Greenfield Public Schools
2014-2015
Superintendent's
Report of Entry Findings

Respectfully Presented to
Greenfield School Committee
April, 2015
**Introduction & Purpose Statement**

The Superintendent’s Report of Entry Findings is presented in alignment with the Superintendent’s Entry Plan, released in September, 2014. In Phase I, Conversation & Document Review, coupled with classroom observation, informed the entry process. The goal of Phase II was as follows:

"After collecting data through conversations, document and policy review, and direct observation at the schools, analysis of these data sources will take place from Winter to Spring 2015. Here, the data will be analyzed for trends, patterns, and themes, to better understand individual pieces of information within the context of the district’s and community’s needs, core values, and strengths."

In Phase III, Preliminary Goals will be articulated based on the emerging themes of the Superintendent’s Report of Findings.


**Strategic Planning Process**

The Superintendent’s Report of Entry Findings was presented to the Greenfield School Committee as a working draft. The purpose of a working draft is to signify that the process is ongoing; that themes will continue to emerge from the data; and that the district’s strategic mission and objectives will continue to evolve in response to a cycle of continuous improvement, while building on the key findings identified in this document. Stakeholders are encouraged to maintain involvement as the Superintendent and School Committee use initial Entry Findings to shape the preliminary goals, which will themselves serve as the basis for the district’s Strategic Plan. Please share any feedback on emerging themes by emailing supergps@gpsk12.org. (Please see Diagram)

This process is undertaken with the support and oversight of the New Superintendent’s Induction Program, co-sponsored by Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE) and Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS), with the full support of the Greenfield School Committee and active engagement of the Superintendent, and fully vetted through the district leadership team.

**Supporting Documents**

In addition to the summary of Emerging Themes posted online, supporting documents are available for review in the Superintendent’s Office.
Appendix

Students & Instruction

- Greenfield Public Schools Foundation Enrollment – Historical
- Greenfield Public Schools District Review (School Committee Overview)
- District Review Report
- School Multi-Test Frequency Distribution Report

Resource Management

- Greenfield Public Schools – History of the School Buildings of Greenfield, MA
- Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (FY16 Chapter 70 Summary)
- Human Resources & Business Management Internal Review
- Chapter 70 and Net School Spending Greenfield School District FY15 Final Numbers

Stakeholder Feedback

- Meet & Greet Federal Street School
- Meet & Greet Four Corners
- Meet & Greet Newton
- Meet & Greet Greenfield Middle School & MSA
- Meet & Greet Greenfield High School
- Family & Community Communications Survey
- Grade Configuration Study – Superintendent’s Executive Summary

Miscellaneous

- Technology Plans
Emerging Theme 1: Exceptional Educators are Key to the Success of our Students

1. Innovative and dedicated educators have made Greenfield a place of warmth and character, and as a result schools are good places for students to learn.

Data Sources: Site Visits; DESE Review; MCAS Scores; Interviews with Principals; Interviews with Teachers; Interviews with Parents.

2. Principals have had flexibility to make curricular decisions; such site-based decision making highlights the necessary role of the principal as Instructional Leader under MA Ed Reform, and Greenfield is a Level 2 district. However, there exists a need for aligned curriculum that supports students consistent academic progression from K-12.
Data Sources: MCAS Scores; Site visits; School Improvement Plans; Parent, teacher, and administrator interviews; review of Organizational Structure.

3. Greenfield does not have a Comprehensive Professional Development Program that outlines the district goals for educators’ professional development, including how school-specific professional development accomplishes over-arching goals and how embedded opportunities, such as Faculty Meetings and Collaboration time, relate to the school’s professional development goals as outlined in the School Improvement Plans.

Data Sources: School Improvement Plan Reviews; review of Professional Development offerings; Review of feedback on Professional Development Offerings; Interviews with Principals and teachers; Professional Development calendar; DESE Review.

4. At the start of the 2014-2015 school year, Greenfield was at the inception of the MA Educator Evaluator model. Implementation of the Educator Evaluation system, initiated in 2014-2015 school year under the joint labor-management Educator Evaluation Implementation Team, presents many opportunities for feedback to educators, yet also brings challenges as with the implementation of any new system, among them demands upon the time of evaluators and the development and implementation of “District Determined Measures”. Rich and ongoing opportunities for professional development, as well as strong labor-management dialogue and collaboration, are essential for evaluators and educators are essential to the long-term success of this model.

Data Sources: Educator Evaluation Team agendas & minutes; Site visits; Greenfield Educator Evaluation document / Joint agreement with Greenfield Education Association; interviews with teachers and administrators; DESE Review.

5. Greenfield has experienced some turnover of teaching staff, particularly at the Middle School level, such that a significant percentage of teachers in Greenfield are within their first 3 years of teaching and are considered to have non-Professional Teacher Status. In addition, there was no formal New Teacher Mentoring Program prior to the 2014-2015 school year. The district does not yet have a systematic plan for Recruiting & Retaining Educators, including a district-wide Professional Development Plan and high-quality professional development offerings for all staff and training for all substitute teachers.

Data Sources: Seniority Lists; Teacher and Administrator interviews; site visits; review of historic Professional Development offerings; DESE Review.

6. Opportunities for teacher collaboration have been institutionalized at the schools participating in the Expanded Learning Time (ELT) Grant, including Newton and Greenfield Middle School/Math & Science Academy, as well as through the structure of the Innovation School at Four Corners. In these schools, daily “Collaboration” or “Team time” provide structured professional development situated within the context of the school and its students’ progress towards learning goals, and provide embedded opportunities for professional growth in addition to teachers’ individual
planning time. Schools outside of the ELT or innovation structures do not have such embedded opportunities.

**Data Sources:** Daily Schedules; Observations of Grade Level time; ELT MOU Agreement; Principal interviews; Teacher interviews; DESE Review.

7. Targeted professional development for teachers, leaders, and educational support staff in areas such as curriculum alignment, program implementation, technology advances, and more, are critical to ensure the long-term success of innovative programming and high quality educational opportunities.

**Data Sources:** DART Financial Analysis Tool; DESE Review; MCAS Scores; Interviews with Principals; Interviews with Teachers; Interviews with Parents.

**THEME 2: Greenfield is committed to providing a well-rounded academic experience to all students**

1. Innovative programs, including rigorous academic offerings, opportunities for acceleration, and extra-curriculars, have generated interest in Greenfield, and increased district enrollment. In contrast to a state-wide enrollment trend, Greenfield’s student enrollment remains steady or increasing, creating long-term opportunities for expansion.

**Data Sources:** NESDEC Enrollment Study; Review of historical enrollment; ELT and Innovation Schools; DESE School Profiles.

2. Enrollment in Greenfield was impacted in 2008 at unprecedented levels. Since that time, the district has recovered significantly, and now offers an Innovation School, Academies, Intra- and Inter-district choice. However, like neighboring districts, Greenfield is impacted by Charter and Choice, and choice-out numbers still exceed choice-in numbers by a factor of 5:1. (431 out, 85 in)

**Data Sources:** Enrollment data (Including Choice In and Out); Intra-district choice and Enrollment (e.g. Math & Science Academy Enrollment, students not enrolled in their neighborhood school); Qualitative Choice-In application data; Exit survey data from choice-out families; Parent focus groups; Teacher focus groups

3. Current configuration of the schools and their grade levels, necessitated in large part due to space considerations in the district’s existing schools, was a strong concern from various constituent groups. In particular, current configuration of Preschool, Elementary as K-3, Middle School as 4-7, and High School as 8-12 was noted as non-traditional configurations with concerns about developmental age of students.

**Data Sources:** Parent focus groups; Teacher focus groups; Choice-out exit interviews

4. Greenfield has maintained a marked commitment to the Arts. Offerings at the district’s schools include Ukele, Violin, and choral lessons; Theatre, Visual and Performing Arts, textiles, an annual
Film Festival in which students create and produce short videos, murals in schools, and enriching before- and after-school offerings.

Data Sources: Direct observation; Recorder newspaper articles regarding programs at the schools; Parent Interviews; Budget documents; Program of Studies.

5. Greenfield has invested in its athletics, including a commitment to free sports. These provide learning opportunities for students in and out of the classroom, and encourage world-class scholar athletes to pursue their studies in Greenfield. A new track under consideration for GHS furthers this commitment, and would draw interest in Greenfield’s new facilities for students, athletes, and community members outside of Greenfields’ schools.

Data Sources: Budget documents; Financial statements of Student Activities & revolving accounts; GHS Construction Committee Minutes.

6. Technology now plays an integral role in high-quality educational programs. Online media content, access to "flipped classrooms," student and parent access to data (Power School), online testing such as NWEA and PARCC, and the rapid emergence of new technological advances for education, make technology needs a rapidly increasing area of priority. Equal access to such technology plays a key role in students’ access to 21st Century Skills for college or career.

Data Sources: DESE Audit; Technology Plan; Communications Survey; Parent Interviews; Teacher Interviews; Principal Interviews; Capitol Plan requests.

**EMERGING THEME 3: Greenfield Public Schools has recovered significantly from the financial distress and enrollment decline of 2008, however, structures and systems are needed to support long-term growth of the district.**

7. Greenfield Public Schools has leveraged resources, including financial assets, innovative programming, and staff to recover significantly from what is widely referred to as the financial “crisis” of 2007-2008.

Data Sources: Budget documents; Enrollment reports; Staffing reports; Parent focus groups; Teacher focus groups; Community feedback.

8. In response to Greenfield’s financial challenges in 2008, a concerted effort was made to preserve classroom positions. Staffing resources in all other positions have suffered considerably, including custodial, curriculum, teacher leader, department head, and central office roles. While classroom staffing has begun to return to pre-crisis levels, district-wide and leadership positions are now critical to the initiatives undertaken by the district and mandated by state- and federal-guidelines. In addition, investments in new facilities such as GHS require adequate staffing levels, including Custodial support, to maintain additional space. Key players need to be identified to access current resources.
**Data Sources:** DESE Review, Chapter 70 & Local Aid review; TMS District Review; Principal Focus Groups; Facilities; Staffing Lists.

9. Changes in student population necessitate a shift in instructional and social-emotional services for our students, as well as corresponding professional development and materials for teachers. This includes an increase in ELL, low-income, and homeless students. Corresponding needs in Greenfield’s student population, including Transportation, Homeless, Charter and Choice and Special Education costs) have added pressures to the system.

**Data Sources:** Budget documents; Homeless enrollment; Special Education costs including Tuition-in, Out of District, and private day; Percentage of Special Education students; Review of specialized programs (Poet Seat, ACES, Strides, Transitions, etc); Parent interviews; SPED PAC; Teacher interviews; Transportation costs.

10. There is a need for a more comprehensive and clearly communicated budget-development and budget roll-out process.

**Data Sources:** Title I Audit; School Committee Minutes; Finance Sub-Committee; Town Budget documents; Finance Director, Accountant, and Business Manager Interviews; TMS Recommendations Report.

11. Prioritized resources have been defined through existing guiding documents from stake-holders, including the town’s Master Plan, created with significant community input, and the Technology Plan. These documents serve as excellent starting places for identification of needs; further attention to the goals outlined in these documents is necessary to actualize actionable next steps. The need for Technology has increased with PARCC, Online testing, and Safety & Security requirements.

**Data Sources:** Town Master Plan; GPS’ Technology Plan; Budget Review; Safety Recommendations from Safety Task Force

12. There is a need for guiding documents that establish the district’s Strategic Plan and codify operational procedures, including in the following areas:

   a. District Vision / Mission and Core Values
   b. District strategic plan
   c. District professional development plan
   d. Budget communications tools
   e. District communications plan, social media plan
   f. Acceptable Use policy – students and staff
   g. Staff Handbook
   h. Student Handbook
   i. Accurate Organizational Chart
   j. Processes, Procedures, Systems
Data Sources: Interviews with Administrators, Teachers, and Parents; Review of District Strategic Documents; DESE Audit; School Committee Minutes; Interview with School Committee Members;

Emerging Theme #4: The community has steadfastly supported the schools, and remains committed to all children in Greenfield having access to safe and rigorous learning environments that prepare them well in today's 21st Century Learning environment.

13. Strong community connections, fostered through challenging years, need to be continued and formalized. The resources of the school system should be self-sufficient, such that community partnerships supplement but do not supplant services required under the law to be provided as part of a student’s right to a Free, Appropriate Public Education.

Data Sources: Greenfield Education Foundation (GEF) Projects & Funding Records; Grant Audits; DESE Report; Interviews with Principals and Teachers; Interviews with Community Members.

14. Communication with the community, including parents/families, business partners, non-profits, and local leaders, must be strengthened for the community to enjoy access to the strides forward that the district continues to make, and for meaningful two-way collaboration and involvement in this process.

Data Sources: Communications Survey; Interviews with Community Stakeholders; Town Council meetings; School Committee Meeting minutes

15. Formal structures for community input, including School Councils, PTOs, Special Ed Parent Advisory Committees, need to be strengthened and continued, with clear guidelines for how these organizations interact with and support the Vision & Mission of the schools.

Data Sources: Sped PAC Meetings; PTO Meetings; MGL Related to School Council; DESE Review.

16. Demands for technological skills have increased, both for college and the workforce, to foster students’ 21st century skills. Actively utilizing technology for students and educators is an essential function of district communications strategy and interfacing with the broader community. Continuing to partner with the community in identifying high-tech and low-tech communication methods is essential to continue to effectively move the district forward.

Data Sources: DESE Digital Connections Technology Grant Application; District Technology Plan; PARCC Implementation; School Committee Minutes; Capital Requests; Communications Survey; Interviews with parents; interviews with teachers; interviews with administrators.
Please see Appendix for additional documentation in the following categories: Students & Instruction, Resource Management, Stakeholder Feedback, and Miscellaneous Data.