GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 16, 2026 @ 6:00 P.M.
CENTRAL OFFICE, ROOM 11/HYBRID

MEMBERS PRESENT: Beverly Washington – Chairperson, Adrian Johnson – Vice Chairperson, Andrea Ackerman (remote), Mitch Shinbrot, (remote), Ian Thomas, (remote & then in-person), Jennifer White, Michael Whitney (remote)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Sean Corcoran, Jay Weitlauf

ALSO PRESENT: Susan Austin, Anne Marie Mancini (remote), Lauren Casini (remote), Stephanie Sawyer, Ryan Chaney, Lisa Shultz

I. CALL TO ORDER – Mrs. Beverly Washington, Chairperson, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Review of November 9, 2026, meeting Minutes –

The Board approved the November 9, 2026, meeting minutes with correction to item IV with addition of Mr. Johnson to the second sentence suggesting the change of adding more meetings for the COW in January and February for budget review instead of having special meetings.

PASSED - UNANIMOUSLY

III. Cather Kolnaski, Charles Barnum, and Northeast Academy Data Presentations (Success & Challenges) with Action Plans - Attachment #1

Mrs. Giordano gave an overview of the PowerPoint Data Presentation (Success & Challenges) with Action Plans for Charles Barnum School.

Mrs. Schultz gave an overview of the PowerPoint Data Presentation (Success & Challenges) with Action Plans for Catherine Kolnaski School.

Mr. Chaney gave an overview of the PowerPoint Data Presentation (Success & Challenges) with Action Plans for Northeast Academy School.

The Board held in-depth discussions with each school.

IV. Continued Discussion re: the 2027 Board Meeting Schedule – Attachment #2

The Board reviewed the revised proposed 2027 Board Meeting Schedule

This item will be placed on the next regular Board agenda for a formal vote.

V. Topics for Discussion with Legislators (at Dec. 9th COW meeting)

Mr. Thomas – Universal access to meals and snacks and after school supplemental nutrients for athletes

Mr. Thomas - How schools are funded.

Mrs. Austin – Unfunded mandates

Mr. Johnson – State help for resolution on their (State) formula problem

Mr. Whitney – HVAC cost

Mr. Whitney – Military funding

Mr. Whitney – Early Childhood funding

Mr. Whitney – No requirements for schools to have Librarians and to pass requirements with books

Mrs. White – Alliance District Update

VI. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ackerman, White: The meeting adjourned at 8:20 p.m.


Our Mission is Teaching and Learning
GROTON
PUBLIC
SCHOOLS
Groton, Connecticut
School Improvement Plan
Charles Barnum
Catherine Kolnaski
Northeast Academy
November 16, 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



Key Performance Indicators

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

Charles Barnum Magnet School: Who We Are...

School Enrollment	313
Special Programming	• Grades 4 and 5 Academy
Student Makeup	• 53% Free/Reduced Eligible • 26% Special Education • 1% Limited English Proficiency
Chronic Absenteeism Trend	• 2024- 17.9% • 2025- 17.2 % • 2026- 9.4%
Theme/Theme Related Opportunities	Charles Barnum Magnet School is dedicated to providing educational experiences that foster discovery through creativity, curiosity, and exploration. Discovery Block built into our weekly schedule as well as Discovery Enrichment. Discovery Expo after each cluster rotation. Partnership with the Denison Pequotsepos Nature Center.

Charles Barnum Magnet School

2025-2026 Data Highlights

- Reduced Chronic Absenteeism from 17.2% to 9.4% in one year (High Needs 21.5% to 10.8%)
- ELA cohort growth in 4th (29% to 33%) and 5th (46% to 47%)
- ELA year-over-year growth in 3rd grade (29% to 45%)
- Math cohort growth in 4th (38% to 42%) and 5th (43% to 45%)
- Math year-over-year growth in 3rd (38% to 50%) and 5th (36% to 45%)
- NGSS growth from 59% to 62%
- ELA Academic Growth from 46.9% to 65.3% ELA High Needs: 47.0% to 60.8%
- Math Academic Growth from 59.9% to 70.0%
- Physical Fitness from 30.2% to 62.5%
- Accountability Index from 63.3% to 74.9%
- 83% of 1st grade was At/Above Benchmark on Spring DIBELS

Charles Barnum Magnet School

2026-2027 Areas of Focus

- ELA: Strengthen standards-aligned literacy instruction to increase student proficiency on the ELA SBA, with a focus on improving achievement across all grade levels currently performing below 50% proficiency and ensuring at least 75% of students demonstrate measurable academic growth.
- Mathematics: Increase student proficiency on the Math SBA beyond the current 50% benchmark through targeted instruction, effective PLC practices, and intervention, with a goal of at least 75% of students demonstrating academic growth.
- NGSS: Build upon continued growth in science achievement by strengthening inquiry-based instruction and scientific reasoning, with a goal of 75% of students meeting or exceeding proficiency on the NGSS assessment.
- Early Literacy (K-2): Strengthen foundational reading skills through high-quality core instruction, early intervention, and consistent progress monitoring, with a goal of all students exiting each grade at or above grade-level reading benchmarks.

District Priorities	Charles Barnum: School Action Steps
Attendance: Increase student and staff engagement by emphasizing the importance of daily attendance	• Continue school wide attendance celebrations and incentives to recognize and encourage consistent attendance. • Maintain ongoing communication with families about the importance of daily attendance and its impact on student achievement. • Provide early intervention and targeted outreach for students with a history of chronic absenteeism. • Strengthen Tier 1 attendance strategies by fostering positive classroom environments, relationships, and a sense of belonging. • Increase parent-teacher conference participation to 100%, building on 94% participation this fall. • Expand family engagement opportunities to strengthen school-home partnerships and connections to the school community.
Culture and Climate: Foster a safe and inclusive environment that engages and empowers students, families, and staff	• Continue implementing the Life is Good Superpowers model through monthly schoolwide community meetings and classroom activities. • Maintain weekly SEL team meetings to review student data, identify trends, and develop proactive supports. • Strengthen the Trusted Adult initiative to ensure all students feel connected to and supported by at least one adult in the building. • Continue consistent implementation of morning meetings and recess wrap-ups to reinforce expectations, build relationships, and support social-emotional learning. • Promote positive behavior and schoolwide expectations through consistent Tier 1 practices. • Create opportunities for student voice, leadership, and family engagement to strengthen school community and belonging
Student Achievement: Provide all students with standards-aligned curricula, student-centered instruction, and engaging learning experiences that support the Vision of the Graduate.	• Strengthen Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) with a focus on the four driving questions to guide instruction, assessment, and intervention. • Continue instructional walkthroughs and leadership team calibration to establish a shared understanding of high-quality, standards-aligned instruction. • Reset and reinforce schoolwide academic expectations to ensure consistency, rigor, and accountability across all grade levels. • Utilize student achievement data to drive instructional decisions, monitor progress, and provide targeted interventions. • Increase student engagement and ownership of learning through student-centered instructional practices and meaningful learning experiences.

Catherine Kolnaski Magnet School: Who We Are...

School Enrollment	314
Special Programming	• Early Learning Skills Program (K-5)
Student Makeup	• 54% Free/Reduced Eligible • 17% Special Education • 5% Limited English Proficiency
Chronic Absenteeism Trend	• 2024- 14.8% • 2025- 18.8% • 2026- 9.8%
Theme/Theme Related Opportunities	STEAM = STEM + Arts Guaranteed experiences in science, engineering, computer science/coding. robotics, and maker education K-5 Piano Lab starting Gr 1 & Strings starting Gr 2 Additional opportunities in Lego Robotics and Drone Team Partnerships with CT Science Center, Project O, and NESS

Catherine Kolnaski Magnet School

2025-2026 Data Highlights

- Percentage of chronically absent students fell from 18.8% to 9.8%
- Accountability index scores rose by 4.5% to 75%
- ELA performance rose by almost 2% overall
- Math performance improved by 2.3% overall
- Science performance improved by 1% overall
- ELA growth rose by 3% overall
- ELA and Mathematical cohort analysis shows improvement year over year
- Grade three and four strong overall improvement year over year in both ELA and Mathematics
- Growth rate is consistently strong for our strongest learners

Catherine Kolnaski Magnet School

2026-2027 Areas of Focus

- Helping all learners grow to the same standard of our strongest academic learners via SMART learning targets
- PLC meetings with grade-level teams and special educators with an emphasis on student work protocols and data analysis
- New MTSS protocol for students who are struggling past primary interventions
- Working with students in yellow/red bands on alternating days with intervention teams
- Attendance and performance initiatives with incentives - surprise attendance day, thermometer tracking for field day end of year celebration
- Working on increasing our fitness test performance - overall score fell slightly; focusing on push-ups and curl-ups; aerobic score increased by almost 10%

District Priorities	Catherine Kolnaski: Action Steps
Attendance: Increase student and staff engagement by emphasizing the importance of daily attendance	- Use highly visible daily tracker to show attendance goal and daily rate - Contact high-risk families and chronic absentees through tools on the ParentSquare Attendance Plus platform every month and as needed - Implement attendance rewards, including Surprise Attendance Days and in-school celebrations for students with 97% attendance rates or above - Increase family participation in events by widely broadcasting upcoming events and consistent parent/teacher/admin communication
Culture and Climate: Foster a safe and inclusive environment that engages and empowers students, families, and staff	- Closely monitor student behavioral data, bringing any students to Targeted Team who need interventions - Use of Restorative Practices as a behavioral tool, piloting SEL program in grade five due to needs - New mascot, new logo, new tagline - adding more fun activities and incentives to the year to increase student and family engagement - Increase student voice and belonging through the Schoolwide Opportunity Committee - Consistent classroom walkthroughs by admins to ensure student safety and visibility of administrators - Upcoming events - at least one a month for families - are widely advertised and shared - Embedded STEAM activities in class and throughout the year
Student Achievement: Provide all students with standards-aligned curricula, student-centered instruction, and engaging learning experiences that support the Vision of the Graduate.	- Weekly PLCs focus on student data, student work, and setting SMART goals to increase growth - School-wide academic goals for ELA and Mathematics are highly visible outside of the office, tracking student growth towards the goal all year - Academic growth is incentivized and celebrated through reward systems and end of year events (field day, teachers v students kickball game, etc.) - Consistent admin walk-throughs in classrooms to monitor integrity to the curricula and pacing - Best teaching practices are highlighted and encouraged in PLC meetings and faculty meetings throughout the year

Northeast Academy: Who We Are...

School Enrollment	334
Special Programming	• None
Student Makeup	• 35% Free/Reduced Eligible • 15% Special Education • 3% Limited English Proficiency
Chronic Absenteeism Trend	• 2024-8.9 % • 2025-7.1% • 2026- 6.9%
Theme/ Theme Related Opportunities	• Flock Theater (supports ELA standards and W&W modules) • CT Storytelling Center (supports Math and Science standards) • cARTie • MMoA • ECSO • Celebrate The Arts Festival (every March)

Northeast Academy

2025-2026 Data Highlights

- Consistently strong performance again on ELA, Math and Science assessments.
- Cohort growth in ELA from G4 to G5 (65% up to 68%).
- Cohort growth in Math from G3 to G4 (60% up to 62%).
- Huge growth on G5 NGSS assessment (66% up to 78%).
- Chronic absenteeism rates under 10% for three consecutive years.
- PE Scores (Accountability Index) rose from 38.2% to 50.8% last year.
- Typical growth scores on iReady (math universal screener) indicate median scores over 100% for all six grade levels.
    - Kindergarten the lowest at 109%, G1 the highest at 152%.
- 80% of Kindergarten students at benchmark on DIBELS in the spring.

Northeast Academy

2026-2027 Area of Focus

- Academic Growth for ALL students
  - Weekly PLC meetings with grade-level teams maintaining an emphasis on student work, data analysis and targeted instruction.
    - Utilizing our math and reading specialists to support this work.
  - Focus on WIN block instruction to target specific needs identified in PLC meetings.
  - Identify specific targets within SBAC where a grade level showed deficits.
    - Example: G3 Literary Text Target 5 (analysis within or across texts).
- Illustrative Math
  - Identifying opportunities to incorporate Building Thinking Classroom tasks within the lesson format to promote standards of mathematical practice - working with models, constructing viable arguments and critiquing the reasoning of others.
- Attendance Matters
  - Continuing to find creative ways to promote student, staff and family engagement.

District Priorities	Northeast: Action Steps
Attendance: Increase student and staff engagement by emphasizing the importance of daily attendance	● Continue the work of our school attendance board ● Incorporate student-led spirit weeks ● Recess Stations ● Staff Challenges to promote morale and attendance ● Meet with parents/families in need of support ● Maintain ongoing communication using PSQ
Culture and Climate: Foster a safe and inclusive environment that engages and empowers students, families, and staff	● Celebrate monthly JTS Professor's Class students ● Utilize Second Step as our universal SEL curriculum ● Continue to implement Restorative Practices ● Implement our new SRSS Screener ● Work with PTO to organize and plan school activities ● Revisit the concept of a trusted adult in our school ● Provide opportunities for more student voice such as the above mentioned spirit weeks
Student Achievement: Provide all students with standards-aligned curricula, student-centered instruction, and engaging learning experiences that support the Vision of the Graduate.	● Work with math and reading specialists to support the Tier 1 instruction of classroom teachers ● Implement and facilitate focused, efficient PLCs ● Support the incorporation of BTCs during Math ● Strengthen the WIN block across all grade levels ● Conduct informal observations with a focus on who's doing the work and thinking in our classrooms

Our Roadmap to Success





District Improvement Plan



School Improvement Plan

Key Performance Indicators and State Data Measure Progress

GROTON BOARD OF EDUCATION
2027 MEETING SCHEDULE

(Approved by the Groton Board of Education at its Regular Meeting on _____, 2026)

Finance/Facilities Committee 6:00 p.m. Central Office, Room 11/Hybrid (1st Tuesday of Month)	Policy Committee 6:00 p.m. Central Office, Room 11/Hybrid (2nd Tuesday of Month)	Curriculum Committee 6:00 p.m. Central Office, Room 11/Hybrid (1st Monday of Month)	Committee of the Whole 6:00 p.m. Central Office, Room 11/Hybrid (2nd & 3rd Monday of Month)	Regular Meeting 6:00 p.m. Central Office, Room 11/Hybrid (4th Monday of Month)
January 5	January 12	--	January 11 January 19 (Tuesday)	January 25
February 2	February 9	February 1	February 8 February 17 (Wednesday)	February 22
March 2	March 9	March 1	March 8, March 15	March 22
April 6	April 20	April 5	April 19	April 26
May 4	May 11	May 3	May 10, May 17	May 24
June 1	June 8	June 7	June 14 (GMS Café), June 21	June 28
July 6	July 13	--	July 19	July 26
August 3	August 10	--	August 16	August 23
September 7	September 14	September 8 (Wednesday)	September 13, September 20	September 27
October 5	October 13 (Wednesday)	October 4	October 12 (Tuesday) October 18	October 25
November 3 (Wednesday)	November 9	November 1	November 8, November 15	November 22
December 7	December 14	--	December 6	December 13

For Information Only

- Groton Scholarship Fund - meets the 2nd Thursday of the month @ 5:15 p.m.
- LEARN Board of Directors - meets the 2nd Thursday of the month @ 9:00 a.m.
- Town & City Councils/RTM/BOE Liaison - meets quarterly @ 5:00 p.m.
- AGSA/GEA/BOE Liaison - meets quarterly @ 4:15 p.m.
- Communications Committee - meets as needed