

East Granby Public Schools

33 Turkey Hills Road • P.O. Box 674 • East Granby, Connecticut 06026 • Fax (860) 413-9075

DR. CHRISTINE F.A.S. MAHONEY
Superintendent of Schools
(860) 653-6486
EMAIL: cmahoney@eastgranby.k12.ct.us

KAREN W. GOGEL
Director of Student Support Services
(860) 413-9079
EMAIL: kgogel@eastgranby.k12.ct.us

June 14, 2017

Dear Community Members:

The members of the East Granby Board of Education and the administration of the East Granby Public Schools have diligently reviewed and responded to the recommendations in the Efficiency study report completed in 2016. A thorough review and study of Recommendation #2.3 - **Explore the options of creating a regional high school with a neighboring school district** - was completed in the Spring 2017, and the results shared with the full Board of Education at its regular meeting that was televised on April 24, 2017. The presentation may be viewed on the school district website at www.eastgranby.k12.ct.us under Board of Education, Efficiency Study 2015.

A full report has been compiled and is attached to this letter. The summary report accompanying this cover letter is followed by:

- ❖ The full document explaining the process used to research, compile and analyze critical data necessary to determine the feasibility of merging with another school district (Appendix A);
- ❖ The slides from the presentation on April 24, 2017 (Appendix B); and
- ❖ The complete Chart of Recommendations showing actions taken by the Board of Education to address them (Appendix C).

At its regular meeting of the East Granby Board of Education held on June 12, 2017, board members approved the document and fully supported the conclusion resulting from the exhaustive study of **Recommendation #2.3**.

Conclusion

There are no potential savings enough to offset the risks involved in sending students to a host high school. It is evident at this juncture that the risks involved in sending students out of town are significant. There is no potential economic savings to the town, but there would be significant disruption to life in East Granby and to the remaining East Granby Public Schools.

The Board of Education is satisfied that the request to explore the option suggested in Recommendation #2.3 of the Efficiency Report (2016) has been completed.

Thank you for your continued support of your high performing East Granby Public Schools.

Sincerely,

Christine F. A. S. Mahoney, Ed. D.

Superintendent of Schools

Message to the East Granby Community

Efficiency Study Recommendation #2.3

“Explore the options of creating a regional high school with a neighboring school district”

The Board of Education previously considered this recommendation in response to early informal inquiries from interested school districts. It was determined that any town interested in hosting EG students would need to have room for all students and have capacity to include an East Granby resident on their Board of Education. The board acted on the guidance of the previously commissioned consultant to conduct a further study of recommendation 2.3 to examine the cost of sending East Granby students to another high school in a town contiguous to East Granby. Information gleaned from such an examination would inform the decision about sending East Granby high school students to a host school district.

The Board Chair, the Consultant, the school district Business Manager and the Superintendent of Schools held meetings to identify and discuss the data that should be collected and examined, cost to be calculated, and other considerations to be reviewed as part of the process of determining the feasibility of sending East Granby high school students to a high school in another town. The tasks were completed using data from the ED001 report filed with the Connecticut State Department of Education, the districts audited year end actual operating budget, and published school district tuition cost for the town that indicated that it may have sufficient seats to host students in several years.

A slide presentation was shared with the Board of Education and the town in a televised board meeting held April 24, 2017. After careful examination of the cost variables, there is no savings to the town if it sends high school students to the neighboring town. The difference (potential savings) of \$248,615 would be consumed by the additional costs for maintaining the middle school shared staff, continued costs of transportation to Vo-Ag/Technical High Schools, variation in special education services/costs, and building operation costs. Any district that indicates it has capacity would be taking education funds from East Granby and not have to spend it building program or infrastructure. There are a number of variables that could change the service model for East Granby high school students as they exit East Granby. For example, each town has its own protocol and practices for how they educate students with special needs. East Granby would lose control over programs and services that are provided for students.

The East Granby Public School district is comprised of four efficiently operated high performing schools that have brought significant recognition to the town, and are a source of pride for all residents. Dismantling of the high school would impact all levels of instruction in the town. Reducing the number of students in the district would also reduce the amount of grant funding the town would receive to continue to provide many programs and services. Legal fees associated with the transition process would also increase the expense to the district. The level of interaction between the high school students and the larger community adds to the vitality of the town, adds value to the towns' status, and helps to attract new residents to the town of East Granby. Of greater concern is the decision that families would make about remaining in East Granby, sending their students to magnet schools and increasing the cost to the town of magnet school tuition payments, and the negative impact of the exodus of students and families on the vitality of the community and the success of businesses operating in the town.

Conclusion

Are any potential savings enough to offset the risks involved in sending students to a host high school? It is evident at this juncture that the risks involved in sending students out of town are significant. There is no potential economic savings to the town, but there would be significant disruption to life in East Granby and to the remaining East Granby Public Schools.

Appendix A

Summary Document

Recommendation 2.3

There was particular interest in Recommendation 2.3 which suggested that the district explore ways to increase the student enrollment in response to a perception that there were thousands of unused square footage in the high school - in order to lower the per pupil expenditure.

Efficiency Study Recommendation #2.3

“Explore the options of creating a regional high school with a neighboring school district”

Process

The Board of Education was previously considering this recommendation in response to early inquiries from interested school districts. It was determined that any town interested in hosting EG students would need to have room for all students and have capacity to include an East Granby resident on their Board of Education. The board acted on the guidance of the previously commissioned consultant to conduct a further study of recommendation 2.3 to examine the cost of sending East Granby students to another high school in a town contiguous to East Granby. Information gleaned from such an examination would inform the decision about sending East Granby high school students to a host school district.

The Board Chair, the Consultant, the school district Business Manager and the Superintendent held meetings to identify and discuss the data that should be collected and examined, cost to be calculated, and other considerations to be reviewed as part of the process of determining the feasibility of sending East Granby high school students to a high school in another town. The following tasks were completed using data from the ED001 report filed with the Connecticut State Department of Education, the districts audited year end actual operating budget, and published school district tuition cost for the town that indicated that it may have sufficient seats to host students in several years.

Identify the per pupil tuition costs for the interested towns

Calculate the direct cost for the high school;
Determine what costs would no longer be incurred;
Determine what costs would continue; and
Determine what the new costs would be.

Per Pupil Tuition Costs are as Follows:

2015-16 Net Current Expenditure (NCE) per Pupil (NCEP) as calculated by the
CT State Department of Education using their derived formula

Granby	\$14,547
Simsbury	\$16,036
Suffield	\$15,698
East Granby	\$18,921

The calculated costs are as follows:

Cost to operate East Granby High School \$4,578,947

This includes:

- special education
- transportation costs

Cost to tuition out students to Granby (example)

Basic Tuition Fee (NCE) "Regular Education"	\$3,665,340
Transportation Costs	\$264,992
Special Education (@ Granby's Rate)	\$400,000
Difference between East Granby/Granby	\$248,615

Additional Costs to be Considered in a transition:

Continuing Costs in East Granby School District

Shared Middle School Staff	\$221,836
Transportation Vo-Ag/Tech Schools	\$ 91,898
Building Operation Costs	\$402,589

A slide presentation was shared with the Board of Education and the town in a televised board meeting held April 24, 2017. The data reviewed and the costs associated with outplacing high school students illuminated the following findings:

Findings from the Analysis of Cost

After careful examination of the cost variables, there is no savings to the town if it sends high school students to the neighboring town. The difference (potential savings) of \$248,615 would be consumed by the additional costs for maintaining the middle school shared staff, continued costs of transportation to Vo-Ag/Technical High Schools, variation in special education services/costs, and building operation costs.

The other considerations that were reviewed include:

Impact to District Programs and Community
Athletics, Clubs and Student Activities
Impact on Middle and Elementary Schools
Shared Staff
Shared Districtwide Responsibilities
Impact on Grant Revenue
Transition Costs
Unemployment costs, and Legal Fees

The East Granby Public School district is comprised of four efficiently operated high performing schools that have brought significant recognition to the town, and are a source of pride for all residents. The high school has received many accolades including the most recent designation by US News as a Gold Rated high school ranked in 3rd Place in the State of CT. The educators seize every opportunity to include town residents and businesses in the educational program. For example, senior citizens serve as volunteers, are hosted on Senior Citizen Day in the high school, and veterans are recognized and celebrated in all schools. Many business persons support the schools in a variety of ways

including serving of the Advisory Board for CT's first Fifth Year Associates degree programs, and provide resources to enhance the implementation of the curriculum. The high school's annual Pops concert, annual Fall and Spring concerts, and drama production are a welcomed addition to the town's recreational offerings. East Granby students are already participating in co-op sports teams with surrounding towns enabling them to play sports that are not currently on the roster in East Granby. The high school band plays in the Annual Memorial Day parade and at numerous events that are open to the public. East Granby High School's athletic teams out perform many of their league competitors, and the high school is a sports venue during the interscholastic season. This level of interaction between the high school students and the larger community adds to the vitality of the town, adds value to the towns' status, and helps to attract new residents to the town of East Granby.

Dismantling of the high school would impact all levels of instruction in the town. The rifting of teachers to new positions and the mileage for travel of shared staff from the middle school to the elementary schools would be an increased cost, in addition to the unemployment costs for those who would be terminated. Several new elementary teachers would lose their positions to senior teachers who are duly certified to occupy positions in the lower grades. Reducing the number of students in the district would also reduce the amount of grant funding the town would receive to continue to provide many programs and services. Legal fees associated with the transition process would also increase the expense to the district.

Host High School Considerations

- Impact of special education
- Loss of control
- Consequences of host high school changes that could result in no longer accepting our students
- What will our district look like
- How would problems be handled
- What type of transition might be needed
- What effect might this have on families contemplating a move to East Granby
- Would this possibly increase students going out of district to magnet and other schools


There are a number of variables that could change the service model for East Granby high school students as they exit East Granby. For example, each town has its own protocol and practices for how they educate students with special needs. East Granby would lose control over programs and services that are provided for students. Of greater concern is the decision that families would make about remaining in East Granby, sending their students to magnet schools and increasing the cost to the town of magnet tuition payments, and the negative impact of the exodus of students and families on the vitality of the community and the success of businesses operating in the town.

Conclusion

Are any potential savings enough to offset the risks involved in sending students to a host high school? It is evident at this juncture that the risks involved in sending students out of town are significant. There is no potential economic savings to the town, but there would be significant disruption to life in East Granby.

Appendix B

Efficiency Study – Recommendation #2.3 Slides Shared on April 24, 2017



East Granby Board of Education
Efficiency Study
Recommendation #2.3 -
High School Regionalization

April 24, 2017

Efficiency Study Recommendation #2.3

“Explore the options of creating a regional high school with a neighboring school district”

- The East Granby Board of Education discussed and explored this recommendation. It was determined that there was not the excess capacity at East Granby High School that would allow the creation of a regional high school

“Explore the options of creating a regional high school with a neighboring school district”

- The idea of finding a host high school was discussed. If East Granby were to tuition out the High School students to another district the following criteria must be met:
 - 1. The receiving district must be able to accommodate *all* East Granby High School students
 - 2. East Granby Board of Education would want representation on the receiving district’s Board of Education

“Explore the options of creating a regional high school with a neighboring school district”

- East Granby Board of Education engaged Dr. Joseph Townsley to research and contact surrounding districts for capacity and interest: Granby, Simsbury and Suffield
- Dr. Townsley advised us to:
 - Calculate the direct cost for the high school
 - Determine what costs would no longer be incurred
 - Determine what costs would continue
 - Determine what the new costs would be

“Explore the options of creating a regional high school with a neighboring school district”

- 2015-16 Net Current Expenditure (NCE) per Pupil (NCEP)

as calculated by the CT State Department of Education using their derived formula

- Granby \$14,547
- Simsbury \$16,036
- Suffield \$15,698
- East Granby \$18,921

“Explore the options of creating a regional high school with a neighboring school district”

Cost to operate East Granby High School \$4,578,947

this includes :

 special education

 transportation costs

Cost to tuition out students to Granby (example)

- Basic Tuition Fee (NCE) “Regular Education” \$3,665,340
- Transportation Costs \$264,992
- Special Education (@ Granby’s Rate) \$400,000

Difference between East Granby/Granby \$248,615

“Explore the options of creating a regional high school with a neighboring school district”

Additional Costs to be Considered in a transition:

- Continuing Costs in District
- Shared Middle School Staff \$221,836
- Transportation Vo-Ag/Tech Schools \$ 91,898
- Building Operation Costs \$402,589

“Explore the options of creating a regional high school with a neighboring school district”

- Impact to District Programs and Community
 - Athletics, Clubs and Student Activities
- Impact on Middle and Elementary Schools
 - Shared Staff
 - Shared Districtwide Responsibilities
- Impact on Grant Revenue
- Transition Costs
 - Unemployment, Legal Fees

Host High School Considerations

- Impact of special education
- Loss of control
- Consequences of host high school changes that could result in no longer accepting our students
- What will our district look like
- How would problems be handled
- What type of transition might be needed
- What effect might this have on families contemplating a move to East Granby
- Would this possibly increase students going out of district to magnet and other schools
- Are any potential savings enough to offset the risks involved in sending students to a host high school

Appendix C

Chart of Recommendations Emanating from the Efficiency Study of 2016

Efficiency Study Recommendations - Response Progress Chart

EFFICIENCY STUDY FOLLOW UP - REPORTING			As of April 26, 2017		
Item #	Section	Recommendation	Comments	Action Y/N	Update 4.26.17
1.1	Capital Planning and Maintenance	Standardizing the historical and projected project data in terms of the formatting across all town facilities would clearly improve the efficiency in communicating, assessment and decision making going forward.	This is being handled by the Special Resources Committee	Y	In progress. Data reviewed by Shared Resource Committee and format established. Committee work is continuing. Waiting on formal report to be released.
1.2	Capital Planning and Maintenance	The facility needs of the Allgrove School and the High School/Middle School complex should be updated annually at least 4-6 months in advance of the budget development process and communicated to all of the town major boards.	Done every year fall (October) and Spring (May)	Y	Complete
1.3	Capital Planning and Maintenance	Provide a status report to the Board of Education every six months regarding the progress of data input, updating, and forecasting.	Every Fall and Spring, the BOE Capital Plan is reviewed and updated.	Y	Complete
2.1	East Granby Public Schools Capacity Analysis	Investigate how the school district can attract high school students on a tuition paying basis.	We are doing this on an on-going basis.	Y	Investigation portion is complete, data has been gathered, implementation has begun, flyers prepared.
2.2	East Granby Public Schools Capacity Analysis	Identify the possibilities of the town and the school district utilizing the excess space in the grade 9-12 facility.	Identified no additional possibilities. Auditorium and gymnasiums used nights and weekends by the Town	Y	Complete

2.3	East Granby Public Schools Capacity Analysis	Explore the options of creating a regional high school with a neighboring school district	Exploration into regionalization and host high school possibilities was completed. No significant savings were found.	Y	Complete
3.1	Technology	Continue to support the staff, the use of no cost or low cost initiatives, and look to further on-line educational offerings for staff and students.	We are doing this through Professional Development. Provide information from CREC and other State organizations	Y	Complete
3.2	Technology	Take advantage of all eligible technology purchases that are eligible for E-Rate participation.	We are doing this.	Y	Complete
4.1	Student Transportation	Request the president of Rainbow Transportation Services be contacted and a request made to reopen the contract for the purpose of renegotiating the cost of the current diesel fuel charges.	We have done this. We had a meeting with the President of Rainbow Transportation. It was determined that our best cost for fuel was through our student transportation provider.	Y	Complete
4.2	Student Transportation	Investigate removing from the contract the language stating that an East Granby school bus cannot operate beyond ten years of service and/or five year average	We do not agree with this recommendation as it does not provide additional cost savings to the district. This provision is included for safety reasons.	N	Complete
4.3	Student Transportation	Conduct a cost benefit analysis for increasing the late bus services from the high school and middle school from the current one day per week to four days per week in preparation for the development of the 2016- 2017 budget	The benefit to students cannot be calculated. We do know the cost per day analysis. Revisited each budget cycle.	Y	Complete

4.4	Student Transportation	Continue contacting neighboring school districts to identify the potential of sharing bus and van transportation to and from out of district sites.	This is collaborative effort is done on a regular basis.	Y	Complete
4.5	Student Transportation	Contact other school districts to discuss their interest in participating in a fuel purchasing consortium.	We have done this. It was determined that our best cost for fuel is through our current student transportation provider as we do not have fuel storage capabilities.	Y	Complete
4.6	Student Transportation	Explore with town officials the potential of sharing in the property tax revenue collected from the bus company for storage of busses on town property.	We will consider this for our next transportation contract.	Y	Complete
4.7	Student Transportation	Explore the potential use of the "no-cost" or "low-cost" CREC transportation experts to assist in negotiating the next school transportation contract.	We will consider this for our next transportation contract.	Y	Complete
5.1	Student Tuitions	We commend the district for the educational and financial gains from their participation in these tuition programs and recommend that these be enhanced whenever possible.	The Board of Education analyzes our participation level in tuition based programs on an annual basis during the budget process.	Y	Ongoing each year.
6.1	Central Office Staffing	Provide cross training with comparable town personnel in the event that either the BOE or Town staff are out, functions like payroll, accounts payable, human resources services etc. can still function at a high level.	We will discuss with the First Selectman	Y	Different rules for educator payroll processing. We cross train from within.
6.2	Central Office Staffing	Explore the opportunity for the Town of East Granby to handle non-certified human resources services for the Board of Education, and/or with neighboring districts.	We have explored this and it is not a feasible option.	Y	Complete
7.1	Cooperative Programs	We recommend that the Board of education investigate shared human resources services either in cooperation with the Town of East Granby or neighboring	Same as item 6.2	Y	The Town does not have a Human Resource Department and it is not feasible

		school districts.			to do this with another district.
8.1	Communication	We recommend that a cover memo be added highlighting only the significant changes from the previous month, the budget implications, and the transfer of funds (if necessary) to manage the change.	Done.	Y	Complete
8.2	Communication	We recommend that a budget planning session be scheduled in late summer/early fall with representatives from all three major boards and the school district administration. All parties should be prepared to present the budget drivers for the upcoming fiscal year. Projected dollar increases in rough terms and budget impact statements should be provided for planning purposes. The community should be advised early on of the forecasting work through media or written communications. Any variations from these initial forecasts should be communicated promptly so there are no surprises.	We will discuss with the Board of Finance	Y	Board Chair to discuss with the Board of Finance.
8.3	Communication	We recommend that East Granby households are contacted through a mailing or using Edline to obtain real time elementary student enrollment projections.	Done	Y	Complete
8.4	Communication	We also recommend that all schools have telephone services full time in the months of June, July and August.	We will work on this.	Y	To be discussed during contract negotiations. Administrator group has instituted a coverage and notification plan.
8.5	Communication	We believe there is a significant opportunity to upgrade the school and town websites in a cooperative manner delegating the responsibility of oversight to a web master.	We will discuss with the First Selectman	Y	Using upgraded platform already linked to the Town and Town Library.