



Superintendent of Schools Report to the Board

February 9, 2026

Jessica Kerr Swift

School Counseling Week 2026

This year's theme: **School Counselors Amplify Student Success**

We have **31 school counselors** who support each student every day.

Our School Counselors:

- Support students' social, emotional, & academic needs
- Run Tier 2 groups for students
- Brief, short-term counseling interventions
- Suicide prevention & intervention
- Serve on district crisis response team
- Support post-secondary success planning & scheduling
- Are a safe person, coaches, & club sponsors



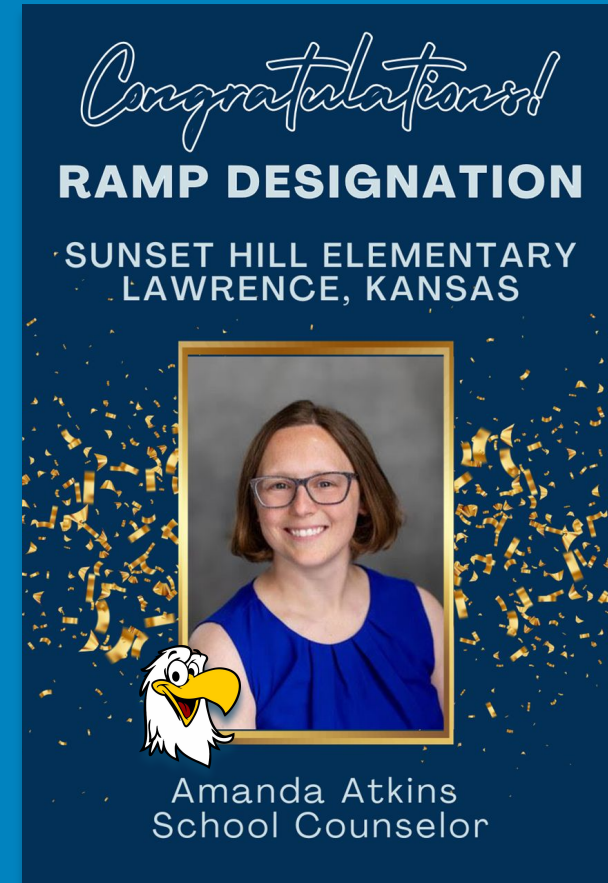
Sunset Hill Earns Historic Honor



Sunset Hill Elementary named **the 1st Kansas school** to earn Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) designation.

The national honor recognizes:

- Alignment with ASCA National Model
- Intentional leadership
- Strong systems
- School culture
- Improving student outcomes



Happy Birthday, Langston Hughes!

Langston Hughes Elementary threw a birthday party for their school namesake with musical assistance from Lawrence High School drumline.



*"We have tomorrow bright
before us like a flame"
Langston Hughes*



Dreams

LANGSTON HUGHES

Hold fast to dreams
For if dreams die
Life is like a broken-winged bird
That cannot fly.

Hold fast to dreams
For when dreams go
Life is a barren field
Frozen with snow.



(Photo: Library of Congress)

Leadership Lawrence

Douglas County Government Day with class members of Leadership Lawrence!



Ovation! 2026



Scholastic Regional Awards



18 LPS high school students earned **61 awards** in the **Scholastic Art & Writing Awards** Midwest regional competition.



- Including **25 Gold Key Awards**.

Gold Key winners will compete at **National Finals in New York City**.



- Finals results to be announced late March.

*Visit **@LHSstudio320** on Instagram to see LHS student artwork.



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Scholastic Regional Awards



Simn Robinson, LHS,
“Internal Issues”



Rilo Scholz, LHS,
“Spinning Star Rings”



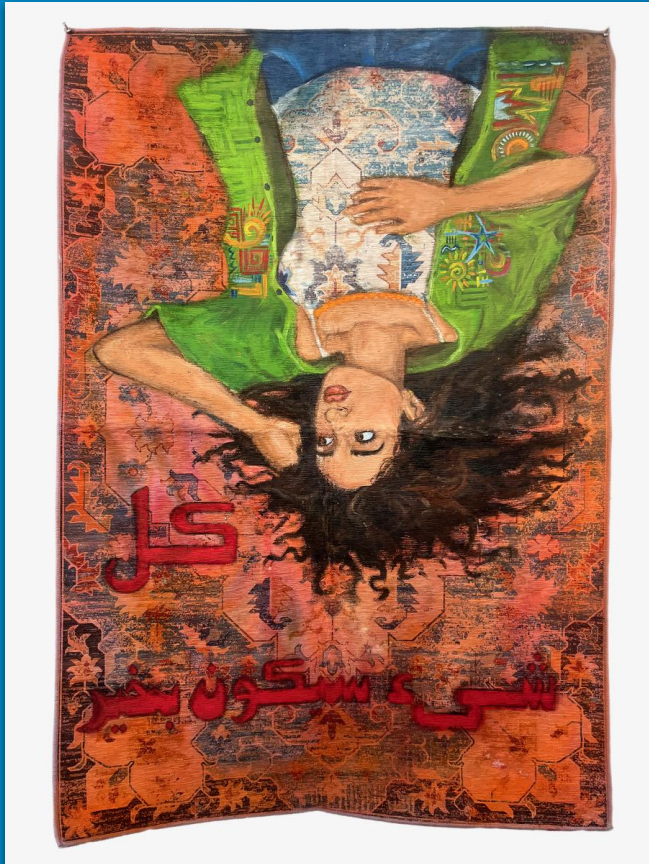
Leila Albaugh, LHS,
“Beneath Your Maturity”

Scholastic Regional Awards



Lily Havener, LHS,
Various pieces

Scholastic Regional Awards



Fatima Elshekhi, LHS,
"Self Portrait"

Visit [@LHSstudio320](https://www.instagram.com/LHSstudio320) on Instagram to see more LHS student artwork.

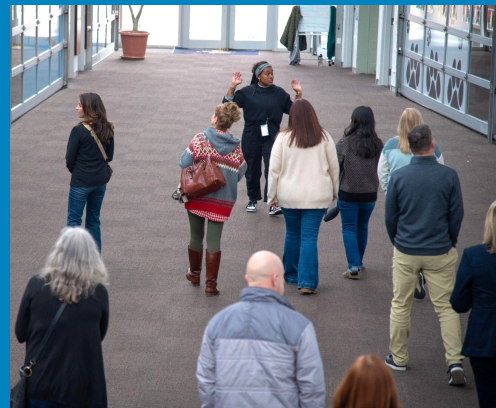
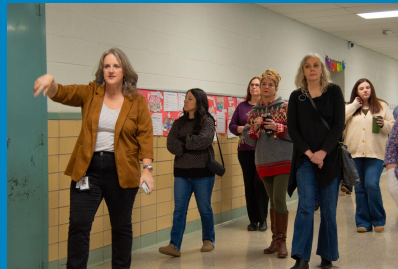


Wren Jay, LHS,
"Wait"

KS Teachers of the Year Tour

Kansas Teacher of the Year district finalists from neighboring districts toured LPS last week, visiting **Cordley, Billy Mills Middle School, Lawrence College & Career Center, & Lawrence High School.**

- Including our **2023-24 Lawrence Secondary Teacher of the Year, Tracy Murray**, from LHS.



Annual BOBS Dinner & Reception



- Joined **Lawrence Schools Foundation** in honoring three decades of outstanding educators
- Celebrated 2025 Excellence in Teaching: **\$10,000 BOBS Award Recipient, Gina Carter**



**LAWRENCE
SCHOOLS**
FOUNDATION

Community Conversations 2026

Recently hosted conversations at the Educational Support Center & Hillcrest Elementary.

Upcoming in-person events:

- Woodlawn Elementary — Feb. 10, 5:30 p.m.
- Billy Mills Middle School — Feb. 17, 6:00 p.m.



 **Join the Conversation!**

Share your feedback online via survey:

www.usd497.org/future

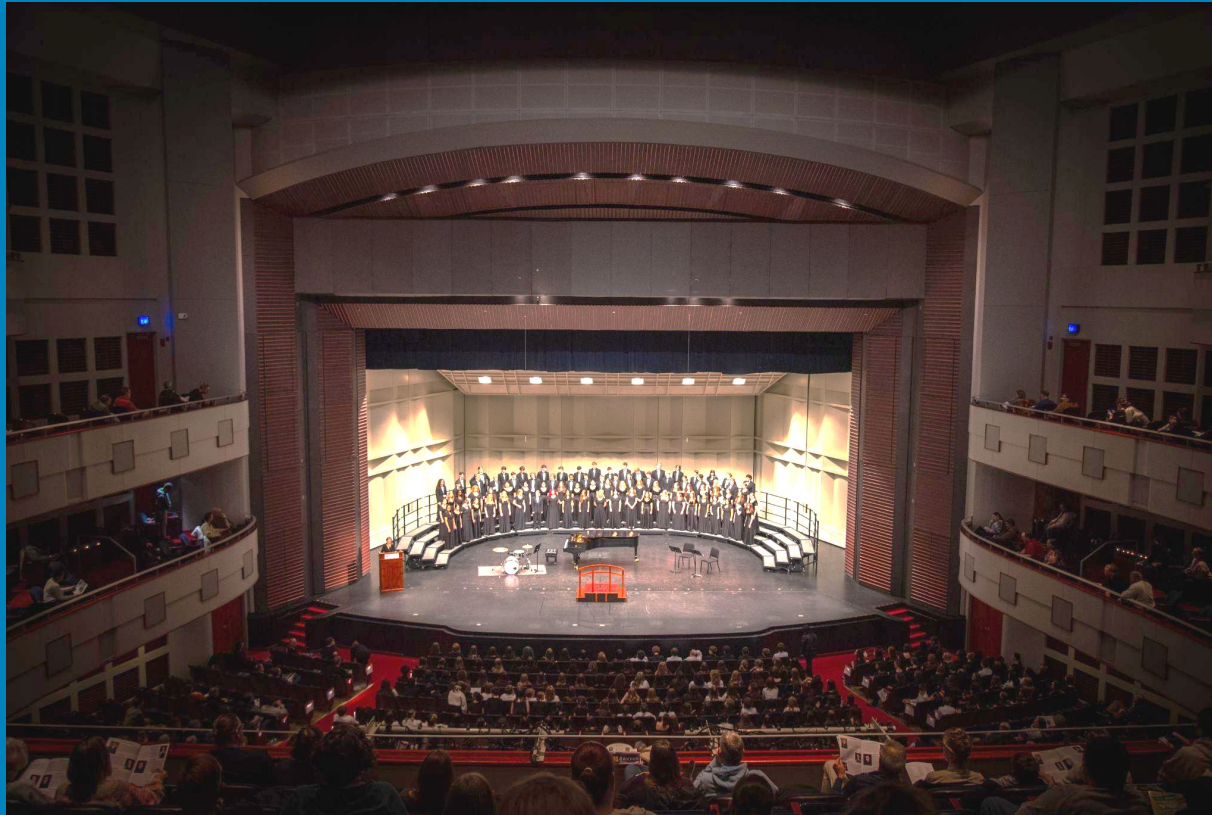
Important Dates



- **Thursday, Feb. 12**
EC-5 NO SCHOOL, EC-5 PT Conferences
- **Friday, Feb. 13**
EC-HS NO SCHOOL
- **Monday, Feb. 23 (6:00 PM)**
Board of Education Meeting @ ESC
- **Preschool Early Enrollment (thru March 22)**
www.usd497.org/preschool



All-City Choir Concert 2026



**Pictured: All-City Middle School Choir (top) and All-City High School Choir (left/bottom).*

All-City Choir Concert 2026



**All-City Middle School Choir performs Čhanťé Wašťé Hokšíla, arranged by William Linthicum-Blackhorse.*

2026-27 Preschool Enrollment

Preschool classrooms coming to **Deerfield & Prairie Park** Elementary Schools in the 2026-27 school year.



Preschool

Early Enrollment Window



February 2 – March 22



Acceptance notifications sent by April 1

Based on eligibility, availability, and at-risk verification.



Sites: Kennedy Early Childhood Center, New York Montessori, Deerfield, Prairie Park, Sunflower, & Woodlawn Elementary School.



Enroll at www.usd497.org/preschool