



C A S E S T U D Y



Lake Washington School District

K12 INSIGHT HELPS FAST-GROWING LWSD ENGAGE ITS COMMUNITY AROUND REZONING PLANS

Changes in school boundaries can lead to frustration and public outcry — especially when community members feel they don't have a say. With increasing enrollment, multiple schools at or near capacity, and three new campuses opening, the Lake Washington School District faced a difficult rezoning process. Administrators needed to ensure families understood the boundary proposals they put forward and had an opportunity to share their feedback. Here's how they did it.

THE CHALLENGE

Tucked between Lake Washington and the Cascade Mountains, Lake Washington School District serves nearly 30,000 students across 76 square miles. Its families speak more than 120 languages, and — while the area is considered one of the wealthiest in the Puget Sound area — Deputy Superintendent Dr. Jon Holmen says the district also serves high need and at-risk populations. The district's proximity to Seattle and big-name corporations, such as Microsoft, Boeing, Google, and Amazon, makes for a bustling, tech-savvy community — one that is growing fast. (CONT'D)



~30K
Number of students



~3,500
Number of teachers



54
Number of schools

Source: Lake Washington School District



THE CHALLENGE (CONT'D FROM PG 1)

“We’re experiencing a rapid growth rate right now,” says Holmen, noting that the district has undergone multiple boundary changes in the past six years. “We’ve grown by 700 students annually for the past 10 years, and that has led to a need for additional space and capacity to match that growth rate.”

In 2016, the district passed a \$398 million bond. Part of that bond included building two new elementary schools and a new middle school. Opening new schools means new attendance boundaries. Many district schools were at capacity or projected to be at capacity soon if boundaries weren’t modified. “This made it one of the most challenging boundary processes we’ve had,” said Holmen.

Conversations about any boundary change — especially a change of this magnitude — are sensitive and can turn heated fast. District leaders knew that determining the right boundary plan for their community would mean giving parents and community members multiple opportunities to ask questions, voice concerns, and provide feedback on the process.

“We really needed a way to communicate with every family,” says Holmen, adding, “Everyone should have a voice in their child’s educational experience.”

THE SOLUTION

To make the boundary modification process as smooth as possible and to produce a final plan that reflected the community’s input, the district tapped K12 *Insight* to help it share out the proposed changes, gather community feedback, and plan a path forward. K12 *Insight*’s solutions were used in addition to traditional in-person meetings.



K12 *Insight* helps us have two-way conversations with our community, understand their feedback, and use it to drive change.”



SHANNON PARTHEMER
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS
AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT,
LAKE WASHINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT



PROVIDING INFORMATION AND GATHERING INPUT

Administrators used Let's Talk!, K12 Insight's cloud-based community engagement and customer service solution, to launch a boundary modification campaign (accessible through a button on the district's website). When community members visited the site, they were greeted by a brief video and note about the boundary review process. They were then invited to a landing page where they could pose questions and learn more about each boundary proposal.

Each scenario featured a brief video that walked families and community members through the changes and their potential impact. With the help of Let's Talk!, community members were able to immediately fill out an online form and share thoughts, questions, and concerns with district officials. During the process, the district received 462 submissions from parents and guardians (85%), community members (21%), employees (3%), and students (1%).

"The ability to communicate both in written form and through embedded videos within the same solution was key for us during this process," explains Holmen, adding, "Let's Talk! gave us one place to go to respond to everyone in a timely, organized manner."

On the backend, school administrators could collaborate and use pre-approved templates to ensure timely, seamless and accurate responses. An interactive dashboard gave district leaders access to key insights, such as average response time, number of submissions, and customer feedback score, so they could track community sentiment during the campaign.

"Let's Talk! really streamlined how we responded," explains Holmen. "We could see when there were spikes in communication requests and work together to

Share Your Feedback With Us

Boundary Process Introduction YouTube

In January 2017, LWSD started the work to redraw attendance boundaries for Redmond area schools. Two new elementary schools are on schedule to open September 2018 and a new middle school is scheduled to open September 2019. With the opening of new schools, new attendance boundaries must be drawn. Additionally, many schools in the Redmond area are currently over or are projected to be over capacity.

In May, the LWSD boundary committee held community feedback meetings at Redmond middle school and Evergreen middle school. Draft elementary and middle school scenarios were presented for feedback. Since then, the LWSD boundary committee has met multiple times to analyze and develop updated scenarios based on the feedback received. These are different from those presented in May.

We invite you to take a few minutes to review each scenario and provide us with your feedback. We will use this feedback to make addition adjustments to the scenarios and present them one last time in October for parent and community feedback.

We look forward to hearing from you.

[Share Your Feedback on Boundary Modifications](#)

Thank you,
Lake Washington School District

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quickly address those rather than have them go to an email address and get mixed in with all of the other communications we receive.”

Shannon Parthemer, the district’s director of communications and community engagement, says email simply wasn’t sufficient to achieve the depth of engagement they needed. “We could have just set up email addresses and have specific people respond to them, but we wouldn’t be able to track inquiries or understand how the customer felt the interaction went,” she explains. “Let’s Talk! tells us how we’re doing with responding to our community, which helps us improve and continuously create positive customer experiences.”

UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY PRIORITIES AND PERCEPTIONS

Once families understood the different boundary proposals and shared their feedback, they were asked to rank the proposed scenarios.

In combination with Let’s Talk!, district leaders used K12 *Insight’s* Engage survey solution to create and administer a brief boundary modification survey, making it easy for families to share their preferences. The survey was open for roughly two and a half weeks and received 1,738 responses.

After the survey closed, the technology made it easy for school leaders to pull presentation-ready reports and share community preferences with the school board and other leaders.

“The solution works for everyone and allows us to see what’s going out when, so we can make an engagement calendar and avoid survey fatigue with our stakeholders,” Parthemer says. “That has been a huge plus for us.”



Let’s Talk! was definitely a part of that positive outcome. It allowed families to have a deeper understanding of the proposed changes and gave them an opportunity to provide significant input.”



DR. JON HOLMEN
DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT
LAKE WASHINGTON SCHOOL DISTRICT



THE RESULTS

Having that authentic two-way conversation led to a positive boundary modification experience for community members and district leaders alike.

“Typically when the board goes to adopt or take formal action on our boundary proposal, they will have anywhere from a hundred to two hundred families in the audience that had given public comments regarding significant concerns,” says Holmen. “When we got down to the final decision this time, we had two families at the board meeting.”

Holmen credits that, in part, to Let’s Talk!’s always-on conversation and giving everyone a chance to not only voice their questions and concerns, but to receive a response. “Let’s Talk! was definitely a part of that positive outcome,” he says. “It allowed families to have a deeper understanding of the proposed changes and gave them an opportunity to provide significant input. That helped us modify the proposals and tailor the outcome to meet as many interests as possible.”



462

**LET’S TALK!
DIALOGUES**



200

**UNIQUE
LET’S TALK!
CUSTOMERS**



1,738

**SURVEY
RESPONSES**

Ready to open up lines of communication around sensitive topics such as boundary modification, policy change, or school start times? Call **703-542-9600**. or visit **www.K12insight.com**.