



News & Views

WINTER 2020

Inside this Edition

Creating a Culture of Support
Page 2

Social Emotional Learning
Page 2

Progress on Strategic Plan
Page 3

The Breakfast Club
Page 3

New Staff Members
Page 4

Ways to Engage with the District
Page 5

Innovation Team
Page 6

Update on Capital Project
Page 6

Ways to Stay Informed
Page 7

C.R.E.A.T.E. Students of the Month
Page 7

Sign up for our monthly e-newsletter.
It's easy. Just go to the district's
website, www.lkgeorge.org, and
click on the link.

www.lkgeorge.org

Living Up to the Vision

During this season of reflection and gratitude, it is fortuitous that the district is also reflecting on the Strategic Plan. The Lake George Central School District is in Year 3 of the Strategic Plan, which was created in 2017 with the help of representatives from every stakeholder group in the district. The overarching themes that emerged during the planning process were curriculum, K-12 alignment, and innovation. From there, five goals were developed as guidelines to help us fulfill the district's vision for our students.

Vision

To foster academic and personal excellence, responsibility and cultural awareness, we are dedicated to creating:

- An engaging and innovative learning environment for each student
- A comprehensive K-12 instructional program using best practices
- Student connections to extra-curricular opportunities
- An appreciation for diversity and local traditions

The time has come to ask ourselves "What's next?" "What did we accomplish that we can celebrate?" "How are we doing?" "Are we measuring those items that will help us fulfill the vision we have for our district and our students?" "Has our vision evolved?"

To begin these conversations, the Strategic Planning and Review Committee (SPARC) recently held its annual data review and progress session. Upon review of data and reflection, the district is in a good place. We have met over half of the targets attached to the five goals,

and the initiatives we have implemented are beginning to bear fruit. We can see where adjustments need to be made, and we are making them in informed, thoughtful, and collaborative ways. We have strengthened our student and staff support systems and augmented our communication systems and means of engagement. Above all, we are making a concerted effort to embody our core values of Collaboration, Respect, Excellence, Accountability, Trust, and Empathy every day in everything we do.

"I am very proud of the work that has been accomplished. I recognize this has been a tremendous amount of work for the entire district, and I want to recognize and thank the SPARC Team and all who have supported and collaborated on targets and goals. These efforts not only benefit our students, but set the course for the future of LGCSD," said Superintendent Rutnik. "Aligning the curriculum K-12, shifting to Next Generation Learning Standards in core subjects plus art and music, and attending to Social and Emotional Learning as prescribed by the new federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) are heavy lifts. We are truly blessed to have caring faculty and staff members who, with the leadership team, tailor each initiative specifically for the students here in Lake George in a manner that is authentic to the traditions and standards of excellence we value."

We are lifelong learners, leaders, and global citizens.

Social Emotional Learning

Last year, a team of professionals and students from Lake George High School, led by the Director of Student Support Services Kemm Wilson, visited four schools to learn about their Wellness Structures. They saw examples of an Academic Coaching Room, 21st Century Classrooms, Restorative Justice, Cross Roads, and SASS. The ideas planted during these visits became the seeds for Lake George Jr.-Sr. High School's own wellness room, coined "OASIS," which stands for "Opportunities in Alternate Settings in School."

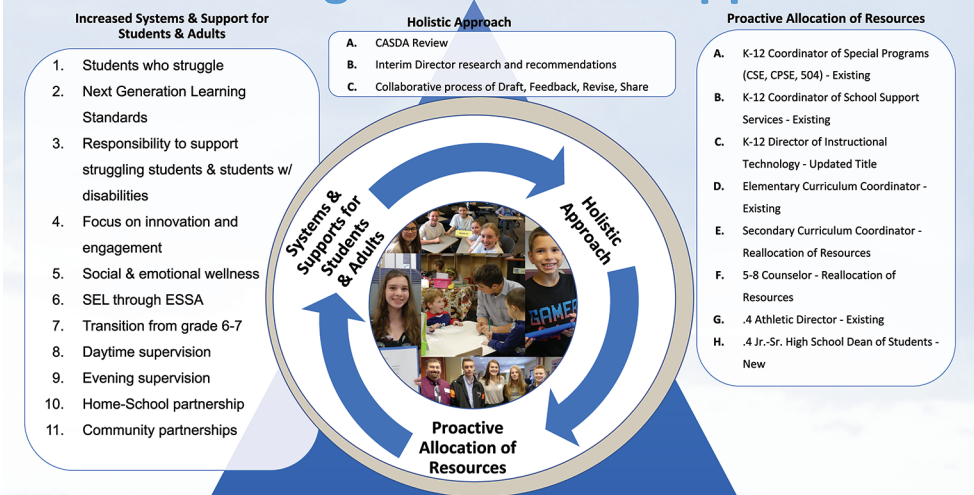
OASIS provides students a safe, comfortable, stress-free environment that offers academic support and opportunities to develop social-emotional competencies. For several periods a day, OASIS is staffed by certified teachers who provide academic support. Teaching Assistant Jana Harris is available throughout the day for academic support and wellness/social-emotional guidance with a focus on self-management, organizational skills, goal setting, and stress management.

Students can participate in additional wellness practices in OASIS with our own certified FLOW and Mindfulness Instructor Mrs. Niki McGrath and Art Teacher Mrs. Erin Connolly-McGrath. We are fortunate to have these teachers who bring their life interests and experiences to benefit others inside and outside the traditional classroom. OASIS has exceeded our expectations, and students and staff are really embracing it.



Therapy Dog Stihl visited OASIS.

Creating a Culture of Support



Strengthening Systems for Students and Staff

Last spring, Superintendent Rutnik reviewed recommendations for the transition that would take place following the dissolution of the Interim Director for Curriculum, Instruction, and Student Support Services position during an evening public presentation. The recommendations for the transition were based on:

- Research conducted by CASDA and Mr. Jeff Ziegler
- A collaborative process of input/feedback/adjustment cycles that included the principals, leadership team, LGEA president and vice president, Board of Education, faculty, staff, business manager, and community members

The goal of the transition was to find student-centered solutions with existing resources within the district. The purpose was to further align curriculum K-12 and strengthen systems and support for students and adults.

The transition plan took into account CASDA's considerations of student support, school structure, pre-K, master schedule, developing partners, keeping balance, class size protocol, student-staff ratio, leadership structure, tuition for non-residents, and marketing. It also factored in Mr. Ziegler's suggestions for future examination including: 0.4 dean of students; director of student support services; director of curriculum, instruction, and technology; teacher on special assignment for student support services; and director of administrative services.

The timing of the transition plan was critical. In order to implement the plan at the beginning of the school year, staff and departments needed to plan for new roles and responsibilities, scheduling needed to take place to include the proposed changes, and postings needed to be made to secure quality internal candidates for the specific areas identified.

The result of everyone's diligence and attention to detail is a thoughtful structure that utilizes the expertise of existing staff members – Teachers on Special Assignment – and one additional school counselor who attends to the needs of students in grades 5-7.

"This model provides students with increased access to social-emotional supports and interventions. Everyone is coming together to meet the needs of students and staff," said Superintendent Rutnik. "I recognize this is a shift in thinking and practice, and these systems need time to develop and evolve. It is still a work in progress."

Other items that were shared during the public presentation for the district to consider in the future include:

- A STEAM and Humanities TOSA
- Increased student voice
- Increased community engagement
- Facilitating distributed leadership
- An ad-hoc focus group to delve into CASDA considerations

Reflecting on Year 2 of Strategic Plan

The Strategic Planning and Review Committee (SPARC) met in October to reflect on Year 2 of the Strategic Plan, celebrate our accomplishments, and prepare for the future. We are happy to announce that with one year to go, half of the 12 targets attached to the five goals have been achieved, and progress is being made on the remaining targets.

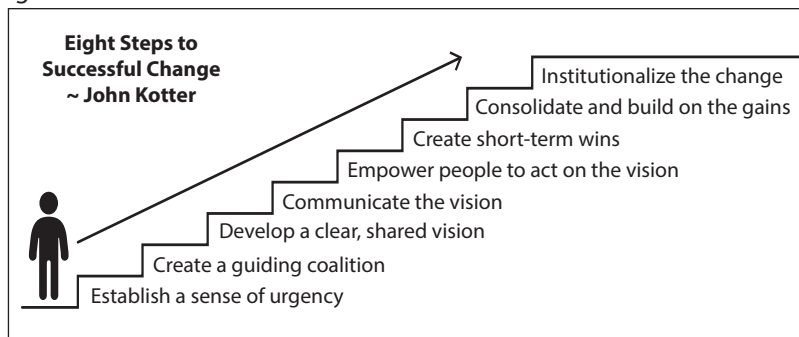
The practice of annual reflection is a healthy one. It helps us remember where we started and have the confidence to make changes that benefit students. Some of the changes going into Year 3 of the Strategic Plan include: strengthening the Response to Intervention program 9-12; a new reading program for early intervention and prevention; and a new K-8 benchmarking tool that is aligned with Common Core Standards. Additionally, the district has contracted with a behaviorist and added special classes in ELA and math for certain grade levels. These efforts help to support the goals of raising the bar and closing the gap.

"It is exciting to see a natural evolution take place as the Strategic Plan evolves," said Superintendent Rutnik. "For example, faculty members in the K-12 Special Education Department have formed their own Professional Learning Community (PLC) for professional development; teams are working together to create shared understanding around standards based grading in grades 7-12; departments are utilizing their shared time to collaborate in new and different ways; and we are operating from a positive, proactive position with a clearly articulated focus."

Following the reflection on the 12 targets, members of SPARC discussed whether or not to keep the same mission, vision, values, and goals for two more years, as Strategic Plans typically span 3-5 years. After thoughtful discussion, the committee recommended keeping the mission, vision, values and goals but adjusting the targets and work plans in years 3-5 (after a data review cycle takes place). The Board of Education has charged SPARC to reconvene in January to renew membership and work through the cycle of input/research/draft/feedback/revise/share to make final recommendations for Years 3-5.

Work groups, in collaboration with the leadership team, will adjust the targets and work plans to make sure they inspire movement in the direction in which the committee originally intended. The work groups will also ensure the revised targets accurately measure those items we value as a community, such as engagement, innovation, and the empowered learner. Drafts will be shared with Cabinet, FORUM, HOD, stakeholders, and SPARC to gain feedback from our shared decision making bodies.

"I believe this is one of the most exciting times in LGCS D history," said Mrs. Rutnik. "The Strategic Plan has allowed us to build upon our strong foundation of excellence, and Kotter's research shows the district is succeeding with incremental steps to successful change. Looking forward to Years 4-5, my hope would be to start collaborative discussions around what it means – and how to become – a "future forward" school district. It is incumbent upon us to make sure our students are graduating from our district with the knowledge and skills to succeed in this world."



We are looking to fill some positions on the SPARC Committee. If you are a community member/alumni, or parent, and want to have a voice in the direction of the district, please call Sarah Barton at 518-668-5456 ext. 1207.

The Breakfast Club

Superintendent Rutnik is excited to announce an additional means of strengthening communication and intentionally promoting LGCS D core values.

"The Superintendent's Student Ambassador Committee, coined "The Breakfast Club," will be an opportunity for students' voices to be heard on larger, district-wide items" said Mrs. Rutnik.

The intention of the Breakfast Club is to bring about unity and greater understanding on a variety of district-level items including future strategic planning efforts. The committee will be comprised of a diverse student body who will represent their school communities and discuss issues that are important to students in LGCS D.

The ambassadors will meet six times throughout the year with the superintendent to offer input, insight, and suggestions on district level items that are important from a student perspective.

"As we move into the third year of LGCS D Strategic Plan, I believe increasing student voice in district level items will help us even further as we move into the next phase of the strategic planning process," said Superintendent Rutnik

Twelve students from grades 7-12 applied for and have been selected to serve on the Breakfast Club.



First meeting of "The Breakfast Club."

Meet Our New Staff Members



Michael Varney
School Business Manager

School Business Manager

Lake George School Business Manager Michael Varney joined us in September. He holds a Bachelor's degree in business administration from Siena College, a Master's degree in education from SUNY Plattsburgh, and is currently working toward a School District Business Leader certificate from LeMoyne College.

Mr. Varney began his career as a CPA for eight years before pursuing a career in teaching. He taught eighth grade social studies at the Queensbury Middle School and coached modified football, basketball, baseball, track, and Nordic skiing. While teaching, he continued to work as a CPA on a part-time basis. After 18 years, Mr. Varney left teaching to go back into accounting full time, working at Whittemore, Dowen & Ricciardelli, LLP.

"This position combines my interests and expertise perfectly," said Mr. Varney, who lives in Queensbury with his wife, Sharon. They have three children, Mike, Matt, and Cassie. They also have a black lab named Gracie. In his free time, Mr. Varney likes to cook, exercise, and play guitar.



John Alecci
Music Teacher
LGHS



Renee Chance
Long-Term Sub Teacher Aide
LGES



Jennifer Dell'olio
School Counselor
LGES and LGHS



CheriLyn Dempsey
Long-Term Sub Teacher
LGHS



Vernon Dorgan
Custodian
LGHS



Alyssa Drapeau
Special Education Teacher
LGES



Michelle Hansen
Cleaner
LGHS



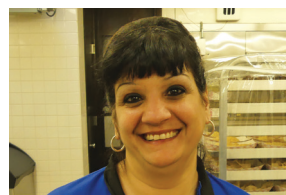
John Kuri
Food Service Helper
LGHS



Abigail Lynch
Special Education Teacher
LGES and LGHS



Morgan McIntosh
Special Education Teacher
LGES



Lisa Shumek
Food Service Helper
LGES



Carolyn Smith
English Teacher
LGHS

Returning staff members in new roles:

- Alexandra Poetzsch, LGES Teacher
- Nicole Borie, Long-term Substitute Teacher LGES
- Sherry Galkiewicz, Long-term Substitute Teaching Assistant LGES

Ways to Engage With the District



1. Follow us on social media

We love to share events, good news, accomplishments, and fun pictures and videos on our social media channels.



We encourage you to “Like” [LakeGeorgeCSD](#) on Facebook and share posts with family and friends.



Twitter users, please “Follow” us and feel free to “like,” “retweet,” and “tag” @LakeGeorgeCSD in your Tweets.

If you’re not on Facebook or Twitter, that’s ok, just click on the icon on the top right corner of our website and see what’s happening without signing in.

2. Participate in Thoughtexchanges

“Thoughtexchange” is an online community engagement and alignment tool. Participants are invited to share their thoughts on open-ended questions that are delivered to participants by a URL link that is emailed and posted on the district website.

All exchanges are confidential; individual’s thoughts are shared, but not the individual’s identity. Participants are asked to share thoughts, read and consider the thoughts of others, and rate or prioritize the thoughts in the exchange on a scale of 1-5 (with 5 being in highest agreement). After a Thoughtexchange closes, the district shares an interactive report with participants and follows up on themes that emerged.



3. Meet us at Café C.R.E.A.T.E.



We recognize that not everyone communicates online. Superintendent Rutnik is happy to meet with residents for coffee in a community setting. Please stop by and join her!

- January 10, 2020 from 9-11am at the Lake George Village Stewart’s Shops
- February 13, 2020 from 9-11am at the Courtyard by Marriott Lake George
- March 19, 2020 from 9-11am at Caffé Vero
- April 23, 2020 from 9-11am at Lake George Village Stewart’s Shops
- May 8, 2020 from 9-11am at the Courtyard by Marriott Lake George

These dates, times, and locations will also be posted on the district website and social media channels.

4. Join SPARC

The Strategic Planning and Review Committee (SPARC) is seeking volunteers to represent the constituent groups listed below to allow every constituent group a voice in the direction of the district.

(1) K-6 Parent

(1) 10-12 Parent

(1) 7-9 Parent

(3) Community members/alumni

SPARC meets 3-5 times per year for approximately 2-3 hours. Meetings are scheduled in the evenings, and dinner is included. SPARC members collaborate with a variety of stakeholders around the future of LGCSD. Each member acts as a liaison between SPARC and the constituent group he or she represents.



5. Volunteer with the PTO, Booster Club, or School Shared Decision Making Committee

Lake George Central School District personalizes opportunities that empower all students to be lifelong learners, leaders, and global citizens. Volunteering your time with one of these organizations will help ensure that all children continue to have as many opportunities to pursue their interests and passions as they do now. Please click on the “Parents” tab on the district website to learn more.

Innovation Team

The District Innovation Team, formerly known as the Technology Team, is supporting Goal 3 of the Strategic Plan: Create Innovative and Engaging Learning Environments. The intention behind Goal 3 is to prepare today's students to thrive in a world that is constantly evolving.

Under the leadership of K-12 Director of Innovation Megan Coker, the Innovation Team developed a shared understanding of the target standards and indicators and tailored them to Lake George CSD. Using the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) Standards for Students, along with the foundation developed through the district's WeLearn initiative, the Innovation Team developed four standards.

The four standards include:

- **Empowered Learner** – a student who takes an active role in the learning process in order to achieve his/her learning goals.
- **Innovative Constructor** – a student who identifies and solves problems by constructing knowledge and creating artifacts.
- **Creative Communicators** – a student who communicates clearly and expresses himself/herself creatively to a specific audience for a specific purpose.
- **Global Citizen and Collaborator** – a student with a broad perspective, who can express sympathy and enrich his/her learning through active collaboration while modeling and acting in safe ways.

The Innovation Team focused on the Empowered Learner during Year 1. Year 2 saw professional development efforts with teachers. The focus in Year 3 will be to establish a process for developing learning spaces based on innovative and engaging learning. The team will define what makes a space innovative and engaging; evaluate existing spaces; establish areas in need of innovation; and create a plan for implementation. This work will be done in collaboration with the K-6 Building Initiative Team.



Update on Capital Project

District architects, Tetra Tech, met with the Buildings and Grounds Committee recently and presented an update at the November Board of Education meeting.

From January-July 2019, consultants verified existing conditions and drafted design and construction documents. Environmental testing and design was performed from August-October. The plans were submitted to the NYS Education Department for approval in September 2019, and we just received approval on the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing plans. Architectural plans should be approved in the next few weeks.

The project team is currently preparing bid documents; they anticipate the process of bidding, descoping, and BOE awarding of bids to take place from February-March 2020. There will likely be five prime contracts for general, mechanical, electrical, plumbing, and site work. Some abatement will be necessary due to the replacement of the fire alarm system and make security improvements to windows and doors.

District construction manager, Chazen Associates, is putting together the construction schedule. They are working closely with the Lake George Facilities team on logistics.

The timeline for construction will have the least amount of impact on teaching, learning, and special events that take place in our facilities. For instance, graduation will still occur in the High School Gym, and Youtheatre will still be held in the Auditorium this summer. Any work that has the potential to negatively impact teaching and learning will be done during second shift after students have left the building for the day.

Estimated Timeline

Bidding and contract awards.....February-March 2020
Mobilization and shop drawings.....Spring 2020
ConstructionApril - December 2020

Channels of Communication

The Lake George Central School District prides itself on effective communication. We have created a "Who to Contact" communication tool that can be found on the district website by clicking on the "District" tab to help stakeholders address questions and concerns in an efficient manner.

Please remember that the district is the source for factual information concerning LGCSD. The district utilizes a variety of channels to reach parents and community members, which can be seen on page seven.

When items arise, the district prefers personal communication. The Leadership Team has an open door policy, welcomes dialogue, and strives to make decisions that are in the best interest of all students.

Coming soon...be on the lookout for a Thoughtexchange in January on how you like to receive news and views from the district. The Thoughtexchange will be posted on the website and emailed to those on the district mailing list. If you haven't signed up to receive e-news from the districts, please call Sarah Barton at (518) 668-5456 ext. 1207.

Ways to Stay Informed

District Website

The district publishes news, information, notifications, and more on the district website, www.lkgeorge.org. Each school has its own landing page with school-specific information.

District Social Media

The district posts events, good news, accomplishments, pictures, and videos on our social media channels. We encourage you to "Like" LakeGeorgeCSD on Facebook and "Follow" @LakeGeorgeCSD on Twitter. If you're not on Facebook or Twitter, you can click on the icon on the top right corner of the district website and see what's happening without signing in.

SchoolMessenger

The district uses "SchoolMessenger" to communicate with parents and guardians in cases of emergency/evacuation, snow days or delays, and unanticipated early release. Parents are connected to SchoolMessenger through the SchoolTool Parent Portal. If you are a parent and are not receiving notifications, please contact Natalie Fullen at (518) 668-5714 ext. 1211.

District Newsletters

The district publishes and mails four newsletters per year plus a school calendar. These publications contain important information on district initiatives. Please take the time to read and help us celebrate all of our accomplishments.

E-Blasts

The district sends e-newsletters as needed to parents/guardians and community members who have signed up to receive district news via email. E-blasts are used to communicate information of immediate importance and to invite community input. If residents would like to receive news by email, please call Sarah Barton at (518) 668-5456 ext. 1207.

Emails, Phone Calls, and Backpack Reminders

These tried-and-true methods remain in place as the primary mode of school-home communication.

SchoolTool Parent Portal

Parents/guardians who are registered users can access specific information about their child(ren). Currently, registered parents and guardians can view:

- Contact information
- Attendance Records
- Student Schedules
- NYS Assessment results
- Marking Period Averages (posted at the same time report cards are released)
- Grades for individual course assignments

To sign up for Parent Portal access bring the completed registration form with your driver's license/photo identification to Registrar Natalie Fullen at the Elementary School. This form must be returned in person; it cannot be mailed in.

C.R.E.A.T.E. Students

Congratulations to the following students who received the Board of Education "CREATE Student of the Month" recognition. Principals, faculty, and staff nominated these students for modeling the district values of Collaboration, Respect, Excellence, Accountability, Trust, and Empathy.



Lilly Montville
6th grade



Michael Burrows
12th grade



Kari Lynn
6th grade



Jaime Smith
12th grade



Tess Armstrong
12th grade



Aazrum Tarar
6th grade



Juliana Yepes-Hoyos
12th grade



Rachel Hunsicker
12th grade

Board of Education:

Tricia Connor Biles - President
Lin King - Vice President
Katie Bruening
Tim Collins
Maryanne MacKenzie
Melissa Seale
Thomas Seguljic



381 CANADA STREET
LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK 12845
www.lkgeorge.org

Superintendent of Schools
Lynne Rutnik

News & Views is published four times during the school year by the Lake George Central School District to encourage interest in education and to keep the district residents informed of the school's activities and programs.

*Printed in conjunction with
WSWHE BOCES Communication Services*

LAKE GEORGE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

NON-Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
PERMIT No. 511
Glens Falls, NY

***** ECRWSS *****
RESIDENT



LGES Teachers and students performed a Readers Theater of "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" during their tremendously successful "Whoville Party."



Lake George Seniors helped community members during Senior Give Back Day.

Upcoming Events *for more details go to lakegeorgescsd.org*

Classes Resume Jan. 6
PTECH/TECH Programs
Information Night Jan. 8
Scholarship Association
Phone-a-Thon Jan. 9
HS Alumni Panel for Students Jan. 9
Deadline to Register for
Feb. 8 ACT Jan. 10
PTSO Meeting Jan. 13
BOE Meeting Jan. 14
Post-Prom Parent Meeting Jan. 14
Martin Luther King Jr. Day
School closed Jan. 20
HS Regents & Mid-Terms Jan. 21-23
Genius Week Grades 7-8 Jan. 21-23
Classes resume grades 7-12 Jan. 24
Pre-ACT 10th grade Jan. 29
Air Band Competition Jan. 31

All-County Orchestra
Jazz Festival Jan. 31-Feb. 1
College Planning Night Feb. 3
ACT Exam Feb. 8
BOE Meeting Feb. 11
LGES Math Night Feb. 12
Deadline to Register for
March 14 SAT Feb. 14
President's Day, offices closed ... Feb. 17
Holiday Recess,
classes not in session Feb. 17-21
8th Grade Parent Night Feb. 26
Deadline to Register for
April 4 ACT Feb. 28
Parents as Reading Partners ... March 1-31
Bon Appétit & Talent Show March 4
PTSO Meeting March 9
9-12 Band/Chorus Concert March 9

Find us on   @LakeGeorgeCSD