



Lewiston-Altura ISD 857

District Planning Updates June 2022

Superintendent
Gwen Carman

School Board
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These are both exciting and trying times for our schools. New and unique learning opportunities are allowing our students to discover new things and further explore their passions and interests. Technology is providing students immediate access to research and resources. And, hands-on, project-based learning activities are now the norm, helping students to not only learn lesson content, but also develop critical teamwork and problem-solving skills that are necessary for success in the workforce. **You can feel confident that our schools are filled with rich learning experiences each and every day.**

As a district we are also experiencing challenges. We are graduating larger classes than what we are seeing enter our elementary school. Fewer students means less state aid to fund our schools. Our facilities are in need of an investment to ensure they are safe, efficient, and provide the best possible learning environment. Finally, fewer people are choosing the teaching profession, when a teaching position is open, especially in a specialized area, it is more challenging than in the past to find candidates.

Strong Schools = Strong Communities

The partnerships between our school district and community residents and local businesses are important as we continue to look for new educational opportunities for our students and tackle the challenges ahead of us. We know that by working together to provide a high-quality PK- 12 public education everyone benefits. Together, we can fulfill our mission of *"Building A Caring, Adaptable, Respectful, Determined, Successful Community."*

Developing A Strategic Plan

The District has been working to finalize a strategic plan that will guide decision-making and areas of focus in the coming years. As part of that planning process, a community-wide survey was conducted to gather feedback and input from all segments of the community. Survey data as well as other metrics were used to develop the following goals and priorities:

- Provide all students the education they need for success: academically, emotionally, and socially.
- Hire, maintain, train and support staff to be as effective as possible.
- Be financially healthy and sustainable.
- Have facilities that are safe, modern, and conducive to 21st Century Education.
- Engage with parents, community members and business owners.

Strategic Planning			
Top 5 (Items with highest agreement)			
Rank	Staff	Parents (Non-Staff)	Non-Parents (Non-Staff)
1	Culture: Maintains a safe and secure campus.	Culture: Maintains a safe and secure campus.	Culture: Maintains a safe and secure campus.
2	Support for Learning: Employs high-quality teachers/staff.	Academics & Development: Builds positive student character.	Support for Learning: Employs high-quality teachers/staff.
3	Academics & Development: Builds positive student character.	Support for Learning: Partners with local businesses and community members.	Academics & Development: Builds positive student character.
4	Support for Learning: Partners with local businesses and community members.	Support for Learning: Employs high-quality teachers/staff.	Support for Learning: Partners with local businesses and community members.
5	Academics & Development: Prepares students to be ready for college and careers.	Communications: Communicates with me effectively.	Culture: Has the support of parents and the community.

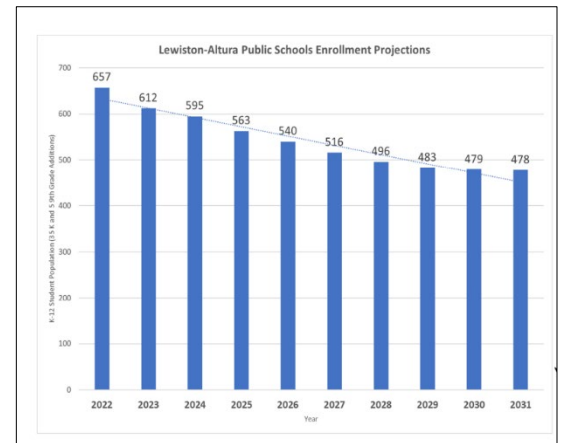
Strategic Planning			
Bottom 5 (Items with least agreement)			
Rank	Staff	Parents (Non-Staff)	Non-Parents (Non-Staff)
1	Support for Learning: Has up-to-date facilities, classrooms, and/or labs to support student learning.	Support for Learning: Has up-to-date facilities, classrooms, and/or labs to support student learning.	Support for Learning: Has up-to-date facilities, classrooms, and/or labs to support student learning.
2	Communications: Is transparent about their planning.	Communications: Is transparent about their planning.	Communications: Is transparent about their planning.
3	Communications: Provides me with the information to learn about what's going on at school.	Leadership: Is heading in the right direction.	Leadership: Is heading in the right direction.
4	Leadership: Is heading in the right direction.	Academics & Development: Prepares students to be ready for college and careers.	Communications: Provides me with opportunities to offer feedback.
5	Leadership: School Board is leading our district effectively.	Communications: Provides me with opportunities to offer feedback.	Academics & Development: Prepares students to be ready for college and careers.

Addressing Financial Challenges

The District has identified an operating deficit of approximately \$450,000 beginning next school year as a result of declining enrollment and a state funding formula that has not kept pace with inflation nor the needed funding for new and increasing federal and state education mandates.

Enrollment projections indicate **the Lewiston-Altura School District will continue to experience a decrease in enrollment**. Therefore, the District is going to need to look at various options to reduce expenses, increase operating efficiencies, increase student enrollment, and secure additional revenue.

One of the primary ways to increase revenue is to ask voters to support an operating levy. More information will be shared with the public as the district considers this option.



Developing a Long-Range Facility Plan

The community survey highlighted your commitment to ensuring the school buildings are well maintained and provide the necessary space for quality learning. The decline in enrollment and financial challenges are additional reasons the district needs to look carefully at our buildings and see how we can most efficiently use our space to serve students and the community.

The District is working with an educational facility planning team, InGensa, gathering important data about our facilities including:

- Overall physical condition of our buildings
- Educational adequacy
- Capacity
- Safety

On May 26th the District hosted a Community Engagement Meeting to share the highlights of our strategic planning survey, budget challenges and facilities needs. We also discussed next steps in our planning process which includes bringing together a group of citizens to serve as a taskforce. This taskforce will provide feedback and ideas as various options for updating and using our facilities are developed. The meeting was attended by more than 100 residents, many who expressed interest in serving on the taskforce. **If you are interested in serving on the taskforce, please contact district Superintendent, Gwen Carman at 507-522-3401 or email gcarman@lewalt.k12.mn.us.**

As the taskforce meets over the next several months, please watch for updates on their work. Once the taskforce develops options another community survey will be conducted to allow all citizens to have a voice in the process. Please know, the District is committed to citizen input and transparency. The taskforce and survey are two key ways to ensure this is a community-wide conversation as we move through this important process.

To address the needs of our school facilities, as a community, guided by the taskforce, we will need to:

- ✓ Prioritize improvement needs
- ✓ Determine a phasing plan for improvements
- ✓ Ensure efficient use of space
- ✓ Secure needed financing to complete projects

The work to meet both the District's financial and facility challenges is important. The decisions we make in the next year will impact our communities for generations. Together, we can do this!



Lewiston - Altura Schools: Building A Caring, Adaptable, Respectful, Determined, Successful Community.