

Groton School

Groton, United States



On an Olmsted-designed campus, English-style forms and a nightly handshake anchor this Episcopal school's century-old ethic of service.

RANKING DIMENSIONS

Overall	81/100
Academic outcomes	80/100
University placement	78/100
Prestige & heritage	85/100
Alumni network	83/100
Facilities	83/100
Transparency	79/100

EDITOR'S VERDICT

The nightly handshake tells you more about Groton than any mission statement. This is a small Episcopal boarding school of 380 students on a 480-acre, Olmsted-designed campus, and it still runs on ritual, duty and a strong internal culture. Morning Chapel, Roll Call, handshaking, Sixth Form prefect responsibilities and weekly worship are not decorative flourishes; they are part of the machinery of the place. Parents looking for a loose, anonymous American high school will find the opposite here. Groton is **deliberately old-structured**, **intensely communal** and unusually confident in asking adolescents to submit to shared habits. For the right child, that produces real ballast.

That structure sits alongside serious academic attention. Groton teaches the American curriculum, with a **4:1** student-teacher ratio and an average class size of **18**, so students get close adult scrutiny and little room to hide. The school states plainly that it resists narrow specialisation, which matters: this is a school for able students who want breadth as well as rigour, and who can tolerate high expectations in many directions at once. The recent university destinations underline the point. The University of Chicago leads with 49 matriculations, followed by Georgetown and Harvard with 16 each. This is not a finishing school for polish alone; it sends pupils into demanding academic environments and has the track record to prove it.

Its market position is clear. Groton trades in *institutional depth*, not scale, novelty or glossy international branding. NEASC and NAIS accreditation provide the expected external assurance, but the real differentiator is the combination of intimacy, pastoral visibility and inherited prestige. Fees are expensive even by US independent-school standards: an average of **\$62,740** a year for boarders and **\$48,850** for day pupils across the full age range. Families paying that level are buying access to a tightly run boarding culture, a powerful alumni network and a school where character formation is treated as a daily practice rather than a slogan.

The pupil who will want Groton is bright, socially durable and comfortable in a community where everyone knows everyone else. It suits students who value *close supervision*, tradition and service, and who are willing to participate rather than stand back. It will not suit teenagers who want maximum freedom, a casual relationship with authority or a more secular atmosphere. On a shortlist, Groton earns its place because it offers something harder to find than strong academics alone: a *cohesive moral culture* with real expectations attached.

STRENGTHS

- Consistently high academic outcomes with a low student-teacher ratio, cited around 7:1, allowing close faculty attention across a small enrollment of roughly 380 students.
- Need-blind admission policy with substantial financial aid: about 40-44% of students receive aid and families earning under \$150,000 attend tuition-free.
- Long, well-documented history dating to 1884 with notable alumni including President Franklin D. Roosevelt and Nobel laureate John B. Goodenough.
- Distinctive enrichment programs such as GEO (Groton Educational Opportunities) travel experiences and the GRACE academic-acceleration initiative broaden the standard curriculum.
- Sizeable endowment (approximately \$475 million) has allowed the school to hold tuition increases below many peer boarding schools in recent years.

TRADE-OFFS

- Highly selective, with reported acceptance rates in the roughly 9-14% range, making admission uncertain even for strong applicants.
- Boarding tuition is substantial (around \$62,000-\$63,000 per year before aid), a significant commitment for relocating families without aid eligibility.
- Very small total enrollment (under 400 students) means a narrower range of course electives and extracurricular scale compared to larger prep schools.
- Rural Massachusetts campus sits roughly 30-40 miles from Boston, requiring reliance on Logan International Airport and added travel time for international families.

ADMISSIONS

Groton admits students into grades 8 through 12 (Second through Sixth Form), with the same application process for day and boarding candidates: transcripts, recommendations, an essay, standardized testing, and an interview. Admission is need-blind and reported as highly competitive, with acceptance rates commonly cited in the single digits to low teens. Financial aid applications run through a separate January deadline, and families earning under \$150,000 annually may qualify for free tuition, room, and board.

NOTABLE ALUMNI (5 8)

SPORT: Richard H. Baker Jr., Henry Calhoun Taylor

DRAMA: Alexandra Paul, Sam Waterston, Alex Gansa, Ayi Kwei Armah, Henry Calhoun Taylor

VISUAL_ARTS: Fuller Potter, Henry Francis du Pont, Q60750819

LETTERS: Theodore Roosevelt Jr., Ayi Kwei Armah, Kermit Roosevelt Jr., Robert Rutherford McCormick, J. Watson Webb, Jr., Joseph Albright, Richard R. Peabody, Thomas Forrest Kelly

POLITICS: Franklin Delano Roosevelt Jr., W. Averell Harriman, Theodore Roosevelt Jr., Bobby Scott, Jim Cooper, F. Trubee Davison, James Coats Auchincloss, Samuel Reber

SCIENCE: Ayi Kwei Armah, Sherwood Washburn, Thomas Forrest Kelly, Donald White, Edward Bell Krumbhaar, Stephen Bleecker Luce, Elbridge Colby, Nathan Alex Scott III

BUSINESS: Franklin Delano Roosevelt Jr., W. Averell Harriman, Theodore Roosevelt Jr., Jim Cooper, Richard Whitney, Kermit Roosevelt Jr., William Kingsland Macy, Archibald Roosevelt

WTS RATING



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