

Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart School District Strategic Priorities Report

OVERVIEW

At the direction of the Buffalo Lake-Hector-Stewart [BLHS] School Board, the Superintendent of Schools contracted with True North Consulting Partners to complete a Strategic Plan for the district for the time period of 2026-2031. A key part of the process was gaining input from stakeholders to identify the Strategic Priorities to guide the development of the strategic plan. The following framework served as a basis for generating the “Strategic Priorities Report.”

Planning Drivers:

- Transparency in Planning
- Data Driven Decision Making
- Stakeholder Driven Collaborative Process

Part I: Environmental Scan Timeline:

- Student Listening Session Activity: February 5, 2026
- Staff Listening Session Activity: February 5, 2026
- Thought Leader Session: February 5, 2026
- Community Listening Session: February 5, 2026
- Stakeholder Surveys: February 9 to February 16, 2026
 - Parent/Guardian/Community
 - Students
 - Staff

Part I: Environmental Scan Results

Student Activity: I Like, I Wish, I Wonder

On Thursday, February 5th, 45 students in grades 10-12 met in the Media Center to begin the process of evaluating the programs, operations and services of the **BLHS** School District. Students were asked to share responses to what they liked, wished for and wondered about their school experience. A summary of their responses is as follows:

I Like...

10-12 Students

- 4 Day Week
- Student Opportunities in activities, classes and student groups
- Staff/Teachers
- Fellow students
- Small classes
- Advisory period at the end of the day
- Class work time

I Wish...

10-12 Students

- A different lunchroom
- More comfortable furniture/chairs
- More student involvement across activities
- Longer advisory period
- More nutritional meals/more food options
- More field trips
- Improve water system
- More class opportunities/options/electives
- Increased passing time
- Increased health/medical related classes
- Increased activities options–soccer
- Spring break
- Air Conditioning/Heating System
- Option to leave for lunch
- More focused teaching
- Not to return to 5 day week
- More Home Ed/FACS classes
- Improved bathrooms/locker rooms
- Switch to laptops from iPads
- New Weight Room
- Options for drinks in addition to water
- More hands-on learning, career pathways and fairs, career site visits

I Wonder...

10-12 Students

- Can we have better and more activities
- Can we increase the number of dress up days
- Can we have phones on Fridays
- Can we increase attendance at activity events
- How a remodel would impact our school
- How much longer our school will be open
- How are school will progress
- How can we improve the school's education system
- How will our sports teams perform in the future
- What are class offerings at other schools...nursing classes, etc.
- Is the air quality up to code
- What is the future of our school
- Does the faculty care about students
- Can the students start practice at the beginning of the advisory team
- Why do we use Google and not Microsoft
- Do we need to increase technology knowledge

Staff Activity: I Like, I Wish, I Wonder

On Thursday, February 5th, 12 staff members met in the Media Center to begin the process of evaluating the programs, operations and services of the **BLHS** School

District. Staff members were asked to share responses to what they liked, wished for and wondered about their school experience. A summary of their responses is as follows:

I Like...

- Great staff that care about students
- Well behaved students
- Strong connections and relationship building opportunities
- Small class sizes
- High quality, licensed educators
- Student clubs and activities
- Support for students outside of the classroom
- Supportive community with their dollars, time and talents
- Small class sizes allows for meaningful connections

I Wish...

- More class electives/course offerings
- Increased funding for building updates, more opportunities and more staff
- More parent involvement
- Updated facilities
- Utilize space better
- Improved ventilation
- A greater community understanding of how education has changed
- We didn't have to cut teachers
- Increase student awareness of the benefits of involvement of activities

I Wonder...

- How long our district will survive
- What is the future of our sports program...we are losing participation
- Will be able to keep smaller class sizes
- How long will our building last
- Have there been conversations about consolidation
- Can we get programs and staff back that we lost
- How do we create more housing and employment opportunities
- At what point will our students suffer from the cuts

Community Activity: Considerations for the Strategic Planning Core Group

On Thursday, February 5th, 23 community members met in the Auditorium to listen to a State of District Report from Superintendent Swann. Community members were asked to discuss and summarize key points that the Strategic Planning Core Group should consider. A summary of their responses is as follows:

Community Member Input

Key considerations for the Core Planning Team:

- Keep the district open
- Maintain the building
- Increase enrollment
- Strive for financial stability
- Offer increased career pathways in addition to college bound
- Provide skills-based and hands-on learning
 - Communication
 - Basic Consumer Skills
- Teaching real world problems
- Increase student opportunities
- Reverse open enrollment trends
- Increase community involvement
- Increase communication
- Attend to student mental health and wellness
- Initiate facility maintenance and capital improvement plan
- Provide support for low income students
- Prepare students for the real world
- Collaborate with local businesses and experts in job training
- Detailed evaluation of costs and cost controls
- Provide more college credit classes

Survey Results:

An online survey was made available to all stakeholders. The survey window was open from February 1 through February 14. Questions for the survey included topics such as: the overall satisfaction with the school district, areas of importance for the school district, and open-ended questions seeking comments on the current perception of the school district and future directions and priorities.

Ratings: Areas of Focus from Survey:

It is our intention to determine the greatest priorities for ensuring our students are prepared for a successful future in whatever career path they choose. Please rank each item below according to what you believe should be the key areas of focus for the school district in the next 3 to 5 years.

COMMUNITY, STAFF AND STUDENT RESULTS

Overall Satisfaction and Perception:

1 Strongly Disagree -----5 Strongly Agree

	1	2	3	4	5
I am satisfied with the overall quality of education provided by the school district					
Community/Parents/Guardians (66)	6.1	6.1	21.2	42.4	24.2
Staff (33)	0	12.1	12.1	53.5	21.2
Students (131)	7.6	3.8	21.2	42.4	6.9
The district is good stewards of taxpayer resources					
Community/Parents/Guardians	10.6	18.2	30.3	24.2	16.7
Staff	0	9.1	21.2	39.4	30.2
Students	13.7	17.6	39.7	26	3.1
Our school provides a safe and supportive learning environment					
Community/Parents/Guardians	3	10.6	16.7	30.3	39.4
Staff	0	3	12.1	45.4	39.4
Students	4.7	14.7	31.8	27.1	21.7
Communications from the district is clear, timely and transparent					
Community/Parents/Guardians	10.6	15.2	22.7	33.3	18.2
Staff	9.1	12.1	24.2	24.2	30.3
Students [Not Applicable]					
COMMUNITY, STAFF AND STUDENT RESULTS <u>Overall Satisfaction and Perception:</u> 1 Not Important -----5 Very Important					
The district offers strong academic programs that prepare students for future success					
Community/Parents/Guardians	4.4	15.2	24.2	37.9	18.2
Staff	3	15.2	18.2	42.4	21.2

Students	2.3	15.4	42.3	30.8	9.2
Our curriculum supports both core academic and deeper reasoning					
Community/Parents/Guardians	3	13.6	25.8	39.4	18.2
Staff	0	12.1	21.2	42.4	24.2
Students	3.8	9.2	33.1	34.6	19.2
Career and technical education/pathways to employment					
Community/Parents/Guardians	1.5	6.1	9.1	30.3	53
Staff	0	0	18.2	30.3	51.5
Students	3.1	4.6	26.9	36.2	27.2
College readiness and partnerships with post secondary institutions					
Community/Parents/Guardians	1.5	7.6	19.7	33.3	37.9
Staff	0	3	15.2	45.5	36.4
Students	2.3	6.2	34.1	28.5	27.9
Social-emotional learning and mental health support					
Community/Parents/Guardians	3	12.1	12.1	18.2	54.5
Staff	6.1	0	9.1	33.3	51.5
Students	5.4	6.2	34.9	19.4	32.1
Early childhood and school readiness program					
Community/Parents/Guardians	1.5	1.5	10.6	37.9	45.5
Staff	0	3.2	6.5	45.2	45.2
Students	3.1	7	37.2	28.7	24
Personalized and project based learning					
Community/Parents/Guardians	3.1	4.6	26.2	30.8	35.4
Staff	3.1	3.1	34.4	28.1	31.3
Students	3.9	11	37	23.6	24.4
Diversity, equity and inclusion					
Community/Parents/Guardians	6.2	10.8	26.2	23.1	33.8

Staff	9.1	3	9.1	33.3	45.5
Students	3.1	7	32.4	30.2	27.1
Technology and digital citizenship					
Community/Parents/Guardians	4.6	13.8	21.5	35.4	24.6
Staff	0	3	36.4	45.4	15.2
Students	3.9	5.5	42.8	30.5	16.4

Fiscal responsibility and efficiency					
Community/Parents/Guardians	1.5	12.1	6.1	28.8	51.5
Staff	0	0	12.5	37.5	50
Students	4.7	7	28.7	27.9	32.8

Staff recruitment, retention and well-being					
Community/Parents/Guardians	0	9.1	21.2	28.8	40.9
Staff	0	0	6.1	37.4	54.5
Students	4.7	4.7	37.2	30.2	23.3

Safe, modern and flexible school facility					
Community/Parents/Guardians	7.6	4.5	15.2	28.8	43.9
Staff	0	6.1	6.1	33.3	54.5
Students	3.9	7.1	26	29.6	33.3

Open Ended Questions

Students

What is the district doing particularly well?

- Quality and support of teachers
- Learning and educational opportunities
- Positive relationships and caring environment
- School safety and support services
- Activities, sports and extracurricular opportunities

- Schedule and structure [4-Day Week/Time for Work]

What are areas of improvement for the district?

- Student discipline and bullying
- Facilities and building conditions
- Food and cafeteria
- More academic opportunities
- School resources and spending

Looking ahead five years, what are the skills and experiences that will be most important?

- Life skills/real-world skills
- Financial literacy
- Career preparation/job readiness
- Social skills and emotional intelligence
- Core academic skills

What are the three priorities for future success for students?

- Academics and learning
- Life skills and real-world preparation
- Mental health and well-being
- Teacher support and relationships
- Career and future readiness

Staff

What is the district doing particularly well?

- Caring and dedicated staff
- Strong relationships and communications
- Student support and program opportunities
- Safe environment
- Academic quality and achievement

What are areas of improvement for the district?

- Communication and transparency
- Student expectations, accountability and discipline
- Curriculum and academic programs
- Facility and building conditions
- Staffing, class sizes and resources

Looking ahead five years, what are the skills and experiences that will be most important?

- Life skills/real-world skills/independent skill development
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Communication and social skills
- Career and technical skills
- Personal development and responsibility

What are the three priorities for future success?

- Student life skills and career readiness
- Critical thinking and academic rigor
- Mental health and well-being
- Communication and social skills
- Technology and digital literacy

Community

What is the district doing particularly well?

- Caring and dedicated staff
- Quality education and academic achievement
- Student support for all students
- Positive school environment and culture
- Small school advantages [class size, relationships, personal attention]

What are areas of improvement for the district?

- Communication and consistent policies and expectation
- Facilities and building improvements
- Financial responsibility and transparency
- Career readiness and life skills
- Academic rigor and accountability

Looking ahead five years, what are the skills and experiences that will be most important?

- Life skills/real-world skills/independent skill development
- Financial literacy and money management
- Career and trade preparation
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Communication and social skills

What are the three priorities for future success?

- Safety and secure learning environment
- Accountability and responsibility for academic expectations and student discipline
- Financial responsibility and transparency
- Academic quality and curriculum
- Student support and opportunity for all learners

Part II: Foundational Items and Strategic Priorities and Goals

BHLS Foundational Items

The Mission of BLHS is to deliver high quality learning through exceptional staff, fostering safety, care, belonging, and opportunity.

Our Vision is to be a safe, supportive environment where relationships flourish and learning thrives.

Core Values

- **Integrity** We act with honesty, respect, and accountability
- **Excellence** We maintain high expectations and celebrate achievement
- **Belonging** We create a safe, welcoming school where everyone is included
- **Relationships** We build trusting, respectful relationships that foster belonging, collaboration, and success for all.
- **Stewardship** We responsibly manage our resources, finances, facilities, and opportunities to ensure long-term success for our students and community.

Strategic Priorities with Goals

1. Student readiness and future success

- Increase Academic Achievement
- Broaden/expand future-focused learning opportunities
- Develop critical thinkers, problem solvers and life-long learners

2. High quality teaching and supportive learning environment

- Retain consistent leadership and leadership structures
- Retain, recruit, and develop highly qualified staff
- Hold all staff to the same high level of accountability
- Use and follow policies and procedures already established

3. Safe, modern and adequate facilities

- Safe and secure learning environments
- Modernize learning spaces to support innovation
- Develop a sustainable long-range facilities plan

4. Student wellbeing, engagement and belonging

- Expand student participation in activities and leadership opportunities
- Strengthen student voice and relationships
- Awareness of equality in treatment of student needs between school, coaches, parents/community to foster a strong culture of belonging and inclusion

5. Community connection, trust and fiscal responsibility

- Retain the census population and attract students from outside districts as the preferred educational choice in the region
- Maintain fiscally responsible budgeting practices that align resources with strategic priorities, maximize operational efficiency and protect long-term district sustainability
- Continue to cultivate meaningful partnerships to increase district support