

STRATEGIC PLAN



2026-2031

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Lower Merion School District's strategic planning process brought our community together to reaffirm our mission, vision, and core values and to identify the priorities that will guide our work over the next five years. The process was designed to be inclusive and transparent, providing multiple opportunities for students, families, staff, and community partners to share their perspectives.

We appreciate everyone who contributed their time and feedback. Your input directly informed the development of this plan and ensured it reflects the needs and expectations of our community.

This five-year Strategic Plan provides a clear framework to guide decision-making at the board, district, and school levels. It establishes community-aligned priorities, supports annual goal-setting, and helps ensure that resources and efforts remain focused on meaningful and measurable progress for students. The plan is designed to be both actionable and adaptable, supporting continuous improvement across all levels of the organization.

Together, we will use this plan to maintain alignment, track progress, and strengthen outcomes for all students in Lower Merion.

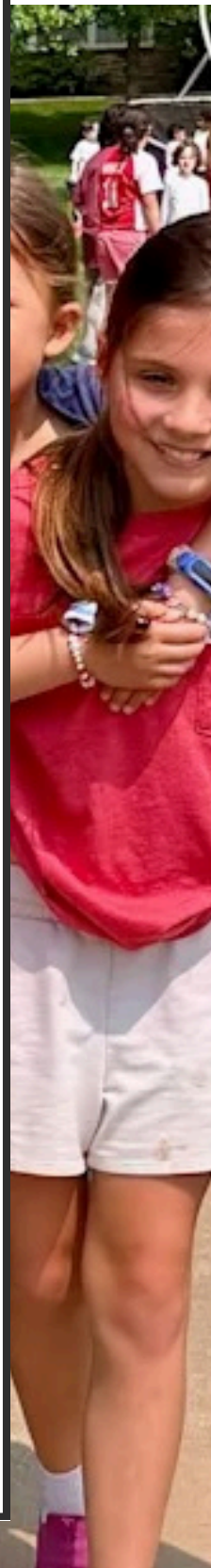


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STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The Chester County Intermediate Unit (CCIU) facilitated an eight-month planning process designed to gather broad, authentic input from the LMSD community. Multiple engagement opportunities ensured that the perspectives of students, families, staff, and community members directly shaped each phase of the plan.



Community Survey

In October, all community members were invited to complete a survey on the mission, vision, core values, and strategic priorities. The survey offered an accessible way for stakeholders to share their perspectives early in the process and helped establish a foundation for the plan's direction.



Community Input Sessions

Four in-person community input sessions were held in October, November, January, and March, each designed to give participants structured opportunities to engage in hands-on feedback exercises. Attendees examined draft components of the plan, shared perspectives on district priorities, and contributed ideas in small-group settings.



Leadership and Community Alignment

CCIU met regularly with LMSD leadership to review emerging themes and ensure alignment with community input. These check-ins helped maintain clarity and cohesion throughout the planning process.

VISION

Together, we will create a learning community where academic excellence, inclusive values, and innovative thinking converge to develop students of strong character who are equipped to thrive and make a positive impact in a rapidly evolving world.

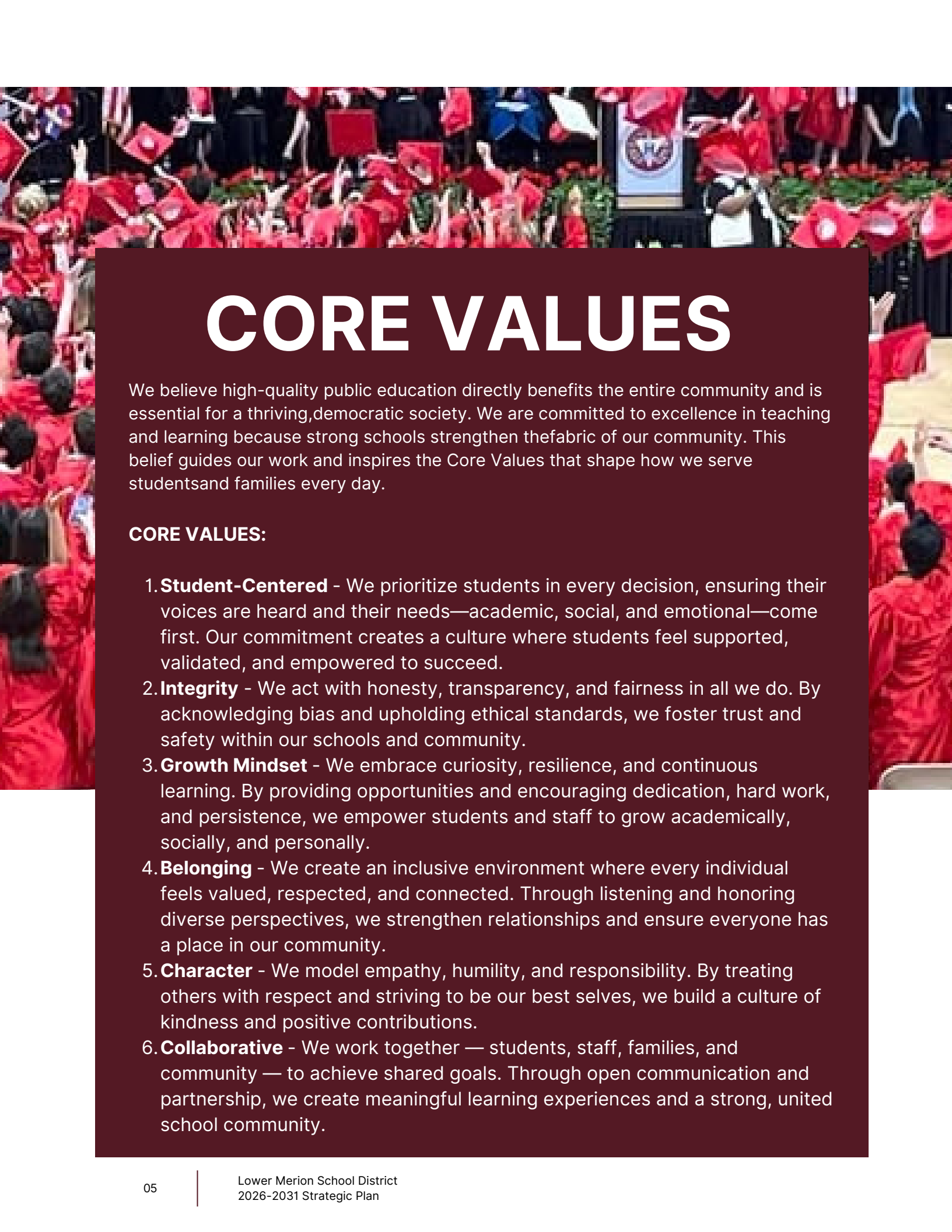


MISSION

The Lower Merion School District cultivates social and academic excellence and fosters wellbeing in all students by encouraging creativity, critical thinking and kindness, preparing students to be contributing citizens and lifelong learners in a rapidly changing world.



MOTTO: Enter to Learn, Go Forth to Serve



CORE VALUES

We believe high-quality public education directly benefits the entire community and is essential for a thriving, democratic society. We are committed to excellence in teaching and learning because strong schools strengthen the fabric of our community. This belief guides our work and inspires the Core Values that shape how we serve students and families every day.

CORE VALUES:

1. **Student-Centered** - We prioritize students in every decision, ensuring their voices are heard and their needs—academic, social, and emotional—come first. Our commitment creates a culture where students feel supported, validated, and empowered to succeed.
2. **Integrity** - We act with honesty, transparency, and fairness in all we do. By acknowledging bias and upholding ethical standards, we foster trust and safety within our schools and community.
3. **Growth Mindset** - We embrace curiosity, resilience, and continuous learning. By providing opportunities and encouraging dedication, hard work, and persistence, we empower students and staff to grow academically, socially, and personally.
4. **Belonging** - We create an inclusive environment where every individual feels valued, respected, and connected. Through listening and honoring diverse perspectives, we strengthen relationships and ensure everyone has a place in our community.
5. **Character** - We model empathy, humility, and responsibility. By treating others with respect and striving to be our best selves, we build a culture of kindness and positive contributions.
6. **Collaborative** - We work together — students, staff, families, and community — to achieve shared goals. Through open communication and partnership, we create meaningful learning experiences and a strong, united school community.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1:
ACADEMIC
EXCELLENCE AND
GROWTH**

**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2:
SAFE, SUPPORTIVE,
AND INCLUSIVE
SCHOOLS**



**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3:
ENGAGEMENT AND
CONNECTED
COMMUNITY**



**STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4:
TALENT DEVELOPMENT
AND RETENTION**



STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1

PRIORITY: Academic Excellence and Growth

GOAL: Advance academic excellence by cultivating inclusive, relevant, and rigorous learning experiences that deepen understanding, build transferable future-ready skills, and ensure meaningful growth for every student.

OBJECTIVES:

- **Innovate and Align Curriculum for Future-Ready Learning** - Deliver a dynamic, inclusive, and rigorous K-12 curriculum that connects across disciplines, reflects real-world contexts, and strengthens durable skills such as critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, adaptability, and ethical decision-making.
- **Measure, Communicate, and Act on Student Growth (Beyond Proficiency)** - Implement clear, consistent, and equitable academic systems - curriculum alignment, grading practices, and progress reporting that use multiple measures to track annual growth for all students, and clearly communicate learning and progress to students, families, and staff.
- **Close Achievement Gaps Through Access, High-Quality Instruction, and Early Support** - Reduce disparities by ensuring equitable access to rigorous coursework and high-quality instruction, identifying needs early, providing timely targeted interventions and enrichment, and monitoring outcomes across race, socioeconomic status, language, and learning needs.
- **Strengthen and Support Student Pathways Beyond Graduation** - Ensure every student graduates with a well-developed post-secondary plan by expanding awareness, access, and preparation for college, career, military, workforce training, and other pathways using early individualized supports.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2

PRIORITY: Safe, Supportive, and Inclusive Schools

GOAL: Enhance school environments where students feel safe and supported. Focus on safety, fostering trust, belonging, and well-being so every learner can engage fully and confidently in their education.

OBJECTIVES:

- **Build a Culture of Respect, Belonging, and Inclusion** - Create learning environments where every student feels seen, heard, and valued by promoting inclusive practices, reinforcing shared norms, and responding swiftly, consistently, and transparently to harassing, bullying, or discriminatory behavior.
- **Ensure Trusted Adult Connections for Every Student** - Intentionally structure and monitor student support systems so every learner can identify at least one trusted adult in school.
- **Strengthen Physical Safety and Improve Emergency Preparedness** - Maintain secure facilities and continuously improve campus safety measures. Continue to practice clear, districtwide emergency protocols and training for multiple scenarios, ensuring consistent implementation across schools while balancing safety with timely communication and attention to student and staff emotional well-being before, during, and after incidents.
- **Strengthen Digital Safety Systems** - Continue to build strong digital safety infrastructure and increase student capacity to navigate the digital world responsibly through clear expectations, instruction, and age-appropriate digital safety education.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3

PRIORITY: Engagement and Connected Community

GOAL: Strengthen meaningful engagement and connection among students, families, and the community—cultivating belonging, student voice, and strong partnerships so every learner has opportunities to participate and contribute within and beyond the classroom.

OBJECTIVES:

- **Elevate Student Voice, Leadership, and Agency** - Embed authentic, ongoing roles for students to provide feedback, lead initiatives, and help shape learning experiences - ensuring student input is valued.
- **Expand Access and Participation in Advanced Academics and Activities** - Increase participation in advanced academics, clubs, athletics, arts, and service by reducing barriers, proactively identifying non-participating students, and providing targeted outreach and supports to sustain academic growth and engagement.
- **Strengthen Family and Community Partnerships Through Clear, Two-Way Communication** - Build inclusive collaboration among schools and families, through predictable messaging methods and structures (events, advisory groups, partnerships), and transparent communication that supports shared responsibility for the success of all students.
- **Build Belonging** - Create welcoming school environment and accessible opportunities that help every student recognize their unique strengths, feel included, and develop a sense of connection and positive identity within the school community.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4

PRIORITY: Talent Development and Retention

GOAL: Optimize a talented, dedicated workforce by cultivating a positive, supportive culture, strengthening professional growth and leadership pathways, and building shared ownership and accountability in service of every student.

OBJECTIVES:

- **Cultivate a Positive, Supportive, and Accountable Work Culture** - Strengthen working conditions across all roles so staff feel valued, respected, and supported to do their best work - grounded in clear expectations, collaboration, well-being, and shared responsibility for student success.
- **Recruit and Retain a Diverse, High-Quality Workforce** - Maintain low turnover and build a strong talent pipeline by enhancing recruitment strategies, onboarding, mentoring, and retention supports - prioritizing a workforce that reflects the community and meets evolving student needs.
- **Invest in Meaningful Professional Learning and Leadership Pathways** - Provide robust, job-embedded professional learning that builds knowledge and skills over time, strengthens collaboration, and creates pathways and opportunities for career advancement and leadership development across positions.
- **Strengthen Recognition, Feedback, and Staff Voice in Decision-Making** - Establish consistent systems to celebrate excellence, gather student and staff input, and provide actionable feedback resulting in follow-through and strengthening trust.

ANNUAL GOAL ACTIVITY

The five-year Strategic Plan sets the broad direction for LMSD, and each year those goals are translated into specific board, district, and school goals. This annual cycle keeps the plan both actionable and adaptable, supporting continuous improvement while ensuring steady, measurable progress that keeps student experiences and outcomes at the forefront.

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC GOALS



ANNUAL BOARD GOALS



ANNUAL DISTRICT GOALS



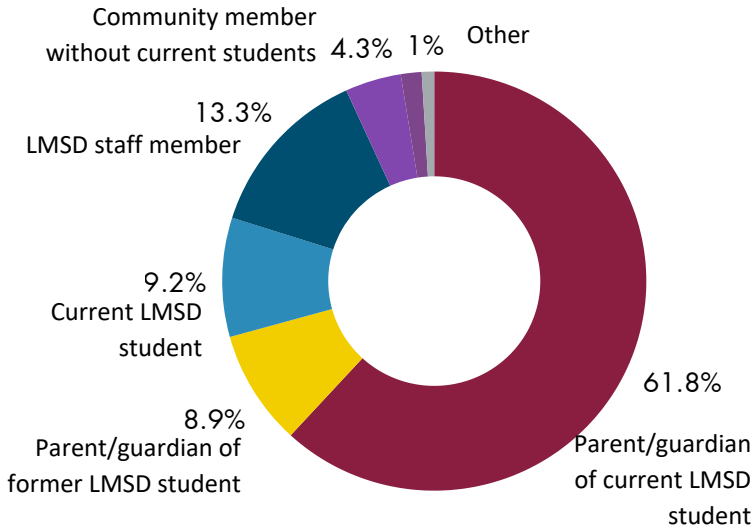
ANNUAL SCHOOL GOALS

APPENDIX A - COMMUNITY SURVEY

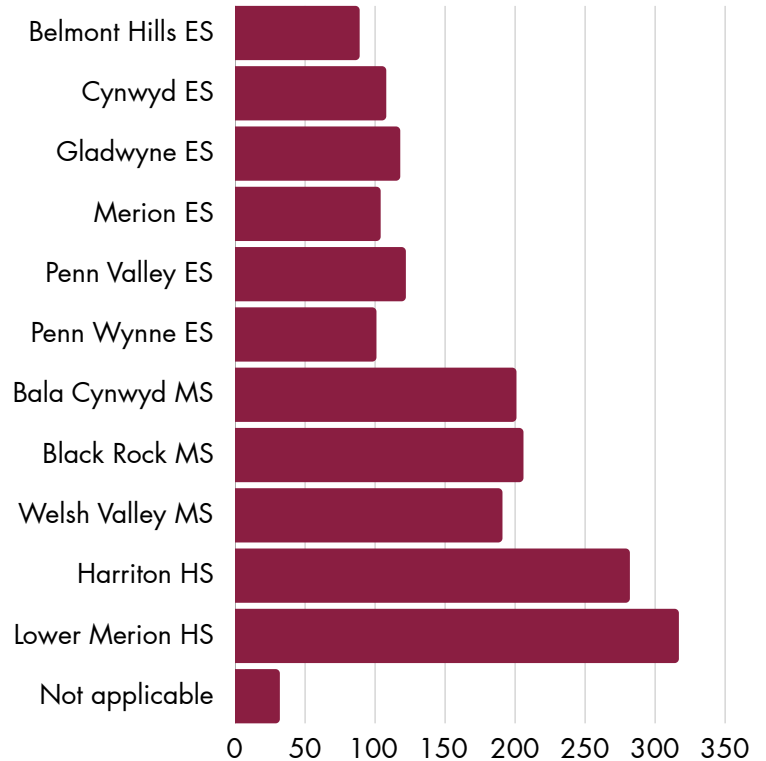


DEMOGRAPHICS

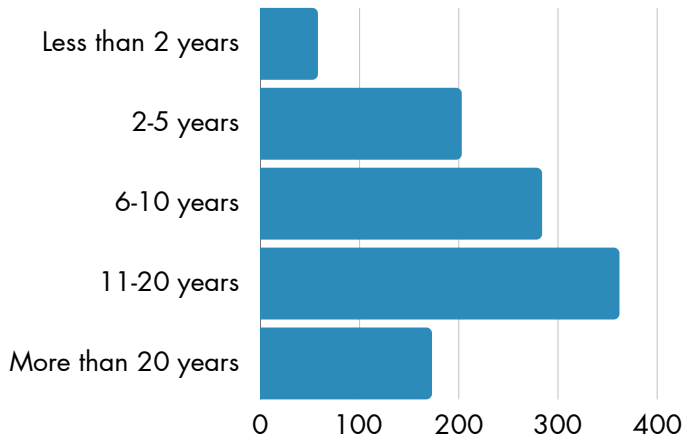
I am a... (check all that apply) (n=1,080)



Which school are you most connected to? (check all that apply) (n=1,080)



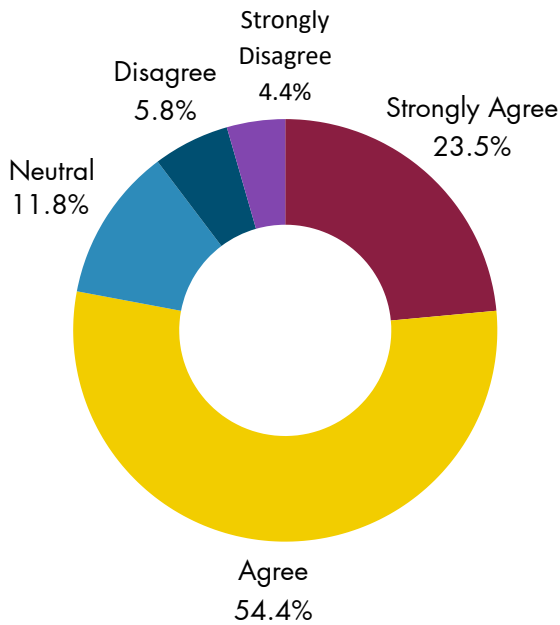
How long have you lived and/or worked in the district? (n=1,080)



**Survey conducted:
Monday, October 6 - Thursday,
October 16, 2025**

MISSION

I feel the current LMSD Mission Statement accurately captures what I believe the school district's purpose and goals should be. (n=1,080)



Below are phrases taken from the current Mission Statement. Rank the phrases based on their level of importance to you. (1 being most important; n=1,080)

Ranking		Average ranking	Top choice count
#1	Ensure that all students achieve their highest level of critical thinking and creativity	2.24	380
#2	Students are knowledgeable, contributing citizens capable of excelling in a rapidly changing world	2.85	227
#3	Committed to excellence and continuous improvement	2.94	275
#4	Students value themselves and the diversity of others	3.23	151
#5	We engage in innovative, active experiences tailored to myriad ways of learning	4.34	36
#6	We act in partnership with our community	5.41	11

Reflecting on the current LMSD Mission Statement, is there anything you feel is missing that would be most relevant today and over the next five years? (n=518 of which 141 had no additions)

Emerging Themes:

Foster inclusive & respectful community

Academic achievement & excellence

Safety & well-being

Community engagement & citizenship

Adaptability & resilience

Key Words Shared:

empathy; compassion; kindness; integrity; healthy communication/discourse

critical thinking; rigor; learning org; reach potential; lifelong curiosity/learning

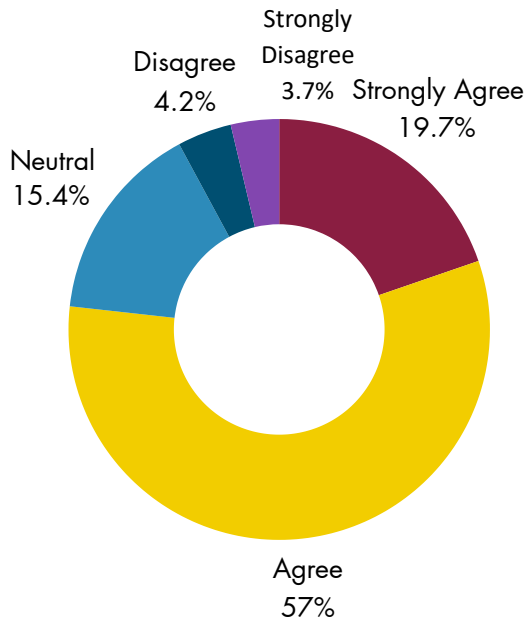
self-value; whole child; mental health; safe environment; social emotional

social responsibility; collaboration; civics; life skills; global community; thoughtful citizens; stewardship

overcome challenges; problem-solve; lead; technology; digital literacy; independence

VISION

I feel the current LMSD Vision Statement accurately captures what I believe the school district's aspirations should be. (n=1,080)



Below are phrases taken from the current Vision Statement. Rank the phrases based on their level of importance to you. (1 being most important; n=1,080)

Reflecting on the current LMSD Vision Statement, is there anything you feel is missing that would be most relevant today and over the next five years? (n=427 of which 141 had no additions)

Emerging Themes:

Clarity in vision goals & aspirations

Preparing for technology-driven future

Strong inclusive community

Collective aspiration for academic excellence

Socio-emotional development

Key Words Shared:

too vague; need clarity; be aspirational; too similar to mission

digital literacy; increasingly technical world; lead; innovate

sense of community; inclusive commitments; diverse learning needs; collaborative

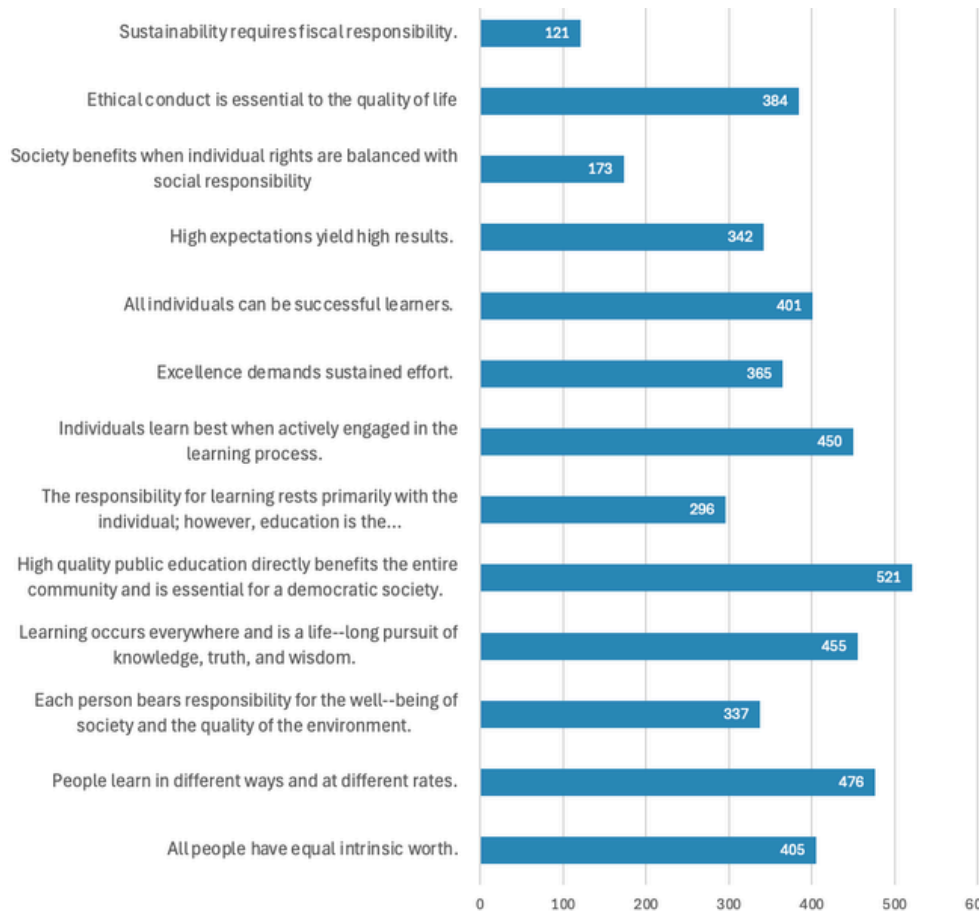
student-centric; all students supported & challenged; maximize potential; engaged learning community

mental health; character development; well-being; holistic educational environment

Ranking		Average ranking	Top choice count
#1	We create environments designed to fulfill the individual learning needs and aspirations of each student.	1.54	598
#2	Individuals learn best when their hearts, minds, and spirits are intimately engaged in the learning process.	1.88	404
#3	We develop active partnerships at all levels of our learning community and value the individual contributions of each member.	2.58	78

CORE VALUES

Below are the existing LMSD Core Values from the last strategic plan ("All Forward"). While the district sees value in the full list, we are interested in those that are most important to you. Select the top 3-5 values that are most important to you. (n=1,080)



Reflecting on the current LMSD Core Values, is there anything you feel is missing that would be most relevant today and over the next five years? (n=334 of which 134 had no additions)

Emerging Themes:

Diversity & inclusion	Academic excellence	Community involvement & collaboration	Accountability & integrity	Future readiness
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Key Words Shared:

community building; student support; feel safe & valued; respect varying viewpoints	high academic standards; recognize various learner needs and pathways; student achievement	collaboration & input; embrace community insights; open communication	measurable outcomes; transparency; align practices	navigate tech-advanced world; adaptability; innovation; responsibility
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STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Below are potential LMSD Strategic Priorities as identified from leading trends in education and recent topics identified by our community. Rank the priority areas based on their level of importance to you. (1 being most important) (n=1,080)

Ranking		Average ranking	Top choice count
#1	Academic outcomes	2.76	389
#2	Ensuring Safety	3.50	236
#3	Hiring and retaining quality staff	3.86	120
#4	Student engagement	3.95	129
#5	Student wellness	4.31	148
#6	Community engagement	6.17	14
#7	Future-driven Technology	6.34	19
#8	Fiscal Responsibility	6.43	14
#9	Updated Facilities	7.68	11

If you could add one Strategic Priority that would be the most meaningful for LMSD over the next five years, what would it be? (n=427 of which 68 had no additions)

Emerging Themes:

Key Words Shared:

Student wellness

mental health; emotional resilience; holistic development; supportive culture

Equity & inclusion

diverse representation; inclusive practices; systemic approaches

Community engagement & responsibility

service; partnerships; civic education; social responsibility; real-world applications

Curriculum & academic excellence

adapt to changing world; technology; critical thinking; inclusive

Staff & faculty development

professional development; staff wellness & satisfaction; supportive work environment; attract & retain

What's ONE thing about how we currently educate students that you hope never changes? (n=654)

Teacher quality & passion

Student supports

Community & environment

Diversity & inclusion

Quality education

APPENDIX B - COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION #1



COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION #1



DATE:
OCTOBER 29, 2025

ATTENDEES:

- 24 Parents/Guardians of Current LMSD Student
- 5 Parents/Guardians of Former LMSD Student
- 12 Current LMSD Students
- 8 LMSD Staff
- 3 LMSD Alumni
- 3 Community Members without current students
- 0 Other

55 TOTAL



AGENDA:

1. Table-top introductions
2. Mission Statement introduction and survey reflection exercise
3. Vision Statement introduction and survey reflection exercise
4. Core Values introduction and community input exercise
5. Mission and Vision Statements community input exercise



MISSION STATEMENT

Mission Exercise 1: Participants were provided with the results of the community survey pertaining to the current LMSD Mission Statement. Participants, in tabletop groups, were asked to identify what they noticed from the results – first as individuals on post-it notes and then collectively on chart paper. The following represents the top five themes from their input:

1. Academic Achievement and Excellence
 - a. Repeated focus on academic goals, excellence, and measurable outcomes.
 - b. Themes around critical thinking, creativity, rigor, and high achievement.
 - c. Some note the lack of focus on extracurriculars and balance between academics and life skills.
2. Community Connection and Partnership
 - a. Strong observation that “community partnership” ranked low in importance, despite recognition that compassion, empathy, and belonging matter.
 - b. Repeated concern over low community engagement and the need to better define what “community” means.
 - c. Many comments call for greater community involvement and connection between school and society.
3. Whole-Child Development and Life Skills
 - a. Mentions of life skills, empathy, compassion, mental health, adaptability, problem-solving, digital literacy, and civics.
 - b. Desire to broaden focus beyond academics to social-emotional learning (SEL), character development, and coping with failure.
 - c. “Whole child” and student well-being appear as missing or underemphasized in the current mission.
4. Mission Statement Clarity and Focus
 - a. Many describe the mission as too long, broad, and unfocused.
 - b. Comments about needing clearer, measurable goals and a sharper articulation of purpose.
 - c. Repetition of confusion about what exactly students are being prepared for.
5. Agreement and Engagement Patterns
 - a. High agreement (around 77–79% approve or strongly approve) with the current mission, but notable minority neutrality or disagreement (~20–25%).
 - b. Low participation from students and non-parent community members.
 - c. Highlights a need to capture missing voices and understand reasons for disagreement.

Mission Exercise 2: As a continuation of Mission Exercise 1, participants, in tabletop groups, were asked to identify what the data suggests should guide the reaffirmation of the LMSD Mission Statement. Individuals once again wrote individual thoughts on post-it notes and then brought them together collectively on chart paper. The following represents the top five themes from their input:

1. Academic Excellence and Achievement
 - a. Strong and recurring emphasis on academic performance, excellence, and measurable student outcomes.
 - b. Focus on critical thinking, creativity, and innovation as essential academic and cognitive skills.
 - c. Concern that achievement and excellence are not stated clearly enough in the current mission.
2. Whole-Child Development and Adaptability
 - a. Repeated mentions of social-emotional learning (SEL), well-being, resilience, persistence, and healthy lifestyles.
 - b. Emphasis on preparing students for life beyond school — not just academics but life skills, coping, and adaptability in a changing world.
 - c. Desire to nurture intrinsic motivation and support each student's individual growth.
3. Community Connection and Partnership
 - a. Frequent discussion of community involvement, engagement, and partnership — often seen as underdeveloped or unclear.
 - b. Questions about what “community” really means in this context and how to make it more active and reciprocal.
 - c. Recognition that community satisfaction with academics is high, but engagement needs strengthening.
4. Diversity, Inclusion, and Respect
 - a. Persistent mentions of diversity, equity, inclusion, respect, empathy, and ethics.
 - b. Calls to strengthen the language around inclusion — for example, emphasizing defending others and valuing differences.
 - c. The idea that being a good, open-minded, and ethical human is part of the district's educational mission.
5. Mission Modernization and Clarity
 - a. Many note that the mission language feels outdated, too broad, or unclear in its goals.
 - b. Desire to update or modernize the mission to reflect emerging themes like adaptability, innovation, and the “whole child.”
 - c. Repeated calls for clearer definitions of key terms (e.g., community, diversity, achievement) and measurable outcomes.

Mission Exercise 3: Participants were presented with three draft Mission Statements that were developed based on interpretation of the initial community survey results. The statements were:

- DRAFT #1: The Lower Merion School District cultivates excellence in all students by fostering creativity [critical thinking], kindness, and adaptability, preparing them as contributing citizens and lifelong learners in a rapidly changing world.
- DRAFT #2: We cultivate critical thinkers and creative problem-solvers in an inclusive community that values academic rigor, well-being, and social responsibility. Through continuous improvement and a commitment to excellence, we prepare students to lead with adaptability and purpose in a rapidly changing world.
- DRAFT #3: We prepare knowledgeable, contributing citizens who think critically and creatively. In a community committed to excellence, we foster the academic rigor, well-being, and social responsibility needed to thrive and lead through change.

Participants were asked to join a live Thought Exchange where they first ranked the three statements most to least aligned with what they believe LMSD should stand for, and then shared a thought that included their overall thoughts on the Mission Statement drafts and what works well, what could be improved, or what should be considered as we shape a final version. After sharing a thought, participants were asked to spend time reviewing and rating their level of agreement with the thoughts of others.

The live Thought Exchange included 45 participants, sharing 60 thoughts with 726 total ratings. On average, each thought received 12 ratings.

The results of the draft Mission Statements ranking are as follows:

Ranking	Average ranking	Top choice count
#1 Draft #3: We prepare knowledgeable, contributing citizens who think critically and creatively. In a community...	189	14
#2 Draft #1: The Lower Merion School District cultivates excellence in all students by...	204	17
#3 Draft #2: We cultivate critical thinkers and creative problem-solvers in an inclusive community that...	207	14

Mission Exercise 3, cont'd: In summarizing the themes of the ThoughtExchange thoughts, the top ranked half of thoughts were considered (rating of 3.6 and above) and the following five themes were identified:

1. Student-Centered Focus

- a. Frequent call for the mission to explicitly mention students and center on their growth, learning, and aspirations.
- b. Emphasis on preparing every student and meeting individual needs, recognizing that rigor and excellence look different for different learners.
- c. The mission should clearly connect to what students experience and achieve in the district.

2. Clarity, Brevity, and Accessibility

- a. Strong theme around simplifying the mission statement — making it short, clear, and memorable.
- b. It should be written in a language that students (even upper elementary) can understand and explain.
- c. A desire for more impactful word choice and avoidance of overly complex or wordy phrasing.

3. Critical Thinking, Creativity, and Curiosity

- a. Repeated emphasis that critical thinking and creativity are distinct skills that both deserve recognition.
- b. Calls also include curiosity and creative problem-solving as essential student qualities.
- c. The mission should inspire students to think deeply, question, and explore, not just perform academically.

4. Inclusion, Kindness, and Community

- a. Strong support for an inclusive, kind, and supportive community that values each student.
- b. Recognition that cultivating these traits (rather than just “preparing”) better reflects shared growth between teachers and students.
- c. Inclusion and compassion are seen as core parts of student success.

5. Adaptability, Growth Mindset, and Continuous Improvement

- a. Focus on adaptability, perseverance, and lifelong learning — for students, teachers, and the district.
- b. Emphasis on continuous improvement as both a student mindset and an institutional value.
- c. Encourages growth over perfection, aligning with modern educational and developmental goals.

VISION STATEMENT

Vision Exercise 1: Participants were provided with the results of the community survey pertaining to the current LMSD Vision Statement. Participants, in tabletop groups, were asked to identify what they noticed from the results – first as individuals on post-it notes and then collectively on chart paper. The following represents the top five themes from their input:

1. Individualized, Student-Centered Learning
 - a. The most consistent thread across comments is a focus on each student's individual learning needs and aspirations.
 - b. Multiple notes about "individual learning," "each students' needs," "meeting students where they are," and "student-centric" approaches.
 - c. Participants emphasize that the vision should center on students as individuals, not just as part of a system.
2. Clarity, Brevity, and Accessibility
 - a. Repeated calls that the vision statement is too long, vague, or dense.
 - b. Desire for a shorter, clearer, more memorable statement — something that "a 3rd or 4th grader should be able to read and explain."
 - c. The need for a clear "north star" or succinct tagline (e.g., "Enter to learn, go forth to serve") appears multiple times.
3. Preparing Students for a Changing Future
 - a. Concerns about the lack of emphasis on preparing students for a rapidly changing, technology-driven, global environment.
 - b. Mentions of digital literacy, adaptability, and future readiness.
 - c. The vision should clearly connect education to life beyond school — equipping students to thrive amid societal and technological shifts.
4. Inclusive and Supportive Community
 - a. Although community partnership ranked low in importance, many participants still want a stronger, more inclusive community focus.
 - b. Repeated observations that "community ranked low, but inclusion is missing."
 - c. Recognition that student well-being and belonging are key to learning and should be reflected in the vision.
5. Balance Between Academics and Whole-Child Development
 - a. The vision is seen as leaning too heavily toward academics or individual outcomes, without fully reflecting mental health, character, and emotional growth.
 - b. Calls to emphasize the "whole child" — social, emotional, and ethical development alongside academics.
 - c. Comments highlight the importance of learning environments that nurture both achievement and well-being.

Vision Exercise 2: As a continuation of Vision Exercise 1, participants, in tabletop groups, were asked to identify what the data suggests should guide the reaffirmation of the LMSD Vision Statement. Individuals once again wrote individual thoughts on post-it notes and then brought them together collectively on chart paper.

The following represents the top five themes from their input:

1. Student-Centered / Individualized Learning
 - a. Emphasis on each student's unique needs, aspirations, and strengths.
 - b. Phrases like "student-centric," "individual learning needs," and "full engagement in the learning process" appear repeatedly.
2. Holistic Development / Whole Child Focus
 - a. Attention to mental health, socio-emotional growth, character, resilience, and inclusivity.
 - b. Focus is not just on academics but also on personal, social, and emotional development.
3. Clarity and Conciseness of Vision Statement
 - a. Repeated feedback that the vision statement is too long, vague, or complicated.
 - b. Desire for a short, aspirational, clear, and motivational statement tied to actionable goals.
4. Preparation for the Future / Technology and Innovation
 - a. Need to prepare students for a rapidly changing, tech-driven world.
 - b. References to AI, digital literacy, and future-oriented skills.
5. Inclusivity and Community Values
 - a. Inclusive learning environments and fostering a strong community are valued, though ranked slightly lower than student-centric focus.
 - b. Emphasis on kindness, empathy, social responsibility, and students being good community members.

Vision Exercise 3: Participants were presented with three draft Vision Statements that were developed based off interpretation of the initial community survey results. The statements were:

- DRAFT #1: Together, we will create a learning community where every student discovers their potential and graduates ready to positively impact our interconnected world.
- DRAFT #2: We envision an inclusive learning community where every student develops critical thinking, creativity, and character to lead and innovate in a technology-driven world—prepared not just for the future, but to shape it.
- DRAFT #3: We aspire to be a model learning community where academic excellence, inclusive values, and innovative thinking converge—developing students of strong character who are equipped to thrive, lead, and make a positive impact in a rapidly evolving world.

Participants were asked to join a live ThoughtExchange where they first ranked the three statements most to least aligned with what they believe LMSD should stand for, and then shared a thought that included their overall thoughts on the Vision Statement drafts and what works well, what could be improved, or what should be considered as we shape a final version. After sharing a thought, participants were asked to spend time reviewing and rating their level of agreement with the thoughts of others.

The live ThoughtExchange included 37 participants, sharing 47 thoughts with 549 total ratings. On average, each thought received 12 ratings.

The results of the draft Vision Statement ranking are as follows:

Ranking	Average ranking	Top choice count
#1 Draft #3: We aspire to be a model learning community where academic excellence, inclusive values, and innovative thinking converge...	176	17
#2 Draft #2: We envision an inclusive learning community where every student develops...	208	9
#3 Draft #1: Together, we will create a learning community where every student discovers...	216	11

Vision Exercise 3, cont'd: In summarizing the themes of the ThoughtExchange thoughts, the top ranked half of thoughts were considered (rating of 3.6 and above) and the following five themes were identified:

1. Student-Centered Focus

- a. Emphasis on preparing every student to reach their individual potential.
- b. Success is defined personally, not uniformly.
- c. Statements like “students are our reason for being” highlight this priority.

2. Equity and Inclusion

- a. Acknowledging the district’s changing diversity, demographics, and needs.
- b. Ensuring all students see themselves represented and supported.
- c. References to DEI (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion) initiatives.

3. Holistic Development / Character Building

- a. Importance of developing character, curiosity, and social-emotional well-being.
- b. Preparing students not just academically but to positively impact the world.
- c. Caring for others and building good citizens is highlighted.

4. Academic Excellence and Learning

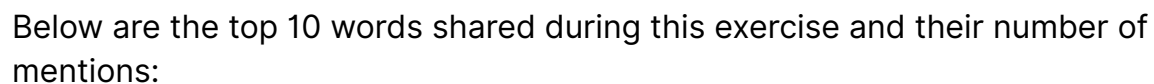
- a. Statements about academics and learning are central to the school mission.
- b. Continuous improvement and fostering curiosity are tied to academic growth.

5. Clarity, Action, and Impact

- a. Need for strong, action-oriented language (“we create” vs. “we aspire”).
- b. Emphasis on concise, clear, focused statements rather than vague aspirational language.
- c. Outcome-focused messaging: graduates who are prepared and make a positive impact.

Downloaded from <http://ajph.org/> on November 10, 2015

Below is the final word cloud developed by 47 participants:



- Lower Merion School District
-
- 2026-2031 Strategic Plan

APPENDIX C - COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION #2



COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION #2



DATE:
NOVEMBER 19, 2025

ATTENDEES:

- 11 Parents/Guardians of Current LMSD Student
- 3 Parents/Guardians of Former LMSD Student
- 21 Current LMSD Students
- 6 LMSD Staff
- 2 LMSD Alumni
- 2 Community Members without current students
- 0 Other

45 TOTAL



AGENDA:

1. Table-top introductions
2. Core Values review and community input exercise
3. Strategic Priorities overview and community input exercise



CORE VALUES

Core Values Exercise: Based on the collective input from the community survey and the October community input session, participants were presented with a narrowed set of six Core Values – Student-centered, Integrity, Growth Mindset, Belonging, Character, and Collaborative. Participants, in tabletop groups, were asked to help develop shared meaning for an assigned Core Value by completing the following prompts:

- In LMSD (insert core value) it means that we commit to (insert).
- A culture of (insert core value) ensures that the school community feels, and students benefit from (insert).

Participants embraced the proposed six Core Values, and feedback on definitions revealed the following:

STUDENT-CENTERED

- In LMSD, student-centered means that we commit to:
 - Communicating with students
 - Putting students needs first
 - Listening to students
 - Making every decision based on what best serves students
 - Supporting students academically and health-wise
 - Not outcome or loud parent centered
- A culture of centering students ensures that the school community feels...:
 - Prioritized, validated & strong
- ...and students benefit from:
 - Support
 - Being listened to
 - Guidance
 - Factual education

CHARACTER

- In LMSD, character means that we commit to:
 - Being our best selves
- A culture of character ensures that the school community feels...:
 - Secure
 - Responsible
 - Accountability
- ...and students benefit from:
 - Treating others as you wish to be treated
 - Strengthening the school community
 - High standard of education

BELONGING

- In LMSD, belonging means that we commit to:
 - Valuing everyone's authentic self
 - Listen to people even when it's inconvenient
- A culture of belonging ensures that the school community feels...:
 - Secure
 - Included
 - Connected
- ...and students benefit from:
 - Being heard and seen (respected)

COLLABORATION

- In LMSD, collaboration means that we commit to:
 - Partnership
- A culture of collaboration ensures that the school community feels...:
 - Valued
 - Engaged
 - Heard/seen
- ...and students benefit from:
 - Active participation
 - Learning from each other

INTEGRITY

- In LMSD, integrity means that we commit to:
 - Serving our community ethically and equally
 - Acknowledging prejudice & bigotry, both explicit and implicit bias
 - Transparency
- A culture of integrity ensures that the school community feels...:
 - Safe
- ...and students benefit from:
 - Inclusion

GROWTH MINDSET

- In LMSD, growth mindset means that we commit to:
 - Providing and chasing opportunities
- A culture of growth mindset ensures that the school community feels...:
 - Empowered
 - Supported
- ...and students benefit from:
 - Positivity
 - Opportunities to learn & grow

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Strategic Priorities Exercise: Participants were presented with survey data specific to Strategic Priorities and were then centered on the top five draft priorities as rated by the community – Academic Outcomes, Ensuring Safety, Hiring & Retaining Quality Staff, Student Engagement, and Student Wellness.

Participants were provided with access to data relating to each of the five priorities and then spent a designated amount of time per Strategic Priority in tabletop groups answering what success would look like five years from now and what would be at stake if LMSD did not make it a priority. Responses were first considered individually on post-it notes and then collectively on chart paper. An additional segment of time was provided to capture any additional Strategic Priorities that may not have been captured within the evening's discussions.

Core themes associated with each Strategic Priority were as follows:

1. Academic Outcomes

- What Success Looks Like:
 - High graduation rates; all students prepared for postsecondary pathways
 - Strong academic performance and year-over-year growth across all student groups
 - Closing racial, socioeconomic, and other achievement gaps
 - Rigorous, engaging, innovative curriculum and instruction
 - Effective academic supports that help all students achieve high expectations
- What's at Stake if Not Prioritized:
 - Students graduate unprepared for college, career, and life
 - Widening academic and opportunity gaps
 - Declining academic performance and district reputation
 - Reduced student engagement, confidence, and curiosity
 - Long-term community impacts, including a less educated and less civically engaged population

2. Ensuring Safety

- What Success Looks Like:
 - Clear, consistent, and well-practiced safety protocols and communication systems
 - Students and staff who feel physically, emotionally, and psychologically safe at school
 - Strong trust between students, staff, administration, and families around safety issues

- Well-maintained, secure, and accessible school buildings and campuses
- Inclusive environments where all identities feel safe from harassment or discrimination
- What's at Stake if Not Prioritized:
 - Reduced ability for students to focus and learn due to fear, stress, or unsafe conditions
 - Increased incidents of harm, confusion during emergencies, and physical or emotional danger
 - Higher absenteeism, disengagement, and potential loss of students from the district
 - Declining trust in school leadership and weakened school culture
 - Greater risk of discrimination, conflict, and harmful behaviors going unaddressed

3. Hiring & Retaining Quality Staff

- What Success Looks Like:
 - Low turnover and strong retention of high-quality, motivated, and experienced staff
 - All positions filled with qualified, dedicated, and diverse educators who reflect the student population
 - Strong teacher–student relationships, high engagement, and effective classroom environments
 - Robust professional development, growth pathways, and a culture of continuous improvement
 - Competitive compensation, supportive working conditions, and a positive, collaborative culture
- What's at Stake if Not Prioritized:
 - High turnover, long-term vacancies, and inconsistent learning experiences for students
 - Declining academic outcomes, student engagement, and overall instructional quality
 - Burnout, low morale, and loss of strong teachers to other districts
 - Weakening of student–teacher relationships and reduced trust and stability for students
 - Smaller applicant pools, lower diversity, and diminished long-term district capacity

4. Student Engagement

- What Success Looks Like:
 - High participation in clubs, activities, sports, and school events
 - Strong school spirit, community connections, and a sense of belonging for all students

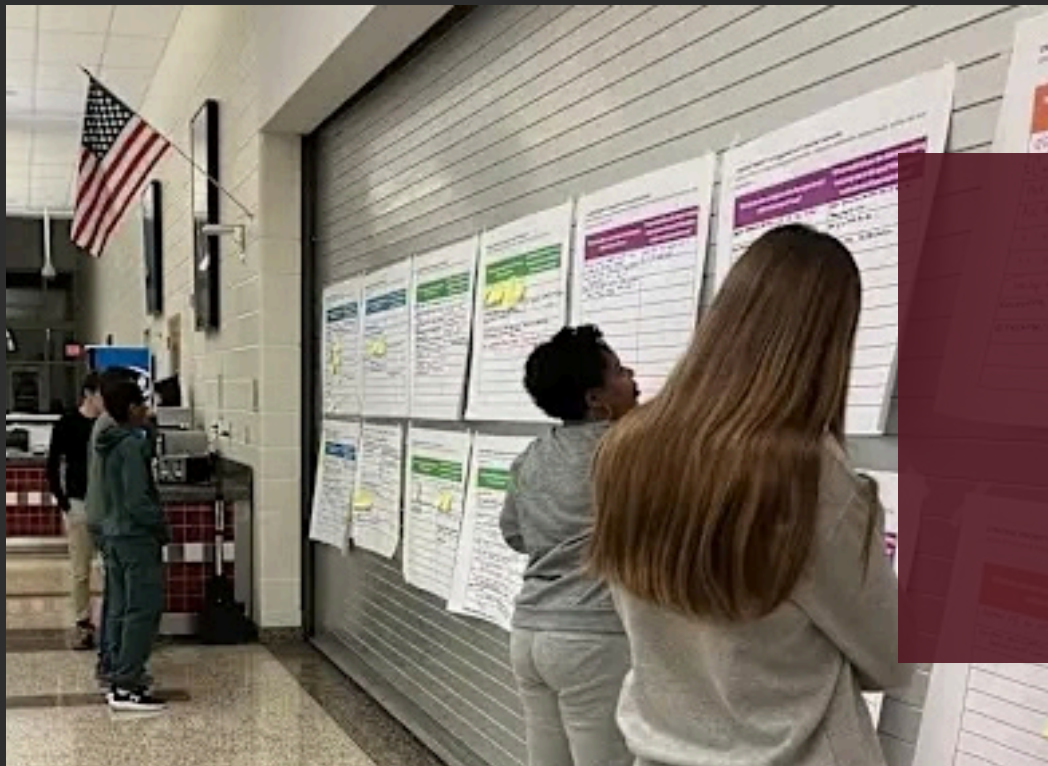
- Active engagement in learning across behavioral, cognitive, and emotional dimensions
- Diverse opportunities for student voice, leadership, choice, and authentic learning experiences
- Consistently strong attendance and low absenteeism as markers of engagement
- What's at Stake if Not Prioritized:
 - Declines in academic performance, motivation, and interest in learning
 - Increased disengagement, absenteeism, discipline issues, and weakened school culture
 - Loss of belonging, confidence, peer connection, and willingness to participate or ask for help
 - Reduced opportunities for leadership, exploration, and development of essential life skills
 - A less connected, less active, and less vibrant school community overall

5. Student Wellness

- What Success Looks Like:
 - Strong mental, emotional, and physical health supports for all students
 - Reduced anxiety, depression, burnout, and stress among students
 - Increased access to counselors, trusted adults, and supportive relationships
 - Balanced student lives with movement, mindfulness, healthy habits, and reduced device use
 - Students who feel connected, purposeful, confident, and able to advocate for themselves
- What's at Stake if Not Prioritized:
 - Rising levels of anxiety, depression, mental health crises, and burnout
 - Poor academic performance, increased absenteeism, and disengagement from school life
 - Students feeling unsafe, unsupported, or disconnected from peers and adults
 - Long-term impacts on students' ability to thrive, build resilience, and succeed beyond school
 - A school environment that becomes unhealthy, high-stress, or unsustainable for students

Additional Considerations: fiscal responsibility; dialogue and community communication; political neutrality

APPENDIX D - COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION #3



COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION #3



DATE:
JANUARY 28, 2026

ATTENDEES:

- 5 Parents/Guardians of Current LMSD Student
- 2 Parents/Guardians of Former LMSD Student
- 9 Current LMSD Students
- 4 LMSD Staff
- 1 LMSD Alumni
- 4 Community Members without current students
- 0 Other

25 TOTAL



AGENDA:

1. Table-top introductions
2. Strategic Priorities and Areas of Focus alignment
3. Opportunities for Improvement and Measures/Evidence of Success community input exercise



INFORMING GOALS

Goal Exercise: Based on the collective input from the community survey and the November community input session, participants were presented with a refined set of four Strategic Priorities, each with four Areas of Focus that serve as contextual drivers. Participants, in tabletop groups, were asked to review each Strategic Priority and associated Areas of Focus, and answer the following two questions:

1. What do you see specifically as opportunities for improvement within each area of focus?
2. What would tell you the district is making real progress in each area? What data or evidence would you want to see?

Community input was then reviewed in context of the outcomes of LMSD Cabinet completing the same exercise, and the following shared themes were identified as key informers for the five-year strategic goals and associated annual goals:

1. Academic Excellence and Growth

- a. Learning that is Relevant, Applied, and Future-Focused: Real-world, interdisciplinary learning that builds durable skills like critical thinking, collaboration, and adaptability.
- b. Broader and More Equitable Definitions of Student Success: Growth-oriented, bias-reducing measures that honor deeper learning.
- c. Clear, Coherent Pathways Beyond Graduation: Earlier, clearer access to multiple post-secondary pathways.
- d. Equity Through Access, Instruction, and Early Support: Rigorous instruction and early supports that close gaps.
- e. Transparency, Consistency, and Trust in Academic Systems: Clear, consistent curriculum, grading, and communication.

2. Safe, Supportive, and Inclusive Schools

- a. Consistency and Clarity in Safety Practices: Clear, consistent safety practices and communication that builds.
- b. Proactive Education for a Changing Digital World: Guidance that helps students navigate evolving, digital tools safely and responsibly.
- c. A School Culture Rooted in Respect, Belonging, and Trust: Environments where every student feels respected, included, and authentic.
- d. Strong, Intentional Relationships Between Students and Adults: Meaningful connections that ensure every student feels known and supported.
- e. Preparedness That Balances Safety, Communication, and Well-Being: Approaches that prioritize safety while supporting communication, trust, and emotional health.

3. Engagement and Connected Community

- a. Belonging that is Seen and Felt: Welcoming environments and accessible opportunities where all students feel connected.
- b. Student Voice and Leadership: Authentic roles for students to give feedback, lead, and shape decisions.
- c. Access and Participation in Learning and Activities: Reduced barriers and expanded paths into clubs, sports, service, and academic engagement.
- d. Partnerships with Families and Community: Inclusive, two-way collaboration with families and local partners, supported by multilingual and accessible communication.
- e. Clear Communication and Connection Structures: Predictable, transparent communication and events that link schools, families, and community groups.

4. Talent Development and Retention

- a. A Supportive and Respectful Work Environment: Conditions where staff feel valued, heard, and able to do their best work.
- b. Staff Voice and Trust in Decision-Making: More opportunities for staff input that strengthen trust and shared ownership.
- c. Attracting and Retaining a Diverse Workforce: Strategies to recruit, develop, and retain talented staff who reflect the community.
- d. Meaningful Professional Learning and Growth: Learning experiences that build continuous growth, collaboration, and leadership.
- e. Consistent Recognition and Feedback: Stronger systems for recognizing contributions and using feedback to support improvement.

APPENDIX E - COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION #4



COMMUNITY INPUT SESSION #4



DATE:
MARCH 3, 2026

ATTENDEES:

- 7 Parents/Guardians of Current LMSD Student
- 0 Parents/Guardians of Former LMSD Student
- 11 Current LMSD Students
- 6 LMSD Staff
- 0 LMSD Alumni
- 2 Community Members without current students
- 2 Other/Didn't Say

28 TOTAL



AGENDA:

1. Table-top introductions
2. Review of Strategic Plan components and how we got to where we are
3. Reflection on planning and process



PROCESS REFLECTIONS

Reflection Exercise: The majority of the meeting was spent reviewing the elements of the draft Strategic Plan and the steps taken to get to where we are. At the end of the meeting, participants were asked to reflect and provide feedback on two questions:

1. Do you have any feedback on the community input process – what worked well and/or what could be improved in future cycles?
2. What observations do you have about how the draft strategic plan reflects community input?

The following represents the top five themes from their input:

1. The draft strategic plan reflects community priorities: Community members consistently shared that the draft plan aligns well with the ideas and values expressed throughout surveys, meetings, and ongoing district conversations.
2. Opportunities to broaden awareness and participation: Several participants expressed that they learned about the sessions through informal channels and recommended expanding communication strategies so more community members—especially students—are aware of opportunities to engage.
3. Surveys were viewed as accessible and effective tools: Participants repeatedly highlighted that the survey format allowed broad input and recommended continuing to leverage surveys—and potentially additional flexible options—to make participation easier for those unable to attend meetings.
4. Appreciation for interactive meeting design, with suggestions to enhance the experience: Community members valued the interactive elements—mixed table groups, brainstorming, and opportunities to share ideas—and suggested refinements such as more time for table discussions, varied meeting times, and the use of more visuals in presentations.
5. A desire for continued clarity as the plan is refined: Some participants expressed interest in even clearer distinctions between mission, vision, and goals, as well as more concise language and information about how success will be measured.