

LAWTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS 2013-18



STRATEGIC PLAN SUMMARY DOCUMENT

“Lawton Community Schools exists to provide meaningful opportunities that challenge each student to reach their potential. Through strong connections with students, families and the community we will prepare our students with the 21st Century Skills necessary to compete in a global economy.”

LETTER FROM BOARD PRESIDENT AND SUPERINTENDENT

Lawton Community Schools Strategic Plan: Shaping Lawton's Vision for the Future

School districts in the State of Michigan who desire accreditation are required to undergo a process of continuous improvement. The most effective school improvement plans are those that benefit from the guidance of a centralized vision promoting district wide cohesion. With this as our motivation, the Lawton Community Schools enlisted the support of the Michigan Association of School Boards and the community in the development of a three to five year Strategic Plan. School improvement plans will continue to be developed, implemented and evaluated annually using the goals and objectives in this plan as focal points. We believe that this plan helps us "tie it all together" and, if implemented with fidelity, take our schools and District from good to great!

The process of strategic planning is heavily reliant upon input from all District stakeholders. To collect this input, an electronic survey was developed and administered. Over 200 people responded providing the process with comprehensive feedback. On November 9, 2013, a Strategic Planning Team of 55 stakeholders met to review this feedback along with District data. The team included representation from across the school community including: Board of education members, administrators, teachers, community leaders, parents, alumni and students. Throughout the planning process, the community expressed high expectations for everyone and a commitment to college and career readiness.

As a result of the planning process, this team accomplished the following:

- Development of new Vision, Mission and Belief Statements
- Identification of major goal areas
- Articulation of specific focus areas within each goal area

This Strategic Plan document will be used by District administrators and school improvement teams in the development of specific programs, practices and activities designed to achieve the goals of the Strategic Plan. The board, administration and staff fully realize that we cannot achieve our goals alone. Family and community engagement will be critical to our organizational success. We embrace the challenges and opportunities set before us as we maintain our focus on providing a high quality educational experience for all students. On behalf of the Board and Administration we extend a sincere thank you to everyone who contributed to this important project.

Sincerely,

President, Board of Education

Superintendent

INTRODUCTION

Strategic planning is the process of determining what an organization wants to be at some point in the future and how it will get there. In the current environment where schools are challenged to do more with scarce resources, planning for the future is more important than ever. An effective strategic planning process results in stakeholders focusing on critical priorities that will meet the mission of a quality educational program for all students.

In June of 2013, the Lawton Community Schools Superintendent and Board of Education made a commitment to create a three to five year Strategic Plan. The Board created a partnership with the Michigan Association of School Boards to serve as facilitator for this project. The District, under the leadership of Board President and Superintendent, completed a process that was data-driven, inclusive of District stakeholders and focused on the priorities that will help the District succeed.

There were several criteria relative to the strategic planning process established by the Board and the leadership team:

- The process must be inclusive where all stakeholders have an opportunity to provide structured input.
- The Board must be an integral part of the process—providing input, support and commitment.
- There must be clarity in the respective roles of the Board, administrators, staff, parents/guardians and community.
- There is alignment between the strategic planning process, current strategic initiatives and critical issues facing the District.
- Timelines, responsibilities and reporting schedules must be built into the planning processes.
- There must be ongoing communication about the planning process with all internal and external stakeholders.

This Strategic Plan is a living document. It will serve as a “road map” to future planning, resource allocation, staff development and decision-making over the next several years.

As part of the planning process, the vision, mission and beliefs were renewed. Based on the renewed vision, mission and beliefs, strategic goals and objectives were developed. Regular monitoring of progress and renewal is critical to the plan’s success.



THE STRATEGIC PLAN PROCESS

This overview describes the planning process, including the survey, data analysis, planning team roles and responsibilities and timelines.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Input from students, parents/guardians, community and staff were gathered through a comprehensive electronic survey as well as a series of community, student and staff forums. The community engagement process was conducted to

- Identify and assess strengths
- Gauge values and perceptions of the community
- Provide an opportunity for input
- Identify areas for improvement
- Gather data to use as a decision making tool
- Develop communication plans and tools

Four community, parent and staff forums, and an electronic survey to gather input provided direction for the planning process. The response rate indicates that the school community cares about the future of the District and desires to engage in the process of creating the future (see Attachment 1 for summary).

LOCAL AREA AND SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

An analysis of District demographics and quantitative data was completed. The analysis included educational, financial, and personnel trends over the previous five years (2007-2012) in comparison with comparable districts and state averages (see Attachment 2 for the data analysis summary).

STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

A Strategic Planning Team was formed to take a primary role in developing the Strategic Plan. The team consisted of fifty-five parent/guardian, community, Board and staff members. The team participated in a retreat workshop as well as additional committee meetings to develop a renewed mission statement, vision, beliefs and strategic goals. During the retreat the team reviewed and discussed relevant quantitative and qualitative data as essential elements in the formation of goals and objectives contained in this document (see team members on page 5-6).

“Collaborating with the Lawton Community Schools Board of Education, administration, staff and the entire community really illustrated their level of care for the school, the community, and most of all, the students.”

—Olga Holden, Board Development & Planning Specialist

STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM MEMBERS ATTENDEES

1. Michelle Adams, Parent
2. Ron Armstrong, Community Member
3. Tammy Barkovich, Parent/Employee
4. Amy Beaudoin, Parent
5. Louise Berdahl, Community Member
6. Don Berdahl, Community Member
7. Stephanie Brown, Employee
8. Estela Carrizales, Parent
9. Steve Carroll, Board Member
10. Tim Cerven, Employee
11. Denise Cody, Employee/Parent
12. David Conner, Parent
13. Pete Cornish, Community Member
14. Bryan Cronenwett, Board Member/Parent
15. Megan Dopheide, Student
16. Terri Dopheide, Parent
17. Kathy Drew, Board Member
18. Claire Durante, Employee
19. Kim Emmert, Employee/Parent
20. Toby Fields, Board Member
21. Chris Hamilton, Community Member
22. A.J. Hartman, Employee
23. Walter Hitchcock, Board Member
24. Leslie Holder, Employee/Parent
25. Holly James, Employee/Parent
26. Gloria Jurado-Long, Parent
27. Stacy Keyser, Parent
28. Shelley Klotz, Employee/Parent
29. Chad Kuhlmann, Employee
30. Nicole Lycan, Employee/Parent
31. Brian Marr, Parent
32. Shawn Marr, Parent
33. Bill Maury, Employee
34. Amanda Merriman, Employee
35. Rev. Ron Packer, Parent
36. Dr. Dan Pratley, Community Member
37. Pat Pratley, Community Member
38. Laura Prior, Employee
39. Lily Reeves, Community Member
40. Molly Reeves, Community Member
41. Chris Rice, Superintendent
42. Matthew Ryan, Board Member
43. Nicole Smith, Parent
44. Tim Somers, Board Member/Parent
45. Lisa Stephayn, Parent
46. Mike Stephayn, Employee/Parent
47. Pam Stermer, Employee/Parent
48. Tom Stermer, Parent
49. Melissa Stull, Employee
50. Jim Turner, Employee/Parent
51. Tom Verburg, Community Member
52. Georgie Washburn, Community Member
53. Tim Washburn, Community Member
54. Tamara Webster, Employee
55. Laura Woodruff, Employee

RETREAT WORKSHOP

A retreat workshop was held on November 9, 2013. The work covered included:

- An overview of the strategic planning process and timelines
- Superintendent's report of current and planned initiatives
- An analysis of demographic, quantitative, and qualitative data
- A review and renewal of the vision, mission and belief statements
- The establishment of strategic goal areas and key objectives
- Assignment planning team leaders to be part of a "goal committee," to develop action plans for each goal and objective including responsibilities, timelines and measurements



VISION, MISSION AND BELIEF STATEMENTS

VISION STATEMENT:

A vision statement describes what you want to happen in the long term. It's a statement about your hopes and expectations for the future. The vision statement below was validated during the Strategic Planning Team Retreat Workshop:

Vision: *Preparing all students for college, career and community success through high expectations, individualized attention, and organizational excellence.*

MISSION STATEMENT:

A mission statement establishes, in the broadest terms, the purpose of a school district. It should answer the question, "What ultimate end will the district pursue and in the broadest sense, how?" The following mission statement was renewed during the Strategic Planning Team Retreat Workshop:

Mission: *Lawton Community Schools exists to provide meaningful opportunities that challenge each student to reach their potential. Through strong connections with students, families, and the community, we will prepare our students with the 21st Century Skills necessary to compete in a global economy.*

BELIEF STATEMENTS:

The basic beliefs of the district—those things that we believe of utmost importance, provide guidance for how we behave and relate to others. The following beliefs were created/renewed during the Strategic Planning Team Retreat Workshop:

Beliefs: We believe:

- *High expectations lead to increased performance and must exist for the learning of every student.*
- *All students deserve opportunities to maximize their talents and reach their potential.*
- *We have a collective responsibility to create and sustain a safe environment that is respectful, engaging, vibrant and culturally responsive.*
- *Effective instruction maximizes the learning potential of every student.*
- *The educational process is most effective when students, families and the community collaborate with highly effective educators who know each student on a personal level and work to ensure each child's success.*
- *Our educational mission must include the development of responsible citizenship through an emphasis on strong character and student leadership.*
- *Our efforts should reflect current best practices in all aspects of the educational process.*
- *Innovation and creativity are essential components of a 21st century education.*
- *Forward thinking and effective planning will allow our schools to meet the needs of our students now and in the future.*
- *All students should be prepared with the skills necessary to achieve college, post-secondary training and work place success.*

2013-2018 STRATEGIC GOALS

Strategic Goals: Areas of priority importance in which the district will focus their work (1-5 years). Strategic goals achieve the organization's vision, mission and beliefs. Objectives are SMART—**S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant and **T**imely

The Strategic Planning Team, at the November retreat, developed goal statements and specific objectives. The goal areas are categorized below.

GOAL AREA 1: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

GOAL AREA 2: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

GOAL AREA 3: DISTRICT MARKETING

GOAL AREA 4: FINANCE

GOAL AREA 5: TECHNOLOGY

GOAL AREA 6: FACILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION

Following the retreat, administrators were charged with developing specific goals based on strategic goal areas identified by the team.

GOAL AREA 1: STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

STRATEGIC GOAL STATEMENT: Demonstrate Continuous Academic Improvement

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS:

- Increase enrollment in rigorous and advanced coursework
- Implement research-based strategies that increase student motivation and engagement
- Expand access to high quality preschool programs for children in our community
- Use multiple assessments to provide a comprehensive picture of student growth for individuals and subgroups
- Establish and promote a culture of readiness for college and 21st century careers



GOAL AREA 2: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

STRATEGIC GOAL STATEMENT: Enhance Family, Student, and Community Engagement

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS:

- Establish and maintain a variety of student-based enhancement opportunities including extended day/year programs, student service learning projects, and extra and co-curricular activities
- Partner with community-based resources to match student needs with services including mentoring programs, job/career training, and community assistance programs
- Collaborate with community resources and the Parent Teacher Organization to provide opportunities for parents/guardians to learn and to support their child's learning process
- Establish regular and meaningful communication between home, school, and community



GOAL AREA 3: DISTRICT MARKETING

STRATEGIC GOAL STATEMENT: Market Lawton Community Schools to Optimize Public Relations

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS:

- Create a brand for Lawton Community Schools
- Market the direct and indirect benefits of Lawton Community Schools via a variety of media including social media, webpages, videos, newsletters, and news outlets including print, radio and television
- Share our pride for the District with the greater community
- Collaborate with the community to share all that Lawton Community Schools have to offer including area realtors, local businesses, and volunteer/service groups



GOAL AREA 4: FINANCE

STRATEGIC GOAL STATEMENT: Maintain Financial Stability while Meeting the Educational Needs of Students and the Community

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS:

- Determine and maintain a fund balance that provides for the long term stability of the District
- Align the budget with the Strategic Plan goals and long-range plans
- Review and pursue sources of additional revenue annually
- Maintain a well-designed long-range financial plan
- Maintain, execute, and evaluate a capital expenditure plan
- Communicate financial aspects of the District to staff and the community

GOAL AREA 5: TECHNOLOGY

STRATEGIC GOAL STATEMENT: Provide a Strong Infrastructure for Technology

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS:

- Form a multi-disciplinary technology committee to address technology related issues and make recommendations for District action
- Expand virtual learning options in both traditional and non-traditional learning environments
- Increase teacher and student access to technology-based teaching, learning and assessment tools across the curriculum
- Pursue a variety of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) based opportunities in each of our buildings
- Maintain a current technology plan that includes optimal maintenance and replacement of hardware, software, and network infrastructures
- Pursue alternative revenue sources to fund current and future technology expansion
- Expand use of technology to inform and engage families and the community



GOAL AREA 6: FACILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION

STRATEGIC GOAL STATEMENT: Provide Safe, Secure and Efficient Infrastructures for Facilities and Transportation

STRATEGIC FOCUS AREAS:

- Design and implement a master facilities plan for all District property
- Continue to focus on efficient, cost-effective use of utilities
- Incorporate innovative facility design to support the educational process
- Design and implement a master grounds and equipment replacement plan for athletics
- Maintain safe and secure learning and working environments for students and staff
- Coordinate with technology department to ready buildings for future needs
- Assess the efficiency and reliability of our current bus fleet and develop a plan for vehicle replacement

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation plan will be developed collaboratively by the superintendent and key staff members. Alignment with current school improvement teams will be an integral part of the implementation plan. The District priority goals/objectives identified during the strategic planning retreat will be translated into action plans with measurements, timelines, responsibilities and a board monitoring calendar.

Recommendations for keeping the momentum of the process are the following:

1. Develop communication plan
 - Community
 - Staff
2. Develop reporting/board monitoring calendar
3. Develop action plans for each objective with:
 - Measurements
 - Timelines
 - Responsibilities
 - Resources
4. Identify annual calendar
 - Mid-year progress report
 - Annual plan update/renewal

Attachment 1 – Input Summary

STRENGTHS

PERSONNEL (HUMAN RESOURCES)

- Teachers
- Administration
- Leadership
- Students
- Support Staff
- Care
- Dedication
- Passion
- Vision

PROGRAMS

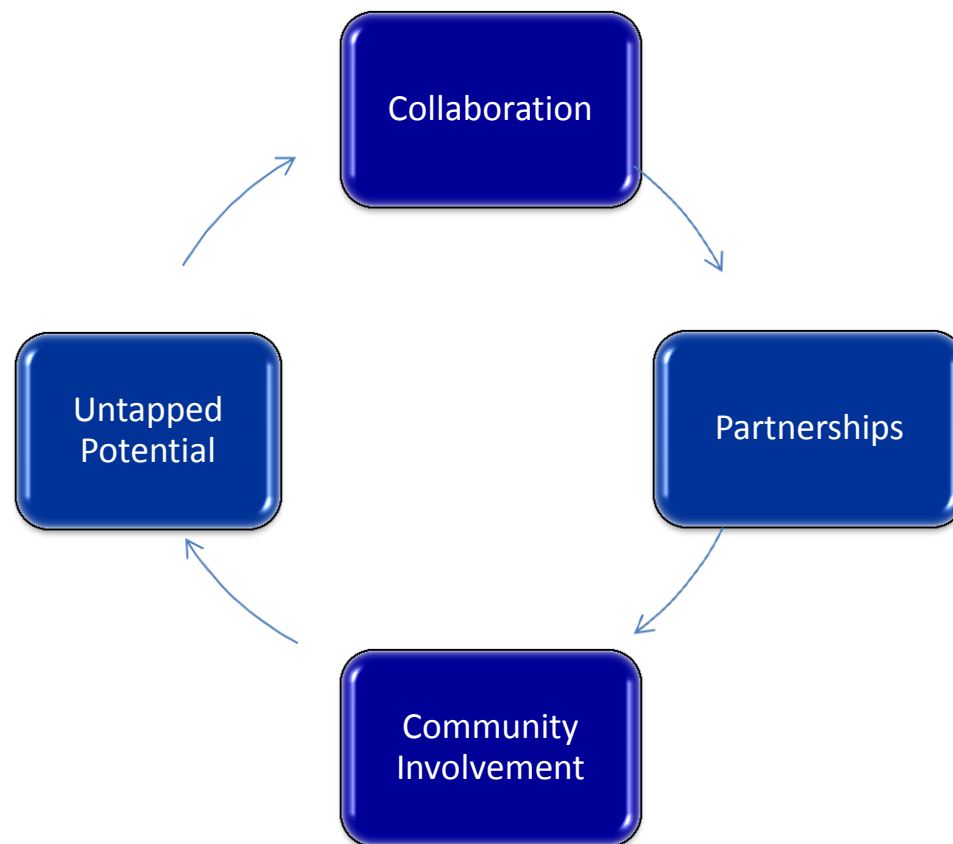
- Academics
- Arts
- Band
- Athletics
- PTO
- Small class sizes

COMMUNITY

- Small town values
- Quality of life
- District
- Technology
- People
- Relationships
- Geography
- Library
- Businesses/collaboration/partnerships

CULTURE

- Atmosphere
- Safe environment
- Stable finances
- Parent involvement
- Focus on all students
- Open to new ideas



*Full Report is available in the central office

Attachment 1 – Input Summary Continued

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

PROGRAMS

- For high achievers
- More rigor at high school
- Support for all students
- Mentoring
- Test scores
- Class size
- Languages
- Global awareness

FACILITIES/FINANCIAL

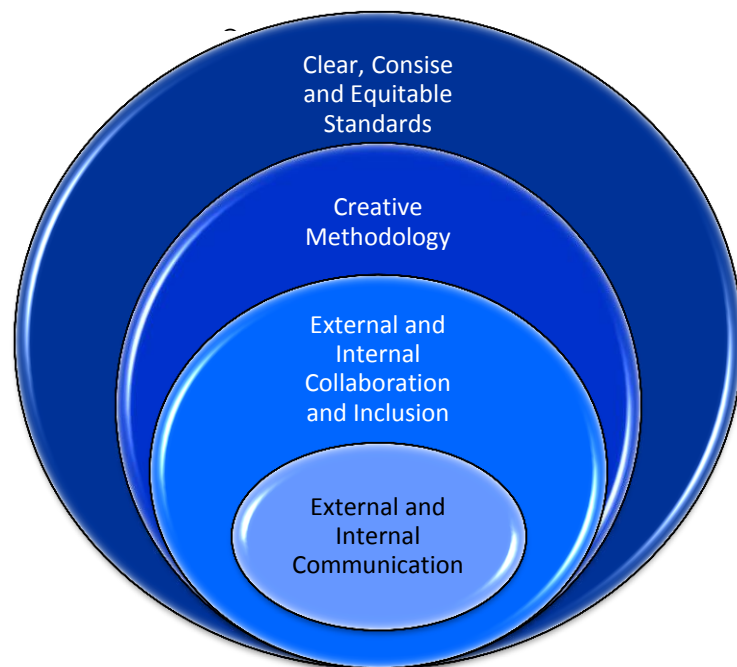
- Technology
- Renovations
- Retaining Lawton students
- New Elementary Building

CULTURE

- Open and honest communication
- Accountability
- Resource allocation
- Communication
- Consistent policies and discipline
- Expectations
- Support for all students
- Collaboration and teamwork

COMMUNITY

- Stakeholder understanding/support
- Parental involvement
- Partnerships
- Rising poverty
- Competition



Attachment 1 – Input Summary Continued

FINANCIAL ALLOCATIONS

FACILITIES

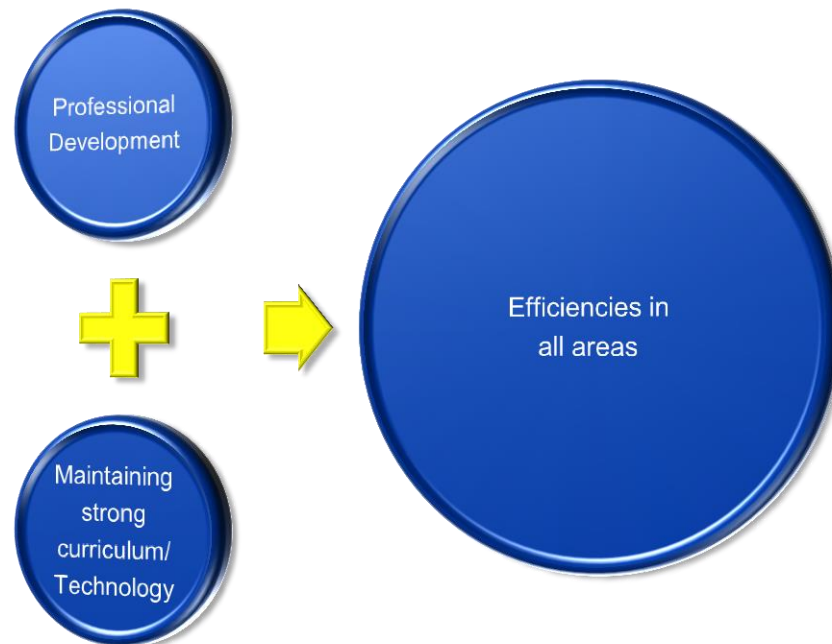
- Technology
- New elementary school
- Building maintenance
- Long-term planning

PROGRAMS

- Continue broad range of offerings
- Maintain strong core curriculum
- Support interventions
- Maintain current staff levels
- Teaching and learning resources
- Small class sizes
- Balance between academics, arts, and athletics
- Professional development

CULTURE

- Safety/Anti-bullying
- Efficiencies in all areas



Attachment 1 – Input Summary Continued

VISION

- Focus on programs and achievements
- Magnet approach
- STEM programs
- Fiscally responsible
- Personalization
- Enrichment/appeal for high achievers
- Community/identity
- A leader in academics
- Progressive and ahead of the changes in our society
- High expectations/the “go to” district/destination
- Prepare students for “life”
- A thriving district where students are excelling in all areas/the #1 school in the world
- A streamlined system of excellence and tons of Blue Devil pride
- Our students exhibit true character, confidence and a determined work ethic
- Lawton Community Schools as an “elite” school
- Lawton Community Schools should be an environment that fosters learning and is fiscally responsible
- Keep pace with rapidly occurring changes
- High quality educational facility that prepares kids for college and careers
- Top tier small district in southwest Michigan

BRANDING



Attachment 2 – Data Input Summary

LAWTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

Based on analysis of data in this report, the following points are highlighted concerning Lawton Community Schools:

- In general, the data revealed that when compared to state averages and the reference districts selected for this report, Lawton Community Schools emerges as a district facing academic challenges.
- Enrollment at Lawton Community has been decreasing slowly but steadily over the past five years, dropping on average 19 students per year. (B-2)
- The percentage of Lawton Community students eligible for lunch assistance in 2013 was the second highest of the referenced districts and 10% above the percentage statewide. The percentage of students eligible for free lunches has generally increased over the past five years, decreasing the percentage eligible for reduced-price lunches. (B-3, B-4)
- Lawton Community's 2012 4-year cohort graduation rate while among the lower of the reference districts, was still above the statewide average. (B-5)
- The percentages of adults in the Lawton Community with less than a high school diploma was the second highest of the reference districts and nearly 3% above state average. Adults with a Bachelor's degree or higher is below state average by 6.2%. (B-7)
- The percentage of district-resident children enrolled in Lawton Community Schools was the lowest of the reference districts, and 1.5% below the state average. (B-9)
- The Lawton Community district 2011 median average household income was among the highest of the reference districts, and above the state average. (B-10)
- Lawton Community District has the highest Hispanic student population of the referenced districts and has seen an approximate 4% increase since 2009. (B-11, B-12)
- Lawton's 3rd and 4th grade students fell at the bottom of the referenced districts in reading and below state average the past four years. (C-2, C-3, C-5, C-7)

*Full report is available in the central office

Attachment 2 – Data Input Summary Continued

- A higher percentage of Lawton Community elementary students met or exceeded standards in Science of the referenced districts and above state average, however 5th grade Science has shown a steadily decrease over the past five years. (C-10, C-11, C-22)
- Lawton Community's 6th grade students outperformed all of the referenced districts and statewide average in Social Studies. (C-14)
- The percentage of Lawton's 11th grade students meeting or exceeding standards on the 2012 MME was among the highest of the referenced Districts in Reading and Social Studies and above statewide average. (C-27, C-30)
- Total instruction spending at Lawton Community was the lowest of the reference districts in 2012, and below the per student average statewide. (D-1)
- Lawton Community Schools had the second lowest 2012 spending on instructional support of the reference districts, but has continually been increasing since 2008. (D-3, D-4)
- Business and administration spending per student at Lawton Community was above state average but within the range of the reference districts in 2012, and has seen a general increase overall since 2008. (D-5, D-6)
- Lawton Community's total General Fund expenditure per student in 2012 has held relatively steady over the preceding four years. (D-8)
- Lawton Community Schools was within the range of most referenced districts in 2012 for the average teacher salary, but was below state average and shown little increase from 2008. (E-3, E-4)
- More than half of the teachers at Lawton Community have a Master's degree. (E-5)
- Lawton has a relatively young staff with more than half the teachers being employed by the district under nine years. (E-6)
- Lastly, district personnel cooperated with our requests for data and analysis. We appreciate the time and effort expended by the Board of Education and staff of Lawton Community Schools in the preparation of this report.

Submitted: November 9, 2013

Submitted:

Olga Holden