

1.) **Why did some of the Administration get raises?** See FAQ 1. Additional bonuses or “raises” are different than annual salary steps or % increases, which are embedded parts of contracts for all staff. Some administrators got steps and % increases as a part of normal practices last year. Some got additional work days added to their calendars, which led to annual increases based on those additional days. No one got a bonus or an additional raise in pay outside the salary schedule last year.

2.) **Why did some Administration get extended days on their contracts last year?** See FAQ1. There is much work to be done to improve the performance of this district, from upgrading curriculum to strengthening employees. Until faculty and staff can do much of this work on their own, administrators must help lead this work. These days were added to modify their contracts, not give them the option of additional work days. They are expected to work these days.

3.) **Why do we pay for some of the Administration cell phones?** The Superintendent, AD, and Operations Director get a \$300 stipend once per year, an average of \$25.00 per month, to offset some of their business related time on the phone for each work and weekend days. In other districts, they opt to provide cell phones to these staff members. However, it is more cost effective to pay an annual stipend, so the individual only need to track one phone and the district doesn't have to pay for additional phone equipment or monthly billings for service. This is a standard practice in most districts and language is typically included as part of their contracts.

4.) **Why are some Administrators going out of state for PD's?** Professional development is taught where it is taught. Some of the best professional development, such as the Future Ready framework, was not offered in Ohio before. Sometimes administrators are delivering and modeling PD to others, thus representing Graham while leading. This is normal for head principals and superintendents at quality schools. In some cases, PD companies are located out of state, and only travel within a region, but offer much to learn. Typically, Graham leaders and staff only travel out of state when they have been asked to deliver professional development themselves. Professional development for principals is just as important as it is for teachers. Ultimately, classroom teachers and principals need to learn to improve schools.

5.) **When an individual presents at a conference, on average how much does that cost the district?** Depends where they go. Last summer, the principals actually drove themselves to an out of state PD they were selected to present at, and only stayed over in a shared hotel room one night to save on costs for the district. Is that fair? The “Return on Investment” is the real question here. What does an administrator learn, transfer, and implement here that makes their PD worthwhile? The same questions can be asked of all staff. If there is an exponential return on investment, then a conference may be not only worth it, but a long-term bargain. Teachers attending design thinking conferences, or train the trainer events for credentials are two examples.

6.) **Why do we have two Education Coordinators?**

Curriculum development and professional development have lagged at Graham for years. The roles focus on different types of programming at the elementary level, where the foundational skills and interventions in core content areas matter more, versus the secondary level, where specialization, and career and college readiness take much planning and time. Add on top of that the differing services and special education requirements, as well as the social and emotional development levels of learners, and good Coordinators are the leaders that teachers and administrators need to support and guide them through all these aspects of their work. One person cannot do these jobs effectively with a 40 hour week

in school districts focused on improving, at all three levels. Our data and performance reveal this to be true.

7.) Why is Twitter being seen as a priority to staff? Twitter is a communication platform used by the majority of educators and young parents to communicate across schools in Ohio, the United States, and Canada. We don't require faculty to use it, but we have prioritized using communication tools such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, etc. to meet the communications goals of our strategic plan, Graham 2020. Our community was clear: Graham was not doing enough to reach out, share, celebrate, and communicate about students, programs, and performance, for years. Twitter helps change that, as do other modes of communication, all of which are part of our strategic communications plan, passed by the Board of Education last fall. So, for staff who do not see communicating with tools like Twitter as a priority, they are missing the bigger picture for school communities. Community members demand information. Tell your story your way, or someone else will.

8.) Why are Administrators seen at community events during the day and not at work? Who? Our administrators are seen in all three buildings and the transportation building monthly. Why shouldn't administrators be seen in public planning strategically to enhance our schools with partners & community agencies, businesses, and higher ed? Do teachers have time to do this during the day? Who should do this, one person or more? We take a team approach to maintaining and sustaining community partnerships at Graham, and have a specific strategic plan goal our Board and community defined to address this exactly. The strategic plan is attached online.

9.) If we can get grants, why do we levy money?

We have spent much time writing grant applications, another reason for two Education Coordinators, and have garnered \$198,000 in the past year and a half. However, this amounts to less than 1% of our 20 million school budget. Our need for additional funds to operate the district is over \$1.9 million annually. Although we were awarded these funds, individuals have submitted several applications for grants that we did not receive. Trying to sustain our district by applying for all available grants that we may or may not be awarded does not provide the financial stability the district needs for daily operations. Grants are only part of a fiscal strategy for school budgets to help supplement, not replace, normal operational costs.

10.) Why are we hiring administrators rather than full time/support staff?

We replaced 4 administrative positions last year due to resignations. All four positions were replaced with internal and external staff. The district hired an additional educational coordinator to focus on curriculum at the middle and high school level. The elementary is the largest school in the district with 872 students; the middle school has 440 students; and the high school has 612. Although the elementary has the greatest number of students, the building was only staff with the following administrators: a principal, an assistant principal and a curriculum director who was shared by all the school buildings (the same administration level as the middle and high school). It was clear that additional administrative support was needed at the elementary. The district brought on a halftime Dean of Students to focus on discipline and a changed the district wide curriculum coordinator to a full time elementary education coordinator. Each year from December – March we ask buildings leaders and staff to help us plan ahead. Human Resources is a fluid business, based on all district needs.

11.) How did administration justify an administration raise last year when the district is going into financial crisis?

For the few administrators who actually received a salary change, more work contract days, more work to do, and recognition that a system has been in place for salary steps for all staff-teachers included -for years- is transparent. We also changed out 4 full-time administrators with top-heavy salaries for entry level salaries to become much more fiscally lean at the top in the past year, which is good for the long run for our budget. Ultimately, quality employees require competitive wages also. It's paradoxical to demand better schools and performance and report card scores and teachers without recruiting, developing, and supporting quality staff. This is also a Graham 2020 strategic plan goal the community drafted.

12.) Why are we spending so much money on new programs when we need new textbooks and to focus on the fundamentals of reading, writing, and math?

Who decides what our focus is? the Graham 2020 plan spells it out. That is our focus now. New math curriculum was purchased last year for Math at GES and GMS after 5 months of staff study and input with a long-term commitment for use. "Textbooks" are not curriculum, per se, but can support this work. They are also very costly, which is why we also research other resources, and seek assistance from CCP partners. CCP numbers doubled in the past year. This costs the district much money, but is well worth it for each student involved, and for their families. It's the right thing to fund. No new staffing at GHS was used to relaunch German and add French. Regular supplies budgets were used to supply those courses. Pathways in Education and Logistics were added with pre-existing career tech funding and partners. Cadet Core was funded with a small budget as compared to an ROTC program, one tenth of the start-up cost. If there is other "new programming" we don't know of, ask.

13.) Didn't the cuts made years ago put the district in the "green"?

No. The cuts never had the district in the "green." Schools aren't in the business to make a profit. The bottom line of the budget is that the ending cash balance each year represents the work of the Board and staff for the entire history of the district. There is no do-over with a set amount of funds each year. Inflation, as well as local, state and federal budgets and laws all impact our budget annually in different ways, just as they did in 1958, 1990, 2000, 2010, and today. Staffing trends impact our budget at different rates at different times. Fuel costs and other materials impact our facilities and operations over time. Decisions on fiscal strategies and consequences are examined and made by different boards and leaders over time. Collectively, all those decisions over time impact the fiscal stability of the district.

14.) Does the district use Ohio Checkbook program?

We do use it. It is live as of 2/12/18. It can help prove we are transparent and not just saying it. No other district in Champaign County has gone live with Ohio Checkbook before us. The Ohio Checkbook also allows for critique, comparison, and education of students, staff, and community that the Board welcomes. Our five year forecasts are posted on our website under the "District" tab, then click on Treasurer's Office. [Click Here](#). The Cupp Report is available on the Ohio Department of Education's website [Click here to access these reports](#). The Cupp Report is available for each school district and provides data values for over 50 variables and also includes two columns of comparison data values – one for similar districts and one for the state. If you still feel you need additional information, please don't hesitate to call Judy Geers, Treasurer of Graham Local School District at 937-663-4123 ext. 2609 or email her at geersj@grahamlocalschools.org.