

Opportunities for BOE Efficiency

We understand that it is up to the BOE and Superintendent of Schools to decide how the BOE budget is spent. This is different than the Town budget, where the First Selectman, the Boards of Selectmen and Finance and the RTM determine specific budget line items and thus the resources that each department, like Police, Fire and Public Works, have available to provide their specific services.

Based on the limited information available to the public, Fairfield Taxpayer has identified what it believes to be potential sources of significant savings in the BOE budget, none of which we believe would have any material impact on the quality of education in the classroom.

We present these suggestions for consideration by the BOE and Dr. Title in response to Fairfield's increasingly urgent need to control the growth in its spending and taxes. It is our understanding that similar significant reductions in administrative costs have been realized in other districts, such as Greenwich, and have helped to fund continued improvement in the quality of academic outcomes.

Fairfield CT Education Budget 13/14

Opportunities for Efficiency

Fairfield Taxpayer

Summary

- Fairfield Taxpayer (FT) evaluated the Fairfield Education budget to identify potential savings. We tried to focus cuts on administrative areas where student academic performance would not be negatively impacted.
- In addition, we strongly recommend tying the budget to performance standards so that there are independent metrics which demonstrate success or identify areas where further improvement is necessary

Summary of Expense Cuts

- \$1.9 Million in expense cuts driven by:
 - \$1.67 Million - Cancel 'House' System by removing redundant deans and counselors at both High Schools
 - \$150k - Consolidate World Language Classes (Italian, Latin and Chinese) between both High Schools and remove 2 FTE (due to higher class sizes) and add video conferencing
 - \$80k – Return unused budget for K-2 Math text book which was not purchased
 - \$43k - Cut Education Travel Budget which currently reimburses 154k miles of teacher travel

Remove “House” system

- Dr. Title was asked at a recent Board of Finance Meeting to justify the ‘House’ system which is currently used in both high schools
- Dr. Title responded that the system has been in place for 60 years and that he did not want to be known as the Superintendent who got rid of it.
- Fairfield is credited with starting the first house system nationally, and very few towns (if any) continue to use it due to its inefficiency (as we effectively have 6 High Schools)

“The House Plan” called inefficient during Prismatic Audit

- Both high schools of the Fairfield Public Schools (FPS) continue to implement an organizational structure known as “The House Plan.” This structure has high personnel costs (from its inherent redundancy) and lacks an empirical connection between it and student success.
- As a result of the House Plan, the two high schools have proportionately more personnel assigned than the number that most other regional, state, and national high schools have.
 - The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) recommends that the optimum ratio for secondary counselors should be 1 : 250. A US Department of Education National Center for Educational Statistics (NECS) study for 2008-09 reported a Connecticut ratio of 1 : 507 for both elementary and secondary schools. The ASCA further reports the national average for 2008-09 to be 1 : 457, using data furnished by the NCES *Common Core Data*. The 2010-11 FPS ratios are 1 : 147 at FWHS and 1 : 188 at FLHS.
 - The NCES School and Staff Survey (SASS) Comparison of the number of pupils per FTE librarian media teachers in 2007-08 in Connecticut public schools was 1 : 714. At FWHS, the ratio is 1 : 442 and at FLHS the ratio is 1 : 501.

Ratio of Counselors to Students	
ASCA Recommended ⁽¹⁾	1 : 250
State of CT Actual (2008-09) ⁽²⁾	1 : 507
National Average (2008-09) ⁽¹⁾	1 : 457
Fairfield Warde HS in 2010-11	1 : 147
Fairfield Ludlowe HS in 2010-11	1 : 188
(1) American School Counselor Association	
(2) US Dept of Educ - National Center for Educational Statistics (NECS)	

Source: Prismatic Study

Is 'House' still inefficient in 13/14 budget?

- According the 2013/2014 budget request, there are 9 High School Guidance counselors on the 2013/2014 budget
- Fairfield can cut 6 FTE counselors and still be at the recommended national standard

	<u>Budgeted</u> Counselors	<u>Students</u>	<u>Ratio</u>	<u>Optimum</u> Ratio	<u>Optimal</u> Counselors	<u>Savings</u>
Ludlowe	9.0	1,557	173	250	6.2	2.8
Warde	9.0	1,435	159	250	5.7	3.3
	18.0				12.0	6.0

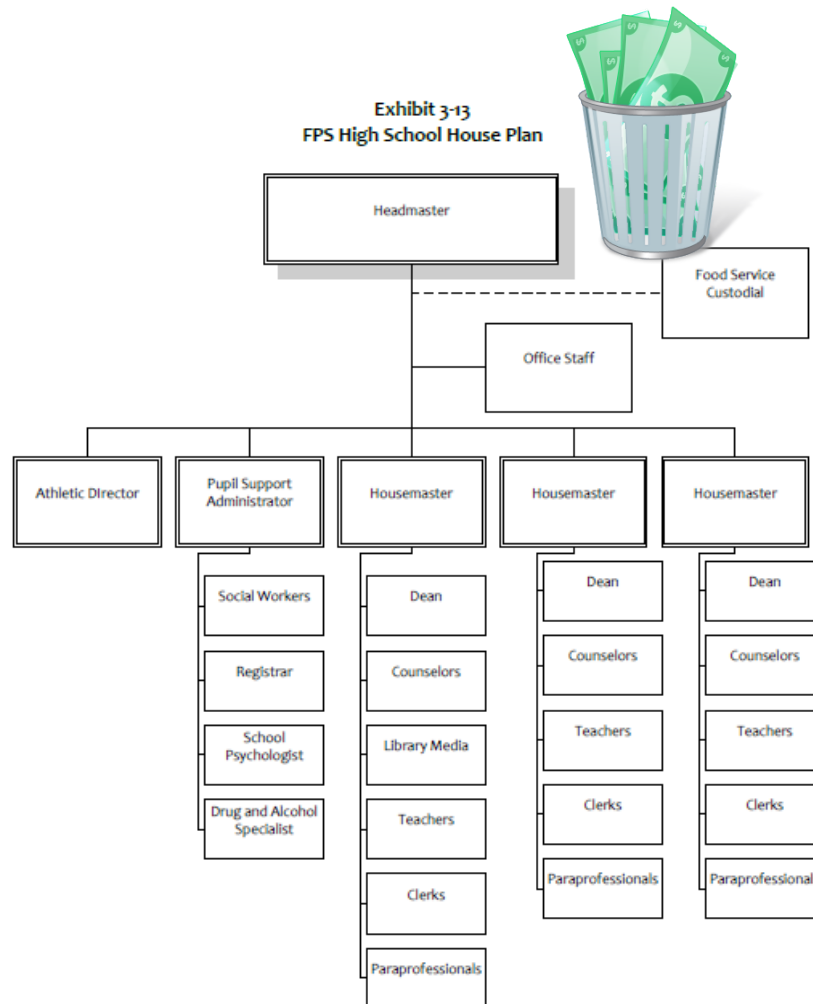
Removal of “House” recommendation does not impact Student Learning

This recommended organization (**Exhibit 3-15 of Prismatic audit**) would provide:

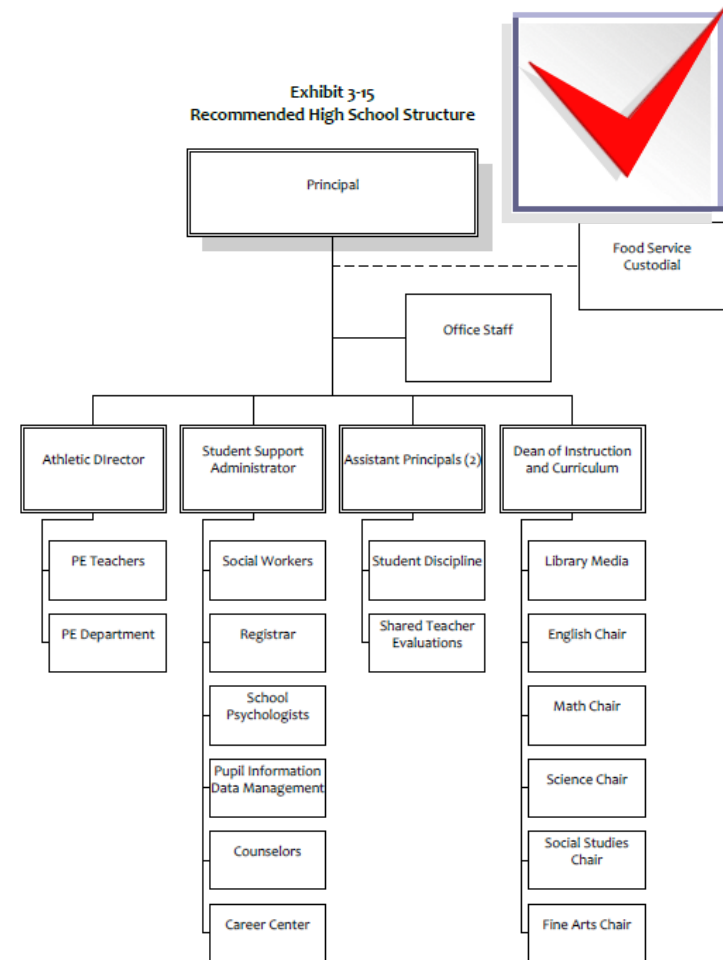
- no change in the number of teachers or the list of course offerings or assignment of teachers to course;
- the assignment of counselors to the supervision of the Student Support Administrator;
- the assignment of Dean of Curriculum and Instruction who supervise departments and teachers;
- the assignment of assistant principals who have the responsibility of student discipline as well as sharing teacher performance evaluations with the Dean of Curriculum and Instruction;
- the assignment of teachers to departments by teacher certification area, headed by department chairs who report to the Dean of Curriculum and Instruction;
- the designation of a master teacher as department chair with release time from teaching for conducting departmental affairs and professional development and curriculum planning and implementation;
- the assignment and evaluation of physical education teachers to the Athletic Director (who is an administrator in FPS);
- current students retain their same homeroom teachers and guidance teachers;
- new and incoming students to be assigned to homeroom teachers and guidance counselors by the Administrator for Student Support, using same criteria as before;
- assistant principals are assigned students for disciplinary reasons alphabetically by student’s last name; and
- the responsibility for maintaining and reporting staff attendance to be assigned to Receptionist in Principal’s office.

Source: Prismatic Study

“House” causes overstaffing



Source: Fairfield Public Schools, October 2010.



Source: Created by Prismatic.

Source: Prismatic Study

Proposed cuts save \$1.7 million per year

Recommendation	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Eliminate Housemaster positions	\$934,380	\$934,380	\$934,380	\$934,380	\$934,380
Eliminate Dean of Student positions	\$569,520	\$569,520	\$569,520	\$569,520	\$569,520
Eliminate House secretary positions	\$339,360	\$339,360	\$339,360	\$339,360	\$339,360
Reduce Guidance Counselor positions	\$474,600	\$474,600	\$474,600	\$474,600	\$474,600
Reduce Guidance secretary positions	\$282,800	\$282,800	\$282,800	\$282,800	\$282,800
Add Assistant Principal positions	(\$622,920)	(\$622,920)	(\$622,920)	(\$622,920)	(\$622,920)
Add Deans of Instruction positions	(\$311,460)	(\$311,460)	(\$311,460)	(\$311,460)	(\$311,460)
TOTAL	\$1,666,280	\$1,666,280	\$1,666,280	\$1,666,280	\$1,666,280

Source: Prismatic Study

World Languages is largest driver of class sizes of less than 15 students

- Where is the inefficiency?
 - 24% of World Language classes have less than 15 students
 - 13% of Math classes have less than 15 students

HIGH SCHOOL CLASS SIZES 2012 - 2013

FAIRFIELD LUDLOWE HIGH SCHOOL

SUBJECT	# OF SECTIONS		TOTAL SECTIONS	TOTAL STUDENTS	AVERAGE	# SECTIONS <15
	SEMESTER	FULL YEAR				
ENGLISH	16	66	82	1,743	21.3	3
SOC. STUDIES	10	72	82	1,584	20.8	4
MATH	10	72	82	1,639	20	7
SCIENCE	17	67	84	1,641	19.5	4
WORLD LANGUAGE	0	65	65	1,255	19.3	14
TOTALS	53	342	395	7,862	20.2	32

FAIRFIELD WARDE HIGH SCHOOL

SUBJECT	# OF SECTIONS		TOTAL SECTIONS	TOTAL STUDENTS	AVERAGE	# SECTIONS <15
	SEMESTER	FULL YEAR				
ENGLISH	14	61	75	1,542	20.6	6
SOC. STUDIES	10	58	68	1,432	21.1	3
MATH*	10	63	73	1,483	20.3	10
SCIENCE	12	62	74	1,504	20.3	3
WORLD LANGUAGE	0	62	62	1,045	16.9	17
TOTALS	46	306	352	7,006	19.9	39

*Does not include math support class

Explanation for High School Class Sizes under 15

A high school class may have fewer than 15 students in any given class period for one or more of the following reasons:

- 1) The class is the culminating course in a sequence of courses. An example would be the final year of a World Language sequence.
- 2) Some Advanced Placement classes.
- 3) Scheduling:
 - a) A common course offering multiple sections may result in one class with fewer than 15 students due to scheduling. For example, i Fairfield Ludlowe has 11 sections totaling 215 students; one of these sections has fewer than 15.
 - b) A course may have enough student interest for two sections averaging 20 students each, but due to scheduling, one course may h the other, 26. Economics at Fairfield Warde is an example of this situation.
- 4) Introducing a new course; a full sequence of classes is offered with small enrollment anticipated. Chinese would be an example of this :

Some classes with an insufficient number of student requests are cancelled; not every requested course in the Program of Studies is offered

Source: Education Budget Request 2013/2014

Italian, Latin and Chinese are driving majority of small class sizes

- Largest inefficiencies can be seen in Italian, Latin and Chinese
 - 7 FTE
 - 585 Students
 - 84 students per teacher
 - 5 classes per day, equates to an average of 16.7 students per class
- Possible solution:
 - Consolidate Italian, Latin and Chinese classes between the two high schools
 - Teacher is at one high school two days per week, and other high school three days
 - Students join via teleconference when teacher is at other high school
- Savings:
 - \$150k or 2 teachers (avg class size goes to 23.7)
 - Extra cost to upgrade teleconference equipment
- Evaluate savings for other classes also (Math, etc)

World Language Enrollment and Staffing
FLHS

	Spanish	French	Italian	Lat'n	Chinese
10	29	15	33	23	27
20	52	11	41	17	22
31	231	75	25	15	11
41	150	34	17	Combined 41/AP 1/4	4
42	46	14			
51	104	30			
52	44	22			
60	45	14			
AP	72	13			
Totals	773	228	116	60	64
FTE	8.0	2.8	1.4	.8	.8

FWHS

	Spanish	French	Italian	Latin	Chinese
10	43	11	43	73	10
20	43	13	33	48	11
31	200	42	33	46	14
41	90	30	14	Combined 41/AP 5/10	5
42	26	12			
51	55	20			
52	53	18			
60	21	Combined 60/AP 3/9			
AP	10				
Totals	541	158	123	182	40
FTE	5.0	2.2	1.4	1.8	.8

Source: Board of Education – First column represents course levels

K-2 Math Text book was budgeted but not purchased this year

- \$80k was budgeted to purchase a new text book for K-2 Math. The Administration did not choose a new text book. Dr. Title wishes to use the funds to create supplemental materials paying teachers over the summer. The funds should be returned to the town.
- Savings:
 - \$80k in budget not used to pick text books (K-2)

Cut mileage reimbursement for teachers and maintenance staff

Board of Education asked the Administration about the \$86k in mileage reimbursement and received the following answer

54500 Mileage reimbursement (p. 70-71)

This seems like a lot (\$86K). How many people attend conferences and/or travel for work, and how far do they go?

The majority of travel reimbursement is for local travel from building to building and is primarily teachers and maintenance staff.

Source: Education Budget Request 2013/2014

Fairfield spends \$86k on teacher and other travel in personal vehicles.

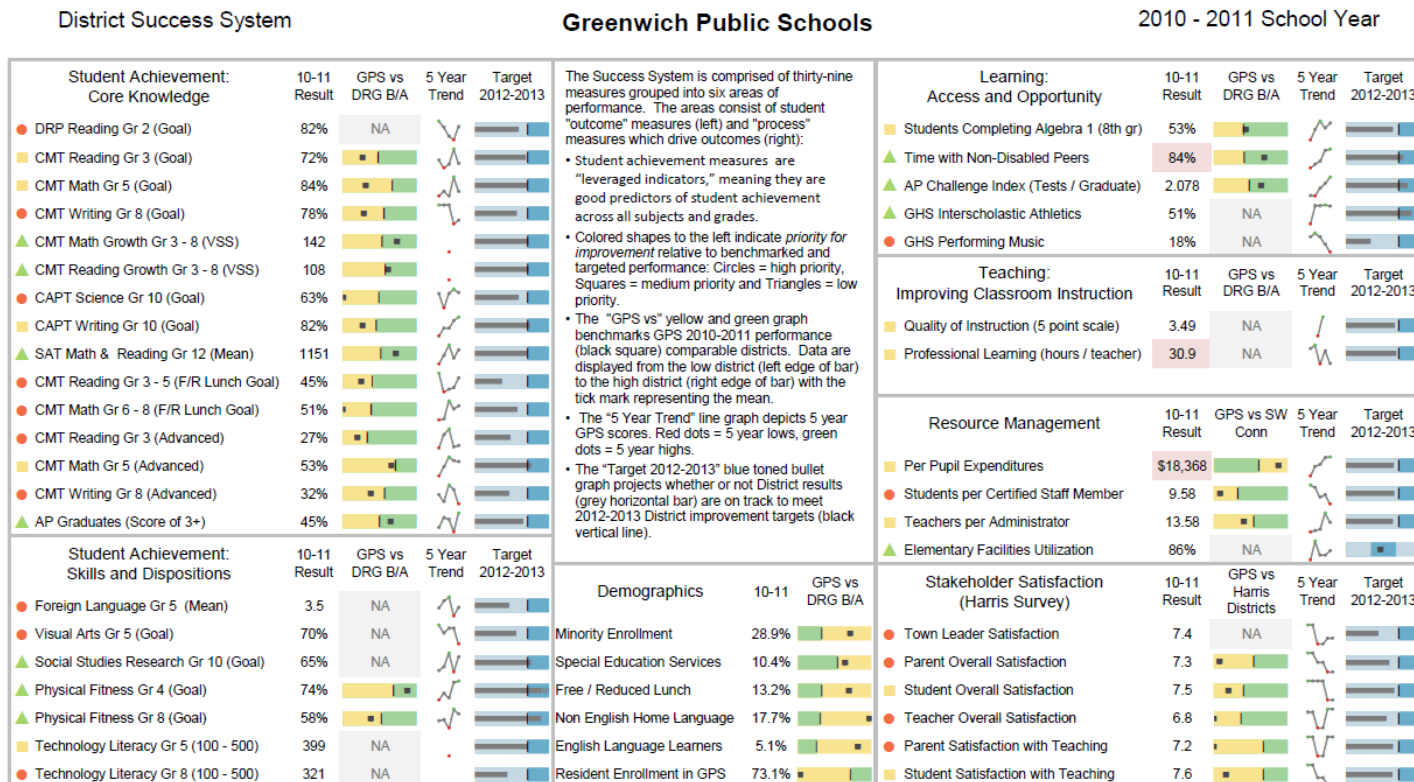
- That equates to 154k miles of travel reimbursement. At an average distance of 15 miles, that is 10k trips per year, or 56 trips per day. Who is driving that much?

Recommendation – Cut travel by 50% for savings of \$43k and require support for all travel

13/14 budget	IRS Rate	Effective Miles	Est. Distance	Est Trips	Days per year	Trips per day
\$ 86,000	\$ 0.56	153,571	15	10,238	182	56

\$150 Million education budget should come with performance metrics!

- Greenwich implemented the following success system to measure performance of their public schools



Conclusion

- Fairfield needs to reduce the Education budget by at least \$1 million to achieve a 2% growth in the overall town budget.
- We have identified almost \$2 million in reductions which do not impact student performance.
- RTM needs to reduce the budget by \$1 million and suggest that Dr. Title and the Board of Education can choose any of the following:
 - \$1.67 Million - Cancel 'House' System by removing redundant deans and counselors at both High Schools
 - \$150k - Consolidate World Language Classes (Italian, Latin and Chinese) between both High Schools and remove 2 FTE (due to higher class sizes) and add video conferencing
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