



Granby Board of Education Plus One Budget Workshop

January 3, 2024



BOE FY25 Plus One Budget

Budget Process

- ☐ BOE Discussion of FY25 Plus One Budget
- ☐ BOE Plus One Budget Questions to Superintendent
- ☐ Three-Board Meeting
Room)
- ☐ Administrative Budget Presentation
- ☐ BOE Budget Workshops/Budget Adoption
- ☐ Town Meeting & Referendum

Dates

December 20th & Jan. 3rd
December 29th
January 16th @ 7 p.m. (Town Hall Meeting
Room)
March 6st
March 13th, 20th & 27th
April 1st & April 15th



BOE FY25 Plus One Budget

6.43% Proposed FY25 increase

+4.34% Contractual Increases

+2.43% Special Education

-0.34% Other Factors



Question: Which maintenance projects are of the most urgent priority at which buildings? Please provide a breakdown of the projects by school and urgency.



Answer: Page 4 of the FY25 Plus One Budget Memo is in priority order and lists school and estimated cost for each project. See next slide for breakdown.

Small Cap - Maintenance

1. Upgrade lock down system and separate integrated panels (High School) **\$675,000**
2. Fire panel upgrade (High School) **\$75,000**
3. Security, fire panel, and equipment upgrade (Middle School) **\$100,000**
4. Fire alarm and security panel upgrade (Wells Road) **\$65,000**
5. Districtwide Credentialed Access Project: Classrooms & Emergency Response **\$730,000**
(breakdown as follows):
 - Granby Memorial High School - **\$400,000**
 - Granby Memorial Middle School - **\$30,000**
 - Wells Road Intermediate School - **\$150,000**
 - Kelly Lane Primary School - **\$150,000**
6. Project Study: Oil phase-out propane introduction (Kelly Lane/Wells Road) **\$50,000**
7. Track dip repair: Ongoing (High School) **\$25,000**
8. Tennis court crack repair (High School) **\$15,000**
9. Extend walkway through parking lot for student drop-off/pick-up (Kelly Lane) **\$25,000**
10. Roof Repairs (District) **\$15,000**
11. Emergency Repairs (District) **\$25,000**



Question: If \$1.8M is needed for building maintenance, what needs are not being met because of the prioritization of the building maintenance? How and where could this impact students?



Answer: The other small cap requests have been pushed out one or two years. Furniture requests, new fitness equipment and the Wells Road playscape are a few examples (see pages 6 and 7).



Question: With regard to \$1.8M for security upgrades, how long has the district known about the need for these upgrades?



Answer: The requests date back to 2016-2017 however, due to lack of funding and opportunity for large capital projects these upgrades have been postponed each year. Now at year 8 we do not have the ability to put off any longer.



Question: Which building(s) are in need of bathroom renovations? If bathrooms were vandalized, can funds be recouped from perpetrators? How can vandalism be reduced?



Answer: The bathroom repairs and renovations in question refer to the Middle School and to Wells Road. Middle School bathrooms will be 32 years old in 2024. By the time the bathrooms are actually renovated, they will be roughly 33-36 years old. There have been no renovations to these bathrooms and the fixtures are past life expectancy. The preference would be to carry out an orderly renovation rather than respond to plumbing emergencies resulting from aging fixtures. Wells Road bathrooms are in need of repair and attention. Bathrooms are not being renovated due to vandalism.



Question: Are there any costs in building maintenance that can be deferred to decrease this line item?



Answer: Yes, the building maintenance list will need to be prioritized. More information will be gathered when quotes come in. These items have already been deferred a number of years. We are beyond life expectancy for many items on the list so there is a sense of urgency.



Question: With a strong focus on the maintenance concerns, are we able to provide sufficient resources to address student mental health and the safety of our staff?



Answer: Yes, the maintenance concerns are small capital projects. This line item is separate from our operating costs. You will see the addition of a Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) and an increase to the FTE for Counseling & Academic Support at GMHS. These are both to address mental health needs. In addition, we are requesting additional Teaching Assistants for specific student needs and exploring creative ways to reorganize our existing resources to increase support for mental health.



Question: Is the cost of the high school bleachers for one gym or for both gyms?



Answer: The bleachers are for one gym in the high school. This is planned for a future Small Capital project (\$48,000 in FY26).



Question: Is it worthwhile to continue to patch the track defects or is it time to do a total replacement and, if so, what is the cost?



Answer: FY25 will be the second budget cycle with a track repair in it. Significant repair or possible replacement will be a large capital item and has been included in the large capital listing on Page 13 of the Plus One Budget Memo.



Question: The special education budget is increased by \$879K. Are the costs expected to be closer to the budgeted number than in the past?



Answer: We do our best to estimate based on information we have at the time of the budget preparation. We budget for known student needs and costs at the time the budget is prepared.



Question: Has there been any discussion in recent years regarding an energy audit to look at potential long-term cost savings and/or viability of solar panels on the new high school roof?



Answer: We are currently working to collaborate with an energy service company to change aging lighting fixtures to more efficient LED lights. This will result in energy savings but not immediate savings in expenses. In order to achieve worthwhile savings from a solar project the school system would need to collaborate with the Town of Granby.



Question #1 : If we are unable to get a waiver regarding our reading curriculum, how would we plan to implement and integrate a new reading curriculum?

Question #2: If we have to change the reading program for next year, have we identified a program? If so, how much will the program cost as well as professional development? Can funds come out of the Quality & Diversity (Q&D) Fund?



Answer: We are reviewing the approved list of materials and will be requesting additional information and quotes for programs that closely align with our current curriculum and beliefs around K-3 reading instruction. Teachers will review and pilot materials prior to deciding on a program by December 2024. Materials and professional development would be part of the FY26 Budget Proposal and funding would be established at that point. We currently have \$56,000 for CSDE to support pilot programs.



Question: How long have the 8 student enrichment clubs been in the Q&D Budget? Are we required to move them into the Operating Budget at some point?



Answer: These 8 clubs have been expensed from the Q&D Fund for years. Over the past few years, as budget increases have been larger than anticipated, we have hesitated to move these to the Operating Budget; however, they do belong in the operating budget.



Question: Are there opportunities to explore a consolidation of resources with neighboring communities?



Answer: Yes, area Superintendents meet regularly and we explore opportunities to consolidate costs whenever possible. We collaborate with transportation, group purchasing as well as membership in the Farmington Valley Diagnostic Center.



Question: Are there ways to grow our preschool program or B.E.A.R. Transition Academy to generate revenue?



Answer: Yes, we have already begun conversations with other districts about sending students to our B.E.A.R. Transition Academy. This is an excellent way to meet student needs locally and generate revenue for the Town of Granby. Under our current structure of budgeting, this revenue will not be seen in the BOE budget as an offset to costs. The preschool program is limited by the space available at Kelly Lane School.



Question: How was the cost of tuition determined for preschool next year? Is it close to private preschool tuition and should it be?



Answer: The preschool tuition was determined at the December 20th Finance Subcommittee of the BOE. We take into account area preschool tuitions and other factors; however, our program is only partial day and is intended to serve as an integrated model for students entering our schools from birth to three. Tuition is not close to private preschool tuition, nor should it be considering the requirement for an integrated preschool model.



Question: Has an audit been done with regard to which classes do not run at the high school for possible cost savings?



Answer: Upon review of student course selection this winter, Central Office and High School Administration will review needs and requests and determine how many sections of each high school course should run and look at the impact on staffing. We are currently looking into consultation with a school scheduling expert to further review projections for upcoming years as well as the possibility of unifying the middle and high school schedules.



Question: In light of the largely required expenses for the strings program, can the expansion be held off?



Answer: We could consider pushing back the start of strings to 2nd grade or combining the 7th (11 students) and 8th (13 students) grade orchestra students at the middle school if we could not add the 0.2 FTE.

The cost for 0.2 in FY25 is \$13,431.



Question: With regard to personnel, has the need been evaluated for campus supervisors at all buildings; an additional lunch monitor at the middle school; and, a part-time groundskeeper?



Answer: We have two campus supervisors that serve the high school. They are not present in all buildings. Lunch supervision at the middle school has always been in place and is necessary. This was funded through teacher stipends, not additional FTEs; however, because we were unable to fill the need through stipends, positions were created to cover the need. The part-time groundskeeper was added at the request of the Finance Subcommittee.



Question: Are the new part-time positions (0.2 PE, 0.2 Strings, lunch monitors, 0.5 groundskeeper) increased positions from part-time to full-time? Is it realistic to fill them?



Answer: All are from part-time to full-time. Not only are these positions needed, they also assist the district in keeping highly qualified staff because staff often move to other districts for full-time work.



Question: Please explain the roles of our administrators and efficiencies created in those roles.



Answer: Current Central Services Administrator Staffing

The Superintendent oversees all operations of the district and communicates with the BOE, town and state and evaluates all administrators.

The Assistant Superintendent oversees all operations around curriculum, instruction, assessment, and learning as well as compliance with all state mandates and regulations including teacher evaluation, professional learning and school climate.

The Director of Pupil Services oversees all Special Education and 504 needs of the district.

The Business Manager oversees all financial operations and non-instructional functions such as food service, transportation, custodial services, building projects, and human resources.

The Director of Technology oversees the technology infrastructure, cyber security, software, state reporting and all device coordination and maintenance for the schools and town.



Current building administration staffing:

Kelly Lane - 395 students, 1 principal (1.0 FTE, 1:395 ratio))

Wells Road - 376 students, 1 principal (1.0 FTE 1:376 ratio)

GMMS - 393 students, 1 principal, 1 assistant principal (10-month) (1.88 FTE, 1:209 ratio)

GMHS - 568 students, 1 principal, 2 assistant principals (one 12-month with Director of Guidance and one 10-month) (2.76 FTE, 1: 205 ratio)

Of Note:

The National Center for Educational Statistics reports 1 administrator for every 162 students, which would mean Granby should have 10.69 administrators working directly with students and Granby has 6.64 building based administrators.

The American Association of School Administrators cites 1 building administrators for every 13 teachers and 1 Central Office administrator for every 33 teachers, which means Granby should have 15.5 building administrators (6.64 currently) and 6.12 Central Office administrators (3 + business and technology currently) for our 202 teachers.



Question: Given the projected decline in enrollment, are two Assistant Principals at the high school necessary?



Answer: A reduction of 10 students is not significant when you consider the administrative needs of a building with over 565 students.



Question: Other school districts similar in size that have a Business Manager and a Superintendent do not have an Assistant Superintendent as well. Could this be an area for savings?



Answer: Data does not support this. Every school district the same size as Granby across the state has a Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent/Chief Academic Officer/Director of Curriculum and a Business Manager. Some even have multiple positions in these roles. Additionally, the one Assistant Superintendent position was created by combining two full-time administrators (Director of Teaching and Talent Development and Director of Curriculum and Professional Learning) in the 2015-16 school year resulting in cost savings for the district.



Question: Is Mandarin necessary given that French and Spanish are offered?



Answer: This is an area that can potentially be cut. World Languages are an excellent opportunity for our students; however, our numbers are small and it is possible to eliminate Spanish at Kelly Lane and/or Wells Road, eliminate Mandarin at GMMS or look at other program reductions. (In Mandarin, currently there are 49 students at GMMS and 60 students at GMHS).



Question: Is the salary of \$71,000 for a Kindergarten Teaching Assistant correct? It seems to be very high.



Answer: The \$71,000 referred to in the above question references the Q&D Budget and is for FY24. This line item has been reduced for FY25 and the Q&D Budget. One Teaching Assistant is \$24,000.



Question: The budget projection for Conferences and Travel is \$45,000 which seems excessive.



Answer: Granby Public Schools has an obligation to educate administrators, teachers, special education personnel, maintenance, and technology staff to stay up-to-date with their respective professional practice. Now that the district is back to in-person conferences and professional learning, teachers and administrators are attending professional conferences and learning opportunities more frequently.

An increase of \$2,125 was requested for FY25. This line item also includes mileage reimbursement and administrator conference reimbursement as identified in their contract.