



# **Community Engagement Forums**

## **Findings and Recommendations**

**March 4, 2019**



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# Overview

## Strategic Plan – Looking Back

Lake Washington School District has a strong tradition of careful planning and purposeful use of resources to support quality instruction and programs for all students. Under the leadership of former Superintendent, Dr. Traci Pierce, and the Board of Directors, Lake Washington developed a comprehensive Strategic Plan that outlined the work for the span of 2013-2018.

The Strategic Plan was guided by key district documents such as the Student Profile and Guiding Principles, work plans, student performance data, and parent and community feedback data. Annual updates on progress and ongoing work have been provided to share the many accomplishments that can be attributed to the current Strategic Goals:

1. Ensure academic success for every student
2. Provide safe & innovative learning environments
3. Recruit, hire & retain highly effective personnel
4. Use resources effectively & be fiscally responsible
5. Engage our communities

## Strategic Plan - Moving Forward

As the time span on the current Strategic Plan concluded, the district welcomed a new leader, Dr. Jane Stavem, as the Superintendent of Lake Washington School District. As part of the transition of leadership, the Strategic Plan is being updated to reflect the vision for the work ahead.



One of the most important factors in determining the future goals of Lake Washington School District is listening to voices from the community and the district. To facilitate the listening process, the District utilized a Community Engagement Forum strategy to facilitate structured conversations within the following areas:

1. Achievement
2. Technology and Innovation
3. Safety and Security
4. Recruit, Hire and Retain
5. Facilities and Finance
6. Communication and Engagement

A series of four Community Engagement Forums were held in four different middle schools. Dr. Stavem invited a diverse group of district stakeholders to participate, including students, parents, staff members, community members, and members of the LWSD Board of Directors.

Groups held multiple discussions and were asked to ultimately synthesize the responses into the format of Findings and Recommendations which will be presented to the Board of Directors at the March 4, 2019 Board Meeting.

The Findings and Recommendations contained in this document are being presented to the Board of Directors for consideration as the next step in defining the vision for the future of Lake Washington School District. The Board of Directors will provide direction for district leaders to begin writing the updated draft of the next Strategic Plan.

As the updated version of the Strategic Plan is developed, multiple groups of stakeholders will be asked to provide feedback as the future work of Lake Washington School District takes shape. The outcome will be a document that reflects the primary strategic work our District will undertake to position Lake Washington School District as the best district in the world.

Thank you to all who are part of the process. Your ideas, feedback, and continued support are vital to the growth of our school district.

Dr. Jane Stavem, *Superintendent*





## Task Force Committees

### Achievement

Jen Rose, Co-Chair  
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 Miina Beyreis  
 Joanna Bowns  
 Peter Brakke  
 Hilary Brewer  
 Laura Bunda  
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## Task Force Committees

### Technology and Innovation

Sally Askman, Co-Chair  
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Natalie Ferrara  
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## Task Force Committees

### Safety and Security

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Georgina Bulkley, Co-Chair  
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Craig Mott  
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Lauren Oakenfold  
Megan Oz  
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## Task Force Committees

### Recruit, Hire and Retain

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 Fabiana Deassis  
 Pat Fowler-Fung  
 Heather Frazier  
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 Linda Johnson  
 Rob Jones  
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 Matt Livingston  
 Rob Noteboom  
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 Bill Rosen  
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## **Task Force Committees**

### **Facilities and Finance**

Brian Buck, Co-Chair  
Barbara Posthumus, Co-Chair  
Bryan Melerski, Co-Chair  
Margo Allen  
Nancy Brown  
Heather Chapman  
Dale Cote  
Eric Laliberte  
Megan Lawson

Mindy Lincicome  
Barbara Pridgeon  
Lynne Pyke  
Denise Radecke  
Luiza Rocha  
Dana Stairs  
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## Task Force Committees

### Communication and Engagement

Jon Holmen, Co-Chair  
 Shannon Parthemer, Co-Chair  
 Laura D'Urso, Co-Chair  
 John Appelgate  
 Kendall Brown  
 Robyn Brown  
 Heather Colombo  
 Taylor Davis  
 Deanne Dhara  
 Andrew Dimitriou  
 Denise Ferguson  
 Andrea Fitzgerald  
 Dawn Gent

Lisa Guthrie  
 Liz Hedreen  
 Robin Ima  
 Damm Iwaszuk  
 Sarah Kimsey  
 Aronia (Roni) McLean  
 Heather Sanchez  
 Karen Schwartz  
 Jessica Soltani  
 Mark Stuart  
 Collin Sullivan  
 Sue Anne Sullivan

## **Committee Name: Achievement**

The Achievement committee analyzed the academic opportunities that are important for promoting equitable outcomes and high achievement for all students, the areas/strategies/programs that are currently effective in promoting college and career readiness, specific areas/strategies/programs to consider in order to ensure access and success to college and careers, and alternative programs and settings to consider providing as educational options beyond the traditional school programs and locations. Members of the Student Achievement Committee included middle school and high school students, parents, community members, higher education staff, teachers, administrators, and central office leadership team members.

### **Findings**

- While Advanced Placement and other high challenge academic offerings at our secondary schools are diverse and rigorous, not all students access these offerings.
- There are multiple programs in our district that are highly successful and the demand for access to these programs/learning environments far exceeds the space capacity of these programs. There is strong desire for more/all students to experience the same engaging, personalized, and rigorous elements that these programs/learning provide.
- While information about district and school classes, programs, and district offerings is available in multiple formats, not all families and students are able to access and engage with these resources for meaningful long-term planning for their LWSU school experience, and for college, career, and beyond.
- Strong home/family connections that ensure a two-way flow of information are essential and in our current system, there are multiple barriers to deep and shared engagement.

### **Recommendations**

- Develop a K-12 family engagement strategy that recognizes the developmental needs of students, ensures active participation of students and families, and is consistent across schools.
- Provide opportunities and experiences for students at all school levels to actively explore options for their future in ways that are relevant to them.
- Develop a systemic strategy that ensures all students experience individualized attention and build strong relationships with adults.
- Ensure students have systemic and intentional access to adult role models from a variety of backgrounds and careers to help them explore and plan for their future, starting in elementary school and continuing as a consistent element through high school.
- Clearly identify 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, knowledge, and attributes, with aligned student outcomes determined, that will be intentionally taught to all students as part of the core instructional program.
- Develop a shared school culture that ensures high expectations and success for all children in all classrooms through aligned systems and supports.
- Ensure Universal Design for Learning is understood by all teaching staff and utilized in all classrooms.

- Provide hands-on learning for elementary students during the school day through enriched, embedded experiences that could include opportunities to learn coding, expanded learning in art, and world languages.
- Provide hands-on learning during the school day for secondary students through experiential, relevant learning opportunities that could include internships and vocational learning.
- Create extended year learning opportunities for students to minimize the “summer slide” and provide enriched learning opportunities for students.
- Increase creativity and instructional flexibility in classrooms through developing teachers’ knowledge and ability to utilize innovative approaches to teaching and learning.
- Explore connections with the larger community and international partners to develop deeper global awareness.
- Develop strategies to ensure a focus on mastery of learning.



## **Committee Name: Technology and Innovation**

The Technology and Innovation Committee included representation from students, parents, teachers, teacher specialists, technology support and operations staff, district administrators and board members. The personal and professional experiences of the group, which were diverse in perspective and technology expertise, allowed for robust discussion,

The committee reviewed the robust technology offerings and services already in place for students and staff. These include Microsoft Office 365 productivity software, one-to-one laptops issued to all secondary students, grade 6-12, and cart-based laptops for elementary students at ratios of 2:1 and 3:1, grades 3-5 and grades K-2, respectively. All teachers have mobile computing solutions and classrooms are standardized with presentation equipment and audio amplification to aid in instructional delivery. School campuses and over 30,000 computers are connected via a resilient, secure, high-speed private fiber network that supports; learning activities, over 400 curricular applications and tools, filtering for student safety, e911 and phone calling capability, building mechanical systems monitoring, transportation, and central office business systems.

Recent initiatives funded by the capital technology levy include replacement of classroom presentation equipment with new interactive Smart Boards and expanding one-to-one student computers to fifth grade classrooms. DreamBox Learning, a supplemental digital math tool, was also funded for elementary schools. DreamBox Learning is the district's first truly adaptive tool that responds to and personalizes for the unique needs of individual learners.

The work of the committee focused on identifying opportunities and priorities to prepare students (and teachers) for the future through enhancements in digital learning and instructional technology, new programs or partnerships, and content areas that may be enhanced with technology. The committee deliberated, refined and prioritized the following findings and recommendations to move forward for strategic consideration.

### **Findings**

- Technology broadens learning opportunities and enables an evolving, global classroom.
- Students at all ages benefit from technology enabled learning.
- Technology choices should support and align with student learning outcomes.
- Technology resources should promote collaboration, experimentation, and personalization, foster inclusion, expand access to knowledge, remote learning, and motivate and engage students.
- Students should be taught to learn with technology and be good consumers of technology/information and not just users for technology's sake.
- Great, sustained, partnerships, guided by data, are needed to extend learning for future readiness.
- There is opportunity for some content areas to be enhanced by technology.
- Education leaders must lead and model the appropriate use of technology and create opportunities for ongoing innovation.
- Teachers can benefit from coaching to build proficiency for using technology in the classroom; teachers are the primary change agent for classroom innovation.

## **Recommendations**

- Establish required curriculum K-12 that includes: digital citizenship, computer awareness and self-moderation, media literacy, how to learn with technology - searching online and deciphering information, social impact of technology, skills universal to any platform, and basic technology skills and troubleshooting.
- Identify standards/expectations for all; including equity and consistency of use, access, exposure, and opportunities to learning technologies.
- Increase professional learning and expectations for competency for teachers on instructional technology and selection and use of digital resources that are standards aligned.
- Increase access to computers and digital curriculum for elementary students.
- Provide online learning as an alternative to the traditional classroom setting.
- Create sustainable partnerships across all age levels based on students' career interests, needs analysis, student feedback, and available data on real-world jobs and future employment opportunities.
- Ensure partnerships are experiential, career-minded, develop transferrable skills, address a range of vocations and future jobs, include how businesses are run, offer real-world, service-minded experiences, connect to mentors, experts, local partners.
- Utilize curriculum that includes gamification, virtual and augmented reality, global field trips and experts, provides choice and multiple paths across content areas.
- Increase the use of technology and digital tools in vocational areas, culinary arts, health and fitness, behavioral science, and the arts.
- Increase computer science offerings across all grades.
- Initiate competitions among schools on technology – e.g. “Battle of the Bots.”

## **Committee Name: Safety and Security**

The Safety and Security sub-committee included parents, community members, teachers, administrators, classified staff members, and district administrators. The group members' varied experiences and expertise informed their thoughtful analysis of complex topics, which included, physical facility safety and security, social emotional safety, comprehensive emergency management planning, digital safety, community partnerships and communication. The committee's thoughtful discussions led to the findings and recommendations presented in this document.

### **Findings**

- The District has invested significant resources toward facility safety upgrades (i.e., interior and exterior entry controls, access controls, cameras, interior window shades) over the past several years.
- District and building emergency communication protocols/processes are, at times, inconsistent during or after emergency situations or drills.
- Despite available information and resources regarding school safety and security, parents often have limited knowledge as to where and how to access the information/resources.
- The District has invested significant fiscal and human resources over the past 5 years toward the social/emotional safety of students (i.e., elementary counselors, social emotional learning, behavioral health supports).
- Despite these efforts, student mental health issues (particularly depression and anxiety) have become an increasing concern across the district.
- The knowledge of staff, parents and students regarding digital safety lags behind in relationship to possible current dangers.
- School resource officers are currently assigned to each of our four comprehensive high school and two out of our seven comprehensive middle schools.

### **Recommendations**

- Continue to focus on security enhancements, particularly to older buildings and portables including ongoing facility audits and campus safety (i.e., playgrounds, visibility and access)
- Develop and implement standard communication procedures, protocols/templates to alert all stakeholders (District, staff, parents, students) of emergency situations and drills.
- Continue to use and explore technology solutions to increase security on campuses (i.e., cameras, badging, campus access).
- Increase education/training efforts for all stakeholders regarding prevention, intervention and response to emergencies (natural disasters, strangers on campus, active shooter, etc.)
- Build capacity through fiscal and human resources to focus more on prevention, intervention and response to students' social/emotional needs. Specifically, social emotional learning, student behavioral health, drug and alcohol use and suicide prevention.
- Increase awareness and training opportunities for all stakeholders regarding safe and acceptable use of technology, particularly social media.
- Provide consistent and equitable staffing and accessibility to SROs (or security personnel) district-wide.



- Student voice is critical in the development and implementation of District safety and security efforts/upgrades.
- Continue to develop and nurture strong partnerships with local jurisdictions, behavioral health providers and community members.

## **Committee Name: Recruit, Hire and Retain**

The Recruit, Hire and Retain sub-committee included parents, community members, teachers, administrators, classified staff members, and district administrators. The group members' diverse experiences and expertise informed their thoughtful and multi-layered analysis of the complex topics related to recruitment, hiring and retention. The group engaged in rich discussions related to developing pipelines of diverse educators, addressing regional challenges related to housing costs and commute times, optimizing support and information for future employees, and strengthening family and community partnerships in order to bring parents and students into the recruitment process. The committee's thoughtful discussions and idea-generation laid the groundwork for deliberative analysis and prioritization of specific strategies, culminating in the findings and recommendations presented in this document.

### **Findings**

- Lake Washington School District has invested resources and maintained strategic focus on the goal of recruiting, hiring and retaining high-quality certificated, classified and administrative staff.
- To recruit the most highly-qualified employees to Lake Washington School District, it is also important to provide financial and logistical support for credentialing, and retention benefits for current employees.
- Lake Washington School District is actively working to recruit, hire and retain a highly effective and diverse workforce; the district has made important gains in this area over the last several years.
- In order to recruit and hire a workforce that reflects the diversity of our students and community, Lake Washington School District must engage in early hiring, ongoing outreach to community and affinity groups, and provide supports for potential and future employees who can contribute to the district's goal of hiring a diverse, highly-qualified workforce.
- To increase the diversity of Lake Washington's teacher workforce, given the current demographic makeup of credentialed teachers in Washington State and the United States, the district must develop a pipeline program to support the development and credentialing of additional educators of color.
- Lake Washington School District currently works to attract high-quality candidates to the district through social media, traditional media, job board advertisements, strategic partnerships, mentoring and professional development and job fair attendance. The district's expansion to these varied forms of candidate outreach supports the recruitment and hiring of high-performing, diverse staff members who are focused on ensuring every student is future-ready.
- To attract a large number of highly-qualified and diverse staff members, the district should expand its advertising, outreach and partnerships with professional organizations and universities.

### **Recommendations**

- Develop staff and financial supports for credentialing and transcript translation for highly-qualified candidates and those serving in high-needs areas.
- Explore the feasibility of loan forgiveness programs and/or financial support for teachers pursuing additional endorsements in high-needs areas.

- Open professional development opportunities in Lake Washington School District to educators in other districts, as well as others interested in learning more about the education profession.
- Conduct further analysis of ways to support the retention of highly-qualified employees, including job-sharing, professional growth and retention bonuses (in the form of compensation or additional leave).
- Develop a pipeline for educators of color by partnering with a local university which offers an Alternate Route to Certification Program, in order to support Paraeducators and Instructional Assistants who wish to become teachers.
- Conduct further analysis of ways to provide scholarships in order to diversify LWSD's workforce, such as scholarships to support educators of color pursuing the Alternate Route program or graduates of Juanita High School's Recruiting Washington Teachers program (with set years of service commitment).
- Provide staff specifically focused on outreach to community groups, high school and college students of color, affinity groups, developing a job shadowing program, and support for applicants from other states and countries.
- Develop internal and external programs to actively recruit and mentor future administrators of color.
- Increase the diversity of Lake Washington representatives at job fairs and on interview panels.
- Develop stronger partnerships with schools of education at local universities.
- Engage in search engine optimization to ensure the strengths of Lake Washington School District are apparent to potential applicants.
- Provide additional resources to advertise Lake Washington School District's job opportunities in a larger number of areas, such as social media, niche job boards and national position-specific sites.
- Highlight the unique strengths of Lake Washington School District, such as supports for teachers, professional funds, benefits for part-time employees, and the diversity of educational programs in the district.
- Highlight student voice in advertising for Lake Washington School District to attract diverse employees who are passionate about serving our community and its students.
- Increase the participation of teachers and students in the recruitment process (job fairs, alumni events, cooperating teachers).



## **Committee Name: Facilities and Finance**

The Facilities and Finance Committee included representation from students, parents, teachers, building and district administrators. The group discussed and considered non-traditional types of programs and settings that might be appealing to our communities. They also discussed ways that we can effectively communicate with our community about facility needs and district finances. The group also looked at examples of shared spaces and school urban settings and the characteristics of these programs that should be considered.

### **Findings**

- The community that we live in is highly sought after and therefore the district enrollment has been increasing significantly the last 10 years and continued growth is expected.
- The district needs additional facilities due to unprecedented growth in our community.
- Communication regarding district facility projects; bond e-news; open houses is important.
- Outdated and undersized facilities limit the educational opportunities we can offer students.
- The district produces an understandable budget and financial documents to effectively communicate with our community.
- The district has a history of strong financial management as evidenced by the Meritorious Budget Award, high credit ratings and consistently clean state audits.
- School finance is complex and is challenging to communicate and understand.

### **Recommendations**

- Continue to look for ways to expand community partnerships to create spaces for students to learn.
- Explore community partnerships for facilities with local jurisdictions (e.g. fields, pools).
- Explore non-traditional options for facilities for schools, training spaces, offices (e.g. businesses, high rises, retail, etc.)
- Expand awareness of school utilization, capacity and condition through events and partnerships that bring people into our schools.
- Continue to seek input from students, community, etc. on facility challenges, design, how we build, future proofing and need for portables. Seek ways beyond normal district communication channels.
- Encourage community volunteers in schools to highlight the programs we have.
- Explore the use of flexible programing (e.g. night school, online learning) to give different options for high school schedule/start time.
- Explore the use of flexible programing to create more capacity in schools and offer alternatives for students.
- Continue to explore choice school options and creative spaces.
- Work with community partners to explore affordable housing options for staff.
- Continue to produce a budget document in line with the Meritorious Budget Award Criteria.
- Expand the use of infographics, animation or other simplified methods of communication when sharing financial information with community.

- Continue to celebrate successes and share with the community. Use students when possible to tell the story about what is going well.
- Target specific demographic with communications.

## **Committee Name: Communication and Engagement**

The Communication and Engagement sub-committee included parents, community members, teachers, administrators, and district administrators. The group members' diverse experiences and expertise informed their discussions around the methods and strategies LWSD should use to effectively communicate information about LWSD to the community, respond to our community in both crisis and non-crisis situations, and engage with our families who may not speak English as their primary language. The group also tackled effective strategies for school-specific communications. The committee's thoughtful discussions led to the findings and recommendations presented in this document.

### **Findings**

- Given the various locations of school and district information, parents may be confused about where to turn for specific information about their child's education and crisis situations.
- There are many different tools being used by teachers and schools and little training provided to parents on how to use and access the tools.
- Families have different preferences for how they want to access and receive information. Some may want newsletters while others might want each school to have its own presence on social media. The same information should be available in multiple ways.
- LWSD and its schools can develop strategies to increase personal connections with families and community members, especially those who are underrepresented.

### **Recommendations**

- Ensure proactive, varied and consistent methods of communication.
- Develop an app for parents and students to streamline the user experience with all the different tools currently being offered to students and parents.
- Reach our audiences where they are – in person, through social media, through traditional media and in other ways.
- Provide communication training to staff at the school level to ensure messages are being sent and received in appropriate methods across the district.
- Offer training on tools that are currently used and think about streamlining future tools that the district plans to use.
- Let families and community members know how we will communicate with them in an emergency.
- Provide opportunities for community and parent feedback and input.
- Go beyond surveys to gather feedback and guidance from parents, community members, staff and students.
- Find ways to encourage genuine community engagement on topics that are critical to the success of our students (i.e., in-person meetings like “Soup with the Supt.” or “Coffee with the principal” events). Post these videos, offer webinars, or offer online town halls.
- Connect with all demographics in our increasingly diverse community through thoughtful outreach.



- Be radically welcoming and provide uncommon service.
- Offer new family welcome events throughout the year in a variety of locations and methods.
- Partner with local companies and organizations to welcome new employees and provide them with information about our schools.
- Develop parent liaisons within our schools to support new parents and ensure that parents get the information they need for students to be successful.