



MARCH 2022

The Griswold Times

GRISWOLD PUBLIC SCHOOLS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

SUPERINTENDENT'S LETTER

Dear Griswold Public Schools:

I am thrilled to introduce you all to "The Griswold Times," our new monthly newsletter. "The Griswold Times" is the brainchild of our GPS Community Relations & Special Projects Coordinator, Kayla Hedman. Kayla oversees communications, our Griswold Schools social media channels, website content updates, and competitive grants for Griswold Public Schools. It is also important to note that Kayla is a proud Wolverine Alumna, who graduated in 2010. Thank you, Kayla, for helping us to move *forward*.

While this newsletter will be released monthly, you can always contact Kayla to highlight GPS-related events and news across our channels. Please know that beginning in April, we will move away from our Weekly Updates communication, as all the news fit-to-print will be in "The Griswold Times."

March marks the end of winter and the beginning of spring. I am certain that you can all join me in embracing the warm temps, spring sports, and more time outdoors in the months ahead! Be sure to stay informed with all the great things happening with our students, families, faculty, and staff by visiting our website and social media platforms often. With the arrival of spring, let's all move *forward* together into this season of renewal.

All my best,

Sean P. McKenna
Superintendent of Schools

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The newsletter you're looking at is a new initiative to better engage and inform GPS parents, alumni, and community members. It will be published monthly, compiling news from each school, upcoming events, historic features, and alumni news.

As this is the first monthly issue, there is room to grow—we'd love to hear from you! **Send any ideas or content for upcoming monthly issues or our social media channels to khedman@griswoldpublicschools.org.**

Until next time!

Kayla Hedman, GHS '10

GPS Community Relations & Special
Projects Coordinator

DISTRICT NEWS

Mask Mandate Lifted

The Board of Education voted on Feb. 16 that masks would be optional, but recommended, in all school buildings starting Monday, Feb. 28. The state followed suit, making masks optional on school buses, and for athletics practices and competition (per the CIAC).

School Budget Development

At the Board of Education meeting on Mar. 14, the Board approved Superintendent McKenna's proposed budget to move forward to the Griswold Board of Finance. Learn more about the 2022-2023 Budget Development at griswold.k12.ct.us/board-of-ed/budget-information

New Digital Sign Coming to Campus

You may have noticed construction in front of the soccer fields. GPS is getting a new digital sign that will serve the district with key dates and news. Please be careful and excuse our appearance during this time of construction!

New GPS Brand Standards

The Board of Education approved brand standards for Griswold Public Schools in Dec. 2021. The standards include the official GPS logo, color palette, fonts, and other elements of the district's identity suite. The assets and guidelines will help maintain consistency across GPS materials. The Standards PDF and link to assets can be found at griswold.k12.ct.us/resources/brand-standards

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

Let's Get Social:



Griswold Public Schools



@griswoldschools



griswoldpublicschools.org

DISTRICT NEWS



MARCH 2022 GRISWOLD FORWARD VLOG:

March is National Reading Month! We spoke with Griswold Public Schools' Library Media Specialists Ms. Beahan, Mrs. LaBossiere, and Mrs. Anthony about updates to the libraries (now **Learning Commons**) in each school. Watch now at griswold.k12.ct.us/departments/library-media-centers



In April, GPS Community Relations & Special Projects Coordinator Kayla Hedman will discuss the District's new Brand Standards for design, and will present best practices for GPS-related social media pages and Google Sites.

Do you manage a Griswold Public Schools-related Facebook page, Instagram or Twitter account, or a website? (i.e. athletics, club, PTO, etc.) If so, please fill out this survey: <https://forms.gle/L3PW3dNxprAKqXD9>

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SNSN Radio was live on location at Griswold High School in early March to highlight the well-rounded education that Griswold Public Schools offers. Watch on Facebook at <https://fb.watch/bvEg2dS-KK/>.

During Professional Development Day on March 11, GPS welcomed nationally-recognized thought-leader, Ray McNulty, to speak with all faculty about the future of education.

Griswold Public Schools is a member of the **Learning 2025** network of demonstration systems, a collaborative network of over 60 districts across the country to help advance student-centered, equity-focused, future-driven education, administered by AASA, The School Superintendents Association.

Learn more about the Initiative at https://www.griswold.k12.ct.us/cf_news/view.cfm?newsID=649.



NOW HIRING:

GPS is hiring for the following positions (as of 3/24/22):

- Long-term Substitute: Grade 4 Teacher (could turn FT in 2022/23)
- GHS Baseball Varsity Assistant Coach & JV Coach
- GHS Outdoor Track Assistant Coach
- Care Counselor and Tutors for Before & After School Program
- Paraeducators: Part- and Full-Time
- Print Shop Coordinator (Part-Time)
- Substitutes: Teachers, Paraeducators, Cafe Service Providers, Custodians, Health Assistants, Nurses

Find all open positions at applitrack.com/griswold/onlineapp/

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Students ages 15+: Are you interested in working this summer? Summer Youth Employment is an amazing opportunity for ALL students to apply to work 100-140 hours this summer at minimum wage. Applications are available in the GHS Main Office and school counseling office. Placements include partnerships with summer rec, summer school, Little Log, DEEP, town hall, senior center, and library. For other jobs, [working papers](#) for students ages 14-17 are available at the GHS Office.

HONORS&AWARDS

Congratulations to Sarah McEwen, RN (center), Griswold Elementary School Nurse, for being selected as the district Outstanding Employee of the 2nd Quarter! Sarah, who is also a 2008 GHS graduate, was recognized at the Board of Education meeting on Feb. 28.



GHS NEWS

GHS's Business Department faculty hosted **Mock Interviews** on March 15 to introduce students to the world of job-seeking. Students dressed for success and had practice interviews in the High School's Learning Commons with volunteers from local businesses.



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Grease is the word! After a two-year unwanted hiatus, GHS will present Grease as the spring musical on April 27, 28, 29, 30 at 7pm. Tickets are available at griswolddrama.com.



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Members of our Teaching, Learning, and Innovation (TLI) team recently visited Mrs. Coolidge's science class at GHS, where students took part in a **Socratic seminar** on "Star Spectra."



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Thank you to **Suzanne Alfiero** for her years as GHS Student Counseling Director. She will be greatly missed and we wish her luck.

IN THE NEWS:

["What's Right With Schools: Griswold High School launches program to help students heading to college"](#)
WTNH, News Channel 8 interviewed students and school counselor Kiley Flynn about the work of College Advising Counselor, Caitlin Pichette.



["What Happens when these CT Schools take Video Games Seriously?"](#) The Norwich Bulletin covers local schools Esports news, including GHS's team.

[GHS 2nd Quarter Honor Roll](#) was published in The Day.

AWARDS & HONORS



The Nexus advanced-technology lab is a finalist for the "Most Innovative Learning Spaces" in the 2022 *New England Tech & Learning Innovative Leader Awards*. Winners will be announced at their Summit, May 6.

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Congratulations to the talented GHS students selected to attend the *All New England Music Festival* in Burlington, CT, March 17-19: Nicole Jessel, Hannah Garvin, Summer Millet, Sydney Hart, Madi Wooten, Skylar Dodge, Nathan Moore, Michael Strain, Connor Benoit, Ryan Pelillo, Aj Hamel, Jacob Hamel, Stephen Johnson, Jenna Wessa, and Devyn Pelillo.

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Three students' [Voice4Change](#) proposals were accepted by the State, and will be voted on by their peers on March 29: Sydney Hart, Lain Whalen and Jakob Skipper.

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Junior Amanda Wrobel won the award for Best Position Paper in her Committee at the *Boston College High School Model UN Conference 30* on March 5.

GAHS NEWS **Griswold Alternative School: A New Era**

Among the many GPS initiatives underway, the eventual move of our Griswold Alternative School, from its current location on 201 to the site of the existing Senior Center, is a major one. The Town of Griswold and Griswold BOE formed an Alternative Space Needs Committee a few years ago to begin planning this move. The goal is to have the Alt. School closer to the GPS campus, and be able to serve middle school students in addition to high schoolers.

Planning includes renovations to the Senior Center to make the interior space more compatible for educational specifications. With the Town's new Senior Center project coming to a close in the near future, we hope that renovations will begin in the next month or so. We would love to welcome Griswold Alt. School students, families, faculty, and staff a new location at some point during the 2022-23 school year.

Griswold moves *forward* with a new era for our Alternative School!

UPCOMING EVENTS

End of Third Quarter

April 1

Paraeducator Appreciation Day

April 1

5th & 6th Grade Fun Night and GHS Spring Fling

Friday, April 8, 6:00-8:00pm

GYFS Night-Light Parade & Festival

Saturday, April 9, 7:30pm

Board of Education Meeting

Monday, April 11, 6:00pm,
GMS Cafeteria

GMS PTO Meeting

Wednesday, April 13, 2:30pm,
GMS Main Office Conference Room

School Volunteers Appreciation Day

April 14

Class of 2022 Skate Night Fundraiser

Thursday, April 14, 8:30-10:20pm
Plainfield Skate Inn, \$10pp
Open to the public!

SPRING BREAK (NO SCHOOL)

April 15 (Good Friday), April 18-22

8th Grade Panera Fundraiser

Saturday, April 23, 4:00-8:00pm

Board of Education Meeting

Monday, April 25, 6:00pm, GMS Cafe

GHS Spring Musical

April 27-30 at 7:00pm

Tickets on sale at
griswolddrama.com

7th & 8th Grade Fun Night

Friday, April 29

Teacher Appreciation Week

May 2-6

ATHLETICS



WINTER SPORTS RECAP:

It was great to be back competing in our winter sports (Boys & Girls Basketball, Indoor Track, Wrestling, Competitive Cheerleading, Fencing)! Congratulations to all student-athletes for a wonderful season.

The Board of Education has an **Ad Hoc Subcommittee for Athletic Fields & Facilities Updates**. On March 18, the committee closed an RFP for a Master Plan of the Revitalization of the Athletic Fields at Griswold Public Schools.

The **Griswold Boosters Club** is back in action, will host a Dinner/Dance at the French Club in Jewett City on Saturday, March 26, to raise funds for district-wide athletics.

SPRING SPORTS ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Spring sports began March 21, but there is still time for students to join in the fun! [Visit Griswold's FamilyID page to register](#). GHS spring sports include Baseball, Softball, Outdoor Track, Golf, Girls Lacrosse, and Boys Lacrosse is co-opped with Ledyard High School.

Join us in welcoming the **new GHS Varsity Baseball coach, Bill Kane '95!** There are several other assistant & JV [coaching positions available](#).

Live stream home games on [Griswold Sports Network's YouTube Channel](#).

Learn more about GHS Athletics on [our website](#).

SIGNING DAY: Several student-athletes have received athletic scholarships and committed to play at NCAA schools:

- Taylor Bialowas, Mitchell College, Soccer
- Lucia Ceccarelli, University of New Haven, Softball
- Zach Confer, Western New England University, Football
- Ben Jeffs, Nichols College, Soccer
- Sonja Matheson, Curry College, Volleyball
- Nate Moore, Northern Vermont University, Cross Country

"Thanks for all the support both in the classroom and on the field! Totally unrelated to football, he has been awarded a \$100k Presidential Scholarship by the School, admitted to the honors program to study Computer Science/Math – his CS major TOTALLY due to a passion he found this year in the Nexus [advanced technology lab]! GHS nailed it!!!"

- Mother of Zach Confer



Top: Families of student-athletes gathered in the GHS gymnasium for a ceremonial signing day on March 22.

Bottom: Lucia Ceccarelli signs her commitment letter for U. of New Haven.

GMS NEWS

GMS library receives American Library Association Grant: Griswold Middle School's Learning Commons (Library) recently received a competitive grant for \$10,000 to help support humanities programming for students grades 5-8. With funding from the National Endowment for the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, the American Library Association distributed a total of \$2 million to libraries nationwide, including GMS. Learn more about what the GMS Library has planned with the funds: https://www.griswold.k12.ct.us/cf_news/view.cfm?newsID=641

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5th and 6th graders signed a banner in the cafeteria in honor of 'National Read Across America Day' on March 2 and shared what they are reading. All month long, students were encouraged to pick out a new book to read outside of school to help celebrate 'A Nation of Diverse Readers' during National Reading Month.

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CREW News: March CREW sessions are focused on "What is a Wolverine?" What connects us, who we are, and what makes us a community? CREWs focused on spreading kindness and building connections. 5th grade CREWs collaborated to create a chain reaction using random items. Student groups used creativity and teamwork to build awesome structures!

Mrs. Cholewa's 8th grade CREW organized a **Breakfast Cereal Drive** March 7 through 31 to benefit the St. Mary's Food Pantry in Jewett City.

CREW (Caring, Respectful, Empowered Wolverines) is GMS's Social-Emotional Learning program for all students. CREW meets weekly throughout the school year to build relationships and create a supportive school community.

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Griswold Greats: Each week, GMS recognizes an individual or group for their outstanding accomplishments. 8th grader Grace Stevenson was recently recognized for her volunteer work with the French Club in Jewett City. [Make nominations via the Google Form.](#)

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Charitable Donations and Fundraising:

Through April 14, 2022, GMS is raising money for the **Kids Heart Challenge**. Donate towards GMS's challenge at https://www2.heart.org/site/TR?pg=company&fr_id=6321&company_id=337928

On March 16, the GMS Student Leadership Council made over 100 sandwiches to donate to the [St. Vincent de Paul](#) food pantry in Norwich.

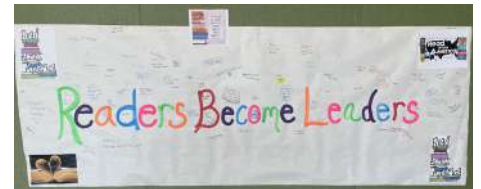
GMS is collecting boys and girls sweatpants, jogging pants, and gym shorts. Please drop off all donations to the GMS Main Office.

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PTO News:

Over the last few months, the PTO has hosted successful Fun Nights for grades 5-8, and a Skate Night at the Plainfield Skate Inn on March 22. The PTO also provided food during parent-teacher conferences, and treats on the 100th day of school.

The PTO hosts an annual snack cart and raffle during **Teacher Appreciation Week**, May 2-6. Please help the PTO honor every GMS teacher by purchasing something from their [Amazon wishlist](#) or making a monetary donation to the GMS PTO.



GES NEWS

As part of **National Reading Month**, CT State Representative Brian Lanoue (45th District) visited the Griswold Elementary School library on March 7 to read to Ms. Sebastian and Mrs. Klewin's 3rd and 2nd grade classes. Brian read [The Sloth who Slowed Us Down](#) by Margaret Wild, Illustrated by Vivienne To, to a very engaged group of students. Thank you to Library Media Specialist Ms. Judith Beahan and GES Principal Mr. Joe Bordeau for helping coordinate the visit!



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The GES cafeteria celebrated **Pi Day** (March 14, or 3/14) by distributing 700 mini apple pies to students!

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We're so excited for the great weather! **Spring Fun Run** began for 3rd and 4th graders on Monday, March 21.

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[GES raised \\$4,400 for the Kids Heart Challenge](#), an annual challenge that focuses on whole-body wellness, helping students improve their own health and better their character while raising life-saving donations for the American Heart Association to help kids facing heart-health issues. This is the 13th year GES has participated in the Kids Heart Challenge, and over the years has become one of the top 25 schools in the nation! Thanks to all that contributed, including the GES staff that participated in dress-down day!



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Members of our Teaching, Learning and Innovation (TLI) team recently visited Mrs. Parkinson's 4th Grade Language Arts class, where students took part in a **Socratic seminar**. A Socratic seminar is a formal discussion, based on a text, in which the leader asks open-ended questions. Within the context of the discussion, students listen closely to the comments of others, think critically for themselves, and articulate their own thoughts and their responses to the thoughts of others.



TLI also popped into Mrs. Arieta's 4th grade math class, where students have been working hard and recently took part in Question Formulation Technique (QFT) group work.

WOLVERINES FORWARD NEWS

Wolverines Forward (WF) is a Before & After School Program for students in grades PreK-8 that started in the fall of 2021. The program is now serving 61 students in the morning, and 75 students in the afternoon.

As the weather gets nicer, WF plans to spend more time outdoors with students! Kindergartners and 1st graders will explore rainbows and springtime flowers with science and art projects; 2nd graders will be starting a gardening unit, discovering the importance of bees, and exploring ecosystems; 3rd and 4th graders will be focusing on cultural exploration of South America and European countries. Our GMS students will be using recycled materials to make multiple science and art projects, including jewelry. The A.M. program will continue offering rotating free choice center activities along with beautiful spring-themed crafts.

[Learn more about Wolverines Forward on their Google Site.](#)



ALUMNI PROFILE: MIRANDA MAHONEY '96

written by Kayla Hedman '10

If you're from Griswold, you may know Miranda (Nagle) Mahoney's grandfather, Mr. Norman Gileau, who served as Principal of Griswold High School for three decades (1959-1989). Today, in the midst of the nationwide "great resignation," we find that loyalty to any one job or place of employment is very rare. However, Griswold Public Schools is not just any place. GPS has seen great loyalty from faculty and staff, especially those who grew up in Griswold or transplants that made the small town home for their family.

Although Miranda may not work for Griswold Public Schools, she has become a dedicated community partner in her work as Program Coordinator at Griswold's prevention coalition known as [PRIDE \(Partnership to Reduce the Influence of Drugs for Everyone\)](#).

"After graduating from UCONN, I started in the substance use prevention field and haven't left," she noted. "I've worked with many towns and coalitions throughout eastern Connecticut, but Griswold has always had my heart. When the opportunity to help my hometown came, I jumped at it." Griswold PRIDE has flourished under her leadership since it began in 2015.

"Miranda has made a huge impact in the region," said State Representative Brian Lanoue. "She is truly out doing God's work." The two have testified together in front of the CT Public Safety & Security Committee in Hartford three times (2019-2021), achieving growth in the CRISIS Pilot Initiative program with CT State Troopers stretching across eastern Connecticut and beyond.

Miranda is also an active voice in Griswold Public Schools' District Partnership Advisory Council (DPAC), aiming to help in the prevention of vaping for minors, educating parents to obstruct minors' access to marijuana and alcohol, providing Narcan trainings and resources for those affected by the opioid epidemic, and more.

Some of Miranda's favorite memories at GHS were homecoming pep rallies, powder puff football games, and contributing to three Quinebaug Valley Conference Championships with the Girls' Basketball team (QVC merged into the Eastern Connecticut Conference, ECC, in 2000). Miranda recently moved back to Griswold after 10 years in CT's "quiet corner;" she and husband Chad Mahoney '01 made it a priority to raise their two boys as Wolverines.

"The relationships and friendships I built at GHS have been the most important asset to me, personally and professionally." Miranda noted growing up in a small town isn't always easy, with everyone knowing everyone and each other's business. However, the friendships she made are still going strong today, and relationships with her GHS teachers (some still teaching today!) helped her build her network within the school district and town. "My job is based on who you know, so when we had to start recruiting members and community leaders for Griswold PRIDE, my history with the town made it easy."

I'm sure Miranda's legacy and heart, much like her grandfather Mr. Gileau's, will still be talked about long into the future.

If you're a Griswold alumn and would like to be featured in a future profile or share any updates with us, contact khedman@griswoldpublicschools.org



Above: Miranda promoting Griswold's prevention coalition, PRIDE, at GES

Below: Miranda with GHS basketball teammates (Source: 1995 GHS yearbook, GHS Learning Commons)



FROM THE ARCHIVES



As we await GHS's 2022 production of Grease, check out this photo of a 1987 GHS rehearsal of Grease. Pictured right to left: Terry (Dean) Cholewa as Sandy, Shayna Dugas as Rizzo, Kara (Kosma) Giroux as Frenchy, Meg (Palonen) Czmyr as Marty, and Melissa (Meadows) Berardelli as Jan. (Source: 1987 Griswold High School yearbook, GHS Learning Commons & [Classmates.com](#))



GRISWOLD FORWARD

OUR MISSION

Griswold Public Schools educates for excellence by ensuring our students are connected, by nurturing individual student talents, and by fostering a future-focused mindset.

OUR VISION

Graduates of Griswold Public Schools journey into the future as engaged citizens, effective communicators, critical thinkers, and resilient problem solvers.

DISTRICT GOALS

District Goal #1: Social and Emotional Learning

Griswold Public Schools commits to the advancement of social and emotional competencies in inclusive and equitable learning environments so that all of our students can grow and thrive.

District Goal #2: Blended and Personalized Learning

Griswold Public Schools will focus on promoting the implementation and expansion of Blended and Personalized Learning in all PreK-12 learning environments.

District Goal #3: Research-Based Instruction

Griswold Public Schools will explore and implement research-based instruction to improve outcomes for all Griswold students.