



**Independent School Dist. No. 857**  
**100 County Road 25**  
**Lewiston, MN 55952**  
**(507) 523-2191**

*Gwen Carman, Superintendent*  
*Cory Hanson, High School Principal • Dave Riebel, Elementary/Intermediate Principal*

**Superintendent's Report to the School Board**  
**Submitted by Gwen Carman**  
**April 12, 2021**

**Meeting Agenda Notes**

**School Perceptions/InGensa Presentation** The meeting will include an informational presentation with School Perceptions, Inc. and InGensa, Inc. This presentation will provide information on key steps we can implement in order to assure we are using data to help guide our strategic planning. School Perceptions (Sue Peterson) develops surveys that are highly reliable and informative. Specifically, we can have School Perceptions to survey our staff and parents on their overall satisfaction on how we are educating students. Connie, Brei and I have met with Sue and agreed that we wanted her to speak with the entire Board. I strongly believe that Sue's survey data with the information/data from the facilities assessment will provide us, staff and the community critical information we need for making longterm planning decisions for the district.

Attached is information about School Perceptions and a proposal that Sue provided me to conduct a staff and parent survey in September.

**Facility Assessment** Jaqui Coleman, Luke Pfothenauer and Rochelle Van Den Heuvel from InGensa, Inc. will be present at the meeting to answer any questions you may have for them. I have discussed with them the necessary steps of engaging with our community after the facility assessment is complete and they will assist us with this as well without additional fees. I am recommending approval of the Project Development Agreement that is on the agenda.

**Mary Kalmes Scholarship** Lewiston-Altura High School was gifted \$10,000 from the estate of Mary Helen Kalmes. Ms. Kalmes was a resident of Colorado at the time of her death. Her will specifically states that the funding "be applied toward scholarships for students enrolling in a music or nursing program." I recommend that we award one annual \$500 scholarship with the funds. Guidance Counselor Lori Anderson works with a small group of teachers to determine scholarship award winners for other scholarships, and I suggest we ask this committee to also determine this annual scholarship.

**Non Renewal of a Teacher** On the agenda is a non-renewal of Mr. Centeno. This non-renewal is necessary because Mr. Centeno is a Tier III licensed teacher with an 'out of field placement' license to teach ELL. We will still need a High School ELL teacher next year, but teacher licensing rules require districts to first advertise for a teacher licensed in the desired area for 65 days before we can apply for an 'out of field placement' license.

## **Additional Updates**

**Memorial Tree Update** Principal Riebel has been working with Larry Rupprecht on a specific location to plant a tree to honor the memory of former bus driver Tom Wirt. The tree will be planted behind the backstop fence of the ball field on the elementary playground. I will coordinate with Mrs. Wirt regarding how she would like to recognize this special designation to honor Mr. Wirt.

**COVID-19 Funding** This continues to be an area of much focus and questions. As you may recall from our budget discussions, there are multiple ‘pots’ of federal funding from the various legislative allocations for schools.

- ESSER I (Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act) – approved in March 2020. We received \$164,000 and have spent those funds in 20-21 to help cover many of the additional supply, equipment, staffing needs due to the pandemic, as well as a \$90,000 replacement school bus.
- ESSER II (COVID Relief Deal) – approved in December 2020. We were notified last week that we will receive \$425,328.
- ESSER III (American Rescue Plan Act) -approved in March 2021. This funding amount is still unknown but should be announced soon.

These funds are certainly much needed and appreciated. We must also recognize that these are one-time funding streams and are not longterm solutions to the challenges of school funding shortages.

The use of these federal dollars is fairly broad and can be carried over through 2024. MDE is using the terms *Response* (direct response needs to COVID-19), *Recovery* (addressing learning loss, re-engaging families) and *Reform* (long standing changes to improve curriculum, instruction, school connections from pre-pandemic norms) as categories for fund use.

We will be assessing and prioritizing how to make the best use of these funds in the current and upcoming school years. This will be part of the budget planning (see below).

**2021-22 Planning:** I am working with Cabinet members to begin to budget and plan the 2021-22 school year. As you may recall, we had a significant expenditure vs revenue deficit in the amended budget that you approved in March. The COVID funding will definitely help this situation because we can potentially use some of those funds to cover some staff positions. We plan to not replace the vacated teaching position from the recent intermediate school retirement.

**Online Learning:** We still do not yet know if districts will be required to provide full time distant learning as an option for students next year. We also do not know if we will see an increase in the number of families that will want this option. This is an option they already have by enrolling in any of the existing online schools.

If we are required to provide distant learning, we do not want our classroom teachers providing distant learning while simultaneously teaching students face to face. This has been one of the biggest challenges throughout this school year. Therefore, we are exploring options for contracting with an online provider (Edgenuity) that potentially could be utilized with a K-12 distant learner. In addition, these courses can be utilized for high school credit recovery, intervention and for elective courses that we are unable to provide. The costs for this would be far less than the funding we would lose if a student open enrolls out to an online school.

Current laws require MDE approval to be able to serve out of district students with online classes which would be important for continuing to support students who open enroll in to L-A. I am working on this application and it may be on the May agenda. Again, districts are still waiting clarity from the State and hopefully this guidance will come very soon.

Curriculum Review/Standards Based Learning Highly effective schools have clearly defined K-12 curriculum in all curricular areas that assures that our instruction and assessments/grading clearly align with MN Standards. We need our curriculum to meet the needs of all students- including modifications/interventions for students who are struggling and enrichment for students who have already mastered the standards and are ready for ‘more.’ This is complex and time intensive work, but its importance cannot be overstated.

It appears that the district has done some work in this area in some curricular areas/grade levels but it has not been done consistently or comprehensively. Most teachers certainly do some of this work as part of their daily planning. However, a comprehensive curriculum review should include in-depth discussions to assure a ‘seamless’ K-12 sequence as well as discussions with same grade/same subject area teachers to assure there is not gaps or duplication. Also, sometimes past or traditional practices of grading impedes renewed reflection on how we determine a student’s ‘success.’

This is work that principals and superintendents often encourage teachers to do, but the reality is that our positions are typically unable to devote adequate time to fully lead and support teachers in this process. This is why larger districts often have an additional administrative position such as ‘Director of Curriculum and Instruction’ or something similar.

Prior to the pandemic, the L-A District did have a partial FTE teacher position to focus on curriculum work. As we plan the upcoming year, I am hoping we are able to assign a 1.0 FTE licensed teacher position to primarily work with administration and teachers on planning/assuring we are utilizing standards-based instruction and assessments. This requires all teachers to be engaged and can be a focus of PLCs (two hour late start days). Some teachers may also want/be willing to work on this outside of the school day or school year. This requires additional compensation that can be paid with staff development set aside funds. This is likely not a one-year initiative but again, this work is essential for our continued growth and improvement.

Office Positions We are assessing our overall office staff needs and how we can most efficiently align responsibilities in various positions. This may result in some changes such as # of contract days, but not a change in overall number of positions.

I anticipate bringing to the Board in May and June budget recommendations for 2021-22. You are required by statute to approve a budget for next school year no later than June 30<sup>th</sup>.





## Parent Survey: Engagement

### ABOUT SCHOOL PERCEPTIONS

School Perceptions LLC is an independent educational research firm that specializes in conducting surveys for public and private schools, educational service agencies, communities, and other state and national organizations. Since our founding in 2002, more than 10,000 schools have relied on us to collect millions of survey responses from students, staff, parents, and community members.

For almost two decades, our mission has not changed: We help educational leaders gather, organize, and use data to make strategic decisions.

**SCH%L  
PERCEPTIONS**

262.644.4300 | [schoolperceptions.com](http://schoolperceptions.com)  



# THE BUILDING BLOCKS TO A SUCCESSFUL PARENT SURVEY

## 1

### ENGAGE YOUR PARENTS

The School Perceptions parent survey collects the data that you need to assess your parents' experiences, attitudes, and levels of engagement at all of your schools. It also allows your parents to provide honest feedback, strengthening the school-parent partnership.

## 2

### WORK WITH EXPERTS

After conducting thousands of surveys, our staff has the experience to help you through each step of the survey design, administration, and results reporting process. Using an independent company like School Perceptions builds trust with your parents and makes your survey process easy, professional, and credible.

## 3

### ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

The base parent survey allows parents to provide feedback on each school their child attends in your district. Optional sections include communications, an evaluation of programs and services, life skills, future planning, and overall satisfaction. Our system allows you to add customized questions that address issues important to your school.

*This survey collects data on six key indicators of parent engagement:*

- » *Culture of educational excellence*
- » *Effective teaching*
- » *Safe and healthy school climate*
- » *Leadership*
- » *Sense of community*
- » *Equity*

1. How would you like to receive school information? (Select all that apply)

- Conversation with teachers/administrators
- Email from teachers/administrators
- Automatic phone notifications
- School newsletters
- School website
- Text Messaging
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Open House
- Parent/Teacher conferences
- School Board meetings, agendas and minutes

2. Academic expectations in this school are:

Too high      Just right      Too low      Don't know

3. The overall use of technology at my child's school is:

Too high      Just right      Too low      Don't know

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know/doesn't apply
My child has a positive relationship with at least one adult at school.					
I am satisfied with the communication that comes from the school.					
The District employs high-quality teachers.					
I receive enough information to understand my child's progress.					
The amount of homework given to my child is appropriate.					
My child enjoys going to school.					

# 4

## SECURE, USER-FRIENDLY SOFTWARE

The School Perceptions web-based survey platform is custom built to serve the unique needs of school districts.

Parent participation is controlled through a one-time-use code sent via email and/or postcard. Surveys can be taken on any internet-enabled computer, tablet, or mobile handheld device. Paper surveys are available for parents without internet access. Our software also allows the survey to be taken in other languages.

# 5

## BENCHMARK YOUR DATA

Your data is easily accessible any time through our password-protected, web-based portal. From there, you can disaggregate based on school, demographic, or individual item. We put your data in context by comparing your results with similar-sized schools. Districts using the survey over multiple years can view results that quantify progress over time.

# 6

## VALUABLE INSIGHTS

In addition to accessing your data online, the School Perceptions team can provide a variety of reports for your school board and administrative team to help focus your planning efforts.

Our pricing is cost-effective and scales based on school size. Call us at 262.644.430 or email [info@schoolperceptions.com](mailto:info@schoolperceptions.com) for a customized service proposal.

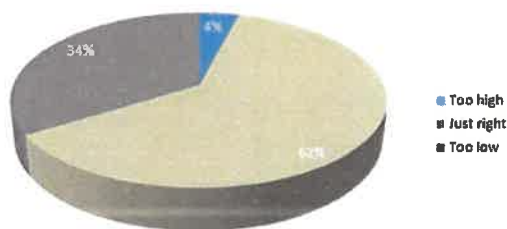
### Overall District Satisfaction

Item	% Strongly agree/ Agree	Average	Similar School Percentile
The District is heading in the right direction.	82%	3.88	86
The District is run effectively.	94%	4.12	71
The District has effective financial management.	79%	3.60	54

### School Feedback

Item	% Strongly agree/ Agree	Average	Similar School Percentile
I am satisfied with the communication that comes from the school.	82%	3.91	90
My child enjoys going to school.	91%	4.11	83
The District employs high-quality teachers.	85%	3.88	70
The amount of homework given to my child is appropriate.	65%	3.30	20

### The academic expectations of our students are:



# SCHOOL PERCEPTIONS

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## OUR CUSTOMERS' IMPRESSIONS OF SCHOOL PERCEPTIONS

"For the second time in three years, the service provided by School Perceptions was exceptional. The staff at School Perceptions listened to our needs and worked with us to develop a survey that has provided our school community with valuable information and data, so that our school board can make informed decisions on how to best move forward with addressing our facility and programming needs. Thank you School Perceptions for your professionalism, direction, support, and encouragement! I continue to recommend School Perceptions to other school districts seeking quality survey data."

***Dale Carlson, New Richland-Hartland-Ellendale-Geneva Public Schools***

"We have used School Perceptions for over 10 years and they have always delivered on every project we had. We currently work with them on three yearly projects, and the information we get from School Perceptions drives change in our district."

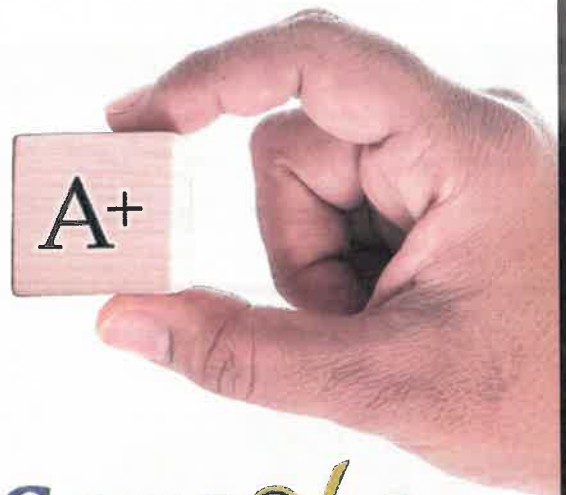
***Phil Ertl,  
Wauwatosa School District***

"School Perceptions continues to meet and exceed the expectations of Kaukauna Area School District. We will continue to partner with them as our needs arise."

***Mark P. Duerwaechter,  
Kaukauna School District***

"School Perceptions is a trusted company with expertise in survey development, analysis, and the use of data to inform strategic planning and school goals. The variety of surveys offered address a number of priorities for gathering perceptions of students, staff, families, and community. School Perceptions provides a standardized, reliable, and valid process for collecting feedback to help a school continuously improve its educational programming, services, and operations. Bill Foster and his staff are not only experts in the field but their customer service is beyond compare when it comes to addressing a school district's individual needs."

***Patricia Vickman,  
Southern Door County School District***



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Lewiston-Altura School District

# STRATEGIC PLANNING SURVEY PROPOSAL

April 1, 2021



**Contact:** Sue Peterson  
262.299.3177  
[speterson@schoolperceptions.com](mailto:speterson@schoolperceptions.com)

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*Measuring what matters*

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## Project Overview

The Lewiston-Altura School District is interested in surveying parents/guardians and the community to gauge overall satisfaction and identify areas for improvement.

This School Perceptions Survey provides insights into these key areas:

- ✓ Culture of educational excellence
- ✓ Effective teaching
- ✓ Safe and healthy school climate
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Sense of community
- ✓ Equity

Your survey can also be customized to meet your district's unique needs.

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## About Us

School Perceptions LLC is a Wisconsin-based, independent educational research firm that works with school districts, regional service agencies, as well as state and national organizations. Over 10,000 schools have used School Perceptions to collect millions of survey responses from students, staff, parents, non-parents, and community stakeholders.

*For 20 years, our mission has never changed:*

**We help educational leaders gather, organize, and use data to make strategic decisions.**

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## Meet Your Account Manager

**Sue Peterson** is a Project Manager and Strategic Communications Specialist and will work with you to develop and deploy your strategic planning survey. She also works with districts to administer student, parent, and staff surveys, as well as designs community surveys for referendum preparation.

Sue received both her bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. Sue brings a strong background in program development, community organizing, grant writing, and communications.



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## Meet Your Support Team

**Cari Udermann** is a Project Implementation Manager and will work with your district to coordinate survey administration. She attended St. Cloud State University and Syracuse University, earning degrees in Psychology and Nursing, respectively. Cari has worked in both the medical and education fields. While working in schools, she became aware of the importance a healthy school climate has on students' ability to learn.



**Chelsea Davis** is a Data Analyst and will help to facilitate printing and mailing logistics (if needed) as well as provide you with post-survey results reports. Chelsea graduated from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater with a degree in Business Administration.



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## Why School Perceptions?

Over the past 20 years, School Perceptions has developed a reputation of excellence and reliability. We take great pride in the following elements of our work, which we believe uniquely position us to meet the needs of the Lewiston-Altura School District.

- 1) **An objective and unbiased process:** Often, surveys designed and administered by a district are perceived as biased by survey-takers. Consequently, results are questioned, trust is broken, and the entire process is undermined. By using an objective and independent firm like School Perceptions, your approach, data, and plans moving forward are viewed as credible.
- 2) **An emphasis on you:** Every school district has unique challenges. Therefore, we never treat a project with a cookie-cutter approach. We listen to you, we work with you, and we customize your project to meet your needs.
- 3) **Cost-effective:** No matter if your enrollment is 100, 1,000, or 10,000 students, our services are cost-effective. We understand the staffing and resource constraints schools face.
- 4) **Research-based and applicable:** The quality of our work will never waver. We combine extensive research reviews with our decades of experience to help you get accurate and valid data.
- 5) **Comparison data:** If 80% of your parents believe the district is heading in the right direction, is that good? Or do you have a problem? By using our benchmarks, we can provide question-level comparisons to similar schools. Rest assured, individual school names are never shared. Our software can also calculate longitudinal changes to quantify growth on a year-over-year basis.
- 6) **Proprietary survey software:** Our survey system is custom designed to meet school districts' unique needs and is proven to be extremely user-friendly and reliable. We continually review security protocols to ensure that your data is always protected and backed up. Additionally, our system includes a survey access control system to ensure that an individual can only take the survey once. A paper version of the survey is also available for those without internet access.
- 7) **Ongoing support:** Gathering good data is only half of the challenge. Our team of experts will help you make sense of your data and develop a realistic plan of action.
- 8) **Dedication to service:** Technology and information specialists are available Monday-Friday, 8 am-5 pm CT. We also provide 24-hour, 365-days-per-year real-time monitoring of company servers. Our staff is dedicated and ready to help your team through each step of the process.



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## Process & Investment

### Survey Design

- ✓ Definition of overall objectives
- ✓ Development of the project timeline with key milestones and assignments
- ✓ Assistance with survey promotion/communication materials

### Survey Administration

- ✓ Survey programming utilizing the School Perceptions proprietary software system
- ✓ Survey distribution via email
- ✓ Follow-up reminders for non-responders
- ✓ Provide a print-ready copy of the survey upon request
- ✓ Web link for community responses
- ✓ Daily data back-up and all software maintenance
- ✓ Password-protected results access to raw data for disaggregation and analysis
- ✓ Assistance with results access

### Results Reporting

- ✓ Password-protected access for all raw data via the School Perceptions system
- ✓ Online reports including full disaggregation capabilities

**Investment: \$2,950**

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### **Policies:**

The School Perceptions Privacy Policy ensures that all email addresses provided will only be used for your district's contracted services. Our entire privacy policy can be found at [www.schoolperceptions.com/files/SchoolPerceptionsPrivacystatement.pdf](http://www.schoolperceptions.com/files/SchoolPerceptionsPrivacystatement.pdf).

Data access is granted to the District's Custodian of Records with the ability to disaggregate all compiled data and authorize access to other district staff. Unless otherwise noted, School Perceptions will designate the Custodian of Records to be the signer of this proposal.

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## Optional Services

- 1) **Survey Customization - \$85/hour**  
We will work with your administration team to conduct survey review sessions to develop customized questions/sections to address your unique needs.
- 2) **District-Level Written Report - \$500**  
This report is created in a PowerPoint format and provides an overview of the survey process, as well as response percentages and/or weighted averages for each survey item. It is typically shared with the school board, as well as posted on the District's website.
- 3) **Comparison Report - \$350**  
Many of School Perceptions' Master Questions have been used for more than 10 years. This report is created in a spreadsheet format and shows your district's and individual schools' percentile ranking in relationship to districts and schools of a similar size.
  - a. **Index Report:** This report shows the district's/schools' percentile ranking compared to similar-sized districts and schools by index and flags data in the bottom quartile (below 25%) and the top quartile (above 75%) for easy analysis.
  - b. **Item Analysis:** This report compares the district's/schools' percentile ranking to similar-sized districts and schools by item and flags data in the bottom quartile (below 25%) and the top quartile (above 75%) for easy analysis.
- 4) **Comment Report - \$250**  
The comment theme summary is developed by first reading all of the comments collected throughout the survey. A theme is identified as a result of having multiple participants referencing similar issues or concerns. This summary is not intended to represent all comments submitted; rather, it represents the prevailing themes. Comments representing each theme will be included verbatim in the report.
- 5) **Additional Data Analysis**  
This includes providing cross-tab analysis, school-level spreadsheets, and/or in-depth comment analysis will be charged at \$60 per hour.
- 6) **Consulting**  
If desired, additional consulting and on-site meetings for planning, data review, and/or presentations are available upon request.

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If this proposal is acceptable, please sign this page, scan, and email to [sales@schoolperceptions.com](mailto:sales@schoolperceptions.com).

Strategic Planning Survey Proposal Accepted: **Lewiston-Altura School District**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_