

**To:** Granby Board of Education  
**From:** Cheri P. Burke, Superintendent  
**Date:** May 21, 2025  
**Subject:** Superintendent Year in Review 2024-2025

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### **Celebrating Progress and Advancing Excellence**

The 2024–2025 academic year was marked by strategic growth, high levels of community engagement and measurable progress across the Granby Public Schools. Under the leadership of Superintendent Burke, the district implemented initiatives that enhanced student achievement, operational efficiency, program development, and community engagement. This report highlights the key accomplishments and areas of continued progress that define a successful year in Granby Public Schools.

### **Academic Excellence and Student Achievement**

An early look at student learning outcomes indicates strong improvement, with the district achieving its highest levels of math performance since the pandemic. The data is still incomplete; however, at this time, Granby Memorial Middle School (GMMS) Smarter Balanced math scores in Grades 6, 7, and 8 are at pre-pandemic highs, while PSAT scores in Grades 8 and 9 increased by 20 points over the previous year. These gains reflect the district’s commitment to instructional rigor and targeted support.

In the 2025-2026 school year, we are optimistic gains will continue with additional instructional time added at Granby Memorial High School (GMHS) and the ability to increase access to academic support and intervention services at both GMHS and GMMS due to the schedule alignment. In addition, these schedule modifications will enhance collaboration and flexibility, further supporting student academic success. A full presentation of student achievement data is scheduled for the Fall 2025.

### **Operational Efficiencies and Strategic Staffing**

The District’s prioritized smart resource management, resulted in substantial financial efficiencies through creative problem solving and effective hiring. Over \$750,000 in savings were realized from renegotiated transportation contracts (over three (3) years), and \$85,000 was saved through Facilities Department innovations and in-house work. These outcomes were supported by strategic planning and a consistent focus on problem identification and solution-oriented approaches.

Administrative changes at Central Office and school levels optimized operations without increasing administrative overhead. Key adjustments included the elimination of several positions and the reallocation of responsibilities through stipends and redefined roles. The Finance and Human Resources Departments led successful contract negotiations and expanded staff benefit options at no additional cost to the District. The new role of Dean of Students at GMHS replaced an Assistant Principal role to provide student-facing support with social and emotional needs and behavior regulation. This was a cost savings and added value to the GMHS team.

### **Special Education and Program Innovation**

Significant advancements were made in the Special Education and Student Support Services Department. The Department was reorganized to provide stronger site-based leadership through new elementary and secondary Department Chair positions (stipend only). Three specialized programs—RISE, PAVE, and the Alternative Learning Center—were launched to meet the diverse needs of students and reduce reliance on out-of-district placements. These programs enabled the

return of several students to Granby and expanded capacity through regional partnerships, including the growth of the B.E.A.R. Transition Academy.

Pilot initiatives such as the Structured Resource Room introduced enhanced behavioral and emotional support within the schools, aligning with the District's broader commitment to inclusive education and fiscal responsibility.

### **Community Engagement and Transparent Communication**

Granby Public Schools continued to build trust and strengthen relationships with families and the broader community. The second year of the three-year District Communication Plan was completed, including the development and dissemination of key resources such as the Crisis Response Protocol and the Guide to Addressing School Concerns.

Communication efforts included proactive outreach through digital platforms, articles in *The Granby Drummer*, social media engagement, and in-person and virtual stakeholder forums. School successes were regularly celebrated at Board of Education meetings, reinforcing a positive district narrative.

### **Safety, Wellness, and Mental Health Supports**

The District expanded its focus on student and staff well-being. Collaborative efforts with the Farmington Valley Health District led to district-wide training in Youth Mental Health First Aid and Teen Mental Health certification for upper-grade students. Additional wellness initiatives included a staff wellness day, therapy dog visits and screen-free awareness campaigns.

The School Resource Officer (SRO) Program was adopted by the Board of Education and is slated for implementation in 2025–2026. Infrastructure updates and planning for long-term capital improvements also advanced under the safety and security umbrella.

### **Strategic Planning and District-Wide Recognition**

Granby Public Schools made notable progress in strategic planning, capital improvement development and district branding. Projects included the design of a future athletic field complex, solutions for the high school track and field, and a study of the 32-year-old Granby Memorial Middle School. These efforts will inform upcoming priorities and investments for the Town of Granby.

This year, Granby Public Schools was recognized at the state and national level. Superintendent Burke was selected as a “Superintendent to Watch,” by the National School Public Relations Association and Granby Public Schools became the only district in the Farmington Valley with 100% staff trained in Youth Mental Health First Aid. Additionally, the District was invited to present its middle and high school schedule alignment work at a national conference. Granby Memorial High School was awarded an Innovation Grant, further underscoring the District's leadership and forward-thinking approach.

The 2024–2025 school year reflects a time of momentum and meaningful achievement for Granby Public Schools. Through strategic leadership, creative solutions, and a student-first mindset, the District has laid a strong foundation for continued growth. The work of the past year exemplifies the power of collaboration, the importance of community and a steadfast commitment to excellence.