

TOWN OF GROTON FINANCE COMMITTEE

Saturday, February 27th, 2016, Selectmen's Meeting Rm

Groton Town Hall, 173 Main St. Groton, MA, 10:30 a.m.

Meeting held jointly with the Board of Selectmen & School Committee

This Meeting was recorded live for Cable Access, and a separate audio recording was made by Mr. Harris

Present for Finance Committee: D. Manugian, G. Green (Chair), Art Prest, R. Hargraves (Vice Chair), B. Robertson, B. Pease, M. Bacon, P. DuFresne (Town Accountant, Recording)

Present for the Board of Selectmen: S. Schulman, A. Eliot, J. Petropoulos (Chair), and P. Cunningham

Absent: J. Degen

Present for the School Committee: A. Manugian (Chair), J. Kubick, L. Lathrop, J. Sjoberg

Also Present: M. Haddad (Town Manager), R. Harris (Groton Herald), D. Devlin (Dunstable BOS), K. Rodriguez (School Superintendent), J. Stanton (Director of Business & Finance), C. Muir (Dunstable FinCom), and Members of the Public

Documents available at the meeting: School Key Findings with Success Metrics/Assoc. Costs
School Budget Drivers by Priority FY16 vs FY17
A Reflection on Sustainability by K. Rodriguez, Ph.D.
Comparable NSS % Analysis Groton vs Other Districts
Revenue/Expense Sustainability Analysis
School Budget Drivers & Assumptions
Class Size & Implications for Our Students
Table of High School Actual Class Sizes 9/15 & 2/16

Mr. Green called the meeting of the Finance Committee to order at 10:31 a.m.

Mr. Petropoulos called the meeting of the Board of Selectmen to order at 10:31 a.m.

Mr. Kubick called the meeting of the School Committee to order at 10:31 a.m.

Mr. Green stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the GDRSD proposed budget. The Finance Committee's role is to provide a recommendation on that budget to Town Meeting. Mr. Kubick thanked the Finance Committee for providing the opportunity to discuss issues and answer questions. He noted that the School Committee is responsible for certifying the district budget. For budget planning purposes, it is useful to know that a major portion of the income that supports that budget is derived from local property taxes. However, the first priority should be the educational welfare of the students. The

School Committee carefully studied the needs, so as to preserve the well-being of the students. They will vote on March 9th to adopt an FY17 budget, and hope that the information shared today will allow the school committee to move forward with that process. Ms. Rodriguez mentioned that while the School Committee has already held its public hearing, additional questions that have been raised by the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen in Groton are important and should be addressed. She acknowledged the work that was accomplished by her team to assemble the answers to these questions.

Dr. Rodriguez distributed a document entitled "A Reflection on Sustainability" in which she considers the concept from the "Triple Bottom Line" position of Profit (Revenue), Social Justice, and Environmental Responsibility. While Groton excels in conservation efforts, there is work to do in the area of social justice. During the recent Future Search opportunity hosted by the school district, it was discovered that many stakeholders saw the district schools as consistently underfunded. While this is a statewide issue, it does affect all students in the district. Social Justice as it relates to education involves safety, protection and equal access to services like the library. Compliance issues, policies and funding must be equally provided to all students. Dr. Rodriguez stressed the growing gap between Groton's needier students and the remaining population as an example where justice is not being served. In Massachusetts, the system by which school districts receive revenue is broken. The Proposition 2 ½ Law has placed an arbitrary limit on a local government's ability to fund its schools as it sees fit. At the same time, schools have had to become more reliant on State Aid (Chapter 70) which has been inconsistent at best. This situation has led to dramatic losses in programming and staff over time. Dr. Rodriguez said that it has taken the district a year and a half to analyze and correct the metrics which were disguising the true extent of the problem. The Foundation Budget Review Commission attempted to address some of these issues, however, Governor Baker chose not to include those recommendations in his budget. Therefore, the district continues to struggle with needs that cannot be met within the constraints of the arbitrary Proposition 2 ½ limit.

Dr. Rodriguez noted that a balanced budget is not necessarily one that is sustainable, and does not always represent health spending. Declining enrollment has led to natural and authentic cuts to the budget. However, the budget continues to grow and programs are cut beyond the impact of that decline. She suggested that the usual way of building a budget, starting with revenue estimates and building expenditure plans up to that point, may not be the most effective method, and leads to a decline in services. As an advocate for the students, she recommends starting with known expense needs, and balancing those to the revenue side. This is a process that must be done collaboratively and thoughtfully. Budgeting is a moral obligation; what we fund is what we care about. Ms. Manugian presented the Sustainable Budget document from the Budget & Finance Subcommittee. She explained that the district spends about \$40 million annually, of which \$36.5 million represents General Fund spending. 60% of General Fund is dedicated to salaries which grow at 3% annually and include COLAs, and step/lane changes per the union contracts. 14% of General Fund spending is for insurance obligations, which grow at about 9% per year, and the remaining 25% of other spending relates to supplies, contracted services and other general expenses. For the time being these expenses are being held flat, although that might not prove to be realistic. With this in mind, the annual rollover cost is \$1.12 million, which can be considered sustainable as it essentially meets the annual growth target of 2.5% (\$1.03 million per year). She emphasized that the district does not have a spending problem; it has a revenue problem. She explained that Grant programs account for 2% of district spending, but cannot be relied upon for budgeting purposes

as they are annual in nature, and the district must qualify to receive this funding. Revolving Accounts make up another 7% of annual revenue, and are comprised mostly of user fees, which must cover the associated expenses. The remaining 91% of school revenue relates to General Fund activity and is made up of State Aid (Chapter 70) at 35% and Local Assessments of 65%. The \$1.15 million of annual growth is assessed to the district towns based on the student enrollment formula outlined in the district agreement. The pattern of decreased State Aid has led to a requirement to increase the assessment to the district towns of roughly 5% to support rollover needs alone. She said the crucial question is whether the towns will step in to fill this void, or step aside and watch district performance continue to erode. Mr. Kubick pointed out that these figures assume a level-service budget and exclude the needs assessment. Dr. Rodriguez emphasized that the increase in salaries proposed in the needs assessment will not exacerbate the budget problem. The number of new FTE's is small given the number of total employees in the district, and not all of the proposed hires are teachers or union members. The district's primary difficulty is reduced state funding, which will continue to be a problem for both towns. Mr. Hargraves noted that the governor's budget is not the final word on state aid, and the senate is often more generous. Mr. Stanton replied that he does not expect the Chapter 70 estimates to be reduced (an additional \$20 per student is on offer this year). Dr. Rodriguez said that the Chapter 71 revenue (district transportation) never reached the levels initially promised by the state, and the 9C cuts which impact that funding disproportionately impact regional districts. She added that she fought these cuts and was successful in getting some of this revenue restored; the district will continue to address these inequities. Dr. Rodriguez said that she has delivered this presentation to both Sheila Harrington and Eileen Donahue and asked that the Foundation Budget Study Committee's findings be integrated into the governor's budget. She urged officials from both Groton and Dunstable as well as residents to contact their representatives on this issue. Mr. Cunningham mentioned that it is a source of frustration that the larger more politically influential communities tend to receive a larger portion of state aid.

Mr. Robertson pointed out that there is only so much that town officials can do to drive local revenue as it is tied to what the citizens can afford. The town has about 3.5% of revenue growth to work with each year, only a few ways to adjust how that revenue will be spent. While it is important that everyone has an understanding of the school's needs and the spending plan, the revenue constraint is real. He noted that 2.5% is not the sustainable level, that number would be 3.5%. The school district was never locked into spending of 2.5%; the assessments were whatever the district requested. However, he expressed concern regarding the 4.7% growth figure supplied by the Budget & Finance Subcommittee. Knowing this figure provides an opportunity to change those budget drivers that will push the district into requiring additional overrides. He stressed that neither the town nor the district can allow wages to grow at 4% and consider that sustainable; whereas 2% wage growth might be. Ms. Manugian countered that current contractual obligations limit wage growth to 2.5%, and that result was difficult to achieve and required mediation. The school made the change to GIC insurance and re-negotiated the cost share split as well. The district feels that the salaries and benefits provided to staff are not unreasonable compared with other districts. She is not confident that wage growth can be reduced significantly going forward without further losses to educational quality. Mr. Robertson replied that this may be true, in which case the towns will have to plan on more frequent overrides of Proposition 2 ½, or learn to live within revenue constraints. Mr. Sjoberg disagreed somewhat with Ms. Manugian's statement, saying that he would expect both the towns and the school district to negotiate future contracts with the idea of limiting wages to the lower rates of inflation. Mr. Green added that Groton is charging a new committee specifically to study the

concept of sustainability as it relates to the municipal budget; this may add confidence to the budget process going forward. Mr. Petropoulos agreed that the Budget Sustainability Committee will produce useful goals for negotiating with unions. Mr. Robertson noted that the school budget may be sustainable in future years even given the magnitude of spending proposed, as the growth will be supported by the built-in bump to the tax base. Mr. Pease said that removing the effect of Revolving Funds (which are self-sustaining and separate from General Fund operations) results in growth of 3.1% rather than 2.5%. Theoretically, the district may qualify for less and less funding for grants and revolving funds, so for that reason and also because they are separate from General Fund, they should not be included in this calculation. Dr. Rodriguez confirmed that entitlement grant opportunities have been very much depleted, although those students must still be supported. The school has been working to remove salaries from grants and replace those with other expenses to mitigate a potential funding cliff.

Mr. Kubick addressed the group regarding the decision to move forward with a full needs budget rather than an incremental assessment. He explained that the School Committee recognized the immediacy of the needs, as well as the fact that these needs had gone unmet for years. Given the magnitude of the request, even if the expense was spread over a number of years, it would most likely still require several overrides to accomplish. Successive year overrides are not productive in Mr. Kubick's opinion, and lead to extra work and tension. Additionally, phasing in those needs would leave them unaddressed for a further period of time. Also, the capital and technology needs have not been fully assessed. Therefore it was decided to phase in the expense by proposing the needs assessment this year, and capital and technology in a subsequent year. Mr. Schulman asked for confirmation on whether the district towns could expect an additional override request in the coming years. Mr. Kubick replied that a funding request for capital could be made for FY18 or FY19. Mr. Haddad asked whether it would be likely that a capital or technology request could be structured as a one-time project. Dr. Rodriguez said that both of those need categories are still in development, but she noted that the district does not have a capital stabilization fund which is a hindrance. Currently, the budget carries no capital line, only an underfunded maintenance line. A large capital project need may result in the request for a debt exclusion and a bond issue. Dr. Rodriguez said that although the district is responding in a reactionary way now, it is necessary to set up funding for preventative maintenance to protect the buildings from further deterioration. She added that she does not believe that the final technology need will result in a significant impact to the budget. Most of the associated infrastructure will be included in the capital plan, and the technology investment made by the towns several years ago is still being managed in a thoughtful and sustainable way.

Mr. Green noted that the town had built its 5-year projections based on school assessment growth of 3%. This will now need to be adjusted based on the 4.7% information received today. Mr. Hargraves asked whether the school budget includes money for routine building repairs. Dr. Rodriguez replied that the maintenance budget does not include funding for building repairs. Mr. Hargraves would like to see this kind of routine maintenance built into future budgets. Ms. Manugian replied that the School Committee is aware of the need for this, however, the revenue has not been able to support this change. Mr. Schulman asked whether individuals would be allowed to donate money to the school district or if there were any restrictions on these sorts of gifts. Mr. Stanton replied that any individual was welcome to donate to the district; the gift must simply be accepted by the school committee.

Mr. Kubick distributed an updated "Key Findings" document that included columns for associated costs of each proposed solution as well as a set of success metrics (as requested by the Finance Committee). Dr. Rodriguez noted that the document must be corrected to add \$50,000 for material costs in key finding #1. She went on to say that while the metrics are limited by what is available for analysis, she believes that what has been provided will provide measurable outcomes over a 6-year impact period. She described the various state and district assessment standards to be applied to elementary, middle school and high school levels. The district will also implement SMART goals which will be reported on bi-annually as a system of accountability to the district towns. She believes that if Groton Dunstable can reach a Level 1 Performance Index, that should be considered a good return on investment. The district is not aligned with ELA and math standards at this time, but is moving in that direction. Curriculum based outcomes will be made available. Also, teachers will be surveyed as to the quality of their professional development. Dr. Rodriguez said that core classroom sizes will be reported differently and more accurately going forward. Mr. Robertson asked for further clarification regarding closing achievement gaps. Dr. Rodriguez explained that a significant achievement gap has been identified between the general education students and those with special needs. She plans to close this gap by half within 6 years. Mr. Robertson would like to see baseline information included on this summary page. He understands that more detail may be available in the voluminous budget materials, but it is preferable to have it included here. Ms. Manugian said that the School Committee will be producing more summaries of this nature for the public. Mr. Robertson said that the school district will gain credibility every year by presenting the measured success outcomes to the towns until the process is complete. Mr. Petropoulos said that he is very pleased with what has been presented at this meeting. He cautioned that the hard part will be successfully meeting all these goals. He wondered how the Superintendent went about predicting the specific outcomes. Dr. Rodriguez replied that the state provides a framework for building on skill deficits. The proficiency range is also based on state guidelines. She stressed that these achievement metrics cannot be supported without the increased assessments from the towns. As an additional example, Dr. Rodriguez said that the district does not currently have a multi-tiered system of support for students' social and emotional needs. It will require a full 6 years to create the structure, environments, staffing and curriculum to meet this success metric. Mr. Petropoulos asked whether the district can cite research findings that support using this model. Dr. Rodriguez replied that all the research findings supportive of this solution are available in the needs assessment document.

Mr. Hargraves asked whether salary information for the specific positions referenced include benefits costs. Dr. Rodriguez answered that the staffing costs listed do include benefits when the positions qualify. Mr. Stanton confirmed that the benefits costs were estimated at roughly \$15,000.

Dr. Rodriguez spoke at length regarding the misleading nature of reports on class size and distributed 2 documents regarding this issue. She explained that in the past, the school district calculated an average class size similar to the model used by the state. Unfortunately, this measure is flawed and does not capture the reality in many of the classrooms. The district now calculates class sizes using actual classroom numbers. This analysis shows that many sections surpass the 25 student standard that is generally accepted as the upper limit. Many studies indicate that best academic success is achieved with class sizes of 16 or less, however, that is clearly not a realistic target. Ms. Rodriguez felt that her needs-based budget appreciates that classes of greater than 25 will be negatively impacted. Smaller class sizes can prioritize engagement and on-task experiences as well as allow increased access to teachers and

student-specific feedback. Professional development must also be aligned to new expectations so that teachers can offer proper personalized attention to students. Mr. Hargraves said that a larger class size will impact English teachers in a greater way than Math teachers; he wondered if additional sections could be scheduled to mitigate that impact. Dr. Rodriguez explained that box scheduling means that while teachers are in the classroom 3 of the 4 periods per day, different courses are taught in the 1st versus the 2nd half of the year. She stressed that the period during which the teachers are not actively teaching is used for planning. Mr. Hargraves said that providing a chart might help sell this argument to the citizens. Ms. Lathrop replied that the School Committee might be able to help with this request as part of its plan to provide a thorough summary of the needs assessment. Mr. Cunningham asked if it was true that the class size metric might be most critical in core classes. Dr. Rodriguez replied that class sizes are too large in all areas, which is a by-product of program reduction. Mr. Petropoulos asked how citizens should react to the various district comparisons that are popularly discussed. Dr. Rodriguez felt that class size comparisons are not completely reliable; a better measure might be per pupil spending. Based on district research, it is clear that Groton Dunstable is underspending in those areas identified in the needs assessment. Per Pupil Expenditure metrics are also not perfect, but are closer to accurate than other measures used for comparison. Ms. Manugian said that this is an area in which the School Committee can provide guidance as the process moves forward. The lack of standardization of data input among various districts makes absolute comparisons difficult. Dr. Rodriguez stated that this is why no class size ratios were included in this year's budget book; the results are not authentic. Mr. Prest asked for information specific to the average student teacher ratio. Dr. Rodriguez replied that the average at the elementary levels is less than 1:23, and lower at Swallow Union due to lower enrollment. Mr. Prest would like to see how that ratio changes if the calculation includes the proposed new hires. Dr. Rodriguez said she would do that analysis and return an answer to Mr. Prest.

Mr. Hargraves asked for clarification regarding the professional development component of the proposal. Dr. Rodriguez replied that the current model in use is not sustainable, and is not meeting requirements. The district does reimburse for graduate level coursework, but cannot fully provide the in-district development hours that are also mandated. The state advises that 49 hours on a specific topic is required to see growth, and only 2 to 3 hours are provided to district teachers currently.

Dr. Rodriguez distributed material detailing the major budget drivers, and Comparable Net School Spending. Mr. Kubick explained that the NSS analysis shows the percent above minimum that comparable districts have been spending. According to the NSS chart, the average district in Massachusetts spends 15% above the required minimum, while Groton Dunstable (in 2014) spent only 3% above the minimum. Regarding the issue of declining enrollment, Mr. Kubick argued that recent trends show that this decline has leveled off and enrollment may be trending upward again. He stressed that the declines that have been observed the last few years have not been precipitous and are not restricted to a single grade level. Decline in enrollment does not necessarily translate to a proportionate decline in expenses for that reason. Mr. Green asked whether the state aid formula is impacted by enrollment trends. Mr. Stanton replied that even though enrollment is down, the governor's budget has allotted an additional \$20 per student in the state aid forecast.

Mr. Green said that both the Finance Committee and the Board of Selectmen will be meeting again on Monday evening to continue discussing FY17 budget issues. Mr. Kubick mentioned that while the School

Committee has already had a budget discussion with Dunstable, they will offer additional opportunities for discussion as needed. Mr. Haddad asked whether the School Committee would be open to considering various funding scenarios to meet the needs presented today. Mr. Kubick replied that it was too early to say as the committee would not be meeting until Wednesday. He added that they will be considering recent feedback, however, the budget as presented meets the route that the School Committee wants to take. Mr. Hargraves asked whether the School Committee was unanimously in support of the proposed budget. Mr. Kubick said that while some differences of opinion exist, those are mostly centered on structuring of the funding request and not on the extent of the needs as presented. Mr. Petropoulos asked the School Committee whether they had given any thought to implementing this growth over a period of years to reduce the impact to the taxpayers. Ms. Manugian replied that the School Committee is still discussing these options, but they do not have a high level of comfort with seeking multi-year overrides. Ms. Eliot added that there had been some discussion about possibly voting a single large override, but requesting that Town Meeting phase in the appropriation over several years. Ms. Manugian expressed concern that Town Meeting could be unpredictable. Mr. Petropoulos would like to explore the idea of crafting a non-binding article that describes the intent of the Town to spend a certain amount of the override each year, and then manage to that amount year over year. Mr. Green thought this was worthy of further discussion by the School Committee. Mr. Haddad said that the Town of Grafton had been successful with a similar strategy. It requires that the district have faith in Town Meeting, but will help to stabilize the tax rate and limit override events. He reminded the group that Dunstable would have to spend proportionately. Mr. Cunningham cautioned that further overrides may be required once the district's capital and technology needs are known. Mr. Haddad thought it may be possible to fund capital with a debt exclusion, which is a temporary override. Ms. Manugian felt that phasing in implementation would further delay meeting student needs. Also, she would be somewhat hesitant to support a plan predicated on what could be characterized as a formal handshake when structuring future spending for the school district. Mr. Petropoulos felt that if the probability of successfully funding the needs assessment is increased with this kind of strategy, it should be considered. Mr. Cunningham added that the most core needs could be addressed in the first year. Mr. Bacon agreed that urgent items could receive priority treatment. Ms. Manugian, speaking as an individual, stressed that all the needs presented must be considered a first priority. Mr. Schulman wondered whether a phased-in approach may prove more costly in certain cases. Mr. Pease suggested that breaking out instructional service costs by student may yield a valid metric to use for comparisons.

Mr. Green officially adjourned the meeting of the Finance Committee at 1:14 p.m.

Mr. Petropoulos officially adjourned the meeting of the Board of Selectmen at 1:14 p.m.

Mr. Kubick officially adjourned the meeting of the School Committee at 1:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Dufresne, Recording Secretary

Class Size and Its Implications for Our Students

Authored by Dr. Katie Novak and Dr. Kristan Rodriguez

Students in the Groton-Dunstable Regional School District are scheduled into classes that are much larger than in the past. This is discussed in detail in our *Needs Assessment*. As with all staffing requests in the *Needs Assessment*, it is important to review the relevant research and address how the proposed changes will affect student outcomes.

A recent review of literature sought to analyze the effect of class size on student outcomes. Krasnoff (2015), in partnership with the Northwest Comprehensive Center, analyzed 65 peer-reviewed journal articles published on the effect of class size. Across the entire range of research studies on class size reduction, there was a consensus that minimal or arbitrary reductions in class size does not improve student performance. This analysis, however, has significant limitations. First, as stated in Chingo's (2013) study in the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, "The number of high-quality studies [in class size] is disappointingly small" and researchers in the most widely cited studies only examined the effects of class size in kindergarten - third grade (Schanzenbach, 2007).

The most widely referred-to study in class size reduction is Project STAR, a 4-year large-scale randomized experiment that examined the effects of small classes on achievement (Konstantopoulos, 2008). Another widely cited study is Project SAGE, a class size project conducted in K- 3 schools in Milwaukee, Wisconsin (Tienken & Achilles, 2006). Because of the scope of these experiments, they have been used in many policy discussions, but they focus only on early elementary students. In fact, it is important to note that nearly every study on the effects of class-size reduction have occurred in the elementary level and that "scant research" has been done at the secondary level (Finn & Pannozzo, 2003; Tienken & Achilles, 2006).

Lastly, many studies on class size reduction measure the teacher-pupil ratio in schools. Finn and Pannozzo (2003) note that, "aggregate pupil-teacher ratios do not describe the day-to-day setting in which students are learning; many districts have low pupil-teacher ratios, while most students spend the entire school day, every day, in crowded classrooms" (p.322). We saw this very thing in Groton-Dunstable. In past budget booklets, we provided averages of student-to-staff ratios. This could be deceiving as many classes are much larger than a mean average defined by dividing the amount of students we have with the number of teachers we employ. This is because students are not equally divided by staff based on specific course selection, in particular at the secondary level. As part of the *Needs Assessment*, published in

November 2015, we ran actual sections in our new student management database. Recently, we updated this data to include the spring semester. What we found was startling. This year, at the middle school, we have 11 core classes and 33 Integrated Arts classes that currently have over 25 students in them. At the high school, this year (including both semesters), there are 52 core classes (English, math, science, history, and foreign language) and 25 classes in areas such of PE, Health, Art, Chorus and Transitions that exceed 25 students.

As a result of the aforementioned limitations in commonly cited research, and the current data in Groton-Dunstable, often referenced class size research showing little impact on student achievement will not yield applicable information because we are requesting decreased class sizes at the middle school and high school based on class size actuals.

Thus, we did a review of research specific to the secondary level. We found that research correlates large class size with negative student outcomes at the secondary level. For example, classroom management is much more difficult in larger classes which “leads to a loss of quality time and a reduction in the teacher–learner contact for supervision and identification of learning difficulties in the learner. The students thus carry their learning to the next lesson or class without opportunity for guidance and possible remediation” (Fan, 2012, p.79).

When examining a three-year initiative to lower class sizes in a middle school in one of the few secondary studies, Tienken and Achilles (2006) found significantly increased writing scores ($p < .001$) for students who experienced small ELA classes for three years. They note, “the results are consistent with best practice and relevant theory (e.g. individual attention, engagement, time-on-task)” and that students who experienced smaller class sizes performed much higher than their peers. Also, research suggests that improved engagement occurs in reduced class sizes because students are more focused and participate more often when they can’t hide in the back of the classroom (Finn & Pannozzo, 2003).

Additionally, Blatchford, Bassett, and Brown (2011) share that smaller classes benefit all secondary students because they have increased access to teachers and receive more individual attention which allows them to receive more feedback to guide their learning. The authors argue that “lower attaining pupils at the secondary level could particularly benefit from small classes” for this reason (p.728). Given that one of the key findings in our *Needs Assessment* is that there is a significant gap between general education students and our special education cohort in the middle school, reducing class sizes would align with our district improvement plan and allow teachers to provide more focused Tier II and Tier III support to students who need additional attention, as required by the Massachusetts Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS).

Reduced class sizes in middle and high school are more likely to positively affect students when teachers receive professional development and curriculum support so that they can refine their instructional strategies to take advantage of the reduced class size. For example, research notes that teachers who work with small groups, depend on personal relationships with students, and who emphasize hands-on projects—are more productive with smaller than with larger classes and have more successful outcomes (Ehrenberg, Brewer, Gamoran, and Willms, 2001). Based on this line of research, our *Needs Assessment* outlines the importance of increased professional development funding and curriculum leadership to support our educators. In this, we expect increased outcomes for our students as a result of decreasing class sizes at our middle and high schools.

Another study examined the effect of reduced class size on 16 year old students in 148 different schools. The study found that decreasing class size from 25 to 16 resulted in an increase in achievement by about .16 of a standard deviation for reading, and .29 of a standard deviation for mathematics (Ehrenberg, Brewer, Gamoran, and Willms, 2001). In a another study of 7th and 8th grade students, research estimates a class size effect of .02, which corresponds to an increase in student achievement of about .18 of a standard deviation for a decrease in pupil-teacher ratio from 25 to 16 (Ehrenberg, Brewer, Gamoran, and Willms, 2001, p.4).

In speaking with the heads of the Groton School and Lawrence Academy, we found class sizes are often capped at 16 students in our two private high schools in the town of Groton. If we in GDRSD were to reduce our class sizes to this count we would likely have to increase our teaching staff exponentially and this is not a realistic goal at this time. In this case, you can see the distinction between a needs based budget and one that is based on innovation, best practices, and unlimited funds. While our needs based budget moves to reduce the negative impact of large class sizes, it is not robust enough to provide a framework for major gains with class sizes at 16 or below.

References

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- Fan, F. A. (2012). Class size: Effects on students' academic achievements and some remedial measures. *Research In Education*, 87, 95-98.
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- Schanzenbach, D. W. (2007). What have researchers learned from Project STAR?. *Brookings Papers on Education Policy*, 205-228.
- Tienken, C. H., & Achilles, C. M. (2006). Making class size work in the middle grades. *AASA Journal of Scholarship & Practice*, 3(1), 26-36.

Priorities	1	2	3	4	Totals
Benefits	\$ 130,000	\$ 70,000	\$ 130,000	\$ 30,000	\$ 360,000
Salary	\$ 813,903	\$ 329,072	\$ 626,894	\$ 144,290	\$ 1,914,159
Totals	\$ 943,903	\$ 399,072	\$ 756,894	\$ 174,290	\$ 2,274,159

Key Findings	1	2	3	4	5	Totals
	\$477,260	\$555,131	\$175,521	\$424,741	\$641,506	\$2,274,159

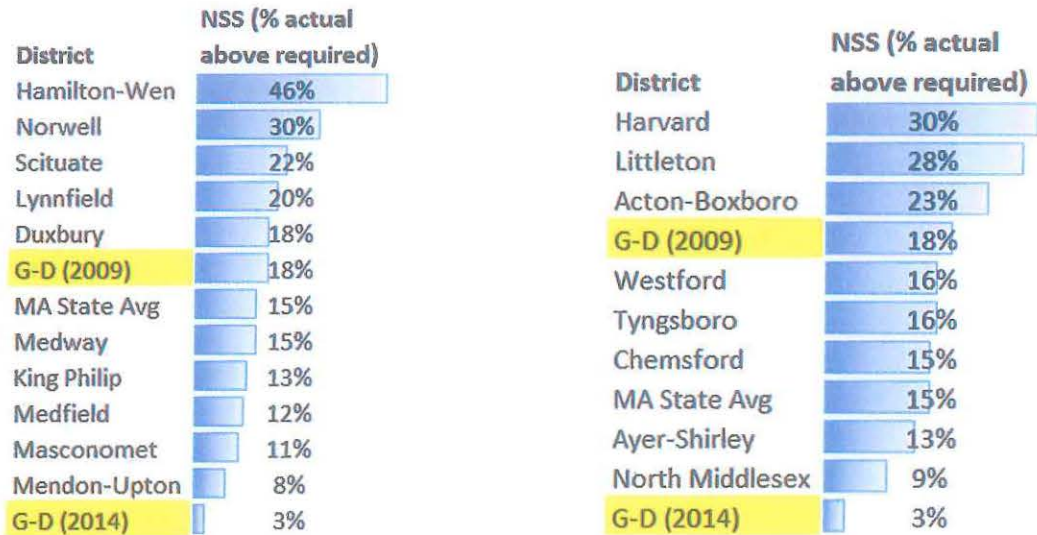
Increases	F16/FY17 Dif	
Salaries	\$ 3,677,740	Needs Assessment, additional required special ed staff, and steps
PD	\$ 100,000	
School Spending	\$ 50,000	
PPS Tuitions	\$ -	level funded in the general fund
Maintenance	\$ 16,498	Budgeted for a truck \$22,000
Technology	\$ -	level funded in the general fund
Utilities	\$ 10,601	Savings incorporated and taking 5 year actual costs and trends
Substitutes	\$ 25,000	
In-D Trans	\$ 34,405	New bus contract/ Revolving will cover the difference
Overtime	\$ 434	
Insurance	\$ 268,097	\$1,022,766.09 more than FY15's actual General Fund amount
Medicare	\$ 36,058	
Middlesex Retirement	\$ 12,342	\$68,163 more than FY15's actual- budgtd for the discount for paying lump sum
Tuition Reimbursement	\$ 20,000	
Lane Changes	\$ 35,000	
Athletic Trans	\$ 15,000	Additional monies taken on for increased trans costs
Total	\$ 4,301,175	

Savings	F16/FY17 Dif	
Sick leave buyback	\$ (34,720)	
Contract District Services	\$ (12,000)	Auditors, Medicaid, Misc, Tyler tech
Unemployment	\$ (65,000)	
Debt	\$ (152,172)	
Total	\$ (263,892)	

Increases	\$ 4,301,175
Savings	\$ (263,892)
Misc	\$ (11,774)
Total Budget Increase	\$ 4,025,509

Comparable NSS %

A look at the most recent data from the DESE website > School/District Profile > Analysis-DART shows the following ranking on NSS as a % above the required level for G-D and our "comparable" districts.



How much "catch-up" do we need to play?

What I did next was to adjust the G-D budget using the other town's (including G-D's from 2009) "% actual above required NSS". According to this, we'd need about \$5 million in increased spending to get G-D back to the level of funding (and associated programs/benefits/advantages) the district enjoyed for the first decade of this millennium. It seems very reasonable that at \$4million increase is what is needed to cover our basic needs.

Comparable District	NSS (% actual above required)	G-D Budget	
		if using comparable town's % above NSS	Effective G-D Budget increase
Hamilton-Wen	46%	\$41,026,000	\$12,926,000
Norwell	30%	\$36,530,000	\$8,430,000
Scituate	22%	\$34,282,000	\$6,182,000
Lynnfield	20%	\$33,720,000	\$5,620,000
Duxbury	18%	\$33,158,000	\$5,058,000
G-D (2009)	18%	\$33,158,000	\$5,058,000
MA State Avg	15%	\$32,315,000	\$4,215,000
Medway	15%	\$32,315,000	\$4,215,000
King Philip	13%	\$31,753,000	\$3,653,000
Medfield	12%	\$31,472,000	\$3,372,000
Masconomet	11%	\$31,191,000	\$3,091,000
Mendon-Upton	8%	\$30,348,000	\$2,248,000

A Reflection on Sustainability
Kristan Rodriguez, Ph.D.

I have been asked a lot lately to define the "sustainability" of our district's budget. I want to take a moment to reflect on the concept of sustainability itself. Many of those in the business field know the term "triple bottom line" to determine sustainability, as coined by John Elkington. In this conception of sustainability, Elkington (1997) defines three separate (but equally important) bottom lines: one is the traditional concept of profit, the second revolves around social justice (being socially responsible) and the third involves being environmentally responsible. One of the cornerstones of the towns of Groton and Dunstable has been supporting efforts for conservation. In this area, we are living the definition of environmental protection as a core component of sustainability, as defined by Elkington.

The question lies, however, if we are doing the same for the social justice component? Dr. Elise Frattura is an expert in the field of social justice in education. Her work is built on the premise that educational services must address, but not be driven by, compliance issues, policies, and/or funding mechanisms. All students, regardless of variability, have a civil right to have access to a high-quality education. Frattura argues that districts must address the components of an effective school educational plan with adequate funding mechanisms to ensure social justice for the students that it serves (Frattura & Capper, 2007).

In a comparative case study of four mid-sized municipalities, Stuart, Collins, Alger, and Whitelaw (2016) "suggest that current policy-based approaches to sustainability are considering more socially oriented strategies focused on promoting community involvement, inclusive decision-making, equity, socio-ecological civility, long-term integrative planning, and responsibility through stewardship." At the end of January, we brought together roughly 80 members of Groton and Dunstable community. Community members, parents, school committee members, school employees, municipal officials and staff, business leaders, and representatives from nonprofit organizations participated in the Future Search event on January 29 and 30th at the Groton Country Club. We were driven by the overarching question: What are your hopes and dreams for GDRSD in the future? The participants chronicled major events in the history of the towns, the district, and the political landscape. From these timelines, the participants defined major implications of our history. The theme with the greatest mention frequency was that of Inadequate School Funding (mentioned 11 times). The theme throughout was that budget cuts have affected school funding, resulting in loss of staffing and programming thus affecting student performance. Participants then moved from the past to the present. During this session, as one of the exercises, the group created a list of "sorries" (those things for which we are most regretful). The two most mentioned "sorries" involved the lack of adequate school funding. Specifically, "Cuts to Staffing and Programming" received 14 mentions and School Finances received 9 mentions, with the theme stating "Sustained underfunding and overall financial instability have created a budget hole for education." Under the triple bottom line definition of sustainability (and social justice)

we as a set of communities acknowledged that we have not done as well with the social justice portion, when it comes to education, as we would have hoped.

I harken us to consider the final component of the "triple bottom line" sustainability: profit. In this case, there is no "profit" in local government, rather in this model it applies to the framework of revenue. We all know that the towns must pass a balanced budget. In an article titled, "The Difference Between a Sustainable Budget and a Balanced Budget" the Farmer (2014) states, "a budget that is balanced isn't always one representing a healthy spending plan." In our towns, and across the state, we have been subject to restrictions that impact our ability to obtain revenue. One of these is the adoption of Proposition 2 ½ that imposes an arbitrary levy limit. In an article titled, "Hidden Consequences: Lessons From Massachusetts for States Considering a Property Tax Cap" Olif and Lav (2010) say, "Between 1980 and 1985, property taxes as a percentage of income fell from 76 percent above the national average to 13 percent above the national average, where it stands today...Massachusetts localities rely more on the property tax than localities in much of the rest of the country because they are not permitted to levy sales or income taxes or various other forms of taxes...State aid has helped fill in some of the gaps in local funding the law created, but not all of them and not reliably over time. Furthermore, the local "overspending" that proponents claimed Proposition 2 ½ could curb did not exist in the imagined quantities, and necessary public services have been jeopardized. By limiting Massachusetts localities' only major source of revenue, Proposition 2 ½ has exacted a considerable cost — one that highlights the shortcomings of property tax revenue caps as a policy approach. The law has:

- arbitrarily constrained local governments' ability to raise revenues without any consideration of the actual cost of providing services;
- made local governments heavily dependent on state aid, which tends to fluctuate with economic cycles and state policies (a particular problem in an economic downturn when state aid usually declines but the need for local services such as education and fire and police protection does not decline)
- exacerbated disparities between wealthier communities and poorer ones in access to quality local services, as many of the former have voted to override Proposition 2 ½'s revenue cap while the latter have generally had to adhere to it

Across Massachusetts, a number of communities have been forced to lay off teachers, police officers, firefighters, and other public employees; close fire stations; shut libraries, senior centers, and recreation centers or sharply reduce their hours; and scale back public school programs. One town even turned off its street lights to save money." As defined in our needs assessment, the district has absolutely laid off teachers, shut libraries, and scaled back our programs. As a state, we are also struggling with more of the burden for funding schools being placed on the towns due to an out of date and inadequate foundation formula for Chapter 70 aid. In March, I sent a letter to the Foundation Budget Review Commission, highlighting increasing costs such as employee benefits and special education and the subsequent burden inadequate state aid places on districts and municipalities.

One of the most commonly used interpretations of sustainability is when “normally occurring revenues are equal to your normally occurring expenditures,” as said by Suzanne Finnegan, chief credit officer for Build American Mutual (Farmer, 2014). The issue that is often posed to me is whether our proposed budget is sustainable within the confines of a town’s levy limit. In this model, we can imagine a scale. We put the revenue on first and then are directed to put only enough expense equal to that revenue. This is the model we have employed for years. As defined in our needs assessment, this has resulted in staff and material losses that have impacted our students.

I would like to suggest an alternate version. Let’s begin the balancing act with the expense side. If we do thoughtful budgeting based on our needs, with transparent and articulated costs, starting with those expenses makes sense. We know our needs, we know those costs, then we place those on the scale first. This task is not exclusive to education as most municipal services offer aspects of social justice. Then the task is to find the revenue to balance against the expense. Absent of thoughtful planning, this version of balancing the scale makes no sense. However, neither does the other way. With planning and defined need, balancing based on existing revenue alone creates a vacuum that is gradually creating the black hole the community referenced in our Future Search session. By flipping this model to start with needs based expenses, we offer a model of sustainable budgeting that meets the needs of our students and towns. In my budget hearing presentation, I began with the concept of budgeting as a moral obligation. If this is the case, then the social justice leg of the “triple bottom line” for sustainability must not be ignored.

References:

Elkington, J. (1997). *Cannibals with forks: The triple bottom line of 21st century business capstone*. North Mankato, MN: Capstone Publishing Ltd.

Farmer, L. (2014) The difference between a sustainable budget and a balanced budget. Retrieved February 25, 2016: <http://www.governing.com/finance101/gov-what-is-a-sustainable-budget-vs-a-balanced-budget.html>

Frattura, E. & Capper, C. (2007). *Leading for social justice: Transforming schools for all learners*. CA: Corwin Press.

Oliff, P. & Lav, I. (2010) Hidden consequences: Lessons from Massachusetts for states considering a property tax. Retrieved February 25, 2016: <http://www.cbpp.org/research/hidden-consequences-lessons-from-massachusetts-for-states-considering-a-property-tax-cap>

Stuart, J., Collins, P., Alger, M., & Whitelaw, G. (2016). Embracing sustainability: The incorporation of sustainability principles in municipal planning and policy in four mid-sized municipalities in Ontario, Canada. *Local Environment*, 21(2), 219-240.

Revenue:

To capture the needed revenue to support the sustainable spending growth we need an increase in local contribution of approximately 5% per year from each of our member towns! Because the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has not kept past funding promises and has not sufficiently funded education in our entire state the revenue burden for education has fallen on local cities and towns.

Ultimately, as outlined in the Winter issue of Massachusetts Magazine, this model is pitting schools against municipalities and creating an ever increasing gap between communities that can afford annual overrides and those that can not garner such support!

(The full article can be found by searching for Massachusetts Magazine Proposition online)

The amount spent in the district annually for education is comprised of General Fund monies, Revolving Fund monies and Grant monies. The General Fund portion of our budget is what we typically discuss at Town Meeting. It incorporates revenue from local assessments and State education funding (Chapter 70).

Grants account for a very small portion of our revenue; approximately 1.9%. There simply aren't many that we qualify for given the makeup of our student population and relative affluence. Grants can not be counted on from one year to the next and are a risky proposition. *We do not anticipate growth here.*

Revolving Accounts also make up a piece of our revenue; approximately 7.1%. These are funded based on user fees. Our fees are already at the high end when compared with other MA districts. *We do not anticipate growth here.*

General Fund revenue provides the remaining 91% of our annual revenue.

Chapter 70 funding makes up a significant portion of this fund, but not nearly as much as it once did. The current Chapter 70 monies make up about 35% of district general fund revenue (not of our total district spending); in FY2007 they comprised about 50% of our general fund revenue income. *We do not anticipate significant growth here.*

Local Assessments provide the remaining 65% of our general fund; which is about 59% of our overall district revenue. The FY16 local contributions (including debt) are:

Groton -	\$18,266,196
Dunstable -	\$5,172,484
Total -	\$23,438,680

Revenue Sustainability:

The spending sheet showed that maintenance of current programs and staffing requires an annual increase in district spending of about \$1.15M; which drives a local contribution increase of 4.9% annually.

The Regional Agreement (currently in review) mandates that the Towns contribute to this local assessment based on the student population. Currently approximately 77% of our students reside in Groton and 23% are from Dunstable. Unless both towns agree every year to use a different method this is the state prescribed methodology.

To remain in compliance with the Regional Agreement and to capture the needed increase of \$1.15M the increases to Groton and Dunstable need to be:

Groton	\$1.15M x .77 = \$885,500	4.7% increase
Dunstable	\$1.15M x .23 = \$264,500	5.1% increase

Spending:

To maintain current programs/staffing / district spending increases by approximately \$1.12M each year.

Sustainability (growth less than 2.5%) would be an annual increase in spending of about \$1.03M.

With a difference of about \$90k annually - GDRSD does not have an unsustainable spending model.

Annual Total District Spending:	\$ 40,100,000
Grant based spending	\$ 750,000
Revolving fund spending	\$ 2,850,000
General Fund	\$ 36,500,000

- 60% of the district general fund budget is salaries - contractually these grow about 3% a year including COLA, lanes & steps. (In our last round of negotiations the negotiations took so long that the teachers worked for almost a year without a contract. To reach agreement a mediator was needed. In my mind this speaks to the unrealistic nature of reducing this growth in any substantive way.

Annual Salary Cost:	\$21,900,000		Salary Driven increase in spending: \$657,000
Annual roll forward Salary Cost:	\$22,557,000	Growth at 3% per contract	

- 14% of the district general fund budget is insurance - this has grown in recent years by about 9% annually. (Several years ago, we joined the state run GIC program, which promised savings due to the increased pool size. This was a negotiated change and hasn't been positive for everyone impacted.)

Annual Insurance Cost:	\$5,110,000		Insurance Driven increase in spending: \$460,000
Annual roll forward Insurance Cost:	\$5,570,000	Assumed growth at 9%	

- The remaining quarter of the operating budget includes utilities and snow removal and all other district expenses. For the sake of discussion, let's assume this spending isn't increasing annually.

Financial Information

Budget Drivers and Assumptions

The FY2017 Superintendent's Recommended Budget is \$40,475,339, which represents an increase of \$4,025,509 or 11.04% from FY2016's adopted budget. This includes increases to assessments and projected revenue. The district uses DESE's Chart of Accounts to categorize and report expenditures. Therefore, the General Fund is broken into nine (9) major function categories.

- District Leadership and Administration;
- Instructional Services;
- Other School Services;
- Maintenance;
- Fixed Charges;
- Community Service;
- Fixed Assets;
- Debt Retirement and Service; and
- Programs with Other Districts.

These functions are defined in DESE's Chart of Accounts (Appendix E). In the sections that follow, there will be a short narrative and bullets explaining any major changes to each function. The "Community Service Function" does not apply to the Groton-Dunstable School District so is therefore not included in our budget:

When examining the major function categories, the biggest drivers and assumptions of the FY2017 Budget include:

- Larger than anticipated teacher lane changes
- Large increases to active and retiree health insurance
- Large increases to Middlesex Retirement from FY2015's costs
- Applied two years of increases in salary expenditures for all collective bargaining units including all step and lane increases because all units were still bargaining when the budget book was published in FY2016
- Restored school instructional materials and equipment to FY2010 levels of an additional \$48,805 over FY2016 levels.
- Increased substitute lines \$25,000 to accommodate a new pay scale
- Increased curriculum professional development lines \$100,000 to accommodate needs
- Assumed 3 years of actuals and used the State's Cherry Sheets when projecting School Choice and charter school tuitions
- Assumed 5 years of actuals and recent rate trends when budgeting all utilities

Table 17: General Fund Function Categories

FUNCTION	FUNCTION DESCRIPTION	FY2015 ACTUALS	FY2016 APPROVED BUDGET	FY2017 REQUESTED BUDGET	DIFFERENCE
1000	District Leadership and Administration	1,198,378	1,115,571	1,432,145	316,574
2000	Instructional Services	17,995,203	18,362,766	21,571,615	3,208,849
3000	Other School Services	2,520,231	2,552,653	2,742,805	190,152
4000	Maintenance	2,279,561	2,601,726	2,816,803	215,077
5000	Fixed Charges	5,948,120	6,898,819	7,118,857	220,038
7000	Fixed Assets	135,559	108,695	138,220	29,525
8000	Debt Retirement and Service	3,238,988	3,100,863	2,948,691	-152,172
9000	Programs with Other Districts	2,167,081	1,708,737	1,706,203	-2,534
	Totals:	35,483,121	36,449,830	40,475,339	4,025,509

1000 Function: District Leadership and Administration

FY2017’s requested District Leadership and Administration function has increased \$316,574 from FY2016’s appropriated budget. In addition to the increased contractual obligations to the positions budgeted in this function, many factors contributed to the changes in this function’s budget:

- The Assistant Superintendent (1.0 FTE) and the Curriculum Administrative Assistant (1.0 FTE) were both moved from Instructional Services (2000 function) to District Leadership and Administration, which increased this function’s budget by \$164,871. The district did this to better align the end of year reporting with DESE’s Chart of Accounts (Appendix E). These are not new positions.
- In FY2016, the district added a .44 FTE Human Resources Clerk with the monies available from the resignation of the contracted Human Resources Specialist. This resulted in a savings of \$25,334 in the Human Resources Contract Services line which will be used for Human Resources needs in FY2017.
- Per the *Needs Assessment*, an additional 1.0 FTE Business Office Clerk was budgeted for \$45,000.
- Per the *Needs Assessment*, additional 2.0 FTE Network Technicians were budgeted for \$100,000.

2000 Function: Instructional Services

FY2017’s requested Instructional Services function has increased \$3,208,849 from FY2016’s appropriated budget. In addition to the increased contractual obligations to the positions budgeted in this function, many factors contributed to the changes in this function’s budget:

- The Assistant Superintendent (1.0 FTE) and the Curriculum Administrative Assistant (1.0 FTE) were both moved from Instructional Services to District Leadership and Administration (1000 Function), which decreased this function's budget by \$164,871. The district did this to better align the end of year reporting with DESE's Chart of Accounts (Appendix D).
- Teacher lane changes are anticipated to be \$115,000, which is \$56,000 more than was expended in FY2016. This new number reflects actual documentation submitted by teachers.
- As part of the *Needs Assessment* at Boutwell, a consulting Special Education teacher was budgeted for an additional \$22,388.
- As part of the *Needs Assessment* for Florence Roche; 1.5 FTE Specialist Area teachers, a 1.0 FTE Library/Media Specialist, a .6 FTE Math Specialist, a 1.0 Kindergarten Assistant, and a .6 FTE Technology Integration Specialist were budgeted. These additional 4.70 FTE's cost \$225,299. This will be offset from restructuring other positions for a savings of \$69,359. In addition, a 1.0 FTE special education co-teacher and a .4 FTE Speech Language Pathologist were budgeted for \$78,358 from the *Needs Assessment*. Lastly, as part of the *Needs Assessment*, the Reading Specialist was moved from an hourly part time position to a salaried full time position and this was budgeted for an additional \$19,763.
- As part of the *Needs Assessment* for Swallow Union; a 1.0 FTE Specialist Area teacher, a .5 FTE Library/Media Specialist, a .4 FTE Math Specialist, a .5 Kindergarten Assistant, and a .4 FTE Technology Integration Specialist were budgeted. These additional 2.8 FTE's cost \$136,293. This will be offset from restructuring other positions for a savings of \$66,468. In addition, a 1.0 FTE Special Education co-teacher and a .2 FTE Speech Language Pathologist were budgeted for \$67,164 from the *Needs Assessment*. The reading specialist was moved from an hourly part time position to a salaried part time position and this was budgeted for an additional \$14,737, as a product of the *Needs Assessment*. 2.0 FTE special education teachers were added to Swallow Union between the FY2016 budget booklet development and the start of the school year. These two positions are budgeted for \$128,986 in FY2017. There was a savings in FY2016's out of district tuitions that helped offset these two costs.
- As part of the *Needs Assessment* for the Middle School, the Reading Specialist increased from a .5 FTE to a 1.0, a 1.0 FTE Literacy Teacher Specialist, a 1.0 FTE Math Teacher Specialist, a 1.0 FTE Library Media Specialist, and .33 FTE Music teacher, and a .4 FTE Mandarin teacher were budgeted for a cost of \$235,208. In addition, as part of the *Needs Assessment*, a 1.0 Special Education co-teacher was budgeted for \$55,970. Also, as part of the *Needs Assessment*, the Middle School's clerical budget line increased .38 FTE for additional hours for the records secretary. In addition, one administrative assistant increased from 214 days to a full year, 261-day, administrative assistant, as defined by the *Needs Assessment*. This increased the budget \$12,943 and \$8,377 respectively. Between the FY2016 budget booklet development and the start of the school year, the Middle School also increased the speech therapist from a .6 FTE to a 1.0 FTE and will cost \$31,496 in FY2017.

- As part of the *Needs Assessment* for the High School; three .33 FTE's for Content Area Coordinator coverage, a 1.0 FTE Math teacher, a 1.0 FTE ELA teacher, a 1.0 FTE Social Studies teacher, a .67 FTE Music teacher, a .67 FTE Art teacher, a .33 FTE Theater teacher, a .17 FTE Videography teacher, and a .33 FTE Mandarin teacher were budgeted for a cost \$348,691. Lastly, in the *Needs Assessment* we budgeted a 1.0 guidance counselor for an additional \$55,970. In addition, in FY2016 the High School added a 1.0 FTE Special Education teacher. This costs an additional \$78,740 in FY2017. A portion of this was offset from restructuring another position.
- As part of the *Needs Assessment* an additional .5 FTE ELL teacher and a 1.0 FTE elementary literacy coordinator was budgeted for \$27,985 and \$82,000 respectively. Also, as part of the *Needs Assessment*, a .6 FTE district wide special education school psychologist was budgeted for \$33,582 as part of the *Needs Assessment*, a 1.0 FTE elementary adjustment counselor for an additional \$55,970 was also budgeted. Also in the *Needs Assessment* is the addition of coordinator stipends for physical and behavioral health, fine and performing arts, and foreign language difference between what is paid now and the extension to 1-12 for a total cost of \$19,410.
- As part of the *Needs Assessment*, professional development on-site workshop costs increased \$45,710.
- The district increased the special education team chairs in FY2016 from 2.67 FTE to 3.0 FTE to cover out of district placement oversight. The cost of this difference (\$35,839), which accounts for salary increases of existing positions and an expansion of this position from .67 to 1.0. In addition, a behavior specialist position was moved from a part time contracted service provider (paid from a grant) to a full time district employee. This position is budgeted for \$66,625 in FY2017.
- The district increased teacher substitute lines by \$25,000 to account for the new substitute starting pay rate and the need to cover sick leave of new staff who are part of the *Needs Assessment*.
- Due to student IEP's, the district's para-educators increased from 69.17 FTE's to 80.67 FTE's. The additional cost in FY2017's general budget is \$112,710.
- Due to contractual obligations, the tuition reimbursement line increased \$20,000 in FY2017.

3000 Function: Other School Services

FY2017's requested Other School Services function has increased \$190,152 from FY2016's appropriated budget. In addition to the increased contractual obligations to the positions budgeted in this function, many factors contributed to the changes in this function's budget:

- As part of the *Needs Assessment*, an additional .7 FTE nurse at the High School and an additional .5 FTE nursing assistant at Florence-Roche are budgeted. The FY2017 costs for these two new positions are \$39,179 and \$8,366 respectively.

- Regular in-district transportation general fund expenses have increased \$34,405 from FY2016's budgeted amount. The district will pay the additional \$75,000 contractual amount out of the transportation revolving account that was established in FY2015. FY2017 is the second year of a new 5-year contract with Dee Bus Inc.
- As part of the *Needs Assessment*, the district is adding 4.56 FTE lunch aides. This represents 12 actual aides but the FTE is calculated on the hours worked. These positions are only 3 hours/day (.38 FTE per lunch aid). The total cost is \$66,600.
- As part of the *Needs Assessment*, the Athletic administrative assistant is going from a .5 FTE to a 1.0 FTE and the cost is \$15,236.

4000 Function: Maintenance

FY2017's requested Maintenance function has increased \$215,077 from FY2016's appropriated budget. In addition to the increased contractual obligations to the positions budgeted in this function, the following two main factors contributed to the changes in this function's budget:

- As part of the *Needs Assessment* a .5 FTE custodian at Florence Roche, a .5 FTE custodian at the High School, and a 1.0 FTE at the two middle school buildings was budgeted. The total cost of these positions in FY2017 is \$90,397. In addition, as part of the *Needs Assessment*, a 1.0 district wide maintenance position is budgeted in FY2017. The cost for this position is \$50,273.
- Heating, sewer, and electricity costs district wide are only expected to go up \$4,801 from FY2016's budget based on a five year mean of actuals. The maintenance department continues to do things to keep these costs as controlled as possible.

5000 Function: Fixed Charges

FY2017's requested Fixed Charges function has increased \$220,038 from FY2016's appropriated budget. Many factors contributed to changes in this function's budget:

- At this time, we estimate the sick leave buyback to be \$34,720 less than FY2016's budgeted amount of \$101,665. The reason for this is that we have less known retirees than we did last year.
- The district incurred a cost of \$766,735 in FY2017 for Middlesex Retirement, which is \$26,735 more than the FY2016 budget amount. The FY 17 amount is based upon an actual assessment from Middlesex retirement. The district receives a 2% discount for paying the entire Middlesex retirement costs upfront and, which will reduce the cost by \$14,393 for a total budgeted amount of \$752,342.
- Last year, we anticipated health insurance percentages to increase double digits due to the deficit in the GIC. While there is still a deficit, rates increased roughly 9% in FY2016 and we anticipate a similar increase for FY2017. Therefore, the active health insurance line item increased \$321,162 for FY2017. Included in this number is the district's best estimate for all the new hires from the *Needs*

Assessment. We estimate this amount because we can not determine how many of the new hires who qualify for benefits will sign up for them. We were able to obtain an accurate estimation of anticipated costs through a health care audit of retirees. This line will be decreased by \$82,426 from the FY2016 amount to reflect accurate projections.

- The Medicare line increased \$36,058 based on the difference of FY2017's anticipated cost of the district's overall payroll expenditures from FY2016's budgeted amount. There is still no limit to the wages that can be subject to the Medicare tax, which equals 1.45% of all covered wages.
- Unemployment was reduced \$65,000 based on anticipated claims in FY2017 as well as the most current bill from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Unemployment.
- Active dental insurance increased \$24,306 based on an anticipated 2.5% increase in FY2017. This expected increase was based on a 5 year history. Included in this increase is the district's best estimate for all the new hires from the *Needs Assessment*.
- Retiree dental insurance increased \$419 from FY2016's budgeted amount. This represents actual anticipated costs and a 2.5% increase.

7000 Function: Fixed Assets

FY2017's requested Fixed Assets function has increased \$29,525 from FY2016's appropriated budget. Many factors contributed to the changes in this function's budget:

- Technology's "Computer Lease and Purchase" line item, after being fully reduced to zero in FY2016, has increased \$6,500. The lease is a part of a plan to revamp an engineering computer lab at the high school. With support of the principal, the three-year lease option of leasing equipment is an effective strategy to support the required technologies needed to offer engineering and other computer science classes.
- Technology's "Acquisition of New Equipment" line item has increased \$5,000 due to the need to maintain teacher laptops and to provide an updated laptop replacement for selected staff throughout the district.
- The district budgeted to replace one of the F350 1 ton 4X4 pickup trucks for the maintenance department. The last one was purchased in 2004. The cost in FY2017 is \$22,000.

8000 Function: Debt Retirement and Service

FY2017's Debt Retirement and Service is a fixed cost to the two towns. The debt principal and interest has decreased \$152,172 from \$3,100,863 in FY2016 to \$2,948,691 in FY2017. The district recently took advantage of the favorable interests rates and refunded the existing Middle School bonds for a savings of \$239,284 over the life of the refunded bonds. This money will be used to lower the debt assessments, which works out to a savings of roughly \$20,000 annually.

9000 Function: Programs with Other Districts

FY2017's requested "Programs with Other Districts" function has decreased \$2,534 in the General Fund budget. Many factors contributed to the changes in this function's budget:

- School Choice tuition out of district is expected to increase \$2,534. This is based on the latest information we have available from the state's Cherry Sheets. These costs fluctuate from year to year.
- Tuition to Charter schools was level funded. This is based on the latest information we have available from the state Cherry Sheets. These costs fluctuate from year to year.
- FY2017 Private Day, Residential, and Collaborative Tuitions were level funded. Circuit Breaker aid from the State and Special Education grants offset these tuition expenses. Private Day expenses are expected to be \$982,825 but will be offset \$450,000 from Circuit Breaker and \$97,000 from a grant. Residential tuitions are budgeted for \$765,599 and will be offset \$350,000 from Circuit Breaker. Lastly, we anticipate our Residential Tuitions to be \$272,875 and offset \$60,000 from a grant. In total, we have budgeted \$2,021,299 for these three types of tuitions but only \$1,064,299 is coming from the General Fund.

GDRSD Budget Savings Initiatives

Below include short summaries of some of the cost-savings measures employed by the district this fiscal year.

After allowing a printer service agreement to expire in FY2015 because of concerns surrounding poor support and an adjustable, monthly cost, a new service agreement was signed in FY2016. Our new managed print service contract, with fixed monthly fees, will have an immediate savings impact of over \$15,000, each year, as compared to the prior agreement. Although fewer total printers are covered, new high-capacity printers were added in addition to carefully selecting existing district printers capable of maintaining the same level of printing needs for our staff.

In prior years, district websites were a fixed, monthly cost, which included software and user fees. This monthly expenditure was set to increase, in part to changes outside of the district's control, relating to e-Rate eligibility. The terms of e-Rate were modified and the costs associated with the software and support were set to substantially increase. As a part of a new district communication strategy, a new, custom designed website in FY2016 was introduced. After an initial outlay of \$10,000 for the one-time design fee, in FY2017, we can expect the costs surrounding the maintenance and support of the district websites to be reduced to near zero. A contingency fund will be included for updates, on an as needed basis, but will likely not be needed.

As a part of the FY2017 budget, a two-year plan is in place for the installation of short-throw, digital projectors in all elementary classrooms. There is a substantial, but fair

install cost for each unit provided by an outside vendor. However, the Building and Grounds Department is actively looking into the feasibility of installing projectors, in-house, with a savings over \$10,000 for FY2017 and FY2018.

In FY2016, multiple servers received substantial upgrades and in a few instances, were completely replaced, thanks in part to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). With immediate savings near \$5,000, the donations from MIT allowed aging servers to be replaced and/or repaired with solid equipment, allowing for speedier Internet connections, better security and access for greater amounts of devices.

The Technology and Pupil Personnel Department have partnered to implement a tracking system for all personalized technology and related software. In doing so we have eliminated duplication and unnecessary purchases. This ensures consistent alignment with the student specific needs based on Individualized Educational Plans and Individualized 504 Plans.

In FY2015, the district bought a used van to do all in-district special education PAVE program runs. This van is used daily throughout the school year and the summer and the savings is roughly \$26,000 per year.

The Maintenance department is always looking for ways to reduce costs. Hand dryers were installed in three schools: Swallow Union and the Middle Schools. We will continue to install hand dryers till all lavatories are completed outfitted with hand dryers. Hand dryers reduce the need for costly paper towels in the district and we estimate the overall savings to be \$5,000+ per year.

At Swallow Union, we replaced the inefficient hot water heater, which ran off the boiler with a high efficiency electric hot water tank. Now the boiler can be on shut down during the warmer months.

Ceiling mounted "destratification" fans were installed in the gyms of the High School, the two Middle Schools and Swallow Union. These fans will recirculate the heat buildup in the ceiling area of the gym to the floor area. Yearly savings is about 1100 therms of heat per unit. There are about 4 units per building.

In the high school, the server rooms were overheating with the computers and telephone system constantly running. Mini-split ductless systems were installed in the two server rooms to provide air conditioning. We will see a reduction in the costly repairs to the systems in these rooms.

To conserve water and reduce sewer costs, we have installed Smart Valves for urinals in Swallow Union and Florence Roche Schools. This reduces the water consumption up to 40,000 gallons per urinal per year for estimated annual savings up to \$600 per urinal. We will continue to install in the High School and the two Middle Schools.

The Maintenance department continues to centralize the storage of the custodial supplies at Prescott. This has considerably reduced the costs of supplies by allotting to schools month to month what is requested. We are pleased to have managed to keep our costs down efficiently since Maintenance started this program in 2008.

Dr. Novak continues to find cost-savings measures to support the curriculum department and district professional development. For example, she has presented out of district and provided the district with her honorarium. This school year, she is scheduled for 8 sessions where all travel and mileage are paid for by the sponsoring district and all honorariums are paid directly to Groton-Dunstable. This year, we anticipate total payments to be approximately \$10,000. Also, during the summer 2015, Dr. Novak taught two 3-credit graduate courses through Fitchburg State University at no cost to the district. For all other classes offered through Fitchburg State, instructors are paid \$1000 a credit. This was an additional savings of \$6,000. For FY2017, she will continue to teach 2 courses for the district and has plans for district partnerships that can provide up to \$30,000 in anticipated professional development savings.

Table 7: High school classes with over 25 students semester 1 (September, 2015)

Course	Students	Course	Students
English 9	30	Algebra IA	29
English 9	27	Algebra IB	26
English 9	28	Geometry	30
English 10	27	Geometry	30
English 11	27	Algebra II	27
English 12	30	Algebra II	30
English 12	30	PreCalculus	30
English 12	31	Introduction to Statistics	29
Writing and Grammar	26	Biology II	26
US History I	27	Molecular Bio	29
US History II	28	Transitions I	29
US History II	26	Transitions I	30
US History II	33	Transitions I	33
Latin I	30	Studio Art I	27
Spanish III Honors	26	Foundations of Health	31
Psychology	31	Photography I	26
Marketing / Entrepreneurship	29	Chorus S1	34
Sociology	29	Physical Education I	26
		Physical Education I	29

Table 8: High School Classes with Over 25 Students Semester 2 (February, 2016)

Course	Students	Course	Students
AP Biology	29	Psychology	26
AP Lang and Composition	27	Creative Writing Workshop	27
AP U.S. History	29	Creative Writing Workshop	27
Biology I	26	Team Sports & Group Fitness	29
Biology II	27	Team Sports & Group Fitness	31
Biology II	28	Senior Project	30
Calculus	27	Physical Education I	40
Geometry	26	Physical Education I	27
Geometry	30	Physical Education I	31
Introduction to Statistics	26	Physical Education I	31
Introduction to Statistics	26	Physical Education II	30
Latin I	30	Foundations of Health	27
Latin II Honors	27	Foundations of Health	30
English 12	28	Foundations of Health	35
English 12	26	Design I	27
US History I	30	Design I	26
US History I	28	Design I	29
US History I	26	Chamber Chorus	27
World History II	28	Chorus S2	49
Writing and Grammar	26		
Writing and Grammar	29		

Key Finding #1: We need to reverse declining student performance in core areas caused by the loss of essential staffing and resources.

- In 2012, the district's accountability level dropped from Level 1 (highest level) to Level 2; district has remained at Level 2 status from 2012-2015.
- The 2014 state accountability report shows an overall decline in district performance over the past 3 years based on MCAS data.
- Over the most recent 4-year period there were declines in pupil performance index (PPI) scores, a cumulative combination score measuring how well the district narrowed proficiency gaps in English, Math, and Science, how well the district grew in English and Math, and the district's graduation and dropout rates.

Verified Root Causes:	Corrective Actions:	Requests:	Associated Costs:	Metrics of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing cuts have resulted in large class sizes in many core classes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 52 core classes at the High School have over 25 students (range 26-34). ○ 11 core classes at the Middle School have over 25 students (range 26-33). • Reduction of curriculum leaders has led to decreased monitoring and coordination of core instructional programs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ There are currently no elementary curriculum coordinators. ○ Middle and high school curriculum coordinators have no dedicated time to monitor or align curriculum. • Limited funds for instructional materials have impeded alignment with current state standards. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ District spending on instructional materials in 2014 (\$124 per pupil) is less than: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the state average (\$409 per pupil); • Best-in-Class districts (\$410 per pupil); and • the district's FY2013 spending level (\$207 per pupil). ○ In FY2016, the total supply budget is \$48,805 less than FY2010. Note that in FY2010, instructional supplies spending for G-D was 14th lowest in the state. • Professional development (PD) has not been adequately funded to enable teachers to improve curriculum implementation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Teachers who receive an average of 49 hours of intensive and sustained PD per year can boost their students' achievement by about 21 percentile points. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elementary GD teachers currently have a total of 30.5 hours and the high school has a total of 18.5 hours embedded into the calendar. • Spending on PD in FY2016 is \$12,703 less than FY2010. • The amount of state-required training that must be funded by the district has increased (i.e., new educator evaluation system, new state curriculum standards, and new requirements to teach English Language Learners). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase staffing to target core class sizes of no more than 25 students. • Provide core curriculum coordination at all levels through increased staffing. • Provide materials and resources that align with current MA state curriculum standards. • Offer PD program that aligns with the new, high quality professional development state standards and re-certification guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 Literacy Teacher (MS) ○ 1 Math Teacher (MS) ○ 1 Math Teacher (HS) ○ 1 English Teacher (HS) ○ 1 History Teacher (HS) ○ 1 Literacy Coordinator (SU/FR) ○ 1 Teacher for coordination coverage (HS) • Additional Materials <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure appropriate funds to cover instructional materials and PD. 	<p>\$65,970 \$65,970 \$65,970 \$65,970 \$92,000 \$55,410</p> <p>\$100,000</p> <p>50,000</p>	<p>Measurable Outcome:</p> <p><i>Within 6 years, all schools within the district will have a cumulative PPI (Progress and Performance Index) score of 75 or higher (Level 1 range</i></p> <p><i>The district will demonstrate measureable student growth in Fountas and Pinnell and mid and end of module math assessments (elementary), a norm referenced standardized measure (PLATO as an example) at the middle school, and SAT scores and AP participation rates at the high school. Benchmark measures of success will be detailed in annual district improvement plans.</i></p> <p>Process Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Classroom Class Sizes of 1:25 or less • Curriculum Leadership in all Core Areas PK-12 with Products Online (A scope and sequence that Documents that Define Curriculum Alignment with All Current State Standards) • Staff PD Satisfaction rates of 80% or higher on end of year PD survey

Key Finding #2: We need to restore and improve programs to meet the needs of students in the areas of the arts, library science, physical/behavioral health, technology and engineering, and foreign language.

- Staffing cuts have occurred in fine and performing arts, library, and foreign language, reducing options and increasing class sizes.
 - In a 2014 student survey, students expressed the desire for additional fine arts offerings including music, drama, and art.
 - In recent open forums, staff articulated a need to restore "full-time certified librarians" at the elementary and middle school level, fine arts positions, and curriculum leadership.
- In 2014, a theme emerged from parents and elected officials regarding the need to restore programs that were cut in the past.

Verified Root Causes:	Corrective Actions:	Request:	Associated Costs:	Metrics of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a result of staffing cuts, programs were eliminated, reducing the depth of offerings in the district and significantly increasing class sizes in Integrated Arts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In FY2009, a total of four certified librarians were and replaced with library specialists, who are not certified teachers. In FY2011, the middle school library staff was further reduced to one para-educator. ○ In FY2012, elementary school physical education was cut from two days per week to one day per week. ○ Foreign Language at the elementary schools was scaled back in FY2009, and cut altogether in FY2010. ○ Groton-Dunstable is missing programs that most other Best-in-Class districts offer to students, such as 3D art and drama. Additionally, the High School has the highest student-to-teacher ratio in music, and the second highest in visual arts. ○ At the high school, there are currently nine classes with class sizes over 25 (ranging from 26-34 students), including physical education, health, art, chorus, and transitions (college prep including college essay writing). ○ In the Middle School, 33 Integrated Arts classes currently have over 25 students (ranging from 26-36 students). ○ There are no Fine Arts and Physical/Behavioral Health coordinators. ○ Foreign language stipend and grade level oversight was reduced from grades 1-12 to only include the secondary level. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional staff will allow the district to restore, expand, and strengthen program offerings. • Additional offerings will reduce class sizes. • Certified librarians will teach organizational, study, and research skills. • Additional staff will allow the district to enhance elementary specialist offerings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 Specialist Teacher (SU)** ○ 1.5 Specialist Teachers (FR)** ○ 1 Part Time Librarian (SU) ○ 1 Librarian (FR) ○ 1 Librarian (MS) ○ 1 Part Time Mandarin Teacher (MS/HS) ○ 1 Full Time Music Teacher (HS/MS) ○ 1 Part Time Art Teacher (HS) ○ 1 Part Time Theater Teacher (HS) ○ 1 Part Time Videography Teacher (HS) ○ PE/Health Coordinator Stipend (K-12) ○ Fine Arts Coordinator Stipend (K-12) ○ Foreign Language Coordinator Stipend (1-12) <p><i>Note:</i> The Math Teacher (MS) position requested in Key Finding #1 will also provide coverage for an existing staff member to teach a new Technology and Engineering class at the MS.</p> <p>**These elementary Specialist Teachers may be in areas such as Foreign Language, Technology, Guidance, or Physical Education.</p>	<p>\$65,970</p> <p>\$103,955</p> <p>\$36,441</p> <p>\$65,970</p> <p>\$65,970</p> <p>\$50,858</p> <p>\$65,970</p> <p>\$47,500</p> <p>\$18,470</p> <p>\$9,515</p> <p>\$8,172</p> <p>\$8,172</p> <p>\$8,172</p>	<p>Measurable Outcome:</p> <p><i>Within 6 years, the district will offer a comprehensive program of studies inclusive of the arts, library science, physical education and health, technology and engineering, and world language, of which electives will be analyzed for comparability with neighboring and best in class districts.</i></p> <p>Process Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specialist Class Sizes of 1:25 or less (unless programmatically needed such as chorus) • (A scope and sequence that Documents that Define Curriculum Alignment with All Current State Standards)

Key Finding #3: We need to provide comprehensive social and emotional support to our students.

- Staffing cuts and decreased district spending for guidance counselors have left the district with insufficient support structures to adequately address the social and emotional needs of students.
- Survey responses from parents and staff have expressed the desire to offer greater support of students' social and emotional needs.
- In March 2014, a Youth Risk Behavior Survey asking students about factors such as their social and emotional well-being during the previous 12 month period found:
 - At the middle school level, 22% of 6th graders and 55% of 8th graders report having high or very high levels of stress as a result of their academic workload.
 - At the high school level, 53% of 9th graders, 60% of 10th graders, 66% of 11th graders, and 64% of 12th graders report high or very high levels of stress as a result of their academic workload.

Verified Root Causes:	Corrective Actions:	Request:	Associated Costs:	Metrics of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to past staffing cuts, staff members do not have consistent or sufficient support structures in place to assist students with social emotional needs. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The Massachusetts School Counselors Association strongly recommends no more than a 1:250 counselor-to-student ratio. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ At Florence Roche, the counselor-to-student ratio is 1:540. ▪ At the High School, the counselor-to-student ratio is 1:289. ○ In FY2014, the district's spending on guidance counselors was \$185 per student, which was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ less than the Best-in-Class average spending of \$508 per student; ▪ \$ less than the FY2013 state average spending of \$206 per student; and ▪ \$ less than the FY2013 district average spending of \$257 per student. ○ The National Association of School Psychologists recommends a psychologist-to-student ratio of 1:1000 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ G-D has two psychologists; the district's psychologist-to-student ratio is 1: 1286. • No past school or district plans addressed the social and emotional health of students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase staffing levels to meet the social and emotional needs of students and align better with recommended staff-to-student ratios. • Develop a district-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports model, to address current and future student needs to support students' social and emotional health. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 Adjustment Counselor (FR/SU) ○ 1 Guidance Counselor (HS) ○ 1 part-time Psychologist (District) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$65,970 \$65,970 \$43,582 	<p>Measurable Outcome:</p> <p><i>Within 6 years, the district will obtain an average score of "Fully Implemented (2)" on the SWPBIS (School-wide Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports) Tiered Fidelity Inventory.</i></p> <p>Process Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing levels will meet the recommended levels of at minimum 1:250 (counselors) and 1:1000 (psychologists) • Students will take the YRBS survey every other year and the results will be shared publicly.

Key Finding #4: We need to improve performance of students with disabilities while meeting the needs of all learners.

- District-wide, composite performance index scores for students with disabilities continue to decrease. State reports showed that comparable districts did not have a similar downward trend.
- 2014 MCAS data for students with disabilities was below the state average and at a 5-year low.
- The number of special education students at Groton-Dunstable has increased from 13.8% in FY2010 to 14.8% in FY2015.
- Recent staff surveys and municipal and school leaders open forums identified "a need to improve intervention and support for special needs students."

Verified Root Causes:	Corrective Actions:	Request:	Associated Costs:	Metrics of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the state of Massachusetts developed a blueprint for a Multi-Tiered System of Supports in October 2011, the blueprint was only integrated into the district improvement plan this school year. • While required IEP's and 504 plans are being met, past cuts eliminated specialized staff who had provided intervention to students below grade level. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ From FY2009 through FY2013, the district cut 2.5 reading teachers. There are currently no math interventionists at the elementary level. ○ We currently only have two co-taught classes at the elementary level that offer special education and general education support in the classroom all day. • Data is not used regularly and continuously to improve student learning because the district lacks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ a learning management system ○ the resources to track assessment data over time to measure student growth. ○ consistent universal screening measures. ○ progress-monitoring tools to determine baseline needs and progress towards benchmarks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a functioning <u>Multi-Tiered System of Support</u> to meet diverse learning needs including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Standards-based instruction and assessment ○ Research-based <u>Universal Design for Learning</u> model ○ <u>Co-teaching</u> classrooms ○ <u>Growth Mindset</u> models • Implement a student data management system to track performance and progress at all levels. • Create district-wide protocols to use instructional data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intervention Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 Part-time Special Education Teacher (BW) ○ 3 Special Education Teachers (FR, SU, MS) ○ 1 Reading Teacher (FR) ○ 1 Part-time Reading Teacher (SU) ○ 1 Math Interventionist (FR/SU) ○ 1 Part-time Speech Teacher (FR/SU) ○ 1 Part-time Reading Teacher (MS) ○ 1 Part-time English as a Second Language Teacher (District) <p><i>Note: The Literacy Teacher (MS) and Math Teacher (MS) positions requested in Key Finding #1 will provide intervention services to students identified in Key Finding #4 in addition to decreasing class sizes.</i></p>	<p>\$22,388 \$197,910 \$19,763 \$9,161 \$65,970 \$43,582 \$27,985 \$37,985</p>	<p>Measurable Outcome:</p> <p><i>Within 6 years, the district will close the achievement gap of the special needs subgroup by half as measured by the composite PPI score for students with disabilities.</i></p> <p>Process Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish and publish the district's plan for Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS)

Key Finding #5: We need to provide essential support services including kindergarten assistants, technology support staff, nursing staff, custodial and maintenance staff, business office staff, and administrative assistants.

- Staffing reductions have limited the district's ability to provide adequate support services in essential areas such as kindergarten assistants and nursing.
- State requirements and recommendations have increased staffing needs in nursing, student information system management, and technology support.
- Maintenance needs for buildings (due to age) and athletic fields (due to increased usage) have both grown during recent years, while maintenance staff reductions have occurred.

From FY2013 to FY2016, the number of student devices requiring technology support has roughly tripled; current plans to move the district to a more individualized platform will only increase the number of devices requiring support.

Verified Root Causes:	Corrective Actions:	Request:	Associated Costs:	Metrics of Success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to staffing cuts and growing needs, vital services are not being provided. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In FY2010, kindergarten classroom assistants were eliminated. ○ During FY2014, the district eliminated a 0.5 Nursing Assistant position at Florence Roche. ○ In FY2016, the district technology department was cut from five members to four. ○ In FY2010, office secretarial services were reduced during the school year and completely eliminated during summer months. ○ In early 2014, the Records Secretary was reduced from 35 to 20 hours per week. ○ Presently, 18 custodians are responsible for the cleaning of our buildings. In 2009, the district employed 23 custodians. ○ In 2009, the district reduced the maintenance department by one person, thus providing only four people to maintain six buildings, over 90 acres of grounds, and 10 athletic fields. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restore staffing cuts and build necessary systemic supports to reverse the detrimental impact such cuts have had on the overall functioning of the district. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1 Part-time Kindergarten Assistant (SU) ○ 1 Kindergarten Assistant (FR) ○ 1 Part Nursing Assistant (FR) ○ 1 Technology Integration Specialist (FR/SU) ○ 12 Part-time Lunch Aides (FR, SU, MS) ○ Restoration of Summer Months for Secretary (MS) ○ 1 Part-time Records Secretary (MS) ○ 1 Part-time Nurse (HS) ○ 1 Part-time Athletic Dept. Secretary (HS) ○ 2 Network Technicians (District) ○ 1 Business Clerk (District) ○ 2 Custodians (District) ○ 1 Maintenance Department Staff (District) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> \$19,106 \$28,211 \$18,366 \$65,970 \$66,600 \$8,377 \$24,792 \$49,179 \$15,236 \$120,000 \$55,000 \$110,397 \$60,273 	<p>Measurable Outcome:</p> <p><i>Within 6 years, the district will close the achievement gap of the special needs subgroup by half as measured by the composite PPI score for students with disabilities.</i></p> <p><i>The district will demonstrate measureable student growth in Fountas and Pinnell and mid and end of module math assessments (elementary), a norm referenced standardized measure (PLATO as an example) at the middle school, and SAT scores and AP participation rates at the high school. Benchmark measures of success will be detailed in annual district improvement plans.</i></p> <p>Process Outcomes:</p> <p><i>Establish and publish the district's plan for Multi-tiered System of Support (MTSS)</i></p>