



HOWARD LAKE • WAVERLY • WINSTED

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Howard Lake-Waverly-Winsted Schools: A New Superintendent's Listening Tour Summary Report

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I'm grateful for the many opportunities I have had to connect with our students, staff, families, and community members during my first few months as superintendent. The insights shared during our conversations in July, August, and early September have been invaluable. I've listened to many different voices and perspectives, all united by a deep commitment to our students and a strong sense of pride in our community. This report summarizes the key themes and findings from these listening sessions, structured around the four focus areas of our Strategic Plan.

Student Achievement and Well-Being

Conversations have highlighted that our schools provide a **wide range of opportunities** for students to get involved and find their niche, which is a significant strength. Whether through academics, athletics, or co-curricular activities, students have a chance to connect with their school community and achieve at high levels. This commitment to holistic student development is a key part of our schools' success. We continue to have opportunities for growth in our understanding of students' overall well being and how to strengthen their experiences in this area.

Effective Resource Management

A crucial theme that came up repeatedly has been the need for our district to develop long term financial stability given our recent and expected future enrollment trends, while maintaining strong programming opportunities for our students. One area of particular note was the need to **stabilize the FFA program**. The program is currently going through a significant staffing transition, and it's clear that the community values this program and wants to see it thrive. We need to

commit the necessary resources and support to ensure this program continues to provide exceptional opportunities for our students.

Family Partnership and Community Engagement

There is a strong, shared desire to **enhance the "Laker identity"** across our school community. People want to feel more connected and unified, and this sense of collective pride is a powerful asset we can build upon. Additionally, a clear theme emerged regarding the need to continue to **strengthen school and family partnerships**. Families want to feel like true partners in their children's education, and we must find new ways to build and sustain these relationships.

Staff Development and Support

I have been consistently impressed by the quality of our staff and even more impressed by our staff's willingness to recognize and acknowledge the strength of their colleagues. I've heard over and over that our team is not only talented but also **committed to supporting one another**. This sense of a strong, collaborative staff is a tremendous foundation for our district. This commitment to one another directly supports our belief statement that "Our communities are better together."

A Call to Action

The most significant takeaway from my listening tour is the strong desire for our **recently adopted strategic plan to come to life**. Our community has provided us with a clear roadmap, and the time for action is now. These conversations have validated the importance of our strategic plan and provided us with a deeper understanding of where we need to focus our energy and resources. The themes of strengthening partnerships, enhancing our community identity, and supporting our staff are all directly tied to our shared vision: "**Every Laker, Every Day.**"

I look forward to continuing to work alongside our school board and district community as we turn these findings into meaningful action.