



LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

Turtle Lake School District
January 14, 2026

SELECTION PROCESS

The Turtle Lake School District (TLSD) has retained the services of Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) to assist the Board with the hiring of the next superintendent. The consultants will screen applications and recommend candidates to the Board for interviews and further consideration. Any questions regarding the application process, selection process, and/or this Leadership Profile Report should be directed to: Mike Richie, HYA Vice President, or Scott Winch, HYA Senior Associate. mikerichie@hyasearch.com / scottwinch@hyasearch.com

PURPOSE

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by HYA during the months of December 2025 and January 2026 for the new superintendent of the Turtle Lake School District. The data contained herein was obtained from the input the HYA consultants received when they met with individuals and groups in either individual interviews or focus group settings and from the results of the online survey completed by stakeholders.

HYA and the Board intend to meet the challenge of finding an individual who possesses the skills and character traits required to meet the district's needs. The search team will focus its recruitment on candidates who possess leadership qualities congruent with the profile.

The search team would like to thank the Turtle Lake School District for the opportunity to find your next leader who fits the criteria of your stakeholders. HYA would like to thank all of the participants who attended focus group meetings or completed the online survey, and the TLSD staff who helped coordinate the schedules, invitations, dates, and arrangements which supported the data collection for this report.

Respectfully submitted,
Dr. Mike Richie, HYA Vice President
Scott Winch, HYA Senior Consultant

DESCRIPTION OF THE DISTRICT

The Village of Turtle Lake has a population of approximately 1,150. Located in Northwest Wisconsin, the Village resides in both Barron and Polk Counties; however, the majority of the Village lies in Barron County. Two major highways, US Highway 8 and Highway 63, intersect in Turtle Lake and have spurred much commercial growth throughout the years. Turtle Lake is full of possibilities. If you are an outdoor recreation buff, you will not have to stray far. In these great outdoors, recreation is endless...from protected lands, open lakes and streams, thick woodlands, open fields, vast wetlands...we have it all! For more information on activities in and around Turtle Lake, visit our [Visitor Info](#) section. There you will find a long list of fun outings to choose from.

The District serves 423 (PK-12) students, all encompassed in one building. The District has 70 FTE employees and a general fund budget of approximately \$8.4 million.

Vision Statement: To foster a culture of excellence where every person belongs, learns, and succeeds.

The Turtle Lake School District offers an exceptional educational experience by blending the benefits of a close-knit community with the resources of a larger district. Here, every student is known, supported, and challenged. Academically, it provides a rigorous curriculum delivered by dedicated, high-quality staff who utilize innovative teaching and embedded technology to offer personalized instruction and small-group learning. The district is also proud of its outstanding, state-of-the-art facilities, which include a Fab Lab, an on-site swimming pool, a modern fitness center, and updated athletic fields, including a new track. Students have access to a wide range of co-curricular and extracurricular activities, from various sports to academic clubs and community service groups. This commitment ensures students are well-rounded, receiving a high-quality education that prepares them for post-secondary success while fostering a positive, safe, and collaborative "Laker Pride" environment.

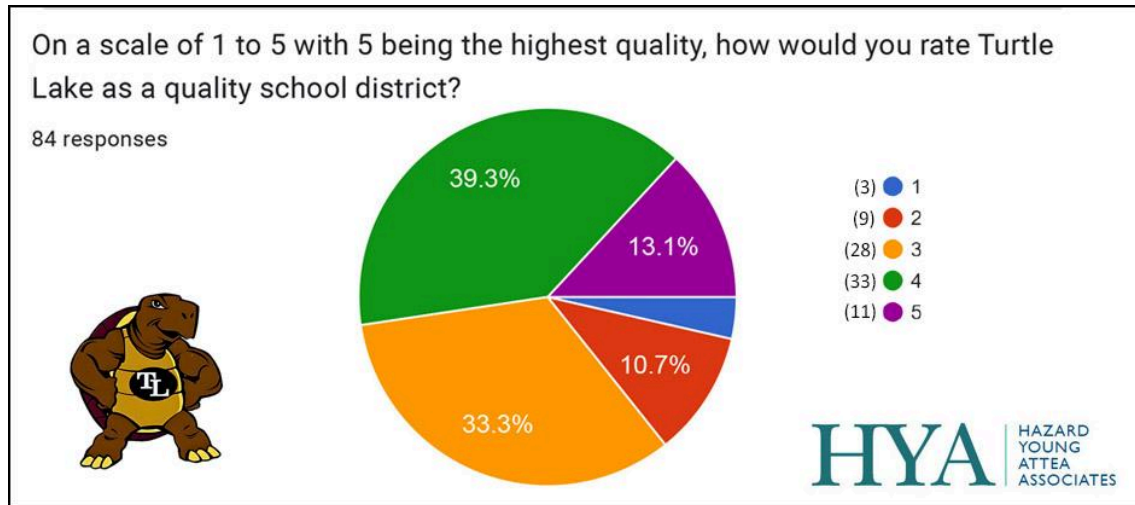
District Highlights:

- Exceeds Expectations on the WI DPI report card
- Elementary school Significantly Exceeds Expectations
- No debt
- \$2.36 million in fund 46
- Fund balance is 26% of expenses.
- Outsource transportation with a five-year contract.
- Outsource food service with a healthy fund balance in fund 50.
- 2025 WiRSA teacher of the year.
- 73% of our high school students are involved in at least one activity
- 95% attendance rate
- Laker Online Virtual Charter School
- 2024 ACT score 19.6
- 20% of students are open enrolled into the district

Visit the Turtle Lake School District Website for more information: turtlelake.k12.wi.us

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

From December 8 to 19, 2025, an online survey was conducted for all stakeholders. The Turtle Lake School District received 84 responses; of those, a total of 44 respondents (52.4%) rated the district a 4 or 5 out of 5, reflecting a strong level of satisfaction.



To shape the search for a new superintendent, the HYA Associates gathered valuable insights through surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions. These efforts aimed to identify the key qualities desired in the next leader while also highlighting TLSD's strengths and challenges ahead. Common themes voiced by multiple groups were used to build a well-rounded leadership profile, ensuring the selected candidate aligns with the district's needs and vision. It should be emphasized that the data is not a scientific sampling, nor does it necessarily represent the majority opinion of each respective group.

The HYA Associates conducted individual interviews with all five current School Board members, along with eight (8) focus groups (both in-district and virtual), ensuring that a broad range of perspectives are considered in the superintendent search.

The following questions were asked during each interview and focus group:

1. What are the strengths of the Turtle Lake School District that the next superintendent can build upon?
2. What are the challenges facing the Turtle Lake School District that the next superintendent should be aware of, or that you would like to see addressed?
3. What characteristics or traits are you looking for in your new superintendent?
4. Is there anything else you would like to share with us or that we should know about the Turtle Lake School District?

Through the information gathered, common themes were generated by the respondents. In this report, we will highlight what those themes were as identified by the following groups:

- School Board
- Community/Parents
- Staff
- Students

PROCESS

The structure of the individual meetings and focus groups was open, allowing participants to build upon each other's comments. All of those involved in providing input were asked to respond to the questions on page 4.

PARTICIPATION

Responses were gathered from individual interviews and focus groups. The HYA consultants conducted five individual interviews and hosted eight (8) focus groups.

Turtle Lake School District Interviews and Focus Groups
School Board Members (5)
Focus Group 1: 9th and 10th Grade Students (15)
Focus Group 2: 11th and 12th Grade Students (11)
Focus Group 3: Business Leaders (2)
Focus Group 4: Garden Club, Lions, Lioness, civic groups (7)
Focus Group 5: Administrators, Directors, AD, Building and Grounds, Admin. Assistant (6)
Focus Group 6: All School Employees - both certified and support staff (24)
Focus Group 7: Parents and Community Members (3)
Focus Group 8: Open to All (virtual) (4)

PROFILE DEVELOPMENT & QUALITATIVE DATA

Perceived Strengths • Perceived Challenges • Desired Characteristics

Strengths of the Turtle Lake School District as identified by BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(Based on interviews and personal statements)

Community Support and Unique Opportunities

- The district is the heart of the community, thriving with strong local support.
- Turtle Lake is a small school district in a good location, offering excellent accessibility and regional opportunities.
- The students are also viewed as a strength of the district.

Dedicated Staff and Administration

- The school district excels with its quality, dedicated staff, ensuring high academic and extracurricular success.

- The retiring superintendent is a strong leader who supports students and staff, creating opportunities for success.

Strong Leadership and Governance

- The School Board is a key strength of the district, working well together and providing strong leadership and support for its initiatives.

Strong Position Financially

- The Turtle Lake School District is in a strong position financially; the district currently has no debt.
- The community has also been supportive with donations to help with facility upgrades.

Facilities

- The facilities are in good shape but they will need to be continually taken care of.
- The track and pool were specifically mentioned as recent upgrades to the district.

Challenges of the Turtle Lake School District as identified by BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(Based on interviews and personal statements)

Staffing

- The ability to attract and retain quality staff is viewed as a concern, including replacing the retiring superintendent.

Finance

- Turtle Lake is facing declining enrollment, and with that comes concerns about the financial future of the district.
- The district will also need an operational referendum in the near future to replace the expiring referendum in the next year.

Extra Curricular Activities

- Participation numbers are low in the district, and the potential co-op with another local school district did not go through.

Housing Shortage

- The district has a shortage of affordable housing within the district boundaries.

Curriculum

- The district faces increased special education needs, and with that an increased cost to provide the education to meet the students' needs.
- The district has limited course offerings, and would like to look for ways to expand the options.

Top Five Desired Characteristics of the next Turtle Lake Superintendent as identified by SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS	
Leadership - Trust Building	Interpersonal Skills
The superintendent should be a clear leader who can make decisions to keep the district moving forward, and be firm and fair in their decision making process.	The superintendent must possess strong interpersonal skills, be approachable, creative, flexible, level-headed, relatable, and compassionate, while maintaining a clear vision for advancing the district.
Experience - Instruction and Finance	Community Minded
The superintendent should have a strong financial background, have big picture goals, and have demonstrated experience in elevating academic performance.	The superintendent should be fully committed to the district, actively engaging with both the school community and local stakeholders.
Clear and Concise Communicator	
The superintendent must be able to bring all stakeholders together, and work with the Board to define the roles of the Board and administration.	

Strengths of the Turtle Lake School District as identified by PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

(Based on interviews and personal statements)

Dedicated Staff

- The staff is deeply committed to teaching the students and committed to providing them with a high quality education.
- The staff has a passion for putting the students first, fostering a supportive, student-centered learning environment.

Facilities and Safe Learning Environment

- The school is dedicated to maintaining a safe and secure learning environment for all students and staff. There is an appreciation of having a resource officer in the district.

Opportunities for Students

- Despite being a small district, Turtle Lake offers a wide range of co-curricular activities and after-school programs.

Community Centered Facility Community Support

- The facilities are available for community use - in particular, the pool and fitness center were mentioned.
- The community supports the school both through donations and support at events and there seems to be a good deal of "Laker Pride".

Challenges of the Turtle Lake School District as identified by PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

(Based on interviews and personal statements)

Communication and Transparency

- The community is seeking improved communication from the district in a variety of ways, across multiple channels. There is an appreciation for the local newspaper coverage of the district.
- Parents and community members want to be more informed and engaged in the decision making process.

Staffing

- Compensation across all district positions is a concern and seen as a barrier to retention.
- There is a critical need to attract and retain qualified staff, including substitute teachers.
- Turnover with staff and employees at the elementary level seems to be high.
- Staff morale was also mentioned as a challenge including cliques within the school.
- All staff/school employees must be held accountable.

Scheduling and Parent Concerns

- There are concerns with the number of academic choices, (Dual Enrollment and AP) that are keeping students from participating in the fine arts program.
- The special education program is concerning, in particular, consistency in the program and the increased needs within the program.
- The need to address student mental health issues.

Finance and Enrollment

- There is a concern about the district having declining enrollment and the impact that would have on future finances.
- Budget issues are also concerning, including state aid and increased costs for special education.
- The district will also need to continue its referendum to sustain the current levels of funding.

Top Five Desired Characteristics of the next Turtle Lake Superintendent as identified by PARENTS and COMMUNITY MEMBERS	
Communication - Interpersonal Skills	Strong and Decisive Leadership
The superintendent must be a team player who is open minded, and is respectful to the students, staff and community.	A strong leader is essential, one that is firm but fair in their decision making process, and engages the community in the long range planning process.
Student and Community Focused	Effective Communicator
The superintendent should work collaboratively with staff, community and the school board to make decisions that are in the best interest of the students.	As the district's spokesperson, the superintendent must be transparent and communicate with all stakeholders.
Involvement and Community Engagement	
The superintendent must be visible in the school and community. The community has continually supported the school and wants a leader that values their input and wants the community to be involved in the district.	

Strengths of the Turtle Lake School District as identified by STAFF

(Based on interviews and personal statements)

Community Atmosphere

- Turtle Lake is a small community with a small rural school district. The staff appreciate the feeling of everyone knowing each other in the building and the district.

Student Opportunities and Engagement

- Student outcomes are a strength and are continuing to improve.
- Grade level curricula are aligned, and the elementary is utilizing standards based grading.
- Students have a multitude of choices for AP and dual enrollment courses.

Long Range Planning and Fiscally Sound

- The district is strong financially with a steady tax base and no debt.
- Turtle Lake does a good job with the long range planning to make sure the facilities are taken care of.

Professional Development

- Staff members appreciate the professional development opportunities they are allowed to participate in, also noting that CESA #11 is located in Turtle Lake.

Challenges of the Turtle Lake School District as identified by STAFF

(Based on interviews and personal statements)

Staffing and Retention Issues

- Competitive wages and benefits are a continued challenge in the district, which in turn makes it difficult to retain quality staff
- The supply of substitutes for professional and support staff is concerning.

Financial Stability and Budget Challenges

- Declining enrollment is a future concern of the district, which could lead to budget restraints.
- Going to a referendum every four years is concerning, and makes staff feel uneasy if a referendum fails.

Students and Academic Consistency

- The wide range of online course options conflicts with in-house offerings, which has resulted in lower enrollment in in-house classes. Band was specifically mentioned as a class students often can't take because they're enrolled in other courses.

Facilities

- Student parking, the bus lane, and the road are issues which are currently being explored with the village to make a safer area in front of the school.
- Physical space is challenging, we need to look for more ways to provide opportunities for students, both curricular and co-curricular.

Top Five Desired Characteristics of the next Turtle Lake Superintendent as identified by TURTLE LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT STAFF	
Approachable	Educator Focused
The superintendent must be committed to knowing that their presence in the school is important, and their visibility in the community is essential.	The superintendent must show support for the work that is being done in the district, and value staff time with creative and innovative professional development opportunities.
Effective Communicator and Transparent	Visible and Community Minded
The superintendent must communicate with all stakeholders, and be open and transparent about what is going on in the district.	The superintendent must be visible and active in the community. The community support for the district is strong and those relationships must continue.
Trustworthy and Communicative Leadership	
Ideally, the superintendent would have small town values that hold people accountable when needed. There is also a sense that the superintendent needs to value trust, and build relationships within the district making a long term commitment to the Turtle Lake School District.	

Strengths of the Turtle Lake School District as identified by HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

(Based on interviews and personal statements)

Academic and Career Preparation

- The students appreciate the course offerings and the teachers who provide support during the school day and in the after school study program.
- The youth apprenticeship program was also listed as a strength.

Strong Community

- The students recognize the importance of the supportive community in the district, whether it's with financial contributions or attending and supporting the various school activities.
- The facilities are also appreciated by the students, specifically the new track, the fitness center, and the swimming pool as assets.

Co-Curriculars

- The students believe that the district has a very good athletic program, and appreciate the opportunities provided by the district.
- The students also mentioned other activities they appreciate, such as the kinship program and the ability for juniors and seniors to have an open campus lunch.

Safe Learning Environment

- Overall, the students feel the school is a safe environment to attend school, and appreciate having a resource officer in the building.

Challenges of the Turtle Lake School District as identified by STUDENTS

(Based on interviews and personal statements)

Technology

- The district's Wi-fi is too slow and/or the Chromebooks need to be updated to maximize the speed of the internet.
- The students feel that there are too many websites that are blocked, including some that are needed for their coursework.

Food Service

- Food service options could offer more variety, and the students would like to see a fresher selection offered - particularly at the salad bar.

School Programs

- The playground needs upgraded facilities.
- Students feel the homework is challenging, and the upperclassmen mentioned frustration with RTI and the IXL program.

Athletic Facilities and Infrastructure

- Students believe there could be improvements within the facility; they would like to see a return to after school supervision in the fitness center so students that are under 18 can utilize the equipment.
- Gym space also appears to be limited which impacts practice time for all sports.

Top Five Desired Characteristics of the next Turtle Lake Superintendent as identified by TURTLE LAKE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS	
Approachable	Fairness and Inclusivity
Many students want a superintendent who is friendly, nice, respectful, and easy to get along with. They value someone who will talk to all students, not just a select few, and be involved in school events.	The desire for equal care and attention to all student activities, not just popular sports, was highlighted.
Positive and Supportive	Effective Leader
Characteristics like caring, thoughtfulness, understanding and having a positive attitude were mentioned. Students want someone who will interact with students but also take their job seriously.	Students are looking for a leader who is hardworking, takes action and is open to new ideas and student input. They also value someone who can make the school a fun place for both students and teachers.

FINDINGS / THEMES

Many of the discussions pertaining to strengths and challenges for the Turtle Lake School District flow into the expectations for the next superintendent. Several of the characteristics that are present in the profile for the next superintendent build on the current strengths of the organization in addition to addressing the challenges ahead. The search team will seek a new superintendent who will understand issues facing the district.

When the data from interviews and focus groups were combined, themes emerged. It should be noted that there was more similarity across groups than there were differences. In general, strengths and challenging issues were almost unanimous across groups. Additionally, the characteristics desired in the next superintendent were also closely aligned across groups. This congruence is viewed as a positive characteristic of this search and will bring clarity in focus for the Board and the new superintendent.

The following themes are supported by the combined data.

STRENGTHS

Dedicated Staff

All groups agreed that the staff were truly dedicated to the students and contributed to providing a quality education. The staff is a good mix of veteran teachers and some relatively new teachers that collectively contribute to a quality education.

Strong Community

Groups consistently emphasized that the majority of the community has and will continue to support the school. There is evidence of support in the passing of operational referendums, donations to upgrade facilities, and support of all school activities.

Commitment to Student Success

Turtle Lake is committed to students' success, from the staff to the parents and the community, they all want what is best for the students. Students appreciate the opportunities that they have, including the youth apprenticeship program.

CHALLENGES

Financial Stability and Staff Retention

Limited state funding affects multiple areas in the district, with the most common responses being retention and recruitment of both certified and support staff. This is a challenge due to lower salaries and benefits compared to neighboring districts and bigger districts in the region. Strategic financial planning is needed to maximize available funds ensuring fiscal responsibility while managing declining enrollment.

Communications and Transparency

While community support remains a core value, concerns about communication and transparency have been raised. There is a belief that the district needs to further engage all stakeholders in the decision making process.

Other Challenges Noted

While not unanimously expressed, several challenges emerged through community engagement. Students and staff would like to see greater visibility of the superintendent at school events and community activities, fostering stronger connections with students and families.

There is also a need for greater consistency in discipline policies and holding people accountable and to a consistent standard.

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NEXT SUPERINTENDENT

Leadership and Decision-Making

Seek a strong leader who is firm, not afraid of confrontation, and willing to make hard decisions based on facts rather than personal gain. This leader should hold people accountable, follow rules/policies, and possess a strategic mindset for long-term success.

Communication and Transparency

Respondents highly value a superintendent with excellent communication skills, emphasizing clarity, honesty, and transparency with the board, staff, parents, and community. They should be approachable, willing to listen to all concerns, and visible/present in the school and community.

Financial Leader

The new superintendent needs strong business and financial leadership skills, including expertise with budgeting, managing money wisely, and being a good steward of school resources.

Student Focus and Involvement

The ideal candidate is student-centered, prioritizes the needs of the whole child, advocates for students, and is involved in various aspects of school life, including community activities and sporting events. Needs to understand special education laws and policy. They should strive to improve the school and address student discipline.

Community Connection and Perspective

Preferences are split between wanting someone who is already active and living in the community and someone new without local ties. Both groups, however, want a leader who understands small-town dynamics and values.

Integrity and Fairness

Desired traits include honesty, integrity, fairness to all staff regardless of status or "favorites," and a commitment to equitable treatment. The individual should be willing to address and challenge favoritism, entrenched practices, and nepotism.

TURTLE LAKE SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT DESIRED CANDIDATE PROFILE

The Turtle Lake School District seeks a superintendent who in collaboration with the Board, staff, students, parents and community, will focus the district on shared goals and vision. After seeking input from stakeholders through individual and group interviews, focus groups, and a survey, the Turtle Lake School District seeks an engaged, visionary superintendent who possesses the following characteristics:

Involved Community Member

- Actively participates in school, activities, and community events to strengthen relationships.
- Actively promotes an environment where everyone feels valued and involved, ensuring all voices are heard.

Cultivator of Growth and Continuous Improvement

- Welcomes innovation and is willing to explore different approaches for growth.
- Open to learning, adapting, and improving continually.

Trust Builder

- Earns confidence through integrity, consistency, and reliability.
- Empowers staff by delegating responsibility and showing confidence in their abilities.
- Takes courageous actions while being empathetic and understanding toward others.
- Builds relationships with community members with transparent, concise communication.

Approachable, Personable and Respectful

- Actively promotes an environment where everyone feels valued and involved, ensuring all voices are heard.
- Engaging as a member of the community and in the schools, an approachable listener with an open door policy.
- Consider the perspectives of all Turtle Lake stakeholders, encouraging friendly, open communication making others feel heard and valued.

BULLETED NOTES FROM ALL GROUPS

The interviews and focus groups of stakeholders generated the following responses. Careful attention has been made to accurately convey the message. The comments listed below emerged from statements made by stakeholders and they are to be considered personal opinions of the individual making the comments regarding the Turtle Lake School District.

Board Members

What are the strengths of the Turtle Lake School District?

- Small district
- Community pride
- Community support
- Facilities are well kept
- Competitive benefits and salaries
- Strong financially
- Board is supportive of the superintendent
- Board trusts people to do their jobs
- Current superintendent is a strength - so leadership is a strength
- Staff morale is improving
- Staff is strong
- Building is in good shape
- One building K-12
- Financially strong
- District is doing well overall
- Good staff
- Strong financially
- Facilities are ok, need to keep working
- Swimming pool in the district, track redone
- Small district/town feel
- Facilities are in good shape - track and pool
- Teachers are good
- Students are the number one strength
- Good staff
- Good parents
- Outgoing superintendent
- Community supports the district

What are the challenges of the Turtle Lake School District?

- Operational referendum coming, one year left on current referendum
- Housing shortages
- Enrollment challenges
- Stepping stone, challenge to keep good staff
- High property value, rely on local funding
- Increased Special Education needs, number of paras needed
- Replacing the superintendent

- Special Education needs are growing along with needs for funding
- Operational referendum in the near future
- Sports participation numbers, the co-op with Clayton did not go through
- Need administration to be stronger
- Need more accountability from administration
- Course offerings can be limited
- Competitive salaries
- Keep staff
- Campaigning for a new wrestling room
- Better communication from administration
- Good staff that will stay
- Competitive salaries

Parents and Community Members

What are the strengths of the Turtle Lake School District?

- Good community support
- The current superintendent is a good leader
- Good education for students
- Supportive of sports
- New track
- Small class sizes
- No debt, the superintendent did a good job with finances
- Teachers are a strength
- Good facilities for a small school, pool and auditorium
- Expanded AP Classes
- Teachers are approachable
- Principals are outside greeting students
- Backpack programs
- After school study program
- Kids shopping for parents/grandparents
- Stockings for veterans
- Community support is strong
- Extracurricular activities
- Youth apprenticeship program
- Weekly paper provides good coverage
- Scholarship program is amazing
- Upward Bound Program
- Buildings are well taken care of
- Good staff
- Cell phone policy is a good thing

What are the challenges of the Turtle Lake School District?

- Keeping enrollment up
- Foundation issues by the tennis courts
- Community input on long-term planning

- More support of fine arts, scheduling conflicts with AP courses
- Enrollment
- Funding
- Increased special education needs and costs
- Staffing challenges, both staff and support staff
- Staff morale
- Budget issues, state aid funding
- Potential referendum
- Cliques within the school
- Communication and follow up from administration
- Special education programs are a concern
- Too much money spent on athletics
- Attract and retain quality teachers
- Communication needs to improve
- Morale could be better
- Stop the "Good ol' Boys Club"
- Cliques within the school are an issue
- Need to get back to what the district used to be (better communication, trust, fair and equal treatment for all)
- More training or awareness of special education programming (what's available) for parents

School District Staff

What are the strengths of the Turtle Lake School District?

- Small district
- Community atmosphere, everyone knows each other
- Long range planning for facilities
- Fiscally sound, no debt
- Student outcomes are a strength and improving
- Staff is invested in the district
- School social media presence is strong
- Tax base is steady
- Small school, all in one building
- Professional development
- Opportunities for students, extracurricular activities
- AP courses and dual credit opportunities for students
- Staff knows all of the students in the district
- Grades are aligned, curriculum
- K-6 Standards based

What are the challenges of the Turtle Lake School District?

- Declining enrollment
- Student parking, road issues
- Some negative community members
- Finding new staff

- Student sense of belonging
- Moving forward with 21st Century Learner
- Continue to build technology infrastructure
- Online courses cause conflicts with in-house courses (low numbers)
- Sub shortage
- Competitive wages
- Referendum every four years
- Career readiness for students
- Socioeconomic background of families
- Mental health challenges, needing more resources
- Para supply is short
- Physical space challenges

High School Students

What are the strengths of the Turtle Lake School District?

- Good sports programs
- Liaison officer
- School ends in May
- Math teachers are amazing
- Good academics and teachers
- Track and fitness center, also open to the community
- Science classes and their labs
- Good leadership
- Special Education teacher is very helpful
- Good community support
- Open pool
- Homework help after school with teachers
- Good sports programs
- Facilities are good
- Course offerings, college and online classes
- Resource room for study hall
- Open campus for lunch, juniors and seniors
- Kinship program, high school working with EL students
- Youth Apprenticeship
- Resource officer is good to have
- Clubs for students to participate in
- Fitness center is good

What are the challenges of the Turtle Lake School District?

- Student participation in all activities
- Homework can be challenging
- Food service could be better - better options, quality of food in general
- Wi-fi could be better
- Some websites are blocked, some are needed for coursework
- More activities during the school year, quarter parties

- Playground could be updated
- Bullying can be handled better
- RTI program, IXL - told it was for ACT Prep but still doing it
- Technology is slow, Chromebooks are slow
- Many sites are blocked, needed for classes
- Gym space is limited
- Fitness center supervision so students can use it after school

APPENDIX

The APPENDIX pages of this proposal include the following documents:

1. Turtle Lake Data Briefs - 2024-2025 Wisconsin State Report Card Analysis
2. Turtle Lake Online Survey Response Summary
3. Turtle Lake Strategic Plan 2026 - 2031
4. Turtle Lake Open Enrollment Chart



2024-2025
Wisconsin
State Report Card Analysis

State Percentile Analysis

Turtle Lake

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to examine how Turtle Lake compared to other Wisconsin districts during the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years. Percentiles are used to indicate where Turtle Lake falls in the distribution of school districts across the state of Wisconsin on a wide variety of metrics related to student achievement, target group performance, financial information, student demographics, and general district characteristics.

Methods

Data were collected across the five areas listed below from the Wisconsin Report Card website (<https://apps2.dpi.wi.gov/reportcards/>) :

<u>Student Achievement</u>	<u>Target Group Performance</u>	<u>Financial Information*</u>	<u>Student Demographics</u>	<u>District Characteristics</u>
Proficiency – ELA & Math	Target Group Outcomes Score	Total Education Cost Per Student	Economically Disadvantaged	Enrollment
Achievement Score – ELA & Math	Target Group Achievement Score	Instructional Expenditures Per Student	English Learners (EL)	Student to Staff Ratios
Growth Score – ELA & Math	Target Group Growth Score	Percent Revenue from Property Tax	Disabilities	Graduation/Attendance
3rd Grade ELA Achievement Score	Target Group Chronic Absenteeism	Teacher Average Salary and Fringe	Ethnicity	Mobility
8th Grade Math Achievement Score	Target Group Graduation/Attendance	Teacher Average Experience		Chronic Absenteeism
On-Track to Graduate				

Percentiles were calculated by ranking all Wisconsin districts who had data on the particular metric appearing in the state report card. A percentile of 50 would indicate that a district had an indicator value that was the same or higher than 50% of districts across Wisconsin. A percentile of 99 would indicate that a district had an indicator value that was the same or higher than 99% of districts across Wisconsin. Note that it may not be desirable to have high percentile rankings for all indicators. For example, it may be preferable to have an average or lower percentile ranking for metrics such as student to staff ratios or between district mobility (the percent of students not present for the full academic year).

Tables 1-5 display the values corresponding to the state 50th percentile, the district values, and the district percentile rankings within the state of Wisconsin for the 2023-2024 and 2024-2025 school years. Note that the state value is the 50th percentile value across all districts in the state. The change in the value and percentile between these two school years is also reported. Figures 1 and 2 visualize the shift in the state's distribution of ELA and Math proficiency from the Spring of 2024 to the Spring of 2025. The vertical lines represent the District proficiency in the Spring of 2024 and the Spring of 2025. Figures 3 and 4 show the percentage of students designated as economically disadvantaged against the percentage of all students meeting ELA and Math proficiency across the district in the spring of 2025.

*Financial expenditure and revenue data reported is from the previous school year.

Table 1. Student Performance

* The state value columns report values at the 50th percentile across the state.

Indicator	State Value*	2024		State Value*	2025		Change 2024 to 2025	
		District Value	District Percentile		District Value	District Percentile	District Value	District Percentile
ELA Proficiency	52.5%	50.8%	44	52.5%	52.4%	50	1.6%	+6
Math Proficiency	55.4%	59.8%	66	55.3%	51.0%	37	-8.8%	-29
Achievement Score	61.6	61.4	49	67.3	67.1	49	+5.7	0
ELA Achievement Score	62.2	60.4	43	66.1	64.8	45	+4.4	+2
Math Achievement Score	61.1	62.4	55	69.6	69.3	50	+6.9	-5
Growth Score	64.1	66.0	60	63.2	65.1	59	-0.9	-1
ELA Growth Score	64.1	66.0	60	62.2	64.1	57	-1.9	-3
Math Growth Score	64.1	66.0	58	64.1	66.0	58	0.0	0
3rd Grade ELA Achievement Score	63.4	53.1	19	69.5	58.8	19	+5.7	0
8th Grade Mathematics Achievement Score	58.8	57.1	46	73.5	57.3	14	+0.2	-32
On-Track to Graduation Score	85.6	83.4	34	87.4	84.8	31	+1.4	-3

Notes:

Table 2. Target Group Performance

* The state value columns report values at the 50th percentile across the state.

Indicator	State Value*	2024		State Value*	2025		Change 2024 to 2025	
		District Value	District Percentile		District Value	District Percentile	District Value	District Percentile
Target Group Outcomes Score	58.7	63.2	71	64.8	69.3	71	+6.1	0
Target Group Achievement Score	21.9	21.2	47	30.6	29.4	43	+8.2	-4
Target Group Growth Score	63.2	68.9	77	63.2	66.9	67	-2.0	-10
Target Group Chronic Absenteeism Score	79.5	78.2	45	80.2	84.7	72	+6.5	+27
Target Group Graduation/ Attendance Score	94.2	94.2	50	94.0	94.3	54	+0.1	+4

Notes:

Table 3. Financial Information

* The state value columns report values at the 50th percentile across the state.

Indicator	State Value*	2024		State Value*	2025		Change 2024 to 2025	
		District Value	District Percentile		District Value	District Percentile	District Value	District Percentile
Total Current Education Cost per Student (TCEC)	\$ 13,849	\$ 13,839	50	\$ 14,514	\$ 14,835	58	+\$ 996	+8
Instructional Expenditures Per Student	\$ 8,697	\$ 8,609	47	\$ 9,161	\$ 9,269	56	+\$ 661	+9
Percent Revenue from Property Tax	34.8%	54.6%	85	36.1%	59.0%	88	4.3%	+3
Teacher Average Salary	\$ 58,571	\$ 55,048	26	\$ 60,219	\$ 56,671	29	+\$ 1,623	+3
Teacher Average Salary Plus Fringe	\$ 83,866	\$ 82,168	42	\$ 86,181	\$ 82,572	33	+\$ 404	-9
Teacher Average Total Experience	14.4	14.7	55	14.5	13.4	27	-1.3	-28

Notes:

* The state value columns report values at the 50th percentile across the state.

Notes:

Table 5. District Characteristics

* The state value columns report values at the 50th percentile across the state.

Indicator	State Value*	2024		State Value*	2025		Change 2024 to 2025	
		District Value	District Percentile		District Value	District Percentile	District Value	District Percentile
Enrollment	955	441	19	965	449	20	+8	+1
Ratio of Students to Staff - Licensed Staff	11.3	10.2	25	11.3	10.4	30	+0.2	+5
Ratio of Students to Staff - Total FTE	6.8	6.5	39	6.8	6.7	46	+0.1	+7
Graduation/Attendance Score	96.0	94.6	32	95.9	92.0	14	-2.6	-18
Between District Mobility	3.3%	5.0%	82	3.2%	5.1%	85	0.1%	+3
Chronic Absenteeism Rate Score	87.0	86.4	45	87.3	90.9	74	+4.5	+29

Notes:

The graphs below illustrate the percentage of students meeting proficiency standards for all subjects in each school district across Wisconsin. The distributions of these percentages in 2024 and 2025 are captured under the grey and purple curves respectively. The state median is noted for each year as well. The vertical lines illustrate the percentage of students meeting proficiency each year in your district.

Figure 1. Proficiency Distribution of Wisconsin Districts - ELA

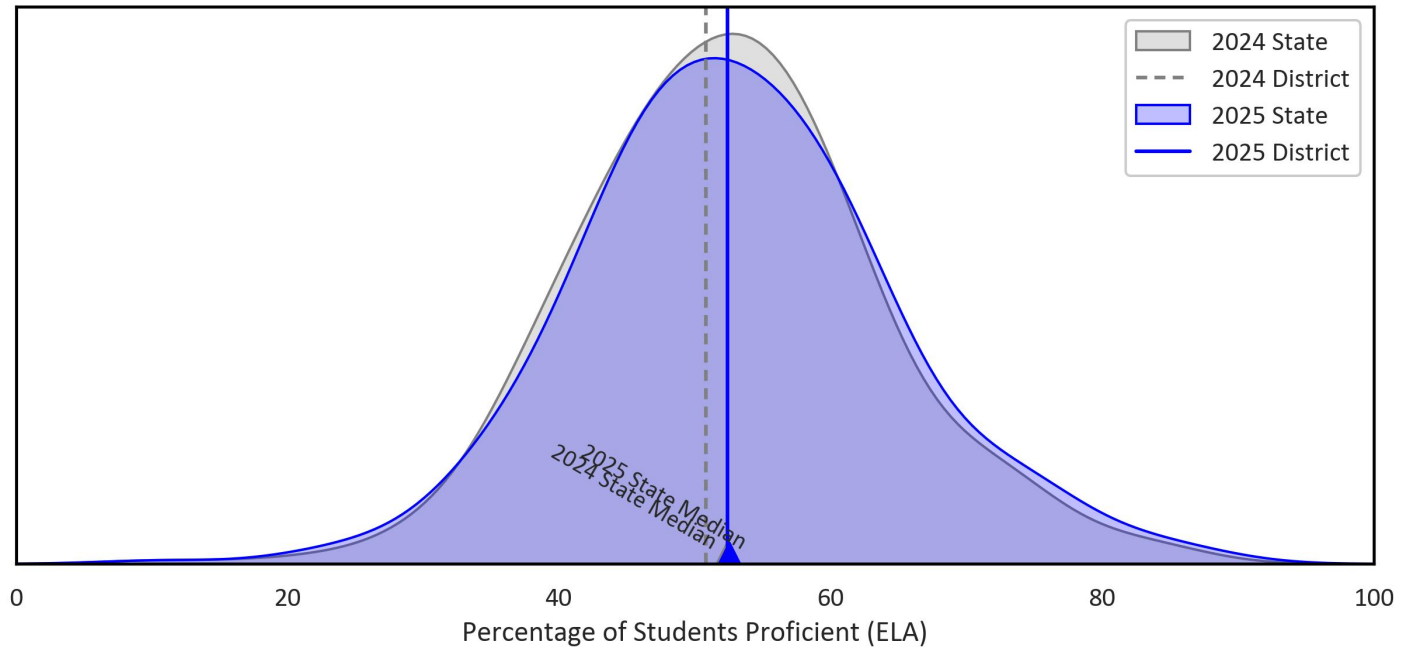
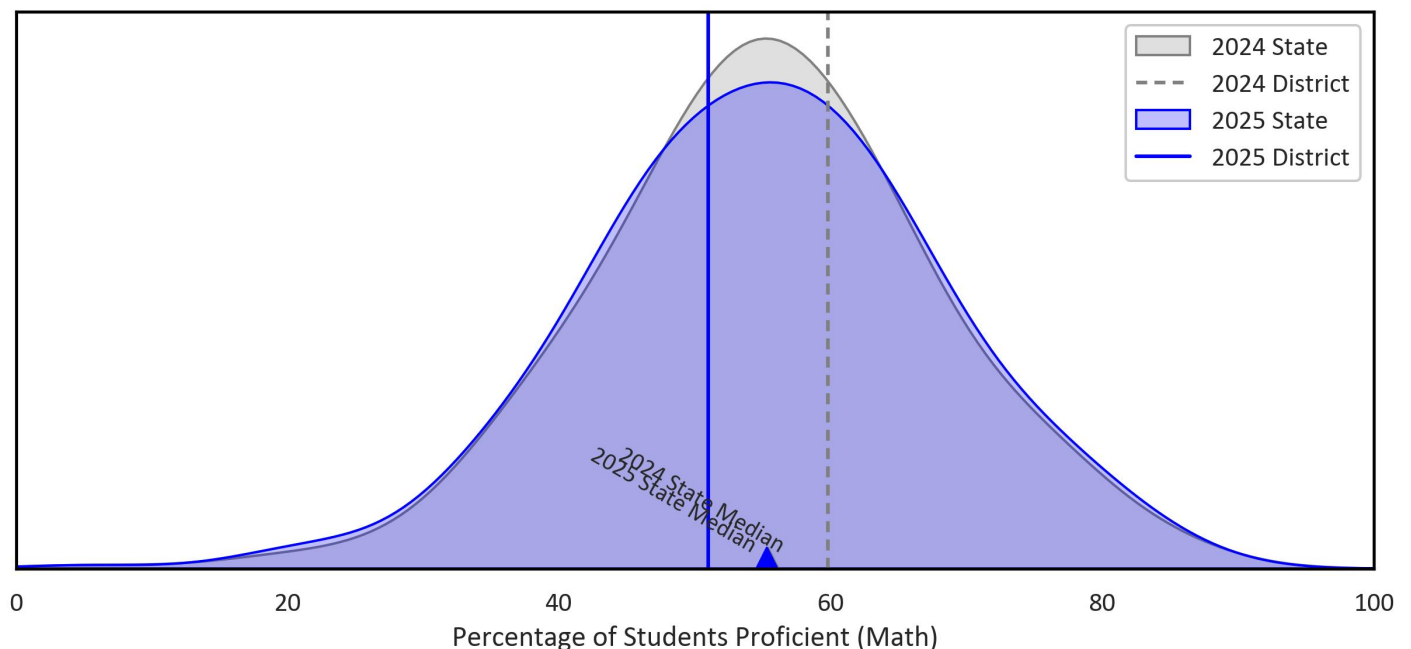


Figure 2. Proficiency Distribution of Wisconsin Districts - Math



The graphs below depict the percentage of students designated as Economically Disadvantaged against the percentage of all students meeting proficiency in the Spring of 2025 across the district. The proficiency grey dots represent all other school districts in the state, with a trend line included through the center of the distribution meeting proficiency.

Figure 3: Economically Disadvantaged vs. ELA Proficiency 2025

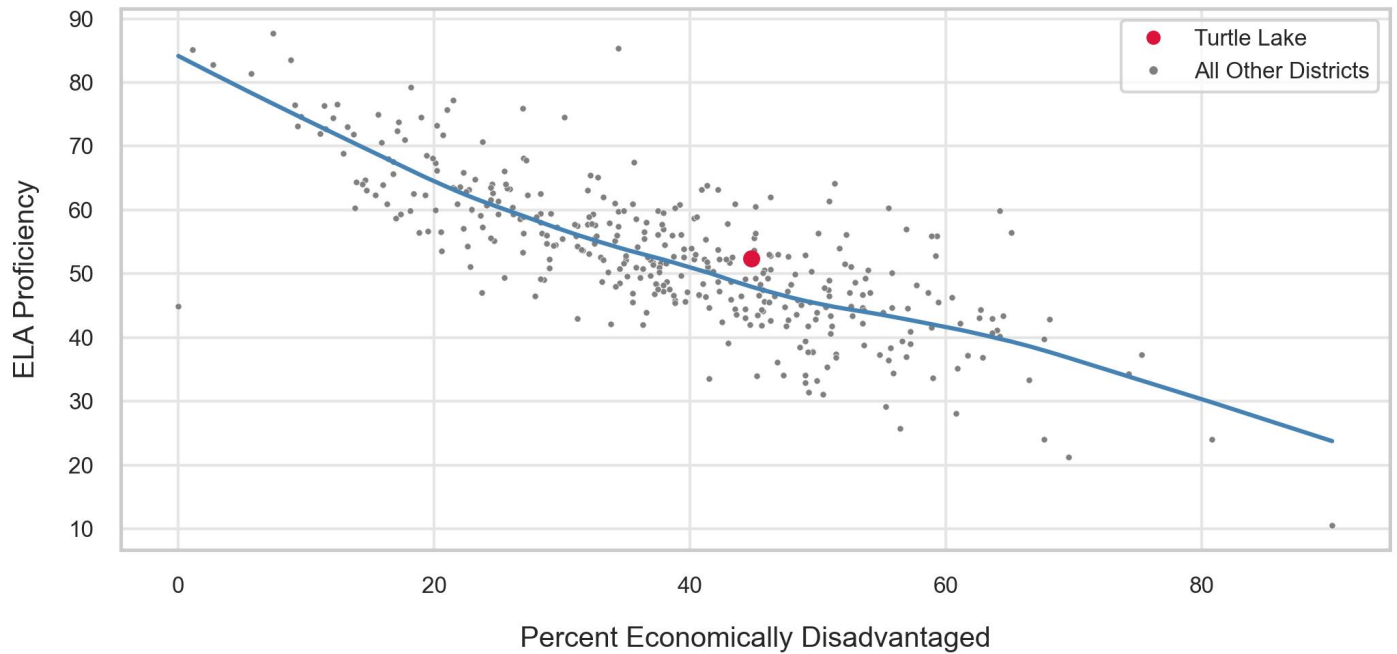
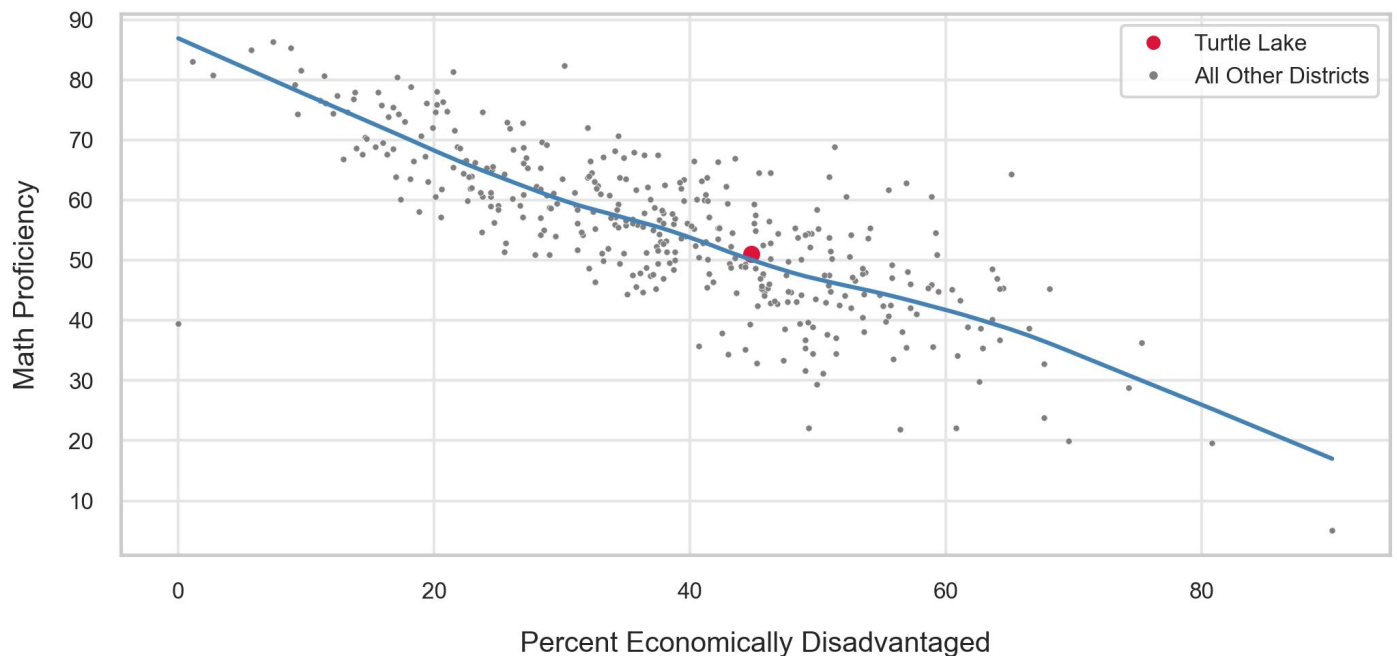


Figure 4: Economically Disadvantaged vs. Math Proficiency 2025



Turtle Lake School District Survey Response Summary

Stakeholder Online Survey • December 8-19, 2025

What are Turtle Lake School District's strengths that the next superintendent can build upon?

- **Academics and Student Focus:** Strengths include good test scores/rankings, high academic standards, strong curriculum, and dedication to personalized attention in small class sizes, especially in the elementary and middle schools. The same hour resource period was also noted as inspired.
- **Community and Culture:** The district is praised for its close-knit, small-town feeling, strong community/parental involvement, and school spirit, which translates to a high level of public support.
- **Facilities and Offerings:** Respondents highlighted the great facilities, including the new track, pool, and gym, as well as the variety of activities, clubs, and classes offered, providing "Big School Opportunities" in a small school setting.
- **Staff Quality and Dedication:** Many responses emphasized having great, dedicated, and responsive teachers and staff who build strong relationships with students, are approachable, and care about students' education and success.
- **Financial Stability:** The district is noted for its financial soundness, strong fund balance, and debt-free status, indicating a successful track record of budgeting and financial planning.

What are the challenges facing the Turtle Lake School District that the next superintendent should be aware of, or you would like to see addressed?

- **Culture, Bullying, and Fair Treatment:** Significant issues include extensive bullying (especially towards special education students), staff favoritism and cliquishness, unfair treatment of students based on last names, and a generally poor staff culture and morale. Some responses also noted bullying of staff by administration/other staff.
- **Academics, Staff Accountability, and Leadership:** Challenges involve the quality of teaching (some teachers are perceived as not teaching or grading in a timely manner, or just "collecting a paycheck"), lack of accountability for staff and students, inconsistency in discipline, and poor leadership, including issues with the high school and elementary principals. The need for a cohesive K-12 building culture and improved test scores were also mentioned.
- **Financial and Enrollment Concerns:** The district faces declining enrollment, which is linked to budget constraints, the need for an upcoming referendum, and concerns about money management, funding for education vs. sports, and attracting/retaining quality staff with competitive pay and benefits.
- **Special Education and Resources:** There is a stated lack of help and fair treatment for special education students, including DPI discipline issues. Other resource shortages include paras and substitute teachers.

- **Communication, Extracurriculars, and Facilities:** Key challenges are poor internal and external communication from the administration, a heavy focus on sports over other extracurriculars (especially the arts/music/drama), a decrease in non-athletic opportunities, an aging facility, and the need for better security and mental health awareness.

What characteristics or traits are you looking for in our new superintendent?

- **Leadership and Decision-Making:** Seek a strong leader who is firm, not afraid of confrontation, and willing to make hard decisions based on facts rather than personal gain. This leader should hold people accountable, follow rules/policies, and possess a strategic mindset for long-term success.
- **Communication and Transparency:** Respondents highly value a superintendent with excellent communication skills, emphasizing clarity, honesty, and transparency with the board, staff, parents, and community. They should be approachable, willing to listen to all concerns, and visible/present in the school and community.
- **Financial Acumen:** The new superintendent needs strong business and financial leadership skills, including expertise with budgeting, managing money wisely, and being a good steward of school resources.
- **Integrity and Fairness:** Desired traits include honesty, integrity, fairness to all staff regardless of status or "favorites," and a commitment to equitable treatment. They should challenge the "good ol' boy's club" and nepotism.
- **Student Focus and Involvement:** The ideal candidate is student-centered, prioritizes the needs of the whole child, advocates for students, and is involved in various aspects of school life, including community activities and sporting events. They should strive to improve the school and address student discipline.
- **Community Connection and Perspective:** Preferences are split between someone who wants to be involved and live in the community, and someone new who doesn't have ties to the area, but both groups desire someone who understands small-town dynamics and values.



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF TURTLE LAKE

*"To foster a culture of excellence where every person
belongs, learns and succeeds."*

205 Oak Street North
Turtle Lake, WI 54889

(715)986-4470

Fax: (715)986-2444

www.turtlelake.k12.wi.us

Kent M. Kindschy, District Administrator

Troy Wagner, 4K-5 Principal

Jason Hinze, MS/HS Principal

Strategic Plan 2026-2031

Teaching and Learning

Overall Goal: The Turtle Lake School District will provide a rigorous and relevant curriculum delivered by highly qualified educators who use innovative, research-based strategies to prepare the students to compete in a global environment in the 21st century.

- Curriculum and resources
- Professional Learning Communities
- Academic and Career Planning with growth in career planning
- Response to Intervention
- Student wellness and success

Technology

Overall Goal: Create classroom environments where students engage in collaborative, inquiry-based learning, facilitated by educators who can use technology to transform knowledge and skills into solutions, new information, and products.

- One to one electronics rotation
- Replace smartboards
- Maintain Laker Online
- Telephone replacement
- Server infrastructure update

Communication and Community Engagement

Overall Goal: The Turtle Lake School District will communicate, engage, and develop partnerships with students, staff, and citizens to help reach our mission of academic excellence and positive citizenship for all students.

- Market the District
- Staff involved in the community
- Community members in school building
- Community education growth
- Collaboration with local businesses

Workforce Engagement and Development

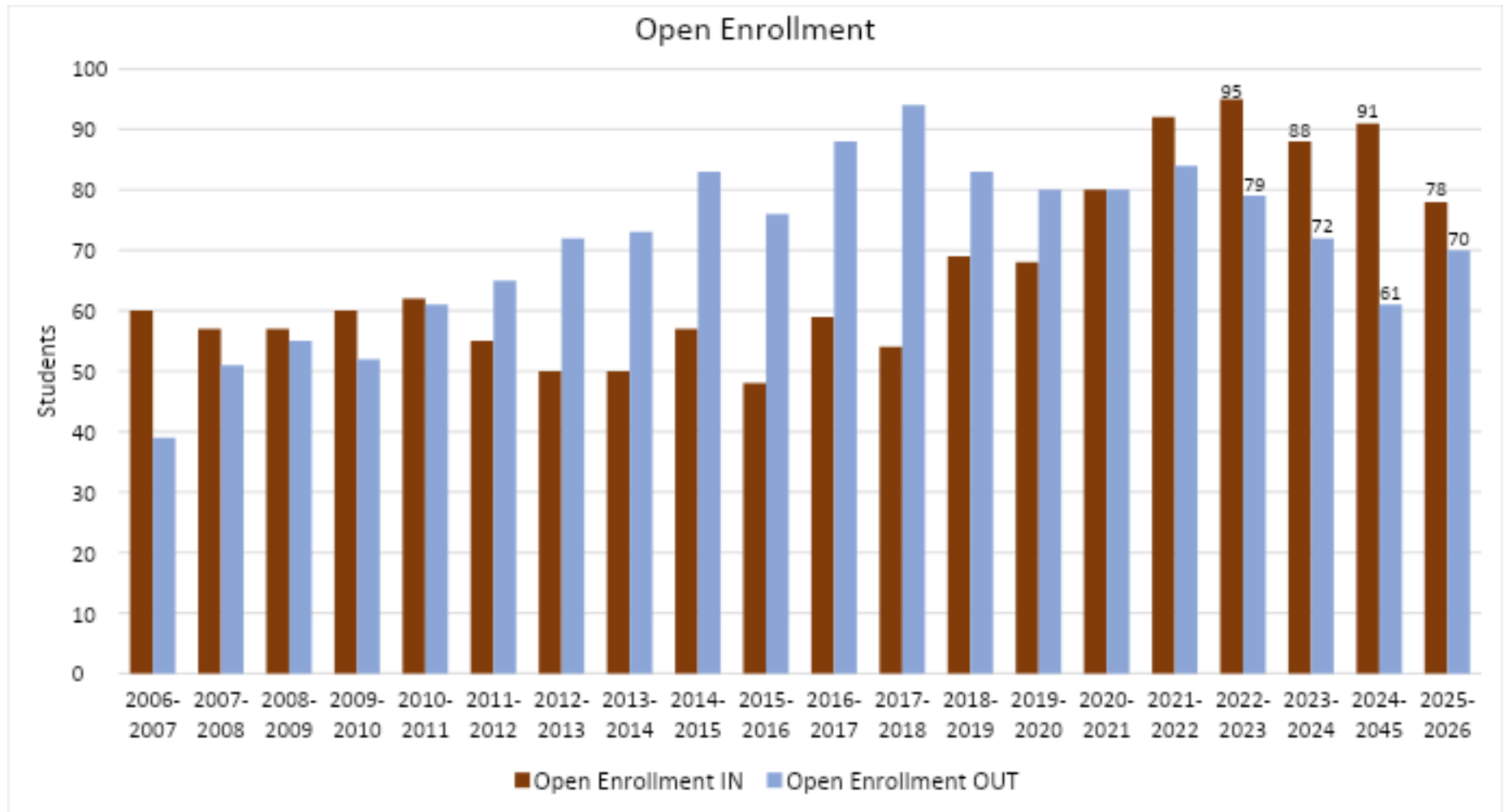
Overall Goal: The Turtle Lake School District will utilize best practices to hire, retain, engage, and develop a skilled, talented workforce that will enable the district to achieve its mission.

- Staff wellness
- Cooperative salaries and benefits for all staff
- Continuous professional development
- Leadership development
- Attract and retain quality staff

Facilities and Operations

Overall Goal: The Turtle Lake School District will provide safe, healthy, and efficiently operated schools to ensure the success of all students and accountability for all stakeholders.

- 10-year plan
- Front of school safety
- Maintain fitness center – Self-sufficient
- Continue maintenance of buildings and grounds.



Turtle Lake School has worked hard over the past years to retain current students and attract new students. There are many reasons why a parent might open-enroll out of the district. Many times, parents or guardians will choose to attend other districts because it is closer to a parent's work, a parent's former school, or closer to daycare. Students may choose to go to another district to be with friends. In 2021-2022, we started to see more students enrolling in the district than out of the district. With the before and after-school care and daycare in the area, we are seeing encouraging signs that this trend will continue to improve. We have eight more students enrolling in our district than we do enrolling out.