

## Laurens County School District 55

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

[www.laurens55.org](http://www.laurens55.org)



### 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.

**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.

April 24, 2023

Greetings Laurens County School District 55 Family,

I hope this message finds you all well. This week, I am excited to share that our district has been awarded the Golden Achievement Award for our Laurens 55: Safety Made Clear campaign. We strive to provide the best educational opportunities possible in environments that are safe and conducive to learning. This is a significant recognition regarding our progress in safety, family engagement, and communication, and we are thrilled to be able to share this news with you.

Additionally, our teachers and staff continue working tirelessly to provide our students with the best possible educational experience. I am impressed by their commitment and dedication, and I know that our students greatly benefit from their efforts.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact my office. We appreciate your partnership and look forward to continuing to work together to provide a world-class education for all students. Thank you for your support as we work hard to *Finish Strong!*

## LINKS

[April 26, 2023 Blood Drive Flyer](#)

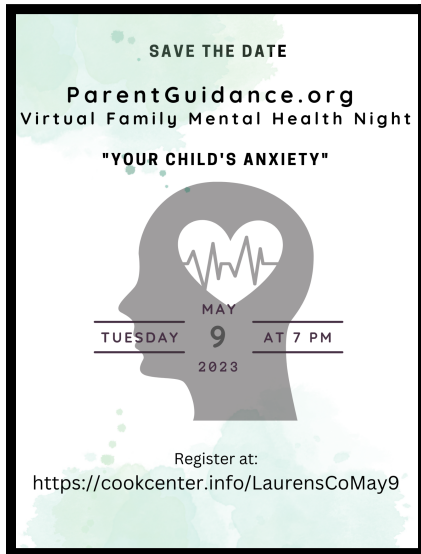
[May 6, 2023 Books and Blankets Laurens County Literacy Association Flyer](#)

[May 18 & 23, 2023 St. Francis Mobile Mammography at Laurens District 55 High School](#)

[April 19, 2023 Virtual Parent Academy Recording](#)

[April 11, 2023 Fire Science Dual Enrollment Program Photo Gallery](#) (Click View as Guest)

[LCSD 55 TruConnect Webpage](#) and [Community Eligibility Letter](#)



## PARENTGUIDANCE.ORG

ParentGuidance.org offers a plethora of free resources. A featured course is [How Digital Media is Changing our Children's Mental Health](#).

A [recording of the Family Mental Health Night](#) held on April 13, 2023, is now available. Use the passcode: gc6yKB=G if prompted to enter a password.

The next Virtual Family Mental Health Night is on May 9th at 7:00 p.m. It will focus on the discussion of strategies to help parents respond to their child's anxiety. [Registration is now open.](#)

## VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DAY AT WATERLOO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



Volunteer Appreciation Week was April 17-21, 2023. The teachers and staff at Waterloo Elementary School (WES) held an appreciation breakfast for WES volunteers on Friday, April 21, 2023. The volunteers were presented with gift bags.

## EARTH DAY

The first Earth Day was celebrated in April 1970. Millions of Americans demonstrated throughout the United States to force the national government to have regulatory mechanisms that will protect the environment. As a result of the first Earth Day demonstrations, the United States Congress created the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in December 1970. The EPA aims to protect people and the planet and encourages everyone to help [protect the planet all year long](#).





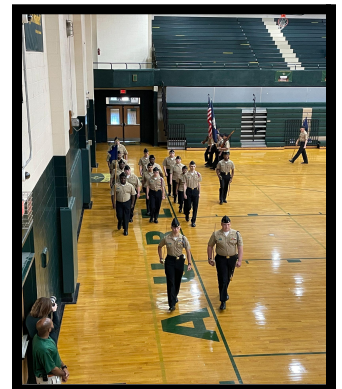
### **EARTH DAY CELEBRATION AT WATERLOO ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

Waterloo Educators, Krystal McGrew (Grade 3) and Gerri McConnell (Special Education), applied for a Michelin grant to fund an Earth Day celebration at WES. The educators were granted \$1,000.00 and used the funds to set-up educational stations on April 21, 2023.



WES students were engaged in STEM (Science Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) Building and learning about Oil Spill Clean Up. Earth Day book read-alouds took place throughout WES and each WES student received an Earth Day bookmark and sticker.

### **NJROTC ANNUAL MILITARY INSPECTION, APRIL 20, 2023**



The Laurens District 55 High School (LDHS) Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps (NJROTC) participated in the Annual Military Inspection (AMI) on April 20, 2023. Navy officers conducted the inspection and cadets presented their marching formation and drill. The AMI is conducted annually to ensure each NJROTC unit maintains the Navy's standards.

### **SPECIAL OLYMPICS, APRIL 21, 2023**

The Office of Special Education Services supported LCSD 55 special education students at the 2023 Area 5 Spring Games also known as Special Olympics held on April 21, 2023 at Presbyterian College.

## 2023 SUPERINTENDENT'S LUNCH OF CHAMPIONS



Laurens County School District 55 Superintendent Dr. Ameca C. Thomas and the Department of Teaching and Learning honored the top ten students for each high school class of Laurens District 55 High School (LDHS) on Friday, April 21, 2023, at 11:00 AM. District staff members and LDHS Guidance Counselors lined the lobby and hallway with pom poms to cheer and welcome the students. The students enjoyed a special meal and were handed plaques to honor their great work. The students also had time to socialize with their peers, administrators, and school guidance counselors.

### MARCH 2023 SPIRIT OF 55 SUPPORT STAFF MEMBER

Christine "Chris" Statom, RN, BSN, is the recipient of the Laurens County School District 55 March 2023 Spirit of 55 Support Staff Member Award. She is the school nurse at Waterloo Elementary School (WES). She has been a nurse with District 55 for 12 years. She left Long Term Care to pursue school nursing. She came into the school system for a change of pace.

WES Principal Penland said, "Nurse Chris is willing to jump in and help out in other areas, but her top priority is to take care of our students with the best care possible. She goes above and beyond to help students who need her attention."



Nurse Statom said, "I had no idea I would love being a school nurse as much as I do. It's a different kind of nursing. In most fields, you deal with the patient only, but with this type of nursing, the entire family is your patient. As an elementary school nurse, my greatest joy is receiving a hug from a fragile student who now feels safe. That warms my heart!"

### JANUARY 2023 CHAMPION SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR

Tina Faulkner is the Laurens County School District 55 (LCSD 55) January 2023 Champion School Administrator. She is the Director of Laurens Preparatory Academy (LPA). She has been in education for 35 years (including this year) and served all those years with LCSD 55. Her greatest joy as an administrator is to know that she is always learning and experiencing new things.

LPA Assistant Director Yoneko Allen said, "Dr. Faulkner is a pleasure to work with. She works tirelessly to ensure that we keep students first and make decisions based upon what's best for them. She is intentional yet genuine about building relationships with all stakeholders."





## APRIL IS SCHOOL LIBRARY MONTH

We continue to celebrate our librarians and school libraries throughout the month of April. A big thanks to all Laurens County School District 55 school librarians! In this issue, we feature two of them.

Read the previous issues of A Message from Your Superintendent featuring other school librarians.

- [January 23, 2023](#) - Anna Barker
- [April 11, 2023](#) - Michelle Spires, Cheryl Earl, Ami Hayes Hardy
- [April 17, 2023](#) - Wilma Tribble, Claudia John, Melody Sarmento

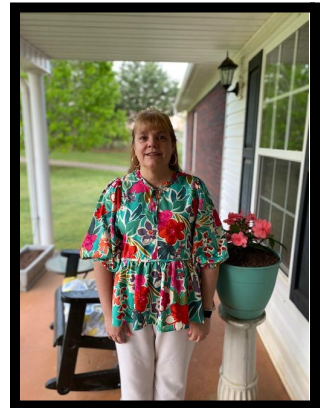


### MICHELE CARROLL

Michele Carroll is the school librarian at Laurens District 55 High School (LDHS). She is in her eighteenth year in education and her sixteenth year at LDHS. Michele earned a Masters degree in Library and Information Science from the University of South Carolina in May of 2022, which is her second Masters degree.

Michele always believes that the library is an important place in the school. She knows that a school needs a librarian who loves books. She knows that students need to read to be successful in their lives.

Michele's greatest joy as a librarian is sharing the best books with the students. "When students return from reading a selection I suggested, and they love it, there is no greater joy. I have the absolute best job in the world, and I'm very thankful for the privilege of serving Laurens 55 students. They truly are a precious gift to me," said Michele.



### KATHLEEN "KATHY" BUTLER

Kathleen "Kathy" Butler is the school librarian at Laurens Middle School. She has been a librarian for 29 years. She has worked as a children's librarian in a large public library and as a reference librarian at a college in New York. She has been the librarian at Laurens Middle School since the 1999-2000 school year.

Kathy's first job out of college was as a Biomedical Engineer but after she got married and had three children, she was looking for something different. Growing up, all through school and as a mother of young children, Kathy spent many enjoyable days among the books in libraries. Kathy realized that working in a library, and sharing books, was where she was meant to be. When her family moved to South Carolina, she found a new home at Laurens Middle School.



Kathy's greatest joy as a school librarian is when a student comes to her so excited to tell her about a book the student just read. Kathy said, "When a student feels a personal connection to a book and cannot wait to read another – that is the best. Libraries are always changing, and with the addition of a variety of book formats, new technologies, and maker spaces, I am using that engineering degree more and more, allowing me to use both of my interests."

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The LCSD 55 Board of Trustees will hold a work session on April 24, 2023, in the Lecture Theater of Laurens District 55 High School, beginning at 4:45 p.m. The regular monthly meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Lecture Theater at Laurens District 55 High School, located at 5058 Highway 76 West, Laurens, SC 29360.

## STAY IN THE KNOW

	<i>A weekly video to share school district news</i> <a href="#">April 21, 2023</a>
	<i>A podcast of one-on-one conversations</i> <a href="#">Michael Cade</a>
	<i>A chance to hear how L55 has positively impacted students</i> <a href="#">Mykayla Neely</a>
	<i>A chance to hear about our excellent teachers</i> <a href="#">Madeline Crowder</a>
	<i>A chance to hear how L55 graduates achieved greatness</i> <a href="#">Bryanta Maxwell</a>

## 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](mailto: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.*