

The Future

LAPEER
COMMUNITY
SCHOOLS:

TRANSITIONS
FOR TOMORROW



Meeting the Challenges

"Planning is bringing the future into the present so that you can do something about it now."

The words of author Alan Lakein are especially profound today, as schools across the country are searching for ways to deal with new and challenging realities. Within this changing educational landscape, however, are great opportunities.

At LCS we are committed to innovation in education; we are

confident that we can meet the challenges set before us and continue to teach for the future today.

To do this will require a fresh look at how our services are provided, greater attention to efficiency and a plan that will put our District on a path for greatness and in a position to exceed expectations for student achievement moving forward.

We have many challenging issues to confront and shouldn't fear engaging in an honest dialogue

about identifying workable solutions for our future. To identify these solutions, we must approach the process with an objective guided by vision, rather than an agenda. We must work together for the sake of our students.

What follows is an overview of our District's strategic planning process. I thank you for your interest in the future of Lapeer Community Schools.

– Matt Wandrie,
LCS Superintendent

Teaching for the Future
Today!



2012

Lapeer Community Schools is a dynamic community organization embracing our students with a quality learning environment, developing independent and confident learners for the future.



Community Survey marks initial stage of strategic plan

In the initial stage of our strategic planning process, an independent community survey was conducted on our behalf to gauge the effectiveness of district services. While the survey was strictly informational, it is an integral component to the development of a plan to prepare LCS for the future – it is, however, only one component.

The survey was conducted in October 2011 and was used to construct a series of community focus groups to dig deeper into issues facing our District. The results also provide us with a glimpse of how what we do is perceived in the community, in triumph and shortcoming. The survey yielded overwhelmingly positive results, news that was shared with the Board of Education and staff. Additionally, we plan to survey current and former students, collect more information from parents, and also engage our local business community in a legitimate process so we can make informed decisions for our District.

To view the results of the community survey, you can log on to our District website (LapeerSchools.org) under District info.

Focus Panels fix eyes on the future of LCS

From the start of this process, it has been the goal of everyone involved to approach the future of LCS with open minds and full-fledged engagement with the community.

There is but one preconception: Maintaining the status quo, given funding and state-level changes in education, is not an option.

With that in mind, we have instructed members of our staff to invite stakeholders in LCS to participate in a series of Focus Panel discussions about how our District will transition into the future.

We are asking for ideas, not money.

We are keenly aware of the tough decisions being made every day in households and businesses across our District. Because of this, our process is going to be founded upon innovation to create a better and stronger district for the future.

In order to fix our minds on what the school of the future will look like in Lapeer, we have reached out to a diverse group of people to craft the long-range vision for our District. In addition to students, parents and staff members, we have reached out to local civic and business leaders in our community.

Throughout this process, it is imperative that we bear in mind the strategic importance of LCS to the future prospects of our entire community. In order to teach for the future today, we must have an understanding of what employers are looking for today, and into the future.

One of our goals for the future is to keep Lapeer talent in Lapeer. To do this requires investments in education that reflect workforce trends that are now, more than ever, global in scope.

To achieve this, we need community-based solutions.

Five FAQs of strategic planning:

1. What should I expect from my involvement in this process?

Since we are not approaching the task of planning for the future with an agenda, we are only interested in your input. It's about ideas, not money.

2. Are the things being discussed in focus panels the only things being considered by the District?

No. The purpose of the Focus Panels is more specific in its scope when compared to the broader strategic planning process. This is only one of the initial steps in the process.

3. Who else is involved in the process?

It is important that we engage our whole community during this process. To do this, Superintendent Wandrie and other members of the LCS staff will meet with numerous community groups, including civic and business leaders, to discuss the future of Lapeer Community Schools.

4. Why wasn't I involved in the initial survey?

The community survey, the initial step in the strategic planning process, was conducted by an independent firm that selected 400 participants at random in order to ensure statistically-significant data. The survey, with a confidence rating of 95 percent, was strictly informational and is only one component in a broad-based process.

5. How can we do more with less?

As we wrestle with the reality of a smaller district, we must turn our eyes to efficiency and shared sacrifice. One example of this is our "Energy Essentials" conservation plan. The plan, which began this year, is aimed at achieving perpetual cost-savings across the District. Utilizing the expertise of staff members from all of our buildings, we have already identified a multitude of opportunities to lower our energy costs. Small sacrifices aimed at saving energy can have a great effect on our bottom line.

LCS 101

Lapeer Community Schools: By the numbers

225

Lapeer Community Schools encompasses a land area of 225 square miles, geographically among the largest school districts in Michigan.

36,000

Approximately 36,000 people call our District home. LCS encompasses the City of Lapeer, Lapeer Township, Mayfield Township and large portions of Attica, Elba, Hadley, Metamora and Oregon Townships.

14

The District currently operates 14 buildings: Two high schools, an alternative high school, two middle schools, seven elementary schools, the Administration and Services Center and a bus garage.

5,869

The projected enrollment for LCS in 2012-13 is 5,869. This represents a 33 percent decrease in overall enrollment since 1980.

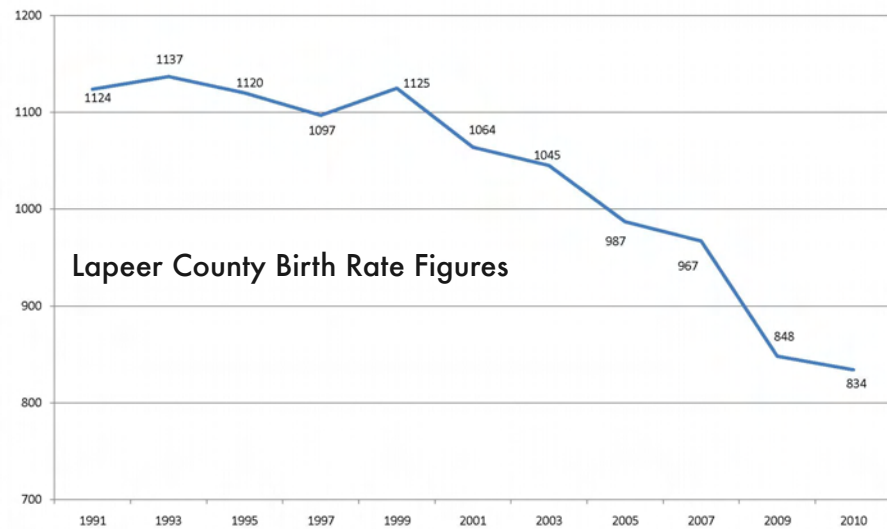
42,937,604

The projected revenue for 2012-13 demonstrates the effect of declining enrollment figures. This figure reflects a 13 percent drop in revenue since the 2003-04 school year.

26

In the last 20 years, Lapeer County has experienced a 26 percent drop in the overall rate of births. The decline is shown in the graph at the top. This trend becomes the basis for the high school enrollment projections.

Population decline weighs heavy on enrollment, funding



Since school funding in the State of Michigan is tied to enrollment, there is a direct connection between population shifts and the decline in the revenue necessary to operate schools districts. We are not facing this challenge alone, however. Over 85 percent of school districts across Michigan are struggling with declines in population due to our state's disproportionate job loss figures. As many families are forced to leave the state to find work, we are left with the challenge of maintaining our standards of excellence with less funding.

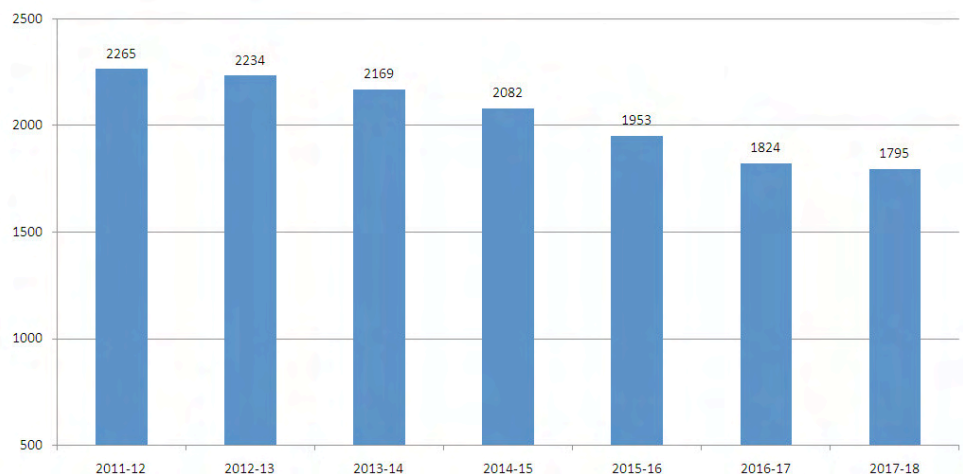
Overall enrollment in Lapeer Community Schools has dropped significantly over the last several decades from a high of 8,766 in 1980-81 to a projected low of 5,869 in 2012-13 – a decline of 33 percent.

From 2000 to 2009, our state lost 783,000 private sector jobs – a 20 percent drop in a decade. The overall U.S. job loss figures are much lower for this time period, at around 1 percent.

The impact of our sluggish economy is weighing heavily on our enrollment projections at the high school level. Currently, there are 2,265 high school students in the District. As we project the aforementioned demographic forces into the future, the result is striking: **If present trends hold, there will be 1,795 high school students enrolled in LCS in 2018.** This figure represents a 21 percent decrease, lowering the classifications of our high schools to Class B.

The decline in population and enrollment requires adaptation at the district level. To do this will require keen eyes to innovation and shared sacrifice for the betterment of Lapeer Community Schools.

Projected High School Enrollment



Five FAQs about Focus Schools:

1. Are Focus Schools better than traditional schools?

Focus Schools are unique. The year-round school model, for instance, is appealing to many students and parents. Academic standards across all our schools, traditional and Focus, will be uniform.

2. Do year-round Focus School students have to give up their summer vacation?

No. Summer vacation is simply shorter for students at year-round schools. Students will still attend class the same number of days per year. Only the calendar changes. The balanced schedule helps students close the "summer gap" allowing for more retention and less time spent on review.

3. Must Focus School students meet state standards for core subjects?

Yes. The core curriculum of traditional schools is left intact. Students must meet standards for reading, writing, math, science and social studies. The "focus" will only enhance learning in these areas.

4. What advantage is there for LCS to create Focus Schools?

There are several advantages. First, Focus Schools provide choices for parents and students; they offer unique marketing opportunities to the District; finally, they allow us to tailor-make programs to prepare students for specific careers.

5. Does a balanced, year-round calendar serve the academic interests of students?

Yes. Research indicates that struggling learners score significantly higher on standardized tests taken at the beginning of summer vacation than they do on the same standardized tests taken at summer's end.



Innovation: Focus Schools

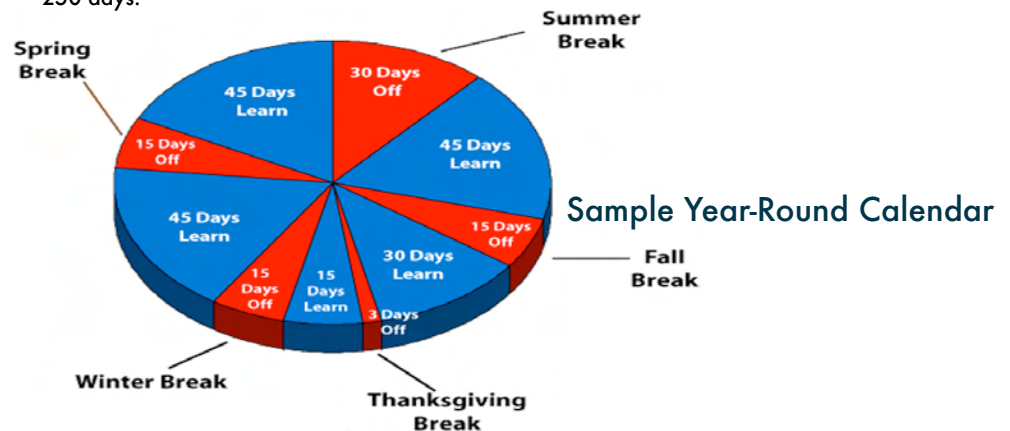
One potential innovative solution for Lapeer Community Schools is the creation of Focus Schools. These are schools designed to attract students from diverse backgrounds, placing special emphasis on particular disciplines. Further, some Focus Schools operate on a year-round calendar which has been proven to increase student retention and achievement.

Here are three examples:

Art Infusion: An Art Infusion Focus School would maintain reading, writing, math, science and social studies as part of the core curriculum, but would utilize a focus on fine arts to enlighten the core curriculum.

The Leader in Me: A Leader in Me Focus School would maintain the same standards for the core curriculum, but would emphasize a culture of student achievement by adhering to the positive habits of strong leaders.

Year-Round: The Year-Round model was created to increase student achievement using a balanced academic calendar (see below). While the number of school days remains the same, the balanced calendar has been shown to help close the "summer gap" thereby diminishing review time. In addition, there are low-cost enrichment opportunities available to students up to a total of 250 days.



FOCUS Schools

Let's clear up some of the misinformation that is out there regarding what Focus Schools are and who they are meant to serve.

Myths

The traditional core curriculum is replaced by one that is totally focused on a particular discipline.

Focus Schools cost more money to attend.

Focus Schools are for the "elite."

Truths

Focus Schools share the core curriculum of traditional schools, including math, science, reading, writing and social studies. The "focus" serves to enhance the core curriculum.

There is no additional cost to attend a Focus School.

Focus Schools serve students from diverse backgrounds. Parents choose Focus Schools over traditional schools for a variety of reasons, including flexibility and core curriculum enhancements.

Innovation: Virtual Learning

The Internet, perhaps more than any other single factor, has changed the way we educate our young people. In the 21st century, students are trained to receive and process information differently. As educators, we must adapt to the ever-changing technological landscape in order to effect greater student achievement.

At Lapeer Community Schools, it is our goal to offer a variety of options to our current families while providing avenues to home-school families for virtual learning opportunities.

Virtual Learning gives students access to a strong academic curriculum while providing parents with the option to keep students at home. Virtual Learning also provides students with flexibility for time and space; in addition, students will be charged with the responsibility of budgeting their time and workload to meet deadlines for coursework.

Virtual learners will not, however, be left to their own devices at all times. Students are guided and encouraged by professional teachers who monitor their progress and provide solutions when difficulties arise.

Finally, it's important to note that, as with all prospective non-traditional teaching methods, standards for students achievement would be uniform across the District.

Innovation: Technology in the Classroom

As technology continues to advance, educators must adapt to new and different ways to reach students of all ages.

In our District, new technology is playing an ever-greater role in the learning process. Web-based programs allow students to learn at their own pace and gives teachers access to vital evaluative information.

Just this school year, a room full of excited third graders at Murphy Elementary was able to interact with best-selling author Megan McDonald, live from her office in California via Skype. Thanks to the power of streaming video, McDonald was able to stoke the students' interest in reading in ways never before possible.

Across the District, we're investing in technology that is both innovative and cost-effective. LiveScribe pens, for example, are transforming the way math is taught in our High Schools. Students are now able to watch digital lessons at home, at their own pace, to be prepared to put what they've learned into practice in the classroom.

Technology in the classroom is opening doors for students across the District, presenting them with opportunities to engage the curriculum in new and powerful ways.



"The most common—and in fact, nearly universal—teacher-reported effect on students was an increase in motivation."

– Effects of Technology in the Classroom, U.S. Department of Education

Moving Forward: The Big Picture



Change is inevitable. Accepting this, we must make decisions every day that dictate whether we change our circumstances or our circumstances change us.

In our District, we are committed to proactivity and innovation to be in the best position to transition into the future. That's why we are investing in a process that will lead us to long-term solutions to complicated problems.

This long-lens view of the future of Lapeer Community Schools exists within a framework that values the traditions and small-town values that have made our schools great for generations. Throughout the process, we will remain committed to the maintenance of our strong community standards.

Finally, the transition for tomorrow starts and stops with student achievement. The single most important factor in this process is our ability to prepare students for a future that will scarcely resemble the past. To do this, we must be willing to re-orient the way we perceive our roles as educators in the home and the classroom.

We must use options to optimize, innovate or evaporate; we must "bring the future into the present."

– Matt Wandrie, LCS Superintendent

Log on to LapeerSchools.org*

By logging on to our District website, you can find all the information you will need to be informed during the process.

Read

Take a moment to read through the findings from the initial community survey of Lapeer Community Schools. You can also find a digital version of this brochure as well as a copy of our "Transitions for Tomorrow" Powerpoint presentation.

Watch

You can also watch a pair of videos that showcase the Art Infusion and Leader in Me Focus School concepts. These videos will provide a quick glimpse into these schools, and how traditional curricula can be enhanced using Focus School principles.

Participate

Take a moment to participate in a short, six-question survey about Focus Schools. We need your input to get a gauge on the interest in the Focus Schools concept in our District.

* While you are visiting our District website, please follow the links to our new blogs.

Lapeer Community Schools

Teaching for the Future Today!

250 SECOND ST.
LAPEER, MI 48446

Lynch
Elementary School

Maple Grove
Elementary School

Mayfield Elementary
School

Murphy Elementary
School

Schickler Elementary
School

Seaton Elementary
School

Turrill Elementary
School

Rolland-Warner
Middle School

Zemmer Middle
School

Lapeer Community
High School

Lapeer East
High School

Lapeer West
High School