

Message From the Superintendent

Last Updated Monday, 16 November 2009

Welcome to the Lake Shore Central School District web site.

The new school year is well underway and we are very pleased with a smooth beginning and an opportunity to welcome all of our students back. Everyone seems refreshed, eager to learn and most importantly ready to experience success.

I would like to take the opportunity, in this second issue of the Eagle Express, to present some promising information on Lake Shore's graduation rate. As you are well aware, two years ago, the Board of Education established a goal focused on improving the graduation rate for our students. The revised goal for the 2009 – 2010 school year is as follows:

By June 30, 2010, the graduation rate will be 85% and increase each subsequent year until it reaches 100% in 2017.

At this point it is important to note that since this goal has been in place, the entire faculty and staff, Kindergarten through grade 12, has been focused on improving our graduation rate for our students. Graduation needs to be a systemic effort and not just an expectation for the high school. In fact, there are indicators as early as Kindergarten that begin to present themselves in our students that we need to be aware of and address in a timely manner. Some of those indicators are as follows:

Elementary Level:

- Low Achievement
- Retention (student is older than his / her peers)
- Poor Attendance
- Low Socioeconomic Status

Middle Level Profile:

- High Risk Peer Group
- High Risk Behavior
- Low Achievement
- Retention (student is older than his / her peers)
- Poor Attendance
- Low Educational expectations
- Low Socioeconomic Status
- High Family Mobility

- Low Family Contact with School
- Low Number of Family Centered Conversations About School

High School Profile:

- High Number of Work Hours
- Parenthood
- Low Achievement
- Retention (Older than his / her peers)

• 1 grade of retention increases the risk of drop out by 40%

• 2 grades of retention increases the increases the risk of drop out by 90%

- Low Attendance
- Low Educational Expectations
- Low Commitment to School
- No Extracurricular Activity Participation
- Misbehavior
- Low Socioeconomic Status
- Not Living with Both Parent

When these indicators begin to come together and develop into a profile for a particular student, interventions through our GRAD Success Teams are begun immediately.

The graduation data is identified and reviewed by each high school cohort group. A cohort group is defined by the year the group of students enters the high school as 9th graders. For instance, the Cohort of 2005 should have graduated, after four years in high school, in June of 2009. Below is a table representing graduation data from Lake Shore by each cohort group:

	After 4 years	After 5 years	After 6 years
Cohort 2002 (Graduated 2006)	68%	71%	72%
Cohort 2003 (Graduated 2007)	70%	80%	82%
Cohort 2004 (Graduated 2008)	71%	82%	N/A
Cohort 2005 (Graduated 2009)	72%	N/A	N/A

At this time I would also like to share with you projected graduation rate data that is very promising:

After 4 years

Cohort 2006 (Current Seniors)	82%
Cohort 2007 (Current Juniors)	98%
Cohort 2008 (Current Sophomores)	99%

The Cohort of 2006 initially had 35 students retained in the 9th grade. There are currently 20 students who have dropped out, including several students who have enrolled in a GED program. There are 17 students who are not on grade level with 15 in the 11th grade and 2 in the 10th grade. We are projecting that 42% of the students will graduate with an Advanced Regents Diploma; 49% will graduate with a Regents Diploma and 6% will graduate with a Local Diploma for a projected graduation rate of 82%.

The Cohort of 2007 currently has 4 students who have dropped out. These students came into the 9th grade as 16 year olds or 2 years older than their peers. 3 students are currently attending the GED program through our Special Education Department. Initially, we had a total of 7 students who repeated the 9th grade. All but one of those students are back on track and in the 11th grade. We are projecting between 55 and 64% of the students to receive an Advanced Regents Diploma; 45% to 55% to receive a Regents Diploma and less than 1% receive a Local Diploma for a projected graduation rate of 95% to 98%.

The Cohort of 2008 started the 9th grade with 230 students. There were only 3 students retained in the 9th grade. Therefore, 227 remain on grade level, combined with 10 new transfers, and are entering the 10th grade for a projected 99% graduation rate in 2012.

Several questions come to mind when reviewing this promising data. The key question is, what has changed over the last three years? After the Board of Education identified its graduation goal in 2007, several initiatives were put into place. They are as follows:

- 1.) Skills for Success presented to each 9th grade student.
- 2.) Mandatory Summer School attendance for any student that was not successful during the normal school year.
- 3.) The development and assignment of an At-risk Counselor to work with students who are not on pace to graduate on time.
- 4.) The Board of Education's action to alter their policy and raise the drop out age to 17 years old.
- 5.) The participation of all 10th grade students in the 7-Habits for Highly Effective Teens program.
- 6.) The 15-Day Identification program has been implemented for the past three years for all students.
- 7.) The School Counselors are assigned to a cohort of students and follow them through their high school career, which builds critical relationships and advocacy.
- 8.) Finally, for the first time this year, we have implemented a Freshman Academy in order to setup a small learning community for our freshman class, which will assist in the critical transition from middle school to high school.

These projected graduation rates are very promising and are a direct result of the focused Board of Education goal, a dedicated faculty and staff and prescriptive programs that allow students to succeed. It will continue to be our mission to usher these students across the graduation stage and continue to increase our graduation rate to 100%.

In closing, in an effort to promote fiscal responsibility the next two issues of the Eagle Express will be electronic publications and found on the District's Website (www.lakeshore.wnyric.org). They will be available on Friday, January 22, 2010 and Friday, March 19, 2010. We will provide reminder notices in the Pennysaver, as we get closer to the publication dates.

Jeffrey R. Rabey,
Superintendent of Schools

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