

Lake County School District

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Elevating Expectations

Update to the Community: Spring 2015

Dear Leadville & Lake County Community Members:

It is an exciting time in the Lake County School District! We have been very busy making many changes in our schools, and we are happy to pause to provide an update on our progress to you—our most important stakeholders.

Our mission is to ignite a passion for learning.

What are we working on?

This year, our work is focused on three primary goals:

1. Culture & Climate
2. Student Learning
3. Infrastructure



Read on to learn about our work in these areas and all the ways we are elevating expectations for ourselves and our students. **Want to learn more, or have input or questions?** Call 719-486-6800 and let us know!



By the Numbers

In 2014, the Lake County School District moved from Accredited with a Priority Improvement Plan to Accredited with an Improvement Plan with the State of Colorado. **The district earned the most points toward accreditation in five years, and is no longer on the state's accountability clock. Now, the work to further improve our schools continues. Thanks to all who are part of this work! We appreciate you.**

Culture & Climate: We support each other and our kids.

We create a welcoming, inclusive and safe environment that embraces all stakeholder groups including, students, families, employees, and community members. We build strong relationships and a positive climate throughout the school community.



What are we doing?

- **Expeditionary Learning & CREW:** Ask a West Park or LCIS student about CREW, and they'll tell you about a daily meeting where they learn the **Habits of a Learner**.
- **Family Liaisons at each building:** Each school has a staff member devoted to supporting parents in being involved in school and in their child's education.
- **Communication:** We have many new communications initiatives, including a new website; a Facebook page; a weekly employee newsletter; and a new parent email newsletter, Paw Prints.
- **Teacher Retention Project:** We are working with teachers to understand why teachers stay in Lake County so that we can impact these factors and keep great teachers in the district.



What are teachers saying about Expeditionary Learning?

"What I love about EL is how students are taking responsibility [and] setting goals. For the first time since I started in this district, the students truly care about their quality of work and increasing their knowledge."

"Having the students doing the 'heavy lifting' and taking ownership of their learning is a huge change."

Lake County Schools K-6

Habits of a Learner

Perseverance: *I can stick with things even when I'm tired or when things are challenging.*

Compassion: *I can demonstrate empathy for others, my community, and the world around us.*

Craftsmanship: *I can demonstrate consistent use of revision strategies by giving, accepting, and acting on feedback. I can create my best work with creativity, skill, accuracy, and beauty.*

Respect: *I can treat others how we agreed to treat each other. I can take care of myself, others, property, and our environment.*

Responsibility: *I can stay focused on my work until it's completed. I can demonstrate strategies that help me take ownership of my learning. I can take control of my actions and fix my mistakes.*

Curiosity: *I can explore new ideas by asking questions and seeking answers about the world around me.*

Collaboration: *I can communicate well by actively listening and explaining my ideas clearly. I can fulfill my role to achieve a common goal.*



How do we know our work on climate & culture is starting to work?

- Teacher reports
- Family survey data

What's next?

- Teacher Retention Action Steps
- Student & Teacher Perception Surveys

What does the data show?

- ◇ 72% of parents report that they feel empowered to advocate for their child's success
- ◇ 63% of parents report that the school communicates with them in multiple ways
(Fall 2014 baseline data)
- ◇ LCIS implemented "effort tickets" to reward students for persevering on assessments. Students in the school chose to spend a total of **72 hours** more on their winter NWEA benchmark assessments as compared to the fall assessments.

Student Learning: We expect our kids to do more than they think they can, and we do the same.

We engage students in high-level learning that results in complex/conceptual thinking and quality products through the use of the new state standards, curriculum, instruction and assessment.

What are we doing?

- **Expeditionary Learning:** Students are learning deeply about complex topics. Learning expeditions about bison and the Tenth Mountain Division create engaged learners who become “little experts.”
- **Technology Enabled Learning:** Every student at LCHS will now have a Google Chromebook for use at home and at school.
- **Flex, Enrichment & Intervention Blocks:** Flexible scheduling allows us to customize learning to individual student needs.
- **High Quality Professional Development:** Wednesday afternoons provide time for in depth learning for teachers.



Lake County School District Accountability

Source: CDE District Dashboard, <http://www.schoolview.org/dish/dish.asp>

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
District Accreditation Rating	Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan	Accredited with Improvement Plan	Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan	Accredited with Priority Improvement Plan	Accredited with Improvement Plan
District Performance Framework Points Earned	43.9	52.1	49.3	46.6	54.5

The table below reflects the district's progress in preparing students for life after high school. The district has improved its graduation rate, which now exceeds the state's expectations, and lowered its dropout rate.

Post Secondary and Workforce Readiness Data					
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Grad Rating	Does Not Me..	Approaching	Meets	Exceeds	Exceeds
Dropout Rating	Approaching	Meets	Approaching	Meets	Meets
ACT Rating	Does Not Me..	Approaching	Approaching	Approaching	Approaching



How do we know our work on student learning is starting to work?

- Teacher reports
- Student data

What's next?

- New State Assessments
- Exploration of Expeditionary Learning at LCHS



What is an "expedition?"

Part of Expeditionary Learning model is the implementation of in-depth learning experiences known as expeditions. One example is third grade's Tenth Mountain expedition:

- ◇ First, the grade learned about WWII, the Tenth Mountain soldiers, and their impact on Leadville. These academic topics align with the third grade social studies standards.
- ◇ Next, students wrote reflections and letters of appreciation, which they presented to Tenth Mountain veterans at an assembly.
- ◇ Finally, the entire third grade journeyed to Ski Cooper for the annual Tenth Mountain Ski Down. Many students skied for the first time, and learned first-hand about the soldiers' equipment and experiences.



Infrastructure: We provide the support teachers & staff need to create great outcomes for kids.



We develop infrastructure and operational systems that support and enhance the improvement of student outcomes.

What are we doing?

- **Newly renovated and expanded high school:** Thanks to the support of Lake County, we opened a new \$26M high school in fall 2014.
- **New playgrounds:** With the partnership of the community, we now have a new playground at LCIS and West Park is next.
- **Improved technology:** We have greatly improved the speed and reliability of our technology and our network.
- **Community input on budgeting:** We are soliciting stakeholder input on how we spend our public dollars.

How do we know our work on infrastructure is starting to work?

- Employee reports
- Community feedback

What's next?

- West Park Playground project
- LCIS Gym floor replacement, LCIS roof repair completion
- Long-term capital projects budgeting

What does the data show?

- ◇ When asked, "In general, when you express a concern about something in our district to a leader or administrator, do you feel listened to?" 66% of district employees answered "Always" or "Most of the Time."

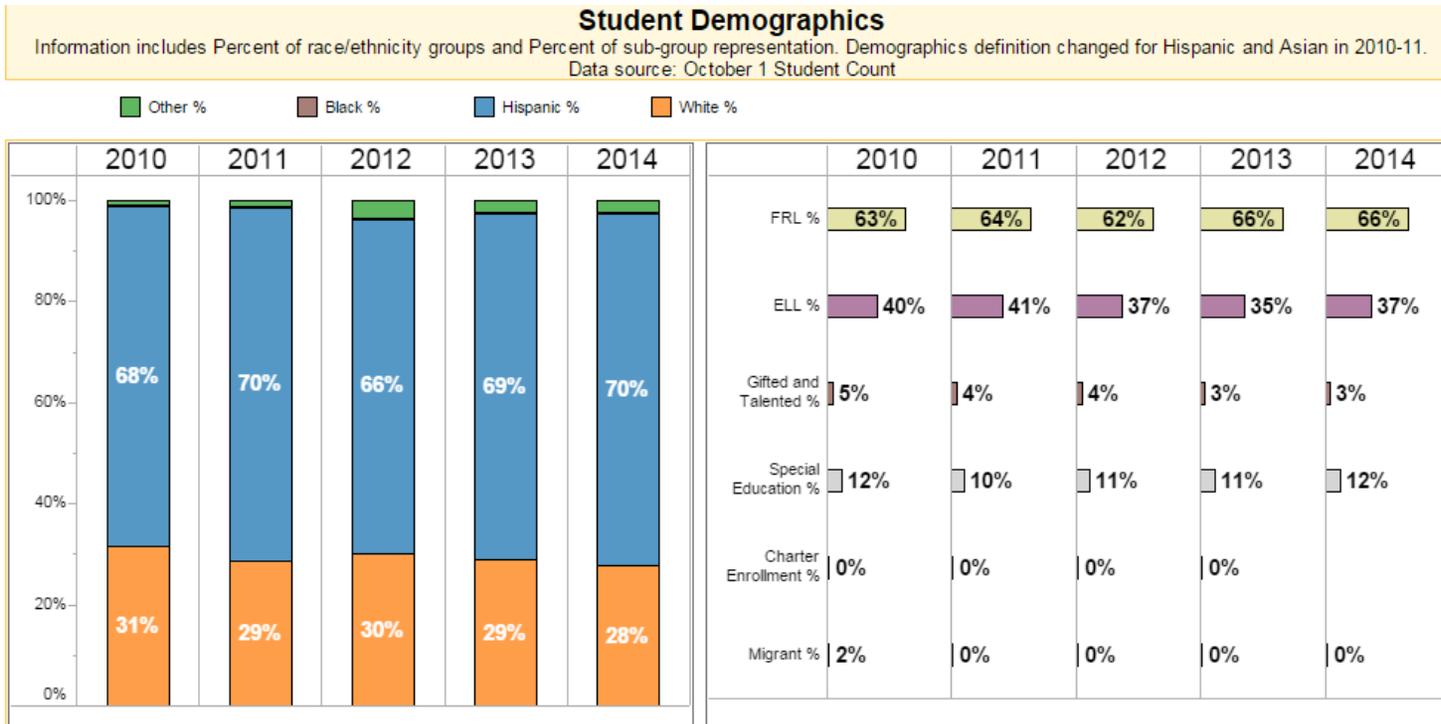
(Fall 2014 baseline data)

Other District Highlights: 2014-15

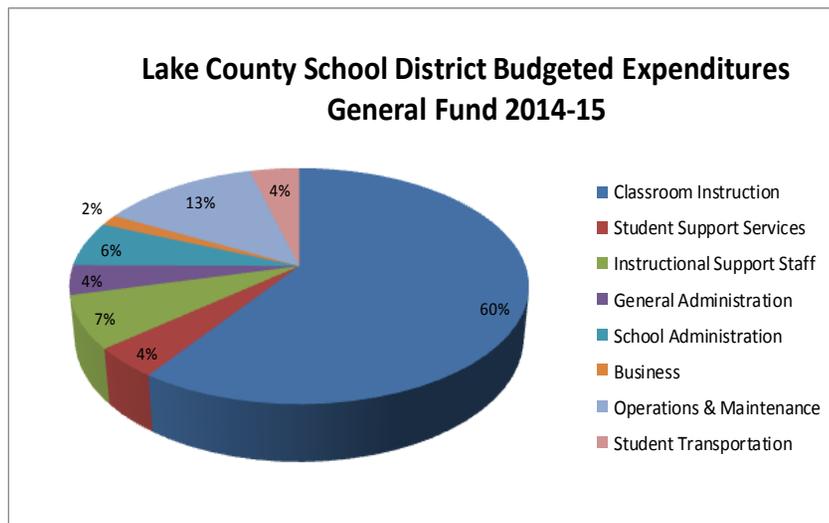
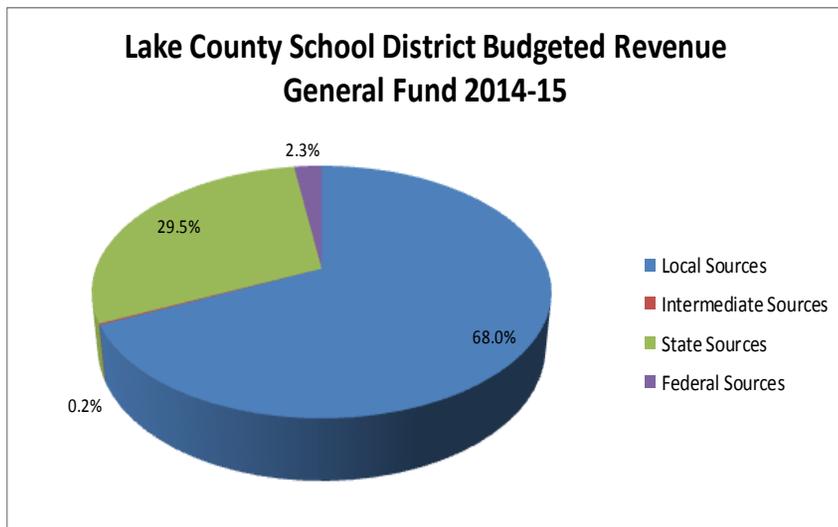
- **Art & Music offered K-12:** Students in all grades now have art and music offerings.
- **Gifted & Talented Programming:** The district now has a full-time GT coordinator to insure that our advanced learners are challenged.
- **Pre-Collegiate Program:** In partnership with several community agencies, the district has launched a pre-collegiate program at LCHS.
- **New Funding:** The district secured new funding from the following sources, among others, in 2014-15:
 - Gates Family Foundation funding
 - CDE WIDA ELL Grant
 - CDE Data Use for Improved Results Grant
 - CDE School Improvement Support Grant
 - CDE Turnaround Network Funding
 - Lake County Build a Generation Mini Grant funding

By the Numbers: District Profile

FRL: Free & Reduced Lunch; ELL: English Language Learners; Source: CDE District Dashboard, <http://www.schoolview.org/dish/dish.asp>



By the Numbers: District Finances



District Reserves

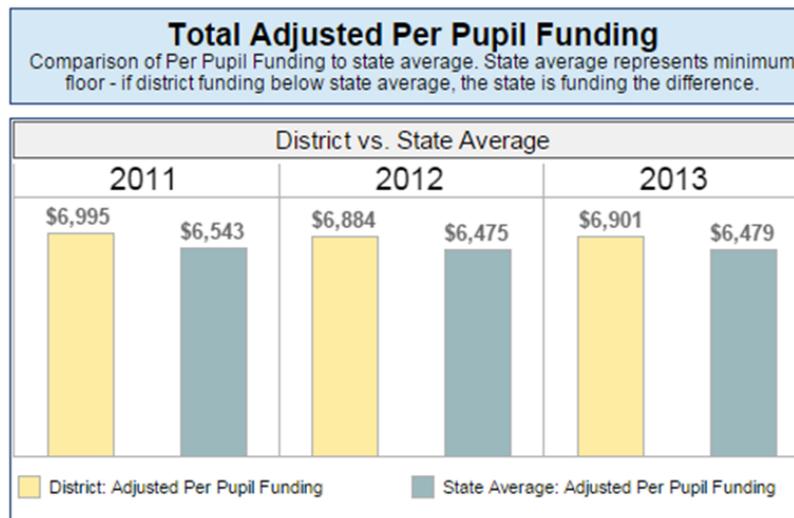
General Fund Operating Reserve	\$1,528,162
TABOR Reserve	\$286,000

Community Budget Priorities

The following were the top three budget priorities identified in our community budget survey in 2014:

1. **Specials like art & music offered K-12:** We created new positions at West Park for art, music and PE that now allow us to offer these subjects for all students K-12.
2. **Smaller class sizes:** We continue to monitor class size and our student to teacher ratio. The current school-wide ratio of certified teachers to students is currently 1:13 at LCHS, 1:14 at LCIS and 1:13 at West Park, all of which are considered relatively low. Note that these ratios do not reflect average class sizes, which are currently in the low 20's at West Park, mid-upper 20's at LCIS and mid-20's at LCHS.
3. **Up to date technology in classrooms:** The district made a significant investment in technology in our schools. All three schools have technology labs that have been replaced in the past two years, and each LCHS student now has a Chromebook.

We also prioritized staff salary increases in this year's budget. Teachers received an average of a **4.8%** raise from 2013-14 to 2014-15, and classified and other staff received a **3.5%** raise. The average in all industries across the State of Colorado was 2.8%.



Source: CDE District Dashboard, <http://www.schoolview.org/dish/dish.asp>