



2025-2026

Superintendent 100 Day Report:

Listening, Learning, and Looking Ahead



LAGUNA BEACH
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT



FOREWORD

When my family and I decided to join Laguna Beach, it wasn't just a professional move. We were choosing a new home, a new set of schools for our children, and a new community to belong to. Relocating from Kentucky meant leaving family, friends, and familiarity to embrace the unknown—and it also meant opening ourselves up to the possibilities and energy of a place long admired for its natural beauty, spirit, and creativity.

Laguna Beach is, quite simply, extraordinary. From its legendary beaches and art festivals to its deeply rooted community traditions, this place lives and breathes high expectations and a passion for the extraordinary.

Sarah and I have been fortunate to live and work in amazing places. In Colorado, we've led schools with views of Vail and Beaver Creek and listened to concerts at Red Rocks from our backyard. Most recently we lived among the green, rolling hills of Kentucky's horse and bourbon country. We have had more than our share of blessings.

But the chance to raise our children here—where they can attend schools that match the quality and opportunity of the best in the world—and in a community that aligns with our values as educators and human beings, was compelling.

The early months have been filled with meaningful moments: standing at the edge of Thalia Beach while our kids played in the surf; seeing our old whitewater kayak, once on Colorado rivers, become a small seagoing vessel along this coast; and experiencing the warmth of families, students, and staff who welcomed us to this community and want us to thrive.

I come to this role as superintendent with deep experience doing hard work in challenging circumstances. Laguna Beach is navigating a difficult time for trust, which can make cooperation uneven and the future feel hazy. Yet I believe our best days are ahead—if we are willing to work together in the interests of our children.

During my interview with the Board of Education, I was asked what matters most in a superintendent. My answer was simple: love. Some may find that trite. But I have learned that when school leaders approach their work with genuine care for students and community, things get better.

It is in this spirit that I present this 100 Day Report.

Jason Glass, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools



LAGUNA BEACH
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT





TABLE OF CONTENTS

4	Introduction — A Journey of Listening and Learning
5	The Listening Journey — How We Gathered Input
6	Theme 1: Trust, Coherence, and Culture
7	Theme 2: Arts, Environment, and Community
8	Theme 3: Pathways, Student Voice, and Place
9	Theme 4: Balancing Innovation with Well-Being
10	Our North Star — The Learner Profile
10	What Comes Next — From Listening to Action
11	Closing
12	Appendix: Evidence Mapping of Report Claims

INTRODUCTION

A Journey of Listening and Learning

Laguna Beach is not just our town; it is a way of life. The arts festivals, beach-day gatherings, high school games under the lights, parades, and graduations—all are threads in the fabric of our shared identity.

Schools here are not merely educational institutions. They are the heart of the community—places we entrust with our children. They are also our gathering spaces, stages, proving grounds, and perennial springs of inspiration and hope. There is no gap between school and community; they are inextricably woven together.

This report reflects my first 100 days in Laguna

Beach Unified School District (LBUSD). It is not a final plan or a list of promises. Instead, it mirrors what staff, students, parents, and community members shared—and pairs those voices with an honest look at our operations and systems. It acknowledges extraordinary strengths while naming areas where trust has been strained and coherence has frayed. It looks forward while staying grounded in the reality of now.

While this report captures my impressions and learning as a new community member and school leader, at its core it is about listening and mapping a possible course for our future based on what we've learned together.



THE LISTENING JOURNEY

How We Gathered Input

Before I began as Superintendent with LBUSD, I provided the Board with a detailed “entry plan,” which focused heavily on relationship building and connecting. The listening process associated with that effort was both structured and organic.

Conversations. I began by saying “yes” to as many conversations as possible, meeting with community and regional leaders, parents, staff, and students. Anyone who reached out, we made time to meet. We talked in coffee shops, offices, parking lots, and on neighborhood walks. While organized data-gathering mattered (see below), these early conversations were a central part of listening.

Leadership Retreat. In August, school and district leaders met for two days at Thurston Middle School to consider LBUSD’s present and future. Using a modified “three horizons” model, they sorted priorities into urgent (now), near-term (6–12 months), and longer-term (1–3 years), and articulated far-future aspirations (3–5 years). Leaders also examined how our work could become more coherent with fewer, better-aligned initiatives. We also reflected on cultural practices that could better support collaboration and innovation.

Staff Validation. After the retreat, all staff were invited to respond to a validation survey. Their feedback was remarkably consistent. Staff affirmed the direction leaders identified and candidly named limiting factors such as initiative overload, innovation fatigue, and the need for clarity. They expressed excitement about deeper learning and coherence (a strategic direction that intentionally fits together), and they noted that governance-related trust concerns were real.

Community Survey. The Start/Stop/Keep survey engaged parents, students, staff, and our broader community. Uniquely, it used open-ended prompts, inviting original ideas rather than reactions to preset options. With 237 submis-

sions and more than 1,700 individual comments, several themes emerged: the arts were the most frequent keep; “stop the drama” in governance was the most common stop; and the most frequent start was new programs and pathways such as career options, civics, balanced technology learning, and more student voice.

Town Halls. At each school, town halls surfaced and deepened these themes. Parents asked for more transparency in special education and clearer communication overall. Many celebrated our small size, strong arts program, and tradition of excellence. Some raised concerns about technology; others emphasized the need for relevance in preparing students for a fast-moving world and for supporting innovation wisely.

Operational Review. Alongside listening, I reviewed district operations and data: enrollment trends, finances, staffing, assessment results, instructional alignment, and business functions. The review confirmed much of what we heard in the listening phase: Strong systems in many areas, unevenness in others. As an example, some of our core operational functions require greater consistency and transparency while instructional alignment (ensuring learning progressions within and across grades make sense) needs renewed focus.

Together, these inputs paint a complex, yet hopeful picture. The voices were diverse and sometimes in tension. Four themes emerged repeatedly, forming a foundation for what comes next. These are:

Theme 1: Trust, Coherence, and Culture

Theme 2: Arts, Environment, and Community

Theme 3: Pathways, Student Voice, and Place

Theme 4: Balancing Innovation with Well-Being



THEME 1:

TRUST, COHERENCE, AND CULTURE



LBUSD has much to celebrate. Parents and staff highlighted our student-centered approach, pride in our schools, the relationships that bind staff and families, and the abundant community resources that make possible what many districts can only imagine.

The challenges are equally clear. Staff described fatigue and initiative overload. Parents spoke of strained trust and inconsistent or infrequent communication. The phrase “stop the drama” came up often—expressing frustration with personal conflicts and a desire for more civility in governance. The Board has made some progress in working together, and our community wants them to continue to focus on the issues that directly affect students.

Opportunities

- Rebuild trust through a governing board that works together professionally and respectfully, with clear roles and steady communication.
- Improve coherence by reducing initiative overload and aligning efforts to shared priorities.
- Strengthen some of our business services (i.e., health care spending, transportation) by building transparent, consistent systems that reliably support students.
- While special education is supported by dedicated, skilled staff and strong inclusion practices, opportunities exist to improve through greater consistency and communication with families.
- Build a culture of openness where communication is proactive, candid, and two-way — turning information-sharing into relationship-building.

This theme is about culture: moving from fatigue and division to clarity, focus, and trust. A district culture where people feel heard, systems are reliable, and leadership models stability.

A note for the future...

LBUSD is well positioned to become a leader in developing a local accountability dashboard which would be a user-friendly, community-built system that measures what truly matters here. Such a dashboard would reflect Laguna’s values—the arts, pathways, wellness, citizenship, and belonging alongside core academic outcomes. While this concept did not emerge directly from community feedback, it is an educational innovation whose time has come. LBUSD has an opportunity to show how schools can be accountable not only for test scores, but also for the whole experience of student growth and community priorities.

THEME 2:

ARTS, ENVIRONMENT, AND COMMUNITY

“Keep the arts.”

I heard this again and again. Parents, students, and staff see the arts, performing and visual, not as optional, but essential. The arts are central to LBUSD’s identity, to Laguna Beach’s culture, and to cultivating a life of meaning and appreciation for our students.

However, this theme extends beyond the arts. It includes the small-district feel that allows students to be known by name and recognized as individuals. It includes the traditions that shape who we are—graduations, performances, athletics, and celebrations. And it includes our connection to Laguna Beach itself with its artistic heritage, creative spirit, and deep community pride.

Caring for the Environment

Environmental stewardship is also woven into Laguna Beach’s identity. Just as our hills, canyons, ocean, and sky shape daily life, so too does a shared commitment to preserving them. LBUSD reflects



this ethos. The district has set a goal of carbon neutrality by 2030, implementing water conservation and waste diversion, and has been recognized as a California Green Ribbon School for sustainability and environmental literacy. The broader community sustains this same tradition through initiatives such as the City’s stewardship effort to protect coastal and cultural resources and a community legacy of preserving surrounding wilderness spaces. Stewardship should not be treated as an add-on, but as part of who we are in Laguna. We must maintain a commitment to connect curriculum, facilities, and student action to sustainability, and to preserve the beauty of this place for generations to come.

Our Community

The opportunity is to lean into our uniqueness. Larger districts often struggle to preserve identity and tradition while LBUSD can make them central. Protecting and elevating the arts, celebrating community-centered traditions, maintaining small-district strengths, and connecting learning to Laguna’s cultural identity will strengthen what makes us who we are.

The Board of Education has already taken an important step in this direction with the creation of an Ad Hoc Committee on the Arts. This intentionally diverse group of educational and community perspectives will begin its work this fall, with the goal of building on the strong foundation of school and community arts experiences that already exist for our students—and exploring where we can go next, to continue living out our tradition as a community of the arts.



THEME 3:

PATHWAYS, STUDENT VOICE, AND PLACE

Learning Pathways

Parents and students asked for more options: more pathways into careers, civics, and technology. Students voiced a clear desire for greater influence in shaping school culture and decisions.

Leadership and staff reinforced these ideas. They emphasized *deeper learning*—project-based and experiential learning that connect content to real-world challenges. They also stressed strengthening the instructional and academic core: literacy, vertical alignment, and professional learning, ensuring a strong foundation that students can apply meaningfully.

Student Voice

Students shared that their perspectives can sometimes feel marginalized. School is their daily experience; they want an organized, ongoing way to influence the decisions that affect them. While there are elements of student voice already in place at LBUSD, students want more than to be simply the object of adult decisions, they want an influential seat at the table. While the



district has a number of mechanisms for including student voice, such as the Superintendent's Student Advisory and prominent roles for student representation on the school board, the district should also consider how we can better include student voice and perspectives in decision making. We need to determine how we can empower students with decision making authority, where appropriate.

Investing for the Future

This theme also includes the places where learning happens. While the Board recently advanced a long-awaited pool modernization using general funds, it must also consider broader facilities needs and how to fund them. Our campuses are beautiful, but they are aging and increasingly outpaced by modern school designs.

The Board and community have choices. One approach is to tackle projects incrementally over many years using expected funds. Another is to consider whether to renew the district's expiring 2001 bond in 2026. That 2001 bond transformed our campuses for a generation. Renewing it would give voters the opportunity to invest in facilities that support future learning, sustainability, and community use for decades to come. Ultimately, this is a community decision, but one that has the potential to shape LBUSD's future and help keep Laguna an attractive place for families.

The opportunity: expand learning and career pathways, elevate student voice, strengthen instructional foundations, and invest in our school facilities to bring our Learner Profile to life.



THEME 4:

BALANCING INNOVATION WITH WELL-BEING



The Role of Technology

Concerns about technology and balance came through loudly. Parents worry about cell phones and screen time and their impact on relationships, focus, and rest. Staff spoke of initiative fatigue and the need for thoughtful pacing and coherence when introducing innovations. Students offered a complementary perspective: they don't want technology eliminated; they want it used well, creating real opportunities in AI, computer science, and media literacy.

The work is to hold two truths at once. LBUSD can reduce distractions and overuse of technology and invest in innovations that matter. We can ensure innovation is purposeful, strategic, and coherent. At the same time, we must prioritize wellness by supporting executive function, social-emotional health, and whole-child development, and replacing interactions given over to devices with authentic human experiences.

At the center of this concern is something very human: a desire to connect, meaningfully and with purpose, in ways that prepare our students for their future.



Safety and Belonging

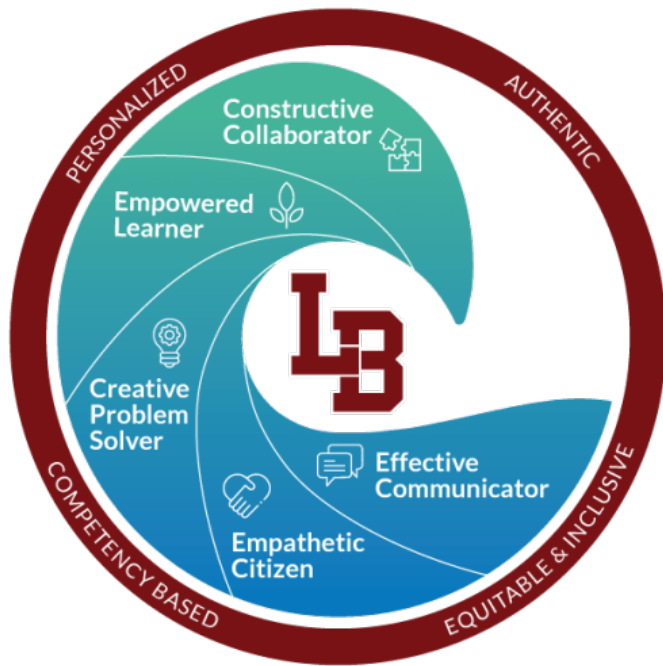
Another aspect of well-being raised in our town halls was the need to remain vigilant in addressing bullying. While these concerns were not among the most frequently mentioned across all input, they speak to the central importance of safety and belonging. Parents expressed a desire for clear communication and consistent follow-through when bullying incidents occur, and want the district to recommit to its ongoing anti-bullying efforts. For LBUSD, this is part of the larger work of supporting the whole child: ensuring not only academic preparation and balance with technology, but also a school environment where every student feels safe, respected, and valued.

In the end, balancing innovation with well-being means creating schools where students are both future-ready and well-supported in the present. By using technology with intention, focusing on authentic human interaction over screens, and fostering safe, inclusive environments, LBUSD can ensure that every learner grows not only in knowledge and skills, but also in confidence, connection, and belonging.

OUR NORTH STAR

THE LEARNER PROFILE

LBUSD already has a defined North Star: the Learner Profile. It identifies five competencies we want for our students: Effective Communicator, Empowered Learner, Creative Problem Solver, Constructive Collaborator, and Empathetic Citizen.



What struck me in these first 100 days is how often the Learner Profile surfaced organically. Parents asking for civics and media literacy were calling for empathetic citizens. Students asking for more voice were asking to be empowered learners. Staff emphasizing deeper learning were describing creative problem solvers.

The Learner Profile isn't separate from these themes; it is woven through them. Our challenge is to make it real in classrooms, programs, and decisions. This work has been important to LBUSD; it should not be forgotten or abandoned, but rather placed at the center of what we do.

Staff also impressed upon me that one of the district's existing collective commitments, "Every Student, Every Day," is not just a slogan. They see it as a lived value: a call to provide consistent, individualized support that motivates their work and defines LBUSD's culture. This enduring commitment aligns directly with the Learner Profile and serves as a reminder that our vision for the future is built on a foundation already strong in care and purpose.

WHAT COMES NEXT FROM LISTENING TO ACTION

This report is not the plan; it is the foundation for one. The work ahead will begin with continued community conversations to confirm and refine these themes. From there, we will distill them to the key priorities that matter most. If everything is a priority, then nothing truly is. Just as important, we must think carefully about sequencing: what should come first, what can follow later, and how we can sustain progress over time.

With those clear and disciplined choices, we can move into the development of a new strategic plan

that aligns with state requirements (such as the LCAP) and reflects our vision and priorities for education in Laguna Beach for the future.

A cross-cutting commitment throughout this process will be student voice. Our students are not simply recipients of education; they are partners in shaping it. Their perspectives must be included as we prioritize and plan.

The next chapter of LBUSD will not be determined by one person or one group alone. Rather, it will be determined together as a community of learners.



CLOSING

These first 100 days have confirmed what I believed when I accepted this role: Laguna Beach is an extraordinary community with remarkable schools. The challenges are real: strained trust, divisions that distract, and a lack of coherence that weakens our efforts. Yet I have also seen the strengths that define us: a small but deeply committed district, dedicated educators, proud traditions, thriving arts, and a community that treasures its children.

When we choose to pull together, these strengths are greater than any obstacle. Laguna Beach has

all it needs to renew trust, restore unity, and demonstrate what a focused and caring public school system can achieve.

The story of LBUSD's future will be written not by chance or by our circumstances, but by our willingness to take ownership: of our decisions, our conduct, and our shared responsibilities. If we embrace that responsibility together, we will not only overcome our challenges, we will define what public education can be at its best.

APPENDIX:

EVIDENCE MAPPING OF REPORT CLAIMS

This report is rooted in the voices of staff, students, parents, and community members, as well as a review of district operations and practices. To ensure transparency and accountability, the table below maps each substantive claim in the report to its source of evidence. In some cases, the same theme surfaced across multiple input methods,

reinforcing its importance. In others, a single but significant source brought an issue forward. By tracing each statement back to its origin, this appendix demonstrates that the findings of the 100-Day Report are a reflection of the community's collective voice and lived reality.

Theme 1: Trust, Coherence, and Culture

Report Claim	Evidences/Quotes (Paraphrased)	Source(s)
Fatigue and initiative overload	"Too many initiatives at once"; "initiative overload"; "innovation fatigue."	Staff Validation Survey; Leadership Retreat
Strained trust	Parents and staff voiced concerns about governance tensions; staff survey flagged "trust under pressure."	Leadership Retreat; Staff Validation Survey; Town Halls
Inconsistent or infrequent communication	Calls for "clearer, more consistent communication"; frustration with conflicting/delayed info.	Community Start/Stop/Keep Survey; Town Halls
"Stop the drama"	Most common <i>Stop</i> in survey: "drama around governance"; repeated at town halls.	Community Start/Stop/Keep Survey; Town Halls; Community Conversations
Focus on present/future	Requests to "stop re-litigating the past" and focus on students now.	Town Halls; Community Conversations
Stronger business services	"Business services require greater consistency and transparency" confirmed in superintendent review.	Operational Review
Consistency in special education	Families asked for more transparency, clarity, and support in SPED services.	Town Halls
Local accountability dashboard	Surfaced in leadership discussions and superintendent review.	Superintendent Proposal; Leadership Retreat



Theme 2: Arts, Environment, and Community

Report Claim	Evidences/Quotes (Paraphrased)	Source(s)
"Keep the arts"	Most frequent <i>Keep</i> in survey; repeated at town halls.	Community Start/Stop/Keep Survey; Town Halls
Arts are central to LBUSD's identity and Laguna's culture	Comments linking arts to student identity and community pride.	Town Halls
LBUSD's small-district feel is a core strength	Families and staff praised the value of knowing students by name.	Community Start/Stop/Keep Survey; Town Halls
Traditions shape community identity	Parents and staff emphasized graduations, athletics, performances, and celebrations.	Town Halls; Community Conversations
LBUSD is connected to Laguna's artistic heritage	Community highlighted ties to local festivals and artistic culture.	Town Halls
Environmental stewardship is central to Laguna Beach's identity and part of LBUSD's ethos	LBUSD aims for carbon neutrality by 2030; water conservation and waste diversion practices in place; district recognized as a California Green Ribbon School (Green Achiever) for sustainability and environmental literacy; community commitment to the environment.	Operational Review; Community Conversations

APPENDIX:

Theme 3: Pathways, Student Voice, and Place

Report Claim	Evidences/Quotes (Paraphrased)	Source(s)
Increase pathways (career, civics, tech)	Requests for more career/vocational programs, civics/media literacy, AI/CS.	Community Start/Stop/Keep Survey; Town Halls
Increase student voice	"Our perspectives feel ignored"; desire for structured student input.	Town Halls; Student Input
Deeper learning and experiential approaches	Leaders emphasized project-based, experiential, personalized learning.	Leadership Retreat; Staff Validation Survey; Town Halls
Instructional core	Literacy, vertical alignment, and professional learning emphasized as priorities.	Leadership Retreat; Staff Validation Survey
Aging facilities	Board discussions (pool; broader facilities); community comments on aging campuses.	Town Halls; Operational Review
Past and future bond investments	2001 bond widely acknowledged; community/Board discussion of 2026 option.	District/Board Records; Town Halls

Theme 4: Balancing Innovation with Well-Being

Report Claim	Evidences/Quotes (Paraphrased)	Source(s)
Screen time and cell phones	Calls to reduce overuse; concern for relationships, focus, rest.	Community Start/Stop/Keep Survey; Town Halls
Initiative fatigue and balance	Staff concerns about too many new programs and coherence of innovation.	Staff Validation Survey; Leadership Retreat
Students and technology	Calls for AI, CS, and media literacy opportunities.	Community Start/Stop/Keep Survey; Town Halls; Student Input
Balance innovation with wellness	Voices across groups emphasized executive function, SEL, and human connection.	Staff Validation Survey; Town Halls
Bullying and safety	Bullying not being consistently addressed; calls for recommitment to anti-bullying programs and visible responsiveness; ensuring student safety and belonging remains central to well-being.	Town Halls; Community Conversations

Learner Profile

Report Claim	Evidences/Quotes (Paraphrased)	Source(s)
Civics/media literacy align with "Empathetic Citizen"	Comments linking civics/media to citizenship skills.	Community Start/Stop/Keep Survey; Town Halls
Student voice aligns with "Empowered Learner"	Students expressed a desire to participate in decision-making.	Town Halls; Student Input
Deeper learning aligns with "Creative Problem Solver"	Discussion of project-based, experiential learning.	Leadership Retreat; Staff Validation Survey
Collaboration aligns with "Constructive Collaborator"	Group work, arts, and civic projects mentioned.	Town Halls
"Every Student, Every Day" is not just a slogan, but an enduring cultural value focused on consistent and individualized student support.	Staff emphasized that the district's collective commitment motivates their daily work and reflects the organizational culture; referenced frequently in staff conversations and validation survey comments.	Staff Validation Survey; Staff Conversations

Next Steps (From Listening to Action)

Report Claim	Evidences/Quotes (Paraphrased)	Source(s)
Confirm/refine themes with the community	Desire for transparency, validation, ongoing conversation.	Town Halls
Prioritization and sequencing are essential	Staff flagged overload/fatigue; community urged focus on key issues.	Staff Validation Survey; Leadership Retreat
Strategic plan must align state/local frameworks	Meet LCAP requirements while advancing LBUSD's Framework for the Future.	Superintendent Review; Board Direction





LAGUNA BEACH

UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

550 Blumont St. Laguna Beach, CA 92651

PHONE: 949-497-7700 | FAX: 949-497-6021

lbusd.org