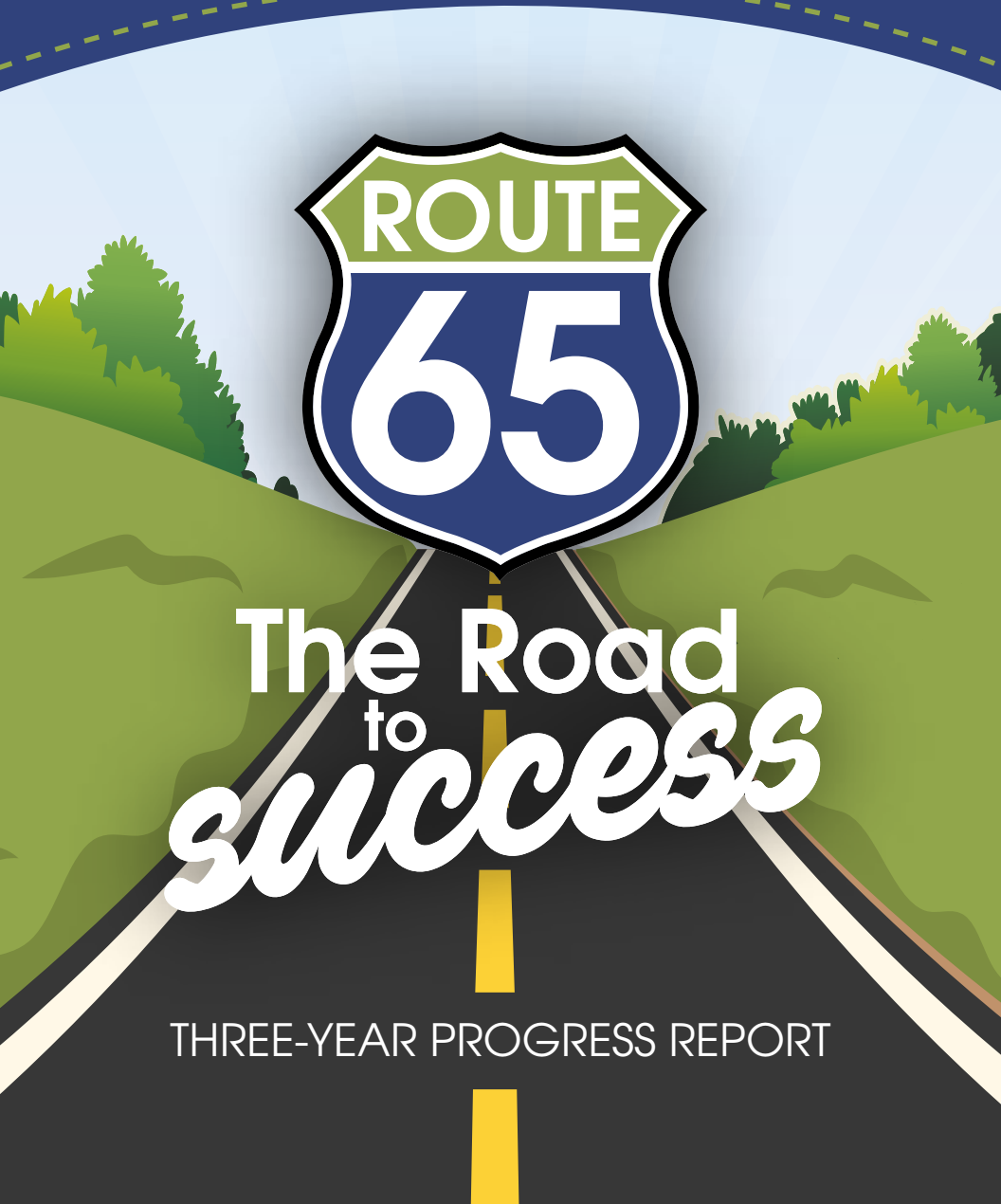
LAKE BLUFF SCHOOLS
DISTRICT 65



The Road to success

THREE-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

ROUTE 65 AT A GLANCE

In 2023, our community came together to create Route 65, a strategic roadmap for the future of Lake Bluff School District 65. Together, we identified five Landmark Goals that continue to guide our work and shape every decision we make.

This report highlights our progress toward each Landmark Goal and the work that continues as we move forward together.

MISSION

Ensure academic achievement and personal growth for all students through innovative and engaging educational opportunities.

VISION

An inclusive community of motivated learners who are inspired to change the world through exploration and collaboration.

MOTTO

Excellence in Education, Enthusiasm for Life, Every Student, Every Day.

5 LANDMARK GOALS

Three years later, this report marks our first major checkpoint along the Route 65 journey.



PORTRAIT OF A LEARNER

In partnership with District 67 and District 115

CRITICAL THINKING

- Apply disciplined thinking that is clear, rational, open-minded, and informed by evidence.
- Consistently improve the quality of one's thinking by skillfully analyzing, assessing, and reconstructing along the way.
- Understand the "bigger picture" and propose solutions that are mindful of the impact they may have on other parts of a system.

COMMUNICATION

- Listen effectively to decipher meaning - including knowledge, values, attitudes, and intentions.
- Articulate thoughts and ideas effectively using oral, written, and nonverbal communication skills in a variety of forms and contexts.
- Use communication for a range of purposes and audiences (e.g. to inform, instruct, inspire, and persuade).

ADAPTABILITY

- Work effectively in a climate of ambiguity and changing priorities.
- Demonstrate flexibility and agility in thoughts and actions when acclimating to various roles and situations. Respond constructively to feedback, praise, setbacks, and criticism.
- Understand, negotiate, and balance diverse views and beliefs to reach a workable solution.

EMPATHY

- Seek to understand from another's perspective.
- Listen without judgment.
- Demonstrate awareness, sensitivity, concern, and respect for others' feelings, opinions, experiences, and cultures.

CONFIDENCE

- Believe in one's ability to ultimately attain a defined goal. Persist to overcome adversity and obstacles to uncover alternate strategies and achieve goals.
- Reflect on successes and failures as a way of refining the path forward.
- Take initiative and act with purpose.

CITIZENSHIP

- Value and embrace diverse cultures and unique perspectives through mutual respect and open dialogue.
- Demonstrate personal, civic, social, local, and global responsibility through empathetic and ethical behaviors.
- Contribute and take action to make the world a better place.

Landmark Goal 1

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

On the Road to Student Success

When our community launched Route 65, we committed to ensuring every student has the knowledge, skills, and support needed to thrive. Three years later, we're seeing meaningful progress. Student achievement is rising, instruction is more aligned and consistent, and students have more opportunities to discover their strengths and prepare for what's ahead.

PROGRESS *at a glance*

Illinois Assessment of Readiness

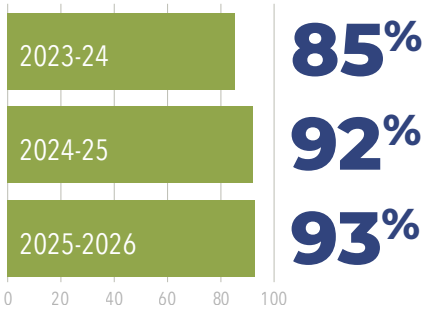
Goal: more than 80% of students meeting or exceeding state standards



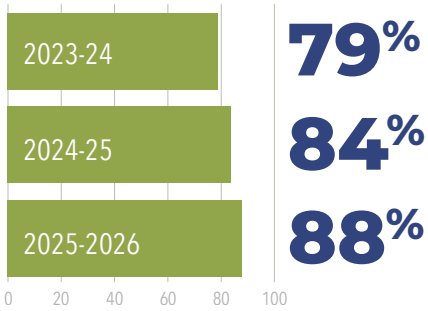
ELA

MATH

Student Achievement & Growth (IAR + MAP)



ELA



MATH

*Beginning with 2024-25 results, Illinois adopted new proficiency benchmarks for IAR. Because the criteria used to determine proficiency changed, proficiency rates beginning in 2024-25 cannot be directly compared with prior years.

UNDERSTANDING THE MEASURES

WHAT IS IAR?

The Illinois Assessment of Readiness is the state assessment administered to students in grades 3-8. It measures student performance against Illinois learning standards and is reported publicly through the Illinois Report Card.

WHAT IS MAP?

MAP is a district-administered assessment that helps educators monitor individual student growth and achievement over time. Unlike IAR, which provides a state-standardized measure at a particular point in time, MAP provides teachers with additional information to understand student progress and adjust instruction.

WHY DOES DISTRICT 65 USE BOTH?

Together, IAR and MAP provide a broader picture of student learning. IAR allows the district and community to understand student performance against state standards, while MAP provides additional information about individual growth and achievement throughout a student's learning journey.

HOW IS THE DISTRICT 65 IAR + MAP MEASURE CALCULATED?

1 IAR
Meets or exceeds state proficiency

If not... →

2 MAP
Meets growth or proficiency benchmarks

If not... →

3 Individual Growth Measures
Meets annual IEP goals or English language proficiency measures

= District 65 Student Achievement & Growth Measure

Students who demonstrate success through any of these measures are included in the district's strategic-plan metric.

OUR ROUTE TO *Student Success*

2023-24
BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

STRENGTHENED CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION

Established districtwide frameworks for consistent curriculum, instructional planning, and teacher collaboration, while adopting updated mathematics curriculum at LBES and science curriculum at LBMS.

REVIEWED PROGRAMS & STUDENT SUPPORTS

Conducted audits and studies of enrichment, student services, and inclusive practices to identify opportunities to better meet student needs.

EXPANDED SPECIALIZED SUPPORT

Established a multilingual learner task force, added a Student Support Specialist, and strengthened intervention training and services.

WHAT WE SAW

IAR: 65% ELA | 49% Math
District Measure: 85% ELA | 79% Math
Multilingual Learners Exiting Services: 3

2024-25
PUTTING THE FOUNDATION INTO PRACTICE

DEEPENED CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

Continued districtwide curriculum work by prioritizing standards and identifying essential learning targets, while expanding collaborative planning opportunities for educators.

EXPANDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Introduced schoolwide K-5 enrichment and an accelerated mathematics pathway for students in grades 4-5.

STRENGTHENED INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICES

Expanded explicit grammar instruction, inclusive practices, and developmentally appropriate professional learning for primary educators.

REFINED TECHNOLOGY & LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Continued redesign of the LBMS schedule and adjusted early-elementary technology practices to support more intentional device use.

WHAT WE SAW

IAR: 76% ELA | 61% Math
District Measure: 92% ELA | 84% Math
Multilingual Learners Exiting Services: 8

OUR ROUTE TO *Student Success*

STRENGTHENED CURRICULUM & ASSESSMENT
Advanced curriculum alignment through common formative assessments, completed a review of summative assessments, and piloted CKLA literacy in grade 3.

EXPANDED STUDENT PATHWAYS
Redesigned the LBMS master schedule to introduce new Communications, Writing, and Math Practical Applications courses and implemented advanced learning services at LBES for students in grades 3-5.

STRENGTHENED INTERVENTION & LITERACY SUPPORT
Expanded intervention services and professional learning, including LETRS and specialized supports for students with dyslexia and decoding or fluency needs.

FOCUSED ON SCHOOLWIDE IMPROVEMENT
Fully implemented school improvement plans focused on mathematics at LBES and writing at LBMS while also launching work around high school readiness.

2025-26 DEEPENING & EXPANDING THE WORK

2026 ILLINOIS SCHOOL DESIGNATIONS

Lake Bluff Elementary School: **EXEMPLARY**

Lake Bluff Middle School: **APPROACHING EXEMPLARY**

WHAT WE SAW

IAR: 80% ELA | 65% Math
District Measure: 93% ELA | 88% Math
Multilingual Learners Exiting Services: 11

JOB-EMBEDDED SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS
Two new Teaching and Learning Specialists, continued curriculum alignment, and professional learning focused on high-impact instructional practices.

STRONGER CORE INSTRUCTION & INTERVENTION
CKLA implementation, in K-4th grades WIN time at LBES and FLEX at LBMS, MTSS review, and expanded mathematics, literacy, and student-support interventions.

COLLABORATIVE IMPROVEMENT
School-based guiding coalitions and a district council bringing educators and administrators together around student achievement and growth.

CONTINUOUS REVIEW & REFINEMENT
Continued evaluation of mathematics, related arts, report cards, assessments, technology, and student services to ensure programs meet student needs.

2026-27 THE ROAD AHEAD

Landmark Goal 2

STAFF & EDUCATOR EXCELLENCE

Powered by Exceptional People

The success of Route 65 begins with exceptional people. By investing in our educators through professional learning, collaboration, and meaningful support, we're creating the conditions for both staff and students to thrive.

PROGRESS *at a glance*

STAFF RETENTION

2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
92.5%	94.5%	93.6%

A stable, experienced staff strengthens relationships, instruction, and student success.

CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE



Lake County Middle School Educator of the Year (2025)
Jane Twohig
7th Grade Social Studies Teacher



Lake County Educator of the Year (2026)
Nic Schlichting
Paraprofessional at LBES



Financial Literacy Grant Recipient
Heather Komac
LBMS Math Teacher

WHAT'S MOVING US FORWARD

INVESTING IN PROFESSIONAL GROWTH

Our educators continue to grow through collaborative learning and research-based professional development.

- Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)
- Inclusive Schools professional development
- Consortium for Interdistrict Collaboration (CIC)
- District Office transformation work

SUPPORTING GREAT TEACHING

We're creating more time and stronger systems to help educators focus on student learning.

- Weekly collaborative planning for K–5 staff
- Middle school team collaboration time
- Teaching & Learning Specialists
- Expanded social emotional learning support
- Take Flight reading intervention
- Renaissance assessment platform

GROWING A STRONG TEAM

Investing in people means creating an environment where educators feel supported and valued.

- Expanded enrichment opportunities that allow K–5 classroom teachers to focus more intentionally on core literacy and mathematics instruction.
- Director of Teaching, Learning and Impact
- Expanded multilingual staffing
- Continued evolution of Student Support Specialist roles

Landmark Goal 3

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Traveling Together

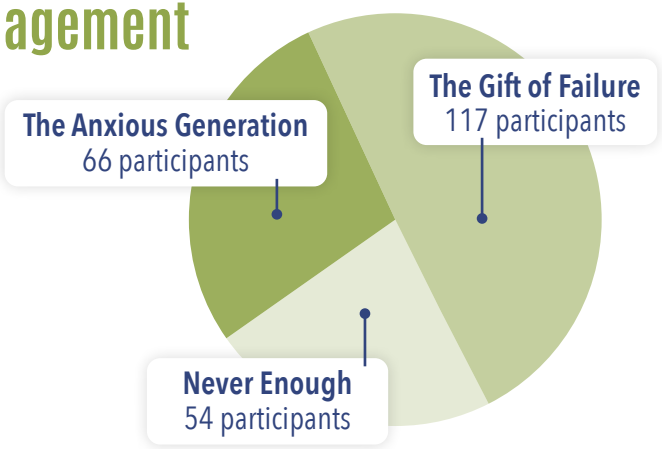
Route 65 was never meant to be a journey taken alone. Strong partnerships with families, community members, and neighboring districts help create the best possible experience for every student. Over the past three years, we've expanded opportunities to connect, listen, and collaborate, building stronger relationships that support student success both inside and outside the classroom.

PROGRESS *at a glance*

Community Engagement

237

Community Members participated in District 65 Summer Book Clubs over three years.



New Ways to Connect

- Monthly Community Newsletter
- New District Website
- Thrillshare Communication Platform
- Community Calendar
- Lattes with Leali
- Principal Updates

WHAT'S MOVING US FORWARD

STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION

Clear, consistent communication helps families stay informed and engaged.

- SeeSaw implementation
- Monthly Community Newsletter
- New district website
- Thrillshare communication platform
- Expanded principal communications
- Volunteer Handbook
- Community Town Halls

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Strong schools are built through meaningful partnerships and shared experiences.

- Community Wellness Task Force
- Youth Summit
- Adult Summit
- Career Day
- Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee engagement
- Community service and donation initiatives
- Bluffers in Need fund, donations that assist in meeting student needs

EXPANDING PARTNERSHIPS

Collaboration creates more opportunities for students and families.

- Portrait of a Learner partnership with Districts 67 & 115
- High School Readiness Committee
- Alliance for Excellence Innovation Grants
- Legacy Mosaic Project
- PTO-supported campus improvements
- School Safety Week with local law enforcement partners

Landmark Goal 4

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Keeping Route 65 on Solid Ground

Every step along Route 65 is supported by thoughtful planning and responsible stewardship. District 65 remains committed to making strategic investments that strengthen learning while protecting the district's long-term financial health.

Over the past three years, we've continued to align resources with student needs, invest in our people and programs, and maintain the strong financial practices our community expects and deserves.

PROGRESS *at a glance*

Financial Strength

AAA BOND RATING

The highest possible credit rating, reflecting the district's strong financial position and responsible fiscal management.

Excellence in Financial Reporting

CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE in finance

Recognized annually by the Association of School Business Officials (ASBO) and the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) since 2017.

Investing in Our People

2024-2029 **FIVE-YEAR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT**

Successfully negotiated a five-year agreement that supports staff while maintaining long-term financial stability.

WHAT'S MOVING US FORWARD

INVESTING IN STUDENTS

Every financial decision is guided by one question:
How does this support students?

District resources continue to be aligned with instructional priorities, ensuring investments directly strengthen teaching, learning, and student success.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

Responsible stewardship means balancing today's priorities with tomorrow's opportunities.

Through thoughtful planning and careful financial management, District 65 continues to position itself for long-term stability while remaining responsive to the evolving needs of students.

EARNING COMMUNITY TRUST

The Lake Bluff community's investment in its schools is managed with transparency, accountability, and care.

By maintaining strong financial practices and earning continued external recognition, the district is maximizing every taxpayer dollar in support of student learning.

MAINTAINING OUR FACILITIES

District 65 takes a long-term approach to maintaining the community's investment in its schools. Through ongoing maintenance, facility planning and strategic improvements, the district works to provide safe, effective learning environments while responsibly managing resources.

Landmark Goal 5

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Creating the Conditions for Every Journey

Great learning begins with a safe, supportive, and engaging environment. Over the past three years, District 65 has continued to enhance our schools through thoughtful investments in safety, student supports, technology, and learning spaces, creating environments where every student can thrive.

PROGRESS *at a glance*

Safer Schools

- Districtwide electronic door lock project
- Stop the Bleed kits and safety backpacks
- Updated emergency maps
- Annual Safety Week
- Reunification planning
- Director of Safety & Security leadership

Learning-First Technology

- Transition from Chromebooks to iPads
- YouTube disabled on student devices
- Kindergarten transitioned away from 1:1 devices
- Community-led Wait Til 8th Program

LEARNING *first* TECHNOLOGY *second.*

Student-Centered Schedules

- LBMS Flex Period
- LBES WIN Time
- Updated middle school schedule

Designed to provide additional opportunities for intervention, enrichment, and student support.

WHAT'S MOVING US FORWARD

Prioritizing Safety

Students learn best when they feel safe and supported. District 65 continues to strengthen school safety through proactive planning, staff training and facility improvements.

Designing Learning Around Students

Learning environments continue to evolve to meet students' academic, social, and emotional needs.

- Flexible scheduling
- Dedicated intervention and enrichment time
- Technology that supports learning
- Continued focus on student wellness

Supporting the Whole Child

A positive learning environment extends beyond classrooms. Through thoughtful systems, student supports, and intentional planning, we're creating schools where every student feels connected, valued, and ready to learn.

WHAT'S NEXT

Continuing the Journey

The progress highlighted in this report reflects the collective efforts of our students, staff, families, Board of Education and community. While we've reached meaningful milestones over the past three years, our work continues.

As we look ahead, Route 65 will continue to guide our decisions as we build on our momentum and remain focused on what matters most, providing every student with an exceptional educational experience.

Student Achievement

Continuing to strengthen teaching and learning by:

- Advancing the MTSS framework
- Continuing curriculum implementation and refinement
- Launching a redesigned elementary report card
- Expanding cross-curricular collaboration
- Improving outcomes for every learner

Staff & Educator Excellence

Supporting the people who make student success possible by:

- Expanding professional learning opportunities
- Strengthening instructional collaboration
- Recruiting and retaining exceptional educators
- Supporting educator well-being
- Investing in systems that help teachers thrive

Community Partnerships

Building stronger connections by:

- Expanding two-way communication with families
- Creating more opportunities for community dialogue
- Strengthening partnerships with local organizations
- Increasing family engagement across district initiatives
- Continuing to build trust through transparency and collaboration

Fiscal Responsibility & Resource Management

Maintaining responsible stewardship by:

- Aligning financial decisions with student needs
- Investing strategically in people, programs and facilities
- Maintaining long-term financial stability
- Continuing transparent financial communication
- Maximizing every taxpayer dollar in support of student success

Learning Environment

Creating the conditions for every student to thrive by:

- Strengthening school safety and emergency preparedness
- Enhancing learning spaces that support collaboration
- Aligning technology with instructional goals
- Expanding student wellness supports
- Ensuring every student feels safe, valued and inspired to learn

The Journey Continues

Route 65 is more than a strategic plan, it's a shared commitment to continuous improvement. Together, we'll continue building on our progress, embracing new opportunities and preparing every student for success today and in the future.

Thank you for being part of the journey.

LAKE BLUFF SCHOOLS
DISTRICT 65

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