

OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE
KEITH FABER



Lake
Local School District

Performance Audit

October 2026



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To the Lake Local School District Community:

The Auditor of State's Office recently completed a performance audit for the Lake Local School District (the District). The District was selected for a performance audit based on its projected financial condition. This review was conducted by the Ohio Performance Team and provides an independent assessment of operations within select functional areas. The performance audit has been provided at no cost to the District through state funds set aside to provide analyses for districts that meet certain criteria, including conditions that would lead to fiscal distress.

This performance audit report contains recommendations, supported by detailed analyses, to enhance the District's overall economy, efficiency, and/or effectiveness. This report has been provided to the District and its contents have been discussed with the appropriate elected officials and District management. The District has been encouraged to use the recommendations contained in the report to perform its own assessment of operations and develop alternative management strategies independent of the performance audit report.

It is my hope that the District will use the results of the performance audit as a resource for improving operational efficiency as well as service delivery effectiveness. The analyses contained within are intended to provide management with information, and in some cases, a range of options to consider while making decisions about their operations. This performance audit report can be accessed online through the Auditor of State's website at <http://www.ohioauditor.gov> and choosing the "Search" option. Additional resources related to performance audits are also available on the Ohio Auditor of State's website.

Sincerely,

KEITH FABER
Ohio Auditor of State

Tiffany L. Ridenbaugh, CPA, CFE, CGFM
Chief Deputy Auditor

October 6, 2026

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Introduction

The public expects and deserves government entities to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars. School officials have a responsibility to maximize program outcomes and success while minimizing costs. Transparent management of taxpayer dollars promotes a good relationship with the constituents served by a school district. School districts in Ohio are required to submit financial forecasts to the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce (ODEW) annually in August, with updates to the forecast submitted in February.¹ These documents provide three years of historical financial data, as well as the projected revenues and expenses for a multi-year period.²

The Ohio Auditor of State's Office Ohio Performance Team (OPT) routinely reviews the submitted forecasts in order to identify districts which may benefit from a performance audit. These audits are designed to assist school districts that are struggling financially. We use data-driven analyses to produce and support recommendations that identify opportunities for improved operations, effectiveness, increased transparency, and reductions in cost. While we have the authority to initiate a performance audit for school districts facing financial distress, any school district can request, and benefit from, an audit.³

Audit Methodology

Our audit focuses on identifying opportunities where expenditures may be reduced as the District administration can make decisions in these areas. The information, which was presented to District officials, is based on a combination of peer district comparisons, industry standards, and statewide requirements. During the audit, we relied on academic year (AY) 2025 data and AY 2026 to complete our analyses, which were the most recent years of available data at the time.⁴ When applicable, we supplemented our analyses with current data supplied by the District.

Two groups of peer districts were identified for the purpose of this audit. The first peer group, primary peers, are districts located throughout Ohio and are chosen based on having similar or better academic performance and similar demographic makeup while maintaining relatively lower spending per pupil. Primary peer districts are used for financial comparisons and analyses regarding operations such as staffing levels. The second, local peers, is comprised of districts in

¹ORC § 5705.391 and OAC 3301-92-04.

² House Bill 96 of the 136th General Assembly (the biennial budget bill) contained changes to the school forecast which included shortening the length of the forecast period and altering the submission dates. These changes went into effect in AY 2026.

³Performance audits are conducted using Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards guidelines, see [Appendix A](#) for more details.

⁴ The academic year, which coincides with the fiscal year, begins July 1st and ends June 30th.

the surrounding area and is used for labor market comparisons, such as salary schedules. See [Appendix A](#) for a list of all districts used in our peer comparisons.

Lake Local School District

Lake Local School District (LLSD or the District) is located in Wood County and, as of AY 2025, had 1,531 students enrolled including students residing in the District and those who attend through open enrollment options. The District spans approximately 37 square miles and has an Ohio median income of \$45,308.

Financial Condition

In February 2026, the District released its required forecast update that showed negative year-end fund balances in the forecast period beginning in AY 2028. A summary of this forecast is in the table below. As seen in this table, the District has negative results of operations in each of the four years of the forecast period. This deficit spending is possible in the short-term because of the existing positive fund balance. However, based on projected deficit spending, the District forecasted a negative ending cash balance beginning in AY 2028, which was projected to grow to approximately \$9.4 million by AY 2029, the last year of the forecast. Due to the declining fiscal condition of the District presented in the February 2026 forecast, and in consultation with ODEW, we chose to conduct a performance audit which was initiated in April 2026.

Financial Condition Overview (February 2026 Forecast)

	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Total Revenue	\$21,291,154	\$20,782,813	\$20,665,802	\$20,618,191
Total Expenditures	\$23,050,292	\$23,654,970	\$24,751,390	\$26,130,534
Results of Operations	(\$1,759,138)	(\$2,872,157)	(\$4,085,588)	(\$5,512,343)
Beginning Cash Balance	\$4,793,964	\$3,034,826	\$162,669	(\$3,922,919)
Ending Cash Balance	\$3,034,826	\$162,669	(\$3,922,919)	(\$9,435,262)
Ending Fund Balance (Line 12.010)	\$3,034,826	\$162,669	(\$3,922,919)	(\$9,435,262)

Source: ODEW

ODEW can require a district to submit a financial recovery plan (FRP) if it determines that the district is at risk of fiscal distress. Due to the District's projected financial condition in its February 2026 forecast, LLSD was required to submit a written FRP to ODEW. The Board approved the District's plan in May 2026 and subsequently submitted it to ODEW, who approved the District's FRP in May 2026. The FRP included a financial forecast; however, the forecast was not submitted separately to ODEW. Using the information contained in the FRP, we developed a forecast summary, identified as the 2026 FRP Forecast in the following table. The FRP forecast projected negative results of operations for each year of the forecast and a negative ending fund balance of approximately \$4.5 million in AY 2029, the last year of the forecast.

Financial Condition Overview (2026 FRP Forecast)

	FY 2026	FY 2027	FY 2028	FY 2029
Total Revenue	\$21,396,497	\$21,306,591	\$21,194,167	\$21,153,279
Total Expenditures	\$22,971,536	\$22,821,165	\$23,661,541	\$24,934,925
Results of Operations	(\$1,575,039)	(\$1,514,574)	(\$2,467,374)	(\$3,781,646)
Beginning Cash Balance	\$4,793,964	\$3,218,925	\$1,704,351	(\$763,024)
Ending Cash Balance	\$3,218,925	\$1,704,351	(\$763,024)	(\$4,544,669)
Ending Fund Balance (Line 12.010)	\$3,218,925	\$1,704,351	(\$763,024)	(\$4,544,669)

Source: ODEW

Although the FRP forecast projected an improved negative ending fund balance, it did not resolve the continued deficit spending. In the 2026 FRP forecast, the projected negative results of operations in AY 2026 was approximately \$1.6 million or 7.4 percent of forecasted revenue. While the projected deficit spending decreased to approximately \$1.5 million in AY 2027, it was projected to grow throughout the remainder of the forecast period, the result of which was projected negative results of operations of approximately \$3.8 million or 17.9 percent of projected revenue in AY 2029.

The FRP forecast reflects actions taken by the District to reduce expenditures. Forecasted expenditure reductions for AY 2027 include a staffing reduction of 7.0 FTEs, a reduction in purchased services, and revenue enhancements through increased student fees. Since the submission of these forecasts, the District placed a 1.0 percent earned income tax levy on the November 2026 ballot to generate new revenue, which was not included in the FRP Forecast.

During the course of the audit, the District released its August 2026 initial required forecast. The forecast can be found here: [Reports Portal](#)

School Funding

Historically, school funding in Ohio has been a partnership between the state and local districts. Local districts can raise funds through property and school district income taxes, and the state provides funding primarily through a foundation formula, which is intended to ensure a basic level of education funding for all students. Districts may also receive some funding from other sources, such as federal grants. In AY 2026, of the approximately \$28.9 billion in reported revenue for public education in Ohio, 84.2 percent, or \$24.3 billion, came from state and local sources.⁵

⁵ Of the remaining 15.7 percent of revenue, 8.1 percent came from the federal government with the remaining 7.6 percent coming from a variety of sources including funds raised through tuition, fees, extracurricular activities, grants, and other non-tax sources.

State Funding

On July 1, 2025, House Bill 96 of the 136th General Assembly (the biennial budget bill) was signed by the Governor. This bill included changes to the state foundation funding formula, which was enacted in 2021,⁶ and is commonly referred to as the Fair School Funding Plan. The formula changes will be phased in at 83.33 percent in AY 2026 and 100 percent in AY 2027.⁷ During the phase-in period, the amount of state funding received in any given year may have been less than what would have been received if the formula were fully funded. In addition to the formula, there are two “guarantee” provisions that provide additional revenue and prevent a district’s state funding from falling below certain historical amounts.⁸ In the most recent budget, the temporary transitional aid provides funding based on AY 2020 levels and the formula transition supplement provides funding based on AY 2021 levels including a district’s student wellness and success funds and enrollment growth supplement for that year. LLSD did not qualify for either of these supplemental guarantees and receives only the calculated formula funding.

Local Funding

Local revenue can be raised through a combination of property and income taxes. While property taxes are assessed on both residential and business properties within a district, school district income tax is assessed only on residents.⁹ Approximately one-third of Ohio school districts currently have an income tax.

Property Tax

Property taxes levied in Ohio are subject to restrictions in the Ohio Constitution¹⁰ and the Ohio Revised Code (ORC).¹¹ These restrictions limit the amount of tax that can be levied without voter approval to 10 mills¹² or 1 percent of property value. While the Constitutional limitation is based on fair market value, the ORC sets a more restrictive limit based on taxable value, which is defined as 35 percent of fair market value. These taxes are distributed between the various taxing districts that operate where a property is located.

⁶ ODEW transitioned to the new funding model in January of 2022.

⁷ See <https://www.lsc.ohio.gov/assets/legislation/136/hb96/psc/files/hb96-comparison-document-as-pending-in-senate-committee-136th-general-assembly.pdf>

⁸ In addition, the budget extended temporary transitional transportation aid associated with a district’s per-pupil transportation aid.

⁹ See <https://tax.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/tax/individual/school-district-income-tax>

¹⁰ Ohio Const. Art. XII, Section 2.

¹¹ Ohio Rev. Code § 5705.02.

¹² A mill is defined as one-tenth of one percent or \$1 for every \$1,000 of taxable value.

The 10 mills allowed by the Constitution are typically referred to as inside, or un-voted mills. On average, school districts have approximately 4.7 inside mills, and the remainder of property tax revenue would come from voted, or outside millage.

School districts can obtain additional property tax revenue through voter approved bonds and levies. These taxes can have a variety of purposes that are defined in the authorizing language which are generally divided into three broad categories: general operations, permanent improvement, and construction.

Levies may be defined as either a fixed-rate or a fixed-sum. A fixed-rate levy identifies the number of mills that will be assessed in order to raise revenues. If new construction occurs within the district, the rate will apply, and the district will realize additional revenues. Current expense levies, used for general operations, and permanent improvement levies are typically fixed-rate. A fixed-sum levy identifies an amount that will be generated from the levy. While there may be an estimated millage rate, the actual rate will vary based on assessed property values. If new construction occurs within the district, there would be no new revenues for a fixed-sum levy. Emergency levies¹³ for general operations, and bond levies for the financing of new buildings, are typically fixed-sum levies.

Ohio has historically had laws which limit the impact rising property values can have on property taxes. The most recent version of these limitations was enacted in 1976 and requires that the amount collected on fixed-rate millage is frozen at the dollar value collected in its first year.¹⁴ In subsequent years, with exceptions such as new construction, a district would not receive additional revenue from a levy as property values increased.¹⁵ Instead, the outside mills are subject to reduction factors¹⁶ which lower the effective millage rate in order to maintain the preceding year's level of revenue from the same properties.¹⁷

However, under state law, in order to receive state foundation funding, a district must collect a minimum of 20 mills in property taxes for general purposes, or current expenses.¹⁸ In order to

¹³ Authorized by ORC §5705.194. Beginning in Tax Year 2026, new emergency levies are not allowed to be proposed, per HB 129 of the 136th General Assembly. However, existing emergency levies may be renewed as a converted fixed-sum current expense operating levy for up to five years and can be renewed subsequently after that.

¹⁴ Am.Sub.H.B. No. 920, 136 Ohio Laws, Part II, 3182, 3194.

¹⁵ If property value decreased due to reappraisal, it is possible that a district would receive less revenue than originally intended.

¹⁶ ORC § 319.301.

¹⁷ We are providing this information for historical purposes only. The law which regulates collection of on outside millage has been amended since enacted in 1976. The District should consult with the most current version of the law for a clear understanding of how this process works today.

¹⁸ The term 'current expense' refers to revenue generated from levies that are not restricted in their use. It does not include bonds or levies that generate revenues for restricted funds, such as Permanent Improvement levies.

prevent a district from failing to meet this minimum threshold, reduction factors stop being applied once a district reaches an effective rate of 20-mills, colloquially known as the 20-mill floor. Practically speaking, this means that if a district's effective tax rate is reduced to 20 mills for current expenses, the amount of revenue generated from levies will increase with property values unless a new operating levy is approved by voters.¹⁹ It is important to note not all levies count toward the 20-mill floor.

School District Income Tax

A school district income tax is an alternative method of raising local revenue. Like property taxes, a school district income tax must be approved by voters and may be for either general use or specific purposes, such as bond repayment. Once approved, a tax becomes effective on January 1st of the following year. Unlike municipal income taxes which are generally levied on wages earned in the municipality by both residents and nonresidents, school district income taxes are levied on wages earned by residents of the district, regardless of where the resident may work. Businesses operating within the school district are not required to pay the income tax.

A school board, when determining that an income tax is necessary for additional revenue, must submit a resolution to the Ohio Tax Commissioner identifying the amount of revenue to be raised and the tax base to be used for calculations. A school district income tax can be assessed on either a traditional tax base or an earned income tax base. The traditional tax base uses the same income base as Ohio's income tax and the earned income tax base is only earned income from an employer or self-employment. Under the earned income tax base, income such as capital gains or pension payments is not taxable, though this type of income may be taxed under the traditional tax base. Once this information is received, the Tax Commissioner identifies the school district income tax rate and equivalent property tax millage for the district.

The Ohio Department of Taxation collects income tax through employer withholding, individual quarterly estimated payments, and annual returns. Employers are required to withhold the tax and submit payments to the state under the same rules and guidelines as are currently used for state income taxes. Districts receive quarterly payments from the Department of Taxation and each payment is for the amount collected during the prior quarter. A district receives the total amount of revenue collected less a 1.5 percent fee retained by the state for administration purposes. The amount of revenue collected via school district income tax each year will vary based on the earnings of the district's residents.

¹⁹ Under HB 186 of the 136th General Assembly, property tax growth at the 20-mill floor is capped using the GDP deflator over the three preceding tax years beginning in Tax Year 2025.

LLSD Local Funding

In 2025, LLSD collected revenues on 28.42 mills of property tax for residential properties.²⁰ This included 4.70 inside mills and 19.41 outside mills for current expenses. The District's current expense millage rate is 24.11 mills. In addition to the 24.11 mills collected for current expenses, the District collects additional property tax revenue that does not count toward the 20-mill floor. In 2025, this additional millage totaled 4.31 and was comprised of 3.50 bond mills and 0.81 permanent improvement mills.

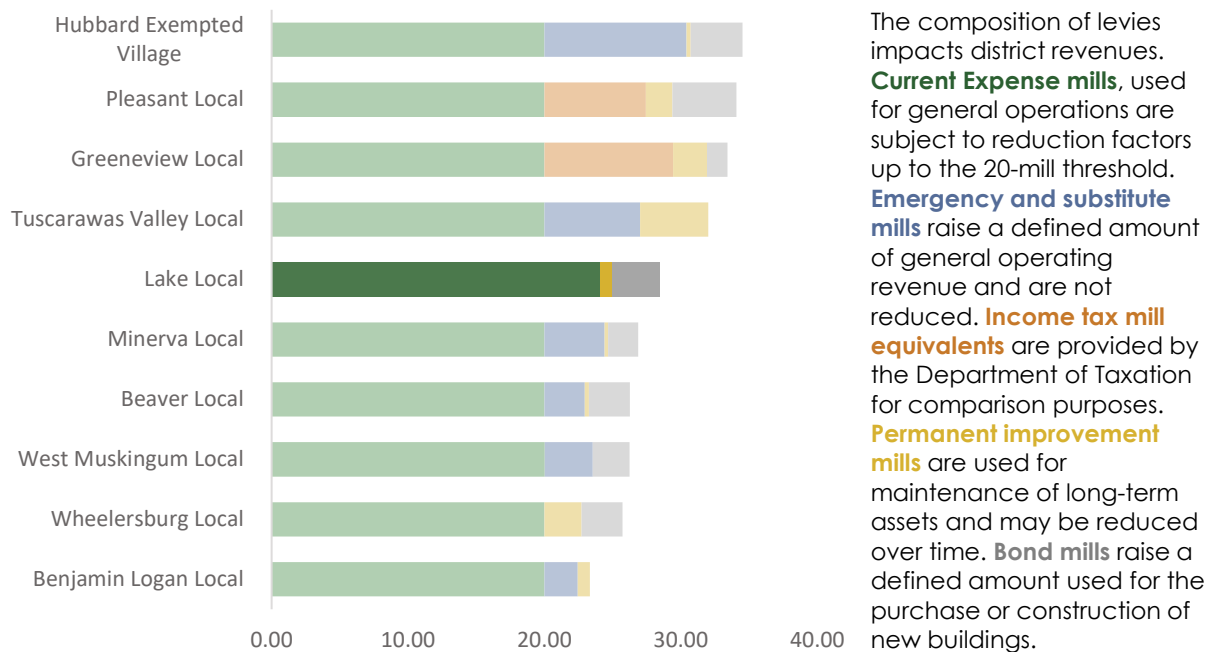
Since the total millage rate can be rolled back as a result of reduction factors, we compared the total effective millage for LLSD to that of its primary peers. This comparison is found in the chart below. The green portion of the bar represents the current expense millage rate, where eight of the peers are at the 20-mill floor.²¹ The blue portion represents emergency and substitute revenue, which is not subject to reduction factors.²² The yellow represents permanent improvement funds, and the gray represents bond funding. While LLSD does not have a school district income tax, two peers do have revenue from income tax. For comparison purposes, OPT calculated an estimated millage for the revenue generated from income taxes based on guidance from the Department of Taxation, which is represented by the orange portion of the bars in the chart below.

²⁰ Residential and agricultural property is considered Class 1 real estate. Commercial Property is considered Class 2 real estate and subject to a different set of reduction factors. The effective millage rate for Class 2 property in 2025 was 40.80 mills.

²¹ West Muskingum Local School District has 20.03 current expense mills and is not at the 20-mill floor.

²² Per HB 129, beginning in Tax Year 2026, if a county which contains a portion of a district goes through a property value reappraisal or triennial update, emergency and substitute levies will be included in the 20-mill floor calculation. Because counties do not undergo reappraisal on the same cycle, HB 479 provides additional clarification. In considering levies included in the 20-mill floor for school districts located in more than one county, instead of the "tax reduction factor" being triggered whenever any county in the district undergoes reappraisals or triennial update, it is instead triggered every three years based on the reappraisal cycle of the county with largest portion of taxable value. Wood County, where LLSD is located, had a reappraisal in 2026 and will be updated in 2029.

2025 Millage and Millage Equivalents | Primary Peers



Source: Ohio Department of Taxation

The composition of levies impacts district revenues. Current expense mills, used for general operations are subject to reduction factors up to the 20-mill threshold. Emergency and substitute mills raise a defined amount of general operating revenue and cannot be reduced. Income tax mill equivalents are calculated by OPT based on guidance provided by the Department of Taxation for comparison purposes. Permanent improvement mills are used for maintenance of long-term assets and may be subject to reduction factors. Bond mills raise a defined amount used for the purchase or construction of new buildings. It is important to understand that *revenue* generated from bond and emergency levies remains the same regardless of changes to property values as they are voted as fixed-sum levies. The *revenue* generated from current expense millage and permanent improvement millage also stays the same until the 20-mill floor is hit for current expense taxes. At that point, a district at the floor would see additional revenues from increases in value to existing properties. The District relies heavily on current expense mills and is not presently at the 20-mill floor. This means that if

property values increase within the District, it will not see additional revenues based on that growth.²³

The property tax revenues for the District's General Fund are generated from several levies. The following table shows the levies currently in effect for the District and includes the Gross Tax Rate, or the amount that was voted on, and the Effective Tax Rate, or the amount that is assessed on properties. In the table, the first current expense levy is identified as starting in 1976. It should be noted that in 1976, changes were made to the ORC that impacted the collection of property taxes. The levy identified in 1976 may include any levies that predate that year which remain in effect.

Current Levies Collected by LLSD, AY 2025

Levy Year	Levy Name	Length	Last Approved	Gross Tax Rate	Class I Effective Tax Rate
	General Fund (Inside Mills)	N/A	-	4.70	4.70
1976	Current Expense	Continuing	-	20.50	3.86
1977	Current Expense	Continuing	-	4.50	0.86
1981	Current Expense	Continuing	-	4.30	0.93
1990	Current Expense	Continuing	-	4.50	1.56
2001	Permanent Improvement	Continuing	2011	1.40	0.81
2008	Current Expense	Continuing	-	5.56	3.58
2011	Current Expense	Continuing	-	6.63	4.27
2012	Current Expense	Continuing	2015	6.75	4.35
2021	Bond (\$36,000,000)	36 Years	2021	3.50	3.50
Total				62.34	28.42

Source: Ohio Department of Taxation

Note: Due to rounding, millage categories may not sum up to total millage.

Note: The 2012 Current Expense levy and 2001 Permanent Improvement levies were both passed for an initial period of time and then subsequently renewed as continuing levies.

In AY 2025, the District's millage included 4.70 inside mills, identified as General Fund in the table, that were not voted on by the taxpayers. In addition, the District collects revenue on 3.86 mills that predate the 1976 changes to property tax laws in Ohio. Finally, the District collects revenue on a combined 15.55 mills from multiple current expense levies, the most recent of which was passed in 2012 and subsequently renewed in 2015 as a continuing levy. These levies are used to calculate the 20-mill floor. Because the District is not at the 20-mill floor, the

²³ The information presented in this paragraph is accurate based on information available in 2025. However, in December 2025, four new laws were enacted that will change the way that local property taxes are calculated. Specific changes are noted throughout the report that may impact the District's revenue.

outside mills are subject to reduction factors. If the District's effective tax rate drops to 20 mills, it will begin to see revenue growth based on increases to property values.²⁴

In addition to the current expense mills that count towards the 20-mill floor, the District collects revenue from Permanent Improvement and Bond millage. The Bond millage is intended to raise a specific dollar amount and is not subject to reduction factors. The Permanent Improvement levy is subject to reduction factors but does not count towards the 20-mill floor.

Property Valuation

Millage is one component of how districts generate revenue. The millage is assessed on property value, so the total revenue collected from property levies is a combination of millage and total valuation. A district with higher property value may see more total revenue from fewer mills than a district with lower property values. LLSD's millage rate is comparable to the primary peers. In addition, the District has a lower property valuation compared to its peers. LLSD's total property valuation in Tax Year 2025 was approximately \$375 million compared to the primary peer average of approximately \$430 million. In Tax Year 2024, one mill of property tax generated approximately \$249.17 in revenue per pupil, which is below the primary peer average of \$261.99 per pupil. The combination of lower valuation and comparable total millage means that the District would generate less revenue than the primary peers. Due to this, LLSD has lower capacity to raise revenue.

Local Tax Effort

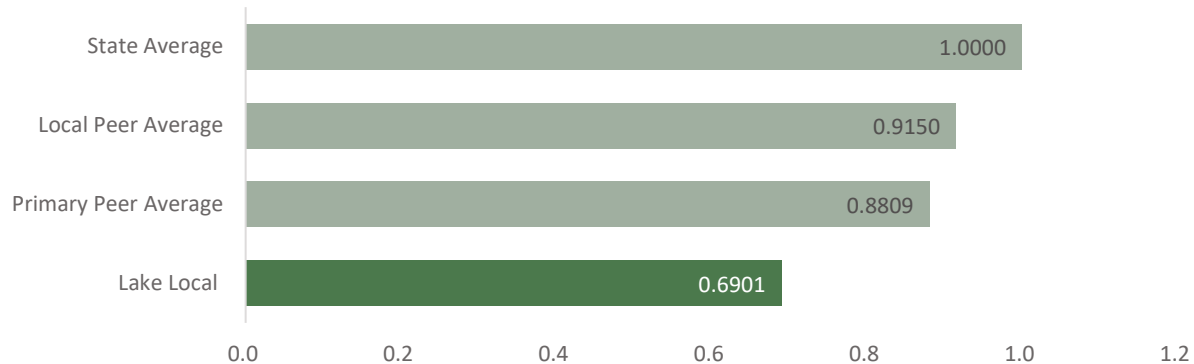
ODEW uses the Local Tax Effort Index as a measure of taxpayer support for the district in which they reside. This index, one of a number of possible measures for evaluating local effort, was initially developed by the Division of Tax Analysis within the Ohio Department of Taxation and is calculated in the context of the residents' abilities to pay by determining the relative position of each school district in the state in terms of the portion of residents' income devoted to supporting public education. This index uses median income data and provides context to better understand a community's tax burden, not only compared to other districts, but also as a function of the residents' ability to pay.

On this sliding scale, a value of 1.0 indicates the state average, a baseline against which all districts in the state are weighed. If a district has a local tax effort below 1.0, residents provide a smaller portion of their available income to public education whereas a value above 1.0 indicates the community pays a larger portion of their available income to public education compared to the state average. The index is updated annually by ODEW as part of its District

²⁴ HB 335 caps the rate of growth using the GDP deflator over the three preceding tax years.

Profile Reports, also known as the Cupp Report, to reflect changes in local conditions from year to year.

AY 2025 Local Tax Effort Comparison



Source: ODEW

The District's local tax effort was compared to the local peers, primary peers, and the state average. Districts are ranked from 1 to 606,²⁵ with 1 being the highest level of effort, or the 99th percentile and 606 being the lowest level effort, or the 1st percentile. The District has a local tax effort of 0.6901. This is one of the lowest local tax efforts in the State, ranking 528 out of 606 districts, which is approximately the 13th percentile of all districts. By comparison, the local peer average of 0.9150 would rank approximately 346 out of all 606 districts, or the 43rd percentile.

LLSD Revenues and Expenditures

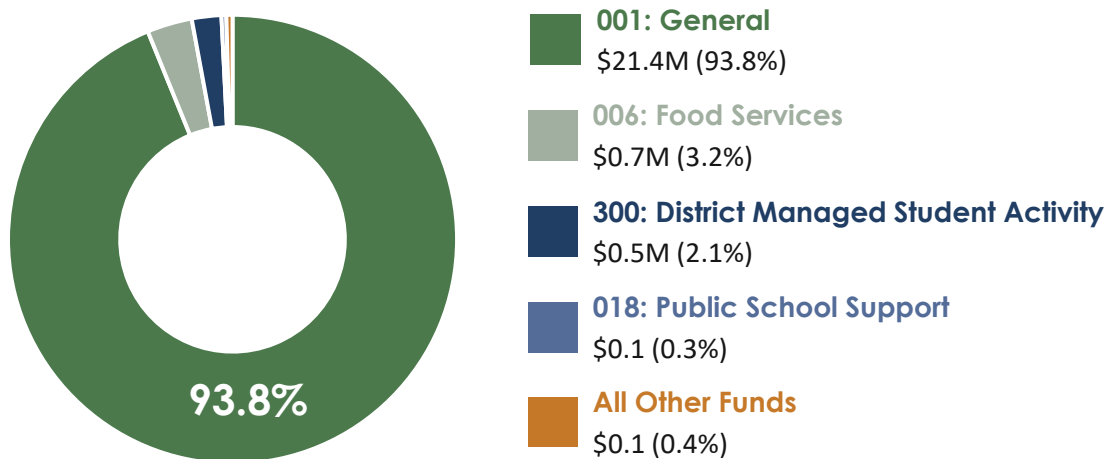
A school district budget is comprised of revenues and expenditures. Revenues are primarily received from local, state, and federal funding sources, and can be placed into general or special use funds. In AY 2025, LLSD had approximately \$22.8 million in total revenue as seen in the following chart. The General Fund comprised 93.8 percent of total revenue, the Food Services Fund comprised 3.2 percent of total revenue, and the District Managed Student Activity Fund comprised 2.1 percent of total revenue.

²⁵ Although there are 611 traditional school districts in Ohio, ODEW excludes Ohio's island districts and College Corner Local School District due to the unique characteristics of these districts.

Fund Activity

AY 2025 Revenue Distribution by Fund

Total: \$22.8M



Source: LLSD

Note: Excludes certain funds and receipt codes. See [Appendix B](#) for all fund activity and more detail regarding exclusions.

Note: Due to rounding, revenue categories may not sum up to the total listed.

As noted above, the majority of the District's revenue is directed to the General Fund, which is used for general operations. In AY 2025, the District's total General Fund revenue was approximately \$21.4 million.²⁶

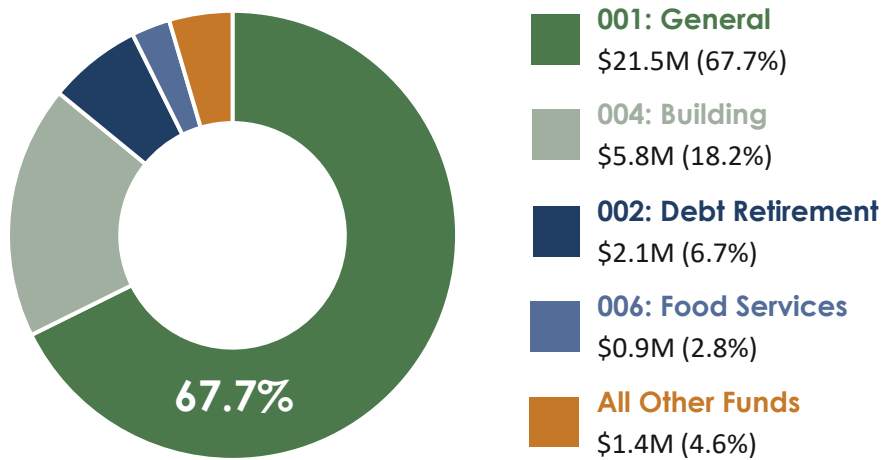
Similar to revenue allocation, expenditures are paid from specific funds. For example, most salaries and wages are typically paid from the General Fund. The following chart shows the District's total expenditures by fund type. In AY 2025, the total expenditures were higher than total revenue, particularly within the General Fund. Within funds, expenditures may exceed revenue due to the ability to use available fund balances from previous years. This is noticeable in the variation in Building Fund in AY 2025 at the District, which had no revenues but \$5.8 million in expenditures.²⁷

²⁶ This total excludes advances to the General Fund. For purposes of comparison, we excluded advances to the General Fund for both LLSD and the peer groups throughout the Revenue and Expenditures section.

²⁷ See [Appendix B](#) for more details regarding fund activity.

AY 2025 Expenditure Distribution by Fund

Total: \$31.7M



Source: LLSD

Note: Excludes certain funds, object codes, and function codes. See [Appendix B](#) for all fund activity and more detail regarding exclusions.

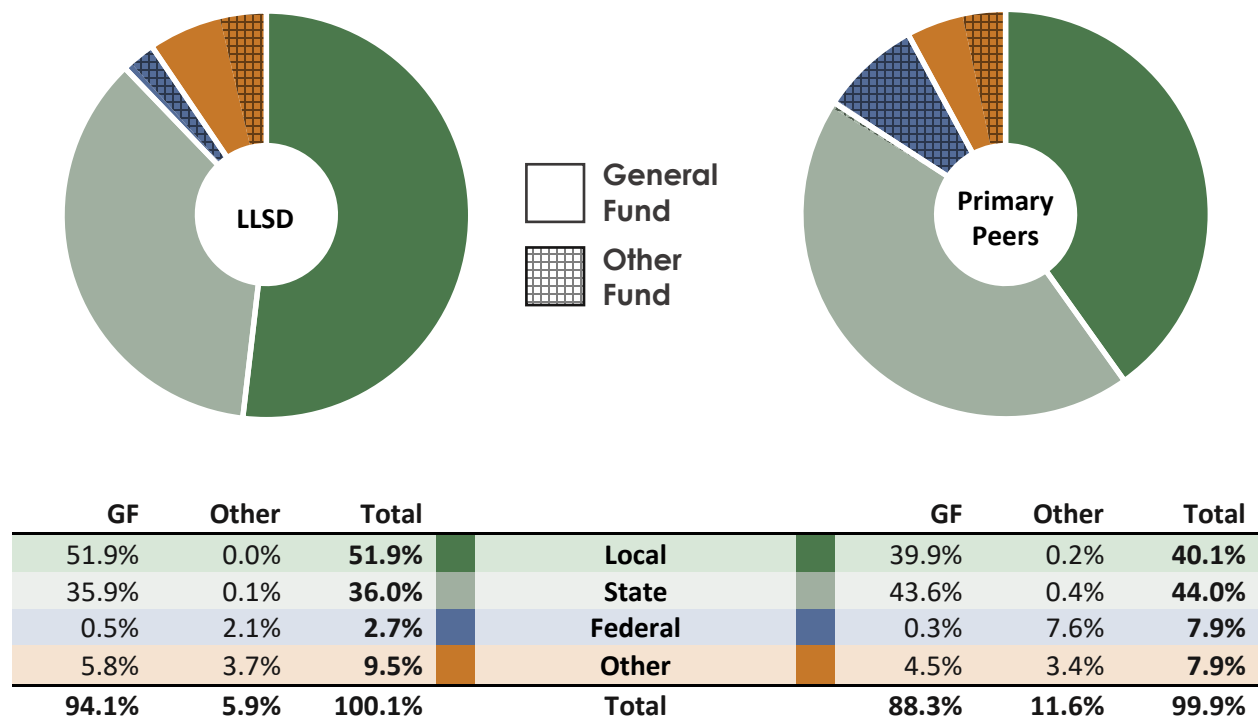
Note: Due to rounding, expenditure categories may not sum up to the total listed.

As seen in the visual above, the District's total General Fund expenditures were approximately \$21.5 million in AY 2025.

Fund Composition

The following charts show the total revenue by type of funding; federal, state, local, or other. In addition, the chart identifies what portion of these revenues are dedicated to the General Fund as it is the largest fund.

AY 2025 Revenue Composition Comparison



Source: LLSD, Primary Peers, & ODEW

Note: Excludes certain funds and receipt codes. See [Appendix B](#) for all fund activity and more details regarding exclusions.

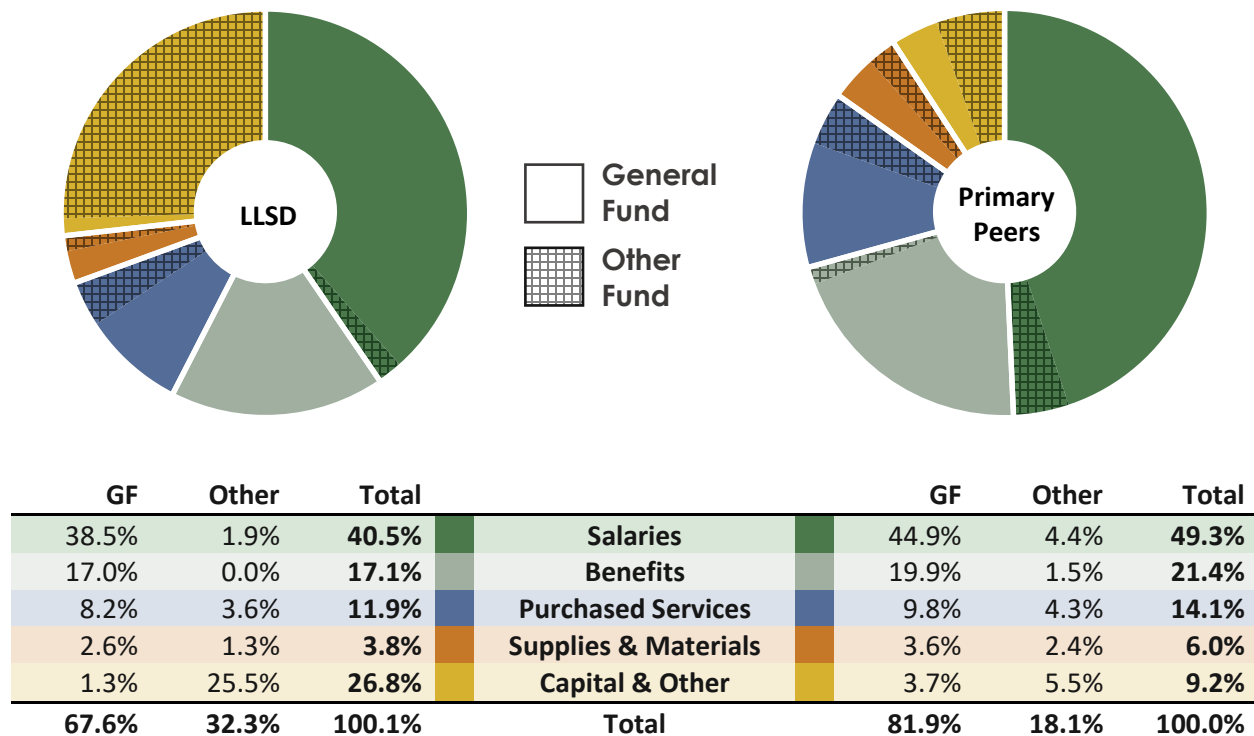
Note: Due to rounding, revenue categories may not sum up to the total listed.

Note: Other category includes other non-local tax revenue funds such as tuition, transportation fees, earnings on investments, food services, extracurricular activities, classroom materials and fees, and receipts from intermediate sources.

As seen in the visual above, the District's General Fund was approximately 94.1 percent of total revenue. Of the total revenue, 51.9 percent was comprised of local funding, followed by state funding, which was 36.0 percent. The District receives a lower percentage of total funding from the state compared to the primary peer average.

The chart that follows compares the District's expenditures by category or type such as salaries and benefits. In addition, the chart identifies what portion of expenditures within each category is from the General Fund.

AY 2025 Expenditure Composition Comparison



Source: LLSD, Primary Peers, & ODEW

Note: Excludes certain funds, object codes, and function codes. See [Appendix B](#) for all fund activity and more details regarding exclusions.

Note: Due to rounding, expenditure categories may not sum up to the total listed.

Note: Other category includes expenditures such as debt retirement, principal interest, and payment of dues and fees.

As seen in the visual above, personnel expenditures comprised of salaries and benefits across all funds made up 57.6 percent of total expenditures. These expenditures, for the District and the peers, were primarily paid from the General Fund. Capital and Other made up another 26.8 percent of total expenditures, which included building-related expenditures. This level of capital expenditure is due to recent construction and additions to the District's buildings and is not a reflection of the District's typical spending in this category.

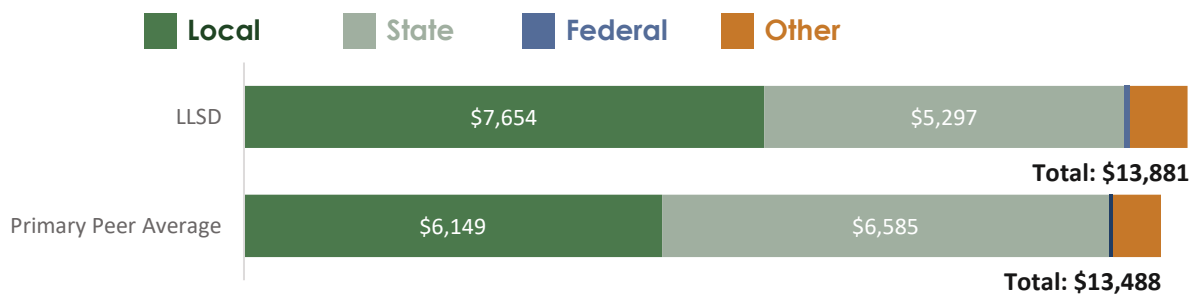
Per Pupil Analysis

This section analyzes revenues and expenditures on a per pupil basis. Revenues and expenditures are divided by the FTE enrollment to normalize peer district comparisons (see [Appendix C](#)).

Revenue per Pupil

Revenue per pupil, broken down by type of funding, is another way to compare funding sources between Ohio school districts. Because our audit focuses on the projected deficit in the financial forecast, we reviewed only the forecasted fund revenues for this purpose.²⁸ In AY 2025, the District received approximately \$13,800 per pupil, with 55.1 percent, or approximately \$7,654, coming from local taxes.²⁹ In AY 2025, the primary peer average was \$13,448 in revenue per pupil, with 45.5 percent, or approximately \$6,100 coming from local taxes. The District's local revenue was higher than the primary peer average in AY 2025.

AY 2025 General Fund Revenues Per Pupil



Source: LLSD, Primary Peers, and ODEW

Note: Excludes certain funds and receipt codes. See [Appendix B](#) for all fund activity and more details regarding exclusions.

Note: Other category includes other non-local tax revenue funds such as tuition, transportation fees, earnings on investments, food services, extracurricular activities, classroom materials and fees, and receipts from intermediate sources.

²⁸ Forecasted funds include the District's General Fund and funds derived from emergency levies.

²⁹ The Cupp Report, issued by ODEW, provides information on all revenues received by a district. Because of this, the percentage of revenues from local revenues in the Cupp report may vary from the amount in our report due to the inclusion of additional revenues.

Expenditures per Pupil

Several of our comparisons are made on a per-pupil basis. This is done to normalize the variation in size between peer districts. The table below shows the District's spending on a per-pupil basis in several key areas. It also shows the differences between the types of funds from which expenditures are made. For example, the majority of salaries and wages are paid from the General Fund, whereas the majority of capital outlay expense are paid from non-General Fund dollars.

AY 2025 Expenditure per Pupil by Object Code

Object	General Fund	Other Funds	All Funds
Salaries	\$7,985	\$400	\$8,384
Benefits	\$3,532	\$6	\$3,538
Purchased Services	\$1,707	\$752	\$2,459
Supplies & Materials	\$530	\$260	\$790
Capital & Other	\$269	\$5,277	\$5,546
Total	\$14,022	\$6,695	\$20,717

Source: LLSD, Primary Peers, and ODEW

Note: Excludes certain funds, object codes, and function codes. See [Appendix B](#) for all fund activity and more detail regarding exclusions.

Note: Due to rounding, expenditure categories may not sum up to the total listed.

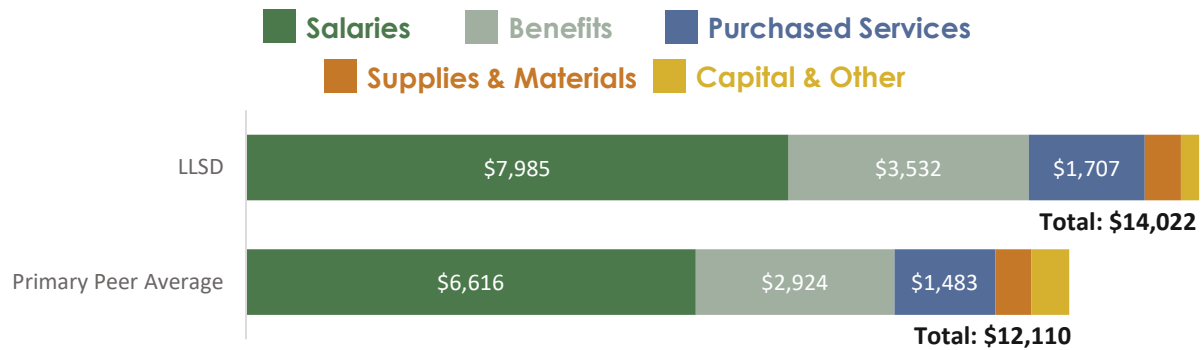
Note: Other category includes expenditures such as debt retirement, principal interest, and payment of dues and fees.

In AY 2025, LLSD spent approximately \$20,717 per pupil from all funds. By comparison, the primary peer average expenditure per pupil from all funds was approximately \$14,948. This difference in expenditures was largely due to construction-related expenses for the District's recent building and addition efforts. The District spent approximately \$14,022 per pupil from the General Fund, which is 15.7 percent higher when compared to the primary peer average of \$12,110 per pupil. We analyzed General Fund expenditures since they are tied to the financial forecast.

The District spent more than the primary peer average on employee salaries and wages, employee benefits, and purchased services. The District spent less than the primary peer average on supplies and materials and capital and other uses of funds.³⁰ The chart that follows provides a comparison of expenditures per pupil for LLSD and the primary peer average.

³⁰ The category of "Other Objects" includes things such as interest on loans, memberships in professional organizations, County Board of Education contributions, and various types of non-healthcare insurance. "Other Uses of Funds" mainly consists of transfers, and contingencies within the various accounting dimensions.

AY 2025 General Fund Expenditures Per Pupil



Source: LLSD, Primary Peers, and ODEW

Note: Excludes certain funds, object codes, and function codes. See [Appendix B](#) for all fund activity and more details regarding exclusions.

Note: Other category includes expenditures such as debt retirement, principal interest, and payment of dues and fees.

The District's higher salaries and benefits expenditures may be driven by the District's staffing levels (see [Recommendation 5](#) and [Recommendation 6](#)) and insurance plan offerings (see [Recommendation 7](#)).

Results of the Audit

Based on an initial analysis of the District's data as compared to its peer groups, the following scope areas were included for detailed review and further analyses: Financial Management, Human Resources, and Transportation (see [Appendix A](#)). We identified 9 recommendations within these scope areas which would result in reduced expenses or improve the District's operational management based on industry standards and peer averages.

Standard Recommendations	Savings
R.1 Improve Forecast Practices and Assumptions	N/A
R.2 Enhance the Budgeting Process	N/A
R.3 Develop and Enhance Formal Plans	N/A
R.4 Reduce the General Fund Subsidy for Extracurricular Activities	\$35,000
R.5 Eliminate Administrative Positions above the Peer Average	\$72,000
Reduce 1.50 FTE Building Administrator Staff	\$72,000
R.6 Eliminate Direct Student Support Positions above the Peer Average	\$492,000
Reduce 2.00 FTE Teaching Staff	\$93,000
Reduce 0.50 FTE Counseling Staff	\$31,000
Reduce 2.00 FTE Permanent Substitute Staff	\$105,000
Reduce 3.00 FTE Other Professional Staff	\$190,000
Reduce 0.50 FTE Social Work Staff	\$29,000
Reduce 0.50 FTE Technical Staff	\$19,000
Reduce 1.00 FTE Library Staff	\$24,000
R.7 Align Employer Insurance Costs with the SERB Regional Average	\$37,000
R.8 Align Salary Schedules	\$0
R.9 Reduce Bus Routes	\$76,000
Total Cost Savings from Performance Audit Recommendations	\$712,000
Less: Non-General Fund portion of Insurance Costs	\$1,000
Total Cost Savings from Performance Audit Recommendations (General Fund)	\$711,000

Note: These numbers reflect the average annual savings of each recommendation over the forecast period. Some recommendations may not be implemented in all years of the period and have lower average annual savings compared to what is presented in the recommendation itself. Where appropriate, the timing of implementation is discussed in the recommendation language in the report.

Our recommendations, which are based on industry standards and peer comparisons, are projected to save the District an average of approximately \$711,000 annually, if fully

implemented. This is an average savings over the four-year forecast period. It should be noted that some recommendations may not be implemented immediately due to timing.³¹

The financial impact of these recommendations on the projected results of operations in the 2026 FRP Forecast is shown in the following table. This table shows the impact of the estimated average annual savings of the recommendations, for the years of implementation, on the District's projected annual spending. As seen in the table, the identified savings would reduce projected deficit spending in two out of the four years of the forecast period.

Results of the Audit Recommendations (2026 FRP Forecast - Line 6.010)

	AY 2026	AY 2027	AY 2028	AY 2029
Original Results of Operations (Line 6.010)	(\$1,575,039)	(\$1,514,574)	(\$2,467,374)	(\$3,781,646)
In Year Recommendation Savings	\$0	\$0	\$1,334,424	\$1,522,819
Revised Results of Operations (Line 6.010)	(\$1,575,039)	(\$1,514,574)	(\$1,132,950)	(\$2,258,827)

Source: ODEW and AOS

The District's 2026 FRP forecast projected expenditures to exceed revenues in each year of the forecast period. As seen in the table above, the estimated savings from implementing the standard recommendations in the report would not fully address the projected deficit spending over the course of the forecast period.

In addition to annual deficit spending, the FRP forecast projected an ending fund deficit beginning in AY 2028. As seen in the table below, the estimated savings from the implementation of all standard recommendations contained in this report would delay the deficit fund balance until AY 2029.

Results of the Audit Recommendations (2026 FRP Forecast - Line 12.010)

	AY 2026	AY 2027	AY 2028	AY 2029
Revised Starting Cash Balance (Line 7.010)	\$4,793,964	\$3,218,925	\$1,704,351	\$571,401
Revised Results of Operations (Line 6.010)	(\$1,575,039)	(\$1,514,574)	(\$1,132,950)	(\$2,258,827)
Revised Ending Cash Balance (Line 7.020)	\$3,218,925	\$1,704,351	\$571,401	(\$1,687,426)
Revised Ending Fund Balance (Line 12.010)	\$3,218,925	\$1,704,351	\$571,401	(\$1,687,426)

³¹ In this audit, approximately \$2.85 million in total cost savings were identified in AY 2028 and AY 2029. It is possible that the LLSD officials could implement recommendations sooner, but those decisions could have significant impacts on overall District operations. Officials should work with the District's legal counsel on these options.

Source: ODEW and AOS

As seen in the table above, if all recommendations were fully implemented, the District's ending fund balance would continue to be depleted, but less so than without the recommendation savings. In AY 2026, the fund balance was projected to be approximately \$3.2 million, or 15.0 percent of total forecasted revenues. By AY 2029, due to continued deficit spending, the District's available balance would be depleted and the resulting fund deficit would be approximately \$1.7 million, or 8.0 percent of total forecasted revenue. It should be noted that the FRP forecast does not include revenue that would be generated from passage of that income tax levy in November 2026, nor does it include the cost saving measures the District plans to take in AY 2028 and AY 2029 as part of its financial recovery plan.

The District's current financial condition is such that implementation of the recommendations identified using industry standards and peer comparisons would not fully address the projected deficit. Because of this, LLSD officials will need to consider additional cost savings measures. Our audit identified areas where the District could further reduce expenditures by going beyond alignment with peer averages and industry standards. In some cases, these cost saving measures may include reducing services to state minimum levels.

The additional cost saving measures are identified in the table below. The implementation of these measures could change the type or level of services offered by the District. It is important for LLSD officials to carefully consider the needs of the students and families served by the District when implementing any of these additional cost saving measures. These estimated savings reflect the average annual savings that could be achieved in AY 2028 through the remainder of the forecast period.

Additional Recommendations		Savings
R.10	Eliminate the General Fund Subsidy for Extracurricular Activities	\$597,000
R.11	Implement a Base and Salary Step Freeze	\$342,000
R.12	Eliminate 0.50 FTE Building Administrator Positions	\$60,000
R.13	Eliminate up to 22.50 FTE Teacher Positions	\$2,506,000

The amount of savings realized from staffing reductions identified in [Recommendation 12](#) and [Recommendation 13](#) would be dependent on a variety of factors including the number of positions that are eliminated along with the impact of the implementation of other cost saving measures identified in this report or by the District itself. Our estimated savings of approximately \$2.6 million identified for these staffing recommendation are based on reductions to state minimum teaching levels and represent the maximum savings possible. The District could identify a smaller amount of cost savings through strategic staffing reductions if necessary.

When considering implementation of recommendations that may take services below industry standards the District must consider the impact on overall operations. District officials may wish to consider implementing any of these additional recommendations, or some combination of them, based on the current financial condition of the District.

Standard Recommendations

Financial Management

Any organization needs to consider both short-term needs and long-term goals when developing policies and procedures related to financial management. This requires strategic planning in order to identify the best use of available resources. School districts, in particular, must have sound planning processes in place so that they can effectively and transparently provide services to their residents. These planning processes and practices should work together and be considered when making management decisions. When developing annual budgets and making spending decisions, the District's administration should consider the information presented in the financial forecast. Additionally, large purchases and other expenditures should be planned for through long-term strategic planning that is also tied to the forecast and the annual budget. These practices, when properly adhered to, can help a district to avoid financial distress.

We reviewed LLSD's financial management policies in order to determine if there were areas for improved management.

Recommendation 1: Improve Forecast Practices

Districts are required to submit financial forecasts to ODEW twice annually, and these documents should provide a consistent overview of a district's financial health.³² The forecast can be used as a tool, along with other fiscal monitoring practices, to ensure district officials proactively manage finances to avoid a state of fiscal distress.

Our review of LLSD's February 2026 forecast found that the District's forecasting process is generally in alignment with best practices. However, our review found that LLSD has a history of prolonged deficit spending which has depleted cash balances. The District has not proactively managed and monitored revenues and expenditures. We further found that the District does not fully incorporate long-term planning into the forecast. The Ohio Association of School Business Officials (OASBO), the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA), and ODEW provide guidance regarding the development and use of the financial forecast. The District should implement best practices from OASBO, the GFOA, and ODEW to improve its forecast and assumptions.

³² House Bill 96 of the 136th General Assembly (the biennial budget bill) contained changes to the school forecast, including shifting to a four-year forecast period from a five-year period.

Impact

By implementing forecasting best practices, the District will be better positioned to effectively, transparently, and proactively manage and sufficiently explain its revenues and expenditures. Such management of financials would assist the District in avoiding deficit spending and the resulting negative ending fund balances. Doing so would contribute to an improved financial condition.

Background

School districts in Ohio are required to submit a financial forecast to ODEW twice annually.³³ These forecasts include three years of historical data, the current year budget, and three years of projections. In addition, the forecasts include notes to explain any significant changes or assumptions used to develop the reported projections. Due to the nature of financial projections, it is likely that the actual results will deviate from the forecast in later years. However, the forecast is a management tool that districts can use to identify future financial trends and proactively manage operations accordingly.

The financial forecast is meant to be a tool that assists with long-range planning and facilitates discussions between the administration, the local board of education, and the community regarding the fiscal health of a district and the financial issues it may be facing. In addition, the forecast identifies a district's ability to maintain personnel and programs. It is also used by ODEW and the Auditor of State to identify districts that may face financial distress.

Due to the District's declining financial condition, we reviewed historical forecasts to identify if there were earlier indicators of financial difficulty. In addition, the historical forecasts allowed us to understand what information had been presented and if LLSD officials were making informed management decisions.

Indicators of financial difficulty would include projected deficit spending, where annual expenditures exceed annual revenues. Many school districts have a cash balance in the General Fund which can allow a district to manage unforeseen expenditures in a given year. However, if consistent deficit spending is projected in a forecast, it could be an indicator of a structural imbalance in the district's operations that necessitates prompt corrective action by the board of education.

³³ House Bill 96 of the 136th General Assembly (the biennial budget bill) contained changes to the school forecast which included shortening the length of the forecast period to four years and altering the submission date.

Methodology

We interviewed District officials to understand their forecasting process. We also obtained and reviewed the District's October 2025 and February 2026 forecasts and assumptions. We specifically analyzed lines of the forecast that projected significant increases or decreases and then compared those lines to the corresponding assumptions to assess whether those changes were thoroughly documented. Additionally, we developed a historical review of the District's forecast trends to determine how prior years' projections may have impacted their current financial condition.

Once we gained an understanding of LLSD's forecasting process, we compared the District's process to best practices from OASBO, the GFOA, and ODEW to identify opportunities for improving the transparency and effectiveness of future forecasts and assumptions.

Analysis

According to *Five-Year Forecast – Guidance and Best Practices* (OASBO, 2025), the forecast is arguably the most critical financial document at a school district, as it outlines the financial state of the District and helps guide the decision-making process. As a critical financial document and management tool, it is important that a district have formal, written policies in place that clearly outline roles, responsibilities, and expectations. While the Treasurer is responsible for the creation of the forecast, the board of education has ultimate governing authority over the financial processes, with their roles and contributions consisting of the following: approve the forecast (ensure alignment with the District's financial state), represent the community to promote transparency, and guide financial decisions (use forecast to make informed decisions). As such, it is important for both parties to be actively involved in the creation and monitoring of the forecast. In addition, OASBO indicates that the superintendent, district administrators, the community, and other external partners should be involved in the forecasting process. All the stakeholders identified by OASBO have unique expertise and perspectives that can be applied to the forecasting process.

LLSD should incorporate missing best practices from OASBO, the GFOA, and ODEW (see [Appendix C](#)). The District should also enhance its formal planning and budgeting processes to ensure that the District's initiatives strategically align with available financial resources and are sustainable (see [Recommendation 2](#) and [Recommendation 3](#)).

Forecast Assumptions

One important document accompanying the forecast is the forecast assumptions. OASBO says that the forecast, without any accompanying documentation, only tells part of the story and is merely a piece of the puzzle. For a forecast to be comprehensively and effectively understood, forecast assumptions are needed to provide context and support. In addition to being a best

practice, assumptions are required by OAC 3301-92-04 *Reporting Five-Year Projections*. OASBO recommends that districts sufficiently explain substantial variations in revenues and expenditures. These explanations enhance transparency and help readers understand the “why” behind the projected financials in the forecasts. Examples of general key drivers for fluctuations in forecast lines which may be explained by school districts include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Property Tax Revenue (Line 1.010): This could increase due to reappraisal within the county or expected new developments within the district;
- Personal Services (Line 3.010): This could increase or decrease due to staffing changes or negotiated salary changes;
- Employee Retirement/Insurance Benefits (Line 3.020): This could change due to changes in insurance costs or staffing levels; and
- Purchased Services (Line 3.030): This could change due to changes in operations, increased utility rates, or changes to contracts.

Generally, the District’s assumptions and explanations for significant fluctuations in the forecast, such as Line 1.010 (General Property Tax) speaking to pending legislation on tax reform, were explained in detail. In reviewing the District’s February 2026 forecast assumptions, the lines related to revenue and expenditures sufficiently explain the key drivers causing deficit spending for Line 6.010 (Excess of Revenues and Other Financing Sources Over (Under) Expenditures and Other Financing Uses). However, the District’s assumptions do not speak to the rationale behind projected increases in Line 3.030 (Purchased Services) that occurred between October 2025 and February 2026 forecasts. Deficit spending is discussed in further detail below.

According to OASBO, when districts review forecasts, it is important to watch for significant fluctuations within the same line. The forecast assumptions should explain any major increases or decreases in detail to help ensure that trends and significant changes such as growing deficits are understood, addressed, and clearly communicated to stakeholders.

Projected Deficit Spending

According to OASBO, the forecast assumptions should explain Line 6.010 (Excess of Revenues and Other Financing Sources Over (Under) Expenditures and Other Financing Uses), most notably if there is deficit spending. Deficit spending may be sustained for short periods due to a district’s cash balance; however, districts should not do so precipitously or allow projected balances to fall below an established threshold, without taking action. As OASBO notes, if deficit spending is significant in the current fiscal year or first few years of the forecast period, it may indicate that the district is operating outside of its means. In any scenario, OASBO indicates that a financial plan is likely necessary to reverse deficit spending and avoid drawing down the

cash balance. Further, OASBO notes that early interventions are key to avoiding more disruptive actions in the future.

Beginning in the May 2022 forecast, the District projected deficit spending across most years of the forecast period, except for AY 2024 and AY 2025 in several forecasts. In each forecast, the projected deficit in the final year of the forecast remained consistently high. The table below shows the forecast annual results of operations ranging from the May 2022 forecast to the February 2026 forecast.

Historical Projected Results of Operations (Forecast Line 6.010)

	AY 22	AY 23	AY 24	AY 25	AY 26	AY 27	AY 28	AY 29
May '22	\$0.21M	(\$1.13M)	(\$0.37M)	(\$1.44M)	(\$2.01M)			
Nov '22		(\$1.22M)	(\$0.19M)	(\$1.41M)	(\$1.73M)	(\$2.43M)		
May '23		(\$1.43M)	(\$0.55M)	(\$0.90M)	(\$1.35M)	(\$1.77M)		
Nov '23			\$0.29M	(\$0.61M)	(\$0.73M)	(\$1.10M)	(\$1.61M)	
May '24			\$0.31M	\$0.05M	(\$0.30M)	(\$0.89M)	(\$1.33M)	
Nov '24				\$0.06M	(\$0.87M)	(\$1.53M)	(\$2.22M)	(\$2.47M)
May '25				\$0.12M	(\$1.07M)	(\$2.15M)	(\$3.17M)	(\$4.08M)
Oct '25					(\$0.74M)	(\$1.57M)	(\$2.25M)	(\$3.08M)
Feb '26					(\$1.76M)	(\$2.87M)	(\$4.09M)	(\$5.51M)

Source: ODEW

Note: The table only contains forecasted 5-year results of operations and excludes actuals.

According to OASBO, if a forecast is demonstrating deficit spending, then corrective action should also be explained in the assumptions. Although the District had continuous projected deficit spending since AY 2022, the District took steps in AY 2026 that improved the District's financial condition as part of its required FRP. However, the District's required 2025 forecast and required 2026 update forecast reflect limited details on the corrective action that it plans to take to address its deficit spending. Specifically, the District's forecast assumptions do not contain detailed explanations related to significant changes between forecasts in projected revenues or expenditures that ultimately impact Line 6.010. The projected deficit decline between the May 2025 and October 2025 forecasts, and subsequent steep deficit increase is the result of data entry errors made by the LLSD treasurer in the October 2025 forecast. Due to these input errors, the District projected a better financial state in its October 2025 forecast than was actually warranted. This was corrected in the February 2026 forecast, leading to a significantly worse financial projection for the remainder of the forecast.

According to OASBO, if a forecast is demonstrating deficit spending, then corrective action should also be explained in the assumptions. LLSD has not historically identified corrective actions within the assumptions; however, the District has included corrective actions as part of its ODEW required financial recovery plan. LLSD generally explains significant increases or

decreases in revenues and expenditures, which together, address Line 6.010 (Excess of Revenues and Other Financing Sources Over (Under) Expenditures and Other Financing Uses). In addition to the corrective action being taken as part of the FRP, the District is attempting to pass a new earned income tax levy in November 2026.

The GFOA states that forecasting should play a key role in budgeting and financial decisions. Based on available information, it appears that the District has not historically made financial decisions that would most effectively reduce actual and projected deficit spending.

Forecast Monitoring

OASBO also calls for districts to proactively manage revenues and expenditures to avoid deficit spending and ultimately, negative ending fund balances. The optimal method for proactive management is comparing monthly and year-to-date actuals to budgeted appropriations and the forecast. Regular comparison can reveal significant deviations and, if found, allow districts time to engage in corrective action. If there is significant variance, districts should do the following:

- Identify the cause;
- Evaluate the impact;
- Adjust appropriations if necessary;
- Adjust estimated revenues if necessary;
- Communicate with stakeholders; and,
- Adopt a revised forecast.

Similarly, ODEW recommends that districts report and discuss expenditures compared to revenues on a monthly basis. The District compares actuals to both forecasted funds and budgeted appropriations on a monthly basis and provides this information at monthly Board meetings presented by the Treasurer.

Cash Balance Policy

Maintaining a minimum cash balance helps a district to avoid financial difficulties that may arise from unforeseen expenses or reduced revenues. Should the forecast show deficit spending and declining cash balances that fall below the minimum unreserved cash balance requirement, then the board is required to be notified. Upon notification, the treasurer and superintendent then are required to develop a corrective action plan to reverse deficit spending and declining cash balances. The District does not have a cash balance policy in place, which helped to contribute to the current financial condition. Both OASBO and ODEW recommend minimum cash balances. OASBO recommends that a district maintain a cash balance equivalent to 90 days or 25 percent of operating expenditures while ODEW recommends a district maintain a

balance of 30 to 60 days of operating expenditures. Although the OASBO and ODEW recommended cash balance amount differs, both ultimately recommend there be a policy outlining the District's requirement to maintain a strategic cash balance. As the District continues to develop financial plans, it should create a formal, written cash balance policy to help prevent future continued fiscal distress.

Conclusion

While the District meets most forecasting best practices, the District does not comply with all best practices as identified by OASBO, the GFOA, or ODEW. Further, the District does not have a cash balance policy and has not effectively or proactively managed its finances to avoid deficit spending and negative ending fund balances in its forecasts. By implementing forecasting best practices outlined by OASBO, the GFOA, and ODEW, the District will have the ability to create forecasts that are reliable and provide an accurate representation of the District's true financial state. This is essential information for the governing body to have in order to make sound financial decisions regarding the operations of the District.

Recommendation 2: Enhance the Budgeting Process

To ensure the District is making the most informed decisions with their resources, and is as prepared as possible for future needs, the District should develop a formal written budgeting process that addresses each of the steps and sub-steps outlined in the GFOA best practices.

Impact

By understanding its expected revenues and the resource needs of students and staff, and creating a plan in which received dollars will be allocated to meet those needs, LLSD can ensure that each dollar the District receives is spent thoughtfully to achieve maximum impact. Fully adhering to best practices in school budgeting may help prevent the District from overlooking gaps between its resource acquisition and resource needs.

Background

School district budgets outline the planned distribution of a district's funding for the upcoming academic year based on expected revenues and resource needs of students and staff.

Methodology

We interviewed District officials to understand their annual budgeting process. Once we gained an adequate understanding of LLSD's budgeting process, we compared the District's process to *Best Practices in School Budgeting* (GFOA, 2017), a formal guidance for school district financial administrators to adopt when creating their annual budget.

Analysis

LLSD's current budgeting process is a collaborative effort that involves internal stakeholders discussing the budget and how resources align with the District's goals. The Treasurer is primarily responsible for the budget, while the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent oversee aspects related to student performance to address instructional priorities identified in the District's strategic plan (see [Recommendation 3](#)). The District monitors the budget through a monthly budget variance analysis, which is presented at each board meeting. This presentation details budgeted and actual figures, with explanations on the variances. Ultimately, the annual budget is approved by the Board.

After comparing LLSD's budgeting process to the GFOA's best practices, we determined that LLSD adheres to 11 of the 15 budgeting sub-steps, partially adheres to 2 of the sub-steps and does not adhere to 2 of the sub-steps recommended by the GFOA.

GFOA School Budgeting Best Practices

PLAN AND PREPARE

Meets	Establish a Partnership between the Finance and Instructional Leaders
Meets	Develop Principles and Policies to Guide the Budget Process
Meets	Analyze Current Levels of Student Learning
Meets	Identify Communications Strategy

SET INSTRUCTIONAL PRIORITIES

Meets	Develop Goals
Meets	Identify Root Cause of Gap between Goal and Current State
Meets	Research and Develop Potential Instructional Priorities
Meets	Evaluate Choices amongst Instructional Priorities

PAY FOR PRIORITIES

Partially Meets	Applying Cost Analysis to the Budget Process
Meets	Evaluate and Prioritize Use of Resources to Enact the Instructional Priorities

IMPLEMENT PLAN

Does Not Meet	Develop a strategic Financial Plan
Does Not Meet	Develop a Plan of Action
Meets	Allocate Resources to Individual School Sites
Partially Meets	Develop a Budget Presentation

ENSURE SUSTAINABILITY

Meets	Put Strategies into Practice and Evaluate Results
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Source: GFOA and LLSD

The sub-steps labeled as “Partially Meets” and “Does Not Meet” were identified primarily due to a lack of formalized planning processes. For example, District’s lack of formal long-term planning such as a written strategic financial plan and corresponding action plan that shows how the District plans to pay for things such as instructional priorities. According to the GFOA, “the strategic financial plan outlines the school District’s instructional priorities over the next 3 to 5 years and how the District will pursue and pay for those priorities. The strategic financial plan is primarily intended to be a communication device, and also, if well-crafted, as an agreement among stakeholders about what defines success in the District and what it takes to be successful.” The strategic financial plan should be consistent with the District’s overall strategic plan (see [Recommendation 3](#)).

According to the GFOA, a school budgeting framework “begins with guidelines for district-wide communication and collaboration, including setting baseline expectations for what the budget process will achieve. The focus then shifts to developing robust goals and integrating the process with the district’s strategic plan, including developing a comprehensive package for implementing a district’s goals, or instructional priorities.”

Conclusion

Budgeting is an extremely important annual process which culminates in the allocation of district resources to reach their goals and positively impact their students. By developing a formal budgeting process that is built on best practices and fully integrated with a strategic plan, LLSD will be able to focus on optimizing student achievement within its available resources. A robust budgeting process encompasses a complete budgeting cycle which includes planning, development, evaluating how the process functions, and adjusting accordingly. Within this process, the District's instructional priorities will provide a guide for decision-making.

Recommendation 3: Develop and Enhance Formal Plans

LLSD should develop formal written capital improvement, facilities preventive maintenance, and bus replacement plans, while refining its existing strategic plan and fleet preventive maintenance plan in order to meet financial, programmatic, and operational needs.

Impact

School districts should have multiple formal plans that identify future needs and guide each operational area of the district. It is important that the district has a long-term strategic plan tied to a formal budget and capital plan, as well as a facilities preventive maintenance plan, fleet preventive maintenance plan, and bus replacement plan. This allows the district to ensure the needs of all operational areas can be met in an efficient and effective manner.

Methodology

We interviewed District officials and confirmed that the District has a strategic plan and a fleet preventive maintenance plan, but no formal capital plan, facilities preventive maintenance plan, or bus replacement plan. We then compared the District's current planning practices to industry standards and best practices to identify opportunities for improvement.

Analysis

Each operational area within the District has specific planning needs which should be considered and included in planning documents. Specific criteria related to each type of plan is addressed below.

Strategic Plan

The GFOA provides guidance to governmental entities in the development and maintenance of effective long-term planning. *Strategic Planning* (GFOA, 2023) defines strategic planning as the “act of articulating where or what an organization wants to be in the future and includes the design of a vision and identification of goals and objectives. It relates to long-term financial planning, developing financial policies, capital improvement planning, and budgeting, but it is inherently different. Each process fulfills a different combination of planning purposes.”

Key steps in the strategic planning process include:

- Conduct strategic planning under the organization's chief executive;
- Analyze internal and external environments;
- Identify the most critical problems facing the organization;

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- Develop a vision/goal to address each problem;
- Develop strategies to realize your visions;
- Develop tactics to implement strategies;
- Obtain approval of the plan;
- Execute and monitor tactics and strategies; and,
- Continually evaluate and reassess the vision and strategies.

While the District has a recently developed formal strategic plan, the plan does not meet all GFOA best practices. The strategic plan only partially meets criteria on analyzing internal and external environments, as while the District gathers data and input from stakeholders, no official analysis of the data occurs. The District does not execute and monitor tactics and strategies in the strategic plan, nor continually evaluate and reassess vision and strategy. However, this is because the plan was finalized during the course of the audit, so the District could not yet have conducted these activities. Additionally, the strategic plan is not tied to the budget, which is necessary to utilize the budget as a tool for measuring whether tactics are working. The District did not provide evidence that shows how they plan to evaluate and reassess their strategic planning efforts. As LLSD continues to implement its strategic plan, it should ensure these best practices are being met.

Capital Plan

According to *Multi-Year Capital Planning* (GFOA, 2022), public entities should “prepare and adopt comprehensive, fiscally sustainable, and multi-year capital plans to ensure effective management of capital assets.” The GFOA further states that “a prudent multi-year capital plan identifies and prioritizes expected needs based on a strategic plan, established project scope and cost, details estimated amounts of funding from various sources, and projects future operating and maintenance costs.” While LLSD does not have a capital plan, it does engage in select planning activities around its HVAC system, including conducting a HVAC risk assessment and an estimation of future HVAC expenditures. LLSD should develop a formal capital plan that incorporates GFOA best practices.

Facilities Preventative Maintenance Plan

According to the *Planning Guide for Maintaining School Facilities* (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003), “a comprehensive facility maintenance program is a school district’s foremost tool for protecting its investment in school facilities and is the cornerstone of any effective maintenance initiative. A good maintenance program is built on the foundation of preventive maintenance. An effective maintenance program begins with an audit of buildings, grounds, and equipment.”

After facilities data has been assembled, structural items and pieces of equipment can be selected for preventive maintenance. Once the items that should receive preventive maintenance are identified, planners must decide on the frequency and type of inspections. Manufacturers' manuals are a good place to start when developing this schedule; they usually provide guidelines about the frequency of preventive service, as well as a complete list of items that must be maintained. Finally, this information must be formatted so that preventive maintenance tasks can be scheduled easily. Ideally, scheduling should be handled by a computerized maintenance management program; however, tasks can be efficiently managed using a manual system as well.

While LLSD performs general maintenance throughout the District, which it stated is tracked internally. LLSD does not have a formal facilities preventive maintenance plan. A formal facilities preventive maintenance plan is particularly important given the District's recent capital projects.

Fleet Preventive Maintenance Plan

According to the *Public Works Management Practices Manual* (American Public Works Association, 2014), a preventive maintenance program should be developed for all equipment and includes preventive maintenance, recording performance, and monitoring the preventive maintenance program. A fleet preventive maintenance program should address all scheduled maintenance, and the program should be evaluated to ensure its efficacy.

While LLSD does have a fleet preventive maintenance plan that meets most of the criteria, the District does not track nor estimate labor hours in its preventive maintenance schedule or periodically review preventive maintenance records and work orders for effectiveness and efficiency. LLSD should work to ensure these best practices are being met.

Bus Replacement Plan

In *School Bus Replacement Considerations* (NASDPTS, 2002), the National Association of State Directors of Pupil Transportation recommends that the timely replacement of school buses should be a planned process. While available funding is a key consideration for the replacement of school buses, there are two other major factors which should be considered:

- First, the need to keep up with federal standards for the safety, fuel efficiency, or exhaust emissions requirements;
- Second, the operating and maintenance expenses on a school bus, or group of school buses.

While the rule of thumb for bus replacement is between 12 and 15 years of age, reviewing maintenance costs for each bus may identify buses that should be replaced sooner or kept in

service longer. With accurate and thorough records on the operating and maintenance costs of all school buses in a fleet, a district will have the data necessary to understand when to make replacement decisions. LLSD does not have a bus replacement plan.

Conclusion

Formal plans help an organization address financial, programmatic, and operational needs. By developing these plans and tying a formal capital plan to the overall strategic plan, the District will be able to efficiently and effectively allocate its limited resources. In particular, by understanding and mapping out both routine expenditures and large purchases, the District will improve its ability to avoid unexpected or unnecessary expenses.

Recommendation 4: Reduce the General Fund Subsidy for Extracurricular Activities

Impact

Reducing expenditures and increasing revenue to bring the General Fund subsidy as a percent of total expenditures for extracurricular activities in line with the local peer average would save LLSD an average of approximately \$72,000 in each year of implementation.

Note: In AY 2025, the District's General Fund subsidy for extracurricular activities as a percent of total expenditures exceeded the local peer average by \$92,700. However, during the course of the audit, LLSD identified approximately \$21,000 in additional revenue relating to fee increases for extracurricular activities in its May 2026 financial recovery plan. This recommendation accounts for this additional revenue and reflects the remaining savings available when compared to the local peer average.

Background

Extracurricular activities represent student activities falling outside the scope of a typical school curriculum. These activities occur under the guidance or supervision of qualified adults and are designed to provide opportunities for pupils to participate in such experiences on an individual basis, in small groups, or in large groups – at school events, public events, or a combination of these – for purposes of motivation, enjoyment, and skill improvement. In practice, participation is usually not required, and credit is usually not given. When participation is required, or credit given, the activity is generally considered to be a curricular course.

Extracurricular activities include, but are not limited to, academic-oriented activities (drama, marching band), sports-oriented activities (individual and team sports), and co-curricular activities (student government, yearbook).

Methodology

The District's AY 2025 General Fund subsidy as a percentage of total extracurricular activities expenditures were compared to the local peer average.

Analysis

In AY 2025, the District spent approximately \$1.1 million on student extracurricular activities, which included the salaries and benefits of directors, coaches, and advisors; supplies and materials; transportation services; awards and prizes; and other miscellaneous expenditures. The District's General Fund subsidy for extracurricular activities expenditures was approximately \$690,000. Additionally, approximately \$513,000 in revenue was generated

through ticket sales for admissions and other sources. The District does charge pay-to-participate fees for extracurricular activities.

AY 2025 General Fund Subsidy as a Percent of Actual Expenditures



Source: LLSD and Local Peers

The District's General Fund subsidy as a percent of extracurricular expenditures is 58.9 percent compared to the local peer average of 45.5 percent. Aligning the District's General Fund subsidy as a percent of extracurricular expenditures with the local peer average would save approximately \$72,000 annually. While it is common for Ohio school districts to subsidize extracurricular activities from the General Fund, doing so at a rate that exceeds the local peer average may represent an undue burden on the District's General Fund.

The District could consider the following steps to reduce expenditures or raise additional revenue to extracurricular activities:

- Increase pay-to-participate fees;
- Increase admissions and sales;
- Increase booster club funding;
- Reduce the supplemental salary schedule; and/or,
- Eliminate programs.

Conclusion

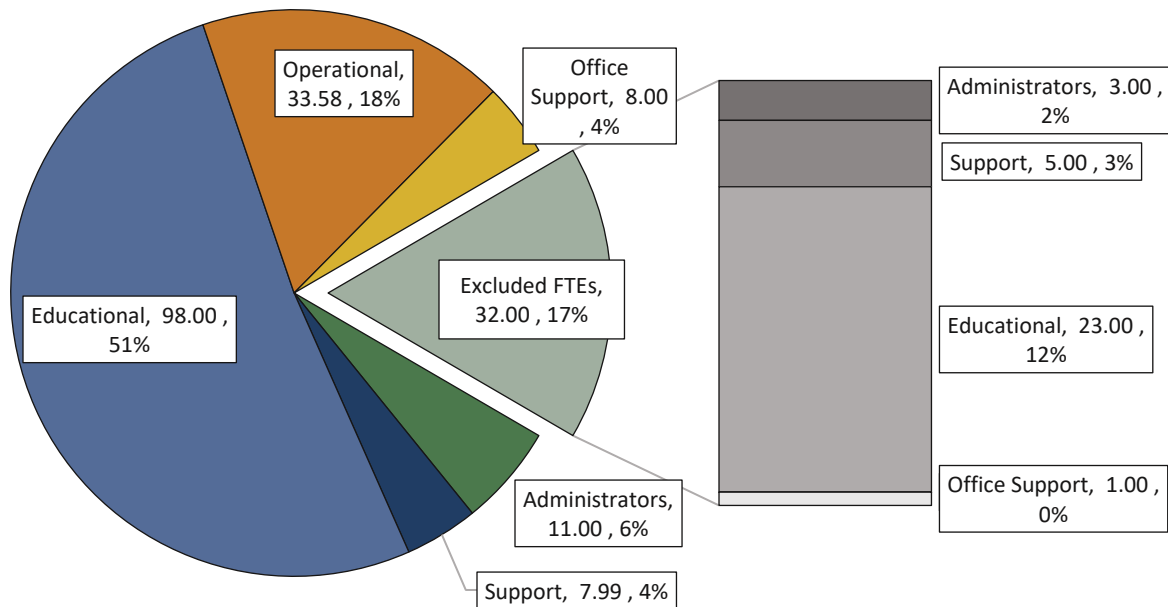
The District's General Fund subsidy of extracurricular activities as a percent of total expenditures is above the local peer average. To close the gap between revenue and expenditures, and in turn alleviate the amount of General Fund support needed, the District should reduce the General Fund subsidy as a percent of total expenditures for extracurricular activities to the local peer average. Doing so would save the District approximately \$72,000 in each year of implementation.

Human Resources

Human Resources (HR) expenditures are significant to both the operational and financial conditions within school districts. OPT reviewed LLSD's staffing levels, salaries, and insurance offerings and compared them to peer districts.

Personnel costs represent over 82 percent of the District's General Fund spending. Due to this, we conducted several analyses relating to the expense associated with maintaining the existing staffing levels. Certain staff were excluded from our analyses due to various legal and contractual requirements that would make reductions difficult. In the chart below there are approximately 32 excluded staff FTEs, which include individuals associated with Special Education, Title I, and preschool programming.

FTEs by Category with Excluded FTEs Breakout



Source: LLSD

Recommendation 5: Eliminate Administrative Positions above the Peer Average

LLSD should consider eliminating administrative positions above the primary peer average.

Impact

By reducing administrative positions to be in line with the primary peer average, the District could save an average of approximately \$145,000 annually beginning in AY 2028.³⁴

Background

The District employs individuals in administrative positions who are responsible for activities related to the daily operations of the District. While these positions provide support to students and educators at LLSD, the District may be able to reduce some positions based on peer comparisons.

Methodology/Analysis

Staffing levels for the District were identified and compared to primary peer averages on a per-1,000 student basis.³⁵ Based on this comparison, LLSD could reduce 1.50 FTEs building administrator positions.

Building Administrators

LLSD employs 7.00 building administrative staff, which is 1.54 FTEs above the peer average. Eliminating 1.50 FTE building administrative staff positions could save an average of approximately \$145,000 annually.

Conclusion

The District should consider eliminating 1.5 FTE building administrative staff positions. Eliminating these positions could save an average of approximately \$145,000 annually and bring staffing to a level consistent with the primary peer average.

³⁴ Calculated savings are based on the salary and benefits of the lowest paid employee in each category.

³⁵ A Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) was used to identify staffing levels, based on ODEW reporting guidelines.

Recommendation 6: Eliminate Direct Student Education and Support Positions above the Peer Average

LLSD should consider eliminating direct student education and support positions above the primary peer average.

Impact

By reducing direct student education and support positions to be in line with the primary peer average, the District could save an average of approximately \$985,000 annually beginning in AY 2028.³⁶

Background

Direct student education and support positions perform functions that assist students in an educational setting directly in some manner. Positions may include a variety of professionals including teachers, tutors, educational support specialists, and counselors. Based on peer comparison, LLSD could eliminate positions in several of these categories.

Methodology/Analysis

Staffing levels for the District were identified and compared to primary peer averages on a per-1,000 student basis. Areas where LLSD could reduce direct student education and support positions include:

- 2.00 FTE Teaching Staff;
- 0.50 FTE Counseling Staff
- 2.00 FTE Full-time (Permanent) Substitute Staff;
- 3.00 Other Professional – Educational Staff;
- 0.50 FTE Social Work Staff
- 0.50 FTE Technical Staff; and,
- 1.00 FTE Library Aide.

Note: At the time of analysis, the District exceeded the primary peer average for staffing in other position categories. However, during the course of the audit, the District took actions in its February 2026 financial recovery plan to reduce staffing levels, effective AY 2027. This

³⁶ Calculated savings are based on the salary and benefits of the lowest tenured employee in each category.

recommendation accounts for those staffing reductions and reflects remaining staffing areas where the District employs more staff than peers.

Teaching Staff

At the time of the analysis, LLSD employed 86.00 FTE teaching staff, which was 7.02 FTEs above the peer average. Accounting for the 5.00 FTE reduction in the financial recovery plan, the District could eliminate an additional 2.00 FTEs teaching staff, which could save the District an average of approximately \$186,000 annually.

Counseling Staff

LLSD employs 4.00 FTE Counseling staff, which is 0.83 FTEs above the peer average. Eliminating 0.50 FTE Counseling Staff could save an average of approximately \$62,000 annually.

Full-time (Permanent) Substitute Teacher Staff

LLSD employs 2.00 FTE Full-time (Permanent) Substitute Teacher staff, which is 2.00 FTEs above the peer average. Eliminating 2.00 FTE Full-time (Permanent) Substitute Teacher Staff could save an average of approximately \$210,000 annually. As a result of this reduction, the District may incur daily substitute expenses, which may offset a portion of the projected savings. However, we were unable to calculate expenses incurred by using daily substitutes as it will depend on whether the substitutes are internal or external. The number of days substitutes are needed, which will be impacted by the number of teacher FTEs, will also affect cost savings.

Other Professional – Educational Staff

LLSD employs 3.00 FTE Other Professional – Educational staff, which includes a math coach, reading coach, and a staff member for the District’s online Flyer Aviation Academy. This is 3.00 FTEs above the peer average. Eliminating 3.00 FTE Other Professional – Educational Staff could save an average of approximately \$380,000 annually.

Social Work Staff

LLSD employs 1.00 FTE Social Work staff, which is 0.86 FTEs above the peer average. Eliminating 0.50 FTE Social Work Staff could save an average of approximately \$58,000 annually.

Technical Staff

LLSD employs 2.00 FTE technical staff, which is 0.76 FTEs above the primary peer average. Eliminating 0.5 FTE technical staff positions could save an average of approximately \$38,000 annually.

Library Aide Staff

LLSD employs 2.00 FTE Library Aide staff, which is 1.01 FTEs above the peer average. Eliminating 1.0 FTE Library Aide Staff could save an average of approximately \$49,000 annually.

Conclusion

The District should consider eliminating 9.50 FTEs from its direct student education and support positions. Eliminating these positions could save an average of approximately \$985,000 annually and bring staffing to a level consistent with the primary peer average.

Recommendation 7: Align Salary Schedules

LLSD should align its classified salary schedules with the local peer average.

Impact

While cost savings are not calculated for this recommendation, aligning the classified salary schedules for specific positions with the local peer average would result in future cost savings and allow the District to improve its overall fiscal condition.

Background

The District has collective bargaining agreements (CBAs) covering both certificated and classified positions which contain salary schedules. Both CBAs are in effect until June 30, 2028.

Methodology

We used the District's classified CBA and salary schedule which were in effect during FY 2026 for purposes of our analysis. The District's classified salaries over a 30-year career were reviewed and compared to the local peer average (see [Appendix C](#)). The District's certificated salaries over a 30-year career were also reviewed and compared to the local peer average; however, we found that they were in line with the peer average. A 30-year career was chosen since school district salary schedules are generally structured around a 30-year period.

Position categories used in our analysis were determined based on the identification of comparable positions and corresponding salary schedules at the local peer districts. As such, this analysis did not include all of the District's salary schedules. Pay schedules from the peer district CBAs were obtained from the State Employment Relations Board (SERB) website. When updated contracts and salary schedules were unavailable from SERB, they were obtained directly from peer districts.

Analysis

The following classified categories were identified for salary comparison between the District and the local peers:

- Bus Driver;
- Cafeteria;
- Certified Custodian;
- Non-certified Custodian; and
- Secretary.

The District's salaries for bus drivers and certified custodians, over a 30-year period, exceed the local peer average by 14.4 percent and 18.2 percent, respectively.³⁷ Both of these positions were also above the peer average in starting salary, average yearly increase, and average yearly salary. While LLSD's compensation for cafeteria employees and secretaries was in-line with the peer average, the District has a higher yearly step increase by dollar amount than the peer average. The District's non-certified custodian was below the peer average for all comparisons made.

Aligning salaries with the local peers could be done in a variety of ways, including instituting salary freezes or renegotiating new salary schedules for employees.

Conclusion

The salary schedules for the District's bus drivers and certified custodians have a higher 30-year career compensation than the local peer average. To achieve savings, the District should align its salaries with the local peer average. Any future savings would affect forecasted funds.

³⁷ Historically, LLSD differentiated certified and non-certified custodians through the requirement for certified to maintain plumbing and boiler licenses. However, beginning in AY 2026, the District updated its Classified CBA to no longer offer the certified position to new hires, while grandfathering in existing certified custodians.

Recommendation 8: Align Employer Insurance Cost and Employee Share of Insurance Cost with the SERB Regional Average

The District should align its employer costs for dental and vision insurance premiums and its employee contribution rates for medical insurance with the SERB regional average for other school districts. This alignment could be accomplished by increasing employee premium contributions and/or adjusting plan designs.

Impact

Aligning employer costs and employee contribution rates with the SERB regional average would reduce expenditures and result in average annual savings of approximately \$148,000 beginning in AY 2029.³⁸ Due to union contracts which stipulate the employee contributions for medical, dental insurance and vision insurance, these savings could not be implemented until AY 2029.

Background

The District is part of the Wood County School Consortium, an organization which provides insurance to participating members. LLSD offers two insurance programs for medical and prescription coverage, a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) plan and a Consumer Driven Health Plan (CDHP) with a Health Savings Account (HSA), with options for single or family coverage.³⁹ The District offers two plans each for dental coverage, one for classified employees and one for certificated employees, each with an option for single or family coverage. Finally, the District offers one plan for vision coverage to both classified and certificated employees that has an option for single or family coverage.

At the time of analysis, LLSD had 41 enrollees in its PPO single medical plan and 102 enrollees in its PPO family medical plan. Prescription coverage is included in the medical plan. The District had 12 enrollees in its CDHP single medical plan and 7 enrollees in its CDHP family medical plan.

For classified dental insurance, LLSD had 15 employees enrolled in single coverage and 21 employees enrolled in family coverage. For certificated dental insurance, 25 employees were enrolled in single coverage and 104 employees were enrolled in family coverage.

³⁸ Of this total, approximately \$4,500 in annual savings, beginning in AY 2029, would not impact the General Fund, but would impact other funds, such as the Food Service Fund.

³⁹ A Community Driven Health Plan (CDHP) is a type of High Deductible Healthcare Plan (HDHP), which combines the HDHP with an employee Health Savings Account (HSA).

For vision insurance, LLSD had 43 employees enrolled in single coverage and 120 employees enrolled in family coverage.

Methodology

We compared the District's medical, dental, and vision insurance provisions and costs to the SERB regional average for school districts. Peer information was obtained from the 2025 SERB survey.⁴⁰ The District's medical plans were compared to 175 plans, while the dental plan was compared to 92 regional peers and the vision plan compared to 68 regional plans. The peer average excluded outlier districts whose plans were more than two standard deviations outside the mean. As the District offers contributions to the Health Savings Account (HSA) to employees enrolled in the CDHP, these contributions were included in the employer cost for a combined analysis of the CDHP plan. Using the District's assumptions for increases to annual insurance costs, we then projected potential cost savings for medical, dental, and vision over the course of the forecast period. We also compared the District's medical PPO plan to the regional peers and found it to be in line with the peer average (see [Appendix E](#) for additional details).

Analysis

The District offers medical, combined with prescription, as well as dental and vision coverage to employees who are employed more than half-time. These insurance benefits are specified in the District's certificated and classified CBAs, which state that the Board reserves the right and responsibility to select the carrier for the insurance benefits provided. The insurance premium, or cost of obtaining insurance, is split between the District and the employee on a percentage basis. The District's CBAs specify that employees pay five percent of the premium for the CDHP plan and makes annual Health Savings Account (HSA) contributions for all staff enrolled in the CDHP plan. The District covers 100 percent of dental premiums for classified employees for both single and family plans, and 83.75 percent of dental premiums for certificated family dental coverage. Certificated employees on the single dental plan have a defined contribution amount of \$5.00 per month. Similarly, employees on the classified and certificated vision plans have defined contribution amounts, with the single plan costing employees \$5.00 per month and the family plan costing employees \$10.00 per month.

There are several factors that impact premium costs, which include consortium negotiation outcomes, market conditions and volatility, as well as healthcare claims history. According to SERB, there are cost saving measures entities could pursue to reduce insurance costs. These cost saving measures include joining a consortium, implementing worksite wellness programs, offering an opt-out incentive, implementing spousal restrictions, and conducting a dependent

⁴⁰ The District's medical insurance rates were updated for AY 2026 and therefore we inflated the 2025 SERB data for use in the analysis.

eligibility audit. LLSD has already implemented some measures to reduce its insurance costs, including joining a consortium, implementing spousal restrictions, and conducting dependent eligibility audits.

CDHP with HSA

Our review of the Districts CDHP plan found that the coverage and provisions, such as coinsurance costs, are generally in line with the peer average. While LLSD's CDHP plan has lower out-of-pocket maximums than peers, deductibles are higher.

The District pays 95 percent of the CDHP insurance premium, but also contributes to an HSA for each enrolled employee. In AY 2026, the District's HSA contributions were \$1,000 for single enrollees and \$1,500 for family enrollees.⁴¹ For a more accurate cost comparison, annual HSA contributions, split into monthly contributions, for the District and peers were added to the monthly premium. After combining the insurance premium payment and the HSA contribution, the District contributes 95.5 percent of the monthly premium for single coverage and 95.3 percent of the monthly premium for family coverage, which is a greater percentage contribution than the regional peer group. The District pays a combined total of \$797.01 for single enrollees and \$2,030.51 for family enrollees. The following table shows the adjustment necessary to align with the peer average employer percent contribution and reduce insurance related expenditures.

2026 Monthly Insurance Costs | HDHP + HSA

		Lake LSD		Regional Peer Averages		Lake LSD Adjustment	
		Costs	% Share	Costs	% Share	Costs	% Share
Single Medical + Rx	District	\$797.01	95.5%	\$799.16	90.0%	\$750.76	90.0 %
	Employee	\$37.56	4.5%	\$89.21	10.0%	\$83.81	10.0%
Family Medical + Rx	District	\$2,030.51	95.3%	\$2,053.20	88.2%	\$1,878.63	88.2%
	Employee	\$100.29	4.7%	\$275.60	11.8%	\$252.17	11.8%

Source: LLSD and SERB

To align itself with the SERB regional average for employer percent contribution, the District would need to shift a greater percentage of the combined CDHP medical premium and HSA payment to its employees. As seen in the table above, employees enrolled in the single CDHP with HSA plan would need to pay 10.0 percent, or \$83.81, of the monthly premium, and employees enrolled in the family CDHP with HSA plan would need to pay 11.8 percent, or

⁴¹ While the District's standard HSA conditions are \$1,000 for single enrollees and \$1,500 for family enrollees, the District's CBA specifies that the first year an employee enrolls in the HSA they receive a one-time higher contribution of \$1,875 for single enrollees and \$3,750 for family enrollees.

\$252.17, of the monthly premium. Alternatively, the District could reduce the HSA contributions to employees.

Dental Insurance – Classified

Under the current classified dental insurance plan, the District contributes 100 percent of the monthly premium, which is a greater portion than the regional peer group. If the District were to maintain the current classified dental insurance plan, it would need an adjustment to shift a greater portion of the premium costs to employees to reduce insurance related expenditures. The results of this adjustment are calculated in the following table.

2026 Monthly Insurance Costs | Dental Classified

		Lake LSD		Regional Peer Averages		Lake LSD Adjustment	
		Costs	% Share	Costs	% Share	Costs	% Share
Single Dental	District	\$123.64	100.0%	\$36.51	84.7%	\$36.51	29.5%
	Employee	\$0.00	0.0%	\$6.59	15.3%	\$87.13	70.5%
Family Dental	District	\$123.64	100.0%	\$91.81	84.7%	\$91.81	74.3%
	Employee	\$0.00	0.0%	\$16.60	15.3%	\$31.83	25.7%

Source: LLSD and SERB

To align itself with the SERB regional average for employer cost, the District would need to shift a greater portion of the classified dental premium to its employees. As seen in the table above, employees enrolled in the single classified dental plan would need to pay 70.5 percent, or \$87.13, of the monthly premium and employees enrolled in the family classified dental plan would need to pay 25.7 percent, or \$31.83, of the monthly premium.

Dental Insurance – Certificated

Under the current certificated dental insurance plan, the District's dollar contribution is higher for the total single and family insurance premiums on a monthly basis than the regional peer average. If the District were to maintain the current certificated dental insurance plan, it would need an adjustment to shift a greater portion of the premium costs to employees to reduce insurance related expenditures. The results of this adjustment are calculated in the following table.

2026 Monthly Insurance Costs | Dental Certificated

		LLSD		Regional Peer Averages		LLSD Adjustment	
		Costs	% Share	Costs	% Share	Costs	% Share
Single Dental	District	\$127.17	96.2%	\$36.51	84.7%	\$36.51	27.6%
	Employee	\$5.00	3.8%	\$6.59	15.3%	\$95.66	72.4%
Family Dental	District	\$110.69	83.7%	\$91.81	84.7%	\$91.81	69.5%
	Employee	\$21.48	16.3%	\$16.60	15.3%	\$40.36	30.5%

Source: LLSD and SERB

To align itself with the SERB regional average for employer cost, the District would need to shift a greater portion of the certificated dental premium to its employees. As seen in the table above, employees enrolled in the single certificated dental plan would need to pay 72.4 percent, or \$95.66, of the monthly premium and employees enrolled in the family certificated dental plan would need to pay 30.5 percent, or \$40.36, of the monthly premium.

Vision Insurance

Under the current vision insurance plan, the District contributes \$11.27, or 69.3 percent, of the single plan premium and \$26.82, or 72.8 percent, of the family plan premium, which is a greater amount than the regional peer group. If the District were to maintain the current classified vision insurance plan, it would need an adjustment to shift a higher dollar amount of the premium to employees to reduce insurance related expenditures. The results of this adjustment are calculated in the following table.

2026 Monthly Insurance Costs | Vision

		LLSD		Regional Peer Averages		LLSD Adjustment	
		Costs	% Share	Costs	% Share	Costs	% Share
Single Vision	District	\$11.27	69.3%	\$5.00	60.5%	\$5.00	30.8%
	Employee	\$5.00	30.7%	\$3.26	39.5%	\$11.27	69.2%
Family Vision	District	\$26.82	72.8%	\$12.58	61.6%	\$12.58	34.2%
	Employee	\$10.00	27.2%	\$7.82	38.4%	\$24.24	65.8%

Source: LLSD and SERB

To align itself with the SERB regional average for employer cost, the District would need to shift a higher dollar amount of the vision premium to its employees. As seen in the table above, employees enrolled in the single vision plan would need to pay 69.2 percent, or \$11.27, of the monthly premium and employees enrolled in the family vision plan would need to pay 65.8 percent, or \$24.24, of the monthly premium.

We identified potential cost savings associated with bringing the employer costs in line with the regional peer average. The District has projected an eight percent increase in health insurance

costs for AY 2027 through the remainder of the forecast period. The District could save approximately \$148,000 annually, beginning in AY 2029, by aligning insurance contribution rates for the CDHP medical insurance plan and aligning insurance costs for its dental and vision plans with the regional peer average. The District could pursue insurance cost reductions by adjusting the plan designs, shifting premium costs, or seeking out alternative options.

Conclusion

LLSD should work to bring its insurance contribution rate for the CDHP with HSA plan and insurance premium amounts for dental and vision in line with the SERB regional average. Doing so could result in average annual savings of approximately \$148,000. These savings can be realized by reducing District contributions toward premium costs and exploring alternative insurance options. It is important to note that shifting premium costs will require contract negotiations.

Transportation

Transportation of students is a critical function for school districts. Ensuring that busing services are provided in a safe and efficient manner is important for both the well-being of students and the fiscal health of a school district. We examined LLSD's bus routing policies and procedures in comparison to industry standards and best practices to determine whether there were any areas for improvement.

Recommendation 9: Eliminate Underutilized Bus Routes

LLSD should eliminate five bus routes from each tier in order to improve routing efficiency and increase ridership per bus.

Impact

Eliminating five bus routes could save the District an average of approximately \$153,000 in salaries and benefits in each year of implementation over the forecast period.

Background

In AY 2026, LLSD operated with 16 active buses and 7 spares. In addition to its regular routes, which transported students to District schools, LLSD transported to one career center. In AY 2026, LLSD transported approximately 830 students on a total of 14 routes. The District uses a two-tier system for transportation. Tier I bus routes serve elementary students and Tier II bus routes serve middle and high school students. Once a bus is finished collecting and dropping off students on a Tier I route, it may then be used for the transportation of students on Tier II routes.

ORC § 3327.01 establishes minimum transportation requirements, including an obligation to transport all resident K-8 students living two or more miles from their assigned schools, all non-public riders to their destinations if the location is within a 30-minute drive of the otherwise assigned resident school, and all students with disabilities who require transportation. LLSD has a policy to transport all resident public students that request transportation, regardless of their distance from the school, which District officials stated is due to the campus being located off a highway, between an airport and railway with no sidewalks to make the campus accessible to students who may live nearby. While LLSD does not have an official policy on bus ride times, District officials stated that they attempt to maintain routes that are under 30 minutes. State law does not cap bus ride times for students. The District does not offer transportation to non-public riders, providing payment in lieu of transportation.

Methodology

We conducted interviews with LLSD, and collected bus route sheets, rider count sheets, and the T-1 report.⁴² We utilized the count sheets that the District collected in October 2025. We compared the information from the count sheets with the T-1 report to ensure that the data reconciled with what was reported to ODEW.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), no federal regulation exists for the number of riders placed per seat on a bus, but “school transportation providers generally determine the number of people they can safely fit into a school bus seat. Generally, they fit three smaller elementary school students or two adult high school students into a typical 39-inch school bus seat.” Capacity on each bus route was calculated using this industry benchmark with two students per seat on Tier I and three riders per seated on Tier II. We also used a target utilization is 90 percent of total capacity to allow flexibility in accommodating variation in actual daily ridership.

When evaluating opportunities for improved efficiency without significant changes to tiers, start times, and bell schedules, it is important to determine whether all routes that are underutilized can be reasonably improved. This determination can be problematic for special purpose routes and for that reason, the District’s career center shuttle and special education routes have been excluded from our analysis. Additionally, one route in Tier II was excluded from this analysis as it already met the 90 percent utilization benchmark. After exclusions, we analyzed 14 Tier I and 13 Tier II routes.

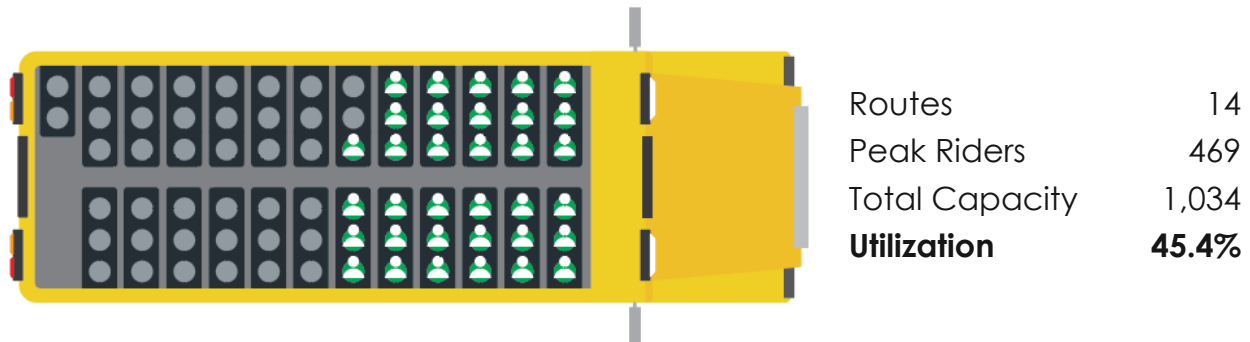
Analysis

The following visuals show a baseline overview of utilization for the regular education routes in Tiers I and II. These visuals are based on ridership and routes in AY 2026 and show the average number of riders and average possible seats in a bus. Based on the analysis of the District’s routes and peak number of rides in AY 2026, as seen in the visuals below, the baseline utilization for existing regular bus routes is well below the total available capacity, indicating that there is opportunity to reduce routes within the District.⁴³

⁴² T-1 reports are submitted annually to certify to ODEW the actual number of students transported, and the total daily miles traveled. The data is used for calculations of the pupil transportation payment pursuant to ORC §3317.0212.

⁴³ While there were 14 routes each included in Tier I and II, one route already exceeded the 90 percent utilization benchmark, and so was not included in the optimization analysis.

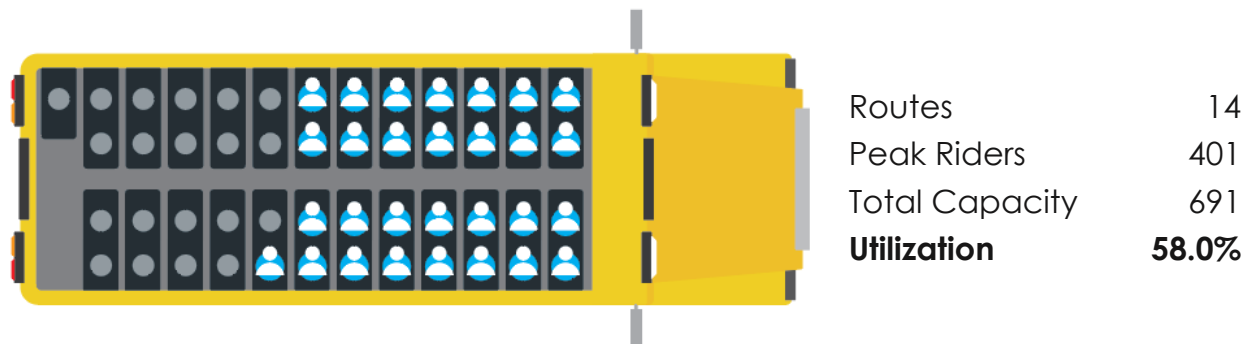
Elementary School (Tier I) – Current State 34 Average Riders / 74 Average Possible Seats



Source: LLSD

Note: Capacity per bus based on three riders per seat.

Middle School/High School (Tier II) – Current State 29 Average Riders / 49 Average Possible Seats



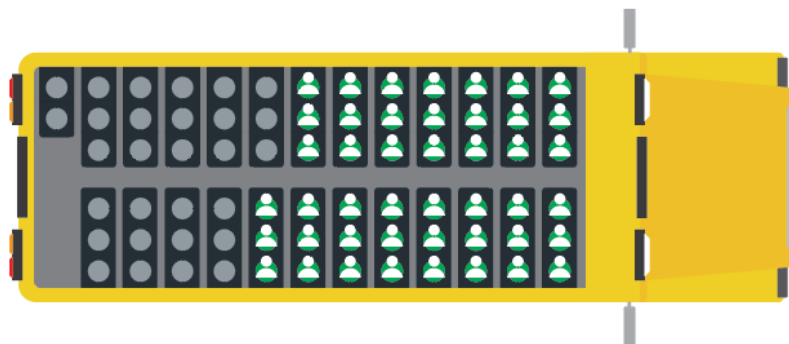
Source: LLSD

Note: Capacity per bus based on two riders per seat.

Once baseline utilization indicated that there were opportunities for bus route reductions, we reviewed the utilization within each Tier to identify the maximum number of routes that may be reduced to reach 90 percent capacity.

Our analysis identified the number of routes that could be eliminated while maintaining enough capacity for Tier 1, since this tier had the highest ridership. Ultimately, we determined that the District could eliminate five bus routes. The visuals below shows the impact on this reduction on utilization for both Tiers.

Elementary School (Tier I) – After Reductions 59 Average Riders / 74 Average Possible Seats

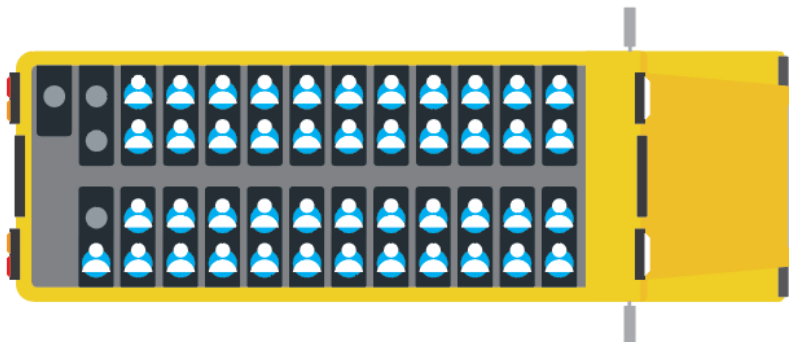


Routes	9
Peak Riders	469
Total Capacity	591
Utilization	79.4%

Source: LLSD

Note: Capacity per bus based on three riders per seat.

Middle School/High School (Tier II) – After Reductions 45 Average Riders / 49 Average Possible Seats



Routes	9
Peak Riders	401
Total Capacity	444
Utilization	90.3%

Source: LLSD

Note: Capacity per bus based on two riders per seat.

Using the ridership for each Tier in AY 2026, LLSD could reduce five routes on both Tier I and Tier II, meaning that the District could have run five fewer buses and still be able to transport students. Reducing five routes would have resulted in approximately 79.4 percent utilization for Tier I and 90.3 percent utilization for Tier II. Note that with the elimination of the five routes, the District would exceed the utilization benchmark on Tier 2. This is due to one route on Tier 2 already being above 90 percent utilization.

The District should strategically identify the buses chosen for fleet reduction purposes. In addition to the age of the vehicle, District officials should consider maintenance costs and other factors related to the cost ownership of a bus (see [Recommendation 3](#)).

Conclusion

The District's bus fleet is not operating as efficiently as possible by operating more routes than necessary. Eliminating five bus routes on each Tier could save an average of approximately \$153,000 in salaries and benefits in each year of implementation over the forecasted period. In addition, the District may see reduced costs associated with the maintenance of buses and could avoid future purchase expense for unnecessary fleet.

Additional Recommendations

As discussed in detail throughout the preceding sections of this report, LLSD could gain efficiencies by aligning its operations with the peer averages and industry standards and implementing the previously identified baseline recommendations. However, the recommendations identified previously in this report, even if fully implemented, would not resolve the projected deficit in the most recent financial forecast. The following recommendations are additional actions that District leadership may need to consider when addressing the current fiscal situation.

Implementing the following additional actions could have a significant impact on the District's operations and instructional activities. However, without additional revenue, the District will likely need to consider the implementation of at least one of, or a combination of, the following recommendations in order to remain fiscally solvent.

Some of the recommendations are subject to successful negotiations.

Reduce/Eliminate the General Fund Subsidy for Extracurricular Activities

In order to reduce expenditures, the District could reduce the General Fund subsidy of extracurricular activities (see [Recommendation 4](#)). To achieve additional savings, the District could consider fully eliminating the subsidy, which would save an additional \$597,000 per year, based on the AY 2025 subsidy level.

While supporting extracurricular activities with the General Fund is a common practice in Ohio, it is not required by law. Implementing this recommendation may impact on the number and quality of programs offered, however, the District's financial condition requires consideration of significant operational changes to remain fiscally solvent.

To fund extracurricular activities without a General Fund subsidy, the District may consider the following options:

- Increase pay-to-participate fees;
- Increase admissions and sales;
- Increase boost club funding;
- Reduce the supplemental salary schedule; and/or,
- Eliminate programs.

Implement a Base and Step Salary Freeze

The District could consider implementing additional salary-related measures in order to achieve additional savings. While [Recommendation 7](#) addresses the potential to reduce future liabilities by bringing specific classified salaries in line with the peer average, significant annual savings could be realized by implementing a freeze on all employee salaries.

Due to the expiration of the District's CBAs, the earliest a salary freeze could be implemented is AY 2029. If the District froze salaries at AY 2028 levels for AY 2029, the last year of the forecast, it could realize average annual savings of approximately \$685,000.

Eliminate Building Administrator Positions

The District could make additional building administrator staffing reductions as it works to regain fiscal solvency. The state minimum requirement for building administrators identified in OAC 3301-35-05 consists only of the duties of a principal. LLSD could eliminate another 0.50 FTE building administrator in addition to the positions identified in [Recommendation 5](#) and remain in compliance with state minimum staffing requirements.

LLSD employs a total of 7.00 FTEs in building administrator positions comprised of principals and assistant principals that serve the District's three academic buildings: the elementary school, middle school, and the high school. Using state minimum requirements, the District could eliminate up to an additional 0.50 FTE building administrator positions.

Given the District's financial condition, if this level of reduction becomes necessary, the District should work with ODEW to ensure compliance with the state minimum requirement in OAC 3301-35-05 before reducing building administrator staff. This reduction could save the District an average of approximately \$60,000. While this option would provide additional savings each year, it would change service levels within the District.

Eliminate Teacher Positions

If the District successfully implements all of the standard recommendations along with a combination of the previously identified additional recommendations, it can resolve the projected deficit. Some of the previously identified recommendations are subject to negotiations and may be difficult for the District to achieve. If the financial condition of the District does not improve, it may need to consider eliminating additional teaching positions.

State law requires that for every 25 students, districts employ at least one classroom teacher, for a student-to-teacher ratio of 25 to 1. In AY 2026, the District had a student-to-teacher ratio

of 15.71:1.⁴⁴ While the standard recommendations brought the District to the primary peer average for classroom teachers, it could eliminate up to 22.5 FTE teaching positions and remain within state minimum standards. Eliminating 22.5 teaching positions would result in approximately \$2.5 million in annual savings but would substantively impact District operations.

LLSD should choose to strategically implement teacher reductions to maximize savings while minimizing the impact on District operations. Ultimately, the total cost savings realized from teacher reductions would be dependent on a variety of factors including the number of positions eliminated, the tenure of the individuals, and the impact of other potential cost saving measures.

If the District decides to pursue reductions to state minimum teacher requirements, it should work with ODEW to ensure compliance with the state minimum requirement in OAC 3301-35-05 before reducing classroom teaching levels.

⁴⁴ The student number used in this ratio represents a regular student population – a formula driven number that reflects students enrolled and educated within the District, excluding categories two through six of special education students. Classroom teachers include K-12 general education teachers as well as art, music, physical education, English language instructional program, and gifted and talented teachers. Preschool teachers, special education teachers, and career-technical teachers are excluded from the ratio (*Source, ODEW*).

Client Response Letter

Audit standards and AOS policy allow clients to provide a written response to an audit. The letter on the following page is the District's official statement in regards to this performance audit. Throughout the audit process, staff met with District officials to ensure substantial agreement on the factual information presented in the report. When the District disagreed with information contained in the report, and provided supporting documentation, revisions were made to the audit report.



LAKE LOCAL SCHOOLS

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MARJOE COOPER, SUPERINTENDENT

MARIA ROBINSON, TREASURER

September 30, 2026

To: Adam Wunderle and Auditor of State Team Members
From: Marjoe Cooper, Superintendent of Lake Local Schools (Millbury)
Re: Performance Audit

Dear members of the State Auditor Team,

I am writing to express my sincere appreciation for your team's hard work, professionalism, and collaboration during our recent engagement. The thoroughness and constructive approach your team brings to the audit process are invaluable to our organization.

Working alongside your team reinforces our own high standards for accountability. We remain deeply committed to strong fiscal oversight and sound financial management. To that end, we have already completed significant work reviewing our staffing structures, leveraging natural attrition, and evaluating our Dean of Students positions, as administrative positions, alongside current enrollment trends to ensure our staffing models align perfectly with student needs. Your insights help ensure that we maintain the highest level of integrity in our operations, which allows us to optimize our budget effectively.

Ultimately, our primary goal is to focus our resources where they matter most: best serving our students and our community. The transparency provided by your review will give stakeholders confidence that we are directing public funds responsibly toward educational excellence and community support.

Thank you once again for your dedication, diligence, and partnership.

Professionally,

Mr. Marjoe Cooper
Superintendent
Lake Local Schools
marjoe.cooper@lakeschools.org

Appendix A: Purpose, Methodology, Scope, and Objectives of the Audit

Performance Audit Purpose and Overview

Performance audits provide objective analysis to assist management and those charged with governance and oversight to improve program performance and operations, reduce costs, facilitate decision making by parties with responsibility to oversee or initiate corrective action, and contribute to public accountability.

Generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS) require that a performance audit be planned and performed so as to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for findings and conclusions based on audit objectives. Objectives are what the audit is intended to accomplish and can be thought of as questions about the program that the auditors seek to answer based on evidence obtained and assessed against criteria.

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with GAGAS. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

Audit Scope and Objectives

In all fiscal distress school audits, preliminary review is conducted to identify operational areas that may have opportunity for improved efficiency and effectiveness. In this audit, the following areas were considered for analysis, but ultimately not chosen due to the available data and preliminary analysis:

- Collective Bargaining Agreements;
- Facilities Utilization;
- Facilities Staffing;
- Facilities Expenditures;
- Facilities Non-Regular Labor;
- Food Service; and
- Transportation Security;

Summary of Objectives and Conclusions

Objective	Recommendation
Financial Management	
Are the District's forecasting practices consistent with leading practices and is the five-year forecast reasonable and supported?	R.1
Are the District's budgeting practices in line with leading practices?	R.2
Are the District's strategic and capital planning efforts consistent with leading practices?	R.3
Is the District's General Fund subsidy of extracurricular activities appropriate in comparison to local peers and the District's financial condition?	R.4
Human Resources	
Are the District's staffing levels appropriate in comparison to primary peers, state minimum standards, demand for services, and the District's financial condition?	R.5, R.6
Are the District's salaries and wages appropriate in comparison to local peers and the District's financial condition?	R.8
Are the District's insurance costs appropriate in comparison to other governmental entities within the local market and the District's financial condition?	R.7
Transportation	
Is the District's bus fleet sized appropriately and routed efficiently in comparison to industry standards?	R.9

Although assessment of internal controls was not specifically an objective of this performance audit, internal controls were considered and evaluated when applicable to scope areas and objectives. The following internal control components and underlying principles were relevant to our audit objectives:⁴⁵

⁴⁵ We relied upon standards for internal controls obtained from *Standards for Internal Control in the Federal Government* (2014), the U.S. Government Accountability Office, report GAO-14-704G.

- Control environment
 - We considered the District’s control of its EMIS and payroll systems.
- Risk Assessment
 - We considered the District’s activities to assess fraud risks.
- Information and Communication
 - We considered the District’s use of quality information in relation to transportation data.
- Control Activities
 - We considered the District’s compliance with applicable laws and contracts.

Internal control deficiencies were not identified during the course of this audit.

Audit Methodology

To complete this performance audit, auditors gathered data, conducted interviews with numerous individuals associated with the areas of District’s operations included in the audit scope, and reviewed and assessed available information. Assessments were performed using criteria from a number of sources, including:

- Peer Districts;
- Industry Standards;
- Leading Practices;
- Statutes; and
- Policies and Procedures.

In consultation with the District, two sets of peer groups were selected for comparisons contained in this report. A “Primary Peers” set was selected for general, District-wide comparisons. This peer set was selected from a pool of demographically similar districts with relatively lower per-pupil spending and similar academic performance. A “Local Peers” set was selected for a comparison of the general fund subsidy of extracurricular activities, compensation, benefits, and collective bargaining agreements, where applicable. This peer set was selected specifically to provide context for local labor market conditions. The table below shows the Ohio school districts included in these peer groups.

Peer Group Districts

Primary Peers

- Beaver Local School District (Columbiana County)
- Benjamin Local School District (Logan County)
- Greeneview Local School District (Greene County)
- Hubbard Exempted Village School District (Trumbull County)
- Minerva Local School District (Stark County)
- Pleasant Local School District (Marion County)
- Tuscarawas Valley Local School District (Tuscarawas County)
- West Muskingum Local School District (Muskingum County)
- Wheelersburg Local School District (Scioto County)

Local Peers

- Eastwood Local School District (Wood County)
- Genoa Area Local School District (Ottawa County)
- Northwood Local School District (Wood County)
- Rossford Exempted Village School District (Wood County)

Where reasonable and appropriate, peer districts were used for comparison. However, industry standards or leading practices were used in some operational areas for primary comparison. District policies and procedures as well as pertinent laws and regulations contained in the Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) and the Ohio Revised Code (ORC) were also assessed. Each recommendation in this report describes the specific methodology and criteria used to reach our conclusions.

Appendix B: Financial Background

In addition to the financial analyses previously presented throughout the report, we conducted additional review of the District's finances compared to peers. This information is provided to give a deeper understanding of the current financial condition of the District.

District AY 2025 Financial Accounts

This section of the report summarizes financial activity across all district funds, including revenues, expenditures, transfers, and other financing uses. Districts may pay for the same services using different funding sources, such as local funds, grants, or special use funds. To support fair comparison of overall activity and services delivered, all funds and funding sources are included, regardless of how that activity is financed. Because money can move between funds before it is ultimately spent, the same dollar may appear more than once as it flows through the system. For this reason, totals shown in this section of the report reflect gross financial activity, not unique dollars received from outside sources.

The following table shows the Districts AY 2025 financial activities by fund. The District operated with 26 funds in AY 2025. Within this table, recorded receipts, or revenues, and expenditures are identified. In any given year, a particular fund may operate at a deficit or surplus. Further, operating at a deficit may not result in an actual fund deficit due to existing fund balances. By reviewing revenues and expenditures at the fund level, a district can have a more comprehensive understanding of its financial condition.

AY 2025 All Funds Activity

Total Funds		Funds with Revenue		Funds with Expenditures	
26		19		23	
Fund	Fund Name	Beginning Balance	Receipts	Expenditures	Ending Balance
001	General	\$5,162,973.78	\$21,387,777.64	\$21,756,784.21	\$4,793,967.21
002	Debt Retirement	\$1,548,528.22	\$1,812,796.34	\$2,351,390.23	\$1,009,934.33
003	Permanent Improvement	\$542,761.39	\$417,470.94	\$258,378.13	\$701,854.20
004	Building	\$7,206,910.11	\$0.00	\$5,787,167.54	\$1,419,742.57
006	Food Services	\$885,584.45	\$738,735.93	\$881,808.01	\$742,512.37
007	Special Trust	\$167,849.71	\$25,024.30	\$19,546.41	\$173,327.60
008	Endowment	\$653,902.86	\$8,072.73	\$28,700.00	\$633,275.59
009	Uniform Schools Supplies	\$294,741.34	\$7,937.50	\$5,198.25	\$297,480.59
014	Other Services Rotary (FY 25)	\$113,080.59	\$49,635.46	\$125,749.64	\$36,966.41
018	Public School Support	\$44,374.53	\$78,979.35	\$66,874.01	\$56,479.87
019	Other Grants	\$11,443.27	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$11,443.27
022	District Custodial	\$51,386.32	\$52,516.84	\$91,993.60	\$11,909.56

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035	Termination Benefits	\$56,365.00	\$0.00	\$56,365.00	\$0.00
200	Student Managed Student Activity	\$57,718.91	\$47,318.77	\$36,467.00	\$68,570.68
300	District Managed Student Activity	\$265,138.58	\$484,914.24	\$389,463.56	\$360,589.26
439	Public School Preschool	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$85,000.00	(\$85,000.00)
451	Data Communications for School Buildings	\$0.00	\$5,973.42	\$5,973.42	\$0.00
467	Student Wellness and Success	\$159,755.31	\$0.00	\$159,755.31	\$0.00
499	Miscellaneous State Grants	(\$2,426.30)	\$2,426.30	\$0.00	\$0.00
507	Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER)	\$500.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$500.00
516	IDEA, Part B Special Education ... Ages 3-21	(\$3,931.98)	\$2,444.54	\$358,026.43	(\$359,513.87)
572	Title I - Disadvantaged Children/Targeted Assistance	\$0.00	\$10,375.52	\$244,975.94	(\$234,600.42)
584	Student Support and Academic Enrichment Programs	(\$2,339.25)	\$21,100.52	\$33,826.54	(\$15,065.27)
587	IDEA, Part B Special Education ... Ages 3-5	\$0.00	\$10,588.60	\$21,865.63	(\$11,277.03)
590	Improving Teacher Quality	\$0.00	\$7,169.71	\$55,538.35	(\$48,368.64)
599	Miscellaneous Federal Grants	\$18,020.00	\$0.00	\$18,020.00	\$0.00
Total Funds		\$17,232,336.84	\$25,171,258.65	\$32,838,867.21	\$9,564,728.28

Source: LLSD

Note: Includes advances, transfers, and other financing activities; Because money can move between funds before it is ultimately spent, the same dollar may appear more than once as it flows through the system (see [Appendix B](#)).

Note: According to ORC § 3315.20, school districts are allowed to have negative balances in special funds if specific circumstances are met.

Revenue and Expenditures Section Exclusions

School districts in Ohio use a uniform accounting system, which allows for financial information to be presented in a similar manner. This system breaks down financial data into dimensions, or categories, which allow for specific detail to be captured. These dimensions are Transaction Indicators, Funds, Functions, and Objects. Transaction Indicators show the types of transactions that occur within a district. Funds are established by constitutional provisions or other statutes to identify how funds may be used. Functions are a broad area of programs, sub-programs, and activities which can be used to identify the goods or services being obtained by a district. Additional information on school accounting can be found in the Uniform School Accounting System user manual: [USAS Manual](#)

To avoid double counting of funds identified in the section above, figures and charts presented in the Revenues and Expenditures section of the report that are shown with certain funds,

objects, and functions/receipt codes are excluded using ODEW's technical documentation for reporting expenditures and revenue.⁴⁶

Revenue Exclusions

Funds:

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| • 002 | • 014 | • 026 | • 406 | • 496 |
| • 003 | • 017 | • 027 | • 409 | • 498 |
| • 004 | • 020 | • 028 | • 413 | • 501 |
| • 005 | • 021 | • 033 | • 414 | • 505 |
| • 010 | • 022 | • 070 | • 419 | • 535 |
| • 011 | • 023 | • 071 | • 426 | • 569 |
| • 012 | • 024 | • 200 | • 450 | • 583 |
| • 013 | • 025 | • 401 | • 453 | |

Receipt Code: 5000 - 5399

Expenditure Exclusions

Funds:

- | | | | | |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| • 017 | • 022 | • 024 | • 027 | • 200 |
| • 021 | • 023 | • 026 | • 028 | |

Objects:

- | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-------|-------|-----------|
| • 470-479 | • 810-819 | • 881 | • 891 | • 900-969 |
|-----------|-----------|-------|-------|-----------|

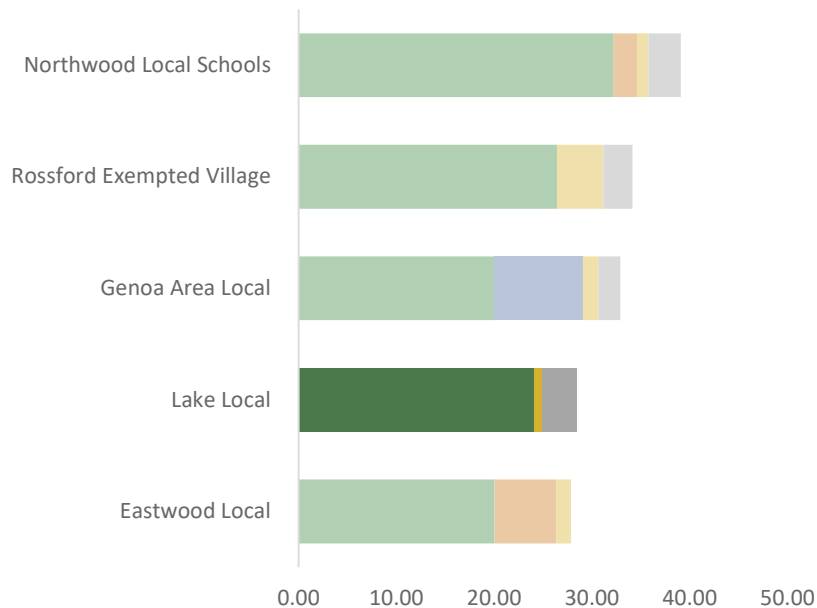
Function: 7000-7990

Local Revenue Comparisons

Since the total millage rate can be rolled back as a result of reduction factors, we compared the total effective millage for LLSD to that of its local peers. This comparison is found in the chart below. The green portion of the bar represents the current expense millage rate, where four of the local peers are at the 20-mill floor. Because the District is not at the 20-mill floor, it will not see continued growth from current expense mills as property value increases.

⁴⁶ "Non-Operating" expenditures, such as adult education, sport oriented extracurricular activities, construction, or interest on debt are excluded in ODEW's reporting, however, are included in this report.

2025 Millage and Millage Equivalents | Local Peers



Source: Ohio Department of Taxation

The composition of levies impacts district revenues. **Current Expense mills**, used for general operations are subject to reduction factors up to the 20-mill threshold. **Emergency and substitute mills** raise a defined amount of general operating revenue and are not reduced. **Income tax mill equivalents** are provided by the Department of Taxation for comparison purposes. **Permanent improvement mills** are used for maintenance of long-term assets and may be reduced over time. **Bond mills** raise a defined amount used for the purchase or construction of new buildings.

The District's effective millage rate is among the lowest in comparison to the local peer districts. In Tax Year 2024, one mill of property tax generated approximately \$249 in revenue per pupil, falling below the local peer average of approximately \$272, by 9.2 percent.

The following tables show the school district income tax revenue for primary peer districts and local peer districts. Two primary peers and two local peers collect revenue from an income tax.

2025 Income Tax Revenue and Millage Equivalents | Primary Peers

District	Tax Rate	Income Tax Revenue	Estimated Millage Equivalents
Greeneview Local	1.00%	\$3,226,594.37	9.42
Pleasant Local	1.00%	\$2,626,328.68	7.44
Beaver Local	0.00%	-	0.00
Benjamin Logan Local	0.00%	-	0.00
Hubbard Exempted Village	0.00%	-	0.00
Lake Local	0.00%	-	0.00
Minerva Local	0.00%	-	0.00
Tuscarawas Valley Local	0.00%	-	0.00
West Muskingum Local	0.00%	-	0.00
Wheelersburg Local	0.00%	-	0.00

Source: Ohio Department of Taxation

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2025 Income Tax Revenue and Millage Equivalents | Local Peers

District	Tax Rate	Income Tax Revenue	Estimated Millage Equivalents
Eastwood Local	1.00%	\$2,784,413.71	6.31
Northwood Local Schools	0.25%	\$404,650.86	2.40
Genoa Area Local	0.00%	-	0.00
Lake Local	0.00%	-	0.00
Rossford Exempted Village	0.00%	-	0.00

Source: Ohio Department of Taxation

The following tables show the local tax effort (LTE) comparison between LLSD and the primary peer districts and the local peer districts. ODEW uses the Local Tax Effort Index as a measure of taxpayer support for the district in which they reside. This index, one of a number of possible measures for evaluating local effort, was initially developed by the Division of Tax Analysis within the Ohio Department of Taxation and is calculated in the context of the residents' abilities to pay by determining the relative position of each school district in the state in terms of the portion of residents' income devoted to supporting public education. This index uses median income data and provides context to better understand a community's tax burden, not only compared to other districts, but also as a function of the residents' ability to pay.

On this sliding scale, a value of 1.0 indicates the state average, a baseline against which all districts in the state are weighed. If a district has a local tax effort below 1.0, residents provide a smaller portion of their available income to public education whereas a value above 1.0 indicates the community pays a larger portion of their available income to public education compared to the state average. Districts are ranked from 1 to 606 with 1 being the highest level of effort and the 99th percentile and 606 being the lowest level of effort and the 1st percentile.

2025 Local Tax Effort Comparison | Primary Peers

District	LTE	Rank	Percentile
Greeneview Local	1.2687	146	75.9%
Pleasant Local	0.9361	336	44.6%
Benjamin Logan Local	0.9214	343	43.4%
Minerva Local	0.9093	348	42.6%
Hubbard Exempted Village	0.9072	350	42.2%
West Muskingum Local	0.8973	356	41.3%
Tuscarawas Valley Local	0.8196	420	30.7%
Beaver Local	0.8124	430	29.0%
Lake Local	0.6901	528	12.9%
Wheelersburg Local	0.4560	596	1.7%
Primary Peer Average	0.8809	375	38.1%

Source: ODEW

2025 Local Tax Effort Comparison | Local Peers

District	LTE	Rank	Percentile
Eastwood Local	1.0559	252	58.4%
Northwood Local Schools	1.0456	260	57.1%
Genoa Area Local	0.9511	325	46.4%
Lake Local	0.6901	528	12.9%
Rossford Exempted Village	0.6074	564	6.9%
Local Peer Average	0.9150	346	42.9%

Source: ODEW

Appendix C: Enrollment

Where a student lives, where they enroll and attend school, how much instruction is received, and how much funding is generated are all measures or factors related to enrollment, or how a student is counted. The following list summarizes descriptions of enrollment terms used in this report.

Enrollment Definition Key

	Description
Place of Enrollment	Where the students living in the District's boundaries attend school.
Open Enrollment-In	Students who reside in another district's boundaries attending the District via open enrollment.
Open Enrollment-Out	Students living within the District's boundaries but attending another public school via open enrollment policies.
Student FTE	Reflects how much instructional time a student received compared to a full-time student.
Headcount	Count of students enrolled at the District at a single point in time. Each student counts as 1.0 student.
Average Daily Membership (ADM)	This is the average enrollment over time and serves as the basis for which a district is funded.
Regular Student ADM	Regular student enrollment which is used for calculating minimum teaching staffing ratios.

Source: ODEW & AOS

Each of the terms above have expanded definitions on subsequent pages and explanations of how they relate to information in this report. Where relevant, a historical analysis is provided to show trends.

Place of Enrollment

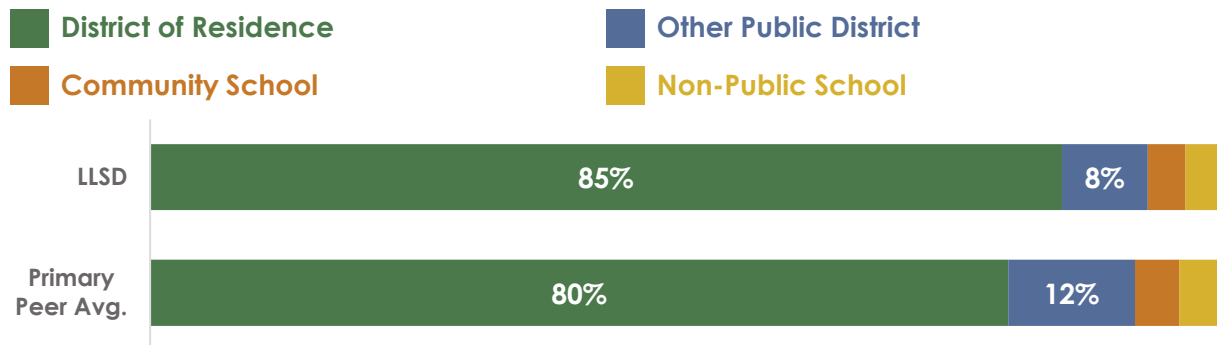
Students and their families have choices regarding where to attend school. Because of this, not all resident students attend the district where they live. The visuals on this page show where students living in LLSD are attending schools.⁴⁷ It should be noted that the visuals do not include students who choose to attend private schools and do not receive state assistance or students who are homeschooled.

AY 2025 Place of Enrollment

	Enrollment
District of Residence	1,262
Other Public District	119
Community School	52
Non-Public School via EdChoice or Other Program	52
Total	1,485

Source: ODEW

AY 2025 Place of Enrollment as % of Total



Source: ODEW

As seen above, approximately 85 percent of students residing in the District's boundaries choose to attend LLSD, compared to the primary peer average of 80.0 percent. This means that

⁴⁷ If applicable, non-public school includes students participating in the EdChoice or EdChoice Expansion Scholarship Programs, the Cleveland Scholarship Program, the Ohio Autism Scholarship Program, or the Jon Petersen Special Needs Scholarship Program.

the District experiences a lower percentage of students who choose to attend another district.⁴⁸ LLSD does offer open enrollment to non-resident students.

Open Enrollment

Interdistrict open enrollment is one of several school choice options. Interdistrict open enrollment allows the resident students of a district to enroll in another district by following that district's open enrollment policies and procedures. Students who enroll under an open enrollment policy must be allowed to attend tuition free. State funding, which is calculated on a per-pupil basis, is awarded to the district where a student is educated. For districts that are funded on a formula basis, offering open enrollment can incrementally increase the state funding. Local funding is collected based on voted property and income taxes. There is no state law that provides for local funding to follow a student to the district of enrollment, which means local funding remains in the district of collection regardless of student open enrollment choices. Open enrollment is dependent on individual districts' policies and available capacity. A district may offer no open enrollment, open enrollment from adjacent districts only, or open enrollment from any district.

Open Enrollment In: These are students living in another public district who attend LLSD through open enrollment policies. In AY 2026, the District had a policy to accept open enrollment from any district, which brought 154 students to the District via open enrollment.

Open Enrollment Out: These are students who live in the District's boundaries but choose to attend another public school through open enrollment policies. In AY 2025,⁴⁹ the District had 114 students living within its boundaries that chose to attend another public district through open enrollment.

⁴⁸ Community schools, nonpublic schools, or another public district that accepts students through open enrollment.

⁴⁹ At the time of the audit, AY 2026 data for open enrollment out for the District was not available.

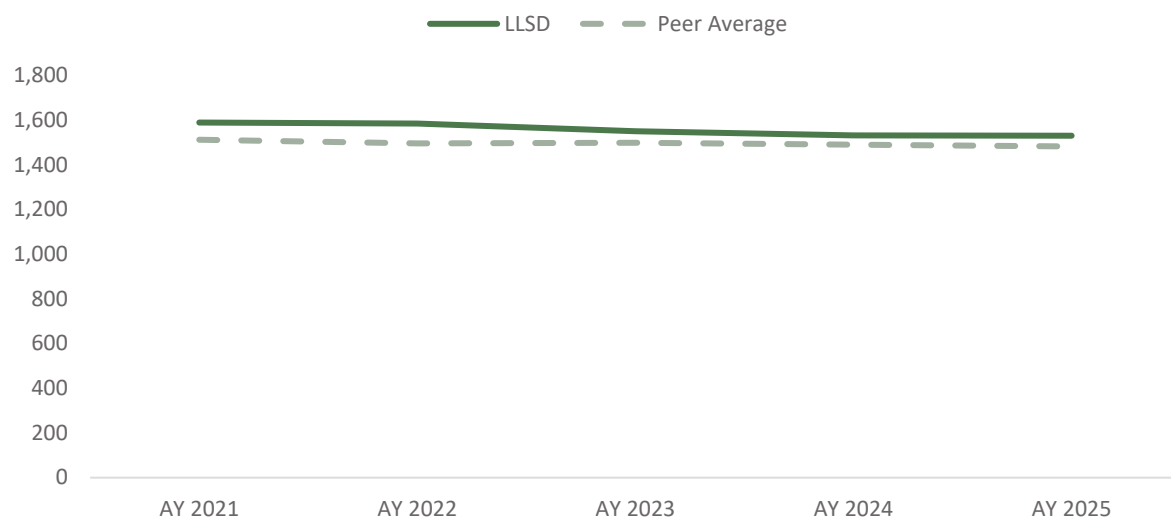
FTE Enrollment

This enrollment metric proportionately reflects how much instructional time a student receives compared to a full-time student. A student who attends the District full-time would count as 1.0 FTE. A student attending the District half-time, for half day kindergarten for example, would count as 0.5 FTE.

Within our report, PK-12 FTE enrollment is used for our revenue per pupil and expenditures per pupil analyses (see [Per Pupil Analysis](#)). For our staffing analyses, K-12 FTE enrollment is also used (see [Recommendation 5](#), [Recommendation 6](#), and [Appendix E](#)).

The following chart shows a five-year history of the District's FTE enrollment.

AY 2021 to AY 2025 FTE Enrollment 5-year History



Source: ODEW

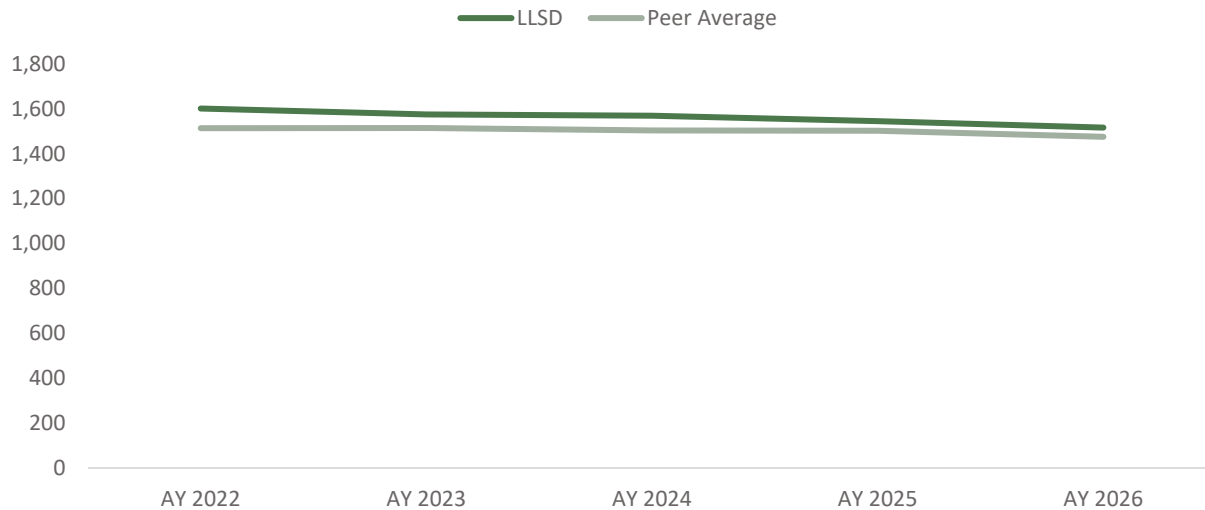
From AY 2021 to AY 2025, the District's FTE enrollment decreased by 3.7 percent, or approximately 59 FTEs. This is a greater decrease than the primary peer average, which decreased by 1.7 percent.

Headcount

This enrollment metric is a simple count of students enrolled in a district at a single point in time. Each student counts as one, regardless of how much instructional time is received. This metric helps to not only understand staffing needs, but also provides insight into understanding a district's building capacity needs.

The following chart shows a five-year history of the District's headcount enrollment.

AY 2022 to AY 2026 Headcount 5-year History



Source: ODEW

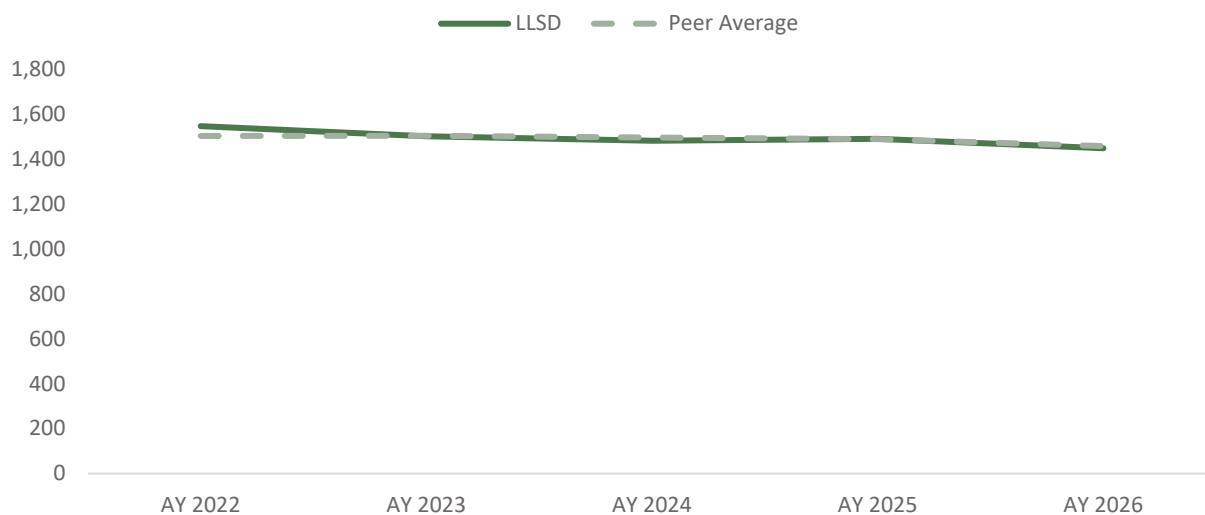
From AY 2022 to AY 2026, the District's headcount enrollment decreased by 5.3 percent, or approximately 85 students. This decrease is greater than the primary peer average, which decreased by 2.3 percent.

Enrolled Average Daily Membership (Enrolled ADM)

Enrolled ADM is the average number of students enrolled at a district during a school year and serves as the basis for state funding calculations. For example, a student enrolled for an entire year counts as 1.0, but a student who enrolls halfway through the year counts as 0.5.

The following chart shows a five-year history of Enrolled ADM at the District. Enrolled ADM trends are important to understand due to its impact on funding, which is done on a per pupil basis (see [State Funding](#)).

AY 2022 to AY 2026 ADM 5-year History



Source: ODEW

From AY 2022 to AY 2026, the District's enrolled ADM decreased by 6.4 percent, or approximately 98 students. This decrease is greater than the primary peer average, which decreased by 2.7 percent or approximately 45 students.

Regular Student ADM

According to OAC 3301-35-05, the minimum staffing requirement for Ohio public schools is a ratio of at least one full-time equivalent (FTE) classroom teacher for every 25 students (often expressed as 25-to-1) on a district-wide basis. In consultation with ODEW, the student number used for calculating this ratio is the Regular Student ADM, which consists of:

Regular Student ADM

$$= \text{Enrolled ADM} - (\text{SpecEd ADM Categories 2 through 6}) \\ - (\text{Jointure} \times 0.2) - \text{Non-Jointure} - (\text{Contract Vocational} \times 1.2)$$

Regular Student ADM data was provided by ODEW for use in calculating the minimum teaching staffing requirements discussed in the [Additional Recommendations](#) section of the report. The calculations used for determining additional recommendations are based on FTEs and enrollment from a specific point in time. If staffing reductions to state minimum requirements are made, the District should use updated and current data to ensure the appropriate number of reductions are implemented. The District should consult with ODEW when nearing or achieving state minimum staffing to ensure compliance with OAC minimum staffing requirements.

Appendix D: Financial Management

Forecasting Best Practices

The following tables show the comparison of the District's forecasting practices to industry standards and best practices. The District's forecasting process meets most of the components recommended by the GFOA and ODEW.

GFOA Forecasting Best Practices

DEFINE ASSUMPTIONS

Meets	Forecast has a timeline
Meets	District is transparent as to whether the forecast is conservative in estimating revenues/expenditures
Meets	District is aware of political/legal issues that could affect forecast
Meets	District does not know major revenue/expenditure categories

GATHER INFORMATION

Meets	District uses statistical data in forecasting
Meets	Uses accumulated judgment and expertise of individuals inside and perhaps also outside the organization
Partially Meets	Become familiar with other longer-term planning efforts of the organization that impact financial decisions and the fiscal environment.

PRELIMINARY/EXPLORATORY ANALYSIS

Meets	Understands how revenues/expenditures vary with economical activity
Meets	Understands effects of demographic trends
Meets	Outliers are identified and explained
Meets	Relationships between different variables are identified and explained

SELECT METHODS

Meets	Determine the quantitative and/or qualitative forecasting methods that will be used
-------	---

IMPLEMENT METHODS

Meets	Put into practice described forecasting methods
-------	---

USE FORECAST

Meets	Forecaster has credibility
Meets	Forecast is presented with a clear message
Meets	Forecast plays a key role in budgeting and financial decisions

Source: GFOA and LLSD

ODEW Best Practices

Doesn't Meet	Proactive management of revenues/expenditures
Doesn't Meet	Board policy to achieve and maintain 60 days of expenditures in cash balance
Meets	Report and discuss expenditures vs revenues monthly
Meets	Participate in a program that promotes best budgeting practices for school districts

Source: ODEW and LLSD

Appendix E: Human Resources

Staffing Comparison Tables

The following tables illustrate the District's employee FTEs compared to calculated benchmark FTEs. These tables show a point in time during the course of the audit and are not meant to represent the current state of staffing at LLSD or the peer districts. Staffing levels at both LLSD and the peer districts may have changed during the audit due to a variety of operational decisions. Where appropriate and possible, our audit took changes into account.

The enrollment benchmark FTEs represents the FTEs the District would need to align with the *primary peer average FTEs per-1,000 student ratio*. Normalizing data on a per-1,000 student basis, as seen in the calculation below, allows for a more precise comparison between districts when student counts differ. This primary comparison is shown in each of the following staffing comparison tables.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Enrollment Benchmark FTEs} \\ = \text{Peer Avg. FTE per 1,000 Students} * (\text{Client Enrollment} \div 1,000) \end{aligned}$$

The building benchmark FTEs represents the FTEs the District would need to align with the *primary peer average FTEs per building ratio*. Normalizing data on a per-building basis, as seen in the calculation below, allows for a more precise comparison between districts when building counts differ. This secondary comparison is shown in select staffing comparison tables.

$$\text{Building Benchmark FTEs} = \text{Peer Avg. FTE per Building} * \text{District Building Count}$$

Central Office Administrator Staff Comparison

Position	LLSD FTEs	Enrollment Benchmark FTEs	FTEs Above/ (Below) Benchmark
Supervisor/Manager	0.00	1.30	(1.30)
Coordinator	0.00	0.56	(0.56)
Education Administrative Specialist	0.00	0.11	(0.11)
Director	2.00	0.86	1.14
Other Official/Administrative	0.00	0.19	(0.19)
Total	2.00	3.02	(1.02)

Source: LLSD and ODEW

Building Administrator Staff Comparison (per 1,000 students)

Position	LLSD FTEs	Enrollment Benchmark FTEs	FTEs Above/ (Below) Benchmark
Assistant Principal	1.00	2.50	(1.50)
Principal	3.00	2.96	0.04
Dean of Students	3.00	0.00	3.00
Total	7.00	5.46	1.54

Source: LLSD and ODEW

Building Administrator Staff Comparison (per building)

Position	LLSD FTEs	Building Benchmark FTEs	FTEs Above/ (Below) Benchmark
Assistant Principal	1.00	2.72	(1.72)
Principal	3.00	3.04	(0.04)
Dean of Students	3.00	0.00	3.00
Total	7.00	5.76	1.24

Source: LLSD and ODEW

In the following table, LLSD exceeds the peer enrollment benchmark for teaching staff by 7.02 FTEs. During the course of the audit, the District approved the reduction of 5.00 FTEs in this category. In accounting for these reductions, the District could still eliminate 2.00 FTEs teaching staff, bringing the District more in line with the peer average benchmark (see [Recommendation 5](#)).

Teaching Staff Comparison

Position	LLSD FTEs	Enrollment Benchmark FTEs	FTEs Above/ (Below) Benchmark
General Education K-12	79.00	71.96	7.04
Gifted and Talented	0.00	0.75	(0.75)
Art Education K-8	2.00	1.44	0.56
Music Education K-8	2.00	2.11	(0.11)
Physical Education K-8	2.00	1.94	0.06
Career-Technical Programs/Career Pathways	1.00	0.77	0.23
Total	86.00	78.98	7.02

Source: LLSD and ODEW

Non-Teaching Educational Staff Comparison

Position	LLSD FTEs	Enrollment Benchmark FTEs	FTEs Above/ (Below) Benchmark
Curriculum Specialist	0.00	0.27	(0.27)
Counseling	4.00	3.17	0.83
Remedial Specialist	1.00	0.99	0.01
Full-time (Permanent) Substitute Teacher	2.00	0.00	2.00
Teacher Mentor/Evaluator	0.00	0.23	(0.23)
Other Professional-Educational	3.00	0.00	3.00

Source: LLSD and ODEW

Professional Staff Comparison

Position	LLSD FTEs	Enrollment Benchmark FTEs	FTEs Above/ (Below) Benchmark
Dietician/Nutritionist	1.00	0.41	0.59
Psychologist	1.00	0.50	0.50
Social Work	1.00	0.14	0.86

Source: LLSD and ODEW

Technical Staff Comparison

Position	LLSD FTEs	Enrollment Benchmark FTEs	FTEs Above/ (Below) Benchmark
Computer Operating	1.00	0.48	0.52
Computer Programming	0.00	0.45	(0.45)
Other Technical	1.00	0.30	0.70
Total	2.00	1.24	0.76

Source: LLSD and ODEW

Central Office Support Staff Comparison

Position	LLSD FTEs	Enrollment Benchmark FTEs	FTEs Above/ (Below) Benchmark
Administrative Assistant	1.00	0.31	0.69
Accounting	0.00	0.11	(0.11)
Bookkeeping	2.00	1.49	0.51
Clerical	0.00	2.10	(2.10)
Records Managing	1.00	0.19	0.81
Other Office/Clerical	0.00	0.20	(0.20)
Total	4.00	4.40	(0.40)

Source: LLSD and ODEW

Building Office Support Staff Comparison (per 1,000 students)

Position	LLSD FTEs	Enrollment Benchmark FTEs	FTEs Above/ (Below) Benchmark
Clerical	4.00	5.95	(1.95)
Total	4.00	5.95	(1.95)

Source: LLSD and ODEW

Building Office Support Staff Comparison (per building)

Position	LLSD FTEs	Building Benchmark FTEs	FTEs Above/ (Below) Benchmark
Clerical	4.00	6.10	(2.10)
Total	4.00	6.10	(2.10)

Source: LLSD and ODEW

Library Staff Comparison

Position	LLSD FTEs	Enrollment Benchmark FTEs	FTEs Above/ (Below) Benchmark
Librarian/Media	0.00	0.32	(0.32)
Library Aide	2.00	0.66	1.34
Total	2.00	0.99	1.01

Source: LLSD and ODEW

Nursing Staff Comparison

Position	LLSD FTEs	Enrollment Benchmark FTEs	FTEs Above/ (Below) Benchmark
Registered Nursing	1.00	0.55	0.45
Practical Nursing	0.00	0.24	(0.24)
Total	1.00	0.79	0.21

Source: LLSD and ODEW

Classroom Support Staff Comparison

Position	LLSD FTEs	Enrollment Benchmark FTEs	FTEs Above/ (Below) Benchmark
Instructional Paraprofessional	0.00	0.83	(0.83)
Teaching Aide	0.00	8.39	(8.39)
Total	0.00	9.21	(9.21)

Source: LLSD and ODEW

Extracurricular/Intracurricular Activities Staff Comparison

Position	LLSD FTEs	Enrollment Benchmark FTEs	FTEs Above/ (Below) Benchmark
Advisor	1.00	0.75	0.25
Other Extra/Intra-Curricular Activities	0.00	0.10	(0.10)
Total	1.00	0.85	0.15

Source: LLSD and ODEW

Other Support Staff Comparison

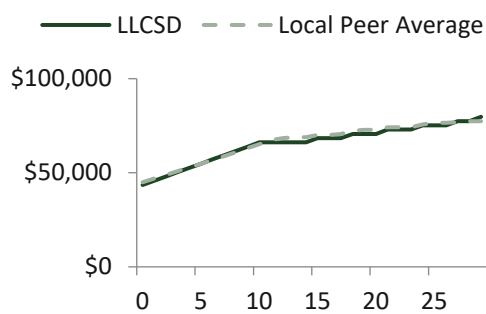
Position	LLSD FTEs	Enrollment Benchmark FTEs	FTEs Above/ (Below) Benchmark
Monitoring	0.99	1.70	(0.71)
Attendant	0.00	0.49	(0.49)
Other Service Worker/Laborer	0.00	0.23	(0.23)

Source: LLSD and ODEW

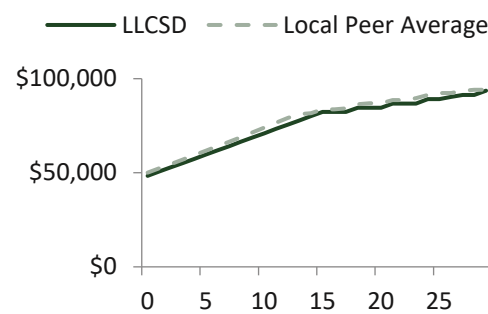
We also looked at annual salaries for all certificated employees and the hourly wage rates for various classified employee positions over the course of a career, as seen in the following charts.

Certificated Career Compensation

Bachelor's



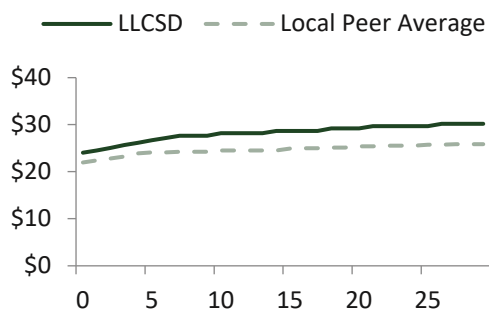
Master's



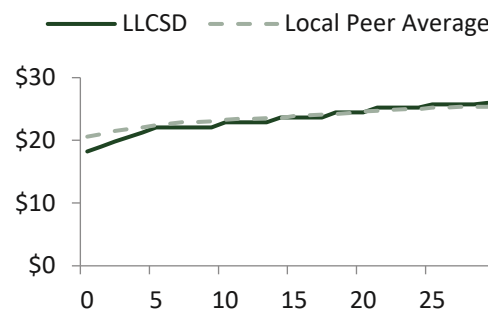
Source: LLSD, Local Peers, and SERB

Classified Career Compensation

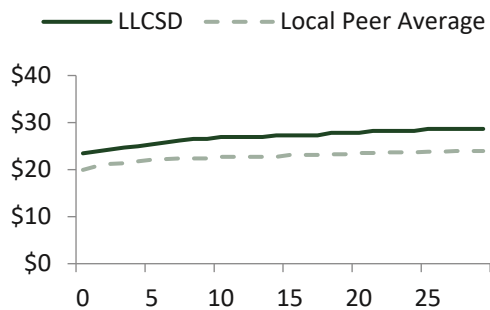
Bus Driver



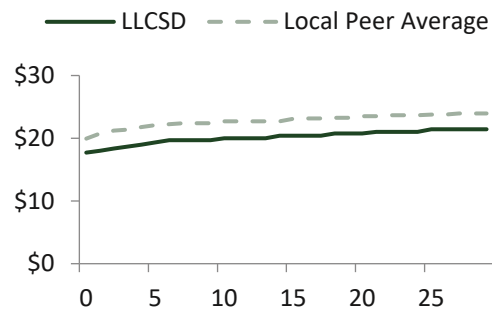
Secretary



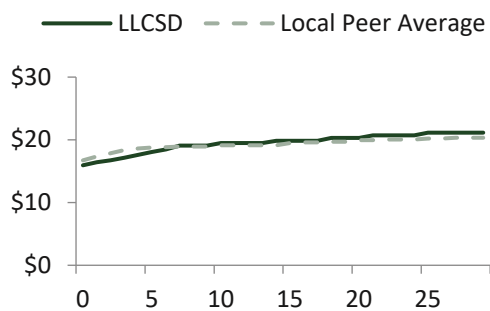
Cert. Custodian



Non Cert. Custodian



Cafeteria



Source: LLSD, Local Peers, and SERB

Insurance – PPO Plan

2026 Monthly Medical Insurance Costs | PPO (Certificated LEA)

		LLSD		Regional Peer Averages	
		Costs	% Share	Costs	% Share
Single Medical + Rx	District	\$755.33	83.7%	\$814.05	84.8%
	Employee	\$146.56	16.3%	\$145.48	15.2%
Family Medical + Rx	District	\$2,016.73	83.8%	\$2,074.64	83.6%
	Employee	\$391.30	16.2%	\$408.24	16.4%

Source: LLSD and SERB

2026 Monthly Medical Insurance Costs | PPO (Classified OAPSE)

		Lake LSD		Regional Peer Averages	
		Costs	% Share	Costs	% Share
Single Medical + Rx	District	\$757.59	84.0%	\$814.05	84.8%
	Employee	\$144.30	16.0%	\$145.48	15.2%
Family Medical + Rx	District	\$2,022.75	84.0%	\$2,074.64	83.6%
	Employee	\$385.28	16.0%	\$408.24	16.4%

Source: LLSD and SERB

Efficient • Effective • Transparent

OHIO AUDITOR OF STATE KEITH FABER



LAKE LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

WOOD COUNTY

AUDITOR OF STATE OF OHIO CERTIFICATION

This is a true and correct copy of the report, which is required to be filed pursuant to Section 117.26, Revised Code, and which is filed in the Office of the Ohio Auditor of State in Columbus, Ohio.



Certified for Release 10/6/2026

65 East State Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215
Phone: 614-466-4514 or 800-282-0370

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www.ohioauditor.gov