

**BELIEFS
and
VALUES**

- We value *building positive relationships with students, parents, colleagues, and community.*
- We believe in *developing learners who share and model high moral values and ethical behavior.*
- We value *the impact of technology on society and embrace its importance in educating students.*
- We believe that *every student will be college and career ready.*
- We believe in *providing an inclusive environment in which all stakeholders feel safe.*
- We value *service-minded learners, demonstrated through active civic engagement and service to others.*
- We believe that *all students must have the skills to communicate effectively.*

VISION

Lake Ridge Schools aspire to provide exemplary opportunities for life-long learning and continuous growth which are the foundations for engaged citizens and a strong community. The Lake Ridge family of learners will be united through strong relationships that are grounded in trust, respect, and responsibility. Lake Ridge is committed to investing in the future by providing a supportive learning environment that will prepare all learners for college and careers in a changing and complex global society.

MISSION

*Changing Learning, Changing Lives,
Inspiring Lifelong Possibilities*

- All learners will demonstrate academic growth in the core content areas. (math, language arts, science, and social studies).

Strategies

- Establish a curriculum [that](#) promotes college and career readiness
- Integrate Problem/Project Based Learning and Learning Outcomes into Curriculum
- Provide tools to ensure students take active ownership of academic success
- Strengthen the [core](#) curriculum [through](#) Fine Arts [integration](#)
- Hold all teachers and administrators accountable for high student achievement
- Continue [to use](#) the 8 Step Process K-12 to increase student academic growth
- Disaggregate and use appropriate test data to drive instruction (ISTEP+, NWEA, Reading Assessments, Interim Assessment, Acuity, End of Course Assessments, and CRAs)
- Leverage the New Tech Network for resources and coaching
- Celebrate student success
- Provide and promote tools to ensure Lake Ridge Students exceed the state required attendance rate
- All staff model punctuality and attendance for students
- ~~Utilize truancy officer to investigate attendance violations~~
- Monitor [individual school](#) attendance rates [weekly](#)
- Make calls home when students miss more than two days
- Child Protective Services called when truancy becomes excessive as identified by LRS Attendance Policy
- Communicate to parents the impact of school attendance on academics
- Use school-based health clinic to decrease student absenteeism
- Communicate the role of parents on student achievement in core content areas

Evidence

- Visitations to exemplary New Tech elementary schools
- Attendance at national, state, and local conferences
- Implementation of New Tech at elementary schools
- Project-based learning implemented for grades K-5
- Professional development for all staff in project-based learning
- Curriculum contains clear standards for College and Career Readiness
- Investigation of effectiveness of district assessments
- Increased student opportunities for fine arts experiences
- Annual Fine Arts festival
- Continuation of 8 Step Process in curriculum development, pedagogy, and assessment
- Yearly 5% improvement in test scores in all core content areas
- Classroom walk-throughs K-12
- Learning Log Meetings
- Success Time
- Grades and GPAs
- Graduation rate improved by no less than 2%
- Increased enrollment in post-secondary institutions
- Teacher and Administrator evaluations meet IDOE requirements as per SEA 1
- Staff Evaluations show increased *Effective* and *Highly Effective* [ratings](#)
- Increased PD for trainers-of-trainers and in-house experts
- New Tech Certified teachers
- School performance data will be shared with staff, students, parents, community, and media.
- Administrators/teachers report to the Board quarterly on academic achievements
- Increased attendance rate
- Power School attendance reports
- School-based ~~health clinic~~ usage reports/surveys

- **The School Board and Administration will create a positive, safe learning environment for all students and staff.**

Strategies

- Staff will receive training/recertification in Safe Schools.
- Staff will attend state and local safety meetings, workshops and conferences.
- Facilities will be evaluated for safety and cleanliness.
- Staff and students will be drilled in safety procedures.
- Partnerships will be continued with law enforcement
- [Bullying incidences](#) as defined in HEA 1423 will be reduced through the implementation of effective bullying programs.
- Facilities will be updated to improve safety.
- SRO will provide leadership safety into school culture and curriculum.
- DARE officers and the SRO will provide information to parents.
- District implementation and coordination of CPI with district trainer-of-trainers.

Evidence

- Grant-funded SRO
- PBIS Agendas
- SWIS discipline data available from each building
- Fewer ODRs, Suspensions, Expulsions
- Agendas of School Safety Commission and administration meetings
- School Safety Specialists trained/recertified
- Reports on incidences of bullying to IDOE
- Updated School Safety Manuals
- Crisis Teams designated for each building
- Current Threat Assessments
- Drug searches by Lake County Sheriffs' Department
- Regular safety drills (ex. fire, tornado, earthquake, etc.) for students and staff
- Attendance at and hosting of Lake county Safe Schools Commission
- Superintendent serves on State Safety Commission
- "Safe places" established for all schools
- Safety procedures posted in all buildings
- Safety Audit
- Facilities updated as per safety audit
- Seminars will be presented by staff and SROs for School Board, students, parents, and community on safety issues including bullying.
- CPI district teams in each building

- **The School Board and Administration will maximize opportunities to develop and improve communication and relationships at all levels of the Lake Ridge Schools family and community to support the social, emotional, and civic development of all learners.**

Strategies

- Continue mentoring programs for students and beginning teachers
- Continue hosting the Superintendent's Community Forums
- Maintain active PTCs in all buildings
- Continue to bring in motivational speakers
- Involve community in the New Tech/PBL initiatives
- Increase effective marketing of Lake Ridge Schools
- Develop partnerships with local businesses and churches
- Promote outreach programs
- Surveys and "bring a voice" opportunities
- Develop two-way communication

Evidence

- Technical and adaptive resources provided for staff, parents, and community
- List of mentors at all levels
- Program for beginning teacher mentoring

- Teacher/administrator reports to Board
 - Student representative at Board meetings
 - Community Forums
 - Parent Meetings and Programs
 - PTC meeting records/agendas
 - Community New Tech meeting agendas and sign-in sheets
 - Website upgraded
 - Newsletters
 - LRS district social media: Facebook, Twitter
 - Tweet of the week
 - District logo created by students
 - Lake Ridge Mobile App
 - Side by Side Parent Visits
 - Superintendent reports and recognition of outreach programs at Board meetings
 - Student-led conferences
 - Surveys of all stakeholders
 - *Blackboard Connect* Communiques
- **The School Board and Administration will ensure that Lake Ridge Schools operates with fiscal responsibility.**

Strategies

- Annual audit of the budget
- Evaluation of all expenditures
- Support district programs/initiatives by researching all financial sources
- Seek partnerships and grant opportunities that will provide fiscal relief
- Continue cost reduction evaluations

Evidence

- Balanced budget
- No deficit financing
- Research-based programs and initiatives that are within the financial parameters of the Lake Ridge budget will be supported
- Grants received
- Partnerships with businesses and community organizations
- Energy savings evaluation
- Lobby legislators
- Association membership evaluation
- Never go below a positive operating cash balance
- Constantly evaluate contracts for services to ensure LRAS dollars are maximized
- Based on benchmark assessments provide upgrades that ensure efficient facility operations for each building

SWOT Analysis

August, 2014

STRENGTHS

- Open and honest communication with community and all stakeholders
 - Website
 - Parent Nights
 - Parent Liaisons
 - Side-by-Sides
 - Community Forums
 - Weekly newsletters
 - School newspapers in some schools
 - Phone calls to students' homes
- Health Initiatives
 - IDOE Certificate of Excellence for Lake Ridge Schools Healthier US School Challenge
 - Chartwells (*Nutrikids*)
 - Breakfast in the Classrooms
 - Morning Snacks
 - Afternoon Snacks
 - Health Fair
 - Blood Draw
 - CPR Classes
 - School-Based Health Care Center
 - Crisis Prevention & Intervention Training for Staff
 - Mobile Dentist
 - Smoke-free Campus
 - Employee Fitness Center
 - *I Am Thumbbody* – 3rd Grade Self Esteem program
 - *Healthy Relationship* – 4th grade Domestic Violence Prevention Program
 - *PATH (Positive Approach to Teen Health)* at Middle School
- Red Cross Certified CPR Trainers
- Teachers'/Clerical/Non-Certified Care and Concern for Students
- Administrators,' Teachers,' Counselors,' Support Staffs' Care and Concern for Students
- Good, dedicated, hard-working teachers
- Excellence in Performance Awards from IDOE for teachers 2012, 2013, and 2014
- Data Coach at Lake Ridge New Tech Middle School
- Deans at Longfellow and Hosford Park Elementary Schools
- Length of Instructional Day Has Increased
- All administrators and some teachers have advanced degrees
- Community Service Projects
- Safe Schools
- Host Northwest Indiana Safe Schools Commission Meetings
- Bullying training for students, staff, community, and parents
- Crisis Prevention and Seclusion and Restraint Training for Staff
- District CPI training-of-trainers
- Crisis Teams established in every school
- Full-day Kindergarten
- Institutional Membership for Lake Ridge Schools
 - ASCD (Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development)
 - NABSE (National Alliance of Black School Educators)
 - NAGC (National Association for Gifted Children)
 - IAG (Indiana Association for Gifted Children)
 - IASBO
 - ISBA
 - I Support Association

- Director of Programs
 - Adult Education
 - Early Head Start (0-3)
 - Head Start (pre-school)
 - Expulsion Examiner
- Improved Technology
 - *Power School* with Parent Access at the middle and high schools
 - *iPads provided to principals for Teacher Evaluations*
 - *Own It! Software for teacher evaluations*
 - *Echo access at middle and high school*
 - *School Wires*
 - *Compass Learning*
 - *Read 180°*
 - *Rosetta Stone*
 - *SWIS School-Wide Information System in All Schools*
 - Laptops at All Elementary Grade Levels
 - iPods at Calumet New Tech High School
 - Promethian and Smart Boards in All Elementary Rooms
 - *Acuity* Grades 3-12
 - IRead
 - *Fast Forward* Perpetual License for Middle School
 - 1:1 Computers at Calumet High School and Lake Ridge Middle School
 - Laptops for Special Education students
 - iPads for High Ability
 - *IXL Math*
 - *Tumblebooks*
 - E-Rate
 - *Accelerated Reader*
 - *Brain Pop*
 - *Star Reading*
 - *Study Island*
 - *Criterion*
 - *Versatrans (Transportation software)*
- Assessments (NWEA K-11 with Science, Interim Assessments, ISTEP+ and End of Course Assessments, Reading Assessments for Elementary Students, Running Records, ACT, Aspire, Acuity, IREAD, CoGat Screener for K-12 High Ability Students, Orleans Hanna for Algebra Readiness in grade 7)
- Clean buildings & grounds
- Ongoing reassessment and implementation of technology
- All schools, LRMS recently renovated and high school painted
- Aligned professional development
- Curriculum Mapping (8 Step) Grades K-12, created by teachers
- Math Curriculum Consultant - Dr. Robert Trammel
- Language Arts and Reading Audits and Consultant – Dr. Schauna Findlay
- Special Education audit and training by outside consultant
- Some K-12 extra-curricular opportunities
- High School students have opportunities to attend Hammond Area Career Center
- Evaluator for scholarships trained by Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Meets social and academic needs of students K-5
- Counseling Services
 - Edgewater
 - Crown Counseling
 - Regional Mental Health
 - Health Clinic
- Appropriate student transportation
- Partial remodeling of Calumet High School

STRENGTHS

- More electives and course opportunities at Calumet New Tech High School
- Dual Credit at Calumet New Tech High School
- *Project Lead the Way* at Calumet New Tech High School
- ILPs for EL students
- Grant funding –Titles I, IIA, III, NESP, 21st Century Community Learning Centers
- Community support
 - Seniors, churches, politicians, fire department, trustees, Little League, precinct committee, banks, tutors
- Connections and partnerships with higher education
 - Indiana University Northwest
 - Purdue University Calumet
 - Purdue North Central
 - Valparaiso University
 - Calumet College
 - Ivy Tech
- Student Field Trips to Universities
- Students attend college fairs
- Parents and students attend FAFSA nights
- Partnerships
 - Times Media
 - NIPSCO
 - Americorp
 - Work One
 - ICAN
 - READY INDIANA
 - United Way
 - Purdue Calumet University Upward Bound
 - Workforce Innovations
 - Urban League
 - GEMS
- Members of Northwest Indiana Special Education Cooperative, Northwest Indiana Education Service Center, and Urban Schools
- Area Vendors/Businesses – Menards, local banks, This Is It
- Truancy Officer
- High Ability Coaches in each building
- New Tech Model
- In-house New Tech Trainers
- *Classroom Walk-Throughs*
- RISE Training and Evaluation Calibration for Principals
- Implementation of RISE 2.5
- Small school district
- *CRISS* Training, all K-12 staff and support personnel
- Professional Development for School Board
- District Uniformity of Color
- Freshman Focus at Calumet New Tech High School
- Title I Director
- Superintendent on state committees (IAPSS, ENA, Northwest Indiana Superintendents' Study Council, Safe Schools Advisory Board)
- Positive Behavior Intervention Support district-wide (PBIS)
- PBIS Tiers 1 and 2 Training Completed
- *Balanced Literacy* at both elementary schools
- All instructional assistants are Highly Qualified as per *No Child Left Behind*
- Feasibility study for high school and central office buildings
- Calumet New Tech High School (grades 9-12)
- Lake Ridge New Tech Middle School (grades 6-8)
- Project-Based Learning (PBL) in all schools
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers Grant – Hi Def after school program, grades 6-12

STRENGTHS

- 21st Century Learners and Upward Bound scholarship opportunities at middle and high schools
- Foreign language opportunities at Calumet New Tech High School
- Climate survey completed in all schools
- Standards-based Report Cards K-5 are under development
- Online Grade Books K-12
- School Resource Officers
- 8-Step (K-12) includes daily ½ hour remediation/maintenance/enrichment (SHINE, SUCCESS, CHAMP)
- 4-H, Girls on the Run, Young Rembrandts, Fantastic Fours at Longfellow Elementary School
- Professional Learning Communities in most buildings
- Staff and administration collaborative approach to goals (contract negotiations)

WEAKNESSES

- Only one School Nurse (K-12), shared by 4 buildings
- Elementary extra-curricular sports program was cut
- PowerSchool, website, documents not in Spanish
- Standards-based Report Cards K-5 not online
- Online gradebook not available for K-5
- Current Indiana Standards have not been available for timely report card and curriculum map revision
- High School/Central Office buildings need major renovation
- Not much business & industry for tax base
- Low GPAs and below state-average student academic performance on standardized tests at all schools
- Low student academic performance on SAT and ACT at Calumet New Tech High School
- High student:teacher ratio in some classes
- Need for more elective classes
- Lack of 1:1 computers
- Small IT staff cannot keep up with computer repairs
- Teachers and administrators frequently out of the buildings for meetings and professional development
- PTC not system-wide
- No foreign language at the middle school
- Rtl not done with consistency in all buildings
- Teachers serve as mentors for beginning teachers and peers
- Some hallways are not adequately supervised by teachers or administrators
- Lack of parental support at all levels
- No alternative school
- Sometimes Breakfast in the Classroom is distracting and time consuming
- Teaching assistants require **more** training in working with students
- Need for expansion of extra-curricular activities for students
- Need more teachers to teach AP and Dual Credit Courses
- Need improvement in Credit Recovery classes
- Superintendent's Forums have poor attendance
- Need for curriculum and continued professional development for technology
- Need technology instructional coach(es) to help teachers implement technology
- Need IT Support Tech Specialist(s)
- Remediation programs inconsistent among buildings
- Need Depth of Knowledge (i.e.Higher Order Thinking Skills and Differentiation) included in curriculum maps at all levels as required by Indiana State Standards
- Need for continued differentiated instruction professional development
- Need for professional development in cultural sensitivity, diversity, and poverty
- Need for data coaches at all levels
- Lack of District Newsletter
- Train delays
- Too many changes
- Lack of home access to Internet for some students
- Overuse of *Alert Now* making it ineffective for real emergencies
- Too much student testing

OPPORTUNITIES

- Additional partnerships with universities/dual credit
- After-school activities and clubs in addition to Hi Def
- Additional Project-based learning at all levels
- ISTEM (Indiana Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math)
- Virtual school days
- Marketing/recruitment
- Better use of parent and community support
- Community partnerships

THREATS

- Legislative changes
- Loss of state beginning teacher mentoring program
- Loss of Funding – low tax collection, state cuts, unfunded mandates, deghoster
- Less grant funding: Title Funds (I, II, III, High Ability)
- Restoration grants
- Blindsided by media that reports Lake Ridge news without accurate facts
- Media does not often report good news about the district
- Union/Administration issues cause stress
- Burnout
- High mobility of students
- Community poverty and resources
- Low tax base/job security
- Community social problems: aging, poverty, crime
- Turnover of administrators
- Lack of businesses in the community
- Lack of parental involvement at some schools
- Lack of PTCs at some schools
- Charter Schools: Parents sending students out of LRS
- Vouchers
- Not able to set referendums
- Gang activity/Curfew violations
- Availability of illegal substances to students
- Teacher cuts may increase class size
- High teacher turn-over
- Low salaries for new teachers who stay with the system

What does a Lake Ridge Schools 21st Century graduate look like?

- Organizational Skills
- Problem Solver, Critical Thinker
- Technology Skills/Savvy
- Proficient written and verbal communications
- Literate: read, understand, question
- Financially literate
- Research skills
- AA or certification before graduation or early college credits (dual credits)
- Social skills
- Soft skills (time management, social skills, punctual, respect)
- Professionalism
- College and Career Ready
- Life plan (goal)
- Self confidence
- Intrinsic Motivation
- “Dreamer”/Visionary
- Adaptable
- Goal-oriented with concrete plan
- Willingness to be a risk taker
- Adaptable
- Self-advocate
- Self-motivated
- Choices for various life paths
- Idea of what they can do to be effective citizens
- Volunteerism, Philanthropy, Service-Oriented Internships
- Collaborative Skills
- Team oriented: Follower when needed
- Leader when needed
- Self-Reliant/Independent
- Good work ethic
- Dependable
- Disciplined and emotionally stable
- Smart decision making
- Resourceful
- Desire to grow and learn
- Life-long learner
- Globally aware and Culturally competent
- Innovative/creative thinkers
- Solid, engaged citizens
- Perseverance, Persistence
- Committed
- Integrity/honesty/Trustworthiness
- Good Listener
- Open-minded
- Good relationships /Interpersonal skills
- Healthy
- Compassionate
- Happy