



November 11, 2016

STATE OF THE DISTRICT - FALL 2016

Dear Lakewood Families:

I trust this communication finds you enjoying the startup of another school year at Lakewood Public Schools. I wanted to reach out and update our families on a few exciting things happening in our district, as well as provide other general details about operations.

ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

There are a number of exciting programming enhancements that have been ushered in with the start of this school year, helping us stay focused on every student, in every class, every day.

- ✓ **Lakewood Early Childhood Center** is beginning to develop the foundation for a Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) plan (see description below) with the intent to add this in full next school year. Additionally, LECC is working on vertical alignment of its curriculum within the building (see details below).
- ✓ **Lakewood Elementary School** is implementing a Positive Behavior Intervention System (PBIS) that will coordinate with our other program. The intent of PBIS is to provide a proactive approach to establishing behavior supports that foster appropriate social/behavioral results in order to maximize academic performance. This will eventually make its way to the remaining buildings.
- ✓ **Lakewood Middle School** is piloting a S.T.E.M. (science, technology, engineering and math) class. This is part of our district-wide K-12 S.T.E.M. initiative. We've also added a middle school students' robotics team.
- ✓ **Lakewood High School** added credit recovery classes, SAT prep classes, and is making plans to expand our trades/industry coursework as part of our *classroom to career* initiative.

We are also implementing a district-wide, **K-12 Vertical Team Model** this year. This initiative has already started with math and ELA (English/Language Arts) meetings in November. The goal for this year's work is to develop a vertically aligned (kindergarten through 12th grade) scope and sequence. Essentially, a scope and sequence answers the question of "when" we teach "what" across the district. This helps align content deployment and lay a foundation for next year's tentative work: the development of common grade level assessments.

M-STEP and SAT results are in for the 2015-2016 school year. We are proud of our teaching and support staff who, along with our students, led the county in most content areas. However, this isn't enough. We are focusing on identifying specific areas to target for growth moving forward. [You can see test results here.](#)

FISCAL STEWARDSHIP

You may recall that in December, 2015 the Board of Education (BOE) posted a budget revision reflecting an increase in the fund balance from approximately 2% to 5.25%. This past June 2016, the BOE approved a preliminary 2016-2017 balanced budget reflecting a 7% fund balance. These increases in the fund equity are a sign that our budget is moving in a healthy direction. Several factors have affected the increase of the fund balance: the savings from recent consolidation, reductions in general fund expenses, and higher enrollment than anticipated for the 2015-2016 school year (versus what was budgeted at the beginning of the year).

December 2016, the BOE will vote on a budget revision from the Superintendent's office that will reflect a fund balance of roughly 10.5%. This steady increase in the fund balance is the result of a cost savings being realized from our recent consolidation of schools (less expenses to operate buildings), an unexpected and unplanned reimbursement from our local Intermediate School, and the reduction of general fund spending (things like fuel, snow removal,



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supplies, employee costs, etc.). It is important that the community see the work and sacrifices made contributed to the improvement.

Having said this, I want to be very clear about the enrollment projections for the future: they continue to show alarming decline. The district utilizes a projection service provided by Middle Cities Education Association out of Lansing, MI. This association provides projections based on estimated county births and historical enrollment trends. Middle Cities' projections have been within a few students the last several years. We feel very comfortable that their data is reliable. Having trustworthy projections gives a proper starting point each year while constructing the preliminary budget. It is important to understand how we project student enrollment as these equate to the student foundation allowance (currently \$7,521 per full-time student), which is the main source of revenue we receive.

Middle Cities reports a projected 45-student decline for the 2017-2018 school year and roughly 20 students more in 2018-2019. Forecasted is a potential 30-student decline for both 2019-2020 and 2020-2021. While these are projections, we will continue to operate within a budget model that reflects these numbers. It is our goal to prove these projections wrong by drawing families into the district with marketing strategies.

The Lakewood Board remains committed to a conservative budget philosophy. To this end, the Board of Education passed a balanced budget for the 16/17 school year. This is the first time in the last 6 or 7 years that a balanced budget passed. This is a fantastic accomplishment and the community needs to know that the district is working very hard being good stewards of hard-earned tax dollars. These are difficult - and at times, very painful - decisions that are being made. We will stay committed to protecting the financial health of the district for our families, while preserving core academic functions. Together, we can chart a course successfully navigating these difficult fiscal times.

OPERATIONS

Over the course of the next few months, several **security enhancements** will be implemented around the district. We are adding a key pass entry system at the middle school for staff to utilize and will be moving to locked campuses at both LECC and LES by the first of the year. These enhancements meet our Strategic Plan Target, which is focused on the continual review and development of safe and secure facilities. Additionally, we will be expanding the amount of video monitors at our facilities and on our bus fleet.

BOARD RELATIONS AND GOVERNANCE

Your Board of Education (BOE) has been very busy the last 14 months. In this time, the BOE has crafted a newly updated **3-5 Year Strategic Plan** outlining a clear path to 2021 and beyond. The plan focuses on 6 key areas: 1) academic growth, 2) fiscal stewardship, 3) facilities and operations, 4) personnel, 5) communications, and 6) board governance. This plan is available in its entirety [at this link](#). While I would consider this a very aggressive plan, I believe it is attainable with everyone working together. I would encourage spending time reviewing the District's Strategic Plan. Our **Strategic Planning Committee** is comprised of students, parents, teachers, support staff, administrators and board members. This team met last year and will continue to meet throughout this year to review the plan and its progress. This team also serves as a vehicle to deliver input to the Board of Education.

The BOE has also increased its frequency of professional development by attending more conferences together, as well as training with area district boards on superintendent evaluation. In fact, this weekend the entire Board is at the annual Michigan Association of School Board conference receiving three days of training.

Wishing you a restful Thanksgiving and all the best as we head into a new year!

Yours in Education,



Randall J. Fleenor
Superintendent