

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 15, 2023

Greetings Laurens County School District 55 Family,

I hope you all had a wonderful Mother's Day weekend. As the school year comes to a close, we must stay focused and finish strong. Our students have worked hard all year, and now is the time to push ourselves just a little bit more to achieve our goals. Our teachers also continue to work hard to provide the best education possible to our students.

Please encourage your children to stay focused and motivated during these final weeks. Remind them of the importance of completing assignments on time and studying diligently for exams.

Together, we can make these last few weeks of the school year productive and successful.

As always, please reach out to us if you have any questions or concerns.

LINKS

[May 16, 2023 Athletics Fan Bus to Catawba Ridge Sign-up Information](#)

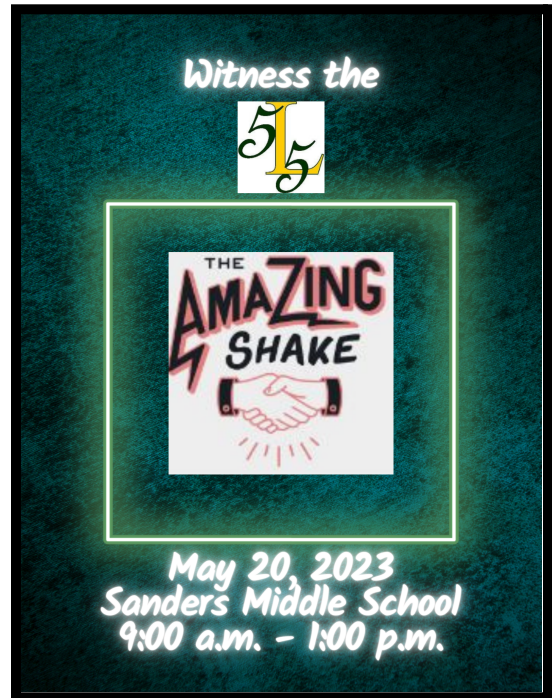
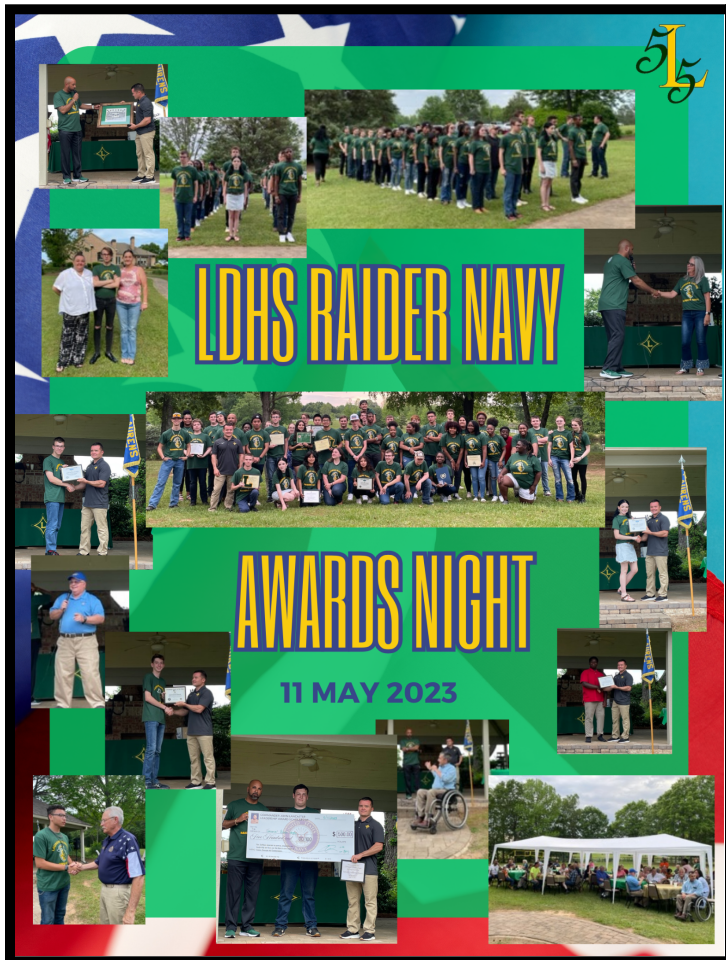
[May 9, 2023 Virtual Family Mental Health Night Recording](#) (Password: NT4=Utpv)

[2023 South Carolina Mathematics Standards](#) for Public Review

[Front Matter and Appendices](#) and [Standards and Indicators](#) Math Standards Review Surveys

[The Amazing Shake Tournament Luncheon Press Release](#)

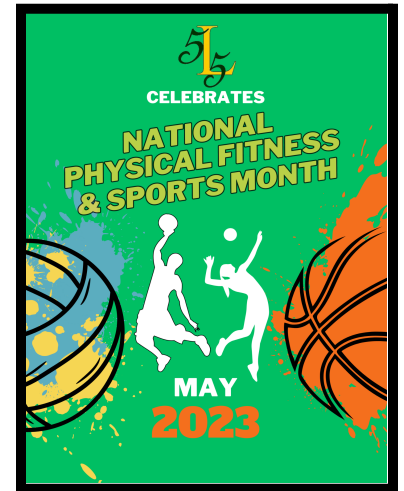
[LDHS Students Earn Certificates and Associates in Arts Degrees Press Release](#)



MAY IS NATIONAL PHYSICAL FITNESS AND SPORTS MONTH

On April 28, 2023, Proclamation 10564 declared May as National Physical Fitness and Sports Month. According to the proclamation, this is a month to encourage the adoption of “healthy habits that strengthen our bodies and minds and increase the prospect of a long and healthy life.”

Laurens County School District 55 (LCSD 55) celebrates Physical Education and Health educators for helping LCSD 55 students develop healthy habits and engaging them to stay physically active. A big shout out to the LCSD 55 Athletics Coaches for promoting the love of sports among our students and honing our Raiders’ athletes’ skills.



MEET “COACH CUB” CAROLINE CULBERTSON

Caroline Culbertson, known as Coach Cub, is the Physical Education (PE) Teacher at Laurens Elementary School. She has been in education for eleven years, and ten years of those have been with Laurens County School District 55 (LCSD 55).

Coach Cub holds a Bachelor of Science in Physical Education and a K-12 Teacher Certification from Lander University. As a tenth-grade student, she thought of becoming a lawyer but realized it wasn’t for her. In her senior year of high school, she became a Teacher Cadet and fell in love with teaching. She learned about the Physical Education/Exercise Science (PEES) Center at Lander University and fell even more in love with the reality that she could still teach but also be physically active.



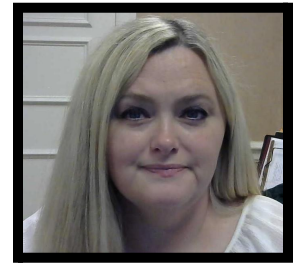
“I was always involved in sports and even participated in different sports in college on intramural teams. Once I got into the physical education aspect of the education department, I knew I had found my passion and couldn’t wait to become a physical education teacher,” said Coach Cub.

Coach Cub loves the opportunity to observe and work with students from Kindergarten to fifth grade. She is amazed to see the way each student changes over the years and how their skill level improves as their cognitive development takes place. She is committed to teaching PE because it develops children who have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to become lifelong learners and enjoy a lifetime of healthful physical activity.

She said, “My job is important as an Elementary Physical Education Teacher because I lay the foundation and teach my students the basic skills to become more advanced in certain areas or sports. I have always seen myself as the hook. I get them hooked on the fun activities, sports skills, or healthy aspects of physical education so that when they move on to middle school, they want to continue their physically active lifestyle.”

MEET OUR NEW EXECUTIVE SECRETARY TO THE SUPERINTENDENT AND SCHOOL BOARD

Candice Branim is the new Laurens County School District 55 Executive Secretary to the Superintendent and School Board. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in English from Lander University and an Associates Degree in Occupational Technology Early Childhood Education from Spartanburg Technical (Community) College.



Before joining LCSD 55, Ms. Branim was a United States Customs Post Entry Analyst for twelve years. She also has work experience as a customer service representative, office manager, project analyst, and daycare lead teacher.

Ms. Branim loves working with children and the community and decided to pursue the position of LCSD 55 Executive Secretary to the Superintendent and the School Board.

"I am excited to work with the wonderful staff at the district office and look forward to meeting all our educators and children. You have truly made me feel at home," she said.

LAURENS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT 55 (LCSD 55) THANKS 2023 READING BUDDIES



Laurens County School District 55 (LCSD 55) Superintendent Dr. Ameca C. Thomas started the Reading Buddies initiative in 2021 to help build foundational literacy skills for our LCSD 55 early learners. Reading Buddies refer to the stuffed animals students will be reading to, to help practice oral reading fluency. Stuffed animals provide students with a "listener" who will not interrupt and maintain eye contact as they read.

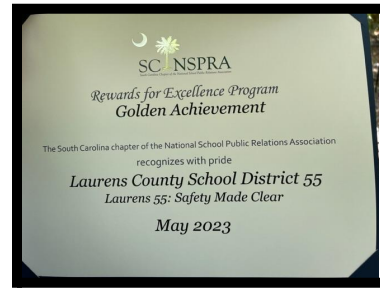
On May 9, 2023, volunteers gathered in the LCSD 55 administrative office building. The volunteers selected animals to stuff, named them, created birth certificates, and wrote special letters from the stuffed animals to their future recipients.

LCSD 55 Superintendent Dr. Ameca Thomas said, "We are thrilled to see our community coming to support our youngest learners through the Reading Buddies Program. This initiative promotes literacy, a love for reading and fosters a sense of connection and care for our students. By stuffing animals and packaging books, our volunteers are sending a message of encouragement and support to our 4k students. We are grateful for their time and dedication to our school community."

In June, LCSD 55 will welcome rising 4K students at the district administrative office. Our young learners will select and meet their take-home Reading Buddy. These students will also receive take-home books and supplies and meet the volunteers who put the Reading Buddies together.

LCSD 55 COMMUNICATION EFFORTS RECOGNIZED BY SC NSPRA

The South Carolina National School Public Relations Association (SC NSPRA) officially recognized our Laurens 55: Safety Made Clear Campaign at their awards luncheon on May 12, 2023. We received a certificate and trophy for our communications effort. LCSD 55 Coordinator of Communications Faye Colley received the Golden Achievement award on behalf of LCSD 55.



MARCH 2023 CHAMPION ADMINISTRATOR OF THE MONTH

Kim Penland is the Laurens County School District 55 (LCSD 55) March 2023 Champion Administrator of the Month. Kim is the Principal of Waterloo Elementary School (WES). Kim marks this year with 29 years in LCSD 55 and education. Her previous roles were classroom teacher, instructional coach, and assistant principal.



Kim loves her students, community, parents, and staff. As an administrator, Kim delights in watching the students learn, grow, and be excited about school. She also finds joy in working with amazing and dedicated staff who create a positive and productive learning environment for students.

This is Kim Penland's first year as principal at WES but her fifth year as a principal for LCSD 55. WES Administrative Assistant and PE teacher Suzanne Fay said, "This is a well-deserved honor for Mrs. Penland. She leads with kindness and support in all aspects of the school."

APRIL 2023 CHAMPION INDUCTION TEACHER OF THE MONTH

The April 2023 Champion Induction Teacher Award recipient is Anna Ross. Anna teaches second-grade students at Waterloo Elementary School (WES). She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Early Childhood Education from Coastal Carolina University and a Master of Education in Language, Literacy, and Culture with a concentration in English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) Instruction from Coastal Carolina University.

Anna decided to become an educator after taking the Teacher Cadet class in her senior year of high school. She loved working with the students at her field experience each week and knew then that she wanted teaching to be her career.



Her greatest joy as an educator is getting to know her students and their families. She said, "I love working at Waterloo because of the positive atmosphere. All of the teachers and administrators are so supportive!"

WES Principal Kim Penland said, "Anna always has a positive attitude with her students and colleagues. She strives to provide a nurturing environment for her students while providing strong leadership and data-driven instruction daily. Anna is an asset to WES. We are blessed to have her in the classroom."

Anna is happy with her recognition and said, "Thank you so much for the recognition of being Induction Teacher of the Month!"

MAY 2023 CHAMPION INDUCTION TEACHER OF THE MONTH

Laurens District 55 High School (LDHS) teacher Lance Kitchens is the May 2023 Champion Induction Teacher. Kitchens teaches 9th and 10th grade Welding Technology 1. He completed 5 years of United Association (UA) Pipefitting/Welding Apprenticeship and is a Certified UA Journeyman Pipefitter/Welder.

He decided to become an educator because of his passion to educate and to inspire the next generation of students in welding. His greatest joy as an educator is helping students not only with their welding education but also helping students become responsible young men/women and good citizens in the community.

"What I love the most about L55 would be the support and encouraging words that have been given to me by my mentor and staff during my first year here at Laurens County School District 55," said Kitchens.

LDHS Principal Lewis Compton said, "Mr. Kitchens has continued to grow professionally as the year has progressed. He works to develop relationships with his students. Also, Mr. Kitchens regularly discusses career opportunities with his students in the field of welding."

"I am so thankful and blessed to be recognized as LD55 Induction teacher of the month," said Kitchens.



CENERGISTIC WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY CAMPAIGN

World Environment Day is on June 5, 2023. Laurens County School District 55, in partnership with Cenergistic, calls on our community to celebrate World Environment Day and practice energy-saving habits every day.

LCSD 55 WELCOMES NEW HIRES FOR 2023-2024 SCHOOL YEAR

The Human Resources Department welcomed new hires for the 2023-2024 school year. The Human Resources Department conducted two new-hire orientation sessions last week (May 9th and May 11th). The new employees were oriented on many topics including their benefits and district expectations.

Welcome to all our new LCSD 55 employees!



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 12, 2023
	<i>A podcast of one-on-one conversations</i> Mayor Nathan Senn
	<i>A chance to hear how L55 has positively impacted students</i> Jackson Martin
	<i>A chance to hear about our excellent teachers</i> Lisa Nelson
	<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.