

# Raising the Bar: Driving School, Student Success

*A new strategic plan with a holistic focus goes beyond measuring success by test scores.*

A progressive strategic plan for the schools focuses on measuring student success “the Olmsted Falls way,” says Superintendent Dr. Jim Lloyd, relating that the district has always been focused on “the holistic manner in which we conduct business.” Now, a revised mission and vision that focuses on a “triple-A” metric of academics, arts and athletics is guided by a tangible plan to raise the bar.

“Every organization, whether it’s a school district or Intel, should have a strategic plan in place that outlines the focus,” Lloyd says. “Good organizations, in order to make the jump to great organizations, try to foresee the future and create a plan to get there.”

Taking the schools from good

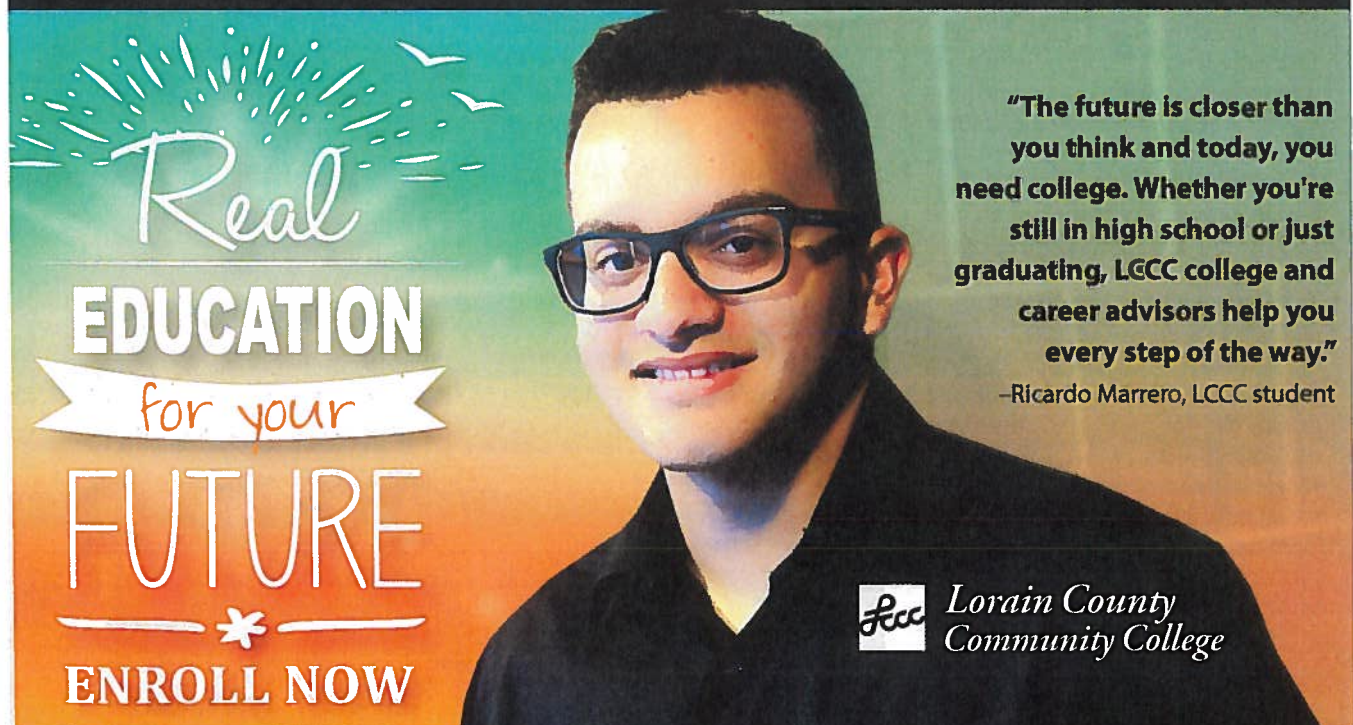
to great meant creating a plan that aligns with students’ current and future needs — a plan that can guide good decision-making in the district. The strategic planning process, which launched in early 2014, began by re-evaluating the existing mission and metrics, which was focused on test scores and “providing opportunities for students.”

While test scores are important, they’re not everything, Lloyd acknowledges. And providing opportunities is just not enough. Addressing the “how” in education is critical, he says. “We want to inspire and empower students — enable them to be leaders and contributing members of society,” Lloyd says.

The strategic plan identifies four areas of focus to reach that goal: student success, aligned resources, technology enabled and community/business partnerships. The plan was guided by O.E. Strategies Inc. and a steering committee consisting of representatives from the Board of Education, district administration, staff, two Olmsted Falls High School students and local business executive Joe Pullella, vice president of operations at VitaMix.

A questionnaire was distributed to parents, residents and local business owners, asking for input as to whether the schools were on the right path. Lloyd says 700 people responded to the survey, and results confirmed that the plan was spot on.

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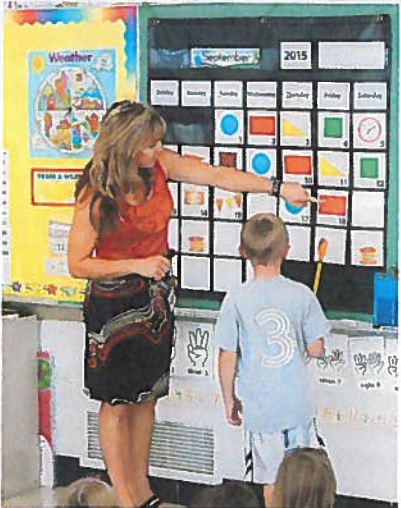
trict increased parent communication at the building level using Power Announcement emails/texts and social media.

- **Student Success:** A new college and career counselor was appointed, and there are more College Credit Plus courses available. The district also launched a business program in fall 2015, and a revised OFHS Program of Studies to show career pathway connections to coursework. The district has partnered with Polaris Career Center to create a Project Lead the Way Engineering Gateway program to give students exposure to ideas and opportunities in science, technology, engineering and math.

- **Aligned Resources:** The district adopted a new math curriculum, called Bridges, and is continuing Lean Six Sigma efforts to maximize efficiency.

The process is a journey with a five-year completion goal. "We're turning up the volume on our mission and vision, and measuring our greatness in something that extends beyond test scores," Lloyd says.

— Kristen Hampshire



The plan was adopted last year, and the district has already made progress toward goals in the four focus areas:

- **Technology Enabled:** A Technology Integration Specialist (TIS) position was established to support teachers' use of technology in the classroom, and a second TIS position will open for 2015/16. Also, the district implemented Chromebooks and Google Apps for Education, conducted ongoing staff training opportunities and will have technology information nights for parents.

- **Community Partnerships:** The dis-

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