

**GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 13, 2026 @ 6:00 P.M.
CENTRAL OFFICE, ROOM 11/HYBRID**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Adrian Johnson – Vice Chairperson, Andrea Ackerman (remote), Sean Corcoran (remote/left around 7:00 p.m.), Mitch Shinbrot, Ian Thomas (remote), Jay Weitlauf (remote/arrived at 6:23 p.m.), Jennifer White, Michael Whitney (remote)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Beverly Washington – Chairperson,

ALSO PRESENT: Susan Austin, Anne Marie Mancini, Lauren Casini (remote), Denise Doolittle, Sarah Beth Stonoha, Julie Field (remote), Lisa Schultz (remote)

I. CALL TO ORDER – Mr. Adrian Johnson, Vice Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:06 p.m.

II. Review of September 14, 2026, meeting Minutes –

MOTION: Shinbrot, White: The Board approved the September 14, 2026, meeting minutes with correct to item V. with the removal “that the Board had consensus to return to the old system” and to leave “to put the topic on the next COW agenda for further discussion.”
PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY

III. Discussion re: the Learner Engagement and Attendance Program Grant

Dr. Mancini gave an overview of the Learner Engagement and Attendance Program grant:

- The grant is in the amount of \$85,000
- It will be for improving attendance rates especially at FHS

IV. Discussion re: High-Dosage Tutoring Program Grant

Dr. Mancini gave an overview of the High-Dosage Tutoring Program grant:

- The grant is in the amount of \$50,000
- Will be hiring a Math Tutor
- Will be targeting 8th grade students

V. ELA Tier 2 & Tier 3 Interventions & Pre-referral Process to Special Education – Attachment #1

Mr. Johnson read a statement submitted by Christine Johnson to the state of Connecticut in 2021 in reference to proposed legislation.

Mrs. Doolittle gave an overview of the ELA Tier 2 & Tier 3 Interventions & Pre-referral Process to Special Education.

VI. Enrollment Update – Attachment #3

Lauren Casini gave an updated review of enrollment.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ackerman, White: The meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Tiered Literacy Interventions & The Pre-Referral Process for Special Education (PreK-8)

Groton Public Schools
October 13, 2026



ELA Instructional Focus

The five components of reading instruction based on the Science of Reading:

1. Phonemic Awareness

- ❖ Heggerty, UFLI- Rhyming, Phoneme Segmenting, Blending, Phoneme Deletion

2. Phonics

- ❖ UFLI, Nonsense Word Fluency Practice, Letter Identification, Letter Sound Identification, Decoding, Encoding, Blending

3. Fluency

- ❖ Accuracy, Rate, Prosody, Phrasing, Starts at the word level with CVC words and builds to sentence level and then passage level

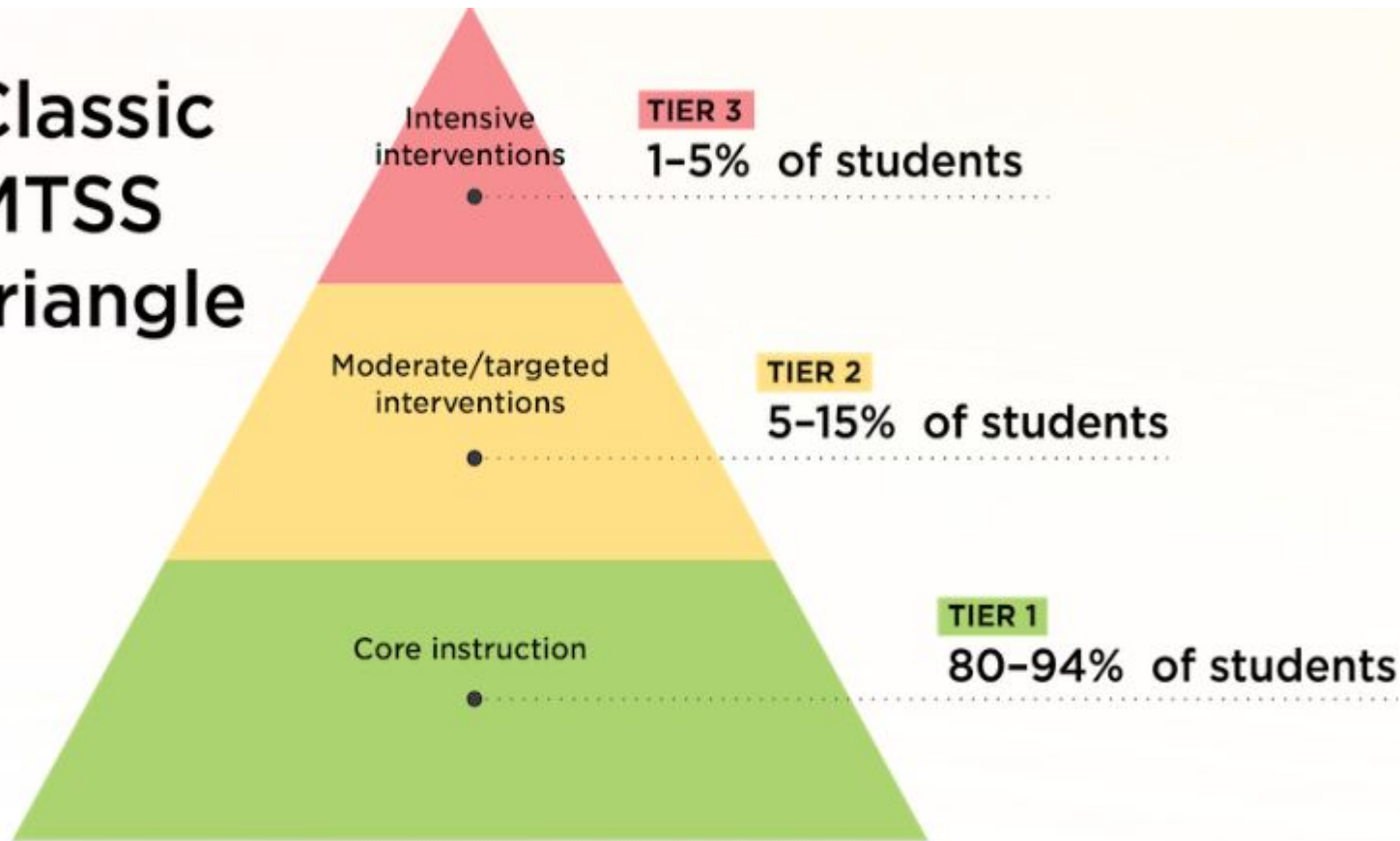
4. Vocabulary

- ❖ Embedded in instruction of single words, phrases, sentences, short passages

5. Comprehension

- ❖ Single word, Sentence Reading, Short Passages

Classic MTSS triangle



Tier 1 ELA

PreK:

- ❖ Curriculum Materials: My Heggerty, Early Literacy Lessons aligned to the Early Learning & Developmental Standards (ELDS)
- ❖ Progress Monitoring: Documentation and Observation for Teaching, CT-DOTS, 3 Observation Periods per year

Elementary:

- ❖ Curriculum Materials: Heggerty K & 1, UFLI K-3, Wit & Wisdom K-5
- ❖ Progress Monitoring: UFLI, DIBELS, Wit & Wisdom Summative & Formative Assessments

Middle School:

- ❖ Curriculum Materials: Wit & Wisdom
- ❖ Progress Monitoring: I-Ready, Wit & Wisdom Summative & Formative Assessments, I-Ready Diagnostic (pilot) 3 times per year

Tier 2 ELA

PreK:

- ❖ Students are identified based on their progress on the CT-DOTS (based on 8 key developmental areas)
- ❖ Small group and individual instruction is provided throughout the day, including during centers
- ❖ Progress Monitoring: Use of Data Collection Forms for the CT-DOTS (naturalistic observation, planned experience, family input)

Elementary:

- ❖ Students are identified based on their progress on Tier 1 assessment results
- ❖ Instruction:
 - Intervention is provided to small groups of students, 2-3 days per week
 - Instruction is delivered in the classroom and/or outside of the classroom
 - 15- 30 minutes per session,
 - Lessons are individualized according to the student's learning profile and the foundational evidence based practices taught in Tier 1
- ❖ Progress Monitoring: Data Collection of weekly progress

Tier 2 ELA

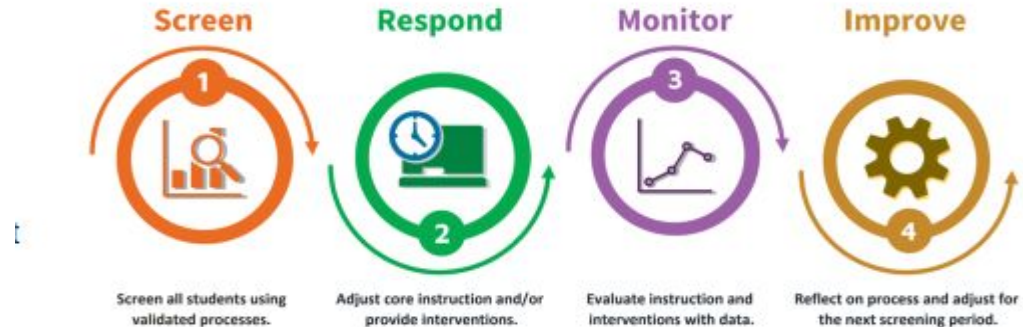
Groton Middle School:

- ❖ Students are identified by SBAC Scores- Level 2 Primarily, DIBELS, Phonics Assessment
- ❖ Instruction:
 - Focus on Vocabulary, Comprehension, and Written Language.
 - Instruction is delivered in small groups of students by grade level
 - Each ELA teacher teaches one Tier 2 class
 - Classes are 38 minutes in length
 - Instructional Level Text utilized, Journal writing, fiction and non-fiction text
 - Lessons are individualized according to the student's learning profile and the foundational evidence based practices taught in Tier 1.
- ❖ Progress Monitoring: Teacher Conferencing, DIBELS 3 times per year

Tier 3 ELA

Elementary:

- ❖ Students are identified by the school's CST/MTSS Team based on DIBELS, UFLI assessment, Letter/Sound ID Assessment, SBAC Scores, and Response to Tier 2 intervention
- ❖ Curriculum resources are selected based on the student's learning profile:
 - Heggerty
 - Sounds Sensible
 - SPIRE
 - OG
 - Wilson
 - UFLI
- ❖ 1-1 and small group instruction
- ❖ Meet daily for 30-45 minutes
- ❖ Progress Monitoring:
 - CORE Phonics
 - PAST
 - DIBELS
 - WADE
 - WIST
 - SPIRE Placement Test
 - UFLI assessment



Tier 3 ELA

Groton Middle School:

- ❖ Instruction is provided by the literacy specialists
- ❖ Small groups of students or individual students are identified by SBAC scores, i-Ready Scores, and DIBELS results
- ❖ Small groups or individual students receive instruction **every other day** for 38 minutes
- ❖ Small groups meet **every day** for 38 minutes based on need
- ❖ Some students receive 1-1 instruction daily for 38 minutes or longer based on need
- ❖ Progress Monitoring consists of data collection
- ❖ Curriculum resources are selected based on the student's learning profile:
 - UFLI, Wilson Just Words, Kilpatrick's Equipped for Reading Success, Morpheme Magic, Wilson's Mega Words

Referral to Special Education

When?

- ❖ Each intervention cycle is 6-8 weeks with progress monitoring data collected throughout the cycle.
- ❖ The MTSS team meets at the end of cycle 1 to review each student's progress and determine if the student's goals have been met.
- ❖ If the student requires an additional cycle of intervention, the MTSS team will update the goals and plan for cycle 2.
- ❖ At the end of the 2nd cycle of intervention, the MTSS team determines if the student's learning has accelerated to the point where the gap is closing,
- ❖ If the student has not met his/her goals and the team suspects that the student may have a disability, an initial referral is made to the PPT.
- ❖ Initial referrals to special education are also submitted by parents and caregivers.

Reading, Writing, and Math Worksheets

The MTSS team submits a Reading, Writing, and/or Math Worksheet (depending on the student's profile) to the PPT, which documents the instruction provided to the student in Tiers 1, 2, and 3 and the data collected.

The worksheets document that the student has been provided appropriate instruction in:

- ❖ Tier 1- Core general Education Curriculum & Small Group/Differentiated Instruction by the General Education Teacher with Progress Monitoring Results
- ❖ Tiers 2 & 3 - Supplemental, Scientific Research-based Interventions with Progress Monitoring Results
- ❖ Specific areas of weakness identified in Reading, Written Expression, and/or Math
- ❖ A conclusion that the student has not made sufficient progress in the supplemental/intensive intervention(s) implemented which appropriately target their specific skill weaknesses. Despite attempts to improve, individualize, and intensify the intervention, the student is not on a trajectory to catch up.
- ❖ This information assists the PPT in determining if an initial evaluation for special education is required.

[Specific Learning Disability and SLD/Dyslexia--Documents](#)

[CT-SEDS Documents/Templates](#)

Designing a Comprehensive Evaluation

The CT Assessment Resource Guide for SLD/Dyslexia is a resource used by the PPT members to design a comprehensive evaluation for a student suspected of having a specific learning disability or dyslexia.

[Connecticut Assessment Resource Guide for Specific Learning Disabilities in Reading and Written Expression](#)

Determining Eligibility as Specific Learning Disability (SLD)

The PPT completes the Multidisciplinary Evaluation Report (MER) for students suspected of having a specific learning disability.

If the student meets the criteria for a SLD, the PPT identifies the area:

- Mathematics calculation
- Mathematics problem solving
- Oral expression
- Written expression
- Listening comprehension
- Reading comprehension
- Reading fluency skills
- Basic reading skills

Determining Eligibility as SLD/SLD/Dyslexia

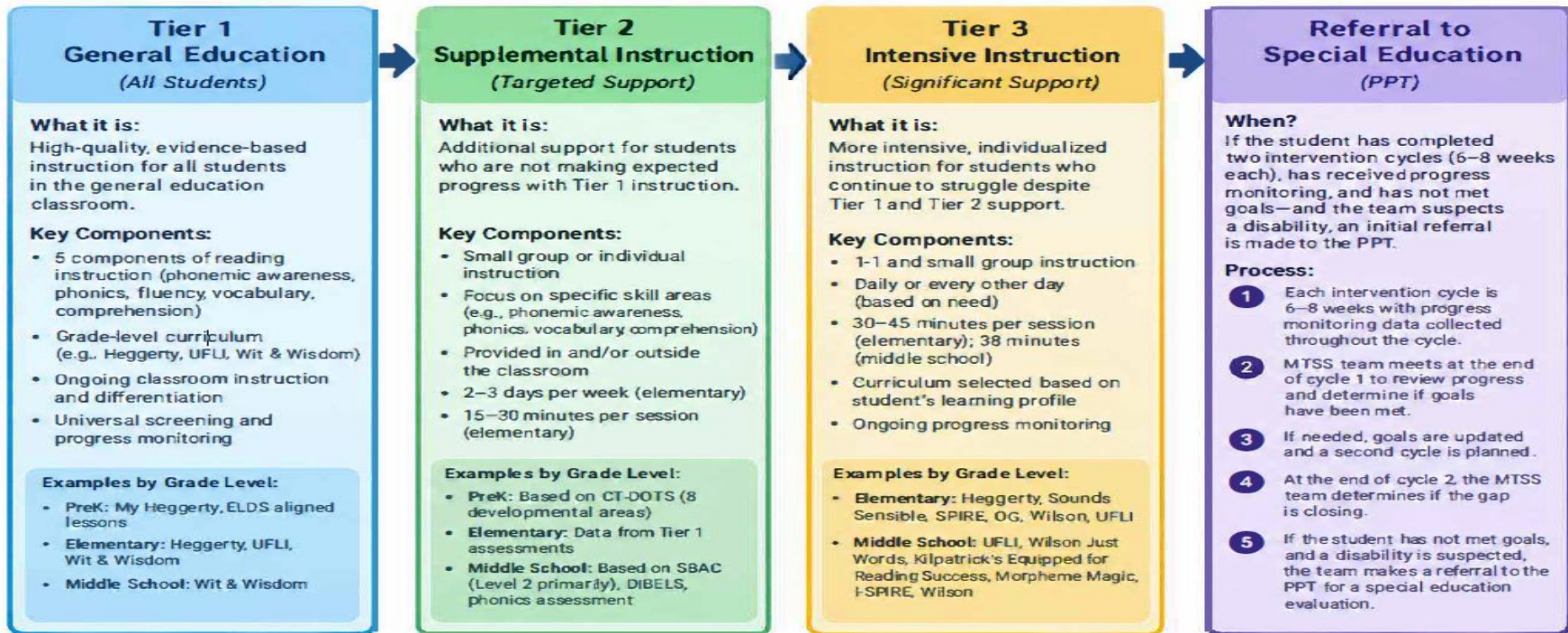
If the PPT has determined that the student has a SLD in reading comprehension, reading fluency skills, and/or basic reading skills, the PPT then specifies the type of reading disability:

- Mixed Reading difficulties (MRD)- SLD
 - Difficulties with reading comprehension based in word reading and vocabulary/language comprehension
- Specific Reading Comprehension Difficulties (SRCD)-SLD
 - Difficulties with reading comprehension that are not due to poor decoding. Difficulties are based in vocabulary/oral language comprehension
- Specific word-recognition difficulties (SWRD)- SLD/Dyslexia*
 - Difficulties with word recognition and/or automaticity of word reading, often reading comprehension is good

[CT-SEDS Documents/Templates](#)

Continuum of Interventions for ELA (PreK-8)

Supporting Every Learner • Using Data • Building Skills • Closing Gaps



Progress Monitoring at Every Step

Data is collected and reviewed regularly to measure student progress, guide instruction, and determine next steps.

Students move through the continuum based on their needs and progress.

The goal is always to provide the right level of support at the right time.

My name is Christine Johnson, a Connecticut certified teacher, and I live in Groton, Connecticut. I fully support HB 6517 to create necessary frameworks, guidance and accountability to support dyslexia legislation implementation. Our family's struggles in dyslexia began in the fall of 2014. My son was receiving tier intervention in first grade by a reading teacher, already struggling and over a year behind benchmark standards. I was updated in regards to his progress twice that year, with no mention that his difficulties may be more significant. He was showing progress but not closing the gap on meeting grade level expectations. Being a first-grade teacher myself, I trusted that school system was providing the appropriate intervention for my child. By the time my son was in second grade he was a year and half behind. I reached out to his reading teacher and expressed my concern about my son's reading development. I was told he that was making progress according to the SRBI data with no mention that his educational gap between his peers was widening. All intervention progress monitoring needed to be requested by us, as the teachers were reluctant to tell me that his reading was significantly delayed. My son was in tier 3 intervention for year and half and still falling further behind his peers. In March 2016, I requested a PPT for my son to be tested. We received my son's test scores at a PPT in June 2016 and at that meeting we were told he did not qualify for special education services. However, the placement team observed him being inattentive during the evaluation and put Nathan a 504 plan. In the fall of third grade, we called another PPT due to our concern of lack of progress. At this meeting, he was determined to eligible for special education services due to the SRBI data and he qualified with a learning disability, but no diagnosis of dyslexia. He continued to work the reading specialist daily receiving LLI intervention in Foundations, a program for slightly delayed readers, not dyslexic readers. He also began receiving additional special education support in other subjects as other aspects of his learning were being affected. As an educator, I had observed the gap get wider with my son's reading progress. He was now nearly 2 years behind, and in third grade children require reading to learn rather than just learning to read. I watched my son struggle every day. In December of 2016 we pursued an outside evaluation by a specialist and my son was diagnosed with dyslexia. We requested another PPT to review the evaluation. At this meeting in February 2017, we brought an advocate to speak about the testing. We requested, based on the specialist evaluation for my son's primary disability, to have his disability be change to dyslexia rather than just learning disabled on his IEP. The school disagreed with our outside evaluation conclusions, even though the evaluation and test scores clearly displayed my son struggled with phonics and phonological awareness. My son continued to receive Foundations from the reading intervention teacher as his main reading instruction. With the help and guidance of our advocate, we requested another meeting and the school district agreed to change is diagnosis to dyslexia in May of 2017. He was subsequently started in a program designed

for dyslexic readers in the 4th grade, the “Wilson” program, but his teacher only had a 3-day introductory course (taken after his IEP modification) and did not have full certification. With pressure for training (by his parents and his advocate), the school agreed on certification for his teacher, and she underwent formal Wilson training with Nathan as her practicum student for level 1 certification. It took two and half years of advocating for my son before he received the appropriate reading instruction with a program designed for dyslexic readers, a reading disability that could have been easily screened and diagnosed at a much younger age. My son, now in the 7th grade, and is behind in other aspects of his education. As a result of his late diagnosis and resistance to appropriate instruction, he now needs much more direct instruction in other areas of his learning, a condition that should not have been had he received proper intervention at a young age. Prior to my son’s diagnosis, I don’t believe his primary teachers or his reading specialists knew the signs of dyslexic readers or were able to properly screen. By December of 2017 my son, was the catalyst for getting his primary reading instructor Wilson level 1 certified. The school subsequently had two additional teachers properly trained and certified in Wilson instruction for dyslexic readers. Although the statistics show that 10-15% of readers may be dyslexic, I do not believe anywhere near that number of children are diagnosed as dyslexic in his school.

Sincerely,

Christine Johnson, Parent and Educator

Groton, CT



Enrollment Updates
2026-2027
October 13, 2026

School Enrollment

	Enrollment: October 1, 2025	Enrollment: October 1, 2026	Change: Positive(+) / Negative(-)
Catherine Kolnaski Magnet School	352	314	-38
Charles Barnum Magnet School	317	312	-5
Mystic River Magnet School	504 *(84 PK)	409	-95
Northeast Academy Magnet School	352 *(11 PK)	334	-18
Thames River Magnet School	460 *(96 PK)	438 *(74 PK)	-22

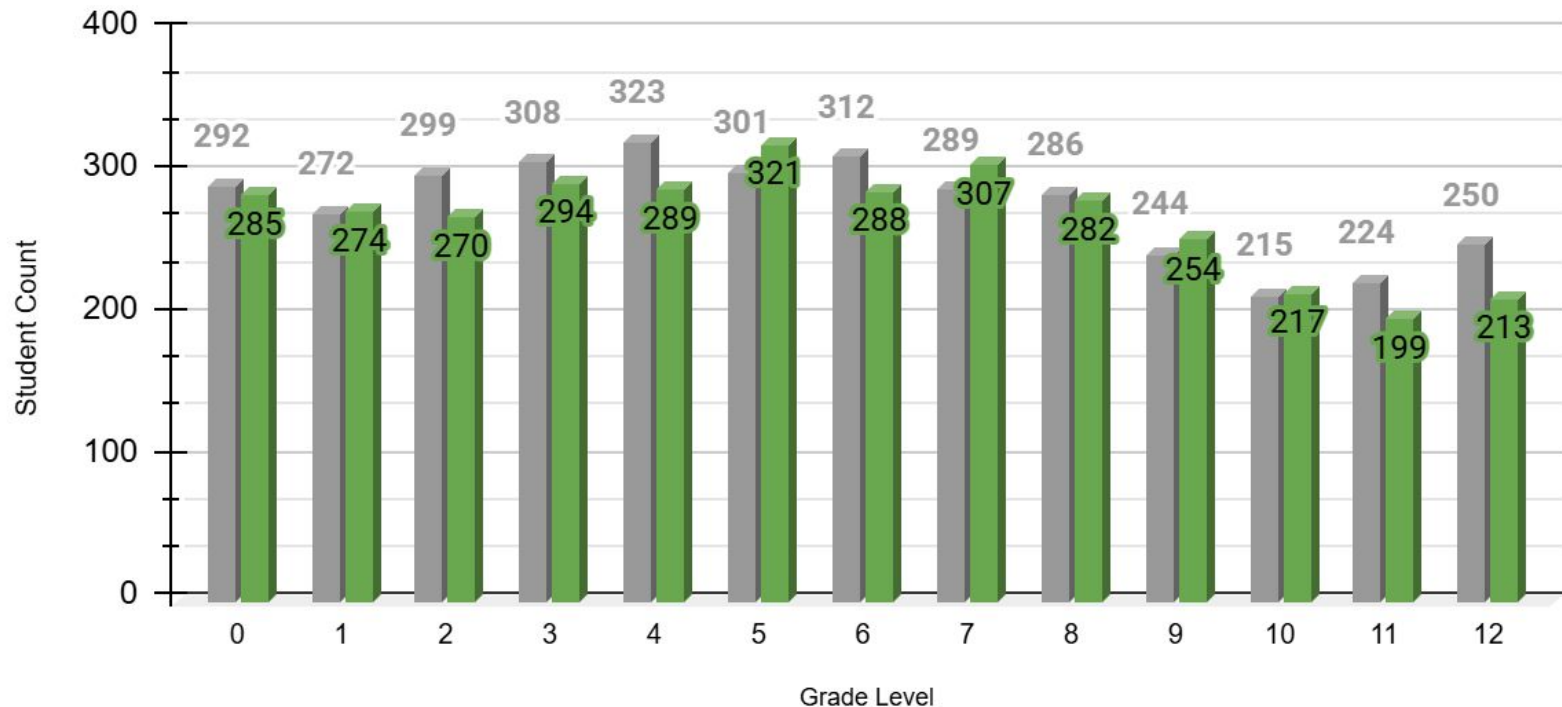
School Enrollment

	Enrollment: October 1, 2025	Enrollment: October 1, 2026	Change: Positive(+) / Negative(-)
Mary Morrison Early Childhood Center	-	175	+175
Groton Middle School	885	877	-8
Fitch High School	907	883	-24
Other Placements	27	48	+21
District Total	3,804	3,790	-14
<i>Magnet/Out of District Students</i>	<i>515</i>	<i>566</i>	+51
Combined Total	4,319	4,356	+37

Grade Level Enrollment

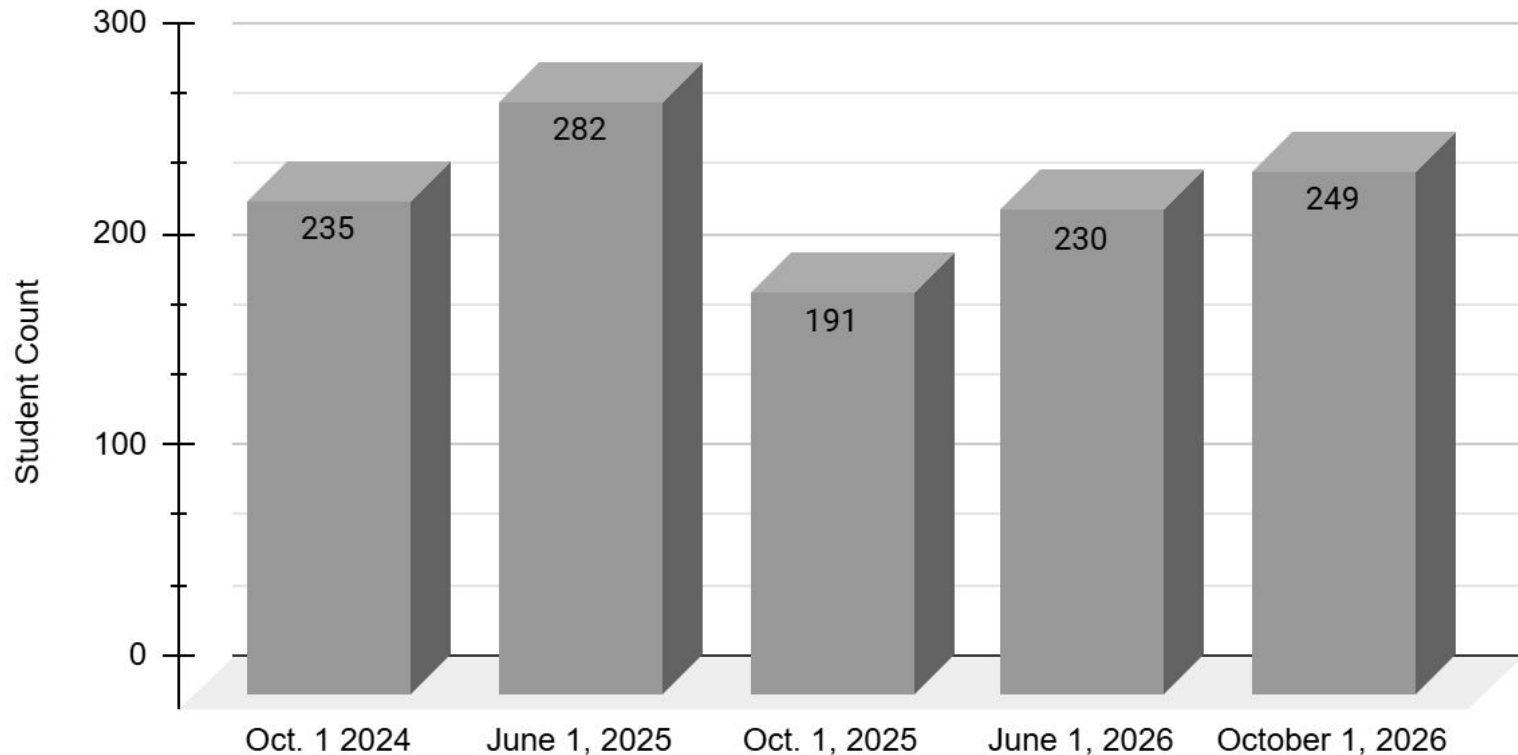
October 1, 2026 Snapshot

■ 2025 ■ 2026



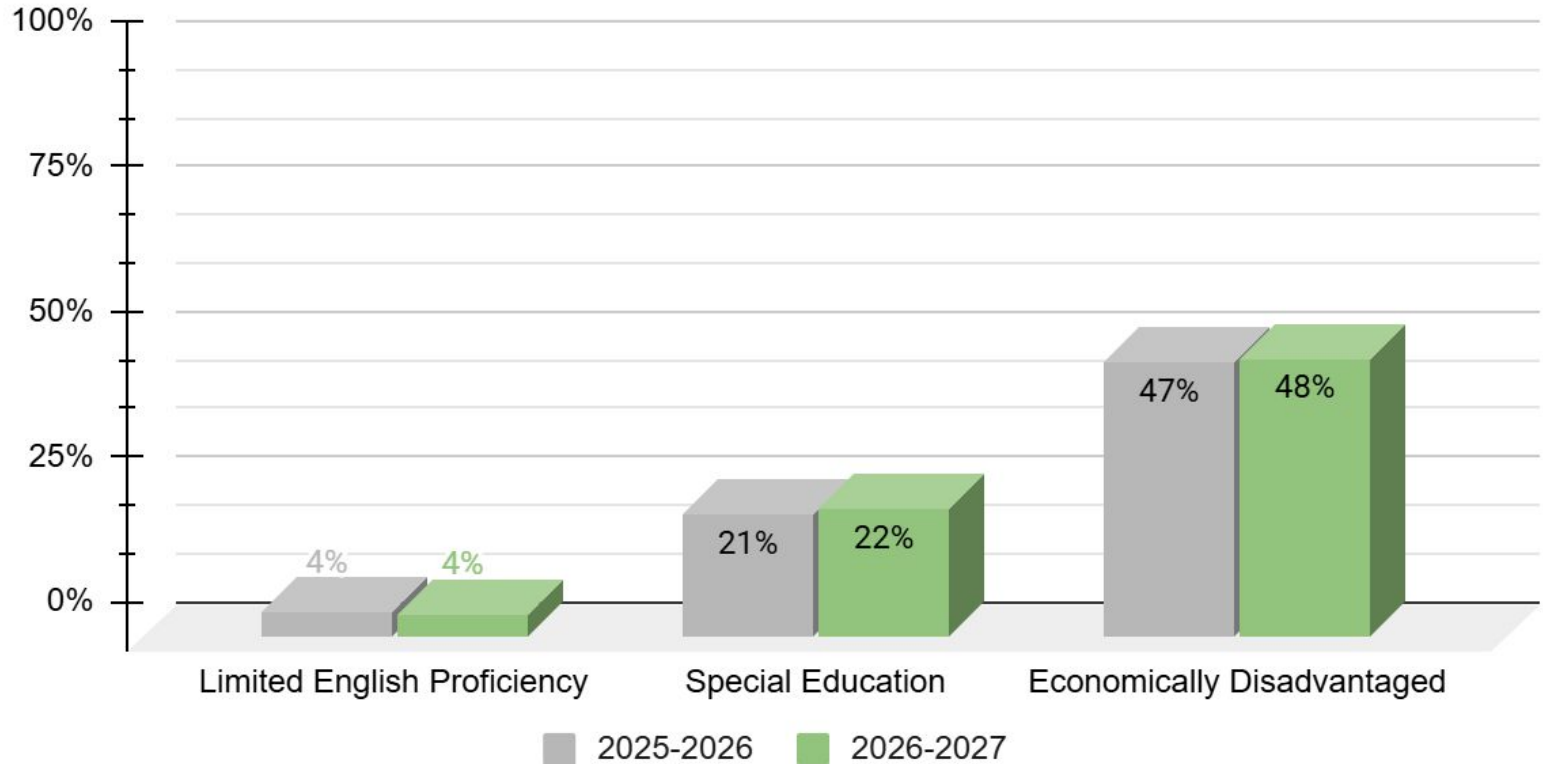
District-Wide Early Childhood Enrollment

PSIS Enrollment Snapshot



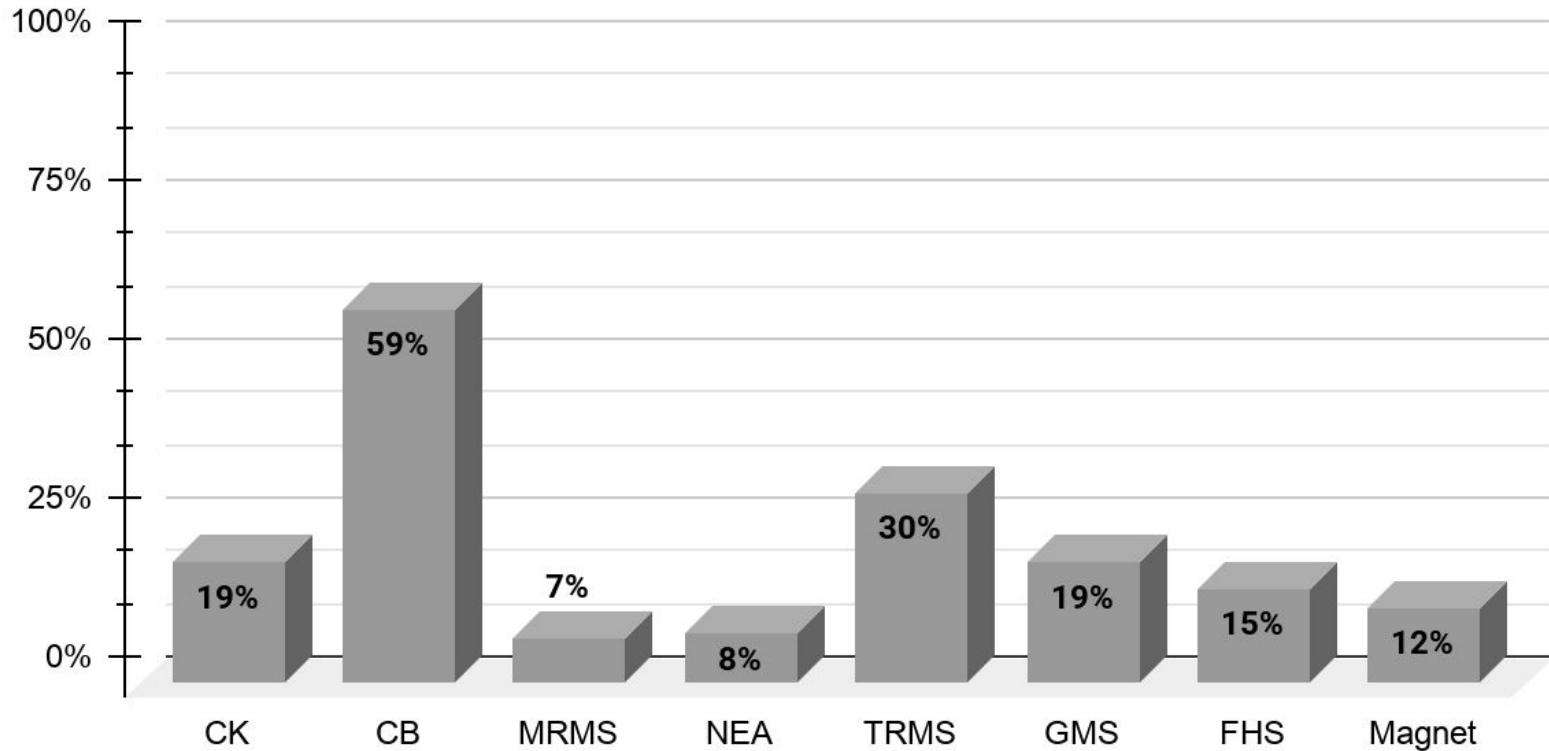
GPS High Needs Subgroups

October 1, 2026 Snapshot



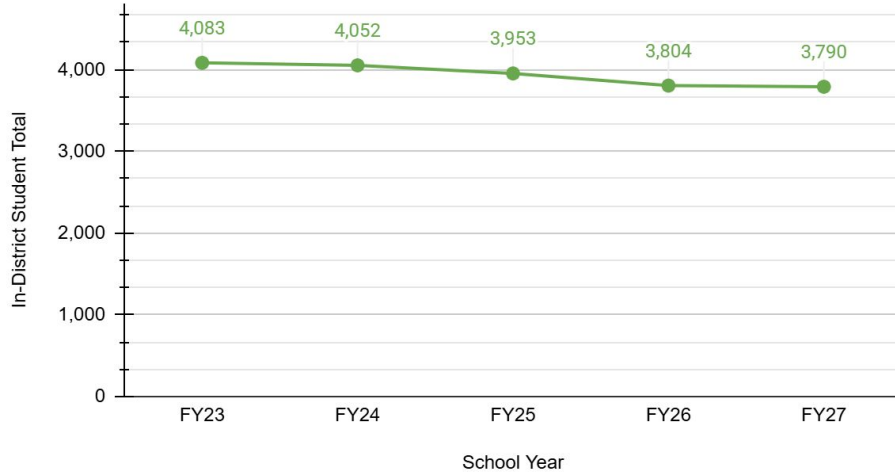
Military Population by School

October 1, 2026 Snapshot

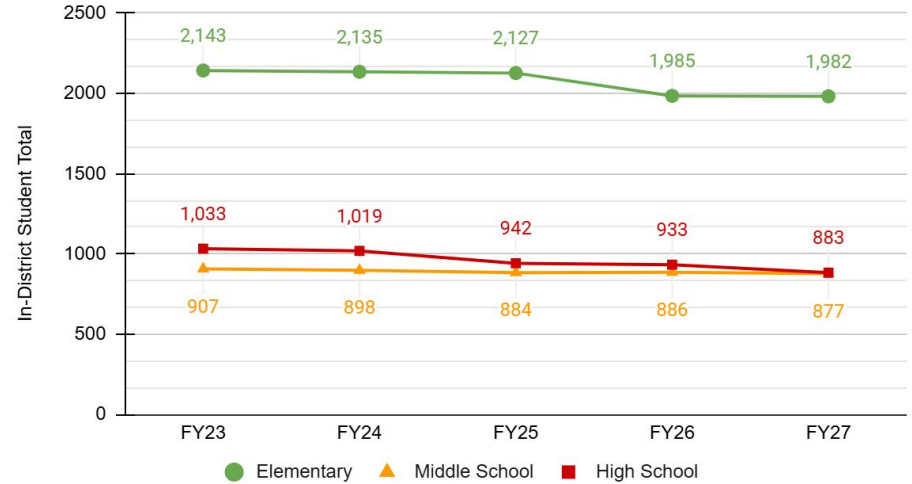


Enrollment Over Time

Overall In-District Enrollment Trend



Enrollment Trend by Level



Enrollment at a Glance

New/Returning Students

2025-2026 School Year

- 808 students delivered to our Student Information System

2026-2027 School Year (to date)

- 688 students delivered to our Student Information System

Student Exits

2025-2026 School Year

- 879 transferred out of GPS

2026-2027 School Year (to date)

- 260 transferred out of GPS