

## CHAPTER 2: EDUCATION

### *Chapter Goal*

#### OVERVIEW

The quality of a town's public school system is an important factor contributing to a community's social and cultural development as well as its economic success. A quality education system can create an involved citizenry, an effective workforce and a strong economy. Prospective new commercial or industrial developers know that good schools are important to their employees, therefore an excellent education system attracts new businesses and new residents.

Granby is one of the few communities of its size in the Commonwealth that has its own K-12 school system and residents are rightfully proud of the high quality of their local schools. The Granby school system has ably serviced the town for many years. The biggest challenges facing Granby's schools are the aging infrastructure and the increased cost of state-mandated programs. While the Granby school district and the town of Granby have worked on addressing some of the infrastructure issues enormous challenges remain.

#### EXISTING CONDITIONS

##### *Student Enrollment and Indicators*

Granby Public Schools have a total enrollment of 1,010 students as of December 2012. There are three public school facilities in Granby supporting the total student population. West Street Elementary school, which houses Pre-K through third grade, currently has a total enrollment of 282 students, East Meadow Elementary School, which accommodates fourth through sixth grade, has 219 students, and a total of 509 students are enrolled at the Junior / Senior High School. Enrollment projections combined with an expected town growth factor indicates slow growth over the next ten years.

According to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education End of the Year Report for the 2010-11 school year reports that Granby's per-pupil expenditure was \$10,376, which is less than adjacent area schools and less than the State average of \$13,361 for the same school year. The total expenditures for Granby schools were \$12.2 million dollars, with approximately 85 percent of overall spending is appropriated from the general fund and State Chapter 70.

The School Choice program allows parents to send their children to schools in communities other than the city or town in which they reside. Tuition is paid by the sending district to the receiving district. Granby receives a higher number of School Choice students than it sends to other communities, which reflects the strength of the school system in comparison to its neighboring communities (Table 1).

Table 1: School Choice Trends, Town of Granby

	<b>Receiving</b>		<b>Sending</b>	
<u>FY</u>	<u>FTE Pupils</u>	<u>Tuition</u>	<u>FTE Pupils</u>	<u>Tuition</u>
FY96	36.4	135,617	0	0
FY97	69.2	256,003	1	3,379
FY98	87.3	296,268	0.1	398
FY99	94.7	377,017	0	0
FY00	106	426,860	4	75,874
FY01	105	473,359	3.7	19,389
FY02	111.1	471,239	4.2	18,231
FY03	112.9	550,214	10.2	52,942
FY04	109.4	520,082	19.5	120,111
FY05	106.8	568,620	19	95,216
FY06	103.8	595,460	27.9	130,128
FY07	103.6	626,001	31.5	174,410
FY08	100.4	577,707	30	165,064
FY09	109.3	662,030	32.4	179,724
FY10	131.96	797,854	27.89	184,547
FY11	132.25	786,314	26.26	176,701
FY12	140.21	783,770	32.01	193,328
FY13	116	720,037	36	213,391

Source: MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education,  
December 2012

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### Per Pupil Expenditures (FY 2008-2011)

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District	Grade Structure	FY08	FY09	FY10	FY11
Amherst	K-6	\$ 15,169	\$ 15,831	\$ 16,413	\$ 17,116
Amherst Pelham	7-12	\$ 16,131	\$ 16,908	\$ 17,144	\$ 17,916
Belchertown	K-12	\$ 9,748	\$ 10,422	\$ 10,619	\$ 10,865
Easthampton	K-12	\$ 10,587	\$ 11,412	\$ 11,354	\$ 12,253
Frontier	7-12	\$ 13,707	\$ 14,936	\$ 14,561	\$ 15,138
Greenfield	K-12	\$ 13,135	\$ 14,011	\$ 13,954	\$ 12,665
Hadley	K-12	\$ 9,698	\$ 9,720	\$ 10,141	\$ 9,770
Hampden Wilbraham	K-12	\$ 10,938	\$ 11,257	\$ 11,403	\$ 11,508
Hampshire Regional	7-12	\$ 12,224	\$ 12,812	\$ 13,438	\$ 13,821
Hatfield	K-12	\$ 11,144	\$ 11,095	\$ 9,546	\$ 11,230
Ludlow	K-12	\$ 10,730	\$ 11,484	\$ 11,453	\$ 12,113
Monson	K-12	\$ 9,901	\$ 10,614	\$ 11,095	\$ 11,824
Palmer	K-12	\$ 11,064	\$ 11,498	\$ 12,032	\$ 12,789
Pathfinder	9-12	\$ 18,075	\$ 20,239	\$ 19,828	\$ 20,729
South Hadley	K-12	\$ 10,631	\$ 11,418	\$ 12,277	\$ 12,790
Ware	K-12	\$ 11,950	\$ 11,481	\$ 11,359	\$ 12,017
Granby	K-12	\$ 9,433	\$ 9,991	\$ 10,132	\$ 10,376
<b>State Average</b>		<b>\$ 12,448</b>	<b>\$ 13,006</b>	<b>\$ 13,055</b>	<b>\$ 13,361</b>

Students choose to leave the district to attend other area schools for many different reasons, including academics, athletics and performing arts.

The MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education also maintains information regarding “selected populations” enrollment. In all categories, Granby had a lower percentage of these populations of students, except Special Education, which was consistent with state trends.

*Table 2: Selected Populations, Granby School System (2011-12)*

	% in District	% of State
First Language not English	2.6	16.7
Limited English Proficient	1.1	7.3
Low-income	16.9	35.2
Special Education	17.2	17.0
Free Lunch	13.8	30.4
Reduced Lunch	3.1	4.8

*Source: MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, October 2012*

On certain indicators, Granby students are performing at a higher level than other students across the state. Dropout rates are lower, graduation rates are higher, and a higher percentage of students plan to attend either a four-year or two-year college than state-wide averages. Also, possibly due to the current economic environment and the rising cost of 4-year colleges, the percentage of graduates who, at least initially, attend a 2-year public college increased substantially from 2008 to 2011 from 33 percent to 53 percent. This new trend may present an opportunity for the Granby High School to collaborate with 2-year colleges in the region to expand its course offerings and to allow its students to receive college credits before graduation.

*Table 3: Student Indicators*

	2007-2008		2010-2011	
	% in District	% of State	% in District	% of State
Grade 9-12 dropout rate	1.1	3.4	0.8	2.7
Graduation rate	94.1	81.2	91	83.4
Graduates plan to attend 4 –year private college	28	30	23	31
Graduates plan to attend 4 –year public college	24	27	17	28
Graduates plan to attend 2–year private college	0	2	0	1
Graduates plan to attend 2 –year public college	33	21	53	22

*Source: MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, February 2012*

Between 2002 and 2008, Holyoke Catholic High School was located at the campus that was previously occupied by the St. Hyacinth Seminary. Following Holyoke Catholic's departure the MacDuffie School, a private school for grades 6 through 12 moved to the same location. The school opened its Granby campus in Fall 2011. Enrollment at the school is around 200, including students from Massachusetts, Connecticut and four other states as well as from 16 countries. The school offers a rich academic curriculum and athletic program.

Administrators from MacDuffie School and Granby public schools should consider exploring opportunities of academic and athletic collaboration between their institutions.

### *Building Conditions*

#### **General Assessment of the Public Schools:**

All three schools are in need of upgrades including all building systems and components, technology, windows, roofs, hazardous materials abatement, among others, in order to prepare the schools for 21<sup>st</sup> Century and the next 40 to 50 years. Each has its particular “trouble spots” unique to each facility, but in a general sense are similar in that the building systems have outlived their useful life and should be upgraded at this time.

#### **Granby Jr./Sr. High School**

The 50 year old building at 86,803 square-feet houses grades 7-12 and shares a site with the East Meadow school. The exterior envelope, HVAC, plumbing and electrical and technology infrastructure and systems all need a complete replacement. The majority of classrooms, core areas (library, gym, etc.) and specialized areas (art, special education, etc.) are grossly undersized from current state size standards. The site is large and flat however and conducive to an option for new construction or major additions. Existing septic and water supply systems are not code compliant and any upgrades to the facility will trigger the need to replace the systems.

#### **East Meadow School**

Built in 1965 this school occupies the same site as the Jr./Sr. High School. It is a one story structure of approximately 37,633 sf. Overall it is in the best condition of the three schools. The school does have areas of localized masonry repair that is required along with window replacement and all new HVAC, electrical and plumbing systems will be required as they have exceeded their expected design life. Existing classroom sizes are at the absolute minimum state size standards and, due to the fact the building is a masonry bearing design, modification of room sizes, if required, could be costly. The structural system is in sound condition.

#### **West Street School**

This is the oldest of the three schools with the original building having been constructed in 1941 with subsequent additions in 1951 and 1956. It houses grades K-3 currently and is approximately 44,139 sf. The original building has wood floor and roof framing which would make it costly and difficult to adapt to a new layout to be more functional for the desired educational program. The site is prohibitively small leaving little room for expansion of a building or required upgrades that would need to take place for the septic and water supply systems.

Like the other two facilities, this building would require a full window replacement, HVAC, plumbing, electrical and technology system replacement. The roof was recently replaced within the last few years.

### **Endeavors to Improve Public School Buildings**

In 2001, a School Building Committee was formed to explore various options to update, renovate or rebuild some or all of the existing school buildings. In 2002, an engineering study was performed to examine the three existing buildings and provide an overview of their condition. The report concluded all three schools are in need of renovations, including structural improvements and improvements to address energy inefficiencies and code deficiencies. (Alderman & MacNeish “Due Diligence Engineering Study” March 2002). Many systems had exceeded their serviceable design life and annual costs are increasing due to heat/energy loss and maintenance upgrades of building systems and components. The report suggested the town seriously consider discontinuing use of the West Street School due to the physical condition of the structure.

The early efforts, which included a feasibility study and a schematic design, were brought to a halt in February 2003 when the Commonwealth of Massachusetts imposed a one-year moratorium on all new projects. When the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) created in 2004 and streamlined the process for project approval and financial assistance, Granby was required to submit a new Statement of Interest (SOI) for a new project.

### **Option Proposed in 2010: New 6-12 Middle High School**

The Town of Granby submitted a Statement of Interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority for the Jr./Sr. High School as the school district's prioritized need. The MSBA only allowed communities to submit one school. The MSBA accepted the SOI and agreed to participate in funding a collaborative Feasibility Study and Schematic Design process in partnership with the Town. The conclusion of the study process resulted in the selection of an option to start the process of rehabilitating Granby's school buildings. The selected option was a new junior/senior high school housing grades 6-12. This option was chosen out of many competing plans that reviewed from code and maintenance upgrades only all the way to construction of a new K-12 campus. It was determined by the School Building Committee and the Selectboard along with the MSBA that this was the most cost effective option to pursue at this time, which also left flexibility for planning future upgrades, replacement or renovations to the remaining school buildings in Granby at a later time. The State would have contributed

63.52% towards the overall project cost of \$45,260,911 leaving a Granby share of 36.48% or \$17,402,094.

In late 2010, the proposed project was rejected by town voters, first at a special town meeting and later at the ballot box,.

### **New Project Initiated in 2013**

In November 2010, the town was asked by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts to update its statement of interest for the West State Elementary School and East Meadow Elementary School. Upon a re-evaluation and prioritization of school buildings' needs, the new Statement of Interest concentrated on the West Street School. In January 2013, the Massachusetts School Building Authority announced its decision to invite West Street School to into the eligibility period. The Town has until November 2013 to complete the requirements of this phase in order to proceed to the next step in the project.

- Taking advantage of colleges in the region especially the two-year community colleges.
- Creating programs that allow the seniors to get more involved in the school.
- Create afterschool programs that are designed to fill the gap between the curriculum and classes that have been canceled working down. Also, some afterschool activities that might help the juniors and seniors to get better prepared for their college preparation process and the business world.

### *Teachers*

There was a total of 82.1 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) teachers in the Granby School District in 2011-2012 school year, with 22.9 FTE at West Street, 19.2 FTE at East Meadow, and 40.0 FTE at the Junior / Senior High School. General education was 63 FTE teachers, special education was 18 FTE, and other teachers comprised 1.2 FTE.

For the 2010-11 school year, the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education indicates that the student/teacher ratio in the Granby school district is 13.9 to 1, which is consistent with statewide trend. This rate is 13.3 at West Street School, 14.8 at East Meadow School and 13.8 at Granby Jr./Sr. High School. Student-teacher ratios are based on the total number of school instructional staff divided by the total enrollment of students. Therefore, this number may include specialist teachers in the arts, literacy specialists, physical education and special

education teachers, who may teach smaller groups of students. As a result, student-teacher ratios can show smaller numbers than the actual average class size.

#### *Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) and the Common Core Standards*

The Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System is designed to meet the requirements of the Education Reform Law of 1993 and tests and measures performance of all public school students. There is no state-wide ranking of communities based on the results of the MCAS scores, but the state does provide the performance levels of district students at each of the required test levels and grades. In general, Granby students perform better or on par with the state level for all grades and subjects. However, Granby students are significantly behind the state levels for Grade 10 Science and Technology. In 2012, only 38 percent of the Granby's 10<sup>th</sup> grade students were ranked Advanced or Proficient compared to 69 percent at the state level, and 62 percent were ranked as Needs Improvement or failing, compared to only 29 percent at the state level.

In 2010, the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted the "Common Core Standards," in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. The goal of common standards is to provide a clear, consistent roadmap for preparing children for college and the workforce. Massachusetts played a leading role in the development of the national Common Core Standards. The 2012-15 District Improvement Plan for Granby public schools strongly emphasizes alignment of math and ELA curriculum with Common Core standards. MCAS Assessments will be revised in response to the new standards.

#### *Special Education*

In 2011 there were 176 enrolled special education students in Granby, with three students leaving the district for schooling. The current Granby schools were built before special education programs were developed. Many of the Special Education programs in the existing buildings are distributed among shared, small group rooms. At West Street School three classrooms and an additional space are available for students on the autism spectrum. At the middle and high school facility there are two life skills/self contained rooms and two resource rooms for special education students. The existing middle and high school facility does not have a space dedicated to serve the constant need for testing and conference/meetings. OT, PT, ELL, and Speech and Language space is also limited throughout the district. ---



Table 4: Special Education Environment

	Enrollment	District Rates	State Rates	State Target
Enrolled students with IEPs	176	--	--	--
Full Inclusion (inside the general education classroom 80% or more of the day)	81	46.00%	57.90%	58.00%
Partial Inclusion (outside of general education classroom 21%-60%)	80	45.50%	20.10%	--
Substantially Separate (inside the general education classroom less than 40% of the day)	10	5.70%	15.10%	14.50%
Separate Schools, Residential Facilities, or Homebound/Hospital placements	5	2.80%	6.70%	5.50%

Source: MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2011 SPED Report

### Technology

The Granby Public Schools installed computer networks in all three schools in the mid 1990's. At that time, several computer labs were installed in the three schools as well. This was funded by a "one time" state grant for school networks and a capital article from the town. For about eight years, the schools continued to increase the number of computer labs and added computers to every classroom and made minor upgrades to the network. Although the town provided subsequent capital articles to help fund this, the schools utilized donated computers that were retired from the federal government and several businesses. Today, approximately 50% of the classroom computers at the Granby Jr. Sr. High School and 70% of the classrooms computers at both the West Street and East Meadow School were derived from donations.

Although the schools continue to receive donated computers which help keep the computer fleet functional, it has been several years since the schools have been able to update the network infrastructure due to a lack of a funding source. Although the network is functional, its antiquated status does not always yield an acceptable level of performance. As a result, certain technology based educational activities that are becoming the norm in other schools are not available to students in the Granby. Likewise, these same limitations prevent the schools from offering administrative services such as an efficiently managed email system and remote desktop access, etc.

### Curriculum

Granby public schools strive to provide a diverse curriculum to all of its students. At the Jr./Sr. High School, a series of honors classes are available to the students. In addition, two AP classes in History and English are offered. All three schools continue to provide a strong music program.

In 2012, a full-time kindergarten program was initiated. West Street and East Meadow Schools attempt to synchronize their curriculum in mathematics to provide the students continuity in their learning process.

Enrichment programs are available to all students.

### CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Despite the school district's small size and limited resources, the public school system provides a quality education and environment for Granby's youth. In comparison to state standards, Granby students are performing well, class sizes are small, and the curriculum offers core classes students need to succeed in the future.

In 2012, the District added a

As town residents and school officials know, the infrastructure at all the schools is problematic, and creates the potential for the school to lose its accreditation if this is not addressed in the near future, before or when the district is slated to go through the accreditation process again in 2015. Lack of funding also prevents the district from expanding extra-curricular activities, such as additional athletic teams and student clubs.

## GOALS AND STRATEGIES

**Goal 1:** Renovate, update or replace existing school buildings and facilities to meet create an environment conducive to promote and achieve higher levels of education.

Strategy 1: Keep ongoing communication with town residents to inform the community regarding cost vs. benefit for renovating the schools.

### *Action Steps*

Responsible Party: School Building Committee, School Committee, Superintendent of Schools  
Resources Needed: volunteer time to present cost/ benefit information  
Target Date for Completion: Ongoing

Strategy 2: If the currently proposed West Street School project materializes, consider alternative uses for the old building.

### *Action Steps*

Responsible Party: Selectboard, Town Administrator  
Resources Needed: volunteer time to present cost/ benefit information  
Target Date for Completion: Ongoing

Strategy 3: Explore opportunities to function as a satellite location for area colleges and offer classes to the students and the community at large.

### *Action Steps*

Responsible Party: School Committee, Superintendent of Schools, Principals, Town Administrator  
Resources Needed: volunteer time to present cost/ benefit information  
Target Date for Completion: Ongoing

**Goal 2:** Establish after school programs throughout the school system that will engage students and the community in creative and educational activities and allow schools to become community centers serving a wide spectrum of the population.

Strategy 1: Establish after school programs utilizing school facilities such as sports, arts, theater and music programs.

*Action Steps*

Responsible Party: School Committee, Superintendent of Schools

Resources Needed: Staff and volunteer time

Target Date for Completion: Ongoing

Strategy 2: Collaborate with the Granby Council on Aging to create activities that could benefit the senior citizens while providing the opportunity for the younger and elder residents of the town to share common learning interests.

*Action Steps*

Responsible Party: School Committee, Superintendent of Schools, School Principals, Council on Aging

Resources Needed: Staff and volunteer time

Target Date for Completion: Ongoing

Strategy 3: Collaborate with the MacDuffie School to jointly offer activities that would benefit from both schools while allowing the students bodies to interact and find common interests.

*Action Steps*

Responsible Party: School Committee, Superintendent of Schools, School Principals

Resources Needed: Staff and volunteer time

Target Date for Completion: Ongoing

Strategy 4: Collaborate with the higher education institutions in the area, particularly the community colleges, to identify extended opportunities for students to take classes at those institutions and get credit for school work or later college career.

*Action Steps*

Responsible Party: School Committee, Superintendent of Schools, School Principals

Resources Needed: Staff and volunteer time

Target Date for Completion: Ongoing

**Goal 3:** Strengthen relationships between school and community and promote partnerships that contribute to increased learning for all students fostering mutual respect, open communication and partnership among students, staff, families and the community.

Strategy 1: Revise district website to be more user-friendly so that it can be used to effectively communicate with the parents and the community at large and receive feedback.

*Action Steps*

Responsible Party: Superintendent of Schools, Principals, staff from school department, volunteers (e.g., PTO, Booster Club)

Resources Needed: Technical assistance, staff from school department, volunteer time, budgeted funds

Target Date for Completion: Ongoing

Strategy 2: Establish ongoing opportunities for increased community dialogue about school events, policies, programming etc.

*Action Steps*

Responsible Party: Superintendent of Schools, Principals, staff from school department, volunteers (e.g., PTO, Booster Club)

Resources Needed: Technical assistance, staff from school department, volunteer time, budgeted funds

Target Date for Completion: Ongoing

Strategy 3: Utilize the public access television to promote school events and activities, including athletics and performing arts.

*Action Steps*

Responsible Party: Superintendent of Schools, Principals, staff from school department, volunteers (e.g., PTO, Booster Club)

Resources Needed: Technical assistance, staff from school department, volunteer time, budgeted funds

Target Date for Completion: Ongoing

Strategy 4: Create and promote a community service program to involve students in town government and other civic activities.

*Action Steps*

Responsible Party: Superintendent of Schools, Principals, staff from school department, volunteers (e.g., PTO, Booster Club)

Resources Needed: Technical assistance, staff from school department, volunteer time, budgeted funds

Target Date for Completion: Ongoing