



Grafton Public Schools Budget Development

March 11, 2014

The development of the fiscal year 2015 school department budget has taken place over the past seven months. This process has identified needs for the coming year and corresponding requests that are meant to strategically strengthen areas of need and build on areas of strength in order to benefit all students. These efforts are based on a research-based strategic vision that will ideally culminate in the school district attaining and maintaining consistently exceptional results for students.

Funding of the schools has historically been challenging and will continue to be given the anticipated needs of the system compared to the annual resources available from the town and state. Projecting needs and anticipated outcomes in the area of education is challenging. Numerous factors and variables can have profound impacts on educational budgets and many cannot be controlled or anticipated with any certainty. That said, I have attempted on the following pages to illustrate my best thinking as to the level of investment required to move our school system from good to great and the impact of funding.

What we want as a town for the future of our students is debatable. The fact that the current funding model is not sustainable for our schools is not. Despite having the lowest per pupil spending in the state, annual cost increases for special education tuitions and salaries alone exceed the limited additional dollars available to the town. In the near future the town will need to make a decision as to what the immediate and long- term future of the Grafton Public Schools will be. It is my hope that this document, paired with the full FY15 budget book, will help begin this important conversation.

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Sincerely,

Jay Cummings

Characteristics of Great School Districts

**The characteristics outlined below define what we aspire to provide to all students within the Grafton Public Schools.
All funding requests are based upon these characteristics.**

Content	Students	Instruction
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every student has access to rich, high-quality content that fosters the use of creativity, communication, critical thinking, and collaboration • Manipulatives and supplies readily available to teachers and students • Access to high quality, real-time technology embedded into instructional practices • Access to enrichment activities within the school day, PTG's supplementing not supplanting • Data assessment system is in place, provides regular data about student learning • Curriculum aligned with state frameworks and focused on college and career readiness development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students will be highly engaged and known as both people and learners. • Instruction and support is tailored to the individual, proactive supports are in place to react proactively to evidence of learning is not taking place • Innovative, research-based programs exist to support student needs and interests (i.e. vocational programming, advanced learning opportunities, increased AP courses, electives) • High degree of access to curricular and extra-curricular offerings, arts & music, athletics, service-based opportunities • School climates in which students are connected to numerous adults and peers in supportive, positive, meaningful ways • Student supports are available and offered in a coordinated and proactive manner 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Instruction will be differentiated, informed by evidence of student learning, collaborative, defined by high levels of student engagement, and focused on continual growth • High degree of rigor and expectation, maximized use of time, no directed study blocks • Readily accessible and supported assessment tools • Curricular supports, resources for teachers in place • Small class sizes, • Regular, proactive two-way communication with parents and guardians • Short and long term student supports (i.e. literacy, special education, mathematics, etc.) readily available in an array of different formats • Wide array of professional development focused on content, instruction, assessment

FY15 –Funding Requests For FY15 (Increases Above FY14 Budget)

District Status/Funds	Investment/Reduction	Outcomes
Great	Greatness is attained when strong funding is sustained over time	
Strong (+\$2,500,000 over FY14 funding)	• Add instructional support at GHS (Dept. head model or admin. addition -1 FTE)	Provides a necessary level of support for teaching and learning, results in increased learning
	• Add full-time school resource officer	Dedicated officer would support staff, work with students, courts, police, safety liaison
	• Add advanced math teacher 5-6	Increase breadth & depth of math programming, extension of differentiated instruction
	• Add 2 literacy coaches K-6	Increased support of general education teachers in literacy instruction
	• Increase art/music at K-8 level	Increase opportunities for students with intensive special needs to access the arts
	• Add 1 nurse position at 7-12 level	Currently 1 nurse serves 9-12 level (750+ students)
Stable (+\$2,000,000 over FY14 funding)	• Add part-time reading teacher at NSES	Significantly improve ability to meet identified reading needs
	• Add 3 general education teachers	New teachers to maintain class sizes K-8 (21-25) and positively impact currently large class sizes in math & social studies at GHS
	• Add psychologist position at K-1 level and counselor at the 2-6 level	Allows mental health/counseling supports to be available to students, currently these supports do not exist
	• Add 2 special education teachers at K-1 level	Would provide for needed level of student supports at K-1, currently insufficient
Limited (+\$1,500,000 over FY14 funding)	• No additional staffing needs met	Limited inclusion of spec. educ. students, stretched support resources for mental health needs, limited availability for admin to support teaching and learning, increase demand for supports, special education, increase in out of district tuition/transportation costs
	• Reduced maintenance and custodial services	Decreased maintenance and cleaning of facilities, reduction of 1.0 FTE
	• No reduction in teacher force	Maintain class sizes 21-25 K-8; 25-30+ at GHS
Dysfunctional (+\$1,000,000 over FY14 funding)	• Reduction of 10 existing teaching positions	Significant increase in class sizes to 27-29.75 in grades 4-8, reduced elective offerings at GHS, decreased time on learning
	• Elimination of 3 requested teaching positions	Significant increase in class sizes to 27-29.75 in grades 4-8, reduced elective offerings at GHS, decreased time on learning
	• Reduction of 1 existing 2 new counseling/mental health positions	Fewer supports for student mental health needs, increased burden on teaching staff, admin., special education
	• No additional staffing needs met	Minimal spec. educ. supports, stretched support resources for mental health needs, limited availability for admin to support teaching and learning, increase demand for supports, special education, increase in out of district tuition/transportation costs
	• Reduced maintenance and custodial services	Decreased maintenance and cleaning of facilities, reduction of 1.0 FTE

FY15 - Variable Measures (bold borders indicate current FY14 status rate)

District Status/Funds (amount over FY14 budget)	Out of district placement costs (anticipated cost increase per year)	Probability of bringing students 'Back' to GPS/Tuition In (revenue)	Students choosing out of GPS (costs affect state funding)	IEP Requests/Services Required (state avg. = 17%)	Achievement (SAT,PARCC/MCAS, AP courses, Reading/Math performance)
Great	\$100,000-\$200,000	Very High	High rate of retention of students in district (1%-5%)	Lower (decreased service needs) 5%-10%	Maximized performance (top 1%-10% in state)
Strong (+\$2,500,000)	\$200,000-\$300,000	High	5%-10%	10%-15%	(top 10%-20% in state)
Stable (+\$2,000,000)	\$300,000-\$400,000	Low	10%-15%	15%-20%	(top 20%-30% in state)
Limited (+\$1,500,000)	\$400,000-\$500,000	Very Low	15%-20%	20%-25%	(top 30-40% in state)
Dysfunctional (+\$1,000,000)	\$500,000-\$600,000+	NA	Increased # students choicing out of GPS (20%+)	Higher (increased staffing needs) 25%+	Decreased achievement (40%-60%+)
FY14 Status	Limited (\$459,000)	Very Low	Stable (12%)	Stable (15%) State Average=17%	Stable (20%-30%)

Projected Costs Associated with School District Status (in millions)

FY15	Annual Increase	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19
Great		Greatness is attained when strong funding is sustained over time			
Strong \$29.3 (\$1.5 million over current allocation)	6% annual increase	\$31.0	\$32.9	\$34.9	\$36.9
Stable \$28.8 (\$1.0 million over current allocation)	5% annual increase	\$30.2	\$31.7	\$33.3	\$35.0
	4.5% annual increase	\$30.1	\$31.5	\$32.9	\$34.4
Limited \$28.3 (\$500,000 over current allocation)	4% annual increase	\$29.4	\$30.6	\$31.8	\$33.1
Dysfunctional \$27.8 (current allocation increase as of 3/7/14)	3% annual increase	\$28.6	\$29.5	\$30.4	\$31.3

Reference: In the proposed FY15 budget \$1,100,000 is budgeted for special education tuition increases (\$459,000 and salary increases (\$734,000). These two expenditures equate to **4.1%** of the annual increase.

Projected Impact Related to Investment FY16-FY19 (based off of requested FY15 budget)

Requested FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19
Great				
Strong Funding 6%	<p>Increased literacy supports</p> <p>Increased safety through full-time SRO</p> <p>Improved nursing services at 9-12 level</p> <p>Restore custodial levels</p> <p>Restore art, music, technology levels at K-1</p>	<p>Advanced math program extended into 7-8</p> <p>Vocational/alternative ed. programming started</p> <p>Advanced math programming extended 9-12</p> <p>Immersion programming piloted K-1</p>	<p>Increased literacy supports</p> <p>Advanced math program started 5-6</p> <p>1:1 extended into 7-8</p> <p>Vocational/alternative ed. programming piloted</p> <p>Before/after school services developed</p> <p>AP programming expanded 9-12</p>	<p>Immersion extended to grade 2</p> <p>STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) programming expanded 9-12</p>
Stable Funding 5%	<p>Stable – The district is ‘whole’, class sizes are within recommended ranges, supports are in place for special educations and counseling services. Maintenance and custodial needs are being met to a satisfactory level. Annually approximately 4.0% of increase is going to salary obligations and special education tuition/transportation increases. Allows for approximately 1% (\$280,000) to be spent on services, materials, increases in utilities, etc.</p>			
Limited Funding 4%	<p>Increased class sizes 27-30 grades 4-12</p> <p>Reduced electives 9-12</p> <p>Reduction of maintenance/custodial</p> <p>Reduction of art, music, PE</p>	<p>Increased class sizes grades K-4 (27-30), additional class size increases at GHS/GMS</p> <p>Reduced electives 7-8</p> <p>Elimination of clubs/activities</p>	<p>Reduction of instructional assistants and counseling supports</p> <p>Further reduction of electives</p> <p>Reduction of extra-curricular activities</p>	<p>Reduction of non-instructional staff</p> <p>Reduction of support services</p> <p>Shared building administration</p> <p>Transportation 7-12</p>
Dysfunctional Funding 3%				