

Laurens County School District 55

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

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.

May 8, 2023

Greetings Laurens County School District 55 Family,

With the end of the school year fast approaching, we all must stay focused and finish strong. Our students have put in a lot of hard work this year, and we must support them to achieve their goals.

This week is Teacher Appreciation Week, and I want to take a moment to express our gratitude for our dedicated teachers. They play a vital role in shaping the lives of our students and helping them reach their full potential. Let's take the time to thank them for their tireless efforts and unwavering commitment to our district. National School Nurse Day is May 10th. Our school nurses play pivotal roles in the success of our students and school community, and we are grateful for their hard work and dedication.

As we approach the end of the academic year, we also need to encourage our students to stay motivated and focused. Remind them to maintain good study habits and stay on top of their assignments. With your support, we can help them achieve their academic goals and finish the year strong.

Thank you all for your continued support and partnership in education.

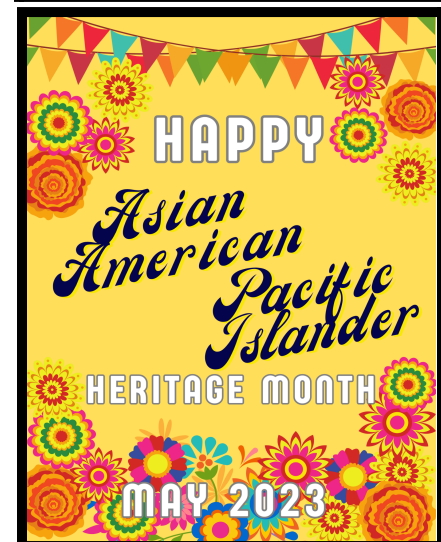
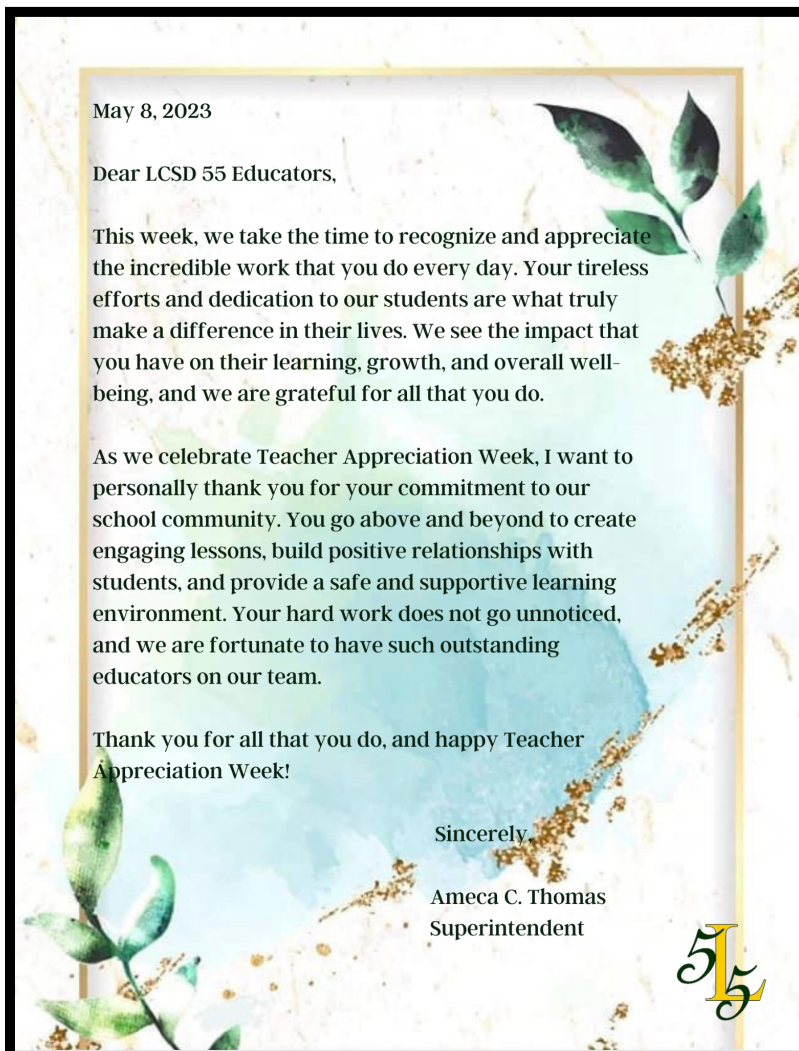
LINKS

[May 13, 2023 Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics, \(STEAM\) Saturday 2023-2024 General Fund Budget survey](#) (Open until May 12, 2023)

[LCSD 55 Spring Art Show Parent Night and Opening Ceremony May 8, 2023, 5:30-6:30 p.m.](#)



May is Mental Health Awareness Month. This celebration began in the United States in 1949. The goal of this celebration among others is to fight the stigma of mental illness, find and offer support, public education, and advocacy for policies supporting mental health. Join the Laurens County School District 55 [virtual Family Mental Health Night](#) tomorrow, May 9, 2023, in celebration of Mental Health Awareness Month.



PUBLIC REVIEW OF MATH STANDARDS

The South Carolina Department of Education Office of Assessment and Standards issued a [Memorandum on May 2, 2023](#), regarding the Online Public Review for the [2023 South Carolina Mathematics Standards](#). The public review is open until Monday, June 12, 2023. Public comments are via [Front Matter and Appendices](#) and [Standards and Indicators](#) surveys.

SCHOOL NURSE DAY, MAY 10, 2023

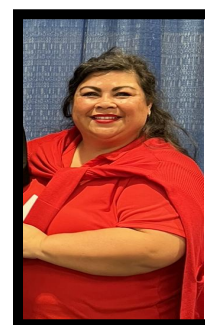
The School Nurse Day celebration started in 1972. According to the National Association of School Nurses, this day helps foster a better understanding of the role of school nurses in the educational setting. Shout-out to our caring LCSD 55 school nurses!

ASIAN AMERICAN PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH

The United States Congress passed a Public Law in 1992, designating May as Asian American Pacific Islander (also known as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month). This celebration recognizes the contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islander Americans to American culture, history, and achievements.

MEET MICHELLE GIBBS, LCSD 55 EDUCATOR WITH ASIAN HERITAGE

Michelle Owens Gibbs was born in the Philippines and is an Asian American who has positively impacted Laurens County School District 55 (LCSD 55). Her Filipino mother demanded academic excellence, while her American father instilled a strong work ethic. Michelle shared, “Between the two, mediocrity was not allowed in the home. That has carried over into my adult life.”



Michelle is a Registered Nurse (RN) who serves as a classroom teacher and coach at Laurens District 55 High School (LDHS). Michelle has been teaching for fifteen and a half years, and fourteen and a half of them in LCSD 55.

Michelle and her husband’s work schedule posed challenges in raising their children, so Michelle decided to apply her knowledge and experience in the classroom. She said, “As a nurse, education is an important part of patient care.” Michelle enjoys seeing her students succeed in school and life, developing classroom relationships, and sharing her love of healthcare education.

As for becoming the LDHS Robotics Coach, Michelle transitioned naturally into it as a volunteer parent, then as a safety mentor two years ago. When the former LDHS robotics mentor moved to another school, Michelle took the LDHS lead mentor role. “It was an easy transition, but I still need to learn so much more to be a truly effective leader,” said Michelle.

Michelle has led the Robotz Garage Team to many successes and has recently taken the team to Texas for the *FIRST* World Championship. She said, “My greatest joy is not about the wins, although it’s nice. It is watching these students grow and develop their confidence. Watching them help and assist other teams that need help.”

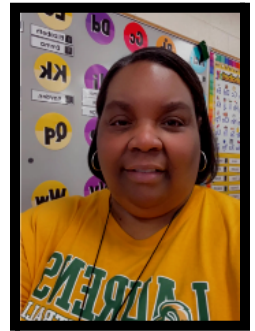
Michelle shares her 2020 Teacher of the Year quote from Coach John Scolinos “Coaches, keep your players — no matter how good they are — your own children, and most of all, keep yourself at seventeen inches.”

LCSD 55 is thankful for all of Michelle’s contributions and celebrates her during Teacher Appreciation Week, Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month, and International Nurses Day (May 12, 2023).

FORD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 2023-2024 TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Ford Elementary School (FES) proudly announces Marvina “Marcy” Sales as their 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year. Ms. Sales is a 4-year-old Kindergarten (4K) Teacher with 31 years of teaching in Laurens County School District 55 (LCSD 55).

Marcy has many reasons for becoming an educator. First and foremost, she wanted to be an educator to positively impact the lives of children. “As long as I can remember, I always wanted to be a teacher. I wanted to make a difference in the lives of children and make a lasting impression,” said Mrs. Sales.



“I also had many teachers who inspired me to become a teacher. My favorite teacher was my fifth-grade teacher. She was stern, but she made learning enjoyable. I ran into her a few years ago, and not only did she still remember my name, but she also remembered what I had given her for Christmas that year. I always strived to be that kind of teacher,” added Marcy.

Lastly, Marcy wanted to give back to the community she grew up in. She attended school in Laurens and graduated from Laurens District 55 High School. “I want to be a positive influence for my students the way my teachers were for me,” said Marcy.

Marcy finds it very rewarding when her students return to visit or shadow. This year, Marcy Sales had two of her former students shadow her. She enjoyed having both young ladies in her class. “I believe that teaching is very rewarding. I wish something I said or did that day would make them consider becoming a teacher,” Marcy said.



FES Principal Zakaria Watson only has praises for Marcy Sales. “Mrs. Sales is currently in her 31st year in the profession. She is humble and displays patience and kindness in all of her actions. Mrs. Sales is an example of excellence in education and positivity. She has always created space for students to thrive. She has a way of patiently bringing out the best qualities in her students, and every year is a favorite teacher of parents and former students. If I am asked to provide examples of what a teacher should be and do, I would simply show clips of Mrs. Sales in action. Mrs. Sales is truly meritorious,” said Principal Watson.

LCSD 55 congratulates Marcy Sales on being named FES 2023-2024 Teacher of the Year!

GRAY COURT-OWINGS (GCO) SPRING FESTIVAL

Gray Court-Owings (GCO) School held its Spring Festival on Thursday, May 4, 2023, from 5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. at the GCO football field. The free event was open to GCO students and their families. Attendees enjoyed games, face painting, and jumping in bounce houses. Family-friendly musical entertainment was provided by DJ Kurious George and the Redeemers of Faith.



RAIDER DAY SIGNING DAY

Laurens District 55 High School (LDHS) celebrated senior students as they committed to attending a college of their choice, the military or workforce. The Raider Day College Signing Day was held in the LDHS gym on May 5, 2023. LDHS students, friends, and family of the LDHS seniors filled the LDHS gymnasium. The Raiders Cheerleaders, Principal Lewis Compton, and Superintendent Ameca C. Thomas welcomed our seniors. LDHS Global Career Development Facilitator Dabs Davis spearheaded the event.



THE AMAZING SHAKE LUNCHEON

The Amazing Shake Luncheon was on Friday, May 5, 2023, at the Laurens County School District 55 Administrative Office. It was a celebration for students competing in The Amazing Shake on May 20th. The students were able to network with inspirational adults, and were inspired by Superintendent Dr. Ameca C. Thomas, Dr. Tawio Barksdale (District Behavior Intervention), and the City of Laurens Mayor Nathan Senn. Students from grades 5-8 who will participate in the LCSD 55 Amazing Shake tournament will be judged on their application of skills and characteristics in Job Interview, Conflict Resolution, and Introduction & Handshake. The students with the highest scores will receive prizes and the opportunity to compete at The Amazing Shake Competition in Atlanta.



NATIONAL PHYSICAL EDUCATION WEEK, MAY 1-7, 2023

Physical Education Coach Suzanne Fay at Waterloo Elementary School celebrated National Physical Education (PE) Week on Thursday, May 4, 2023, with a unique activity for first-grade students. Teamwork Thursday was a cooperative and imaginative activity using parachutes to create shapes.



COMMUNITY LAW EDUCATION WEEK AT GRAY COURT-OWINGS (GCO) SCHOOL



First-grade students at Gray Court-Owings (GCO) School welcomed guest readers from various law-related offices on Tuesday, May 2, 2023, to celebrate Community Law Education Week. Among the guest readers were Madison Hoffman and Jake Lampke from the 8th Circuit Solicitor's Office, Heather Faulkner from the Law Office of Laura Saunders, and Rick Faulks with South Carolina Legal Services. The guests also shared about their careers in law and provided each GCO first-grade student with a book. The Community Law Education Week celebration at GCO was in collaboration with the University of South Carolina literacy Outreach program, Cocky's Reading Express, and was organized by GCO School Librarian Michelle Spires.

READING ON THE GREEN AT EB MORSE (EBM) ELEMENTARY

EB Morse Elementary (EBM) held Reading on the Green on Friday, May 5, 2023 in celebration of Children's Book Week. This is one of the many reading initiatives at EBM that aligns with Laurens County School District 55's literacy goals. A book character day and book character parade also took place during Reading on the Green.



FUTURE FARMERS OF AMERICA VISITS HICKORY TAVERN SCHOOL

Hickory Tavern School Instructional Coach Bailey Hurt reached out to the Future Farmers of America (FFA) to help kindergarten and first-grade students experience real-life and hands-on learning opportunities tied to their animal studies and animal characteristics unit study in Science. The unit is aligned with the new South Carolina Department of Education Science Standards.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the LCSD 55 Board of Trustees will be held on Monday, May 22, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. at Gray Court-Owings (GCO) School located at 9210 SC-14, Gray Court SC 29645. A Budget Work Session will take place at 4:30 p.m. at GCO before the regular School Board Meeting.

STAY IN THE KNOW

	<i>A weekly video to share school district news</i> May 5, 2023
	<i>A podcast of one-on-one conversations</i> Michael Cade
	<i>A chance to hear how L55 has positively impacted students</i> Mykayla Neely
	<i>A chance to hear about our excellent teachers</i> Johnathan White
	<i>A chance to hear how L55 graduates achieved greatness</i> Bryanta Maxwell

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.