

# Groton-Dunstable Regional School District FY27 Superintendent's Proposed Budget

February 28, 2026



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# District Improvement Plan 2025/2026 School Year - Goals:

## **Strengthened student learning & achievement outcomes for all students:**

The Groton-Dunstable Public Schools will provide an engaging, innovative, rigorous, and individualized system of teaching and learning that provides all students with the knowledge and skills necessary for college, career and global citizenship in the 21st century while integrating social, emotional, and wellness support. GDRSD will ensure that district-wide levels of support are accessible and appropriate for all students to ensure equitable outcomes.

## **District student learning & achievement goal:**

GDRSD will meet or exceed [DESE](#) district accountability targets, as measured by the following criteria: student achievement, growth, high school completion, progress towards English Language proficiency, and additional indicators (chronic absenteeism rates, and advanced coursework completion). For the 2025-2026 school year, GDRSD will have met or exceeded the cumulative criterion-referenced target percentage.

# District Improvement Plan Goals:

## **Communication & Community Relations:**

The Groton-Dunstable Public Schools and its school committee will enhance its partnership with the communities of both towns, including town leadership, to sustain and support an education which provides all students with the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue technical, vocational or post-secondary education or college, career and global citizenship in the 21st century. The District and the committee will establish reciprocal communication that is varied, accessible, and understandable, and that unites all citizens around the belief that high-quality public education is a community's most valuable asset. The district and its school committee need to ensure that community outreach is in various methods that will provide access for all families and community members.

## **Cultivating a culture of belonging for all students:**

The DEI advisory serves to inform and advise the GDRSC on how to better align its policies, goal setting, collective bargaining, and budget setting priorities to embrace Diversity, activate Inclusion, and achieve Equity across the district. As members of the community, the DEI advisory may also elevate community issues relevant to the GDRSD's scope of responsibilities.

# District Improvement Plan Goals:

## **Harnessing the resources necessary for effective student learning and well-being:**

The Groton-Dunstable Public Schools will provide its students with a cost-effective education that maximizes effective and efficient use of taxpayer dollars while communicating regarding these efforts in a public and transparent manner.

## **Building a culture of continuous improvement:**

It is intended that the educational environment at GDRSD will be based on best practices, academic research, and rigorous self-evaluation to provide students and staff the resources, materials, and infrastructure required for optimum teaching and learning. A learning environment is more than just a classroom—it's a space in which students feel safe and supported in their pursuit of knowledge, as well as inspired by their surroundings. The learning environment comprises the physical space, the psychological environment and the emotional environment that supports learning.

## Historical Context: Reductions in Staff: FY24, FY25 & FY26

As the district continues to advocate for additional state funding, and despite the best efforts from the Towns to fund the school within their financial abilities, the school district has reduced over \$3 million in order to balance the budget over the past three (3) fiscal years. There have been 35 positions lost which include:

18 Teachers

1 Asst. Principal

2 Admin. Assistants

2 Team Chairs

5 Counselors

3 Nurses

K-6 ELA/Literacy Coordinator

2 Paraprofessionals

K-8 Math Coordinator

## Positions requested in FY27, not included in proposed budget

The positions below were requested by building Administrators and Directors:

- 1.0 FTE BCBA: currently using contracted services to meet specific student needs
- 1.0 FTE 4th grade teacher at FloRo (to make 6 classes per grade)
- 0.2 FTE Administrative Assistant (increase from 0.8 FTE to 1.0 FTE)
- 1.0 FTE Additional Skilled Maintenance (HVAC specialist)
- 1.0 FTE Additional Groundskeeper

# Operational Audit Actions & Other Efficiencies

FY26 efficiencies that will carry into FY27:

- Worked with Dee Bus to reduce fleet by 1 bus for a savings of \$86,000 annually.
- Filled a maintenance vacancy with a licensed electrician reducing contracting expense.
- Vacancy not filled 1.0 FTE Occupational Therapist
- Vacancy not filled 2.0 FTE student service positions
- K-8 Math Coordinator position eliminated; replaced with Math Interventionist and content area stipends
- HS Special Ed Teacher position eliminated; replaced with an Adjustment Counselor
- SLP position eliminated; replaced with a new MS Special Education SEL Teacher
- Employees will absorb an additional 2% of health insurance premiums in FY27
- Reviewing and improving Student Activity/Athletic Fee Collection to reduce impact to general fund

FY26 actions that will take effect in FY28:

- The school district has contracted with a consultant to review scheduling at all schools and recommend changes to improve efficiency and effectiveness in providing student support services.

## FY27 Proposed Budget

The FY27 Superintendent's Proposed Budget (including debt) is:

\$54,187,751

Increase of \$3,277,114

Increase of 6.44%

# Revenue Assumptions

## State Funding

- Chapter 70 - \$150 per student (same as FY26) **Governor = \$75**
- Transportation Reimbursement (@80% reimbursement, 1 less bus) **Same**
- Charter School Reimbursement (FY26 level funding) **Governor a little higher**
- Circuit Breaker Reimbursement (FY26 level funding) **Governor same**
- Medicaid Reimbursement increase \$25,000 (more reimb. expenses)

## Other Funding

- Excess & Deficiency reduce from \$400,000 to \$300,000
- Interest Income (FY26 level funding)
- Rental Income (FY26 level funding)

## Revenue Assumptions - General Fund

The FY27 proposed operating budget is funded primarily by three (3) sources:

Chapter 70 & Regional Transp. Reimb, Charter Reimb	24.6%
Town of Groton	56.5%
Town of Dunstable	17.4%
Other (Interest Inc, Medicaid, Rent, E & D)	1.5%
	<b>100.0%</b>

## Potential Additional Revenue

- The preliminary budget contains \$150 minimum per pupil aid. For every \$50 added to that amount, the district will receive an additional \$110,000.
- Circuit Breaker Reimbursement Fund is offsetting \$2M in OOD expenses. In the event the projected FY26 reimbursement is higher than anticipated, we would reduce additional expenses in the general fund.
- Regional Transportation Reimbursement is estimated using an 80% reimbursement rate. FY25 ended up around 85%. For every 1% additional reimbursement, that will add \$13,000 of revenue.
- School Committee could revisit budget guidance of reducing E & D by another \$100K

# Current Funding Scenarios

There are currently three (3) funding scenarios.

Scenario 1 - The Superintendent's Proposed Operating Budget at \$54,045,663

Both towns can not fund the assessments with available resources

Scenario 2 - Reducing the operating budget to \$53,137,772 (reduce \$907,891)

Dunstable can fully fund the assessment with available resources

Groton can not fully fund the assessment with available resources

Scenario 3 - Reducing the operating budget to \$52,834,222 (reduce \$1,211,441)

Both towns can fund the assessments with available resources

Note: The placeholder funding for the schools still requires the towns to reduce other departments in order to present a balanced town budget.

# Assessment - Scenario 1 (Superintendent's Budget Request)

Total Operating Budget = \$54,045,663 or a 6.46% increase

<b>Groton Assessment Comparison</b>	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2027</b>	<b>\$ Difference</b>	<b>% Difference</b>
Operating Assessment (includes transportation)	\$28,247,632	\$30,506,160	\$2,258,528	8.00%
Operating Grant (one time FY25)	\$0	\$0	\$0	100.0%
Capital Assessment	\$278,643	\$424,500	\$145,857	52.3%
Debt Assessment	\$110,389	\$108,143	-\$2,246	-2.0%
<b>Total Assessment</b>	<b>\$28,636,664</b>	<b>\$31,038,803</b>	<b>\$2,402,139</b>	<b>8.4%</b>
<b>Dunstable Assessment Comparison</b>	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2027</b>	<b>\$ Difference</b>	<b>% Difference</b>
Operating Assessment (includes transportation)	\$8,641,782	\$9,379,518	\$737,736	8.5%
Capital Assessment	\$83,607	\$125,000	\$41,393	49.5%
Debt Assessment	\$36,424	\$33,945	-\$2,479	-6.8%
<b>Total Assessment</b>	<b>\$8,761,813</b>	<b>\$9,538,463</b>	<b>\$776,650</b>	<b>8.9%</b>

## Assessment - Scenario 2 (Balanced to Dunstable 6%)

Total Operating Budget = \$53,137,772 or a 4.68% increase

<b>Groton Assessment Comparison</b>	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>\$ Difference</b>	<b>% Difference</b>
Operating Assessment (includes transportation)	\$28,247,632	\$29,786,910	\$1,539,278	5.45%
Operating Grant (one time FY25)	\$0	\$0	\$0	100.0%
Capital Assessment	\$278,643	\$424,500	\$145,857	52.3%
Debt Assessment	\$110,389	\$108,143	-\$2,246	-2.0%
<b>Total Assessment</b>	<b>\$28,636,664</b>	<b>\$30,319,552</b>	<b>\$1,682,888</b>	<b>5.9%</b>
<b>Dunstable Assessment Comparison</b>	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>\$ Difference</b>	<b>% Difference</b>
Operating Assessment (includes transportation)	\$8,641,782	\$9,160,289	\$518,507	6.0%
Capital Assessment	\$83,607	\$125,000	\$41,393	49.5%
Debt Assessment	\$36,424	\$33,945	-\$2,479	-6.8%
<b>Total Assessment</b>	<b>\$8,761,813</b>	<b>\$9,319,235</b>	<b>\$557,422</b>	<b>6.4%</b>

## Assessment - Scenario 3 (Balanced to Groton 6%)

Total Operating Budget = \$52,834,222 or a 4.08% increase

<b>Groton Assessment Comparison</b>	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2027</b>	<b>\$ Difference</b>	<b>% Difference</b>
Operating Assessment (includes transportation)	\$28,247,632	\$29,468,816	\$1,221,184	4.32%
Operating Grant (one time FY25)	\$0	\$0	\$0	100.0%
Capital Assessment	\$278,643	\$424,500	\$145,857	52.3%
Debt Assessment	\$110,389	\$108,143	-\$2,246	-2.0%
<b>Total Assessment</b>	<b>\$28,636,664</b>	<b>\$30,001,459</b>	<b>\$1,364,795</b>	<b>4.8%</b>
<b>Dunstable Assessment Comparison</b>	<b>FY 2026</b>	<b>FY 2027</b>	<b>\$ Difference</b>	<b>% Difference</b>
Operating Assessment (includes transportation)	\$8,641,782	\$9,063,334	\$421,552	4.9%
Capital Assessment	\$83,607	\$125,000	\$41,393	49.5%
Debt Assessment	\$36,424	\$33,945	-\$2,479	-6.8%
<b>Total Assessment</b>	<b>\$8,761,813</b>	<b>\$9,222,279</b>	<b>\$460,466</b>	<b>5.3%</b>

## Reduction at each scenario

Scenario 1 - No reductions - Requires add'l \$ both towns

Scenario 2 - Reduce budget by \$ 907,891 - Requires add'l \$ in Groton only

Scenario 3 - Reduce budget by \$1,211,441 - Balanced budget w/funding

Note: This is funding is based on placeholders in both towns as of 01.07.26

# What could reductions look like?

Under Scenario 2 - \$907,891

- **\*\*Reduction amount could be less if more state revenue is expected**
- Health Insurance - 12% increase in preliminary budget - might be less
- Move a student services position to a revolving fund (risky as there is no guarantee of fund replenishment)
- Reduce approximately 7.0 FTE's to close the remaining gap

Under Scenario 3 - \$1,211,441

- Combination of any of the above plus at least 3.0 additional FTE's

## Governor's funding vs. Estimated Revenues

Chapter 70 funding - **Reduced by \$169,500** (\$150 pp to \$75)

Charter School Reimbursement - **Increased by \$66,576**

Regional Transportation - **Increased by \$2,597**

Minimum Required Contribution for each town Increased by \$909,743 (does not change our funding from the towns, it is the first factor in the assessment calculation which changes the total assessment slightly). Note: The state only increased our funding by \$169,500, but they dictate that the towns need to increase by \$909,743.

Page 78-80 of budget book has assessment calculation methodology

# Governor's funding impact on shortfalls

Scenario 1 - No reductions - Requires add'l \$ both towns

Scenario 2 - Reduce budget by \$ 907,891 - Requires add'l \$ in Groton only (Supt budget)  
Reduce budget by \$1,101,169 - Requires add'l \$ in Groton only (Gov budget)

Scenario 3 - Reduce budget by \$1,211,441 - Balanced budget w/funding (Supt budget)  
Reduce budget by \$1,434,455 - Balanced budget w/funding (Gov budget)

Note: This is funding is based on placeholders in both towns as of 01.07.26

# Capital Projects

Proposed projects totaling \$549,500 include:

Computer Leases	\$241,000
HS Replace Wooden Fence at Entrance	\$ 40,000
HS Sidewalk Repair	\$ 27,500
HS Water to Maintenance Garage	\$ 10,000
HS Snow Equipment	\$ 12,000
MSN Parking Lot Paving/Repair (partial)	\$ 30,000
MSS Exterior Door Replacement & Electrical Rm	\$ 17,400
MSS Millwork Front Office, Nurse, Classrooms	\$ 33,000
MSS Replace (2) Recirculating Pumps	\$ 33,000
MSS Replace 80 gallon 2003 water heater	\$ 6,600
ECC (2) Bathroom Renovations	\$ 33,000
DW Replacement of 2015 Maintenance Truck	\$ 66,000

# Capital Assessments

Dunstable - \$125,000

Groton - \$424,500

In FY25 & FY26, capital requests were kept to the bare minimum focusing on closing the funding gap on operating costs.

There are proposed improvements and efficiencies to Swallow Union. Due to the shift in enrollment since FY25, Dunstable is responsible for a larger proportional share of Swallow Union repairs.

# Capital Projects with Alternative Funding

## Fair Share Grants (to be completed by June 30, 2026)

- HS - Black Box Theater renovation \$100,000
- DW - Infrastructure Upgrades (HVAC) \$150,000
- SU - Elevator Replacement \$75,000
- SU - HVAC in gymnasium area \$75,000

## Green Communities Grant application (w/Town of Groton) approx \$200,000 **TBD**

- MSS - Installation of LED interior & exterior lighting
- MSN - Installation of LED exterior lighting

## Decarbonization Grant for Regionals application up to \$250,00 **TBD**

- Focus on HS & MSN water heater replacement
- Replace kitchen ovens at Stoddart, North and High School if funds allow

## Community Preservation Funds (Groton) **TBD**

- BECC playground renovation

## Debt Service

<b>Debt Assessment</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>Estimated</b>
	<b>FY24</b>	<b>FY25</b>	<b>FY26</b>	<b>FY27</b>	<b>FY28</b>
<b>Groton</b>	\$465,796	\$445,156	\$110,389	\$108,143	\$104,547
<b>Dunstable</b>	\$130,148	\$128,696	\$36,424	\$33,945	\$32,816
<b>Total Debt Assessment</b>	<b>\$595,944</b>	<b>\$573,852</b>	<b>\$146,813</b>	<b>\$142,088</b>	<b>\$137,363</b>

See page 74 of budget book

## Important Dates

February 11 - Public Hearing on FY27 budget (advertised in Groton Herald)

February 25 - Public Hearing on FY27 budget (will be advertised in Groton Herald)

February 28 - Groton Finance Cmte - Defend and answer budget questions

March 11 - Budget Certification

Budget questions can be emailed to:

[budgetquestions@gdrsd.org](mailto:budgetquestions@gdrsd.org)

A running list of questions and answers will be posted on our website. This list will be updated every Friday.