibility, and a dedication to cultural responsiveness, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Business and Non-Instructional Operations

Food Service - Charging Policy

Groton Public Schools Food Service Department is an essential program that provides students and staff with nutritious and healthy foods.

Groton Participates in the National School Breakfast (SBP) and School Lunch Programs (NSLP). ~~These programs~~ are federally funded and ~~are~~ administered by the United States Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service. At the State level, the school Child Nutrition Programs are administered by the Connecticut State Department of Education which operates the program through agreements with the local school food authorities.

Students have the right to obtain a meal in accordance with CGS 10-215. ~~and we~~ The Food Service Department allows students to charge a single reimbursable meal ~~to their student account~~ for breakfast and lunch each day to their student account. A reimbursable meal must consist of the minimum requirement(s) of guidelines set by SBP and NSLP.

~~We prohibit~~ Publicly identifying or shaming a child for any unpaid meal charges ~~is prohibited~~, including, but not limited to, delaying or refusing to serve a meal to a child, designating a specific meal option for a child, or otherwise taking any disciplinary action ~~against such child with unpaid meal charges~~.

Parents and guardians are responsible for providing meals or meal money for their student(s). Charging is intended to be for emergency purposes only. Repayment is expected.

To view account transactions or receive a low balance alert(s), ~~you~~ parents / guardians may sign up for an account on "School Cafe Parent Portal" App. The account is at no cost/charge ~~to you~~; however, there is a fee for each credit/debit transaction. For students with a negative balance, communication will be emailed to families twice a month with negative balance letters. The emails are based on the address entered into the PowerSchool primary contact. Parents ~~or~~ guardians may pay outstanding balances in person at the school cafeteria or at the Food Services office.

Free and reduced applications are available for any families who would like to apply.

Parents/guardians can find the online application and SNAP information on ~~our website~~ grotonschools.org. Paper applications are available at every school, at Central Office, and at the Food Service Administrative offices.

Adults are not permitted to charge meals at any time. They can, however, open an account with the Food Service Department and put funds on the account or pay directly to the kitchen.

Students and adults are not permitted to charge a single item or a la carte item(s).

The Groton Board of Education (Board) realizes that funds from the Nonprofit School Food Service account, according to federal regulations, cannot be used to cover the cost of charged meals that have not been paid.

To sustain the District's food services program, the District cannot permit the excessive charging of student meals. If a student's account reaches an unpaid balance equal to, ~~or~~, or exceeding the cost of 30 meals, Food Service Administration shall refer the parent/guardian to the homeless liaison, Director of Pupil Personnel.

Families may also contact **Groton Human Services** for access to family assistance.

humanser@groton-ct.gov

860-441-6622

45 Fort Hill Rd, Groton, CT

Food Service - Charging Policy – cont.

~~The goal of the department is to effectively and respectfully address family responsibility for unpaid meals.~~

Any parent ~~or~~ guardian who anticipates a problem with paying for meals is encouraged to contact the Groton Public Schools Food & Nutrition Services Office (860-449-7208). The Board encourages all families who may have a child eligible for free or reduced-price lunch to apply.

Dissemination of Policy

This policy shall be provided in writing to all households at the start of each school year and to households transferring into the ~~school~~ District during the school year.

This policy shall be included in student/parent handbooks, on online portals that households use to access student accounts, ~~placed~~ on the District's website, ~~on the website of each school, and published at the beginning of each school year at the time information is distributed regarding free and reduced-price meals and again to~~ and ~~provided for~~ the household the first time the policy is applied to a specific child.

This policy shall be provided to all school staff and/or school food authority responsible for its enforcement; ~~in addition, it shall be distributed to~~, school social workers, nurses, ~~the~~ homeless liaison, and other staff members assisting children in need or who may be contacted by families with unpaid meal charges also should be informed of this policy.

The District's school food authority shall maintain, as required, documentation of the methods used to communicate this policy to households and school or school food authority-level staff responsible for policy enforcement.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes

[10-215](#) Lunches, breakfasts and other feeding programs for public school children and employees. (as amended by PA 21-46)

[10-215a](#) Nonpublic school and nonprofit agency participation in feeding programs.

[10-215b](#) Duties of State Board of Education re feeding programs.

State Board of Education Regulations

State of Connecticut, Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education Operational Memorandum No. 4-17, "Guidance on Unpaid Meal Charges and Collection of Delinquent Meal Payments," Nov. 2, 2016

Operational Memorandum #19-10, State of Connecticut, Bureau of Health/Nutrition, Family Services and Adult Education "Unallowable Charges to No-profit School Food Service Accounts and the Serving of Meals to No-paying Full and Reduced Price Students"

National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program; Competitive Foods. (7 CFR Parts 210 and 220, Federal Register, Vol 45 No. 20, Tuesday, January 29, 1980, pp 6758-6772

Food Service - Charging Policy – cont.

USDA Guidance:

SP 46-2016, "Unpaid Meal Charges: Local Meal Charge Policies"

SP 47-2016, "Unpaid Meal Charges: Clarification on Collection of Delinquent Meal Payment"

SP 57-2016 "Unpaid Meal Charges: Guidance and Q and A"

SP 58-2016 "2016 Edition: Overcoming the Unpaid Meal Challenge: Proven Strategies from Our Nation's Schools"

Policy Adopted: September 25, 2017
Revised: June 24, 2019
June 17, 2024

GROTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Groton, Connecticut

Business and Non-Instructional Operations

Food Service - Charging Policy

Parents will be notified as follows.

- A. Negative balance communications weekly via email through SchoolCafe to the email address registered in PowerSchool.
- B. Twice a Month negative balances over \$100.00 are sent via Text message through ParentSquare at the phone number registered with PowerSchool.
- C. Negative balance letters are mailed weekly to families who do not have an updated email or phone number on file.
- D. When a student's account reaches an unpaid balance above \$100.00, Food services will refer the family to the homeless liaison.
- E. Outstanding balances can also be paid online through SchoolCafe with the convenience of a debit card or Credit Card.
- F. Families are encouraged to submit meal applications through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) multiple times during the school year should their income change.

Adopted:

GROTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Groton, Connecticut

P 5144.12

Students**Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline****Introduction**

Related to all matters of student discipline, the Board of Education (Board) requires District staff to make every effort to correct student challenging behavior through school-based resources and to support students in learning the skills necessary to enhance a positive school climate and avoid challenging behavior.

For most behaviors, schools should minimize the use of in-school and out-of-school suspensions, recommendations for expulsion, and referrals to law enforcement to the extent practicable while in compliance with state statutes, local ordinances, and mandatory reporting laws. The goal of the Groton Public Schools and the Board that the juvenile and criminal justice systems be utilized rarely to address all forms of challenging behavior.

All challenging behavior procedures and responses shall ensure due process and be enforced uniformly, fairly, consistently, and in a manner that does not discriminate on the basis of ethnicity, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, or disability.

The Board adopts this “Restorative Practices Response” policy to be implemented by school employees for incidents of challenging behavior or student conflict that is nonviolent and does not constitute a crime. This policy shall not include the involvement of school resource officers or other law enforcement officials unless the behavior or conflict becomes violent or criminal.

The Board supports the District’s fundamental mission to provide all students the opportunity to achieve academically and socially and emotionally, ethically, civically, and intellectually at the highest levels and to become a contributing and engaged citizen in a diverse society. All students should have the opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge, and competencies in a nurturing and accountable school setting. Schools play an important role in helping families and children make responsible decisions, cooperate with others, and have a successful life. Children, at times, find difficult managing their emotions and focusing on their studies effectively. Developmentally appropriate social and emotional skills building allows students to cope with stress so they can access learning and develop into productive adults. Learning is a social activity, meaning children must be ready to learn by regulating their emotions and working constructively with others. Social and emotional learning (SEL) helps build a positive school climate by developing emotional intelligence through self-awareness, self-management, goal setting, social awareness, relationship building, collaborative skills, and responsible decision-making. Students should receive effective and engaging teaching, with curriculum, instruction, and assessment designed to address the needs of diverse learners.

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline – cont.

Restorative approaches recognize students' unique strengths, needs, and interests and present an opportunity for schools to develop a structure that utilizes practices that will create a more equitable path for all students. Utilizing restorative practices allows schools to embody more equitable approaches and meet students' short—and long-term needs.

The Board believes that all students have a right to attend schools that are safe and free from unnecessary disruption. Appropriate student behavior, reinforced by an effective system of discipline, is essential to creating and maintaining a positive school climate. This is the joint responsibility of students, staff, parents, and the community.

The Board requires District schools to implement restorative practices in response to conflict and harm. The “Restorative Practices Response” philosophy supported by the Board views misconduct as a violation against people and damaging to relationships in the school and throughout the community. The Board recognizes that schools may involve a wide range of people in the “Restorative Practices Response” process, voluntarily including victims, who are often teachers, school staff, bystanders, other students, and the school community.

The four main goals of Restorative Practices Response are:

1. **Relationship Building:** creating a school environment where everyone is safe, welcomed, supported, and included in all school-based activities and focuses on high-quality, constructive relationships among the school community members;
2. **Accountability:** Restorative Practices Response strategies hold each student accountable for any challenging behavior;
3. **Community Safety:** Restorative Practices recognize the need to keep the school community safe through strategies ensuring that all students have a role in repairing relationships affected by challenging behavior. In safe, supportive education environments students feel a sense of belonging and allow schools to challenge policies and procedures that prevent student growth;
4. **Competency Development:** Restorative Practices Response seeks to increase the social-emotional intelligence skills of those who have harmed others, address underlying factors that lead students to engage in the form of challenging behavior, and build on strengths.

Definitions

Through adopting the Connecticut School Climate Policy (5131.911), the Board endorses a “Restorative Practices Response” approach to student discipline. As defined in Policy 5131.911,

Restorative Practices mean evidence and research-based system-level practices that focus on (a) building high-quality, constructive relationships among the school community, (b) holding each student accountable for any challenging behavior, and (c) ensuring each such student has a role in repairing relationships and reintegrating into the school community.

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline-cont.**Definitions** (continued)

“Challenging Behavior” means behavior that negatively impacts school climate or interferes, or is at risk of interfering with, the learning or safety of a student or a school employee.

“Evidenced-Based Practices” in education refer to instructional and school-wide improvement practices that systematic empirical research has provided evidence of statistically significant effectiveness.

“School Climate” means the quality and character of school life, with a particular focus on the quality of the relationships within the school community. It is based on patterns of people’s experiences of school life and reflects the norms, goals, and organizational structures within the school community.

“Social and Emotional Learning” means the process through which children and adults achieve emotional intelligence through the competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making.

“Emotional Intelligence” means the ability to (a) perceive, recognize, and understand emotions in oneself or others, (b) use emotions to facilitate cognitive activities, including, but not limited to, reasoning, problem-solving and interpersonal communication, (c) understand and identify emotions, and (d) manage emotions in oneself and others.

“School Community” means any individuals, groups, businesses, public institutions, and nonprofit organizations that are invested in the welfare and vitality of a public school system and the community in which it is located, including, but not limited to, students and their families, members of the local or regional board of education, volunteers at a school, and school employees.

“School Environment” means a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program, whether on or off school grounds, including at a school bus stop or on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased, or used by a local or regional board of education, and may include other activities, functions, or programs that occur outside of a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function, or program if bullying at or during such other activities, functions, or programs negatively impacts the school environment.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to support school discipline that:

1. The District community has a shared vision and plan for promoting and sustaining a positive school climate that focuses on prevention, identification, and response to all challenging behavior;
2. Maintains safe and engaging learning communities;

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline – cont.

Purpose (continued)

3. Assures consistency and coherence across all schools in the District;
4. Defines and communicates expectations for student behavior;
5. Defines and communicates expectations for staff responsibility related to school discipline;
6. Balances the needs of the student, the needs of those directly affected by “challenging behaviors,” and the needs of the overall school community;
7. Assures equity across racial, ethnic, and cultural groups, and all other protected classes, including, but not limited to, gender, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity and expression.

General Principles

1. A positive school climate is best accomplished by preventing challenging behaviors before they occur and using effective restorative practices, in response to those challenging behaviors that may occur despite proactive measures;
2. School safety and academic success are formed and strengthened when all school staff and employees build positive relationships with students and their parents and/or guardians;
3. Effective school climate maximizes the amount of time students spend learning academically, socially, emotionally, ethically, civically, and intellectually and minimizes the amount of time students cause disruption or are removed from their classrooms due to an act of challenging behavior;
4. School discipline should be reasonable, timely, fair, age-appropriate, and should be proportionate to the student’s challenging behavior. Response to an act of challenging behavior rooted in restorative practices will provide meaningful instruction and guidance, offer students an opportunity to learn from their mistakes, and results in engaging rather than punitive responses to challenging behavior. The school community should adopt policies that promote a restorative school environment focused on overcoming barriers to teaching and learning by building and supporting meaningful school-wide relationships and intentionally re-engaging and disengaged students, educators, and families of students in the school community;
5. Effective school climate improvement is a restorative process that engages all school community members in promoting a positive school climate. The vast majority of challenging behaviors should be addressed at the classroom level by teachers; however, behaviors that cannot be addressed at this level should receive more targeted and intensive interventions, as determined by an individualized assessment;

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline – cont.

General Principles (continued)

6. The District serves a diverse community. To serve all students and to prepare them to be members of an increasingly diverse community, schools and staff must build cultural competence. The District commit to eliminating institutional racism and any other discrimination that presents barriers to success. The school community should create a school environment in which everyone is safe, welcomed, supported, and included in all school-based activities;
7. Challenging behaviors, which may be subject to disciplinary action, including any within the school environment, but not limited to those occurring during either curricular or extracurricular activities, in classrooms, in school buildings, on school grounds, or in school vehicles, when such conduct is detrimental to the school environment and to the welfare or safety of other students or school personnel.

General Policy Guidelines

The District's system of school climate improvement is built on the incorporation of restorative practices, which should include:

Evidence and research-based system-level restorative practices that focus on:

- 1) building high-quality, constructive relationships among the school community,
- 2) holding each student accountable for any challenging behavior, and
- 3) ensuring each such student has a role in repairing relationships and reintegrating into the school community.

Restorative practices should be guided by the Connecticut School Climate Standards:

1. The District community has a shared vision and plan for promoting and sustaining a positive school climate that focuses on prevention, identification, and response to all challenging behaviors.
2. The District community adopts policies that promote: a) a sound school environment that develops and sustains academic, social, emotional, ethical, civic, and intellectual skills; and b) a restorative school environment focused on overcoming barriers to teaching and learning by building and supporting meaningful school-wide relationships, and intentionally reengaging any disengaged students, educators, and families of students in the school community.
3. The school community's practices are identified, prioritized, and supported to: a) promote learning and the positive academic, social, emotional, ethical, and civic development of students. b) enhance engagement in teaching, learning, and school-wide activities. c) address barriers to teaching and learning; and d) develop and sustain a restorative infrastructure that builds capacity, accountability, and sustainability.

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline – cont.

General Policy Guidelines (continued)

4. The school community creates a school environment in which everyone is safe, welcomed, supported, and included in all school-based activities,
5. The school community creates a restorative system that cultivates a sense of belonging through norms and activities that promote social and civic responsibility and a dedication to cultural responsiveness, diversity, equity, and inclusion.
 - a. Practicing early identification and assessment of struggling students;
 - b. Using a problem-solving/collaborative process to provide interventions matched to student needs;
 - c. Ensuring timely progress monitoring and feedback; and
 - d. Delivering scientific research-based interventions.

The District shall post this policy on the District website and in each school. A copy of this policy and accompanying procedures shall be readily available in each school's administration office.

Copies of this policy, any accompanying procedures/regulations, and school rules will be made available, upon request, to each student and parent/guardian and, upon request, be promptly translated into a language that the parent/guardian can understand.

Applying the goals related to Restorative Practices Response, this policy's definitions, purpose, principles and guidelines, the Superintendent, or designee shall develop such procedures and provide for any training necessary as may be needed to effectively implement this policy.

Legal Reference:

Connecticut General Statutes

4-177 through 4-180. Contested Cases. Notice. Record, as amended.

10-233a through 10-233f Suspension, removal and expulsion of students, as periodically amended.

21a-240(9) Definitions.

53a-3 Definitions.

GOALS 2000: Educate America Act, Pub. L. 103-227.

18 U.S.C. 921 Definitions

Title III - Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Act Sec. 314

Elementary and Secondary Schools Act of 1968, as amended by the Gun Free Schools Act of 1994

PL 105-17 The Individuals with Disabilities Act, Amendments of 1997

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline – cont.

Legal Reference – cont.:

P.L. 108-446 Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

State v. Hardy, 896 A.2d 755, 278 Conn 113 (2006)

Public Act 23-167, Section 74, An Act Concerning Transparency in Education

Policy Adopted:

GROTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Groton, Connecticut

Students

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline

The following procedures are designed to be consistent with the general purpose and principles outlined in the aforementioned policy and with federal and state statutes and regulations.

The District and staff are committed to establishing positive learning environments that ensure that all students have access to a quality education. The District recognizes that a key aspect of maintaining a healthy and safe environment is establishing and maintaining positive and constructive behavior in our schools. This goal can only be achieved through the cooperative efforts of our school personnel, students, parents, guardians, and our community.

School Discipline Administration

1. Staff training will be provided as needed to ensure that the Restorative Practices in each school are effective and that relevant policies and procedures are equitably applied. Such training will include, but not be limited to, strategies and approaches related to Restorative Practices and its theoretical framework.
2. District staff responsible for implementing this policy shall do so without discrimination based on ethnicity, race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity or expression, age, or disability.
3. Challenging behavior related to students receiving special education and tiered intervention supports shall be in accordance with the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), and behavior intervention plan, 504 Plan, and Board policy.
4. The District believes that developing strong relationships with families is the first step in establishing safe and healthy schools. Staff members are encouraged to contact parents early in the school year to proactively establish positive school-home communication and throughout the school year to share student successes and challenges, and develop plans to help students have access to a quality education. Schools will convene parent sessions to educate the community on Restorative Practices Response and how they will be implemented.
5. The District is committed to eliminating the disparity in school discipline with respect to its underserved populations by reducing the number of referrals, suspensions, and expulsions. The staff will engage in restorative practices that enhance school climate and develop a system for addressing challenging behavior that promotes equity. Staff members are specifically charged with monitoring the impact of their actions on students from racial and ethnic groups or other protected classes that have historically been over-represented among those students who are suspended, expelled or referred to law enforcement. The District will collect discipline data examining and aggregating referrals and disciplinary responses. In addition, principals will provide the Superintendent with an annual report highlighting Restorative Practices Response programs, their impact on school climate, and the number of referrals and disciplinary actions.

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline – cont.

School-Level Rules

In developing school-level rules of behavior, the school shall solicit the participation, views, and feedback of at least one representative selected by each of the following groups:

1. Parents/guardians
2. Teachers
3. School administrators
4. Middle, junior high and high schools, students enrolled in the school

The rules shall be consistent with law, Board of Education (Board) policy, and District administrative regulations. The development of the rules shall be informed by school-level challenging behavior data as described in policy #5144.12.

The school shall also solicit participants' views on whether school-level and District-level standards of behavior are being equitably and fairly applied. The confidentiality of student records shall be maintained at all times.

Interventions

General: Effective school responses related to challenging behavior shall promote interventions that refrain from interrupting a student's education to the extent possible. Schools should minimize the use of suspensions, recommendations for expulsion, and referrals to law enforcement to the extent practicable while remaining consistent with federal and state statutes, regulations, and Board policies.

Reasonable Responses to Challenging Behavior Consequences: Responses should be reasonable, fair, age-appropriate, and match the severity of the student's misbehavior, and through restorative practice consider the impact on the victim or community. Restorative practices that include meaningful instruction and guidance offer students an opportunity to learn from their mistakes and contribute to the school community, and are more likely to result in having the student re-engage in learning.

Relevant Considerations for Determining Restorative Practices

1. Age, health, and special education status of the student.
2. Appropriateness of student's academic placement.
3. Student's prior conduct and record of challenging behavior.
4. Student's attitude.
5. Student's willingness to repair the harm.
6. Seriousness of the offense and the degree of harm caused.
7. Impact of the incident on the overall school community.
8. The availability of prevention programs designed to address challenging behavior should also be considered before determining a restorative practices response.

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline – cont.

Interventions/Alternative Means of Correction: When challenging behavior occurs, schools shall investigate the circumstances and gather facts that will help determine appropriate interventions and a restorative response for that student, with emphasis on correcting student misbehavior through school-based resources. Responses to challenging behavior should provide students an opportunity to learn from their mistakes and reengage the student in learning. All interventions should balance the needs of the student, of those directly affected by the behavior, and of the overall school community.

Each school is responsible for incorporating a restorative response framework into its planning to reduce referrals and suspensions through pro-active intervention, positive behavioral support, restorative practices, and other non-punitive approaches to challenging behavior focused on maximizing student achievement, reducing such behaviors and avoiding loss of instructional time through the tiered interventions. That intervention framework shall integrate a Restorative Practices framework.

Referral of students from the classroom environment for challenging behaviors should be avoided. The District expects alternatives to suspension and restorative practices to be utilized before referring a student out of the classroom. The District expects that alternatives will be undertaken within the classroom except where suspension for specific offenses is required by statute and Board policy or where the challenging behavior imposes a clear danger to others.

Three types of intervention strategies to be considered: Administrative, Restorative, and Skill-based/Therapeutic.

1. **Administrative Strategies** are statutorily or policy-required interventions that respond to the offender. These include removal from the classroom, detention, suspension, and expulsion.
2. **Restorative Strategies** coordinate with Connecticut's School Climate Policy as they are problem-solving interventions responding with the offender. They are driven by an opportunity to restoration for the harm caused and focus how it will be repaired. A successful restorative practice response strategy may utilize interventions with allied agencies and professionals. An assessment of the incident/conduct will be completed, and the school or District will determine whether a face-to-face meeting with all parties is appropriate. Examples may include:
 - a. Family group conferencing
 - b. Victim-offender mediation
 - c. Classroom mediation circles
 - d. Reparation of harm

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline – cont.

Interventions/Alternative Means of Correction (continued)

3. **Therapeutic/Resource Strategies** are responses by the offender and require intrinsic motivational behavior change. Such interventions include:
 - a. Mental health counseling
 - b. Anger management classes
 - c. Informal mentoring and behavior coaching

Teachers and administrators should intentionally utilize various types of strategies, or multiple strategies simultaneously, to address and correct challenging behavior, especially for multiple offenses.

The District should consider adopting a District Restorative Practices Response statement and model with a common framework, definitions, and procedures should be widely displayed and available to all school community members.

Considerations for Adopting a District Restorative Practices Response Model:

1. The degree to which the model is easily integrated with the District's Discipline policy;
2. The degree to which the model receives buy-in from the staff and school community;
3. The degree to which the model can be consistently and reliably implemented;
4. The degree to which adherence to the model is supported by research and yields positive results.

A statement and model can be designed in a manner similar to the following example:

Restorative Justice in Groton Public Schools

The Board considers Restorative Practices Response as a set of principles and practices used to build community, respond to harm/conflict, and provide individual circles of support for students. By building, maintaining, and restoring relationships between members of the entire school community, the District strives to create an environment in which all students can thrive. The Restorative Justice approach to school discipline is to be implemented through a 3-tier, school-wide model.

Tier 1: Community Building (Prevention/Relate)

Tier I is characterized by the use of social-emotional skills and practice classroom circles to build relationships, create shared values and guidelines, and promote restorative conversations following a behavioral disruption. The goal is to build a caring, intentional, and equitable community with conditions conducive to learning.

Tier 2: Restorative Processes (Intervention/Repair)

Tier 2 is characterized by the use of non-punitive response to harm/conflict such as harm circles, mediation, or family group conferencing to respond to disciplinary issues in a restorative manner. This process addresses the root causes of the harm, supports accountability for the offender, and promotes healing for the victim(s), the offender, and the school community.

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline – cont.

Interventions/Alternative Means of Correction (continued)

Tier 3: Supported Re-entry (Individualized/Re-Integrate)

Tier 3 is characterized by 1:1 support and successful re-entry of youth following suspension, truancy, expulsion, or incarceration. The goal is to welcome students to the school community in a manner that provides wraparound support and promotes student accountability and achievement.

Classroom-based Strategies to Reduce Challenging Behaviors

Classroom-based strategies include, but are not limited to:

1. Explicit re-teaching of behavioral expectations;
2. Separating students;
3. Call to parent;
4. Keeping students after class;
5. Restorative conference set up with student(s) or class;
6. Creating a positive behavior contract;
7. Conference with student;
8. Conference with parent and the student.

School-based Strategies to Reduce Challenging Behaviors

Students who exhibit a pattern of challenging behaviors should be provided more intensive support through a system of tiered interventions. Parents should be notified if there is an escalating pattern of challenging behavior that could lead to classroom or school removal. Appropriate school-based strategies include, but are not limited to:

1. A conference between school staff and the student and their parents/guardians
2. Referral to a school counselor or other school support service personnel for case management and counseling
3. Referral for drug or alcohol counseling
4. Convening of a Student Study Team (SST) or other intervention-related team to assess the behavior and develop and implement an individual plan, to address the behavior in partnership with the student and their parents/guardians
5. When applicable, referral for a comprehensive psychosocial or psychoeducational assessment or Applied Behavior Analysis, including for purposes of creating a behavior plan, an individualized education program, or a Section 504 plan
6. Enrollment in a program for building anger management skills
7. Continuing to encourage participation in a restorative justice program
8. A positive behavior support approach with tiered interventions that occur during the school day on campus

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline – cont.

School-based Strategies (continued)

9. After-school programs that address identified challenging behaviors or expose students to constructive activities and behaviors, including, but not limited to, those operated in collaboration with local parent and community groups.

Detention After School

Students may be detained for disciplinary reasons (up to one hour) after the school day has ended.

If a student will miss his/her school bus because he/she is detained after school or is not transported by school bus, the principal or designee shall notify parents/guardians of the detention at least one day in advance so that alternative transportation arrangements may be made. The student shall not be detained unless the principal or designee notifies the parent/guardian.

Students shall remain under the supervision of a certified employee during the period of detention.

Community Service

For consideration with a restorative practices response strategy, the Board, Superintendent, Principal, or Principal's designee may, at his/her discretion, allow for a student to perform community service during non-school hours on school grounds or, with the written permission of the student's parent/guardian, off school grounds. Such service may include but is not limited to, community or school outdoor beautification, campus betterment, and teacher, peer, or youth assistance programs.

Referrals

The Board supports the adoption of the SRBI framework to facilitate a systems approach to positive, pro-social behavior management. The District expects teachers to attempt SRBI-tiered interventions prior to making a referral out of the classroom whenever possible.

When a referral out of the classroom is made, the principal or his/her designee must ensure that staff making the referral complete the following:

1. Teacher completed a written referral notification/form;
2. Principal or his/her designee reviewed the referral form and, if warranted, assigned appropriate consequences;
3. The Principal or designee or teacher contacted the student's parents/guardians and notified them of any consequences;
4. The Principal or designee investigated the reasons for the student's conduct;
5. The Principal or designee recorded the classroom interventions and referrals in the District's database.

Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline – cont.

Notice to Parents/Guardians and Students

At the beginning of the school year, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall notify parents/guardians about the availability of District rules and procedures related to student behaviors and school climate.

The Superintendent or his/her designee shall also provide written notice of behavior rules to transfer students at the time of their enrollment in the District.

Parent programs that relate to how the school integrates Restorative Practices Response in the student discipline/behavior management system will be provided.

Annual Review/Discipline Committees

Both individual schools and the District will evaluate and monitor the effectiveness of the school behavior plan using school disciplinary data disaggregated by race, ethnicity and gender of student. This will allow schools and the District to identify areas of need; target areas of concern; access professional development, supports, and services; and revise school procedures as needed.

In consideration with the Connecticut Positive School Climate Policy, schools will review student discipline data.

The review will include the following:

1. Intervention and prevention strategies.
2. The number of referrals, in school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, and referrals to law enforcement, disaggregated by race, ethnicity, age, grade, disability, and gender of the students, where available.
3. Differences in referrals among staff members.
4. The extent to which the policy, including but not limited to disciplinary action, is consistently applied to all students.
5. Review of Restorative Practices and their impact on student discipline and climate.

Based on the review, schools will make changes consistent with the intent of this and other related policies.

Schools are encouraged to establish a discipline committee including school personnel, parents and students to develop, monitor, and evaluate school discipline policy and school climate. The use of school discipline data is recommended in this process.

Policy Adopted:

GROTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Groton, Connecticut

Community Relations

Use of School Facilities

School buildings and school facilities belong to the Town of Groton and are provided to the Board of Education (Board) for the purpose of offering an educational program to the children of the District. The Board believes that the use of ~~such~~ facilities should be encouraged for legitimate, for-profit, non-profit, charitable, and community services organizations which are nonexclusive and open to the general public and when such use does not interfere with the educational programs of the schools. ~~Such~~ Purposes may include organizations which are not directly related to the schools. ~~Such~~ Organizations may use the facilities when ~~activities comply such use complies~~ with the law, ~~does~~ not result in additional costs to the ~~school~~ District, and does not present an inconvenience to the students.

All applications for use of school facilities must be made in writing to the Superintendent ~~of Schools~~ or designee who may grant the request when the building principal involved has ascertained ~~the~~ availability ~~of the facility~~ on the date or dates requested. The Superintendent ~~of Schools~~ may revoke permission or refuse applications for use of a facility for cause. Priority will be given to school related organizations.

In cases where buildings or equipment are to be utilized on Saturdays, Sundays, or holidays, or any other time when custodial personnel are not normally scheduled, user fees will be charged to the using organization. The Board ~~of Education~~ will set rates annually as recommended by the Superintendent ~~of Schools~~ (see appendix A). Once approved, the fees will not be waived except for the Town of Groton and those organizations having a substantial and continuing school relationship as determined by the Superintendent ~~of Schools~~ or designee.

Eligible Organizations and Priority of Use

1. Educational programs
2. Student activities
3. Administrative, faculty, or staff activities (includes parent-teacher groups)
4. Town department or agency activities (Parks and Recreation activities top priority)
5. Activities sponsored by and for organizations promoting the physical or cultural wellbeing of the citizens of Groton
6. Private organizations, private businesses, or enterprises located in or taxpayers to the Town of Groton
7. Out-of-town organizations

Rental fees and/or security deposits will be required for use of any equipment and consumable supplies authorized for use by the Superintendent ~~of Schools~~.

As a condition for approval of an application for use of facilities, applicants shall file with the Superintendent ~~of Schools~~ a certificate of insurance indicating a liability coverage of at least \$1,000,000, (one million) dollars with the Town of Groton and the Board ~~of Education~~ listed as additional insured. The Board ~~of Education~~ recognizes the following organizations as having a substantial and continuing school relationship:

- a) All recognized parent and parent-teacher organizations
- b) District approved Booster Club
- c) Fitch Senior High School Graduation Party, Inc.
- d) Groton Education Foundation
- e) Fitch Senior High School Alumni Foundation

The Board ~~of Education~~ will waive the required insurance for these groups.

Restrictions on Use of School Facilities

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Use of School Facilities (continued)

1. Illegal activities will not be tolerated and any violations may justify permanent restriction of the organization(s) involved.
2. Use or possession of alcoholic beverages or unauthorized controlled substances shall not be permitted on school property. There shall be no smoking or use of any tobacco products in school buildings or on school grounds.
3. Vendors shall be prohibited in school buildings or on school grounds, unless specifically approved by the Superintendent.
4. Inappropriate advertising and/or decorations shall not be allowed. Any advertising prior to the final approval is prohibited.
5. Activities which engender (i.e. racial or religious, refer to P 5145.4) prejudices or which are inimical to democracy are prohibited. No school facilities may be used by any individual, group, or society which advocates a social or political change by violence or revolution.
6. School facilities may not be used for the promotion of any commercial interest or private or corporate gain other than by a duly organized and recognized charity, unless specifically approved by the Superintendent.
7. **The Board, and/or its designee, reserves the right to determine the need for:** (a) the applying organization to have additional liability insurance; (b) police protection and traffic control; (c) a food service representative to be present when cafeteria equipment is in use; and (d) the presence of custodian(s) during the activity.
8. Permission shall not be granted for the purpose of providing sectarian instructions or dissemination of religious doctrine during the normal school day. To further provide for separation of church and state, use of school facilities for sectarian purposes may not begin until fifteen (15) minutes after the dismissal of students has occurred in the school.
9. Unleashed animals are not permitted on school grounds, and no animals are allowed in school facilities, with the exception of police dogs and service animals, unless specifically approved by the Building Administrator. All owners are required to clean up after their animals while on school property.
10. Each organization approved to use the school facilities is expected to fully comply with all applicable Board policies, rules, and regulations regarding the use of school facilities. The organization shall be held responsible and accountable for the behavior and actions of the individuals attending the activity. Violation of Board policies, rules, or regulations may result in immediate termination of the activity and may justify permanent restriction of the organization involved.

The Superintendent ~~of Schools~~ or designee shall set out rules and regulations for the use of school buildings as deemed necessary and shall ensure that a copy is forwarded to all organizations requesting the use of a school facility. Under special circumstances, and with notification to the Board, the Superintendent has the authority to waive any of the provisions above except for insurance requirements.

Legal Reference: CGS Sec. 10-239 (paragraphs A and B)

Policy adopted: February 8, 1993 (Effective 7/1/93)

Revised: May 8, 1995

Revised: June 9, 1997

Revised: September 27, 1999

Revised: December 14, 2009

Revised: July 25, 2011

Revised: June 22, 2015

Revised: January 22, 2018

GROTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Groton, Connecticut

Group 1: Functions of local government

Group 2: Local non-government, local charitable and/or local non-profit organizations

Group 3: Town-based, profit making organizations and any out of town organizations

**Groton Public Schools
Building and Grounds Rental Rate Schedule**

	Group 1, 2 & 3 Proposed Rate
Custodial (per custodian)	\$75/hr
Technician Staff	\$75/\$100hr (weekend/holiday) 2 hr min.
Police Officer (4-hour minimum)	\$75/hr
Security Staff	\$75/hr
Kitchen Staff	\$50 /\$75 weekend/holiday

Fee Schedule (includes utilities)

	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Location	Day rate	Day rate	Day rate
High School Auditorium	\$0	\$500	\$1,000
High School Cafeteria	\$0	\$500	\$1,000
High School Lobby (Main Street)	\$0	\$200	\$400
High School Gym (Large)	\$0	\$500	\$1,000
High School Gym (Small)	\$0	\$150	\$300
High School Football Field/Track	\$0	\$500	\$1,000
High School Football Field/Track Press Box	\$0	\$250	\$500
High School Baseball Field	\$0	\$500	\$1,000
High School Baseball Field Press Box	\$0	\$250	\$500
High School Tennis Courts	\$0	\$500	\$1,000
High School Parking Lot	\$0	\$200	\$400
Middle School Cafeteria	\$0	\$500	\$1,000
Middle School Gym	\$0	\$500	\$1,000
Middle School Dance Studio	\$0	\$250	\$500
Blackbox Studio	\$0	\$250	\$500
Elementary School Cafeteria	\$0	\$500	\$1,000
Elementary School Gym	\$0	\$500	\$1,000
Elementary Athletic Fields (softball, baseball)	\$0	\$500	\$1,000
Kitchen	\$0	\$250	\$500
Other Athletic Fields (not including middle school turf field)	\$0	\$500	\$1,000
Other Parking Lots	\$0	\$200	\$400

Fee schedule approved by Groton Public Schools on:
Revised:
Revised:

October 5, 2015
January 22, 2018

Community Relations

Use of School Facilities

Written requests for the use of school facilities by individuals or groups, other than those that are a part of the school program, shall be first made to the school principal, ~~who upon approval, will forward . After the request has been approved by the building principal it will be~~ forwarded to Central Office for approval by the Director of Finance following the confirmation of appropriate insurance. All approved programs shall have educational or community value. No program will be scheduled if it interferes with the normal use of the school facility for school purposes. A copy of the regulations governing use of facilities, and the fee schedule is attached. The attached rental request form must be ~~completed, filled out and must be approved by the building principal and who will then forward it to the Central Office for final approval.~~

Regulations for the Use of School Facilities

1. By order of the Fire Marshal, a school administrator, ~~or~~ the Athletic Director, ~~or~~ a designated school staff member, or a custodian must be present at all times when a school facility is in use. All posted occupancy limits must be observed; and in the event that a fire alarm is triggered for any reason, the building must be cleared immediately. The building will then be under control of the fire official in charge and may not be re-entered until ~~said official gives~~ authorization ~~is given~~.
2. Organizations using the school facilities will be responsible for any damage to school property during its use. A certificate of insurance naming the Town of Groton and the Groton Board of Education (~~Board~~), as additional insureds must be submitted at least one week prior to the scheduled event in the amount of \$1,000,000 for property damage/bodily injury. All groups must have liability insurance of \$1,000,000 listing ~~Groton~~ Board of Education and the Town of Groton as additional insureds.
3. Organizations may be required to obtain the services of police officers or firemen if such is considered necessary for the protection of school property and/or traffic safety. It will be the responsibility of the organization to make arrangements directly with the applicable town agency if their presence is deemed necessary by the Superintendent's Office.
4. Alcohol and/or illegal drugs are not permitted at functions held on school property.
5. Use of any tobacco product is NOT PERMITTED in school buildings or on school grounds.
6. Use of the school facility by the requesting organization will be confined only to those areas specifically requested and approved by the Superintendent ~~or designee of Schools~~.
7. At the beginning of any public gathering at which 25 or more persons will be present for the entire time, an announcement shall be read regarding emergency exits, clear aisles, and smoking regulations.
8. Each applicant organization is responsible for the conduct and supervision of all participants ~~and/or guests~~. Representatives from the applicant organization must remain on the premises throughout the function and must maintain control at all times. Names and addresses of all designated persons in charge must be submitted with the application, ~~and they~~ will be held responsible for the supervision of the participants and any property damage. ~~Only representatives of the organization, not school personnel are responsible for supervision of children or adults. The school custodian is not a supervisor of children or adults.~~

Community Relations

Use of School Facilities

9. With the exception of fire and police, custodian, security, kitchen, and technical personnel will be billed by the Finance Director's ~~Superintendent's~~ Office. Fees will be charged as listed on the attached Schedule of Fees, and financial obligations are to be met within two weeks following receipt of the bill. For profit groups ~~are~~ must have all rental fees paid two weeks in ADVANCE of the scheduled event.
10. The use of kitchens will be permitted only when the facility is supervised by a Groton Public Schools food service staff member and a review of the application by The Food Services Director. Notice of approval will be forwarded to the applicant with the standard approval form. If staffing of the kitchen is required, the Food Services Director will schedule ~~and the organization will be responsible for the cost.~~
11. The use of a school facility does not include school equipment, except that which is already a part of the facility. Permission may be granted to use equipment (i.e., projectors, microphones, etc.,) if specifically requested on the Use of Facility form. If an administrator determines that an operator is required, the requesting organization will be billed accordingly.
12. Only UL approved, grounded, heavy-duty extension cords may be used. No nails or screws may be driven into any part of the facility ~~without approval.~~
13. Nothing shall be displayed or exhibited by any group without prior permission from the building principal.
14. No scenery, ramps, extensions or ~~similar structures the like~~ will be constructed in such a manner as to hinder emergency exits.
15. No pet shows, donkey ball games, or other activities involving animals will be permitted within school facility.
16. If schools are closed due to inclement weather, the facility use is automatically canceled. All prepaid fees will be returned in that case with the exception of cost incurred in the preparation for the event.
17. ~~It is expected that~~ The facility used will be completely cleared, no longer than 24 hours before the start of the next scheduled school day.
18. The use of a school facility will be evaluated at the conclusion of the event. Any disregard of the regulations may result in the refusal of any future use by the sponsoring organization.
19. Any exception to the above regulations must be granted by the ~~Superintendent or designee Board of Education~~ prior to the use of the facility.
20. All organizations using the facilities must do so in accordance with all Groton Public Schools policies and regulations.

Use of School Facilities

21. Funding, Management and Allocation of Facility Rentals

- a. The Board ~~of Education~~ has the responsibility to allocate school facilities revenue to support District programs and services. ~~The Board directs~~ The Superintendent or designee ~~shall to~~ direct facility rental revenue to the district-wide Student Activities Fund in an equitable manner.
- b. For Profit groups ~~are required to leave~~ a \$500 deposit at the time of the school facility use request, to be returned if no damage is incurred.

Regulation adopted: October 5, 2015
Reviewed: January 22, 2018

GROTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Groton, Connecticut

P 1110.1

Community Relations**Parent Involvement****Introduction**

The Groton Board of Education (Board) shall provide students with equal access to quality ducation. The Board recognizes that school success is a partnership shared by the District and families, including those who play a roll children's well-being. To this end, the Board, will establish programs and practices that enhance involvement of all and reflect specific needs of students and their families.

~~The Groton Board of Education (Board) recognizes that a child's educational success is a partnership shared by school and family. A child's family includes all those who play an important role in the child's well being. The Board of Education supports and encourages active family involvement. To this end, the Groton Board of Education, in conjunction with families, will establish programs and practices that enhance family involvement and reflect specific needs of students and their families.~~

The District will develop, implement and conduct regular evaluations of family involvement programs in each school. In order to achieve this goal, the following standards will be promoted:

- **RESPONSIBILITY**

The Board will establish policies that support and respect family responsibilities and diversity as well as link parents to programs and resources within the community. All families will be provided opportunities for involvement.

- **COMMUNICATION**

Family and school communications are two-way, regular, meaningful, and respectful. Effective communication requires family and school, initiated contact where both parties provide vital information about a child's strengths, challenges, and accomplishments. The Board will provide support, time, and ~~presentations~~ training to school staff and families to implement and sustain effective communication methods.

- **LEARNING COMMUNITY**

Families play an integral role in student learning. Educators recognize and acknowledge the family's role as the primary facilitator of their children's education. Student achievement increases when families are active in the learning process.

- **CLIMATE**

Families are welcome in all Groton Public Schools (GPS). Their support and assistance are actively sought in their child's social, emotional, and academic development. Support and coordination are provided to school staff and families to implement and sustain active participation and volunteer opportunities. ~~The Groton Public School System~~ GPS, in the judgment of the administration, reserves the right to restrict access to anyone who is disruptive or interferes with the education process.

- **COMMUNITY RESOURCES**

Community resources are made available to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning.

Parent Involvement – cont.

- PARTNERS**

Families and educators have a joint responsibility to make informed decisions related to all aspects of the education provided to Groton's youth. District and school compacts will be developed to facilitate these partnerships.

CONCLUSION

~~A primary District goal is to provide all of Groton's children with equal access to a quality education. Family engagement is essential to improved student achievement. Consistent with the standards set for No Child Left Behind (NCLB), a successful family involvement program will include, but not be limited to the preceding components. Professional development activities for staff as well as family education opportunities will be provided by the Board of Education.~~

RESOURCES**Federal/National Resources**

~~For information on No Child Left Behind and the U.S. Department of Education, call toll-free at 1-800-USA-LEARN (872-53276), or check the websites listed below:~~

~~No Child Left Behind <http://www.NoChildLeftBehind.gov>~~

~~U.S. Department of Education <http://www.ed.gov>~~

~~The White House <http://www.whitehouse.gov>~~

~~What Works Clearinghouse <http://www.w-w-c.org>~~

~~For more information about national standards and parent involvement program resources from the National PTA, see: <http://www.pta.org/parentinvolvement/index.asp>~~

State and Local Resources

~~Connecticut State Department of Education <http://www.state.ct.us/sde/>~~

~~Groton Public Schools <http://www.groton.k12.ct.us>~~

Other

~~Adequate Yearly Progress <http://www.nclb.gov/start/facts/yearly.html>~~

~~Accountability <http://www.nclb.gov/next/fags/accountability.html>~~

~~(cf. 6172.4 Title I Parent Involvement)~~

Legal Reference: ~~Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, 20 U.S.C. 6301-6514~~
 Connecticut General Statutes
10-221(g)(1)-(3) Boards of Education to prescribe rule(s), policies, and procedures

Policy adopted: November 10, 2003

GROTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
 Groton, Connecticut

At the June 10, 2026, special meeting of the Board of Education, I served as acting chairperson in the board chair's absence. Initially, I stated we would vote on reducing full positions before half positions. However, after two board members voiced concerns regarding meeting efficiency and timeliness, I modified that approach as the meeting progressed.

Specifically, during a vote on building substitutes, a member recommended bundling two positions into one vote. I accommodated this, the vote failed, and—without a motion to reconsider—we moved forward. On the next vote concerning the first of four tutor positions, eliminating a full tutor position failed (3–5), while the vote to reduce it by half passed (7–1). For the subsequent three votes on building substitutes, based on the outcome of that first tutor vote and in the interest of running an efficient meeting, I opted to present the half-reduction vote first rather than starting with a full reduction. Those votes all passed (6–2).

Later in the meeting, a board member publicly admonished me, accusing me of modifying the voting process to "sway" the outcome based on personal goals rather than serving the will of the board. Specifically, the member stated: (quote) "when we are running the meeting, and we are trying to vote, we need to do it as neutral as possible and not try to sway the vote".

In the interest of keeping a consequential meeting focused on managing budget cuts imposed by other town bodies, I chose not to address that assumption at the time. However, I want to state clearly now that I was not swaying the voting process to achieve any predetermined outcome. The modifications were made in response to board concerns about efficiency, applied consistently across similar position cuts, and followed a clear expression of support from the board for half-FTE reductions.

Publicly admonishing an acting chair is unprofessional and damages the credibility of this Board, particularly when such accusations rely entirely on a single member's personal assumptions about intent. While members may hold differing perspectives, making public assertions about another member's motives—especially during critical votes with direct financial implications for our schools and students—is counterproductive. As a well-educated and advised body representing Groton's residents, public accusations regarding the integrity of our budget reduction votes are both personally upsetting and damaging to our collective goals.