

**GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
AUGUST 24, 2026 @ 6:00 P.M.
CENTRAL OFFICE ROOM 11, HYBRID**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Beverly Washington – Chairperson, Adrian Johnson – Vice Chairperson, Andrea Ackerman (remote), Mitch Shinbrot, Ian Thomas (remote), Jay Weitlauf (remote), Jennifer White, Michael Whitney (remote, arrived at 7:10)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sean Corcoran

ALSO PRESENT: Susan Austin, Anne Marie Mancini, Denise Doolittle (remote), Sam Kilpatrick, Rita Parciak

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

Mrs. Washington thanked all the staff members for getting MM ready to get MM ready to receive students and a special thanks to Ernie Koschmieder and his staff.

III. COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

Mr. Shinbrot made an observation regarding curb side voting. He requested that Principals reserve a place to have curb side voting in the future.

IV. RESPONSE TO COMMENTS FROM CITIZENS

NONE

V. STUDENT LIAISON REPORT

NONE

VI. SUPERINTENDENT AND ADMINISTRATION REPORTS

A. Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent Report

1. Summer Curriculum/Professional Learning

Superintendent Austin noted the Summer Camps and the teachers working in the camps; staff working on the Robotics project, the MM project; and the Machine Shop project and that all spaces are looking great.

Dr. Mancini noted the following:

- Dedicated curriculum was developed; comprehensive revisions were made; and instructional transitions.
- 3 new courses are coming forward
- 25 courses were revised, mostly at the high school level
- GMS Math and ELA giving opportunity

VI. SUPERINTENDENT AND ADMINISTRATION REPORTS – cont.

- Preparing for IM and ELA and will be making the transition to Wit and Wisdom
- Professional Learning – elementary principals attend PLC at Work institute held in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Some elementary teachers
- attend a elementary Science teachers' for Professional Learning with Ben Moon.

B. Reports and Information from Staff

1. Director of Finance (Attachment #1) – Mrs. Parciak reported on the End-of-Year FY26 Forecast and the Healthcare Report.
2. Director of Facilities – Mr. Kilpatrick reported:
 - a. Cement bids came in high and we went back out to bid again;
 - b. Pricing electrical and the Machine shop;
 - c. Have spent several days with the Fire Marshals;
 - d. MM Early Childhood Center has taken up many days;
 - e. Had a meeting today at MM regarding the traffic flow;
 - f. Had mandatory training for Maintenance department;
 - g. Will have water retesting at MM.

VII. COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Policy – There was no report.
2. Curriculum – There was no report.
3. Finance – Mrs. White noted that the Finance/Facilities committee met and had a tour of the MM facility.
4. Communications – Mr. Weitlauf noted that the Communications Committee met on August 13, 2026, and that Mrs. Beyus gave a comprehensive report.
5. Ad Hoc Long-term Space Planning Committee – Mr. Johnson noted the long-term plan regarding Robotics and that the committee identified the most needs.
6. LEARN – There was no report.
7. Athletic Fields – There was no report.
8. Mility Superintendent Liaison – There was no report.
9. Town & City Councils/RTM/BOE Liaison – There was no report.
10. AGSA/GEA Liaison – There was no report.

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

A. Consent Agenda

- MOTION: Johnson, White: To approve the Consent Agenda with the following corrections:
- Adrian Johnson was in attendance;

VIII. ACTION ITEMS – cont.

- Mr. Thomas was in attendance;
- Mr. Whitney was not in attendance;
- The need for the attachment of Mrs. Bumgardner's statement;

PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY

B. Old Business

1. Discussion and possible action regarding a second reading of policy P 5144.12 Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline (Attachment #2)

MOTION: White, Johnson:

To approve policy P 5144.12 Challenging Behavior Prevention: Restorative Practices Response in Student Discipline

YES – Johnson, White, Weitlauf, Whitney, Thomas, Ackerman

NO – Shinbrot

ABSTAINED – Washington

PASSED

A. New Business

NONE

IX. INFORMATION AND PROPOSALS

- A. Letters, communications, and comments by Board members on meeting items and any other items in the jurisdiction.

- Mrs. Washington extended a thank you to Justine who set up the payment system for parents to pay for student lunches.
- Mr. Thomas asked that Wednesday's Special Meeting would allow for remote attendance. Mrs. Washington denied his request and explained that she doesn't know who is with the person's house who would be attending remotely. Dr. Ackerman stated that she agrees with Mrs. Washington position. Mr. Johnson stated that he agrees with Mr. Thomas's position as well as Mr. Whitney. Lastly, Mr. Thomas stated that he was in favor of a Hybrid meeting for Wednesday.

X. ADVANCE PLANNING

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

As noted in the agenda.

- B. Suggested Agenda Items

NONE

XI.. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ackerman, Shinbrot:

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.
PASSED – UNANIMOUSLY



Groton Town and Board of Education

MDG Underwriting Monthly Update – Data through June 2026

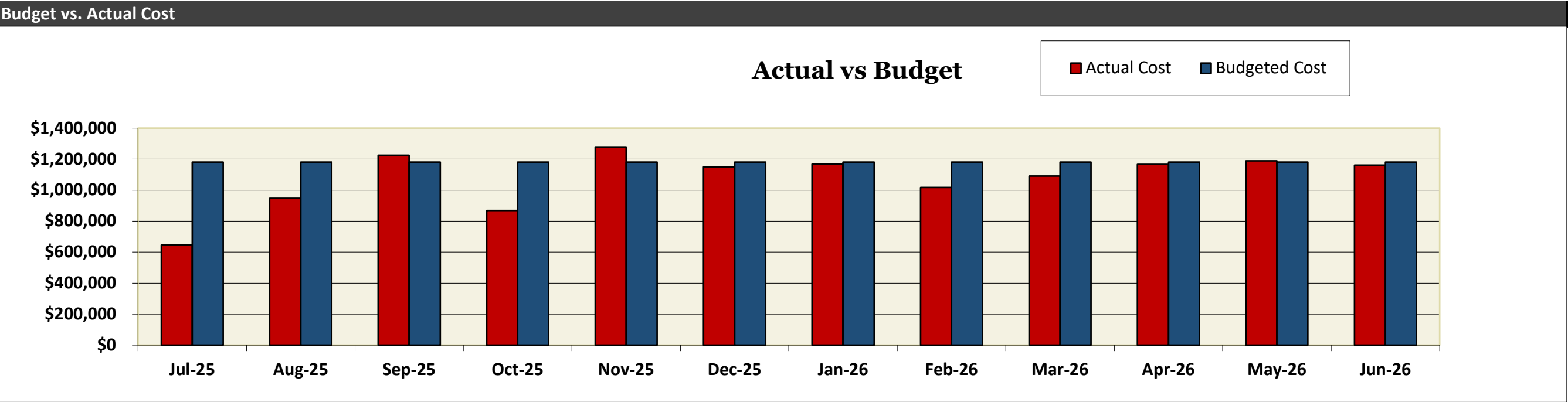
June results were favorable to expectations. Town costs finished at 97.8% of budget, BOE costs finished at 98.3% of Anthem expected, and the combined group finished at 98.1% of expected cost for the month. Key observations for the current 12-month period compared with the prior 12-month period are summarized below:

- Enrollment remained relatively stable, decreasing approximately 1% year over year.
- Routine claims under \$50,000 increased 12% for the Town and 8% for the BOE.
- Mid-level claims between \$50,000 and \$200,000 decreased 5% for the Town and increased 7% for the BOE.
- Net medical and Rx claims per employee per month, excluding claims over \$200,000, increased 3% for the Town and 9% for the BOE.
- Large-claim activity remains elevated, with 8 Town claimants and 7 BOE claimants exceeding \$200,000.

Large claims continue to be the primary driver of year-over-year volatility. The combined group had 15 claimants above \$200,000 in the current 12-month period, compared with 7 in the prior period, and paid claims above \$200,000 increased 216% year over year. While mid-level claims between \$50,000 and \$200,000 increased modestly by 2%, the claimant count declined from 81 to 76. Excluding claims above \$200,000, net medical claims per employee per month increased 7%, indicating moderate underlying trend pressure outside of the largest claimants.

For the plan year paid July 2025 through June 2026, total costs finished at 92.2% of expected, favorable by \$1,693,197. Despite elevated large-claim activity, overall plan performance remains favorable to budget through June.

Self Insured - All Coverages										
All Enrollees										
Claim/Admin. Cost										
Date	Lives	Net Medical Paid		Dental Paid Claims	Total Net Paid Claims	Total Fixed Costs	Total Cost	Anthem Renewal Monthly	Variance - Total	Actual/Estimated BOE Anthem Renewal
		Claims	Rx Paid Claims						Cost vs BOE Anthem Renewal	
Jul-25	471	\$371,330	\$119,960	\$23,699	\$514,989	\$130,557	\$645,546	\$1,181,030	(\$535,484)	54.7%
Aug-25	468	\$641,378	\$150,516	\$25,998	\$817,892	\$129,824	\$947,716	\$1,181,030	(\$233,314)	80.2%
Sep-25	472	\$814,898	\$259,128	\$19,295	\$1,093,322	\$130,802	\$1,224,123	\$1,181,030	\$43,093	103.6%
Oct-25	471	\$488,021	\$223,238	\$27,200	\$738,459	\$130,557	\$869,016	\$1,181,030	(\$312,014)	73.6%
Nov-25	470	\$949,619	\$179,181	\$19,789	\$1,148,588	\$130,313	\$1,278,901	\$1,181,030	\$97,871	108.3%
Dec-25	471	\$745,413	\$254,735	\$19,720	\$1,019,868	\$130,557	\$1,150,426	\$1,181,030	(\$30,605)	97.4%
Jan-26	475	\$784,420	\$228,633	\$23,583	\$1,036,637	\$131,535	\$1,168,172	\$1,181,030	(\$12,859)	98.9%
Feb-26	473	\$692,722	\$175,093	\$18,932	\$886,747	\$131,046	\$1,017,793	\$1,181,030	(\$163,237)	86.2%
Mar-26	476	\$655,640	\$276,915	\$26,739	\$959,295	\$131,779	\$1,091,074	\$1,181,030	(\$89,956)	92.4%
Apr-26	477	\$735,579	\$277,310	\$21,210	\$1,034,099	\$132,023	\$1,166,123	\$1,181,030	(\$14,908)	98.7%
May-26	477	\$768,728	\$264,800	\$22,678	\$1,056,206	\$132,023	\$1,188,229	\$1,181,030	\$7,199	100.6%
Jun-26	477	\$725,879	\$280,995	\$22,154	\$1,029,028	\$132,023	\$1,161,052	\$1,181,030	(\$19,979)	98.3%
YTD	5678	\$8,373,627	\$2,690,506	\$270,998	\$11,335,131	\$1,573,041	\$12,908,171	\$14,172,364	(\$1,264,193)	91.1%
PEPY		\$17,697	\$5,686	\$573	\$23,956	\$3,324	\$27,280			



Total fixed costs is taken from segmented Anthem Renewal dated 3/18/25 plus Network Access Fees of \$185,718
*BOE monthly renewal based on non-weighted Anthem segmented renewal dated 3/25/25

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