

COMMUNITY INNOVATION CHALLENGE GRANT
SOUTHWICK-TOLLAND-GRANVILLE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



Project title: Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regionalization Grant

Communities involved in the project: Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District

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INTRODUCTORY LETTER

It is important to briefly summarize the parts of the regionalization process that were already completed. In the summer of 2009 the Town of Granville contacted the regional school district to express an interest in joining the regional district.

During the 2009-2010 academic year we applied for grant funds to pay for a feasibility study. In the spring we received funding from the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC). A feasibility study was launched in July of 2010 and was concluded in December of 2010. The purpose of the study was to analyze and describe the advantages and disadvantages of expanding the regional district by examining the community demographics, economic factors, student achievement data, and cost factors. During this same time period the Regional School District Planning Committee with the Regional District and the Town of Granville discussed areas of potential savings.

At the annual May 2011 Town meeting in Granville, voters approved the formation of a regional planning committee. The Southwick Tolland Regional School Committee also voted representatives to this committee. The Planning Committee started their work in the fall of 2010. A regionalization grant from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) provided funds for consultants to work with this committee.

In the spring of 2011, the planning committee shared its recommendations with the Southwick Tolland Regional School Committee and Granville School Committee. At the respective Town meetings in the fall of 2011, voters overwhelmingly approved the expansion of the regional district with the inclusion of the Town of Granville. This new three town region became effective on July 1, 2012.

The initiative behind this grant application was to help the Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District to move forward with all of the management and financial considerations surrounding the inclusion of a third community.

The planning work for the regional district took almost two years and there were several obstacles to overcome in the course of this work. Open negotiations, clear communications and the presence of common ground helped resolve these problems and much has been accomplished.

Additional burdens facing the district were the changes to 32B and the development of, and advocacy for a major capital improvement project with the voters. Work needed to be completed in several categories, collective bargaining, curriculum and instruction, data management, budget, human resources, transportation, food service, special education, clerical staff, maintenance, technology and policies.

Once the Community Innovation Grant, was awarded, a Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued to hire a consultant to help identify transition issues. Ridgetopview Consultants was hired in the fall of 2012.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The three town area of Southwick, Tolland and Granville has wrestled with how to structure its schools since the early 1980's. In 1988, it was decided to form the Southwick-Tolland Regional School District and to allow Granville to be a small independent district. This arrangement stayed in place until July of 2012, when the Granville School joined the regional district, forming the newly named Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District. The process of regionalization took place over the last two years and was initiated by town officials in Granville who became concerned about declining enrollment and financial sustainability.

In the winter of 2011 the district was awarded a Community Innovation Challenge (CIC) grant to facilitate all of the adjustments needed to thoughtfully include a third town in the regional district. The Southwick-Tolland District issued a Request for Proposals (RFP) to seek consultants to assist the district with collective bargaining, policy revision, district budgeting, technology planning, and changes with curriculum and instruction, staffing and physical plant.

The District selected Ridgetopview Associates to assist the District. Ridgetopview's three member team consisted of Paul Gagliarducci, who managed the contract, policy and staffing components; Stephen Hemman, who managed the financial and technology components; and Donna Scanlon, who managed the curriculum and instruction component.

The consultants studied the District's policies, and practices, interviewed staff members and administrators and developed a report which represents a set of recommendations for the district as we continue the work of integrating all four schools in one regional district. The final report was presented to the Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School Committee in February and was well received. This valuable document will guide the district over the next few years as we coordinate and standardize the governance and management of the district.

Other accomplishments directly related to the CIG grant include and district wide computerized purchasing and record keeping system, computerizing the Granville School Library, developing a new school schedule for our 7-12 middle school/high school (including Granville students) and improvements to our school transportation system regarding the addition of a new community to serve.

We are grateful for the funding provided by this grant program and we believe that the state is on the right track to encourage and incentivize consolidation of local government services.

PARTNER COMMUNITIES

The partner communities were Southwick, Tolland, Granville schools. The Southwick-Tolland Regional School District was officially regionalized with Granville Village School on July 1, 2012. The district is now referred to as the Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District.

GOALS

The overall goal behind the grant application was to help the Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District to move forward with all of the management and financial considerations surrounding the inclusion of a third community.

It was projected that Granville would save substantially more than Southwick or Tolland as a result of regionalization. It should be noted that the financial benefit to Southwick and Tolland that stems from including Granville comes from financial incentives initiated by the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA). The MSBA provided six additional reimbursement points on the approved project. The MSBA also allowed the District to develop a “campus-wide solution” to our building needs if an expanded region could be achieved. This resulted in a primary project converting our high school to a middle school/high school. This also allows us to complete repair projects at both the Woodland Elementary School and the Power Mill Middle School. The school building project was approved by the voters in the spring of 2012.

The district needed to implement the first year of regionalization in a fiscally prudent manner. We only had five months to complete planning for the implementation. The assistance of consultants and legal services was critical. An expanded region had the potential to cut costs and make the district implementation of the three town region more effective. We wanted to bring this to fruition in a constructive way. This consolidation was about mutual benefits and improving the status quo. We didn’t want consolidation to get a bad name by getting off to a poor start.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Upon approval of the grant in April, the district issued a Response for Services (RFS) for both legal services and a consultant. Once chosen, meetings began for collective bargaining for Units A, transportation, and paraeducators and the consultant began work with the district on regionalization. The Special Educator Director and Food Services Director positions were consolidated. The maintenance and transportation departments were merged over the summer months. A regional budget including all three regions was in place for the 2013 school year. In

addition, the consultant reviewed the policies for the regional district and GVS and provided recommendations for possible changes.

The district is currently in the process of reviewing and aligning curriculum and instruction. Curriculum and Instruction consolidation will go into the following school year; any lessons learned during the first year will help revise budgetary procedures for the following year. Consults on finance and human resource issues could drift into the next school year. Improvement to the budget in the second year of operation would be completed after reflection on the first year of operation as a three town district.

BUDGET

The original budget developed included budget figures that needed to be amended as the district worked through the regionalization process.

- Legal was originally \$14,500 this was reduced to \$2000 because the timeframe for the grant was too short and more work needed to be done
- Program Analysis: \$8,000 after determining what needed to be addressed during regionalization the amount was increased to \$15,000
- Collective Bargaining: \$12,000 removed and rolled into legal services
- Secretarial Costs and office supplies: \$3000 under this line,
 - Transportation required new registrations for all of the buses as well as new lettering;
 - Security ID cards and lanyards were purchased to include GVS on the logo
 - Versatran School bus routing scheduling software purchased as an upgrade to the current system in order to include the GVS bus routes
 - Destiny library “cloud” software purchased to have GVS align with regional district
 - Rediker Student information system “cloud” software purchased to bring GVS online with the regional district
 - Purchase Order module purchased to bring GVS in line with the regional district

Budget for the Community Innovation Challenge Grant Program

Activity/Task	Cost
Legal	\$ 2000
Program Analysis	\$15,000
Bus Lettering	\$ 2,685
Development of Schedules to coordinate buildings	\$ 4,420
<u>Technology:</u>	
Versatran School bus routing scheduling software	\$ 3,886
Addition of Library resource management to GVS	\$ 1,764
Purchase order module	\$ 8,125
Rediker Software – Cloud	\$ 5,400

ID Cards/Lanyards	\$ 720
Total	\$ 44,000

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

The challenges faced throughout the project were primarily the short timeframe in which the grant funds had to be used. Most of this work had to be completed in a six month time frame and it would have been preferable to work with an extended spending period. The revision and consolidation of the budget process for FY '13 was significantly in front of grant funding as it need to be completed last spring. Regional school districts are required to vote on their budget proposals by early April. Also, most of the adjustments to our transportation system needed to be completed over the summer when we were without grant funds. Nonetheless, much was accomplished.

OUTCOMES

In conjunction with the Community Innovation Grant the district has completed the following:

1. Collective bargaining

New collective bargaining agreements were negotiated (or are in process) for all units in our employ; this included teachers, paraprofessionals, clerical, custodial, transportation and food service staffs. These negotiations involve factors that touch on working conditions, salary and benefits. The negotiations of these contracts went well beyond the scope of normal negotiations. The grant funds were helpful in this area.

2. Curriculum and Instruction

In the area of curriculum and instruction, documentation and instructional practices needed to be coordinated across four schools. This process has begun. The recommendations from the consultants prioritize updating curriculum and professional development at the Granville School so that students have a similar educational experience across the district.

3. Data Management

The ever increasing work load associated with reporting data to the state, testing procedures, and enrollment counts were reviewed with the addition of the Granville Village School. Rediker Cloud (student information system) was purchased and installed so that Granville would be included in the district data base.

4. Budget

The budget process was revised to include Granville Village School

5. Human Resources

Other financial considerations included consolidation of liability and casualty insurance, management of health insurance plans, unemployment claims, consolidation of payroll, and GASB 45 reporting.

6. Transportation

There were two separate transportation systems with different bus routes and bus drive assignments, parking locations, fueling procedures which were reviewed and revised

7. Food Service

There were two different food service programs serving breakfast and lunches to qualified students. These programs were merged during the summer of 2012. A cost savings was realized when the district assigned one food service director.

8. Special Education

In the area of special education there were two special education directors and separate special education staffs and programs. This area of instruction of support was reviewed and consolidated ensuring that adequate staff was in place and the district met its obligation for students with disabilities. A cost saving was realized with the appointment of one special education director for the regionalized district.

9. Clerical staff

An analysis of the capacity of our administrative and clerical staff was completed. It was determined that the current workload as impacted by state requirements and the implementation of the building project would indicate that the Central Office is not over staffed.

10. Maintenance

A review of the custodial staff was completed.

11. Technology

The use of technology is continually expanding for schools and school districts. A reassessment of both the management and educational technology status in both the regional and Granville school districts was conducted.

12. Policies

The consultant group reviewed both the regional district and Granville Public Schools policies and determined that the current Regional Policy Manual should serve as the District's guide for all policies. The Granville Village School has a much narrower scope of policies since it has had to address fewer mandates due to its smaller school population, grade configuration and single school facility. Policy revision will be pursued during the course of next year, consistent with the regionalization recommendations.

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RESOURCES

Transitioning Report on Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District (Consultant Report)

TRANSITIONING REPORT

SOUTHWICK-TOLLAND-GRANVILLE

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



Regional Transition Study Team

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Part 1:

INTRODUCTION

In 2010, the Town of Granville petitioned the Southwick-Tolland Regional School District to become a full member of the region. After a series of feasibility studies, the Regional School District brought a proposal to the three communities for a vote in the fall of 2011. The citizens approved the proposal and at the start of the 2012-2013 school year, the District began operating as a new three-town entity. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued to hire a consultant to help identify transition issues. This process is a recommended pathway by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Dr. Paul C. Gagliarducci of Ridgetopview Consultants was hired and he enlisted the support of two colleagues, Dr. Stephen R. Hemman and Dr. Donna M. Scanlon, to assist with the project. The following report represents the results of their study, which began in September of 2012 and ended in January of 2013.

The consulting team would like to thank Dr. John Barry and his staff for their cooperation during the past several months. There is a high degree of dedication evident in the Central Office and displayed by the building principals. In part, this can be attributed to the leadership style of Dr. Barry. The employees we encountered, regardless of their position or tenure in the District, care deeply about this regional school district and its future. The work already done to expand the District and to secure the new building project will lend a high degree of sustainability to the District and for this, the School Committee can be proud.

Part 2:

TRANSITION ISSUES:

Contract Comparison and Review

The merging of collective bargaining agreement that results when a new regional school district is formed is a difficult but critical task. The initial focus is to discover commonalities and then to look for significant differences. While this was our primary focus with agreements covering the District's professional employees, it is important to note there are no support group agreements existing for Granville employees, while there are agreements with the regional groups. The melding of the Granville employees into the regional group should not present any major problems, except there must be discussions relative to seniority clauses, and we understand these discussions have already been or are in the process of being held.

Experience tells us that salary schedules often have the most potential to be different. Such is the case with comparisons of the contracts involving the professional staff. The structure, or step system, of the salary scale reflects some nuances that will need to be discussed. More importantly, matching salaries will be the most important task. Our focus was to review both agreements to determine if there were any other significant differences. We did discover several contract sections and clauses that we feel should be discussed during the collective bargaining stage of the transition process. We make no recommendations as to strategy or direction of the bargaining process, only the need to resolve differences in order to avoid future problems. Since the majority of professional employees are covered under the agreement with the Regional School Committee, we would recommend that this contract serve as the basis for inclusion and changes during the negotiation phase of transition. We would also recommend that consideration be given to current Granville employees with regard to some benefits they have accrued over time, such as those involving sick days and retirement. Language that "grandfathers" these employees would seem fair.

We have provided the following analysis to highlight areas of significant difference:

Seniority:

Our understanding is that the issue of seniority has been discussed and an agreement reached. This is an extremely critical issue and we congratulate the School Committee and the Teacher Association for developing an amicable solution to this potentially difficult issue.

Work Year:

Currently Southwick-Tolland (S/T) teachers work one additional day.

There is a difference in the number of non-teaching start days.

There is a difference in the number of meetings that can be held each month.

Sick leave:

Sick bank language needs to be carefully reviewed.

There are no significant differences that we can determine.

Bereavement:

S/T contract has language that mentions the total number of non-consecutive days in a year.

S/T has restrictions on the number of people who can be absent on one day to attend funeral services.

Personal Days:

S/T contract has more specificity with regard to the different types of personal days, i.e., religious days, Association days, jury duty, etc.

There is a difference in the granting of a “longevity day”. Teachers in Granville are able to acquire one (1) more day than Southwick-Tolland teachers can.

Benefits:

S/T has a richer life insurance benefit.

S/T provides a dental option

Professional days:

Both contracts have specific language and requirements that relate to number of credits, payment, notification, etc. Rather than negotiate a blend of the two, one of the current sections should be adopted.

Retirement/Resignation payment:

The contracts have significant differences. There may be need to “grandfather” staff members with regard to time earned for payment. Both contracts cover the basic issues; therefore, one clause should be adopted rather than attempting a combination of the two clauses.

Salaries and Salary Scales:

There are differences in the columns and steps that must be resolved. One method to discuss would be a tiered process that works toward a single schedule at the end of an agreed upon timeline. This would be in force for current employees, but all new employees would be hired on the one agreed-upon salary scale.

The step system is different in both contracts. Granville has a consistent maximum at 15 years throughout the salary schedule, while S/T has different maximum levels depending on degrees earned. This should also be resolved in a format that has a gradual transition toward one new salary scale.

<u>Southwick-Tolland</u>	<u>Granville</u>
Work year-	Work year-
184	183
180 teaching	180- teaching
1 for opening day	2 days before start
Feb- President's day	1 day in-service
April- Patriots day	7 hour day
School Nurses 188	½ duty free
7 hour	5 preps / week
½ duty-free lunch	2 meetings /month
2 P/T conference/year	1.5 hours per meeting
3-hour early release for P/T conf.	Overnight chaperone- stipend
1 meeting per month	Sick leave-
1 hour	15 sick days
Prep time tied to specialists	Accrue at 1.5 per month

Sick leave	Drs' note after three days
15 /year	Single day with reasonable suspicion
Accrue 1.5 per month	Sick leave bank (voluntary)
3 days for Drs. Note	Bereavement
Sick Bank available	5 days (immediate relative)
Bereavement	3 days (in-law type)
5 days (immediate)	Personal
5 days Non-consecutive	2 days
No more than 5 teachers per building for bereavement	Longevity day (earned after 15 yrs)
Personal	Longevity days (earned after 20yrs)
3 religious days	Leaves at discretion
Jury duty	Family sick (10 days)
5 days for Assoc activities	Maternity
2 personal /yr	Six weeks
No more than 5 per building	NO MENTION OF FMLA
Longevity day after 15 yrs	Child rearing-
Unused days added to sick leave accumulated days	Up to two years w/o pay
Maternity (no definition/No FMLA)	Sept 1 date of return
Paternity/Child-rearing/Maternity (?) leave up to 1 year	Accrue step if worked 90 days in the preceding year.
Additional year approval of SC	
Sabbatical- available	Sabbatical- available
Other leaves available-SC approval	Other leaves up to a year upon request and approval of SC
Benefits	

\$10000 term	Benefits
Health	Annuities
Dental @ %50	Term life \$5000
Cafeteria Plan	Cafeteria plan
Annuity options	Credit Union
Assaults- (protection)	Assaults
Professional improvement	Professional Improvement
Requirement to take course	Reimbursement tuition
Master +30 and above are exempt	Workshops fees
Reimbursement tuition	1 three credit course/year
Notice of potential salary schedule movement	Not to exceed Westfield SU
Workshop credits/course credit	Prior approval
SC course offering	Workshops
Westfield SU course scale	Part-time pro-rated days, salaries, and benefits
RIF	Duties 80-100 per minutes/week
No sub-contracting	Specialist support for staff-provide art music etc.
Certification	RIF
Quality of performance	Area of competence
Length of service	Major/minor field of study
All things equal-length of service	Quality of teacher performance
Retirement/Sick Leave buy back	Continuous length of service
Formula driven by upon retirement or resignation after 15 years	All other equal-years of service
Salaries	Retirement/death pay

12 steps BA and B=15	20% reimbursement unused sick leave
13 steps M	Salaries
14 steps M+30 and M+45	15 steps- BA, B30, M, M, CAGS
15 steps 2M and CAGS	

District Policy Manual Review

Due to the size of the District and the fact that it comprises grades Pre-Kindergarten to grade 12, the current Regional Policy Manual should serve as the District's guide for all policies. The Granville School District has a much narrower scope of policies since it has had to address fewer mandates due to its smaller school population, grade configuration and single school facility. In reviewing the two documents, our focus was to discover if any peculiar or specific issues existed in the Granville document that would be of significance to recommend inclusion into the large regional document. Additionally, it was important to indicate what sections of the regional document would impose changes that need to be explained to the Granville School community. As a general rule, all sections of the current Regional Policy Manual need to be revised to include the Town of Granville when referring to the Regional School District. While time consuming, this is an important task that must be accomplished as soon as possible.

Recommendation #1: Community Use of School Facilities (Section K)

Since the Granville Village School has served as a source of community pride, care should be taken to ensure that the policy that governs "Use of School Facilities" blends with the current Regional Policy. The eligibility of who uses the facilities in the member towns needs to be revised. The Regional Policy is much more inclusive than the Granville Policy (*The School Facility and grounds of the Granville Village School may only be used by organizations of citizens and commercial organizations of the Town of Granville*). The District now has the responsibility to ensure the facility is maintained, secured and operated in a safe and efficient manner. Building use forms need to be processed at the Central Office since all staffing issues fall under regional jurisdiction. Additionally, the building use rates listed in the Granville Policy are significantly less than the Regional rates. The Regional School Committee should discuss this issue to make a determination if and when the rates will mirror those in the Regional Agreement.

Recommendation #2: Visitors to the Schools (Section K)

The current policies that govern Parents and/or Visitors to the schools are similar in many respects, although the Granville Policy appears to be more open in terms of parental visits. A careful review of the policies is in order since this subject is often a sensitive one. If changes are recommended, notification to parents is essential and inclusion of this policy into the student/parent/school handbook would be imperative so there are no misunderstandings.

Both policies encourage visits, but our sense is that traditionally single community schools have a much more open environment simply by the nature of the “community school” atmosphere.

Recommendation #3: *Students (Section J)*

The policy section that deals with student issues has a number of important sections to be reviewed by the District’s Policy Committee in conjunction with and advice from building principals and Central Office administration. A comparison of the two documents reveals that there are some inconsistencies, important omissions, and the need for up-to-date revision dates. The need to review the entire section will necessitate that the Granville staff and parents pay close attention to changes that may be different or absent from current policies. School admissions, retention, student conduct, bullying, and hazing are a few of the policies that are more lengthy and specific in the District Policy Manual and therefore require discussion and possible revisions within the Granville Village Student/Parent Handbook. This recommendation is cautionary. We encourage the use of the District’s web site as an excellent source for parents to use when changes are suggested or implemented.

Recommendation #4: *Adoption of Policies*

The current District Policy Manual should remain as the guide for all district policies.

The School Committee’s Policy Committee should review the two manuals to identify any areas of concern. (As consultants we can only highlight areas that we feel need to be addressed. Staff, administration, and School Committee members who know and understand the nuances of the District and its member towns would be more attuned to areas that are sensitive and unique.)

Although many of the policies are up to date, this period of transition would be an excellent time to affirm the appropriateness of current policies and a notation that they have been reviewed and/or revised with a more current date.

District administration should identify policies that require additional explanation/in-service to the staff/parents at the Granville Village School. Policy can create subtle changes, but clearly communicating new procedures and regulations can avoid potential pitfalls.

Any substantial policy change should be reviewed to determine its impact on current handbooks.

The District should convene a new Student Handbook Committee. The committee members should be charged with developing a District Handbook for all students Pre-K to 12. This new

handbook should then be augmented with specific procedures for the elementary, middle and high school students. This process will begin to incorporate the inclusiveness of the new district. There may be schedules and other nuances that are specific to the operation of each building, but rules that govern children need to be consistent throughout the District and within each building. At the same time, procedures need to be implemented for a new Staff Handbook. Rather than have separate ones for each bargaining unit or job category, a single guiding Staff Handbook with sub- sections specific to work rules for certified and non-certified people should be developed.

District Curriculum Review

With the recent adoption of new state standards in Mathematics and English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies, Science, and Technical Subjects, and the Massachusetts commitment to a national assessment system based on those standards, the timing is ideal for all educators to revisit what they teach and to analyze what students are learning. This process has started in Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District (STGRSD) and the curriculum across the core subject areas is already in transition to match the newly adopted state standards. Engaging in this alignment process is especially useful during the early years of the newly formed STGRSD. The new standards provide a constructive setting and a unifying agenda, removing the apprehension that one school may have to change in order to become more like another now that they are one school district. Instead, the mission will be to align the curriculum to new standards and assessments.

For the purpose of this report, the curriculum review focused on PreK – 8 written curriculum documents and informal site visits arranged by principals of the Granville Village (Grades K-8), Woodland Elementary (Grades PK-4), and Powder Mill Middle (Grades 5-8) schools. During the site visits, principals shared their perspectives on curriculum alignment issues and priorities. Conversations included teachers who have been involved with curriculum development. Since the regional high school has historically included Granville Village School students upon their completion of grade 8, the high school curriculum was not reviewed nor addressed in this report.

The welcoming murals at Woodland, the pictures in the hallways of each graduating class since 1937 as well as the Wright Flight program run by parents in Granville, and various activities at Powder Mill are just a few examples that confirm the regional communities take grade pride in their treasured schools. Other than the known differences in size and enrollment, the school populations are similar in demographics, attendance rates, and overall achievement. Parent volunteerism and involvement is also apparent at all schools.

One of the benefits of regionalization, particularly because the merged districts share an affiliation at the high school level, is the ability to align curricula and other programs so that students arrive at the high school with similar levels of experience and expectations. The process of aligning programs, however, may be easier said than done, and it will likely take several years before

curriculum will be consistent across all classrooms. Nevertheless, the Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District curriculum is evolving into a unified system of studies. Content similarities are found at several grades, and collaboration and sharing within and across grade levels is evident.

Several differences that impact students' school experience were identified, including but not limited to those listed below. These differences do not necessarily imply lower achievement by one group or another. MCAS achievement is generally strong across the District, with proficiency rates typically above the state average.

Curriculum, instruction, and assessment in the subject areas of reading and mathematics differ significantly. Key resources and the underlying research behind the programs and the related training also differ, especially with regard to instructional approaches and structures for learning. The tables below provide examples of the different publishers represented among the programs found.

	Woodland Elementary School	Granville Village School
ELA	Scott Foresman Reading (2005) with heavy emphasis on guided reading and leveled books in early grades	Harcourt School Publishers Storytown (2006 or earlier) with less emphasis on guided reading and leveled books in early grades
Mathematics	Everyday Math, McGraw-Hill (2007)	Houghton-Mifflin Math Expressions (2003 or 2010)

	Powder Mill Middle School	Granville Village School
ELA	McDougal Littell (2001)	America Reads (1985)
Mathematics	Math Connects 5 (2008) Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Connected Math II (2009)	Math Expressions 5 McDougal Littell Course 1, 2, 3 (2007)

Written curriculum guides have not been developed at Granville Village School, although monthly newsletters present detailed curriculum unit summaries by grade. Alignment to state standards has been left to the discretion of individual teachers, but there are several references to Common Core State Standards in the newsletters and faculty agendas, and the principal has provided each elementary teacher with a Common Core State Standards lesson package. Curriculum writing,

alignment with state standards, collaboration, and coordination among Woodland and Powder Mill teachers is active and formalized, perhaps because curriculum coordinator positions exist at both Woodland and Powder Mill, while no such position exists in Granville.

The scheduled use of computers for learning is limited to keyboarding for grade 4 at Granville Village School, though the principal has recently shifted the emphasis from keyboarding to ELA based writing. The computer lab is available for classes to conduct research if classroom teachers reserve the time and it is typically accessed two to three times per day for this purpose. Computer based learning is scheduled for students at Woodland, so the lab is tied up six out of seven periods per day. Laptop carts are available and are sometimes used by third and fourth grade classes. Technology integration is broadly applied to include curriculum applications, assessment, intervention, and information research at Powder Mill Middle School.

Tutoring centers, student assistance teams, and intervention systems provide extra support for learning at the Woodland and Powder Mill schools. Protocols for providing a tiered system of supports for academic and behavioral support and intervention are in place. Although these systems are not evident at the Granville Village School, the size of the school and the commitment of educators who know their students' needs well are features that support a personalized learning environment for students and result in strong overall achievement.

Assessment systems for universal screening and progress monitoring such as the Galileo Assessment Technology (ATI) system for English, mathematics, and science that are used at Woodland and Powder Mill are not used in Granville. Other assessment tools, such as the Benchmark Assessment System, are used consistently at Woodland. At Granville Village School, educators have expressed the need for more training in this instrument.

Powder Mill Middle School offers enrichment programs and after school activities such as New England Math League, Community Problem Solving, Legacy Art, Ski Club, and a robotics lab. These are scheduled either during school or after school with late bus transportation provided. With the exception of the Wright Flight program, these types of options are not available for students at the Granville Village School.

As in many area communities, kindergarten enrollment has been steadily declining across the District for the last several years. In Granville this has resulted in exceptionally small class sizes of ten to eighteen students per class. The class size in Woodland Elementary and Powder Mill Middle School trends in the low twenties.

The way time is used for learning differs. For example, students in kindergarten at Granville Village School have a 30-minute quiet time after lunch each day, while Woodland children rest for 15 minutes each day. Also in Granville, students in grades 5-8 have a one-hour writing block each day, but a consistent teacher does not teach it. For example, sixth graders have this block taught by a science teacher on Monday through Wednesday, ELA teacher on Thursday, and social studies teacher on Friday. The content of this experience for students seems to be left to the discretion of these individual teachers and is currently being reviewed by the new principal.

These and other distinctions imply that the core learning experience in school differs according to where one attends school. Although some variations may be necessary for practical reasons, core experiences should be aligned across the District to the extent possible.

As noted in *Conditions for School Effectiveness* (Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2012) it is important to have in place an aligned curriculum "...where the taught curricula are aligned to state curriculum frameworks and the MCAS performance level descriptions, and are also aligned vertically between grades and horizontally across classrooms at the same grade level and across sections of the same course." The following recommendations are built on the premise that such curriculum alignment activities will be a priority over the next few years and that all major curriculum decisions and purchases will be implemented district-wide.

Recommendation #1:

Include Granville Village School teachers on all district curriculum committees and in all aspects of curriculum renewal processes.

Interviews confirm that decision makers and district leaders acknowledge that curriculum mapping activities, professional development, and task forces such as the elementary math committee must include Granville Village School representatives. The following points should be considered in order to ensure maximum levels of authentic participation:

It may take time for representatives to find a voice at the newly expanded table since there are fewer of them, with the ratio of approximately 5 to 1 at any grade. Their views and contributions should be explicitly sought.

The data used to make curriculum decisions should include Granville Village School data, but consideration should be given to the fact that fewer students means each individual score carries a greater impact on average achievement scores.

Recommendation #2:

Publish parent curriculum guides for each grade.

Public dissemination of key learning expectations raises the level of commitment and adherence to curriculum implementation as stated. Alignment between written, taught, supported, tested, and learned curriculum is always a priority for schools, so finding ways to strengthen and guarantee this alignment is critical. The process of developing a concise two to four page curriculum guide for each grade across the disciplines may take a few years, but it would create a valuable product, and the process along the way would involve fruitful dialogue and the development of shared expectations. When organized by grade, it sends a clear message that students' learning experiences and expectations are consistent across the District, and do not rely on the school placement. Access to this information would be especially welcome from Granville parents, who may be anticipating changes now that regionalization is in place.

Recommendation #3:

Provide professional development in key past initiatives that have shaped curriculum implementation.

It is understood that as of 2012, the same professional development will be provided for all teachers in STGRSD. Including Granville Village School teachers in training for new or past initiatives, including curriculum mapping, Benchmark Assessment System, guided reading, leveled literacy intervention, running records, writing, response to intervention, and mathematics concept development, should be considered. There should be a process to determine whether new or

additional training should be provided to guarantee consistency and efficacy of curriculum implementation.

Recommendation #4:

Provide structures for regular, frequent district wide collaboration to improve implementation of the curriculum and instructional practice.

Opportunities for visiting and observing within the same grade or between sending and receiving schools would enrich the dialogue as instructional staff engages in regular discussions of student learning expectations both horizontally (with colleagues in their grades or subjects) and vertically (across grades). Systems and protocols to guide these collaborative discussions would ensure that the time provided is productive and focused upon strengthening practice and student success.

Recommendation #5:

Establish curriculum coordination processes at Granville Village School, similar to those at the Woodland and Powder Hill schools.

Curriculum coordination serves to leverage internal expertise and has the potential to ensure that professional development, data analysis, and sharing best practices is embedded in daily routines such as staff meetings or professional learning communities.

Recommendation #6:

Establish common assessments across grades or programs.

Common assessments will generate a focus on how students are learning across the district. They will also help to enrich the dialogue of professional learning communities and identify promising practices.

Summary: The STGRSD should be congratulated for developing the foundation necessary for a systemic and effective curriculum renewal process. This foundation was built by keeping student learning at the center of the decision-making process resulting in trust among the communities and stakeholders, an essential element in successful school systems. Combined with the recommendations set forth in this document, this set of actions should produce the powerful consistency and alignment necessary for excellent learning.

Budget and Finance: Practice and Procedures

The process of now having all three towns as part of one budget requires certain actions take place. This report discusses some of the action steps that have already taken place and will provide recommendations for future action steps.

Merging Budgets:

One of the initial actions that took place during the transition was to bring the Granville budget into the Southwick-Tolland budget so that all functions and object codes are listed as one regional budget document. The FY13 Budget brought in the Granville accounts, but the District does not use

the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) Chart of Accounts. This results in crossover charts being established for reporting to the DESE.

The Budget for FY13 has six major expenditure lines listed as Central Office, Woodland Elementary, Granville Village, Powder Mill Middle School, Southwick High School, and Special Education. When discussing the budget, the Business Administrator indicated that, for instance, technology is spread throughout the budget sections and you have to search each section to find the total technology amount. This makes it difficult to track when reviewing a specific expenditure item. There should be budget reports that bring all the sections together in one report and in an expedited manner. From this one report various reports and budget presentations can be provided if the chart of accounts is also developed properly.

The current chart of accounts has eight (8) budget account levels that can provide different ways to produce budget reports. The account structure should be reviewed so that each level is properly defined and understood. When discussing the account structure with the Business Administrator and District Accountant, questions arose whether or not the current structure can be changed to make reporting easier, while also improving the flow of information needed at various times in the year in different formats. This allows the Administration to keep better controls on the budget and helps them give clearer reports to the School Committee. The current budget reports are run by a Level 4 Program.

Further discussion with the Business Manager and District Accountant took place on the history of the current chart of accounts. Several years ago there was a change in the financial software. There was not enough time to create a chart of accounts that would follow the DESE format. The current accounts at that time were loaded into the new financial software. A suggestion to the District is to not spend time trying to fix the current chart of accounts but rather create a new chart of accounts that follows the DESE format.

Recommendation #1:

The timeline for restructuring the chart of accounts should be implemented for the FY15 Budget. The current chart would remain in effect for the FY14 Budget. This would allow the staff time to create a chart of accounts over a 12-month period working with the current vendor or to look for a new vendor who would better serve the District's financial needs. There will need to be extensive time spent on establishing the account levels. The accounts should include the following:

Type of Account

DESE Functions

DESE Object

Regular or Special Education

Location (School, Central Office, etc.)

Grant or Revolving codes

Program

Other levels to be determined

It is suggested that a key code be attached to each account so that only four or five digits are used to identify the account rather than having to input a lengthy account number.

This change requires a coordination of budget accounts, income accounts, general ledger and payroll. It is recommended that a timeline be established to assure all aspects from this change are noted in order to avoid any omissions.

The Budget as a Whole:

The current budget presentation is by the location and program level. The Expenditures section of the budget is shown below:

General Administration

Woodland School

Granville Village School

Powder Mill Middle

Southwick High School

Special Needs Education

This format does not show the budget of the region, but rather administration and schools as separate entities. The two separate school districts are now a single regional. This allows the

School Committee and Superintendent to make adjustments based on student needs throughout the fiscal year. The current format suggests separate entities remain; but as a result, the District loses budget management flexibilities enjoyed by other regionals. When asked why this format was utilized, the response was that this is the only format the School Committee has seen. It is suggested that the School Committee be presented with different formats as they prepare and analyze the budget. In other regionals, budget shortfalls can be covered by under spending in other accounts throughout the total budget. Currently, this practice is not afforded to the District.

Recommendation #2:

The District should consider a different budget format that would demonstrate that it is a single regional. A function and object budget format could be established for final approval and presentation to the public. For the School Committee's convenience, a location budget by program could be provided during the budget process.

Budget Checklist:

A review of the FY13 finances should take place to make guarantee all aspects of the Granville have been addressed and accounted for:

Income

Budget

Assessment to Towns

Grants

Revolving Funds

School Activity Accounts

Food Service

Transportation

Capital Plan

It is important during FY13 that the Business Administrator check all the areas noted above monthly and report concerns to the Superintendent and subsequently to the School Committee. In a transition year, it is not unusual to discover items that were not taken into consideration during the planning process.

Recommendation #3

When developing the FY14 Budget, all District spending should be included. This is called a “spending budget,” which includes personnel, supplies/textbooks, insurance, building operations, special education, transportation, etc. Once this is done, the Business Administrator can assign costs to Grants, Circuit Breaker, School Choice, Revolving Accounts, Capital, Food Service, and the Appropriation budget.

The Business Administrator should check with Granville to make sure they removed all costs related to the operation of the Granville School. It appears that this was done for FY13, but a confirmation would assure that operational costs have been included in the Regional Budget and not the local budget.

The Assessment is done according to the statutory method. This needs to be carefully calculated each year. The decision that has to be made each year is what the District uses for Chapter 70 and the Required Contributions by the Towns. The Governor provides numbers in January through the annual “Cherry Sheet” followed by the House Budget in March and then the Senate Budget in April. Depending on the due date for budgets, the District will need to decide and then inform the towns what set of numbers they used. The final estimation is for Regional Transportation. A percentage estimate is provided to districts based on the amount the State has budgeted. Estimates are updated periodically throughout the State’s budget process.

Function and Object budgets:

Currently the Administration presents a budget to the School Committee by program and location. What are the statutory legal lines of the Budget? The School Committee certifies a total budget for the purposes of the assessment to the member towns. However, there are statutory legal lines within the budget that are established by the School Committee. What are those legal lines for the District?

Recommendation #4:

We suggest that a budget report designed by function and object be developed. This would provide the Administration and School Committee with a format that is a more efficient way to determine the status of the budget. It would show where there are expenditure issues that need adjustment and correction. From this report, Administration could recommend to the School Committee possible legal line transfers.

Policies and practices should be proposed that allow for the school administration to make changes within identified accounts. Such practices must meet statutory requirements. The law states that the School Committee is the only one that can transfer between (statutory) legal lines. In many cases, however, the Superintendent and Business Manager have been given authority to transfer within the specific identified lines, while reporting such action to the School Committee. An example would be the 2000 series (instructional series) of budget accounts according to the DESE

chart of accounts. Within these lines, the Superintendent could transfer funds. However, transfers between the 2000 accounts and the 4000 accounts (Operations and Maintenance), for example, would require School Committee action.

Payroll:

The current payroll software should be reviewed and evaluated. The District has been using the same software for many years.

Recommendation # 5:

We recommend that the Administration initiate a meeting in the near future with the current software vendor. Questions regarding updates should be addressed at the meeting. Updates should then be coordinated so they coincide with other changes that we have recommended. For example, the coding system will change if there is a new account structure. The Administration will need to confer with their software vendor to determine what can be updated electronically and what has to be done manually.

A timeline needs to be established so that all changes are ready at a specific time that coordinates with a new fiscal year.

Monitoring practices:

There are several budget areas that need to be constantly tracked and monitored:

Instructional Salaries

Special Education

Health Insurance

Transportation

Food Service

The budget for these items is often estimated and developed up to six months before the fiscal year begins. Many changes occur before and during the budget year that are different from previous assumptions. This creates the need to make changes and highlights the necessity for flexibility.

Recommendation #6:

The following recommendations serve as a check-list to the District as accepted budget practices and procedures. Many of the recommendations already occur, but it is important to highlight those that are often overlooked during a transition period. These can also serve as a checklist to help those responsible for the District's budget.

Instructional salaries:

It is suggested that the District maintain its manual system for establishing instructional salaries. An Excel spreadsheet is kept on staff and changes are entered as personnel change. There will always be the need for crosschecks between the spreadsheet, the pay account detail, and the correct charging of account on a monthly basis. This will alert the Administration to concerns or problems that might arise.

Special Education:

The Special Education Office should have a sheet on each student with an IEP indicating associated costs. This will assist the Business Manager in preparing the budget.

The Special Education Office should also have a sheet on each student with an outside placement outlining the costs for the placement, transportation, OT, PT, Speech, and any other associated costs. Again, this should be reviewed on a monthly basis.

Special Education transportation requirements should also be studied carefully each year. This requires monitoring with outside agencies such as the Lower Pioneer Valley Educational

Collaborative and with other districts/towns in order to reduce costs by combining routes when possible.

Health Insurance:

There should be a system for tracking health insurance for active and retired employees.

The District should keep its own master list on who subscribes to health insurance. The master list should include the insurance company the employee has chosen, family or individual coverage. The list should include the premium share costs for the employee and the District.

A list that details payroll deductions should also be developed.

A third list should illustrate the insurance companies and the policies and level of benefits that the employee has selected.

Once a month, a system of cross checks should be developed between these lists. This system will help monitor any changes to ensure that the District is not over paying the insurance company.

Transportation:

Because the District operates its own buses, a system that accurately monitors maintenance costs should be developed.

A master plan for bus replacement should be a major component of the budget process.

The District should conduct cost studies on a regular basis comparing bus ownership versus contracting for their transportation services.

Food service:

The Food Service Director and Business Administrator should review the financial status of the Food Service Operations on a monthly basis. The funds for the Food Service are held in a revolving account. There should be two types of reports - one detailing revenues and the other expenditures.

The costs for health insurance for Food Service personnel should be reviewed to determine if the costs should be derived from the general budget or the Food Service account.

District Treasurer:

The District Treasurer should provide the District with a cash flow statement every month. It is important that the Business Administrator and the Treasurer confer on the status of funds so that expenditures and income will be coordinated. There also needs to be a back-up position established for the Treasurer's position

Recommendation #7:

We recommend that the District identify someone to be the District's Assistant Treasurer. This individual should be trained in the event that the Treasurer is not available and should be familiar with the functions of the Treasurer's position.

There also should be back-up training for staff members to cover payroll functions, accounting and payment of invoices, and the preparation of the monthly warrant.

District Technology

Prior to the Region becoming fully operational in July 2012, the Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds was responsible for the District's technology. The District realized there was need for one person to be responsible for this important department. As a result, the District hired a Technology Director, and this report will discuss some of the action steps taken since then and will also provide recommendations for future actions steps.

One of the first steps taken by the new Technology Director was to collect the following data:

Hardware Inventory

Age and Condition of Hardware

Internet Status

Software Inventory

This data will be very important as the Director reviews the Regional School District Technology Plan.

In April 2009, the District wrote a Technology Plan for 2009-2014. There were 26 members from the different stakeholder groups involved in writing this plan. In discussion with the Technology Director, it was determined that the Plan needs to be substantially updated or a completely new plan needs to be written. The fast pace of change in technology and new educational demands, as well as planning for the new building project, make this task a crucial one.

Recommendation #1:

As stated above, the previous group had 26 members. Trying to schedule a meeting of such a large group is difficult. After discussion with the Technology Director, a new and different planning structure should be considered.

When looking at technology in a school district, there are three areas that need to be addressed:

1. Teacher technology
2. Classroom/Student technology
3. Administrative technology

We recommend establishing the following two committees:

Educator Technology Committee

Director of Technology

Curriculum Director

Building Principals

High Teachers (2)

Middle School Teachers (2)

Woodland Teachers (2)

Granville Teachers (2)

Administrative Technology Committee

Director of Technology

Business Manager

District Accountant

Payroll Clerk

EPIMS and SIMS Reporter

Purchasing Clerk

Treasurer

Transportation Clerk

The Educator Technology Committee would consist of those who use technology in the classroom with students. The Administrative Technology Committee members are those who use technology in their work every day. The formation of these committees is a recommendation and the Technology Director would need to discuss the membership of each committee with the Superintendent. It is important to have the stakeholders involved in technology planning because they are the end users and would be involved in implementing the Plan. They need to buy into a plan so implementation of the plan will be accepted and take place more smoothly. Communication between these two committees is essential and we would recommend at least one annual joint meeting to review the status of the Technology Plan and to review the goals for the current school year.

The Educator Technology Committee would focus on the following questions:

What are the District's needs?

What are you doing now and is it working?

What do you want to be able to accomplish in your classrooms with your students?

What are the software and hardware needs of classroom teachers?

What does current research tell us about instructional technology?

The Administrative Technology Committee would consist of those who use technology in their everyday work. Their focus would be:

What are the software/hardware needs of the Central Office to maintain and support our tasks?

What are the new mandates for reporting from DESE and are we equipped to handle the mandates?

What training is required to keep personnel up to date?

Recommendation #2:

There needs to be a group within the District whose function it is to coordinate technology. Our recommendation is to establish a Technology Oversight Committee with the following membership:

Technology Oversight Committee

Superintendent of Schools

Technology Director

Business Administrator

School Committee Representative(s)

Building Principal Representative

This group would receive input from both the Educator Technology Committee and the Administrative Technology Committee and would make decisions on implementing the Technology Plan. They would know what, where, and how technology is being used in the District. They would also be responsible for reviewing budget requests and for determining the final requests for

funding for the entire program. The Technology Director would serve as the Chair for the Educator Technology Committee and the Administrative Technology Committee. The Technology Director would be responsible for communication between the two committees and would present reports to the Superintendent of Schools. The Superintendent of Schools would chair the Oversight Committee.

Recommendation #3:

It is recommended that a District Technology Planning Committee be formed to review/revise/write the District Technology Plan.

District Technology Planning Committee

Technology Director

Technology Technicians

Business Administrator

Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds

Educator Technology Committee Representative(s)

Administrative Technology Committee Representative(s)

Superintendent of Schools

School Committee Representative(s)

Recommendation # 4:

The responsibility of implementing the Technology Plan would fall to the Technology Director who should work in conjunction with the Superintendent of Schools. There should be regularly scheduled meetings with all of the technology committees to keep them informed and to receive feedback.

Recommendations #5:

The District should consider a policy that all technology purchases have to be reviewed and approved by the Director of Technology before the Purchase Order goes to the Business Manager. In effect, the District should centralize all its technology purchases. This is important because the Technology Department needs to know if current hardware can support new software and make sure new hardware will work in the current technology environment. In addition, the Technology Director can make sure the District is getting appropriate pricing discounts. These purchases should not be site based.

From the work of the technology committees, a multi-year capital budget should be prepared and presented to the Technology Oversight Committee. Once there is agreement, then it should be shared with the Educator Technology Committee and Administrative Technology Committee. Finally, it should be presented to the School Committee as part of the District Budget.

Because there will be new construction as a result of the building project, input from these technology committees and the Technology Director is crucial. Mistakes are often made with regard to technology that is part of a building project and personnel are left with server rooms located in wrong places, inaccurate and/or inefficient wiring/wireless systems, and outdated hardware. When the projects are completed, it is too late or too expensive to make changes. Building projects present unique opportunities to make meaningful technology decisions. Therefore, no technology decisions should be made without consulting the Technology Director and the technology committees.

Technology Summary

The STGRSD has an opportunity to be on the cutting edge of technology. They established a new position for technology, and the Technology Director has the experience and knowledge to move the District's technology forward. The current Technology Plan should be substantially revised, or rewritten, using the recommended committee structure. It is essential that all stakeholders in the District move forward together with technology and not go it alone. There must be coordination among all aspects of the organization for the technology. The timing of this new district and the building project make this a significant opportunity for positive change.

Suggested Areas for a Technology Audit

Hardware inventory

Age and condition hardware

Internet status

Software inventory

State required reporting:

SIMS

EPIMS

Grants

List of other state reports requiring Internet

Existing Technology Plans

Student technology

Administrative technology

Technology Budget for FY2013

Technology impact of the building project

Long-range Technology Plan

Building and Grounds Operations

As part of this report, the Transition Study Team was asked to meet with the Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds to review the operations of the District as it pertains to its buildings and grounds. As requested, we met with the Supervisor on three occasions and toured one of the schools.

Buildings

During the first meeting, the status of bringing the Granville Building into the Region was discussed. The Supervisor indicated that over the summer maintenance was performed on univents, motors, and heating systems, plus the normal summer cleaning projects were done.

When analyzing the Building Operations, data needs to be compiled for each building. The data should include:

Year of Construction

Additions

Square Foot of the Building

Number of Classrooms

Layout of the Building

Heating Plant Operation

Type of Heating System

Condition of the Roof

The Supervisor indicated that the above data was available would be compiled. Considering that there will be a building project in the future, it is important to have this baseline data.

Recommendation #1:

It is suggested that data be collected on each building, especially the Granville School. A notebook for each building should be assembled. The MSBA surveys of all buildings would provide helpful data and can be obtained from MSBA. These notebooks would serve as a resource for personnel to use when dealing with the operations of the buildings. If there are changes in personnel, the notebooks could serve as an operational manual.

Custodial Staffing:

The Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds provided the Transition Study Team with the following information concerning custodial staffing:

Staff

1 Supervisor

1 Maintenance - Plumber

1 Groundskeeper

1 Maintenance and Grounds

High School - Estimated 100,000 square feet

1 Day Custodian

2 Night Custodians

1 PT Night Custodian (3.5 hours)

Middle School - Estimated 100,000 square feet

1 Day Custodian

1 Night Custodian

2 PT Custodians (5 hours and 4 hours)

Woodland Elementary - Estimated 67,000 square feet

1 Day Custodian

1 Night Custodian

1 PT Custodian (5 hours)

Granville Elementary -

1 Day Custodian

1 Night Custodian

Recommendation # 2:

Using the building layouts, the Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds should review the staffing levels and what areas current personnel are responsible for cleaning. There were concerns expressed that the custodial staffing levels have been reduced in recent years, which has caused problems in keeping up with the cleaning. With the new building project on the horizon, the Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds can make justifiable requests.

There are many facilities management guides that the District could use as a resource, including the *Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities* and the *APPA Custodial Operation Self-Analysis Program*.

Attached to this report are two Custodial and Grounds Operational Review Studies of school districts that give the District some information on what to look for when evaluating their current custodial and grounds operations.

Grounds:

The Buildings and Grounds staff maintains all the school grounds. A description of the staff for maintaining grounds needs to be established, particularly in order to answer questions such as how will staff interact with Granville, who will be responsible for which tasks, and does the District need to have full-time grounds staff or are there some items that could be contracted out because they are only seasonal?

Recommendation #3:

A study of the seasonal operations for the Grounds Operations should be considered. Staffing in the summer and the varied needs of each building should be reviewed, particularly the Granville Village School.

Buildings and Grounds Leadership:

Currently there is a Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds. The District should conduct a review of the organizational structure to consider, among other things, what the role of principals in the operations of buildings and grounds should be and should principals supervise the custodians or is that the responsibility of the Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds?

There is currently no night supervisor and there are coverage problems when a custodian calls in sick, especially for the evening shifts.

Recommendation # 4:

The District needs to set up a clear chain of command when it comes to hiring, evaluating, supervising, and disciplining personnel in the Buildings and Grounds Department. Currently there is an informal system that works, but a more formal chart is highly recommended.

In our experience, principals need to spend their time with students, teachers and parents. To assist them, the Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds could handle the building operations. Principals do all the hiring of personnel in their building, but the Supervisor could do the initial screenings and bring their final candidate to the Principal for hiring approval.

Recommendation # 5:

The District should consider creating a night supervisor position, who would tour the buildings in the evening to check on the cleaning, as well as rental of building facilities. This person could also do some cleaning when a custodian calls in sick. When there are snow issues at night, this position would be available to coordinate the snow removal process. Currently there is no back up for the Supervisor of Building and Grounds, so if he is out sick or takes vacation, there is no one officially responsible for taking care of the Buildings and Grounds operations. The night supervisor could be available to temporarily assume the Supervisor's duties in his absence.

Work Order System:

There was previously a Work Order System in place in the District; however its use was recently stopped and it is no longer operational on the District's computer system. This leaves a void in assuring that tasks are tracked and completed in a timely manner.

Recommendation # 6:

The District should consider reinstituting a computerized Work Order System. The current Supervisor was previously in charge of technology and thus has a good working knowledge on how a system would operate. A Work Order System should respond to the concerns listed above.

Buildings and Grounds Summary:

When touring the Power Mill Middle School, it is obvious that the Buildings and Grounds Department has worked hard to maintain the facility. With the District now responsible for Granville and the building project getting underway, this is an opportunity to consider the recommendations from this report. There is a high degree of dedication by the staff noted throughout discussions with the Supervisor of Building and Grounds, but there is a need to instill clarity and efficiency with regard to practice.

Central Office Staffing

As a component of the transition study, the Consultants were asked to review the current staffing at the Central Office. Since many of the tasks involving Granville will now be combined with other regional tasks, Dr. Barry wanted to determine if there were any changes necessary to increase effectiveness, such as reassign tasks or reduce staffing. The review included a study of current job descriptions, meeting with the staff to determine current job tasks and perspectives about the general operation of the Central Office, and a review of specific tasks required of the Central Office as impacted by new state statutes and/or mandates. The following is a list of observations and recommendations for review by the Regional School Committee and Superintendent with regard to this transition issue.

General Comments:

The office staff is highly professional. They represent the District well and maintain a professional but informal office atmosphere.

The staff has been extremely helpful to the Transition Study Team. We were made to feel very welcome.

The leadership styles of the Superintendent, Business Manager, and Curriculum Coordinator are reflected in the pleasant atmosphere in the Central Office.

Staff is attentive to their tasks and was always engaged in work completion during our visits.

The set up/design for the Central Office does not provide privacy for employees, and there is a perception the office space is too congested.

Job tasks and job descriptions have changed significantly since the last update of job descriptions.

Job titles do not necessarily match the tasks people currently perform.

There is a degree of duplication that exists within the current job tasks.

The Superintendent's Secretary does a broad variety of job tasks.

The new building project demands that one secretary be assigned to the project to assist the Business Manager and Superintendent with the myriad of paper work that will be created during the next 36 to 48 months.

The former Granville (C.O.) secretary's time needs to be redirected toward other functions of the District.

The Curriculum Director and Business Manager workloads would be facilitated if each had a secretary assigned to assist them with clerical tasks associated with their jobs.

A secretary could also facilitate the work performed by the Technology Director.

The current workload as impacted by state requirements and the implementation of the building project would indicate that the Central Office is not over staffed.

There is a concern that many changes in reports necessary to meet state mandates have brought an increase in required software. At present, the operation of the software is done by a limited number of staff. Back-up help, in case of illness for example, may be non-existent.

Recommendations: #1-#6

Complete a review and update of all job descriptions including defining tasks and renaming job titles to ensure efficiency and effectiveness.

Develop a back-up system, including new training for the office staff, for all required reporting software systems.

Assign a specific clerical staff member to each District Administrator.

Review/study the facility designs of the office with consideration to upgrading office furniture with a modular design to improve privacy, reduce distractions and improve efficiency.

Assign a clerical staff person to the building project. (Requirements include record keeping, correspondence, file management, committee minutes, state reporting, etc. It is essential that accurate and complete files be kept throughout the project.)

Assign some of the multiple tasks of the Superintendent's secretary to other clerical staff. In general, a Superintendent's secretary has two major focuses of attention: the work of the Superintendent and the work of the School Committee. As the Superintendent takes on new challenges or mandates, the workload of the secretary increases as well. Such has been the case with Mrs. Lynch. In the past two years, for example, her workload has dramatically increased as a result of the regional expansion, the building project, the new state mandates for reporting systems, and most recently the new teacher evaluation reform project. A review of her multiple tasks is in order. Small school districts usually demand that people do multiple tasks, but we believe there is a need to review the current situation.

Renaming the New Junior-Senior High School

With the inclusion of the Granville School District in for school year 2012- 2013, the Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District may wish to review the idea of a name change for the District and the new Junior-Senior High School. A review of current regional districts throughout the Commonwealth indicates that multiple town regional school districts have traditionally created a new district name that does not reflect the names of the municipalities, while two-town districts have tended to use the municipal names for both the district and the high school. Commonly, the district names have a geographical or historical name. Currently the District names the three communities in its title: Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District. The high school name has remained the Southwick- Tolland High School, although students from Granville (a tuition town) have attended the school since its inception. Since the high school grade configuration will change as a result of the new building project, the question has arisen as to whether or not a name

change for the District and/or the new Junior-Senior High School should change. This period of transition represents an opportune time to make a change if it is desired. The Transition Planning Team has been asked to review the issue of name changing and to present any concerns involved with a name change and the type of process the District might employ in making a change.

In summary, the District needs to decide on one of the following options:

Keep the name of the District identifying the three towns

Keep the traditional name of the high school: Southwick Junior-Senior High School (slight modification by adding the word Junior)

Keep the name of the district, but change the name of the new junior-senior high school

Change the name of the district and the new junior-senior high school.

While we withhold any recommendations, clearly if a district name change were to occur, now would be the time to conduct a serious discussion at the School Committee level and with the three communities. If the district name were to change, public hearings and input gathered from a variety of stakeholders is recommended. A name change would also require approval at town meetings, since the new name would create a change in the official/legal entity that would represent the three towns. Approval by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Commissioner of Education would also be part of the process.

There would be no timeline for submission to the Department or for the name changing process. The District could develop its own schedule and move forward when it has reached an agreement. If the District were to (re) name the new Junior-Senior High School, the process would only require a vote at the School Committee level. We recommend that full and open discussions occur so that the different stakeholders of the education community and the three communities could be heard.

We have included a listing of all the regional school districts in the Commonwealth. We did not include any vocational districts since few, if any; maintain the name of the communities involved. The list is separated into districts that have two member communities and those that have more members towns. A majority of two-member districts have named their high school after the "district" although there are several exceptions. In the most immediate vicinity, the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District's high school is Minnechaug Regional High School and Dudley-Charlton's is named Shepard Hill. There are two districts with only two members that have kept the name of the high school as its original name. In both cases, the high school was in existence

prior to regionalization, therefore the name stayed as is - Amherst-Pelham's high school is Amherst High school and Athol-Royalston's high school remained Athol High School.

For purposes of discussion, we offer the following:

The name of the district would stay as is with the three towns named. This provides an historical perspective to the district and indicates that each town maintains its own pride in membership. If the district was new, in terms of an initial partnership, then it would be appropriate to look for a new name, as have most of the other multiple town districts.

The name of the new Junior-Senior High School remain as Southwick. This provides some consistency and maintains the historical nature of the school. It does not, however, provide a level of ownership to the other communities, albeit this was not an issue with Tolland for many years.

The name of the new Junior-Senior High School is new. The name would reflect either a geographical site or historical event/reference that is significant to the area (Southwick, Tolland and Granville). The new name begins a new chapter for each town and characterizes the new partnership. The current school mascot and school colors (green and yellow) could remain the same.

We have included some potential names to discuss:

Cobble Mountain Regional Junior-Senior High School

Provin Mountain Regional Junior-Senior High School

Congamond Lakes Regional Junior-Senior High School

Congamond Valley Regional Junior-Senior High School

Connecticut Valley Regional Junior-Senior High School

Metacomet Ridge Regional Junior-Senior High School

Metacomet Hills Regional Junior-Senior High School

Metacomet Trail Regional Junior-Senior High School

Trap Rock Ridge Regional Junior-Senior High School

Powder Mill Regional Junior-Senior High School

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High School Name	District Name (Two Towns)
Acton-Boxborough Regional	Acton-Boxborough
Hoosac Valley Regional	Adams Cheshire
Amherst Regional	Amherst-Pelham
Oakmont Regional	Ashburnham-Westminister
Athol Regional	Athol-Royalston
Ayer-Shirley Regional	Ayer-Shirley
Tahonto Regional	Berlin-Boylston
Blackstone-Millville Regional	Blackstone-Millville
Bridgewater –Raynham Regional	Bridgewater -Raynham
Concord-Carlisle Regional	Concord-Carlisle
Dennis-Yarmouth Regional	Dennis-Yarmouth
Dighton-Rehoboth Regional	Dighton-Rehoboth
Dover-Sherborn Regional	Dover-Sherborn
Shepard Hill Regional	Dudley-Charlton
Freetown-Lakeville Regional	Freetown-Lakeville
Turners Falls Regional	Gill-Montague
Groton-Dunstable Regional	Groton-Dunstable
Hamilton-Wenham Regional	Hamilton-Wenham
Minnechaug Regional	Hampden-Wilbraham
Lincoln-Sudbury Regional	Lincoln-Sudbury
Manchester-Essex Regional	Manchester-Essex
Nipmuc Regional	Mendon-Upton
Algonquin Regional	Northborough-Southborough
Somerset-Berkley Regional	Somerset-Berkley

David Prouty Regional	Spencer-East Brookfield
Whitman-Hansen Regional	Whitman-Hansen
District keeps name of one town for high school. District creates different name for high school	

High School Name	District Name (2 or Multiple towns)
Monument Mountain Regional	Berkshire Hill Regional
Wahconah Regional	Central Berkshire Regional
Frontier Regional	Frontier Regional
Gateway Regional	Gateway Regional
Hampshire Regional	Hampshire Regional
King Philip Regional	King Philip Regional
Martha's Vineyard Regional	Martha's Vineyard Regional
Masconomet Regional	Masconomet Regional
Mohawk Trail Regional	Mohawk Trail Regional
Mt. Greylock Regional	Mt. Greylock Regional
Narragansett Regional	Narragansett Regional
Nashoba Regional	Nashoba Regional
Nauset Regional	Nauset Regional
North Middlesex Regional	North Middlesex Regional
Old Colony Regional	Old Colony Regional
Old Rochester Regional	Old Rochester Regional
Pentucket Regional	Pentucket Regional
Pioneer Valley Regional	Pioneer Valley Regional

Quabbin Regional	Quabbin Regional
Quaboag Regional	Quaboag Regional
Ralph Mahar Regional	Maher Regional
Silver Lake Regional	Silver Lake Regional
Mt. Everett Regional	Southern Berkshire Regional
Tantasqua Regional	Tantasqua Regional
Triton Regional	Triton Regional
Wachusett Regional	Wachusett Regional
Town creates name for district and different name for high school.	
Towns create name for district and high school.	

SUMMARY:

The recommendations and suggestions in this report are meant to be a guide for the District's administration. We decided not to prioritize the list since it will be up to the School Committee and administration to do so, based on their discussions of a feasible timeline, implementation costs, and a communications plan. We recognize that each recommendation will have a unique timeline. While some can be implemented easily and quickly, others will require thoughtful discussion and in some cases, School Committee approval. We stand ready to assist the District as requested. Drs. Gagliarducci and Hemman have worked with the District for the past two years and have developed a deep interest in ensuring the recommendations are undertaken in order to create a meaningful impact on the District's future. We realize that the expansion of a district takes time, especially in the area of curriculum coordination and articulation. We are confident that the District's staff is capable and competent to achieve their goals. In our opinion the District is headed in the right direction and its future looks bright.

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Request for Proposal:

Consulting Services for Regionalization of Three Town District

Background

In the fall of 2011 town meeting voters in the Massachusetts towns of Southwick, Tolland, and Granville approved a proposal to adopt a new agreement for the operation of a three-town regional school district. The addition of Granville to the existing Southwick-Tolland Regional School District created the Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District. The new district comes into existence July 1, 2012 and is the culmination of years of study and effort by interested parties in all three communities, the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, school administrators, District and town officials, and independent consultants. The focus now is to transition the Granville Village School and its employees and students into a regional school district after decades of operation by the Town of Granville Public School District. The District has secured funding through a Community Innovation Grant to cover certain costs associated with the startup of the expanded regional school district.

Consulting Services

The Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District desires to engage a paid consultant to assist the District's administration with the integration of the Granville Public School District into the new Regional District. Anticipated consulting services would likely include the following:

Assistance with collective bargaining

Review of central administration staffing and procedures and identification of opportunities to maximize operational efficiencies

Review policies of both current districts and make recommendations for integrating same

Assist with the inclusion of a fourth school relative to educational technology

Review curriculum and assist district in their efforts to standardize same

Assist with the coordination and consolidation of transportation services

Timeline

The timeline for providing these services would be to commence immediately with completion of all work by January 2013.

Proposals - Qualifications

Interested persons should summarize their qualifications with respect to public education in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, municipal and/or regional school district administration experience, school finance experience and/or other qualifications that would enhance their role as a consultant to a regional school district.

Proposals - Price

It is the expectation that the consulting fees for the above-described services will not exceed \$15,000. Proposals should state whether the consultant can adhere to this amount or not. Separate price proposals should be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "Price Proposal – RFP #286".

Additional Information

Interested persons who have questions or would like additional information regarding the District, the regional agreement, or this RFP may contact the Superintendent of Schools, John D. Barry, Ed.D. or the School Business Manager, Stephen J. Presnal, at 413-569-5391.

Due Date

Proposals must be received at the Superintendent of Schools Office, 86 Powder Mill Road, Southwick, MA 01077 no later than 2:00 PM, Friday, June 29, 2012. Qualifications proposals must be clearly marked "Qualifications Proposal – RFP #286". Price proposals must be submitted along with the qualifications proposals in a separate sealed envelope clearly marked "Price Proposal – RFP #286".

Response to Proposal:

June 25, 2012

John D. Barry, Ed.D

Superintendent of Schools

Southwick-Tolland-Granville

Regional School District

Southwick, MA 01077

Dear Dr. Barry,

I am pleased to submit this proposal for consultant services for the newly formed Southwick-Tolland-Granville Regional School District. I am very familiar with the district having had the privilege to work with the planning team during preparation for the votes to form an expanded regional school district.

My attached resume will indicate that I have continued to expand my consultant experiences not only in Massachusetts, but in Connecticut as well. I have been actively working with regional school districts, most recently helping to form a new consulting group within the Massachusetts Association of Regional Schools called the MARS Consultant Group (MCG). Currently I am part of a team working with the public schools of Northborough and Southborough developing a new strategic plan.

I believe that my years of experience in regional school districts as a principal, assistant superintendent, superintendent and now as a consultant, make me uniquely qualified for the consulting services you seek. I am available to begin work this summer and, as stated in your RFP, I feel confident that the work can be completed by January 2013.

The following details are in response to RFP #286:

Consulting Services:

Assistance with collective bargaining:

I have had ample opportunities to be involved with collective bargaining. I have helped settle contracts in both Massachusetts and Connecticut. During these negotiation periods, I took an active role in moving the discussions forward; and as a result, extended arbitration situations were avoided.

Review of central administration staffing and procedures and identification of opportunities to maximize operational efficiencies:

My experiences in developing staffing efficiencies for both Central Office and instructional staff have been extensive. I have restructured schools, changed administrative jobs and job descriptions, and transferred personnel in order to best meet the needs of the district.

Review policies of both current districts and make recommendations for integrating same:

During my twenty-two year career as a superintendent, I have developed new policies and recommended changes that helped districts stay current and avoid potential legal problems.

Assist with the inclusion of a fourth school relative to educational technology:

Technology and its impact on instruction and learning has always been an interest of mine. Developing a proposal and implementing plans that would help create a technology-rich school would provide me with exciting opportunities to test some of my theories about how instruction can change what happens in classrooms. For example, I believe that One-to-One computing and BYOD programs have the potential to bring about real educational reform.

Review curriculum and assist district in their efforts to standardize same:

I believe that a regional school district must have a curriculum that is systemic, consistent, and articulated throughout each school. Regional school districts are often comprised of schools within a large geographic area; however, each school prepares its students for a single district high school. Without a curriculum that meets the three characteristics stated, the achievement potential of each student will never be maximized.

Assist with the coordination and consolidation of transportation services:

As a retired regional school superintendent, I am familiar with transportation issues that affect regional schools and the towns they serve.

Timeline:

I am comfortable with the timeline presented in the RFP.

Proposal-Qualifications:

The attached resume clearly outlines my career and experiences. Since retiring from the Hampden-Wilbraham Regional School District, I have remained active in the profession both in terms of consulting on numerous and varied projects and staying active as a part-time superintendent in a small district located in the southeast corner of Connecticut.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my credentials for your consideration. If you need to reach me for any reason, please e-mail me at ridgetopview@charter.net or call my cell phone at 413-218-5692.

Sincerely,

Paul C. Gagliarducci Ed.D