

**Laurens County
School District 55**

301 Hillcrest Drive
Laurens, SC 29360
864-984-3568

www.laurens55.org



**A MESSAGE FROM
YOUR SUPERINTENDENT**
Ameca C. Thomas, Ph.D.

VISION STATEMENT
Empowering and Inspiring
All to be Educated and
Informed

MISSION STATEMENT
Laurens County School
District 55 prepares
students for success in
learning and careers
through engaging,
challenging, and
personalized learning
experiences. Students are
curious, confident in their
own abilities, and
competitive in the local,
national, and global
environment. Students are
safe, valued, and supported
in their learning by highly
effective staff, families,
and community.

OUR THEME

World-Class Champions . . . every child, every chance, every day!

OUR GOALS

- Provide world-class safety and a positive school culture.
- Provide world-class, high-quality instruction to increase student achievement.
- Provide world-class communication and family engagement.

March 13, 2023

Greetings Laurens County School District 55 Family,

As we enter the second full week of March, I wanted to take a moment to share some updates and highlights.

March is Music in Our Schools Month. It is an annual event that celebrates the importance of music education in our schools. During this month, we recognize the vital role that music plays in the lives of our students and the many benefits it provides, including increased creativity, improved academic performance, and enhanced social and emotional well-being.

In recent weeks, we have seen some outstanding achievements from our students, ranging from academic excellence to artistic and athletic accomplishments. I want to thank our administrators, teachers, and staff for their dedication and innovation in delivering high-quality instruction and support to our students.

At the district level, we have been working on several initiatives aimed at enhancing our programs and services, and the rollout of mental health resources for our students and families.

Looking ahead, we are excited to continue building on these successes and exploring new ways to enrich the learning experiences of our students. As always, we remain committed to maintaining open lines of communication with our parents and guardians and providing the resources and support needed to ensure every student reaches their full potential.

I am grateful for your ongoing support and partnership in supporting our students' success. Together, we can achieve great things.

LINKS

[Self Regional Scholarships application and information for students accepted in Laboratory Education, Certified Nursing Programs, and Respiratory Therapy Programs](#)
[Waterford UPSTART Spring Challenge](#)
[Times Table Global Challenge](#)
[Laurens 55 Alumni Weekend March 24-25, 2023 Flyer](#)
[ParentGuidance.org Free Mental Health Support Resources](#)
[School Facility Community Survey](#)



Reminders

- Check and update your contact information.
- Be on the look-out for a Parent School Climate Survey on March 22, 2023.
- Report Cards will be sent home on March 22, 2023.
- Spring Break is April 3-7, 2023

The graphic has a green background with a pattern of diagonal lines. At the top left, there are icons for a lightbulb, a laptop, and an envelope. The word 'Reminders' is written in a large, bold, yellow font.

SCHOOL CLIMATE SURVEYS

On March 22, 2023, Laurens County School District 55 (LCSD 55) will release the Parent Climate Survey provided by the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) and Education Oversight Committee. The survey will remain open until April 14, 2023.

Parents will have the option to complete the survey via Parent Portal or by scanning a unique QR code. Detailed survey information will be attached to student report cards on March 22, 2023. Schools have designated individuals who will provide assistance to those with questions about completing the climate survey.

Parents who do not have the appropriate device, internet connection, or mobile service, may complete the survey at their child's school.

SOUTH CAROLINA CHILD ID KITS

In 2022, the South Carolina General Assembly unanimously passed S.1103, otherwise known as the South Carolina Child ID law. As a result, Laurens County School District 55 has been provided at-home child ID kits that are available for each student. The kits are being sent home with students.



These are inkless, at-home kits. The data is not entered into a database, but is to be stored by the parent/guardian in a cool, dry, and safe place at home. This kit should take less than two minutes to complete.

There is no obligation to use the kit; however, it will allow parents/guardians to have their child's vital information, fingerprints, and DNA in a safe place should it be needed. These kits are to be STORED AT HOME and should only be given to law enforcement in case of an emergency.



CHAMPION INDUCTION TEACHER OF THE MONTH

Faith Word, pictured with Laurens County School District 55 (LCSD 55) Superintendent Dr. Ameca C. Thomas, is the Champion Induction Teacher of the Month for February 2023. Faith Word is a school counselor serving students in grades 10-12 at Laurens District 55 High School (LDHS). Word is delighted to receive the recognition.

Word said, "I am thankful to be serving in Laurens District 55 along with some of the educators that had an impact on my life. I graduated from LDHS in 2016 and was eager to come back home to serve in a district that gave so much to me. I love helping and encouraging students to reach the achievement of a high school diploma every day."

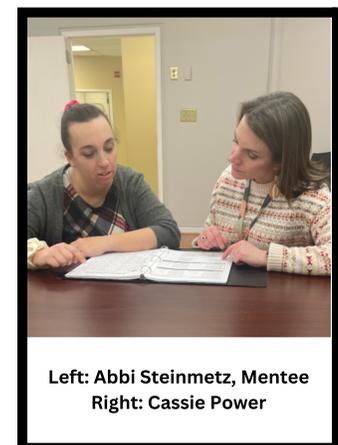
"Ms. Word is very energetic and thoughtful in all she does to serve our students," added LDHS school counselor Tiasha Madden.

LDHS school counselor Chrys Hill shared, "As her former high school counselor I knew she would be successful in whatever career path she chose. She was an extremely driven high school student and that characteristic is still present today."

MEET A MENTOR

The Laurens County School District 55 (LCSD 55) Human Resources Department held a drawing to show appreciation for LCSD 55 mentors. Mrs. Cassie T. Power, instructional coach at Laurens District 55 High School (LDHS), was drawn and will receive a gift card.

Power is in her 15th year in education and has been with LCSD 55 all those years. She started her career in banking, but later decided to try teaching, and immediately loved it. She decided to become a mentor to help new teachers not feel the same stress she felt as a new teacher.



Left: Abbi Steinmetz, Mentee
Right: Cassie Power

Power's love for LCSD 55 is influenced by her parents. Her father is Dr. Ed Taylor, former superintendent of LCSD 55 for many years, and her mother, Loren, is a teacher in the district.

SPOTLIGHT ON LISA D. WILSON

Lisa D. Wilson is the Laurens County School District 55 (LCSD 55) Executive Assistant to the Superintendent and Board of Trustees. She joined LCSD 55 in 1989.

Wilson believes Tom Brokaw's words, "It's easy to make a buck. It's a lot tougher to make a difference." Lisa Wilson took on a challenging position where she could make a difference. No two days are the same. Her role is essential in driving the smooth facilitation of school board meetings, keeping the public informed of policies and meetings, checking for compliance with board policies and practices, and providing high-level clerical support to the superintendent.



Wilson candidly shares, "My job is never boring because there are so many moving parts with it. That's good for me because if you have been around me for a minute, you know I have to be busy, or I go crazy."

Her thirty-five years of faithful service and diligent work in the administrative office have made a difference in LCSD 55. Through the years, she sought continuous professional improvement. She continues to be proactive in learning to become proficient in her role. Not only does she fulfill her duties, but she also shares her knowledge and support with others. Ms. Wilson is a team player who sees public education as a "WE" career.

Even at home, Ms. Wilson constantly thinks of what she can do to help make things better in LCSD 55. As a graduate of LCSD 55, she is committed to helping make LCSD 55 the best district it can be. She has a sense of joy during graduation time. She knows that she played a part in helping the district get to that point each year.

As her retirement approaches on March 31, 2023, Lisa reminisces about being hired for her position and the joy of serving many LCSD 55 superintendents.

Wilson said, "In 2000, the lady in this position had to move because of her husband having a transfer with his job. The position was posted, and I applied. I was hired by then-superintendent Dr. Ed Taylor. Dr. Taylor was one of the most humble people I've had the pleasure of working with."

"I have to say how much I enjoy the opportunity to work with Dr. Ameca Thomas and learn from her. It is an honor to be part of the day-to-day work with our district's first-ever female superintendent! Not only Dr. Thomas, but I am blessed to work with such a strong team of leaders and colleagues in the administrative office," Wilson added.

LCSD 55 will miss Lisa Wilson but wishes her an enjoyable and relaxing retirement ahead, working in her yard or soaking in the sun on the beach. May she have more time to spend with her amazing grandchildren, Cameron and Cadie, and her two greatest accomplishments - her daughters - Candi, a Vice President/Regional Banking Manager with United Community Bank, and Jamie, a Loan Executive Assistant with Southern First Bank. Sure to keep her busy are Lottie, her sidekick chihuahua, and Baeleigh, her grandpup.

WESTERN PIEDMONT EDUCATION CONSORTIUM MIDDLE SCHOOL ACADEMIC BOWL



Laurens County School District 55 (LCSD 55) is a member of the Western Piedmont Education Consortium (WPEC). LCSD 55 middle school academic bowl teams from Hickory Tavern School (HTS), Laurens Middle School (LMS), and Sanders Middle School (SMS) competed at the WPEC Middle School Academic Bowl Division II - Small School on March 6 & 8, 2023, at Clinton High School. Whitmire Middle School from Newberry, and Edgewood Middle School from Greenwood also competed.



The LMS and HTS Academic Bowl Teams went head to head to determine the teams competing in the final match. Among the questions Laurens County School District 56 Superintendent Dr. David O'Shields asked as competition facilitator were, "What do cars and unicorns have in common?" and "What part of the shark's anatomy is the strongest?".

LMS showed an aptitude for many math questions and won the match to move to the finals where they competed against Edgewood Middle School. Edgewood Middle School placed 1st, LMS placed 2nd, and HTS placed 3rd.

LMS Academic Bowl Team Coach Mary Cole was exhilarated about their 2nd place win, "I feel great! We had a small team this year and the five kids I had, worked hard preparing for the competitions. Since we only had five students, not everyone got to take a break. By the end of the third match, the kids were mentally tired!"

Great job to all the LCSD 55 Academic Bowl Teams for representing LCSD 55 well!

HICKORY TAVERN SCHOOL ACADEMIC BOWL TEAM

Brittany Schaefer is the coach of the Hickory Tavern School (HTS) Academic Bowl Team. She is in her first year coaching the team, but has been with HTS for six years. She is currently a 4th grade math and science teacher and the Lego Robotics Coach for HTS. She decided to coach the HTS Academic Bowl Team because she was a student of HTS and was part of the Academic Bowl Team and won two bowl championships.

"The best part has been working hard in practice, broadening our scope of knowledge, and then having one of the concepts we covered asked at the match. I love seeing the excitement on the players' faces when they realize we just learned that in practice." Schaefer said.



The HTS Academic Bowl Team members are Maggie Payne (team captain), Chase Rogers, Corrisa Green, Brady Tucker, and Addy Payne.

Schaefer said, "In general, the players love the competition. They are motivated to do their best, but they also can lose gracefully, which is part of the competition."

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The next LCSD 55 Board of Trustees regular monthly meeting will be Monday, March 27, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in the auditorium of Laurens Middle School located at 1035 West Main Street in Laurens.

STAY IN THE KNOW

	<p><i>A weekly video to share school district news</i></p> <p>March 10, 2023</p>
	<p><i>A podcast of one-on-one conversations</i></p> <p>Michael Cade</p>
	<p><i>A chance to hear how L55 has positively impacted students</i></p> <p>Gage Camden</p>
	<p><i>A chance to hear about our excellent teachers</i></p> <p>Crystal Arnold</p>
	<p><i>A chance to hear how L55 graduates achieved greatness</i></p> <p>Adam Taylor</p>

CLOSING

On behalf of the LCSD 55 Board of Trustees, administrators, and staff thank you for your partnership, support, and continued engagement as we work together to serve your children and our community. Your input is greatly valued and we love to hear from you. Contact me at athomas@laurens55.org, call 864-984-3568, attend our school and district events, or view our school board meetings. Have a great week!

Sincerely,

Ameca C. Thomas, Ph.D.
Proud Superintendent of
Laurens County School District 55

Laurens County School District #55 is committed to the principle of equal opportunity. It is the policy of the district not to discriminate on the basis of race, religion, sex, color, age, national origin, immigrant status, English-speaking status, familial status, or disability with regard to students, employees, or applicants for admission or employment.