



MAY 2022

The **Griswold Times**

GRISWOLD PUBLIC SCHOOLS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

SUPERINTENDENT'S LETTER

Dear Griswold Public Schools:

As the 2021-2022 school year approaches the final weeks of school, there is much to celebrate. Our students continue to shine in their academics, extracurricular activities, athletics, and in all other accomplishments and achievements. Congratulations to all! We are certainly proud of all of our Griswold students.

Griswold Public Schools are proud to offer a robust, district-sponsored Summer Learning program. Offerings range from grade-level, project based learning to help students with skill development; high-interest extended learning opportunities in a range of areas, including technology and world language; and specialized learning sessions in music and structured physical education. Credit recovery opportunities are also available for students who wish to finish subject learning already in progress. Our Summer Learning program offers students and families free transportation to and from our campus; breakfast and lunch; and connected programming, if enrolled, in the Griswold Youth and Family Services Summer Recreation session. To learn more about our Summer Learning program, please visit our district homepage.

We continue to keep our website and all social media platforms current, with all the highlights, information, and important developments to keep Griswold Public Schools informed. Please be sure to visit our sites often.

Sincerely yours,

Sean P. McKenna
Superintendent of Schools

DISTRICT NEWS

School Budget Development

The Board of Education had a Special Meeting on Monday, May 2, 2022, after the Town of Griswold, Board of Finance previously met and tasked the Board to review the submitted budget for any potential additional reductions. At that 5/2 meeting, the Board decided to move forward with the Initial Budget Proposal that was originally forwarded with no additional reductions.

At the Town of Griswold, Board of Finance Special Meeting on May 5, 2022, the BOF decided to make no adjustments to the Board's Initial Budget Proposal.

However, the budget development process is still very much underway and not finalized.

At the Town of Griswold, Board of Finance meeting on May 11, the public was allowed to comment on Town, Board of Education, and Capital budgets. There was another Town Meeting on the budgets on May 25.

The annual **Town Budget Referendum is Tuesday, June 7, from 6:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Griswold Town Hall.**

Learn more about the 2022-2023 Budget Development at griswold.k12.ct.us/board-of-ed/budget-information

(DISTRICT NEWS CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)

Let's Get Social:



Griswold Public Schools



@griswoldschools



griswoldpublicschools.org

DISTRICT NEWS

GRISWOLD FORWARD VLOG:

We're so excited to kick-off our 2022 Summer Learning program! This FREE program is open to students grades K-12 and provides project-based enrichment programs as well as credit recovery for those who need it.

Summer Learning Coordinators Pat Feeney and Jessica Gillespie put together an [overview video that can be found here](#).

Registration has been extended past the May 27 deadline, but will close soon. Please [register your child here](#) as soon as possible!



Members of our school community have participated in Griswold PRIDE's no vaping campaign, "This is my Breath of Fresh Air." Most Griswold students don't vape, and together we keep informing students of the risks associated with it. Find videos of GHS students showcasing their reasons not to vape on [@griswold_pride's Instagram](#). Griswold PRIDE is currently running a contest through June 15 to make your own Breath of Fresh Air video. [Learn more about the contest here](#).

In April, the Franklin Board of Education approved Griswold High School as an option for their students beginning in the 2022-2023 school year. We hope to welcome students from Franklin as soon as this fall to join our students from Griswold and Jewett City, Canterbury, Lisbon, Norwich, Preston, Sprague, and Voluntown.

HONORS&AWARDS

Happy retirement to the following Griswold Public Schools faculty and staff:

- Kathy Bocciarelli, GMS Music Teacher
- Phil Miner, GMS Teacher
- Diane Cipriani, Paraeducator
- Rachel Baribeault, GMS Café
- Kathy Kissack, GHS School Counselor
- Nadine Keane, GHS English Teacher
- Jill Skidgell, GHS Culinary Teacher
- Carol Geer, Paraeducator

Retirees were honored at the Board of Education meeting on May 23.



Above: Superintendent Sean McKenna and Board of Education Chairperson Mary Beth Malin with Kathy Bocciarelli and Carol Geer.

NOW HIRING:

GPS is hiring for the following positions (as of 5/24/22):

- Associate Principal (GHS)
- School Psychologist (GES)
- School Social Worker (GES)
- Teachers: Grade 4 Math (GES), Grade 6 Language Arts (GMS)
- Special Education Summer Enrichment Program
- Paraeducators (Part-Time)
- Custodian, 2nd Shift
- Temporary Custodians (Part-Time) and Summer Custodial Help
- Print Shop Coordinator (Part-Time)
- Substitutes: Teachers, Paraeducators, Cafe Service Providers, Custodians, Health Assistants, Nurses

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

Students ages 14+: [Working papers](#) for students ages 14-17 seeking summer employment are available in the Griswold High School Main Office.

We cannot go without acknowledging our Parent Teacher Organizations from across the district for their efforts to celebrate our instructors during Teacher Appreciation Week. The PTOs ran daily raffles, snack carts, stocked the teachers' lounges, provided lunches, and so much more! THANK YOU! [View pictures on the GPS Facebook page](#).



Above: Members of the Griswold Middle School PTO with loaded Snack Carts during Teacher Appreciation Week May 1-7.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Memorial Day (NO SCHOOL)

May 30

GPS String Festival

June 1, 7:00pm

GHS Senior Dinner

June 2, French Club

GMS 8th Grade Awards Night

June 2

GHS Senior Final Exams

June 6-9

GMS 8th Grade Trip to Holiday Hill

June 7

GMS PTO Meeting (Final of 2022-23)

June 8, 2:30pm, GMS Main Office

GMS 7th Grade Field Trip

June 9

GMS 8th Grade Block Party

June 9

GMS NJHS Field Trip / GES Field Day

June 10

GHS Final Exams for Grades 9-11

June 10-15; Shortened Days

GMS 8th Grade Promotion

June 14, 5:30pm, GHS Football Field

GHS Graduation Walk & Rehearsal

June 14, through GES & GMS

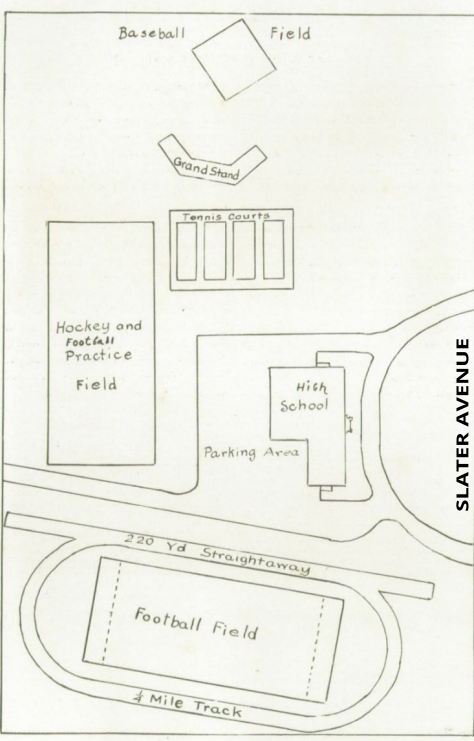
GHS Class of 2022 Graduation

June 15, 5:30pm, GHS Football Field

Last Day of School - Half Day

June 15

FROM THE ARCHIVES



THE GREEN SENTINEL

OUR ATHLETIC PLANT

Few schools, private or public, can boast of a campus affording such an abundance of athletic facilities as the Griswold High School. Set in a thirty-six acre plot ideally located are: four tennis courts, a baseball diamond, a hockey and practice field, a football field, a quarter mile track, and a two hundred twenty yard straightaway.

High schools have definitely accepted the responsibility of training the bodies of their students as well as their minds. Each student at Griswold High School must schedule a physical education class twice every week. School athletic fields are essential to a physical education program. The abundance of these facilities does not necessarily mean an emphasis on producing winning teams nor does it mean an over-emphasis of athletics. Rather it means that this space will allow for the setting up of an intramural program of athletic activity which will encourage every student to participate in some game. Sports for girls should be encouraged just as much as sports for boys. Our athletic program should aim at affording every student an opportunity to develop his body and at the same time to teach him how to enjoy wholesome pleasures.

The high school student's body must have first consideration in the use of our athletic plant, but the possibility of its use as a community recreational center and for summer playground programs must be considered. Tennis courts open to the public, a baseball field for community groups, and a soccer field for public use have long been needed in Griswold. Our athletic plant offers all these facilities. Some way will no doubt be found to make them available to the public.

The layout of the Griswold Public Schools campus in 1937. The original High School, now renovated and serving as Griswold Middle School, was built in 1936 and graduated its first class of students 85 years ago in 1937. The new high school was built in 1992. Since 1937, the GPS campus has expanded from 36-acres to 70-acres, added two new school buildings, and additional athletic fields that are used by the public.

Please consider supporting Griswold Public School's Committee on Campus Athletic Fields Revitalization Project that we covered on page 1 of [our April issue of the "Griswold Times"](#). The Committee plans to renovate the existing track and field behind GHS to fix damage caused by drainage issues and years of use, to once again boast such an abundance of state-of-the-art, multi-use athletic facilities.

(Source: GHS 1937 Yearbook, GHS Learning Commons & [Classmates.com](#))
View many GHS Yearbooks 1937-2000 at [Classmates.com](#).

GHS NEWS

Mental Health Awareness Day

On May 13, the Student Leadership Council hosted a Mental Health Awareness Day with activities during lunch waves, and classes could sign up to visit with goats from Marra's Menagerie on the patio. Thanks to the GHS PTO for supplying refreshments and to Griswold PRIDE for helping coordinate the day. [See more on our Instagram.](#)



Fundraisers:

The Student Leadership Council raised \$1,087 to benefit World Central Kitchen, an organization that is providing hot meals to Ukrainian refugees in Eastern Europe. They raised the funds by selling "Stand with Ukraine" bracelets. Sophomore Kianna Ego was critical in making this fundraiser come to life.

The Tri-M Music Honor Society held an "Eyes on the Pies" pizza competition on May 18 where they raised \$1,000 for their scholarship fund. Jewett City's Chew & Brew won best pizza out of 11 pizzas in eastern Connecticut. In 2023, the group plans to host the Pepperoni Showdown as a rematch for all participating pizzerias.

#nicksride: The entire GHS community has been active helping senior Nick Guile's family raise funds to purchase a wheelchair accessible vehicle. [Meet Nick, who has Cerebral Palsy, here \(VIDEO\).](#) Students in GHS's Sports Management class are hosting a "Ballin' for a Benefit" Basketball Tournament on Friday, June 3 at 5:30pm. Tickets will be sold at the door for \$5.

Please consider donating to one of two GoFundMe campaigns:

1) [Help Nick Get A Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle](#)

2) Teacher Brian Browne is challenging people to donate to [this GoFundMe](#) for the chance to win "The World's Oldest PB&J Sandwich" from 1994 – at least 10 year's older than Nick himself!

Juniors & Seniors in Financial and Professional Management (FPM) classes attended a **Financial Reality Fair** sponsored by CT Credit Unions at Killingly High School on May 18. This interactive financial learning experience is designed to teach students the value of using money responsibly. Each student chose a career that interests them and were provided with a starting salary; they were then tasked with budgeting real-life expenses such as housing, transportation, food, and other essentials. As in the real world, entertainment opportunities and non-essential services were made available to tempt the students in this simulation. Students documented their budget and reviewed it with financial counselors, and walked away with a better understanding of the costs associated with every day life, as well as the importance of savings, investment, and maintaining healthy credit.



Ms. Hannah McNeil is the recipient of the **Connecticut Council for the Social Studies Excellence in Teaching Award**. [Read our press release here.](#)

Congratulations to all students who worked hard to be on the **Honor Roll** in Quarter 3. [See the list online in The Day.](#)

AWARDS & HONORS

GHS held their **Spring Pep Rally** on Thursday, May 26, followed by the Senior Awards Night that evening.

At the Pep Rally, students were recognized for their participation in winter and spring athletics, clubs, members of honor societies, prom courts, and several awards, including the Gerard & Wanda Brunet Scholarships. Others recognized included students receiving certifications for completion of the Youth Manufacturing Pipeline Initiative, and those who have enlisted in branches of the military.

Congratulations to [seniors who received scholarships and awards \(list here\)](#), and thanks to our generous community for supporting these students.

View [pep rally photos on our Facebook](#), and a [fun video on our Instagram](#).



Congratulations to students inducted into the **National Honor Society**:

Juniors: Laila Bakhshalizadeh, Robert Chabotte, Gavin Demicco, Katelyn Fasula, Tyler Kazlauskas, Kendall Larkin, Savana McCracken, Summer Millette, Mikayla Neilson, Maya Perea, Kyle Roode, Kuranda Ruggerio, Lucas Strain, and Amanda Wrobel.

Sophomores: Cyrus Bakhshalizadeh, Natalie Becotte, Justyn Blanchard, Maxwell Brown, Sean Garvin, Samuel Martin, Ryan Tate, Hailey Watters, and Madilyn Wooten.

The winners of the 2022 GHS **Poetry Writing Contest** are Ava Mehrens for the poem "The Feather"; Presley Austin for the poem "A Book Never Read"; and Justin Phillips for the poem "We Are Defective." [Winning poems can be read on the GHS Learning Commons' Google Site here.](#)

The 2022 **Poetry Slam** was won by Ben St. Peter. McKayla Madden came in an extremely close second. Students had to read four original poems. Congrats to all!

GMS NEWS

Exploratories:

GMS Music Students did a fantastic job in their spring concerts. It was the first time since December 2019 that GMS has been able to host in-person concerts. 7th and 8th grade students performed for their peers at an in-school concert on May 11; [see more on our Instagram here](#).

The art work at GMS' **Exploratory Night, Art Show, and Scholastic BOGO Book Fair** on May 19 was incredible! Thanks for coming out to learn more about students' recent work in Art, Health, Technology Education, Physical Education, Music, and Spanish!

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CREW News:

Earlier in April, students participated in the ACES Walk with their CREWs. ACES stands for "All Children Exercising Simultaneously" and was created by physical education teacher Len Saunders in 1989 as a method of motivating children to exercise. ACES takes place on the first Wednesday in May as part of National Physical Fitness and Sports Month along with National Physical Education Week. Since 1989, millions of children from all over the world exercise together to promote proper health and fitness habits. [Check out a clip of students enjoying the beautiful weather on our Instagram](#).

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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Charitable Donations and Fundraising:

The GMS Student Services team is creating a mini "Care Closet," so students have access to personal care items if they need them in school or to take home. They are collecting donations of new, unopened products including: deodorant, feminine products, dry shampoo, soap, flushable wipes, face wipes, toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, shampoo, conditioner, body wash, etc. Travel or sample sizes are ideal. If you would like to donate products to the Care Closet, they can be dropped off at the GMS Main Office.

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PTO News:

The PTO plans to host summer fun nights, and has funded a Gaga Ball Pit and fresh paint for four-square courts on the playground to be installed this summer. The PTO continues to fundraise for more improvements to the GMS Playground. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation, checks made payable to "GMS PTO" can be mailed to the Middle School at 211 Slater Avenue, Griswold, CT 06351.

Learn more on the [GMS PTO webpage here](#).

[More GMS News can be found online on the GMS Now blog!](#)



GES NEWS

Art Show:

Students in each grade created works inspired by the “Dessert Painter,” Wayne Thiebaud, which were showcased earlier this month.

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Charitable Donations and Fundraising:

At the POP! (Power of Purpose) Step it Up fundraiser, GES collected over \$20,000 via donations from parents, families, and friends. Portions of the funds will be used for the installation of new playground equipment, future field trips and assemblies, and student enrichment products.

Students participated in the Day of Awesomeness party on May 24 as a celebration for their fundraising efforts. POP! brought in all of the equipment, and students and staff alike had a great time. Watch some clips of first graders enjoying their time on the inflatable obstacle courses and some frozen treats [on our Instagram here](#).

Thank you to the greater-GES community for your generosity! We’re excited to install the new playground equipment and get planning programming for the 2022-23 school year!



Above: Fourth grader Emma R. with donut art projects from her class.
Students participating in fun activities during the GES Day of Awesomeness.

WOLVERINES FORWARD NEWS

Wolverines Forward (WF) is a Before & After School Program for students in grades K-8 that started in the fall of 2021.

This spring, students have been getting outside for sports, scavenger hunts, nature crafts, and even gardening. On June 3, WF students and their families will be going to a Norwich Sea Unicorns game for an end of the year Family Fun Night. [Learn more about Wolverines Forward on their Google Site](#).

As we wrap up the first year of the Wolverines Forward Before & After School Program, we are so thankful for all the students, families, and staff that made it such a success!

Registration for the 2022-2023 school year will be open Mid-July; an email will go out to all GES and GMS families when it is live. The registration form will be found [on our website under Parent Resources](#). Students will be added to the program roster on a first come, first served basis.

ATHLETICS



Congratulations to our GHS athletes for an incredible spring season! We will continue to share news from the season in our June issue, as students compete in the CIAC Class S Outdoor Track Championship on May 31.

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Live stream or watch past home games and the upcoming Basketball Tournament fundraiser for senior Nick Guile (June 3) on [Griswold Sports Network's \(GSPN\) YouTube Channel](#).

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GHS Cheerleading Tryouts are to be held June 7-9 so the team can attend Cheer Summer Camp. Students must have a current physical in order to tryout. Incoming GHS freshmen for the 2022-23 school year are able to tryout as well. Follow [@griswoldhscheer](#) on [Instagram](#) for more info!



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Congratulations to the [2022 Connecticut Association of Schools' Scholar-Athletes](#): Nathan Moore and Haley Eliasson.

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Aiden Christie was named to The Day's 2022 All-Area Wrestling Team.

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The Griswold Booster Club is highlighting **GHS Athletes of the Week:**

April 25-May 1:

Anthony Gaeta (Senior, Outdoor Track) is a leader in the classroom and on the track. At the Ledyard Relays Invitational Anthony earned medals in three events. He came in 3rd place for discus individually and his relay came in 3rd overall for the meet. He was also part of the shot put relay that came in 2nd and the 110 shuttle hurdle relay that took 3rd place overall.

Keira Fleming (Sophomore, Lacrosse) is a humble, hard-working athlete who is highly coachable. She has performed diligently at every position we put her at. She is also very dedicated, never missing practices or games.

May 2-8:

Michael Strain (Junior, Outdoor Track) was a top contributor to the GHS Track & Field Team's win vs. Windham. He took 1st place in the 800 and 1600. He was also part of the 4x800 and 4x400 relays that took 1st place. Additionally, at the Marty Roberts Invitational, he placed 2nd in the 1600 and 5th in the 800 overall.

Taylor Bialowas (Senior, Outdoor Track) took 1st place for long jump and the 100 at Griswold's dual meet vs. Windham. She also placed 8th overall in the 100m and 3rd for long jump at the Marty Robert's Invitational at Coginchaug High School.

May 9-15:

Sean Garvin (Sophomore, Baseball) went 4-4 with a double and 2 RBI's while pitching 6 innings; striking out 10 batters to earn the win for Griswold defeating Stonington 6-5. The victory clinched Griswold into the ECC tournament.

Sydney Hart (Senior, Outdoor Track) placed first in shot put at the dual meet against Stonington, and then she had another great performance at the Running Rams Invitational on May 13. She qualified for finals and placed 8th overall.

May 16-22:

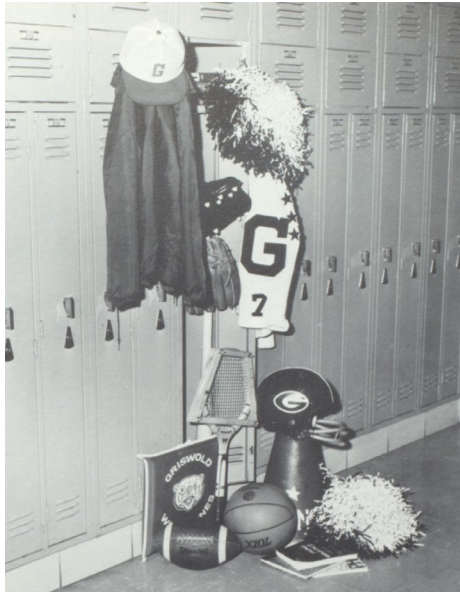
Cory Smith (Junior, Baseball) has been a savior in the outfield all year and an excellent teammate with a positive attitude.

Emily Aviles (Junior, Lacrosse) is a born leader and is highly dedicated to our team. She had another fantastic week and is always a catalyst for our team. She had 10 goals and 2 assists during our last two regular season games against Stonington & Jonathan Law.

Follow the [Griswold Boosters Club](#) on Facebook for more sports news!

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At the ECC Championship Track Meet on May 23, senior Taylor Bialowas became a three- time long jump champion. Danny Sims received 1st in shot put, Anthony Gaeta received 1st in discus, and Logan Benoit received 2nd in javelin—all contributing to the Griswold High School Boys Team winning 2nd overall! Congratulations!



Above: Griswold sports memorabilia. (Source: GHS 1973 Yearbook, GHS Learning Commons & [Classmates.com](#))



Above: Taylor Bialowas after winning the ECC Championship for Long Jump. Taylor will be attending Mitchell College in New London to play soccer in the fall.

ALUMNI PROFILE: JERMAINE FRAZER-PHILLIPS '13

written by Kayla Hedman '10

Each month, a couple bags of delicious, aromatic coffee beans roasted in New England show up on my doorstep. Beyond the fact that the coffee gives me life most days, my coffee subscription supports a startup business venture by a fellow Griswold High School alumni, Jermaine Frazer-Phillips. For our May issue, I could not think of a more fitting feature than Jermaine and his coffee company, [Big Up Brew](#). The first week of May was National Small Business Week, which is an obvious fit, but May is also Mental Health Awareness Month. “Big Up” is a Jamaican expression that refers to congratulating and honoring yourself. “We want our Big Up Brew family to believe in self-compassion and confidence, which directly impacts our personal lives, relationships, and communities,” reads Big Up’s website. Big Up Brew has become a staple in my pantry, and I was excited to catch up with Jermaine to learn more about his business and life since his time at GHS.



Jermaine, a first-generation Jamaican-American, graduated from Griswold High School as a member of the class of 2013. Although I was a few years ahead of him in school, I have always had great respect for Jermaine. He was the quintessential Griswold student that took advantage of as many opportunities as he could. He worked hard in athletics, earning All-ECC and All-State recognition in Football, played basketball for a year before switching to Wrestling as his winter sport, and participated in outdoor track in the spring of his sophomore year. Jermaine was also active in the music program, as a member of Chamber Choir and a stage-hand in the spring musicals, and he still enjoys playing guitar and making music. Recognitions didn’t stop there, as he also recalled winning a poetry slam, and naturally, being crowned Mr. GHS his senior year.

Following graduation from Griswold, Jermaine attended Suffield Academy preparatory school for a year to play Football and Wrestling. While there, he brought his love of music with him and started a Men’s Choir. Ultimately, his football reel at Suffield helped him be recruited to play NCAA DIII Football at Ohio Wesleyan University (Defensive End, team captain his senior year), where he pursued International Studies. Just as he was in his time at Griswold and Suffield, Jermaine was highly engaged in his program and student life. He served as co-chair on the International Studies student board and was one of three students to receive an award for Outstanding Achievement in International Studies. You could say that wherever he goes, Jermaine has been the cream that rises to the top. Upon graduation from OWU, he moved to Chicago where he started his career as a cyber insurance broker. As a passion project, he spent time interviewing and producing podcasts with Chicago-based entrepreneurs and creatives and loved helping them amplify their voices. Making connections with other creatives helped Jermaine realize two things: one, he wanted to move back to New England, and two, it inspired him to start his own business with the goals of giving back to his community and diversifying the food and beverage industry.

Jermaine moved back to Connecticut in 2019 and now lives in Avon with his fiancé, Nicole. While working as a marketing sales professional at HubSpot, he started Big Up Brew and officially launched the company in April 2021. “Starting a business is difficult, but being unhappy is more difficult,” he noted, referring to losing interest in past positions. “Just go for it and chase happiness!”

To Jermaine, coffee is a bridge to commonality. He shared experiences of sitting with people who have different backgrounds, cultures, languages and beliefs than his own, but they were able to connect over coffee.

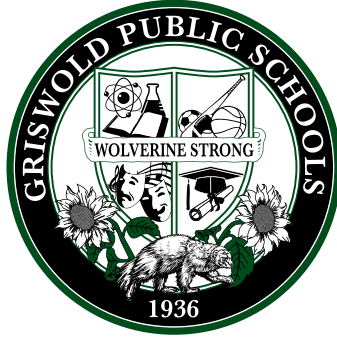
For now, Big Up Brew is primarily sold online at [bigupbrew.com](#). Jermaine is already investing back into his business to do some rebranding and gear up for some exciting changes. He hopes to expand his coffee brand into a coffee food truck, and eventually a café. Since launching last year, Jermaine has been busy building relationships in the Hartford area; you can find Big Up Brew at farmers markets and pop-up events in Hartford county, as well as at Hartford Prints and Semilla Café + Studio. **If you’d like to try Big Up Brew, use promo code [GHS](#) for 20% off your [online order](#).** I hope you’ll join me in supporting (and enjoying) Big Up Brew! ☕

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

A few local or online Griswold Alum-run businesses to support:

- [Big Up Brew](#), Jermaine Frazer-Phillips '13
- [Sweet Dahlia Jewelry](#), jewelry by Heather LaRose '08
- [SunStormUSA](#), jewelry by Jamie Musa '10
- [Beyond the Ridge Taxidermy](#), Seth Gwiazdowski '10
- [PIKA Food Truck](#), Lauren Barnes '10
- [Yeaton Tree Removal LLC](#), Austin Yeaton '13





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.