



A Message from the Superintendent

September 13, 2024

Hello, Lawrence Public Schools Community,

It's a great time across our school community as we wrap up this fifth week of classes, settle into the rhythms of the school year, and transition into fall. We are delighted to welcome each of our 10,000 students and proud of their strong progress in acclimating to this new school year.

We are immensely grateful to our school families and community partners for your robust support of our students, staff, and schools in launching this 2024-25 school year. What a positive difference you make!

Many thanks to our teachers, support staff, school leaders, and all on the Lawrence Public Schools' team for your diligent work to ensure a strong start for our students. We are fortunate to have each of you on our team.

The African proverb, "*It takes a village to raise a child,*" reflects our Lawrence community, and I thank each of you for sharing in this critically important endeavor. Our children benefit from the participation of each individual in our village.

Fall Community Engagement

Over the coming days, we will share detailed information about upcoming fall community engagement opportunities. These community conversations will explore what we most need and want for our students as we move forward in Lawrence Public Schools, to better understand our best hopes and dreams for the future of our children, schools, and community.

No one knows better the strengths and celebrations, the challenges and areas for improvement, dreams and hopes for the future than all who live here, work here, bring children to learn and grow in Lawrence Public Schools each day, and/or partner with and contribute to our schools from across our community.

Lawrence Public Schools USD 497

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As we focus the work to enhance equity, inclusion, and opportunity for all our students and prepare to move forward in planning for the future of the Lawrence Public Schools, we want to hear from you. We will use what we learn from our conversations to inform and align district direction with the thoughts, experiences, needs, and aspirations shared.

I look forward to continuing to connect with you at community events, convening gatherings for conversation, as well as offering an online survey opportunity for additional input. We plan to publish a report of what we have heard from our community during the December-January time frame.

Strong, vibrant communities are known for their care and engagement, the priority they place on the learning and growth of their children, and for the effort they invest to sustain high quality public schools to serve them. Thank you for choosing Lawrence Public Schools and for the opportunity to serve together in this important work for our children.

We always have exciting news from Lawrence Public Schools to share. You may want to read some highlights and access the links below to learn more about recent updates from our school district.

Please watch for more details coming soon. I hope to meet, see, and connect with you at a school or community event this fall!

Sincerely,
Jeanice Kerr Swift
Interim Superintendent
Lawrence Public Schools

P.S. For real-time updates, I invite you to engage with me [@LPSSuperSwift](#) on X (Twitter) and follow [@Lawrence Public Schools](#) on Facebook and [@usd497](#) on Instagram and YouTube.

Back-to-School Tours

During the early days of this school year, I loved visiting all of our schools. I saw caring staff and happy children getting to know one another, practicing school routines, and engaging in learning. The work of our USD 497 team is amazing, and our buildings are extraordinary, proof of our community's ongoing investment in its public schools. You can view highlights of the back-to-school tour here:

District Earns \$100,000 Grant

A nearly \$100,000 USDA/Kansas Department of Agriculture Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program Grant will support the creation of a district-supporting bakery at Community Connections at Pinckney. The bakery will engage with the local food system by prioritizing the utilization of local grains through expanded Farm-to-School partnerships and enhanced recipes and meals provided by our child nutrition programs. The bakery will also offer job training for students with disabilities attending our transition programs at Pinckney.

Congratulations, National Merit Semifinalists!

Congratulations to our eight Lawrence Public Schools' National Merit Semifinalists: Amaya Gab, Malcolm Karman, Richard Li, Noah Pultz-Earle, Elinor Russo, Anwen Williams, and Lois Xie of Free State High, and Elise N. Rathmel, Lawrence High. The National Merit® Scholarship Program honors students who show exceptional academic ability and potential for success in rigorous college studies. Semifinalists announced this week represents less than one percent of U.S. high school seniors.

The Foundation's Community Education Breakfast is *Sold Out!*

The Lawrence Schools Foundation's annual Community Education Breakfast kicks off the 2024-25 school year by enabling local businesses and community members to demonstrate their support for public education. This year's program will feature Jaunelle White of Lawrence High's Class of 1996. She is the first female athletic director and vice president of intercollegiate athletics for Point University in West Point, Georgia.