# Laurens County School District 55



2022-2023 Gear In Review

South Carolina National School Public Relations Association 2023 Golden Achievement Award Recipient



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





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### **School Board**



Cathy Little
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cclittle@laurens55.org



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Mike Hughes Seat 4 mhughes@laurens55.org



Peggy Nance Seat 6 phnance@laurens55.org



# Sycrafted Message

Dear Laurens County School District 55 Community,

It is with great enthusiasm that I reflect on the many remarkable achievements of our students, faculty, and staff during the 2022-2023 school year. Despite the challenges we faced, we persevered with courage, resilience, and a commitment to excellence.

Our students demonstrated academic prowess, athletic skill, and artistic talent, achieving countless victories and accolades. Our educators and support staff continued to inspire us with their unwavering dedication, creativity, and passion for teaching and learning.

We also made tremendous strides in advancing our district's mission of Empowering and Inspiring All to be Educated and Informed. We implemented innovative programs and initiatives that ensure every student has access to high-quality educational opportunities and the supportive environment they need to thrive.

Looking ahead, I am eager to build upon our successes, focus on continuous growth and improvement, and continue pushing the boundaries of what is possible. With the support and collaboration of our entire community, we can create a world-class education system that prepares our scholars for success in life.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership and commitment to our shared vision of excellence in education.

Sincerely,

Amera C. Thomas

Proud Superintendent
Laurens County School District 55

# District Leadership



Dr. Jody Penland
Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services jpenland@laurens55.org



Mrs. Jennifer Abercrombie Executive Director of Elementary Education jabercrombie@laurens55.org



Mr. Danny Frady Director of Technology dfrady@laurens55.org



Dr. Rhett Harris
Director of Secondary Education
& Operations
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Mr. Jim Lollis Chief Financial Officer jlollis@laurens55.org



Ms. Wanda Knight
Director of Student Nutrition Services
wknight@laurens55.org



Mrs. Renee Madden
Director of Human Resources
rmadden@laurens55.org



Mrs. Kathy McMillan-Bennon
Director of Academic Interventions
kmbennon@laurens55.org





Dr. Sara Frances Reid
Director of Special Education Services
sfreid@laurens55.org

#### Who We Are

Established in 1972 in Laurens County, South Carolina, Laurens County School District 55 is an accredited Cognia public school district committed to making every child a champion. We focus on instruction, staff development, community & family engagement, providing innovative learning facilities, and fiscal accountability.



We are proud to serve a diverse community and humbled to be honored with the 2023 Golden Achievement Award by the South Carolina National School Public Relations Association for our communication efforts.

## Geographical Area Served

We serve the communities of Laurens, Waterloo, Gray Court, Hickory Tavern, and the surrounding residents in the northern half of Laurens County. LCSD 55 covers approximately 300 square miles.

#### Mission

Empowering and Inspiring All to be Educated and Informed

#### Vision

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.

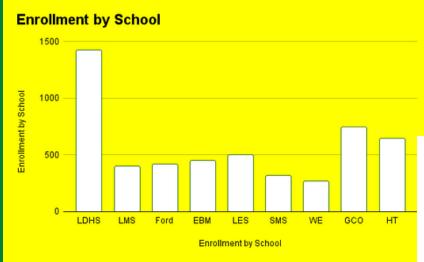
#### Theme

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

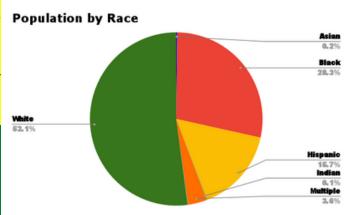
#### Goals

- 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.

# 5 Demographics



5,162 Students



## **School Leadership**



Brandon Addy Hickory Tavern School Principal



Dr. Jason Bailey EB Morse Elementary School Principal



Lewis Compton Laurens District 55 High School Principal



Clayton Cotney Laurens Middle School Principal



Joshua Dawkins Sanders Middle School Principal



Tina Faulkner Laurens Preparatory Academy Director



Dr. Carlos Littlejohn Laurens Elementary School Principal



Kim Penland Waterloo Elementary School Principal



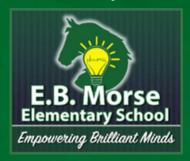
Farrell Thomas Gray Court-Owings School Principal



Zakaria Watson Ford Elementary School Principal

# OUR 2 **SCHOOLS**

**EB** Morse Elementary School



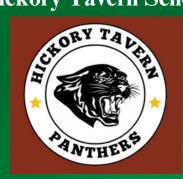
Laurens Elementary School



**Ford Elementary** School



**Hickory Tavern School** 



**Sanders Middle School** 

Sanders Middle School

Empowering Brilliant Minds

Waterloo **Elementary School** 



**Gray Court-Owings** School



Laurens **Preparatory Academy** 



Laurens Middle School



**Laurens District 55** High School





# provide supportive learning environments throughout the school year!



# **THANK YOU**

## July



Staff Development

#### August



School Supplies & Clear Backpack Drive

### **September**



Drone Signing Day

#### January



Mid-Year Kick-Off

## **February**



Read Aloud Day

#### March



**Team Ecology** 

# for a fruitful 2022-2023 academic year!

#### October



**Commitment to Commencement** 

#### November



Legislative Luncheon

#### **December**



Fire Science Program Contract Signing

#### **April**



Superintendent's Lunch of Champions

#### May



The 2nd Amazing Shake

#### June



Reading Buddies Distribution

## **Instructional Focus**

Laurens County School District 55 will create an exceptional learning environment that supports and challenges each student to reach their potential.











#### **Other Initiatives**

Book Study with Administrators

Common Assessments

Data Walls

Data Conferences with Principals
District Instructional Learning Walks
Instructional Leadership Meetings
Montessori Certification Cohorts
Principal's Monthly Bulletin
Professional Learning Communities
SEED Grant Partnership with NIET
Strategic Planning Sessions
Weekly Cabinet Meetings
Weekly One-on-One with Principals

5 LAURENS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT 55

Empowering and Inspiring All to be Educated and Informed

Laurens County School District 5s in Laurens, South Carolina, is a district committed to making every child a champion. We focus on instruction, staff development, community & family engagement, providing innovative learning facilities, and fiscal accountability. We are proud to serve a diverse community and humbled to be honored with the 2023 Golden Achievement. Award by the South Carolina National School Public Relations Association for our communication efforts. Our districts participation in the SEED grant empowers us to cultivate excellent leaders, which highly impact our teacher effectiveness and students' performance. The SEED grant has also increased our ability to attract and retain principals, particularly in our highest-need schools.

In 2020, Laurens 55 partnered with the National Institute for Excellence in Teaching (NIET) to join the South Carolina Principal Leadership Network (SCPLN). SCPLN is a cohort-based program, funded by a federal Supporting Effective Educator Development (SEED) grant, animing to build and accelerate the leadership opacity of school leaders in high-need districts. Laurens 55 principals and assistant principals in SCPLN receive high-quality virtual professional development, quarterfy on-site coaching, and quarterly networking opportunities via virtual communities of practice.

Through SCPLN, Laurens 55 has strengthened the instructional leadership skills of its school leaders--creating a cadre and pipeline of effective school leaders.



Cohort 1 survey respondents said that they learned something new during SCPLN communities of practice that would enrich their work.



Cohort 1 & Cohort 2 survey respondents reported that their leadership capacity has improved

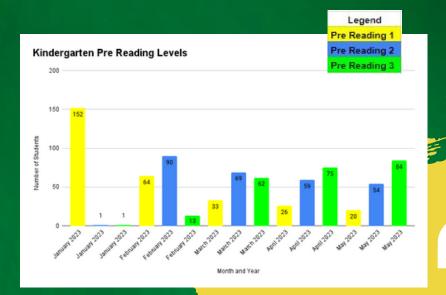




#### Special Highlight: Waterford Upstart

The South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) included Laurens County School District 55 (LCSD 55) in the Waterford Upstart Family Engagement Project grant. The program empowers parents and caregivers of young learners as the first teacher in the home. The learning model uses research-based early learning software technology. Four-year-old kindergarten (4K) students were provided with computer-adaptive instruction at home alongside personalized support from Waterford Upstart's family education liaisons.

This initiative provides young learners in LCSD 55 additional support to ensure kindergarten readiness. Each student receives a highly-personalized curriculum in math, science, and reading aligned with the South Carolina Early Learning Standards. To achieve desired outcomes, students need to use the program 15-20 minutes a day, five days a week.



Participation in the Waterford Upstart Family Engagement Program does not require classroom time. LCSD 55 teachers are encouragers and cheerleaders for promoting the use of this program in the homes of all 4K students.

#### **Student Impacts**

151 Preschool students participated in this program.

In three months, 55% of those Preschoolers completed Pre Reading 1 and continued on with Pre Reading 2 and Pre Reading 3.

153 Kindergarten students placed at Pre Reading 1.

In three months, 88% of those Kindergarteners moved beyond Pre Reading 1 and continued with Pre Reading 2 and Pre Reading 3

56 First-grade students placed at Pre Reading 1.

In three months, 82% of those first-grade students moved beyond Pre Reading 1.

49 Second-grade students placed at Pre Reading 1.

In three months, 98% of those second-grade students moved beyond Pre Reading 1.

## **Staff Development**

Laurens County School District 55 will continually strengthen the recruitment, retention, and development of highly effective staff.





**Administrative Cabinet Training** 

**Champion Tuesdays** 

**Induction Program** 

**Coach's Camp** 

**TSL Cohort** 

**Montessori Cohort** 

**One on One Principal Sessions** 

Staff Evaluations, Feedback & Coaching







# LAURENS (SCHOOL D



Laurens County
School District 55

#### CERRA Rural Recruitment Initiative

**CERRA Undergraduate Loan Forgiveness Program** 

**Cross Country Mortgage Partnership** 

**Employee Assistance Program** 

**Gradfin Student Loan Assistance Program** 

**Grand Canyon University Partnership** 

**Recruitment Events & Fairs** 

**Retention Bonus** 

**Teacher Cadet Program** 

**USC-Upstate Partnership** 

**Welcome Walks** 

**ESS Substitute Provider** 

**Lander University Partnership** 

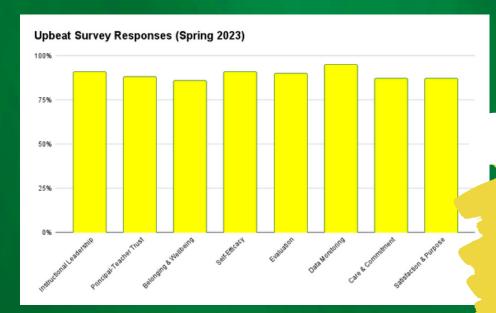
#### Special Highlight: Upbeat Survey

Upbeat Survey is a tool used in Laurens County School District 55 in making data-driven culture decisions.

The Upbeat Survey offers a simple and statistically-sound method for understanding teacher engagement so that administrators can best address staff needs and wants. Upbeat's survey instrument has proven to reveal consistent, actionable insights that positively influence staff turnover in each school's unique context.

#### **Staff Member Impacts**

Very High-Level Instructional Leadership
High-Level Principal-Teacher Trust
Highly Knowledgeable Evaluators
Highly Positive Teacher Evaluation Experience
High-Level of Belonging & Wellbeing
High-Level of Self-Efficacy
High-Level of Equity



#### **Student Impacts**

Effective Student Progress Data Monitoring

**Student Learning** 

**Student Growth** 

**Positive School Culture** 

### **Facilities**

Laurens County School District 55 will provide safe schools with innovative learning environments to support student readiness for college and careers.





#### **Student Nutrition**

**Health & Wellness Policy** 

Formation of Health & Wellness Committee

Installation of New Combination & Multi-Cook Oven at Laurens Elementary

**Highly-Maintained Cafeteria** 

**Highly-Maintained Kitchen Equipment** 

**Highly-Maintained Food Storage** 

**Updating Student Nutrition Software** 

**Updating LDHS Serving Line** 



Thank you bunches







NATIONAL SCHOOL BREAKFAST WEEK

DIGIN TO SCHOOL BREAKFAST.



471,891 Breakfasts Served

616,774 Lunches Served

36,989 Afterschool Snacks Served

44,284 Summer Meals Served



RAISE 1



## **Family and Community Engagement**

Laurens County School District 55 will actively engage with parents and community as partners in the education of all students.

# Dialogue with School Board

Chair & Vice-Chair Monthly Meetings

**Email Communications** 

**Weekly School Board** Newsletters

**Monthly School Board Meéting Report** 

Laurens County School District 55 Receives an Award for Safety Made Clear Campaign



Laurens County School District 55 (LCSD Golden Achievement Award from National School Public 1

who v entries planni The cam

person Listen & Learn sessions in early 201 stakeholders' input in mind-Its goal is to promote threaten safety. T safety threat iten

Legislative Luncheon



for their "Law

MISSION STATEMENT

Laurens County School District 55 301 Hillcrest Drive Laurens, SC 29360 864-984-3568



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 stu



**Alert Calls, Emails and Texts** 

**Connections Podcast** 

**Grad to Greatness** 

**Impact 55** 

**Legislative Luncheon** 

**Listen & Learn** 

**Lunch & Learn** 

**Press Releases** 

**Raider Nation Station/ Table Talk** 

Read Along with Dr. Thomas

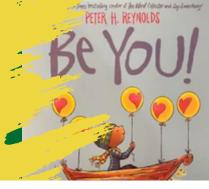
Social Media

**Times in 55 Monthly Publication** 

Website

Weekly Newsletters to Parents and Staff









Mykayla Neely IMPACT:55

Jackson Martin



#### **Special Initiatives**

**Clothes Closet** 

Community Garden Partnership with United Way

**Parent Academy Series** 

**Parent Coordinator** 

ParentGuidance.org

**School Supply Drive** 

**Summer Meals Program** 

**Surveys** 

**TruConnect** 

**Volunteer Program** 

#### **Student Impacts**

Community Support

Educational Opportunities

Health & Wellbeing Support

Mental Health Support

Parental Support

Safety Support

Scholarship Opportunities

Social Emotional Support



#### **Partnerships**

**AlNautics** 

**Chick-fil-A Laurens** 

**Cook Center for Human Connections** 

**Lakelands YMCA** 

**Lander University** 

**Laurens County Chamber of Commerce** 

**Laurens County Development Corporation** 

**Laurens County DSN** 

**Laurens County Emergency Management** 

Laurens County Sheriff and City Police Departments

**NIET** 

**Piedmont Technical College** 

Presbyterian College

**PRISMA** Health

**Rotary of Laurens** 

Self-Regional Health Care

**United Way of Laurens County** 

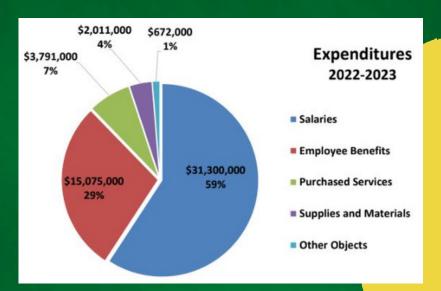
**USC-Upstate** 





## **Fiscal Responsibility**

Laurens County School District 55 will use resources effectively and maintain a strong fiscal position.



#### **Initiatives**

**Budget Monitoring** 

Cenergistic Energy Conservation Program

Financial Transparency

**Fiscally-sound Budget** 

LED Project utilizing Duke Energy Rebates and low-interest ConserFund Financing

**Public Input** 

**Right-size staffing** 

Student Nutrition Funds & Grants

#### Special Highlight: Cenergistic

In September 2022, the LCSD 55 School Board approved for the district to go under a 5-year contract with Cenergistic. Under this contract, the projected 5-year program gross savings based on comparable properties is \$1,540,000.00, and a net savings of \$904,000.00 after applicable program investment fees. A great feature of the program is it is budget neutral. LCSD 55 does not need to generate new funds to be able to invest in the Cenergistic program. The current 2% budget allocated for utilities will cover anticipated utility bills and fees for the Cenergistic program. Further, the district is not required to invest in new equipment to generate savings. District utility savings are guaranteed to be more than the investment. Furthermore, Cenergistic guarantees to give LCSD 55 a yearly refund on the investment fees if no savings are generated for a specific year.

Oct 2022 to Mar 2023

Energy Program Update Laurens County School District (LCSD)



**Total Program Savings** 

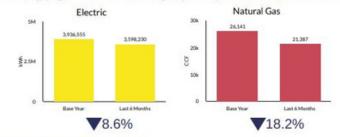
\$34.371

Program savings measures the impact of the energy program on utility consumption and cost when independent variables such as weather, unit cost, etc. are factored in.

6.1% overall savings

#### Use Reduction by Commodity

The energy program has assisted in reducing utility consumption across multiple commodites.



#### **Environmental Impact**

The expected amount of energy reduced by LCSD since the beginning of program for electricity natural gas is equivalent to:



#### Special Highlight: Student Nutrition Funds & Grants

Ms. Wanda Knight, the Director of LCSD 55 Student Nutrition Services is passionate about ensuring LCSD 55 students are properly nourished. She believes that "hungry children can't learn." She has a big heart and is concerned about students who may only be getting the proper nourishment at school. She is meticulous with getting work done, including applying for various food grants.

In 2022-2023, all LCSD 55 students received free breakfast and lunch. Additionally, three elementary schools received the Fresh Fruit and Vegetables grant. This grant allowed students to try new fruits and vegetables for a snack.

LCSD 55 was also awarded \$27,444.00 by the South Carolina Department of Education and the South Carolina Department of Agriculture to purchase locally-grown produce. The fund enabled our district to provide all LCSD 55 schools with more options for fresh fruit or vegetables for breakfast and lunch.

In Spring 2023, Director Knight requested the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide LCSD 55 extra funding to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables. USDA approved the request, and LCSD 55 received \$5,000.

In Spring 2023, the South Carolina Department of Education notified LCSD 55 that the district will receive \$50,530.29 to purchase non-processed foods, like milk, fresh fruits, and vegetables.





#### Parents' Testimonials

"Thank you for instilling and improving Tucker's knowledge and skills for farming and caring for animals. We are so grateful for the agriculture/horticulture programs at LDHS and Tucker's involvement with them and the Future Farmers of America."

-Mr. Brian McHone

"The Navy Junior Reserve Officers Training Corps Program at LDHS is an excellent program that prepared Matt for the Navy. It combines discipline, physical activity, teamwork, and responsibility that has truly helped our son mature in many ways. Under the leadership of Senior Chief Flood and Commander Politino, Matt learned the value in hard work, taking responsibility, and accomplishing goals he could take pride in."

-Mrs. Gemini Dyar

"We are thankful that Anna had the opportunity to graduate high school with an Associate of Arts Degree from Piedmont Technical College. The LDHS Middle College Program gives students the ability to jump-start their college career while in high school, and it's a great way for students to become acclimated to the rigors of a college curriculum. Financially, because the program satisfies basic college degree requirements, this can be a game changer for many families trying to navigate paying for their child's college education."

-Dr. Seth Reynolds

"It was a very proud moment as a parent to see my child receive the Superintendent's Scholar Award! My husband and I have always instilled a love for learning and stressed how hard work pays off. Receiving this award signifies that academic diligence is required for school success and future endeavors. We are grateful to the school district for recognizing students for their academic achievements."



"Softball is an important part of my life and it has helped me build relationships, come out of my shell basically... I want to give a shout out to Mrs. Hill for being the coolest teacher ever, my Business Teacher, and just teaching me a lot about business law... I'm very excited for my future. Thank you Laurens 55 for making an impact!"

> -Kauree Munyan 12th Grade LDHS

"I've been in the Health Science Program for three years... I learned how to care for others and be sympathetic towards others... My career goal is to work as a psychiatrist in an elementary or middle school in a low income community in order to further educate the community on mental health awareness. My experience within the district has led me to this career... Thank you District 55 for making an impact in my life so that I can make an impact on others!"

-Mykayla Neely 12th Grade LDHS

#### **Students' Testimonials**

"One way being in school has impacted me is teaching me about responsibility... another thing is being respectful is the right thing to do... another thing is using your voice to speak up. All of these three things I have learned prepared me not only for going to the high school next year but for my life ahead of me. Thank you Laurens 55 for making an impact!"

-Gage Camden 8th Grade Sanders Middle School

"I've really enjoyed my time playing both football and baseball... baseball has really made an impact in my life... Coach Patterson has made it such a joy and has made such an impact in my life... Thank you District 55 for making an impact on me!"

-Jackson Martin 12th Grade LDHS



100 Rating
Districtwide School Cafeteria DHEC Inspection

Dr. Ameca C. Thomas National School Public Relations Association 2022 Superintendent to Watch

SEED Grant Recipient for Principal Leadership Professional Development

South Carolina National School Public Relations Association Golden Achievement Award L55: Safety Made Clear Campaign

> South Carolina Department of Education Low-Risk Rating Risk Assessment of Federal Sub-award Recipient

Connie Godfrey, Ford Elementary South Carolina School Nutrition Association Employee of the Year

Angel Tollison, E.B. Morse Elementary South Carolina School Nutrition Association Cafeteria Manager of the Year

All-Clear Rating South Carolina Department of Education Office of Federal and State Accountability Consolidated State Monitoring Protocol



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