



Montana Board of Public Education

Public Charter School

Application June 2024

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INTRODUCTION

HB 549 (2023), now codified in Title 20, Chapter 6, Part 8 of Montana Code Annotated, authorized the establishment of public charter schools in Montana and tasked the Montana Board of Public Education as the sole entity authorized to enter into public charter contracts with a governing board. There are two types of public charter schools – those operating under an existing local school board and those operating as a new school district under a separate governing board. This Public Charter School Application is for both options.

A public charter school means a public school that has autonomy over decisions including, but not limited to, matters concerning finance, personnel, scheduling, curriculum, and instruction as defined in a public charter contract. Public charter schools are governed by a local school board, or in the case of a governing board other than a local school board, by the governing board of the public charter school district of which the public charter school is a part. Public charter schools are established and operated under the terms of a public charter contract and allow parents to choose to enroll their children. Public charter schools must admit students based on a lottery if more students apply for admission than can be accommodated.

Public charter schools provide a program of education that may include any or all grades from kindergarten through grade 12 and vocational education programs and operate in pursuit of a specific set of educational objectives as defined in its public charter contract.

The evaluation of your application will focus on whether implementing the proposals in your application will lead to the academic, organizational, and financial performance you are promising in exchange for potential broad flexibility from Montana’s education standards. The evaluation will also determine whether:

- There is an established need for the proposed public charter school;

- The proposed public charter school meets the needs of all its students;
 - The proposed public charter school is of the highest academic quality;
 - The proposed public charter school will provide a healthy learning environment and positive school climate;
- The proposed governing board demonstrates the capacity to implement the plan outlined in the application with fidelity; and
- The proposed public charter school will provide an educational opportunity to students that they would not otherwise receive at the traditional school they are zoned to attend.

SUBMISSION PROCEDURES

To facilitate the Montana Board of Public Education’s review of public charter school applications, applicants must submit the application to bpe@mt.gov between the dates of October 28 and November 1, 2024, with a deadline of November 1, 2024 at 5PM. All submission materials must be submitted in a single electronic submission. Multiple attachments will not be accepted in the submission. The Board will review the public charter school application, and if determined complete, will facilitate an interview, and take public comment on the application in November. Final approval of the application will take place at the January 2025 Board of Public Education meeting. Please note the timeline on the Board’s web page under the Public Charter School tab.

We recognize that this application may not provide the space to fully respond to each of the questions in the application. Please provide a brief, direct response to each question, with reference to attachments, appendices, and weblinks to lengthier handbooks, policies, and additional information. Please make sure to clearly state where any corresponding responses are located within the application and limit application pages to 26, plus any attachments and letters of support.

Please note that submitting a public charter school application does not guarantee approval and that a public charter school contract will be granted. Failure to adhere to any requirements may lead to an incomplete application that is rejected before consideration. In addition, complete applications that are not strong enough to guarantee a successful public charter school implementation will be recommended for denial.

PUBLIC CHARTER APPLICATION COVER PAGE

Check One: New Public Charter under existing local school board New Public Charter District

Name of Public Charter School: Laurel Virtual Academy

Local school district in which the public charter school will be physically located:

Laurel Public Schools 7, 7-70

Contact Information for the Governing Board Chair

Contact Person: Brittani Hunter

Title: Board of Trustees Chair

Contact Address: Laurel Public Schools; 410 Colorado Avenue; Laurel, MT 59044

Telephone Number: 406-671-9791

E-mail Address: brittani_hunter@laurel.k12.mt.us

Contact Information for the Person Completing this Application

Contact Person: Matt Torix

Title: Superintendent

Contact Address: Laurel Public Schools; 410 Colorado Avenue; Laurel, MT 59044

Telephone Number: 406-628-3360

E-mail Address: matthew_torix@laurel.k12.mt.us

Local Board of Trustee Evidence

Check One: Approved by existing local school board Refused approval by existing local school board

Link to [full School board minutes for October 21, 2024](#) showing approval. Approval for Charter School formation is shown below.

f. Public Charter School

Superintendent Matt Torix explained that the motion is to approve writing an application for a public Charter School. The application is currently being wrote and will be brought to the Board at the next meeting, for it is due November 1st. The application is for virtual school offerings to students that are grades 6-12 that are not able to attend school either full time or parttime. This will provide students another oppportunity who cannot attend school to graduate.

It was moved and seconded to approve writing an application for a public Charter School.
Motion: Chris Lorash Second: Rene Roth Passed: 7-0

PUBLIC CHARTER APPLICATION

Name of Public Charter School: Laurel Virtual Academy 9-12

Provide an executive summary with the general purpose and rationale for the creation of the public charter school, and explain how the proposed public charter school is different from a program that you could operate or are currently operating without the public charter designation.

Laurel High School and Laurel Middle School are part of Laurel Public School District in the town of Laurel, MT located in Yellowstone County approximately 15 minutes southwest of Billings, MT. The town of Laurel has approximately 7200 residents. The dominant industries in the area include railroad, refinery, and mining. With proximity to Billings, there is some overlap of community members who commute to Billings for work. The demographics of Laurel identify it as a working class community. Many parents work blue collar jobs in the dominant industries or work in the trades in the area. Laurel has also been experiencing increased transience of students moving into and out of the district creating instability in student education and fluctuations in enrollment. Given the changing laws in Montana regarding education, Laurel has experienced a slow decline in enrollment due to families opting into virtual learning and home-schooling. Families cite the flexibility and decreased stress of home-schooling or online schooling as motivators for the change. Following Covid, our schools also saw an increase in students reporting challenges with attending a traditional comprehensive high school and middle school full time.

Additionally, we have some students looking to accelerate their high school education for an early graduation to move on to their post-secondary options or to move into work options. Like much of the rest of the country, we feel the landscape of education changing around us and we feel the need to move with it. We recognize that the dominant educational model still benefits most students. They thrive in the opportunities provided in a Class A size high school where students have choices, but they are still known as a person. The LVA Charter School Application will target approximately 7-8% of the high and middle school population that need a much more specialized option for their secondary school years. We are also hoping to draw back the equivalent of 1-3% of our students who have opted out for "home-schooling" choices or optioned into a fully remote, but costly online platforms. We believe that these students still deserve and need the wrap around support and connections that a comprehensive public school provides.

This charter will provide alternative and innovative options to meet the unique and diverse needs of our students and their families. It will help us keep our students connected to the school and provide support while they earn credit through online options. It also provides for a hybrid/blended schedule so students could be part-time in the building and part-time remote online to serve their needs. The LVA offers the flexibility to speed up student pacing towards earlier graduation if that is something they are interested in or to slow it down if they want to create space in their schedule for internships and work experiences. Students would be able to take courses that we are not able to offer in a traditionally structured high school or middle school day with limited instructional staff. We recognize that although home schooling in concept may be attractive to families for a variety of reasons, many parents soon find that it is difficult or expensive to manage, supervise, and navigate on their own. The LVA would provide support and guidance to help families navigate educational options and meet the needs of their students. It would also provide a seamless transition to return to an on campus environment when the student is ready to be involved in the social opportunities offered through many hands-on classes, clubs, activities, and athletics. We could not feasibly start and operate the same program at this size or to this extent without the additional state funding for the charter school. The formation of the charter school

gives us latitude for flexibility and responsiveness to student needs.

[Link to LPS Strategic Plan](#) : Full Strategic plan also included as Addendum B

Opening Date: September 2025 **Public Charter Term Length:** 5 years

Grades to be served: 6-12

Minimum Enrollment Per Year: 65

Planned Enrollment Per Year: 70-90

Maximum Enrollment Per Year: 100

During the proposed public charter 5-year term, indicate the specific grade-level programs that you plan to serve:

Check all that apply: Elementary Program Middle Grades Program High School Program

For each year of the public charter term, estimate the number of students the public charter school plans to serve in each grade:

	Elementary						Middle		High School				Total	
	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11		12
Year 1							5	10	10	5	5	15	20	70
Year 2							5	10	10	5	5	20	25	80
Year 3							5	10	10	5	5	25	30	85
Year 4							5	10	10	5	5	25	30	90
Year 5							5	10	10	5	5	25	30	90

ACADEMIC PROGRAM

See Submission Procedures

1. State the public charter school’s mission and vision and describe why this initiative is important to the community it will serve.

The LVA mission and vision align with the Laurel Public Schools Strategic Goals for Learning, specifically Focus area 1: Enhanced learning Opportunities for Each Student and Focus Area 4: Innovation.

Laurel Public Schools has committed to fostering “a dynamic and inclusive learning environment that embraces innovation and flexibility tailored to meet the diverse needs of individual students and families. We are committed to adapting to the changing requirements of our students,

families, and the community we serve. Our aim is to ensure that every learner is actively engaged in the learning process, fostering confidence and agency over their own educational journey.” As part of the Strategic plan the district is working to pilot a flexible learning program and to identify and evaluate innovative educational platforms to provide support for a flexible learning model within the next academic year. Focus Area 1 for Laurel Public Schools is to develop “enhanced learning opportunities that are continually adapting to the needs and aspirations of each student.”

The mission of the LVA is to provide flexible pathways to support students in earning their high school diploma despite challenges, limitations, or obstacles to a traditionally structured brick and mortar school on a standard 180 day 8:00-3:30 calendar year. The vision is a virtual structure that allows for the use of multiple online learning platforms, community service, work experience, and a flexible schedule and calendar. This structure will create unique and rigorous learning experiences for students and keep them connected to a larger school community. It will allow them to participate in athletics, activities, extended learning opportunities, and on campus classes with minimal transition.

2. Identify the targeted student population and the community the public charter school proposes to serve.

Laurel Virtual Academy is targeted to serve up to 10% of the population of the high school and middle school who, for a variety of reasons, do not thrive in the traditional, comprehensive school environment. Our goal is to provide a self-paced, flexible environment that will support students with extenuating circumstances, family issues, medical issues, or other obstacles to a traditionally scheduled day. Additionally, we are also hoping to provide an option to families who are interested in the home-schooling approach for scheduling and flexibility, but lack the resources to acquire and implement an accredited curriculum to meet state graduation requirements. Being part of the LVA allows homeschooled students to maintain a connection to a traditional school structure and more easily access the additional benefits of clubs, activities, events, instructors, counselors, additional academic support, etc. It also provides an easier transition if the student/family determines they are ready to return to a traditional school structure either full time or part time. The final target population would be students who are not on track to graduate, but could benefit from the flexibility and opportunity to pursue credits outside of a traditional school structure.

3. Describe plans and timelines for student recruitment and enrollment, including lottery procedures.

Currently LHS and LMS has several students who would benefit from the opportunities presented by a flexible virtual structure. They range from full time to part time students. We would like to begin by expanding this number and offering the opportunity to additional students in the high school and middle school who are currently failing to thrive in the environment or demonstrate a need for more significant differentiation. We would also like to promote it to former LPS students who have pursued home school or online school platforms outside of the district. If there is a greater interest of acceptable applicants to the academy at the opening than we have the ability to support, we would implement a lottery process to fill spots. Following the opening we would create a wait list and rolling admission as vacancies become available. There will be an established application deadline for each semester; however, students may apply on a rolling basis if there are spots available.

- LVA staff with the support of LHS/LMS administration and staff will finalize the application form, application process, and publish the lottery process.
- LHS and LMS counselors and administrators will work together to identify students who are:
 - at risk of not graduating,
 - not thriving in their current structure, or
 - already participating in online curriculum through accommodations in their personal learning plan. These students will be invited to apply for the LVA.
- Students will work with counselors and administrators to develop a plan of study (Personal Learning Plan) to meet graduation requirements in the necessary timeframe for each student.

Summer 2025

- Open seats will be available to current and former LPS students who reside in the district; followed by students who reside outside of the district, but are interested specifically in the LVA.

Fall 2025

- Staff and administration will work with students and families to orient them to the platforms and the LVA requirements for progress.
- If there are spots available, enrollment will proceed on a rolling basis throughout the semester. If there are not available spots, students will be added to the waitlist.

Spring 2026

- LVA staff will plan, schedule, and hold a parent/student orientation seminar for new families who have joined LVA since the fall open house.

4. Describe the public charter school's academic program, specifically focusing on why it is innovative in your school district. Include plans to formally assess student achievement on an annual basis.

Laurel Public Schools is currently a traditional class A Montana public school requiring compulsory attendance to achieve a high school diploma with 23 credits prior to the student aging out. Laurel High School and Middle School currently has a limited number of students who are part time, or attend exclusively virtual classes. Presently, approximately 12% of students take at least one MTDA class per year within their traditional schedule. Laurel Public Schools, like many other districts in Montana, have been feeling the slow trickle of students leaving for the flexibility of homeschooling. As professional educators, we know that formal schooling offers many benefits and opportunities in addition to the course content that students earn credit for. We also understand that many families eventually return to formal education when they discover there is much more to homeschooling than they were prepared for. Through the LVA, we seek to bridge the gap between traditional school and the flexibility and personalization that students and families are seeking. Additionally, we believe that by using online platforms we can not only conquer physical limitations of time and place; but also the limited course availability we are able to offer with contracted teachers during a given school term. The structure of LVA also accommodates a blend of part-time online and part time in person instruction as well. A structural shift like this has not been attempted in our district. It will provide flexible, creative options for students to build an educational experience that will help develop their skills for their targeted post-secondary choices.

Online learning advisors will review student progress and performance weekly to enter progress grades within the SIS. We will also use regular student check-ins to maintain connection and progress. Periodic parent/guardian check-ins and surveys will ensure we are meeting family needs relative to

educational progress. In order to formally assess student achievement on an annual basis, we will require that they remain on-track to graduate according to their personal learning plan. Students in grades 6 - 10 will complete a district adopted reading and math universal screener tests three times per year to monitor growth. Students in grade 11 will take the ACT. Seniors will work closely with their advisors to ensure they are earning any remaining required credits for graduation.

5. Describe any variances to existing standards that the public charter school requires to enhance educational opportunities.

LVA will seek to use a combination of traditional courses, MTDA, and online platforms that are vetted and accredited by the State of Montana. The LVA does not need and is not requesting any variances as it will comply with all Montana educational and graduation requirements.

6. Describe the instructional design, including the type of learning environment, class size and structure, curriculum overview, and teaching methods.

The instructional design for LVA will be a combination of online synchronous/asynchronous and in person instruction. The class size will vary depending on the platform of the course. Students could have on-campus traditional class sizes or smaller class sizes via online synchronous/asynchronous virtual courses. The instructional design may also include internships, project based learning, and school to work experiences. The curriculum offerings will align with Montana Content Standards and courses will be vetted to meet requirements for graduation requirements. The learning environment, teaching methods, and class structure will vary depending on platform and course. The development of the student's Personalized Learning Plan will structure the student's educational progress to graduation.

7. Describe plans for identifying and successfully serving students with disabilities, students who are English Language Learners, students who are academically challenged, and gifted students, including compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

The Laurel Virtual Academy will follow existing LPS District policies and procedures, as well as state and federal requirements for special education and section 504 plans, as outlined in district policy. Students with IEP service minutes would be served for those requirements by the Laurel High School and Laurel Middle School special education staff. Students who are academically challenged, gifted, or English Language Learners will have accommodations built into their Personal Learning Plans. These accommodations can be monitored by the digital learning coordinator. Students requiring extended support can access additional services in the main building. Special education accommodations and service minutes will be provided on the high school and middle school campuses as much as possible. If IEP teams discern that alternate accommodation or locations are necessary to achieve a least restrictive environment the Virtual Academy team will work with the student's IEP team or 504 case manager to develop appropriate accommodations.

8. Describe student discipline policies, including those for special education students.

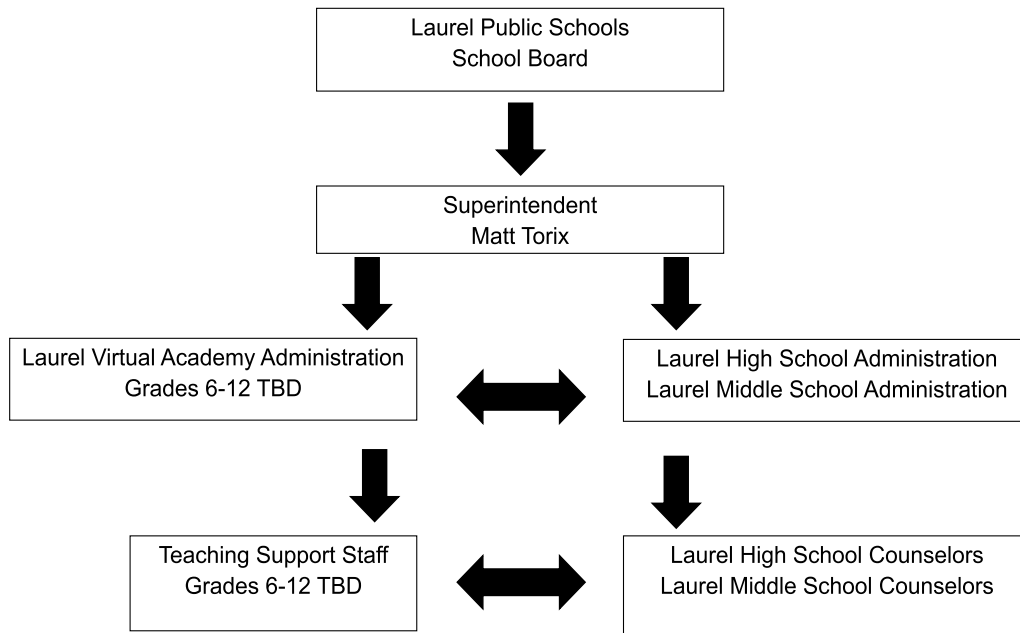
The Laurel Virtual Academy will follow the existing LPS District discipline policies, protocols, and procedures for behavior issues including for students who are identified by IEP.

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

See Submission Procedures

9. Describe the public charter school’s organizational chart that clearly presents the proposed organizational structure, including lines of authority and reporting between the governing board, staff, related bodies such as advisory bodies or parent and teacher councils, and external organizations that will play a role in managing the public charter school.

The Laurel Virtual Academy will operate as a school within a school under the governance of the Laurel Public Schools Board of Trustees. Direct oversight of the Academy will be by the LVA administrator in consultation with the LHS/LMS Administration.

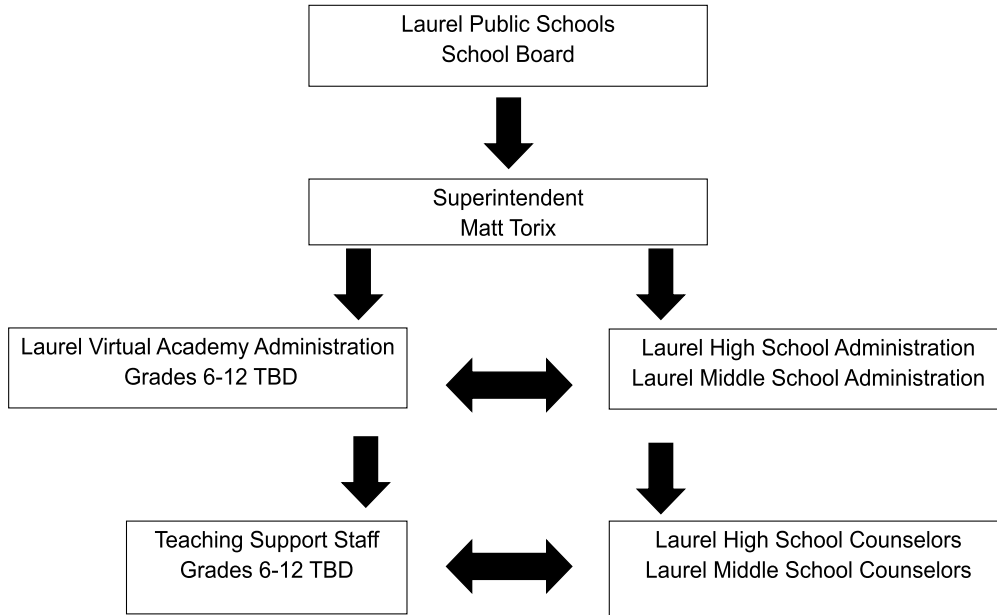


10. Describe the roles and responsibilities of the governing board, the proposed leadership management team, and other entities shown in the organizational chart.

The Laurel Public Schools Board of Trustees would serve as the governing body, responsible for setting the overall strategic direction and policies of the LVA. The Board of Trustees will also provide financial resources, provide oversight, and accept public input.

Day to day operational oversight will be by the LVA Administrator who will report directly to the Superintendent. The LVA administrator will work closely with the LHS/LMS administration for students in hybrid programs and recruitment of additional students. The Superintendent will oversee financial, policy-related, personnel-related and structural components of the LVA as it functions as a school in the district.

11. Provide a staffing chart for the public charter school’s first year and a staffing plan for the term of the public charter school.



12. Detail the public charter school startup plan, identifying tasks, timelines, and responsible individuals.

The Laurel Virtual Academy startup plan is:

Task	Timeline	Responsible Individual(s)
Complete charter application	By October 31, 2024	John Stilson, Justin Klebe, Melissa Byington, Charla Wetsch, Matt Torix
Identify online platforms used in charter school	September - December 2024	John Stilson, Justin Klebe, Melissa Byington, Charla Wetsch, Matt Torix
Solicit applications for Laurel Virtual Academy	January - TBD 2025	Laurel Virtual Academy staff, Laurel High School and Laurel Middle School administration and counselors
Recruit and hire charter school administrator	February - April 2025	Matt Torix
Recruit and hire charter school teacher	February - April 2025	LHS administrative staff and charter school administrator
Provide training for educational	June - August 2025	Selected online platform, Laurel School

platform for necessary stakeholders		District Tech Department
Lottery Selection of Applicants if needed	June - July 2025	Laurel Virtual Academy Staff and Laurel High School Administration
Data entry for students admitted to the Laurel Virtual Academy	August 2025	Laurel Virtual Academy staff, Laurel School District Tech Department, Laurel High School Counselors and Administrators
First Day of Classes	September 2nd, 2025	All relevant stakeholders

13. Describe the plans for recruiting and developing school leadership and staff.

Recruitment, on boarding, and evaluation of staff and administration will remain consistent with the policies and procedures of Laurel Public Schools. The LVA administrator will evaluate the teachers following Montana OPI regulations and Laurel School District policy. The superintendent will evaluate and supervise the LVA administrator. The LVA administrator and teachers will participate in district professional development based on the district goals and strategic plan. Additional support and training will be provided for staff based on learning the online platforms the Academy will be using and best practices for supporting online learners.

14. Describe the proposed leadership and teacher employment policies, including performance evaluation plans.

The Laurel Virtual Academy will utilize the current policies, procedures, and practices of Laurel School District No. 7, 7-70. The policies, procedures, and practices are outlined in the District Policy Manual, Staff Handbook, and other applicable district publications. Evaluators will utilize the evaluation tools currently in use.

15. State the proposed governing bylaws.

Laurel Virtual Academy will be governed by the Laurel Public Schools Board of Trustees policies and procedures. Link to [LPS Board of Trustees page and policies](#)

16. Explain any partnerships or contractual relationships central to the operations and mission of the public charter school.

Laurel School District will contract with online platforms to best meet the students’ needs. The district is currently exploring partnerships with Edmentum and Edgenuity/ Imagine Learning. The district will also utilize Montana Digital Academy and EdReady when appropriate.

17. Provide the proposed calendar and sample daily schedule.

The calendar for the LVA will follow the same basic calendar as the district with optional summer sessions extending into June and July. Since most classes will be asynchronous, the schedule is fluid. Teachers and administrators will have flexible daily schedules with some standardized office

hours. The flexibility will allow for the need to work with students on evening hours as arranged for support or for meetings with students or parents.



Laurel Public Schools

DISTRICT 7 & 7-70

2024-2025

www.laurel.k12.mt.us
(406) 628-3360

CALENDAR

July S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	August S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	September S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	October S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31
November S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30	December S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	January S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31	February S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28
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No School Dates Aug. 27 - Aug 30 PIR Days (prior to school start) September 2 Labor Day September 30 Staff Professional Development Day October 17-18 Teacher Convention—PIR Day November 27-29 PIR/Thanksgiving Break Dec. 23 - Jan. 1 Winter Break January 24 Half Day January 30-31 Staff Professional Development Day /State Speech, Drama & Debate February 28 Day Off March 14 Day Off April 18-21 Spring Break May 9 Staff Professional Development Day May 23-30 25-26 Kindergarten Evaluation May 26 Memorial Day		Quarters November 8 End of 1st Quarter January 24 End of 2nd Quarter April 4 End of 3rd Quarter June 6 End of 4th Quarter State Speech, Drama & Debate January 31st-Feb 1st September 3 First Day of School June 6 Last Day of School; Half Day PIR Days Half Day Holiday/No School Days End of quarter/Semester Parent/Teacher Conference	

BUSINESS OPERATIONS

See Submission Procedures

18. Describe plans for providing transportation, food service, and all other significant operational or ancillary services.

LVA will use the LPS transportation, food service, and technology resources. Given that the preponderance of courses are virtual, there will be minimal need for transportation. Students will have the opportunity to access school food service and technology support in the same capacity as all LPS students.

19. Describe co curricular and extracurricular programs and how the programs will be funded and delivered.

All students who qualify by MHSA guidelines will be allowed to participate in Laurel Public School extracurricular activities. LVA students are also eligible to participate in LHS/LMS clubs and activities not governed by MHSA.

20. Describe the proposed financial plan and policies, including financial controls and audit requirements.

The Laurel Virtual Academy and its required operating expenses will follow the same funding structure as the school district's general fund based on the formula found in state law. The additional state base aid funds will be directed to the operating costs for staffing, supplies, curriculum and expenses for the LVA. The school will operate under the policies, financial controls and audit requirements of the LPS District.

21. Describe the insurance coverage that will be obtained.

The LVA will be covered by the same plans and policies that cover LPS. Current coverage for general liability insurance is provided by MSGIA. The LVA will fall within the same coverage for Unemployment Insurance and Workers' Compensation as the LPS district.

22. Describe the startup and five-year budgets with clearly stated assumptions.

Budget Attached as Addendum A

23. Describe the startup and first year cash flow projections with clearly stated assumptions.

In the five year projections, the funding from the student enrollment in the LVA should provide sufficient funding to support initial operations. The enrollment projections are based on a small increase in enrollment each year. It is anticipated that funding will continue to support operations with minimal if any deficit.

Laurel Virtual Academy: Financial Overview

Income:

- **First-Year Projection:** \$551,715
 - State Funding: \$471,715 (basic entitlement)
 - Multi-District Fund: \$80,000
- **Second-Year Projection:** \$847,780
 - State Funding (Increase by 2.35%)
 - ANB based off of 20 "New" Middle School Students and 40 "New" High School Students
- **Third-Year Projection:** \$935,466

- State Funding (Increase by 2.35%)
- ANB based off of 20 Middle School Students and 45 High School Students
- **Fourth-Year Projection:** \$1,023,419
 - State Funding (Increase by 2.35%)
 - ANB based off of 20 Middle School Students and 50 High School Students
- **Fifth-Year Projection:** \$1,035,304
 - State Funding (Increase by 2.35%)
 - ANB based off of 20 Middle School Students and 55 High School Student

Expenses:

- **Staff:**
 - **First-Year Projection**
 - **Administrator:** 1.0 FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) - Salary based on Laurel School's average administrator pay (\$91,365) with 18% benefits.
 - **Academic Support Teachers:** Teachers FT (total 0.5 FTE) - Salary based on Laurel School's average teacher pay (\$61,060) with 18% benefits.
 - **Other Staff:**
 - Counselor: 0.25 FTE (salary + benefits)
 - Receptionist/Registrar: 0.25 FTE (salary + benefits)
 - Technology Support: 0.25 FTE (salary + benefits)
 - **Second-Year Projection**
 - **Administrator:** 1.0 FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) - Salary based on Laurel School's average administrator pay (\$91,365) with 18% benefits.
 - **Academic Support Teachers:** Teachers FT (total 1 FTE) - Salary based on Laurel School's average teacher pay (\$61,060) with 18% benefits.
 - **Other Staff:**
 - Counselor: 0.25 FTE (salary + benefits)
 - Receptionist/Registrar: 0.25 FTE (salary + benefits)
 - Technology Support: 0.25 FTE (salary + benefits)
 - **Third-Year Projection**
 - **Administrator:** 1.0 FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) - Salary based on Laurel School's average administrator pay (\$91,365) with 18% benefits.
 - **Academic Support Teachers:** Teachers FT (total 1.5 FTE) - Salary based on Laurel School's average teacher pay (\$61,060) with 18% benefits.
 - **Other Staff:**
 - Counselor: 0.25 FTE (salary + benefits)
 - Receptionist/Registrar: 0.25 FTE (salary + benefits)
 - Technology Support: 0.25 FTE (salary + benefits)
 - **Fourth-Year Projection**
 - **Administrator:** 1.0 FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) - Salary based on Laurel School's average administrator pay (\$91,365) with 18% benefits.
 - **Academic Support Teachers:** Teachers FT (total 1.5 FTE) - Salary based on Laurel School's average teacher pay (\$61,060) with 18% benefits.

- Counselor: 0.50 FTE (salary + benefits)
 - Receptionist/Registrar: 0.50 FTE (salary + benefits)
 - Technology Support: 0.50 FTE (salary + benefits)
 - **Fifth-Year Projection**
 - **Administrator:** 1.0 FTE (Full-Time Equivalent) - Salary based on Laurel School's average administrator pay (\$91,365) with 18% benefits.
 - **Academic Support Teachers:** Teachers FT (total 1.5 FTE) - Salary based on Laurel School's average teacher pay (\$61,060) with 18% benefits.
 - **Other Staff:**
 - Counselor: 0.50 FTE (salary + benefits)
 - Receptionist/Registrar: 0.50 FTE (salary + benefits)
 - Technology Support: 0.50 FTE (salary + benefits)
- **Instructional Resources:**
 - Digital platforms: Montana Digital Academy and Edgenuity
 - Learning programs: rapid training, dual enrollment, work-based learning
 - Student supplies: workbooks, calculators, technology assistance (Chromebooks)
 - Staff supplies: folders, lamps, headphones, etc.
 - Professional development (travel may be included)
- **Additional Stipends:** \$1,500 year/person for staff working additional hours.

Future Budget Projections:

- Budgets for fiscal years 2025-26 are based on a 2.35% inflation rate, aligned with the five-year forward inflation expectation.
- \$80,000 will be paid back to the Multi-District fund in year 2

24. Describe anticipated fundraising contributions and evidence, if applicable.

We do not have any anticipated fundraising contributions at this time.

25. Describe the facilities plan, including backup or contingency plans.

Since the LVA will be predominantly digital and off-site, there is not a significant need for space allocations. The Laurel Public Schools District Administration building, Laurel High School, and Laurel Middle school all have available classroom and conference room space for supporting students who need to be on campus for additional support, special education support, or meetings. The District office has space available for the administrative and teacher offices.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT AND NEED

See Submission Procedures

26. Describe the specific evidence of significant community support.

Laurel Schools have seen a steady rise in students choosing home school or learn at home options. More and more families from our high school and middle schools are looking at part time school day options with homebound services. The school, in an effort to guarantee a solid scholastic

foundation, wants to work with families of all ages to better meet the needs of each individual student. Additionally, we want to work with families we have never had a connection with or have lost our connection with, and in turn, build bridges with our Laurel School community to support the students who feel that the traditional school setting has not served their needs.

27. Describe the opportunities and expectations for parent involvement.

Parents will be connected with all school functions, having access to extracurricular and cocurricular activities. This includes parent activity nights, and school outreach such as parent surveys. Parents are a vital part of a student’s education and staying involved with the larger school community is expected and encouraged. Parents will have access to facilities and District resources for special needs and academic support for every student where it is needed.

The LVA would have a specific Charter School Open house and orientation night to welcome families and onboard the students and parents to programs that will be used in the LVA. The LVA will also host a parent workshop at the beginning of the second semester to help parents understand the platforms and operations of the Virtual Academy. Topics may also include best practices for online learning, digital safety, orientation to Infinite Campus and any educational platform their students are using.

NOT AN EXISTING LOCAL SCHOOL BOARD? COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION

See Submission Procedures

1. Provide specific evidence that the applicant has sought from the local school board the creation of a school or program of the located school district serving the mission and vision of the proposed public charter school.

N/A

2. Provide specific evidence that the local school board declined to create the school or program and declined to submit a proposal for the creation of a public charter school to the Board of Public Education.

N/A

3. Provide a legal description of the property of the existing school district from which the boundaries of the public charter school district are proposed to be formed.

N/A

4. Share background information on the initial governing board members and, if identified, the proposed school leadership and management team.

N/A

Addendum A: LVA projected budget

**projections rounded to the nearest whole dollar amount. [Link to Budget in .xlsx](#)

Preliminary Budget for Laurel Virtual Academy (LVA)	Fiscal Year	Current Rate	Projection Elements					1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	5th Year
			1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	5th Year					
Middle School and High School												2.35%
Revenues												
High School Basic Entitlement (> 45 Students)		\$353,787.00	1	1	1	1	353,787	362,101	370,610	379,320	388,234	
Middle School Basic Entitlement for Grades 7 & 8 (> 25 Students)		\$117,928.00	1	1	1	1	117,928	120,699	123,536	126,439	129,410	
High School Basic ANB (Current rate \$7,634) * (45 - 15 existing) = 30 New		\$7,634.00	30	40	45	50	229,020	229,020	305,360	381,700	381,700	
Middle School Basic ANB (Current rate - average of \$5,962, \$7,934) * (25 - 15 existing) = 20 New		\$6,798.00	20	20	20	20	80,000	135,960	135,960	135,960	135,960	
Laurel School Multidistrict Fund Revenues to Start Up Program							531,725	847,780	935,466	1,023,429	1,035,304	
Total Revenues												
Expenditures												
Staff Salaries/Benefits		Amount	FTE				Total					
Administrator		\$91,365.00	1	1	1	1	91,365	93,512	95,710	97,959	100,261	
Academic Support Teachers		\$61,060.00	0.5	1	1.5	1.5	30,530	62,495	63,212	64,647	66,800	
Counselor		\$72,715.00	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.5	18,179	18,606	19,043	19,898	20,131	
Receptionist/Registrar		\$35,033.60	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.5	8,758	8,964	9,125	9,587	9,699	
Technology		\$69,172.00	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.5	17,293	17,699	18,115	18,928	19,150	
Total Salaries							166,125	201,277	206,007	210,848	215,803	
Benefits (18%)		18.00%					29,903	30,605	31,324	32,061	32,814	
Total Benefits and Salaries							362,153	433,158	442,586	453,927	464,658	
Instruction and Supplies		Amount	Number				Total					
Digital Learning Platforms (Montana Digital Academy, Edgenuity, and Other approved programs)		\$2,000.00	70	80	85	90	140,000	143,290	146,657	150,104	153,631	
Student Supplies (Assume \$50.00 per student)		\$50.00	70	80	85	90	3,500	3,582	3,666	3,753	3,841	
Student Computers (Assume one per student)		\$350.00	70	80	85	90	24,500	25,076	25,665	26,268	26,885	
Professional Development Dues and Fees		\$800.00	2	2	3	3	1,600	1,638	1,676	1,715	1,756	
Staff Supplies (Assume \$250 per teacher)		\$250.00	1.5	1.5	2	2	375	384	393	402	412	
Travel out of district /in service for Professional Development							2,500	2,559	2,619	2,680	2,743	
Stipends for Teachers (A maximum), Receptionist/Registrar,Technology		\$1,500.00	6	6	7	7	9,000	9,212	9,428	9,650	9,876	
Total Instruction and Supplies							181,475	185,740	190,105	194,572	199,144	
Pay Back Mult District in 2nd Year							0	80,000	0	0	0	
Total Expenses							543,628	698,898	632,691	648,499	663,803	
Balance - Revenues - Expenses							8,087	148,882	302,775	374,930	371,501	

Note: Each years balances increase due to an inflation rate of 2.35%

Addendum B: Laurel Public Schools Strategic Plan



Laurel Public Schools' Strategic Planning Process

Initially Adopted November 22, 2010 and Updated Annually

Revised on October 28, 2024

Learning! Committed! Engaged!

Overview

The Laurel Public School District has embarked on a strategic initiative to align its resources with the community's identified priorities and needs. This ongoing process aims to strengthen and revitalize the school district through strategic planning and thinking. The ultimate goal is to optimize resource allocation to best serve the students of Laurel Public Schools.

To this end, the Laurel Board of Trustees, Staff Leadership Team, and faculty have initiated a strategic planning process that reflects their commitment to children, community engagement, and knowledge-based decision-making. The district has partnered with consultants from the Montana School Board Association to facilitate this process.

The district views strategic planning as a continuous endeavor rather than a one-time project. The adoption of a plan signifies agreement with the general direction outlined by the Core Ideology, Envisioned Future, Goals, and Strategic Objectives. Progress towards these objectives will be evaluated at least annually, with the plan being updated to reflect achievements and evolving student needs.

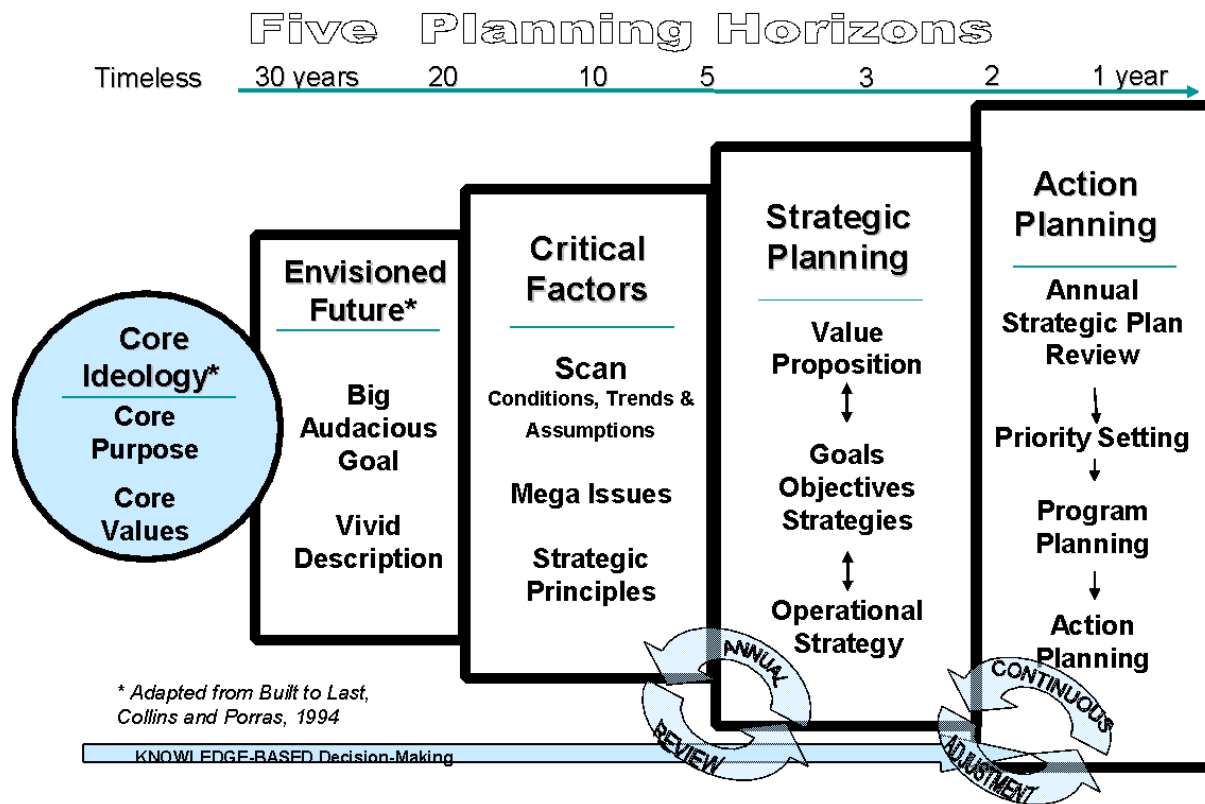
This approach ensures that Laurel Public Schools remains adaptable and responsive to the changing educational landscape, consistently working to provide the best possible learning environment for its students.

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Strategic Planning Framework

The framework used by the Laurel Public Schools for its strategic planning process was adapted from a model developed by Jim Collins, author of “Built to Last” and “Good to Great.” The Board focused on five different planning horizons, starting with the long term issues first to provide focus to shorter term efforts.



Part I: Planning Horizon: Timeless Core Ideology¹ of the Laurel Public School District

Core Purpose of the Laurel Public School District:

Laurel Public Schools prepares each child for the future in a safe and entrusted environment with a clear focus on quality education, meeting the unique needs of students and positively impacting students, their families and our community.

The district embraces this Core Purpose within its mission statement; *“The Laurel School District is dedicated to the individual development of each child every day, without exception.”*

Core Values of the Laurel Public School District

- **Focus on Students:** We are committed to delivery of a quality educational program that promotes both academic success and the overall development of every student. We believe in tailoring our educational programs to meet the needs and skill level of each student. Our educational environment promotes high student expectations, the importance of collaboration, lifelong learning and creative/critical thinking. We believe that it is vital that students have a strong desire to learn and collaborate with each other.
- **Focus on Staff:** We are committed to staff excellence and the retention and recruitment of the best staff possible. We believe educators need to have a strong desire to educate and work together to become better professional educators.
- **Accountability:** We are committed to ensuring that decisions at all levels (board, administration, employees and students) are transparent and data-driven with the goal of maximizing the positive impact on students. We believe that ethics, perseverance, commitment and efficiency serve as the foundations of everything we do as a school district. We believe that accountability is reciprocal at all levels from our students, staff, board, community and parents.
- **Open Communication/Engagement:** We are committed to open lines of communication and transparency at all levels. We understand the importance of engagement at all levels from our students, staff, board, community and parents. We know that the success of our students is dependent on both the involvement of our community and parents in our educational programs and on the school’s efforts in keeping the community and parents informed about our educational programs, our challenges and our needs.
- **Citizenship and Community Focus:** We are committed to providing an atmosphere in which respect, honesty and integrity are required of everyone. We believe that creating a culture of acceptance of others, understanding the importance of giving back to the school district and to our community, recognition and honoring of others and exercising self-discipline is vital to the success of our community, our schools and our students.

¹ **Core ideology** describes a school district's consistent identity that transcends all changes related to its relevant environment. It consists of two elements - **Core Purpose** - the school district's reason for being - and **Core Values** - essential and enduring principles that guide a school district.

Part II: Planning Horizon: 10-15 Years

Envisioned Future² of the Laurel School District

Big Audacious Goal:

At Laurel Public Schools, students and staff share a passion for understanding the human condition and a healthy competitive spirit to meet global workplace demands. Our rigorous academic program exposes students to diverse opportunities, helping them envision their future and equipping them with the skills needed to achieve their individual goals.

Engagement begins on the first day of kindergarten and continues throughout a student's educational journey. We lay the groundwork for post-secondary success starting in elementary school. While maintaining a strong focus on core curriculum, we offer forward-thinking electives that cater to students' unique skills, talents, and interests.

Our commitment is to help each child reach their highest potential in a safe, caring environment that addresses students' social, emotional, and academic needs. We remain at the forefront of technology, effectively utilizing tools to enhance student achievement.

A Vivid Description of the Desired Future:

- We offer diverse academic and vocational opportunities to all students.
- The District remains on the cutting-edge in technology and effectively uses tools to enhance student achievement.
- Our competitive benefits and compensation attract top-tier educators.
- We embrace innovative teaching methods that extend beyond traditional classroom walls.
- We provide interest-based academic tracks, including arts, technology, trades, and sciences.
- Our Graduates take pride in themselves and what they have accomplished at Laurel Public Schools and in our community.
- We have the necessary resources to meet the needs of our students and staff.
- Our students serve as role models, positively impacting their peers and community.
- We instill self-discipline, encouraging students to work hard towards both short-term and long-term life goals.
- Our students understand their responsibility to be active citizens.
- We foster a lifelong love of learning in our students.
- We offer a diverse range of classes including college-level and vocational courses to ensure post-secondary success for all students.
- We have successfully broken the cycle of low motivation, inspiring high achievement across generations.
- We empower each child to realize that their dreams are attainable through personal effort.
- Our education system allows students to progress at their own pace, grouping them by academic ability rather than age. We adjust learning time to accommodate individual rates of progress.

² **Envisioned Future** conveys a concrete yet unrealized vision for the school district. It consists of a **Big Audacious Goal** - a clear and compelling catalyst that serves as a focal point for effort - and **Vivid descriptions** - vibrant and engaging descriptions of what it will be like to achieve the big audacious goal.

- Our teachers act as facilitators of knowledge, guiding students in their learning journey.
- We cultivate an inspiring, motivated, and innovative teaching staff that embraces change, rewarded both intrinsically and financially for their efforts.
- We offer flexible scheduling, recognizing that students have varying instructional needs. Some students need 6-7 hours of instruction/day and support, while others only need 1-2 hours/day or week.
- Technology is seamlessly integrated at every level of our educational system, from board governance to classroom instruction.
- Students explore career opportunities through on-site experiences, technology, and community business partnerships.
- The curriculum is globally integrated..
- Our facilities are designed and operated with environmental consciousness.
- Every student graduates from Laurel Public Schools with a personalized plan for future success, whether educational, career-oriented, or vocational.
- We provide parents access to diverse resources, including health, social, emotional, and skill-based support, both from the school and partner agencies.
- Through collaboration with parents and the community, we've developed creative funding methods to provide necessary resources for our schools.
- Laurel Public Schools prides itself on collaborative efforts between the board, staff, students, parents, and community, all working together for the benefit of all our students. This collective approach ensures that every student receives a well-rounded education that prepares them for future success.
- Laurel Public Schools provides virtual learning opportunities for all students who may not fall into the traditional student mold and to assist parents with their child's learning needs on and off our school campus.

Part III: Planning Horizon: 5-10 Years

Assumptions Regarding the Relevant Future for the Laurel Public School District

In order to make progress against the 20 year Envisioned Future, Laurel Public Schools must constantly anticipate the strategic factors likely to affect its ability to succeed, and to assess the implications of those factors. This process of building foresight about the future will help Laurel Public Schools to constantly recalibrate its view of the relevant future, a basis upon which to update the strategic plan on an annual basis. As the outcome-oriented goals that will form the basis of the long-range strategic plan will be based on this foresight, annual review of these statements will be an appropriate method of determining and ensuring the ongoing relevance of the strategic plan.

See Appendix "B" hereto for the assumptions about the future that have been made by the District. The District is committed to a process of continuing to look at the horizon to anticipate barriers to the intended success of the District.

Part IV: Planning Horizon: 1-5 Years

Outcome-Oriented Goals and Strategic Objectives

The following thinking represents goals for the next five years. They are areas in which Laurel Public Schools will explicitly state the conditions or attributes it wants to achieve. These outcome statements will define, "what will constitute future success." The achievement of each goal will move the school district toward realization of its Envisioned Future.

Strategic Objectives provide direction and actions on how the school district will accomplish its articulated goals. All strategies included in the strategic plan should be considered accomplishable at some point in the future. Strategic Objectives are reviewed annually by the Laurel School Board, Staff Leadership Team, and faculty.

See Appendix "A" hereto identifying the progress the District has made on its identified Goals and Strategic Objectives.

3-5 Year Goals and 1-2 Year Strategic Objectives of the Laurel Public School District

Area 1: Enhanced Learning Opportunities for Each Student

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five years:

Laurel Public Schools has developed enhanced learning opportunities that are continually adapting to the needs and aspirations of each student. Our teaching staff is dynamic, highly effective and adjusts their teaching methodologies to meet the needs of each student. We have successfully incorporated differentiated instruction, technology and other innovations into all aspects of our educational programming. As a result of our efforts, our students are enthused about their education, about learning and actively engaged.

1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:

1. We will enhance our K-12 pathway framework to ensure we are enhancing learning opportunities for students and meeting the needs and aspirations of each student. This will include:
 - a. Building flexibilities, alternative choices and innovations into our K-12 pathway framework and learning environments;
 - b. Enhancing our level of staffing and professional development of staff to support this Goal; and
 - c. Enhancing our infrastructure to support this Goal Area.

Area 2: Community/District Relationships

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years:

Laurel Public Schools has been successful in building a strong relationship with our community. As a result, the community is supportive of and enthused about our programs, believe that Laurel Public Schools offers high quality learning opportunities for each student, and people want to be involved through volunteering and/or assisting the district in its endeavors. We have parents involved in the education of their children, we have a strong community-based volunteer program and our business community is an important partner of the school district providing necessary services, resources and opportunities for our students.

1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:

1. We will increase the consistency and effectiveness of our communications with parents and community members.
2. We will enhance opportunities for meaningful engagement between the District, parents and community members.
3. We will improve our methods and forums for seeking community input on school initiatives, programs and services.

Area 3: Innovation

Statement of Intended Outcome, Five Years:

Laurel Public Schools embrace innovations and other flexibilities that meet the needs of individual students and families. We adapt to the changing needs of our students and families and the community we serve.

1-2 Year Strategic Objectives:

1. We will enhance and embrace a culture of continuous improvement to use responsible fiscal management principles, to maximize innovations, flexibilities and efficiencies that are available to provide the best education, programs, services for our students, parents and community we serve.
2. We will maintain an ongoing process of long-range infrastructure planning to ensure that we are meeting the current and future needs of our students, parents and our community.
3. We will increase our support services for students to ensure each student has the necessary tools and resources to reach their full potential.

Appendix “A”

Institutionalized Strategies

The District has made significant progress as a result of planning strategically. The following strategies have been characterized as “institutionalized” due to the fact that they are now part of the culture of our District and remain relevant to preserve our current and ongoing success.

Quality/Dynamic Instruction – We have:

- Increased the programs and services available to students and families to address the social/emotional needs of students;
- Increased the integration of the arts into curriculum and at all grade levels;
- Increased the accessibility to technology by students for the purpose of enhancing student achievement;
- Enhanced our professional development program for staff to ensure that such professional development is aligned to district curriculum, instruction, and assessment.

Knowledge-Based/Data-Driven Decisions – We have:

- Increased training for staff on the importance and use of data to drive instruction and enhance student achievement;
- Increased our use of standards-based progression as a means of making improvements in the delivery of our educational services to students;
- Expanded the use and integration of school improvement processes as a means of ensuring consistency, clarity, and consensus District-wide;
- Established and tracked educational indicators as a means of using data to drive decisions, improve processes, and enhance student achievement;
- Enhanced our use of knowledge-based decision-making processes to support collaboration between schools, departments, and the community to improve student educational needs and services.

Communication, Accountability and Effective Leadership – We have:

- Improved our working relationships with collective bargaining groups by focusing on the common goal of students and student achievement and success.
- Provided enhanced opportunities for trustee visits, exposure, and interaction with students and staff.

Community/District Relations -- We have:

- Enhanced the understanding of and increased opportunities for students to engage in public service.
- Improved the collaboration between staff, parents and students.

Engaging, Safe, Tolerant Learning Environment – We have:

- Resolved issues relating to the transportation of students.
- Increased programs and services that provide positive reinforcement and support for students, with specific emphasis and enhancements for students identified as at-risk.
- Developed and enhanced initiatives that provide for an ongoing engaging, safe and tolerant learning environment.

Appendix “B”

Megatrend Analysis to Help Inform and Assess Laurel Public School District’s Strategic Plan

Assumptions about the future

Assumptions: The following are 5-10 year assumptions concerning the key external trends, challenges, or issues facing Laurel Public School District in the future. They may represent either future opportunities or threats to the District.

5-10 Year Planning Horizon

Demographics

- We anticipate a continued transient population in our community and in our schools.
- We anticipate a decrease in student enrollment counts.
- We anticipate that Laurel will continue to be viewed as a bedroom community to Billings.
- We anticipate an increase in serving students from non-traditional families.

Business/Economic Climate

- We anticipate continued growth in our community.
- We anticipate a continued need for affordable housing.
- We anticipate a continued need to create and strengthen business partnerships to provide opportunities for real world experiences and exploration for our students.
- We anticipate a continued increase in cost of living

Legislation/Regulation

- We anticipate a continued reliance on the passage of levies and bonds to support our programs and services.
- We anticipate continued challenges in the process for getting housing developments approved that could address our affordable housing issues and the necessity of greater engagement between our school board and the Laurel City Council.

Technology /Science

- With the change of pace in technology, we will need to be more strategic in our approach to replacing equipment and tools that support student learning.
- We understand the necessity of having affordable and reliable connectivity (infrastructure) for our school, our community, families and students.
- We need to ensure we have effectively integrated digital learning options in our curriculum and have provided the necessary professional development of staff that supports this strategy.
- We see a need for an expansion of online school options for students who may need an alternate setting.
- We anticipate AI will change the way schools operate.

Politics and Social Values

- We anticipate that the political divide will continue to deepen and will likely impact our school district operations, programs and services.
- We anticipate the need for greater advocacy of our public schools at the state and federal level.

- We anticipate continued challenges in recruitment and retention due in large part to the diminished support and value of teachers and others that work in our public schools.

Mega Issues facing the Laurel Public School District

Mega issues are issues of strategic importance, which represent choices the school district will need to make in defining the ultimate direction of its long-range plan. These issues represent potential impediments to achievement of the Envisioned Future, and form a basis for dialogue about the choices facing the school district. These questions can serve as an ongoing "menu" of strategic issues that, using a knowledge-based approach in gathering insights relative to Laurel Public Schools' strategic position and directional choices for each of the issues, can be used by the Board to create regular opportunities for strategic dialogue about the future issues facing the school district.

Note: The questions are not necessarily arranged in priority order.

Mega-Issue Questions: TO BE FURTHER ARTICULATED BY THE BOARD!!

Knowledge-Based Decision-Making Questions

The Board should prioritize the above-referenced mega issues and decide which of these issues require immediate attention on the part of the Board. Once the identified mega-issues are prioritized, the Board will set aside time at scheduled meetings to analyze a particular mega issue. At such meetings, the Board's primary focus will be on the mega-issue at hand. All other business (routine or otherwise) will be conducted at the end of the meeting once the dialogue and deliberation on the mega-issue has been concluded for that meeting. When analyzing mega issues, the Board will utilize a knowledge-based decision-making process. This will keep the focus of the Board on relevant factors to consider as it develops strategies to overcome particular impediments/barriers that may impact the Board's strategic direction. The Board will analyze mega-issues by answering the following questions:

1. What do we know about the wants, needs and preferences of our constituents that are relevant to this decision?
2. What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics facing our constituents/community that is relevant to this decision?
3. What do we know about the capacity/strategic position of our school district that is relevant to this decision?
4. What are the ethical implications of our choices?