

**GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 14, 2026 @ 6:00 P.M.
CENTRAL OFFICE, ROOM 11/HYBRID**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Beverly Washington – Chairperson, Adrian Johnson – Vice Chairperson (remote), Andrea Ackerman (remote), Sean Corcoran (remote), Mitch Shinbrot (remote), Ian Thomas (remote), Jay Weitlauf (remote), Jennifer White, Michael Whitney (remote/arrived at 6:40 p.m.)

ALSO PRESENT: Susan Austin, Anne Marie Mancini (remote), Rita Parciak, Sam Kilpatrick, Ernie Koschmieder, Clint Kennedy, Rebecca Beyus

I. CALL TO ORDER – Mrs. Beverly Washington, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

II. Review of August 10, 2026, meeting Minutes – The Board approved the August 10, 2026, meeting minutes.

III. Back to School

Superintendent Austin noted the following:

- Smooth beginning of the school year.
- Opening of MM with 176 4year olds who all ride the bus.
- Treehouse is starting this week.
- FHS is going well
- There are 35 new teachers.

IV. Out-of-district Tuition Rates for the 2026-2027 School Year – Attachment #1

Mrs. Parciak gave an overview of the 2026-2027 Tuition Rates.

V. Discuss re: Forms of Payment for Food Services

Mr. Koschmieder reviewed the cash loss system implemented this year re: the pros and cons and how it's working. This topic will be added to the next COW agenda for further discussion.

VI. Discussion re: Supplemental Grant Disbursement

Superintendent Austin shared the need for a truck with a plow attached and for a truck for the plumber. She noted that the district is receiving \$250,000 from the Town and an addition amount in the early part of next year.

Mr. Corcoran requested the work order and an ageing safety report.

VII. Develop Budget Priorities and Process

- Jennifer White asked Board members for any suggested priorities.
- Ian Thomas requested that the board vote to use a Committee of the Whole format for the budget sessions.
- Mike Whitney stated that the board received the principals' requests for additional funding toward the end of the budget process and would like to see those requests earlier in the budget process, such as in November. He also asked to look at the feasibility of going back to having three assistant principals between MR and TR.
- Adrian Johnson stated that he'd like to see if there would be any savings in more efficient class sizes.

VIII. Communications Update – Attachment #2

Mrs. Beyus gave a Communications Update report.

IX. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ackerman, Corcoran: The meeting adjourned at 8:26 p.m.

Groton Public Schools**FY27 Proposed tuition rates for non-Groton resident students**

	Approved	Proposed 4.6% Increase
	FY2025-2026 Tuition Rates	FY2026-2027 Tuition Rates
General Education Tuition Rates		
Pre-K	\$ 16,727	\$ 17,496
Elementary School	\$ 16,727	\$ 17,496
Middle School	\$ 17,736	\$ 18,552
High School	\$ 17,736	\$ 18,552

ADDITIONAL COSTS**Special Education Program Costs**

Self-contained (Academy/NBA Program/Transition Academy)	\$ 19,203	\$ 18,470
ABA Program	\$ 28,709	\$ 29,580
Multiple Disabilities Program	\$ 28,709	\$ 28,938
Resource Room	\$ 11,111	\$ 11,264

General Education Testing Costs

AP/IB Classes	Cost of test	Cost of test
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Additional Services (based on market/contractual increases)

OT/PT	\$157/hour (group rate for 2 or more - \$78.50/hour)	\$166/hour (group rate for 2 or more - \$83/hour)
Speech	\$157/hour (group rate for 2 or more - \$78.50/hour)	\$166/hour (group rate for 2 or more - \$83/hour)
Counseling/Social Skills	\$157/hour (group rate for 2 or more - \$78.50/hour)	\$166/hour (group rate for 2 or more - \$83/hour)
BCBA	\$168/hour	\$178/hour
Evaluations-OT	\$750/hour	\$773/hour
Evaluations-PT	\$462/hour	\$476/hour
Evaluations-SLP	\$923/hour	\$951/hour
Evaluations-Psych	\$1068/hour	\$1101/hour
Evaluations-Educational	\$808/hour	\$833/hour
Evaluations-ASD	\$1,039/hou	\$1,071/hou
Evaluations-FBA	\$1,644/hour	\$1,694/hour
Evaluations-Developmental	\$808/hour	\$833/hour
RBTs	\$28.20/hour	\$28.20/hour
Paraprofessionals	\$20.83/hour	\$21.73/hour



Communications Update

September 14, 2026

Back to School: Media Coverage

Media Highlights & Outreach

- **Principal Feature – *The Day*** – Feature on Dr. Lisa Schultz, Principal of Catherine Kolnaski Magnet School → [Link to Article](#)
- **Mary Morrisson Meet & Greet – *The Day*** – Front-page coverage highlighting the opening of the new Early Childhood Center → [Link to Article](#)
- **Mentor Program – [GMTV interview](#)** with Mentor Program Director Jennifer Anthony

Upcoming Coverage

- Teacher of the Year & Educators Rising
- D.R.E.A.M. Advanced Manufacturing
- Ribbon Cutting events for MMECC and D.R.E.A.M.

Back to School: Communications and Outreach

- **Family Onboarding** – Connecting families to PowerSchool, ParentSquare, and SchoolCafé
- **Welcome Communications** – District and school welcome messages including updates and reminders including schedules and procedures and attendance
- **Back-to-School Website** – Updated centralized resources, key dates, links, and information for families on district services including transportation, food services, and special education
- **Forms & Information Updates** – Contact information, dismissal plans, transportation, and other start-of-year forms

Mary Morrisson Early Childhood Center

Phases of Outreach and Communications

January	March-June	July/August	September /October
SPREADING THE WORD <i>Awareness and Engagement</i> Sharing the plan and building community awareness for the proposed center, state of early childhood opportunities in SECT and gathering input from families.	REACHING FAMILIES <i>Registration Call-to-Action</i> Encouraging registration and sharing information through widespread community outreach and targeted communications to prospective and eligible families.	GETTING READY <i>Preparing Families for Back-to-School</i> Helping families prepare through enrollment confirmations and communications about district services and back-to-school details.	OPENING OUR DOORS <i>Welcome and Celebration</i> Celebrating with the community and capturing the the milestone moments, with the opening of the new center and first days together with families.

Mary Morrisson ECC Communications Update

- **Targeted Outreach** – Communications to current, screened, and prospective families
- **Transition & Readiness** – Updates and resources to prepare families
- **Registration Outreach** – Ongoing updates, reminders, and notifications
- **Awareness & Promotion** – Website, social media, and media outreach
- **Signage & Welcome Materials** – New and refreshed signage, lawn signs, banners
- **Family Engagement** – Meet & Greet, Back to School Night

Full presentation to Communications Committee on August 13, 2026 →



Data Dashboard - 2026-2027 Updates

- **Updated for New School Year** – New data and resources
- **Centralized View** – KPIs aligned with the GPS Strategic Plan
- **Interactive Access** – Tiles allow users to quickly explore data by topic
- **Transparency & Accountability** – District progress and performance data in one easy-to-find location
- **State Data Connections** – Links to Connecticut State Department of Education data updated throughout the year



www.grotonschools.org/data

ParentSquare Highlights

- **Posts and Alerts** – News and information sharing keeps parents informed and connected
- **Secure Documents** – Expanded secure digital delivery of student documents for report cards, compliance letters, state reports
 - State Compliance
 - Cost Savings & Tracking
 - Staff Engagement
 - Parent Reach and Tracking
- **Two Way Communication** – Parents engage in 1:1 messaging, comment on posts, appreciate and share posts, complete forms, sign-up for appts and more



31,746

Secure Docs
distributed in
SY25-26

ParentSquare Highlights

- **Growing Platform Use and Efficiencies** – Year over year growth and adoption of ParentSquare tools across schools, departments, and families and integration with PowerSchool and the district website
- **ParentSquare Pay** – Digital payments to simplify fee collection
- **Attendance Matters**
 - Connecting and engaging with parents on absenteeism and interventions for chronic absenteeism PreK-12
 - Launching Attendance Plus features Pre-K through Elementary

ParentSquare – How are we reaching parents?

EMAIL

- 4,134 (85%)
Parents with emails
- 3,946 (81%) Opted
to receive emails

APP

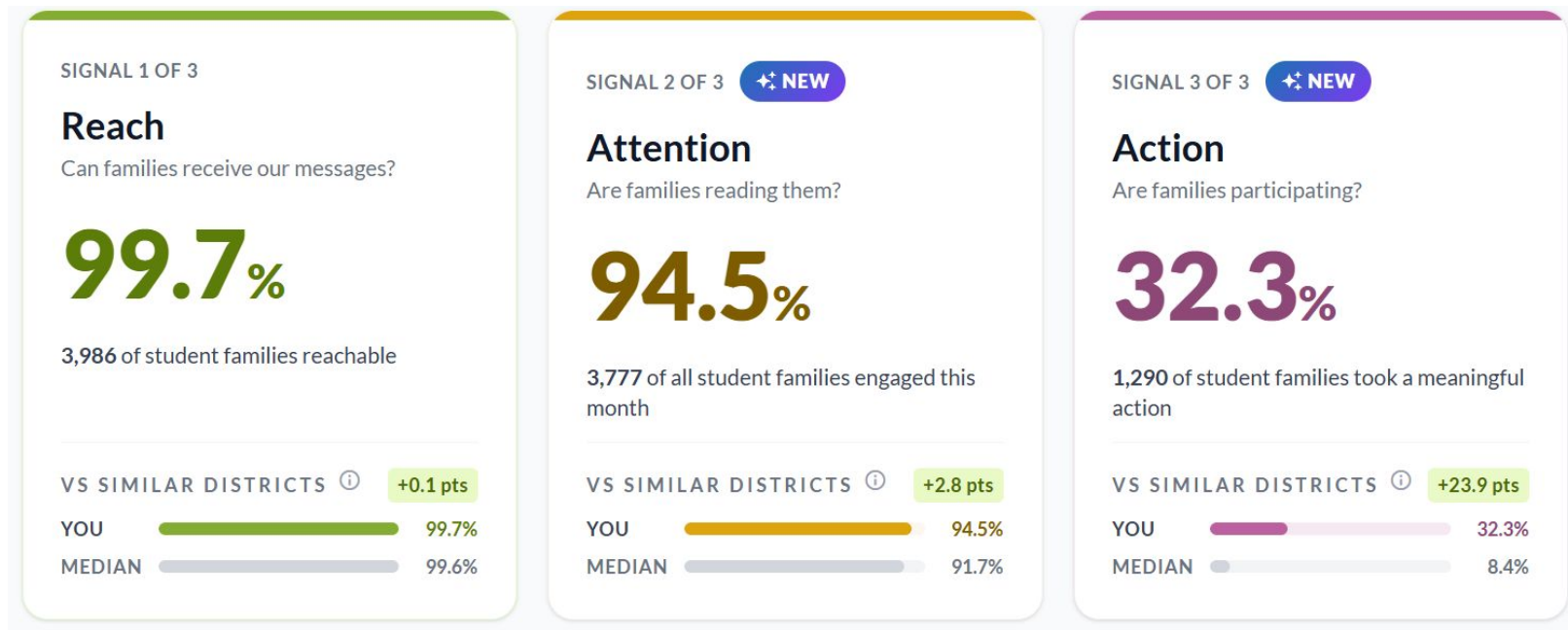
- 3,103 (64%) Parents
with app
- 2,664 (55%)
Receiving
notifications

TEXTS

- 4,854 (100%)
Parents with
phones
- 4,639 (95%)
Opted to receive
texts

112 parents/guardians district-wide have a landline.

ParentSquare - August 2026 Metrics



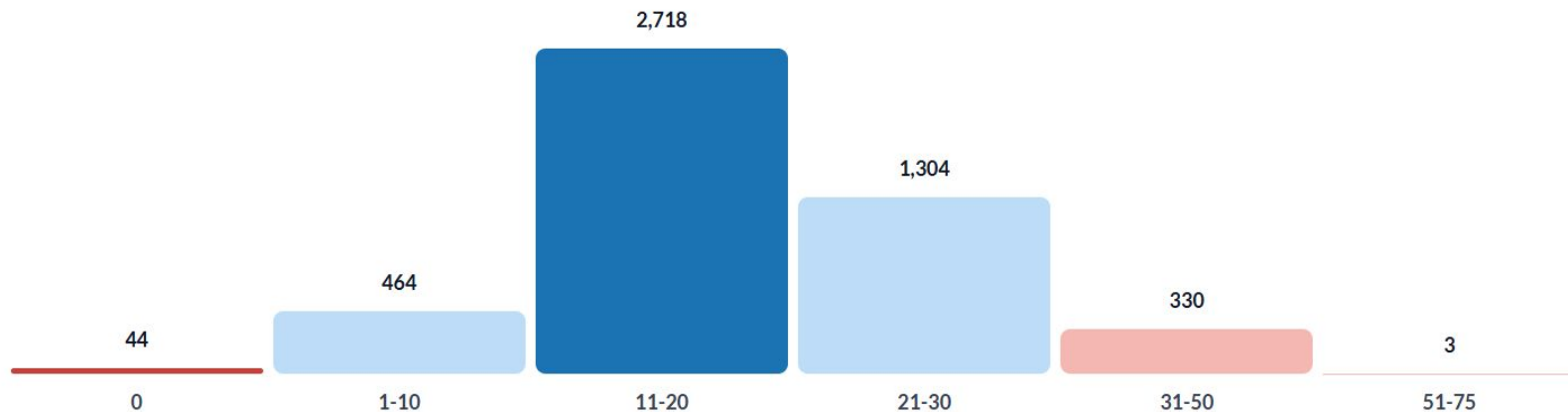
ParentSquare - August Metrics

Volume distribution

The median parent was sent 17 messages. One was sent 56.

MESSAGES RECEIVED PER PARENT • AUGUST

4,863 parents



Family Engagement – District and School Events

- Back-to-School Nights and Events
- Math & Literacy Nights
- Magnet Theme Events
- Concerts & Performances
- Athletic Events and Club Expos
- Parent-Teacher Conferences
- Veterans Day Assemblies and Breakfasts
- Parent Information Series
- Art Gallery Receptions
- College and Career Fair
- Curriculum Specific Nights
- Program/Curriculum Nights and Info Sessions
- PTO Events, meetings and Booster Club
- Early Childhood Fair

Family Engagement – Parent Info Series

- **8-Part Series** – Designed to connect families with information, resources, and support throughout the school year
- **First Session: Back-to-School Routines** – Kicking off the series with practical strategies for families
- **Family-Friendly Access** – Dinner and childcare provided to support participation
- **Strong Early Interest** – Approximately 40 parents/guardians registered for the first session



SEPTEMBER 23
5–6:30PM

GPS Parent INFORMATION SESSION

Groton Public Schools invites you to join us at the in-person kickoff of our **Parent Information Series** at the newly reopened Mary Morrisson Early Childhood Center!

Kim Shepardson, LCSW, IMH-E Mentor, will facilitate this 8-session series.

First Topic Session: Back-to-School Routines
Organizational Skills, Screen Time, Home/School Communication

Dinner and Childcare will be provided.
Registration is required. Fill out the ParentSquare Form.

Future Topics will be based on feedback from participants

Dates of the 8-part series:
SEP 23, OCT 21, NOV 18, DEC 16
JAN 20, FEB 24, MAR 24, MAY 19

A virtual option will be available for additional dates

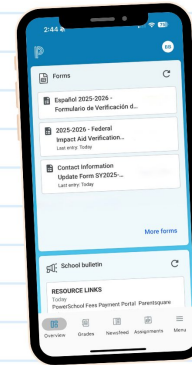
RSVP TODAY in ParentSquare



Coming Soon! Impact Aid 2026

- **Digital Completion / Building on Success** – Targeted messaging and informational campaigns
 - 2025 digital Impact Aid form completion exceed the total combined paper and digital completion from 2024.
- **Family Outreach** – Video messaging, reminders, and other messaging updates helped families understand the process and encouraged timely completion.
- **School Follow-up** – In-person support for families during Fall conferences

It's Time to Fill Out
Your Student's
Impact Aid Survey
in **PowerSchool**.



Login and complete
your form today!

- No income questions
- Confidential
- Takes less than one minute



For PowerSchool help, go to
www.grotonschools.org/powerschool.

