



WESTSIDE
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

COMMUNITY REPORT 2025

Thank you for your continued support of our amazing students and staff. Our theme this school year is **"BE THE ONE"** as each individual, team, department, and building is working hard to be the one that helps make this great school district even better.



As you peruse this report, we hope you see the pride that we all take in being part of such a celebrated and decorated school district. We hope you notice the strong academic performance of our students. We hope you see the fiscal responsibility our Board of Education provides. We hope you get excited about the \$150 million worth of building improvements going on throughout the district. We hope you learn more about us as we work hard to get better in all areas.

Westside Community Schools is special because of our students, staff, families, alumni, and community. We all need to continue to bond together to continue to support and help push Westside even further. Our past gives us so many things to be proud of. Our future gives us so many things to be hopeful for.

There's no better place to be than Westside!

MIKE LUCAS
SUPERINTENDENT

VISION
Westside Community Schools will relentlessly pursue innovative educational ideals and promise to personalize learning for every student.

We invite the challenge of developing a community of learners who embrace a broader, richer definition of success.

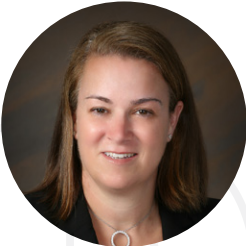
MISSION
The mission of the Westside Community School District, as an innovative educational system, is to ensure academic excellence and to serve the unique needs of all learners.



2025 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE

APR 21	MAY 12	JUN 16	JULY 14	AUG 04 / 18
SEPT 08 / 22	OCT 06 / 20	NOV 03 / 17	DEC 08	

Meetings are held at the ABC building, 909 S 76th Street at 6 pm unless otherwise indicated.



DANA BLAKELY
PRESIDENT



ADAM YALE
VICE PRESIDENT



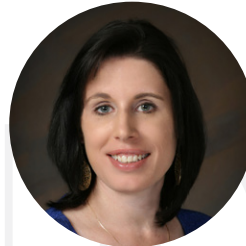
SARAH RIDER
SECRETARY



KRIS KARNES
TREASURER



MEAGAN VAN GELDER
TREASURER-ELECT



BETH MORRISSETTE
DIRECTOR

WESTSIDE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS IS HOME TO MORE THAN



36.24

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS RECEIVING FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH

20

AVERAGE NUMBER OF STUDENTS IN EACH K-6 CLASSROOM

35

PERCENTAGE OF OUR TOTAL STUDENT POPULATION OPTS INTO THE DISTRICT

THE POWER OF OPTING INTO WESTSIDE

When the Win family chose to opt into Westside Community Schools, it was with one clear goal in mind: a better education for their children and a brighter future. With two students—one in first grade and one in sixth—they wanted a district where learning was a priority and teachers were genuinely invested in their students' success.

"We moved to Westside schools for a better education and so my kids would have a better future," they shared. "The teachers have been very kind and very helpful."

The Win family is very happy with their experience with WCS and is quick to share their story with others. "I am sharing with my friends that Westside is a good school and a good community and that they should consider opting in."

STUDENTS

41

LANGUAGES SPOKEN WITHIN THE DISTRICT

16

PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

*The more students
are in school, the
more they learn, and
the better they
perform on local,
state, and national
assessments.*

THE PHYSICS OF FUN

For some students, science can feel intimidating—but not in Ben Powers’ classroom. A beloved physics teacher at WHS for 15 years, Mr. Powers has a knack for making even the most reluctant learners excited about discovery. Instead of dry lectures, students might find themselves launching projectiles, designing simple machines, or even crash test vehicles. The result? A classroom filled with curiosity, laughter, and a love for learning.



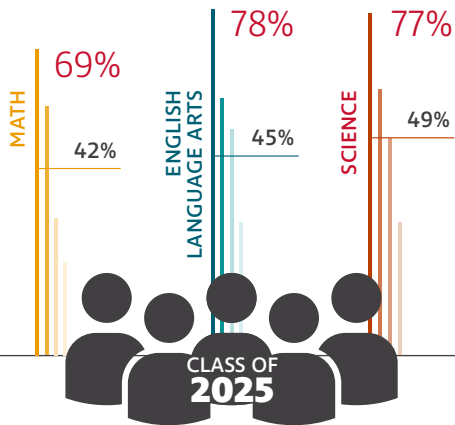
Following the student-centered model, Powers encourages students to own their learning and construct the laws of our universe themselves. He has been instrumental in shaping the district’s approach to science education. Whether through new technology, interdisciplinary projects, or community partnerships, he continues to push the boundaries of what’s possible in the classroom. For his dedication to inspiring young minds and redefining what science education can be, Ben Powers is a true force of nature—and one the entire Westside community is grateful to have.

ATTENDANCE MATTERS

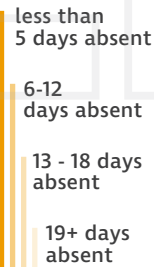
Here’s a look at how our students performed on Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) tests last spring. You will see the percentage of our students that met or exceeded proficiency declines as absences increase. We want to continue to stress the importance of regular and consistent school attendance when our students are not sick.



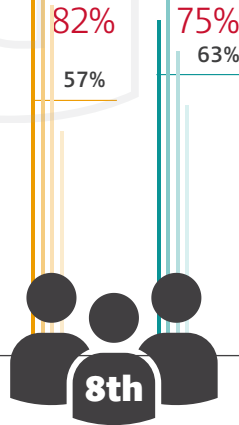
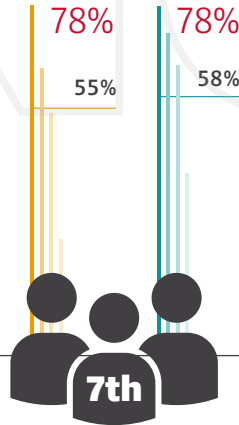
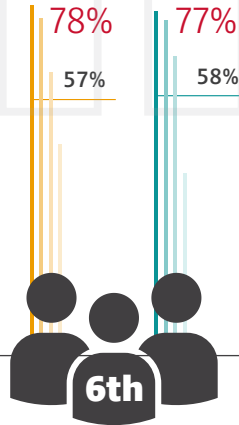
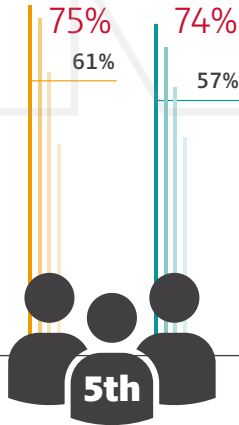
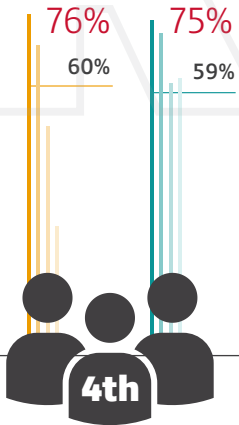
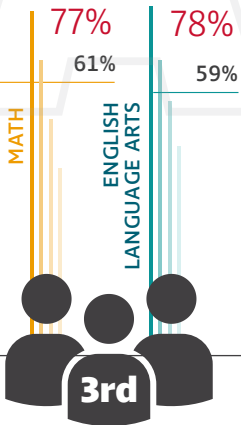
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full data sets



ON ACT SCORES



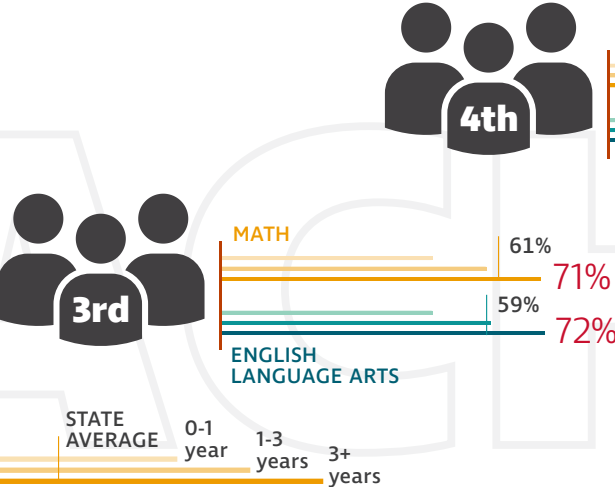
STATE
AVERAGE



IMPACT OF ATTENDANCE ON NSCAS SCORES

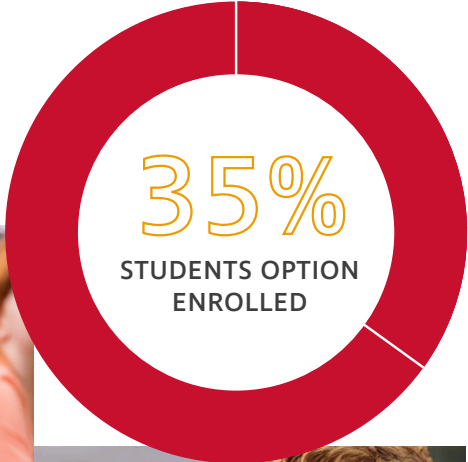
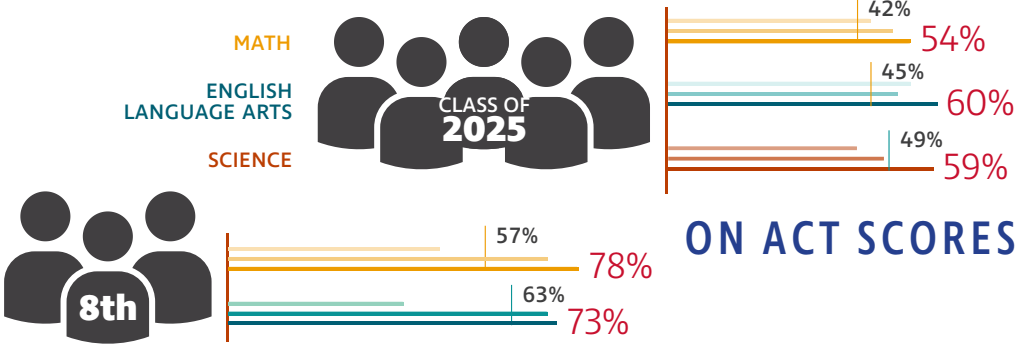
The percentage of our students that met or exceeded proficiency on assessments **increases** the **longer** they are part of our school district.

IMPACT OF LONGEVITY ON NSCAS SCORES



LONGEVITY MATTERS

Below is a breakdown of how our students performed on Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System (NSCAS) tests last spring. You will see the percentage of our students that met or exceeded proficiency increases the longer they are part of our school district. This shows that our amazing teachers and the viable curriculum they cover is working at a high level.



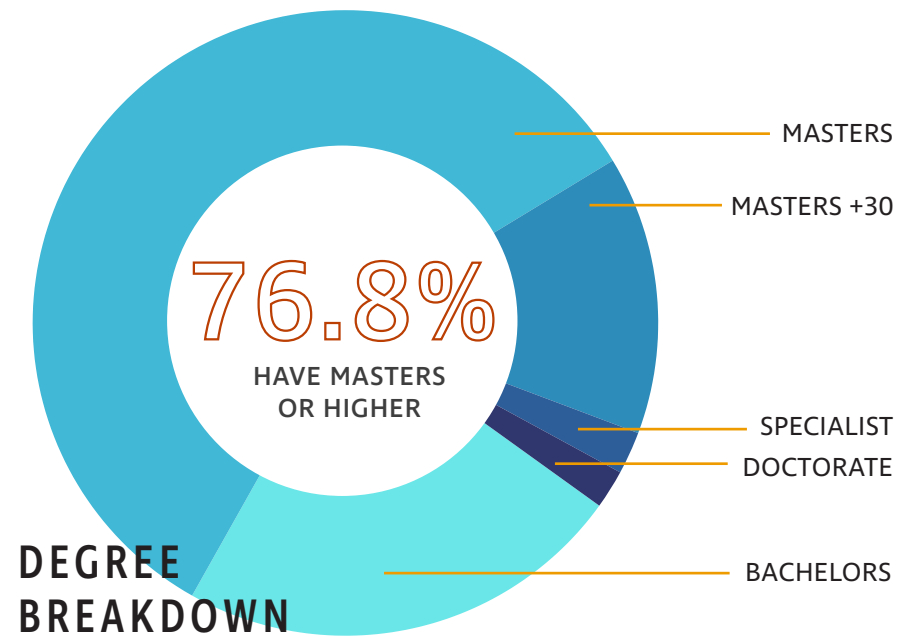
BALANCE MATTERS

Westside Community Schools is proud of its unique blend of resident and option enrollment students. While many amazing students live within our district boundaries, we also welcome those who opt into our district. In fact, Westside receives the most option enrollment applications in the state; typically, we can only accept 33-38% of requests. This year, over 35% of our student population has option enrolled.

By maintaining our total enrollment near 6,200 students, we can support 10 thriving neighborhood elementary schools, maintain effective class sizes, and offer a robust curriculum.



scan to view full data sets



STAFF BREAKDOWN

ADMINISTRATORS - 39

TEACHERS - 547

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS - 38

PROFESSIONAL CLASSIFIED - 56

EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANTS - 224

BUILDING SERVICES - 126

NUTRITION SERVICES - 87

SPECIAL SKILLS - 13



We are always looking for dedicated community members to be a part of our team.

APPLY TODAY

www.westside66.org



TALENT IN BLOOM

For four years, Westside Community Schools' Grow Our Own program has been a powerful tool for cultivating talent within the district.

Designed to eliminate financial barriers, the program offers non-certified staff members multiple paths to earn their teaching certificates while maintaining their current roles.

In partnership with Midland University, participants graduate with a teaching degree and a guaranteed teaching position in the district, with a five-year commitment to Westside students. The program's new apprenticeship path, launched in 2024, makes it even more accessible by welcoming staff with partial or no college credit.

Recognized locally, statewide, and nationally, Grow Our Own received high praise in November 2024 when Nebraska Governor Jim Pillen held a press conference at Paddock Road Elementary to celebrate this innovative model.

By investing in its own talent, Westside Community Schools is building a stronger community—one teacher at a time.



"I've always wanted to have my own classroom. Westside has made a lifelong dream possible."

SHELLY SIP



WHERE EVERYONE FINDS THEIR PLACE

At Westside Community Schools, we believe everyone deserves to feel seen, valued, and connected. Our WE-SIDE program embodies this mission, creating a culture where every student, staff member, and family member feels like they have a place.

WE-SIDE comes to life through powerful programming like our Westside Unified sports teams, where athletes of all abilities compete together, fostering teamwork and friendship. At Westside High School, the Brew Crew—sponsored by Scooters Coffee—provides students with valuable work experience and peer mentoring.

Beyond our schools, WE-SIDE shines through events that build connections. Our Community Walks invite students, families, and neighbors to explore, and our annual Multicultural Fair is a vibrant celebration of the diverse cultures that make Westside thrive.

From the classroom to the community, WE-SIDE is more than a program—it's our promise to make Westside a place where everyone belongs.



PROGRESS IN MOTION

Westside Community Schools is proud to share updates on Phase II of our bond projects. All projects remain on time and on budget, demonstrating our commitment to enhancing learning environments across the district.

In June 2024 we broke ground at Westgate Elementary, Hillside Elementary, and Westside Middle School. Designs have been approved for new gyms that will also serve as storm shelters, and early childhood centers at Paddock Road and Rockbrook Elementary schools. Bathroom renovations at Westside High School are complete, and design

development continues for improvements at Westbrook Elementary and Underwood Hills Early Childhood Center.

Students are involved at every site, bringing valuable insights to these projects. In early 2025 Loveland Elementary selected an architect and will begin seeking feedback from our community in the Spring.

We appreciate our community's support in reinvesting in our district as we build safe, innovative, and welcoming spaces for all.



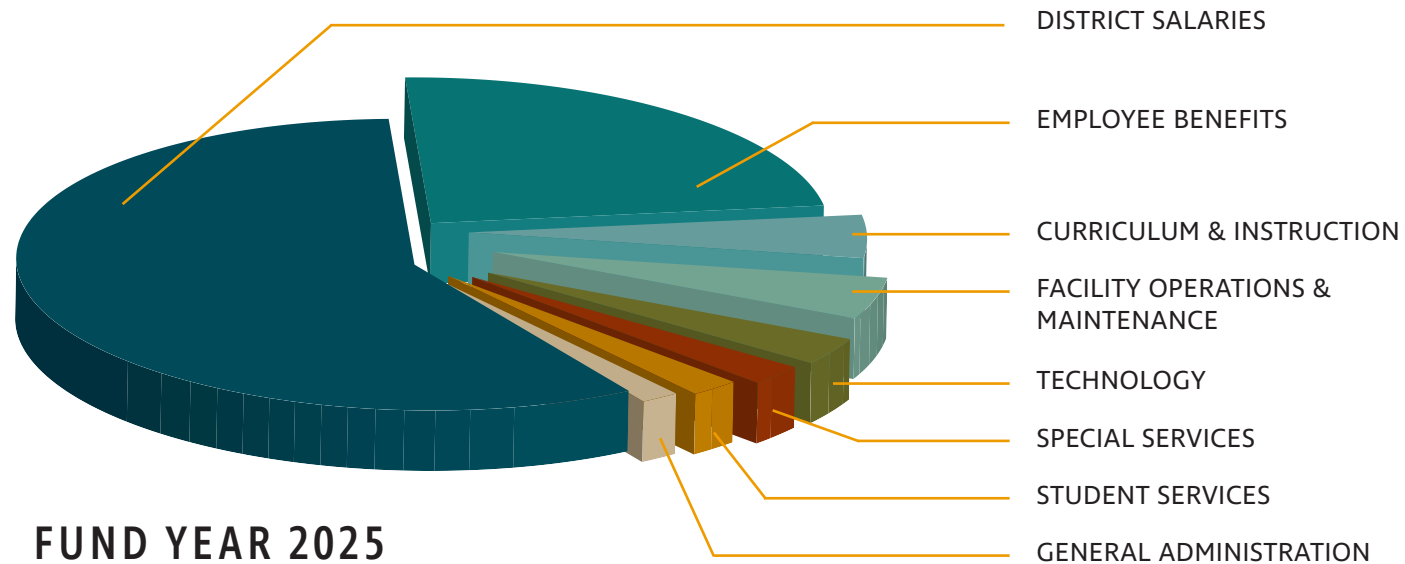
STRATEGIC SUCCESS

In 2021, Westside Community Schools introduced our current Strategic Plan, guided by input from our students, families, staff, and community. Since then, we've made meaningful progress — strengthening academics, enhancing student support, and expanding opportunities for all learners.

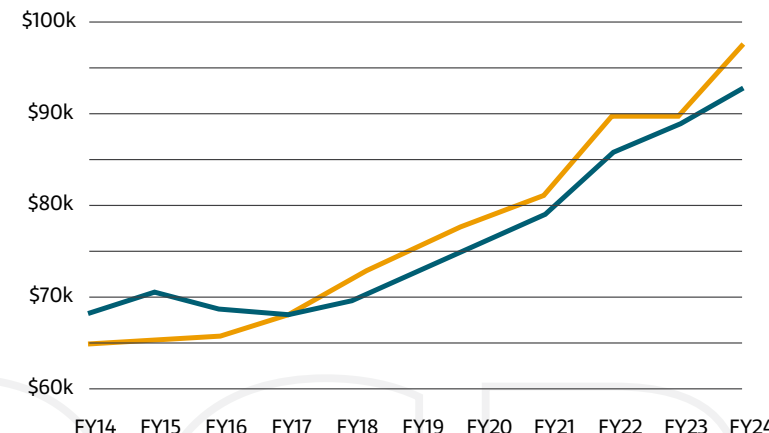
As we near 2026, we believe this approach remains a strong path forward. With continued feedback from our community, we will refresh and evolve our Strategic Plan to meet the needs of our district in the years ahead, ensuring we remain true to our mission of helping every Warrior thrive.



We invite you to track our progress anytime on our website.



FUND YEAR 2025 BUDGET EXPENDITURES



FY25 BUDGET | \$96,378,888

Since 2013/14, Westside has only had an average annual spending increase of 3.58%

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

For FY24, approximately 35% of all Westside students were enrolled in the district through the option enrollment program. These students who chose to not enroll in their resident district in favor of coming to Westside added \$22,677,162 in state aid revenue to our district, allowing us to maintain 10 neighborhood elementary schools and to provide robust course offerings at Westside High School.

For FY25, the total levy (General Fund/Bond/Bldg) decreased by 5.12 pennies and asks for fewer tax dollars than in 2021-22, 2022-23, and 2023-24.

Based on a home valued at \$250,000, the annual tax payment would be \$2,738.90, a decrease of \$128.01 from the prior year.



WESTSIDE
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
COMMUNITY • INNOVATION • EXCELLENCE

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