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Proposal:

Athens Grafton School District

Elementary Program Sustainability Study

Submitted March 2026

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Dear Members of the Athens Grafton School District Board,

On behalf of DY Consulting LLC, I am pleased to submit this proposal to support the Athens Grafton School District Board and Windham Northeast Supervisory Union in conducting a structured review of the long-term sustainability of the Grafton Elementary School program.

The Grafton Elementary School currently serves a small number of students in grades K through 6. The school has long been an important part of the communities of Athens and Grafton. At the same time, operating a very small rural school can present financial and programmatic challenges that warrant thoughtful review.

This proposal outlines a clear and practical process to help the Board complete that work in a way that is transparent, data informed, and respectful of the community.

The proposed process will provide a clear understanding of the financial and operational realities of the current program, evaluate potential models for providing elementary education to Athens and Grafton students in the future, incorporate community perspectives into the discussion, and culminate in a well-supported recommendation for Board consideration.

If the Board ultimately determines that voters should consider a structural change, optional support is also available to assist with community information and statutory preparation for a public vote.

The goal of this engagement is not to predetermine an outcome. The goal is to ensure that the Board and the communities it serves have the information necessary to make a well-informed decision about the future of elementary education in the district.

Thank you for your consideration. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss this proposal with you.

Sincerely,

Dave Younce
Founder and Principal Consultant
DY Consulting LLC

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Consultant Bio and Qualifications

Dave Younce is the Principal Consultant of DY Consulting LLC, a Vermont based consultancy specializing in governance, strategic planning, and complex community engagement for public education and mission driven organizations.

A former Vermont Superintendent of Schools, Vermont Superintendent of the Year, and former President of the Vermont Superintendents Association, Dave has extensive experience working with school boards and communities as they navigate complex structural decisions including school closures, governance changes, district mergers, and long term sustainability planning.

His experience working within Vermont's statutory education framework, combined with deep familiarity with the operational realities of small rural schools and supervisory unions, allows him to guide communities through sensitive decision making processes in a way that is transparent, practical, and grounded in local context.

Context for the Study

The Grafton Elementary School currently operates a K through 6 program serving a relatively small number of students.

Small rural schools often provide close relationships between students, families, and educators that are highly valued by their communities. At the same time, very small schools can face structural challenges related to staffing flexibility, program breadth, enrollment sustainability, and financial efficiency.

This engagement is intended to support the Board in conducting that review in a structured and transparent manner so that future decisions are informed by clear data, thoughtful analysis, and meaningful community dialogue.

Engagement Objectives

The proposed engagement is designed to support the Athens Grafton School District Board in conducting a thorough and transparent evaluation of the future of the Grafton Elementary School.

Key objectives include:

- Provide an objective analysis of the financial and operational sustainability of the current school structure.

- Examine potential models for providing elementary education to Athens and Grafton students.
- Engage stakeholders to understand community perspectives and priorities.
- Ensure that the Board understands the legal and procedural requirements associated with potential structural changes.
- Deliver a clear and well-supported recommendation to guide Board decision making.

Study Methodology

The study will evaluate the current program and potential alternatives using a consistent analytical framework. This approach allows potential options to be compared using clear and objective measures.

Areas of analysis will include:

- Enrollment trends and projections.
- Total program cost and per pupil expenditures.
- Staffing structure and program delivery implications.
- Transportation considerations.
- Potential financial implications associated with different scenarios.

The goal of this analysis is to ensure that the Board and community have a clear understanding of both the educational and financial implications associated with potential options.

Phased Scope of Work

Phase 1: Baseline Data and Context Review	May 2026 - June 2026
Phase 2: Financial and Programmatic Scenario Analysis	June 2026 - July 2026
Phase 3: Stakeholder Engagement	July 2026 - August 2026
Phase 4: Financial Analysis and Recommendation	August 2026 - September 2026
Optional Phase 5: Community Information & Vote Preparation	September 2026 - November 2026
Optional Phase 6: Transition Planning Support	November 2026 - June 2027

Detailed Phase Descriptions

Phase 1: Baseline Data and Context Review

This phase establishes a clear understanding of the current operational and financial context of the Grafton Elementary School.

Activities:

- Review enrollment history and projections
- Review staffing structure and program delivery model
- Analyze current per pupil expenditures
- Review transportation patterns and costs
- Review building operations and facility costs
- Review tuition relationships with neighboring districts

Deliverables:

- Baseline operational and financial profile
- Enrollment and cost trend analysis
- Summary of structural considerations affecting program sustainability

Phase 2: Scenario Development

This phase evaluates potential models for providing elementary education to Athens and Grafton students.

Potential scenarios may include:

- Continuation of the current elementary school structure
- Grade reconfiguration options
- Tuitioning students to neighboring districts
- Closure of the elementary program with a tuition model
- Regional collaboration opportunities

Activities:

- Fiscal modeling of potential scenarios
- Transportation impact analysis
- Programmatic implications review

- Identification of implementation considerations

Deliverables:

- Scenario comparison summary
- Fiscal impact overview
- Operational considerations summary

Phase 3: Stakeholder Engagement

Community dialogue will be an important component of this study.

Activities:

- Community informational forums
- Staff listening session
- Parent input opportunities
- Preparation of informational materials explaining study findings

Deliverables:

- Stakeholder feedback summary
- Identification of key themes and community perspectives

Phase 4: Final Analysis and Recommendation

This phase synthesizes the information gathered during the study and presents findings to the Board.

Activities:

- Integration of financial, operational, and stakeholder findings
- Preparation of final study report
- Board presentation and facilitated discussion

Deliverables:

- Final study report
- Board presentation materials
- Recommendation and implementation considerations

Optional Phase 5: Community Information and Vote Preparation

If the Board elects to pursue a structural change requiring voter approval, this phase provides advisory support leading up to a potential vote.

Activities:

- Preparation of voter information materials
- Community informational meetings
- Advisory support regarding statutory vote preparation

Deliverables:

- Community informational materials and facilitation support
- Voter information summary

Optional Phase 6: Transition Planning Support

If voters approve a structural change, this phase provides advisory support during the transition process.

Activities:

- Coordination with receiving districts
- Transportation planning
- Communication planning for families
- Implementation timeline guidance

Deliverables:

- Transition planning summary
- Implementation roadmap

Vermont Statutory Considerations

Any decision to close a school or significantly restructure program delivery must comply with Vermont law and local governance requirements.

If the Board elects to pursue closure of the Grafton Elementary School, the general process would include:

- Board determination to pursue closure
- Development of a plan for future elementary education delivery
- Preparation of official vote warnings and ballot language
- Public informational meetings to explain the proposal
- Town vote conducted according to district governance procedures
- Implementation planning if the proposal is approved
- A more detailed statutory review would occur during the study process if closure emerges as a potential option, including coordination with district counsel and the Vermont Agency of Education as appropriate.

Cost Proposal

Multiple study pathways are offered to provide flexibility for the Board.

1. Core Sustainability Study

Includes Phases 1 through 4

Baseline Analysis	\$4,000
Scenario Development	\$4,000
Stakeholder Engagement	\$3,000
Final Report & Recommendation	\$3,000
Total Cost	\$14,000

2. Core Sustainability Study + Vote Preparation Support

Includes Phases 1 through 4 + Phase 5

Phases 1-4	\$14,000
Phase 5	\$2,000
Total Cost	\$16,000

3. Core Sustainability + Vote Preparation + Transition

Includes Phases 1 through 4 + Phase 5 + Phase 6

Phases 1-4	\$14,000
Phase 5	\$2,000
Phase 6	\$2,000
Total Cost	\$18,000

Proposed Terms & Assumptions

1. Phases will be billed as fixed-fee engagements.
2. Any work beyond the defined scope will be billed at the standard hourly rate with prior approval from the District.
3. Travel and materials are included in the flat fee cost proposal.
4. Engagement can be terminated at the conclusion of any phase with 14 days notice from either party. Any other agreements to this effect require the mutual consent of both parties.
5. DY Consulting LLC will collaborate with District legal counsel, supervisory union leadership, and AOE staff as needed throughout the process.

This proposal assumes that:

- The District and supervisory union will provide timely access to enrollment, fiscal, and operational data needed for analysis.
- District counsel will review and approve all statutory documents, including warnings and formal submissions to the Agency of Education.

- The District will manage statutory warnings and posting of meetings and votes in accordance with Vermont law.
- Community engagement sessions will be scheduled and noticed by the District as required, with facilitation and materials support from DY Consulting LLC as described in the scope.

Acceptance / Intent to Enter Agreement

This proposal may be accepted as written or modified by mutual agreement. Intent to enter into an agreement may be indicated below by an authorized representative of WNESU / Athens Grafton School District. A formal contract for services will follow execution of this intent by both parties. Execution of this agreement indicates mutual understanding of the scope and intent described herein.

For WNESU / AGSD

Name: _____

Title: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

For DY Consulting LLC

Name: Dave Younce

Title: Principal Consultant

Signature: _____

Date: _____