Lawson R-XIV School District Volume 32, Issue 1 Fall 2026

Cardinal CONNECTION

We Are Lawson
PROUD TRADITIONS • ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES



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ON THE COVER: **Liam Ashcraft** (5) and a Special Olympics athlete, high-fives **Andee Riley**, Special Olympics team sponsor, during the team's first ever track meet on Wednesday, Apr. 22, 2026, at Lathrop. *Photo by Aleah Johnson*

Follow Lawson School District on our social media platforms, so you won't miss important announcements, updates, and special things going on!

Lawson School District Facebook
Lawson.GoCardinals

Lawson School District X (Formerly known as Twitter)
@LawsonGoCards

Lawson Cardinals Activities
@LawsonCardinalsActivities

Southwest Elementary Facebook
@swelementaryschool

FROM THE DESK OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

As we move through the first months of the 2026–2027 school year, our schools are once again full of the energy that makes Lawson special. Students are learning and growing in our classrooms, competing and performing through activities and athletics, developing new skills, and taking advantage of opportunities throughout our district.

It has been a strong start to the year, and I am grateful for the work of our students, educators and support staff, families, and community that makes it possible.

As you receive the first *Cardinal Connection* of the school year, I also want to recognize that our schools serve a community much larger than the students who walk through our doors each morning. Whether you have children in our schools, are a Lawson graduate, have grandchildren attending, or simply call this community home, our schools belong to all of us. Strong schools contribute to strong communities, and the opportunities available to Lawson students today help shape the community Lawson will be tomorrow.



DR. MICHAEL STEPHENSON
Lawson R-XIV
Superintendent

Over the past several years, we have remained focused on a straightforward goal: continually improving opportunities for students while responsibly managing the resources our community has entrusted to us.

That commitment shows up throughout our district. We have expanded early childhood opportunities, strengthened academics, invested in our educators and support staff, increased real-world learning experiences, introduced agriculture education, improved safety and security, and addressed long-standing facility needs throughout our schools.

These are more than individual programs or projects. Together, they represent a deliberate effort to strengthen the educational experience we provide students and position Lawson for continued success. We have accomplished a great deal together, but our focus remains on what comes next.

One question continues to guide our work: What do Lawson students need today to be prepared for tomorrow?

We want every student to be appropriately challenged and supported. That means providing additional help when needed while creating opportunities for students who are ready to advance further. It means strong academics alongside activities, career and technical education, real-world learning, and experiences that help students develop the knowledge, skills, confidence, and responsibility needed beyond our schools.

Whether the next step is college, a career, military service, technical training, or another opportunity, our goal is for Lawson graduates to leave us prepared to take that next step with confidence.

Providing those opportunities also requires us to look beyond this school year. As costs rise and state funding conditions change, responsible planning requires us to understand challenges early, communicate openly, and make thoughtful decisions that protect both the opportunities available to students today and the long-term strength of our district.

This fall, we have been sharing a six-part Financial Outlook series to provide our community with a clearer understanding of where district resources come from, how those dollars are invested, the financial pressures ahead, and why long-range planning matters. You will find more information about this work inside this edition of the *Cardinal Connection*.

Transparency matters because these are our community's schools and our community's investment. We want residents to understand the progress we have made, the challenges we are preparing for, and the considerations that will shape decisions moving forward. Just as importantly, we want to continue listening to our community as we plan for Lawson's future.

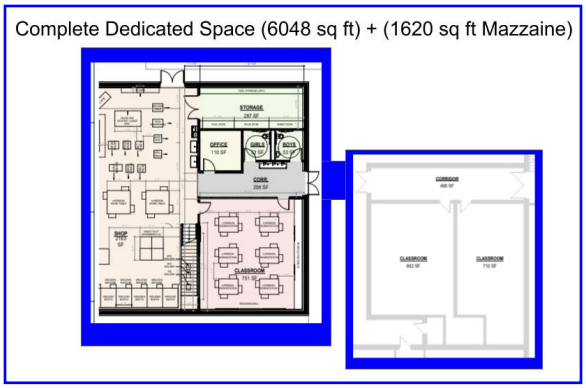
Lawson has much to be proud of. Our traditions remind us where we have been, the work taking place in our schools today demonstrates our commitment to continuous improvement, and the decisions we make together will help shape the opportunities available to the next generation of Cardinals.

As we move forward this year, our commitment remains clear: keep students at the center of our decisions, support the people who serve them, responsibly steward the resources entrusted to us, and continue building a school district our community is proud to call its own.

Thank you for your continued support of Lawson students and schools. I look forward to sharing their accomplishments and our continued progress with you throughout the year.

We Are Lawson: Where Proud Traditions meet today's challenges to provide Endless Possibilities.





Growing Opportunities

LAWSON'S AGRICULTURE LEARNING LAB

As we move deeper into fall, an exciting new chapter is taking shape for Lawson students. Thanks to our community's support in April, we are preparing for construction of the Agriculture Learning Lab—a space where students can turn ideas into projects, discover their interests and build skills for the future.

In September, the Board of Education approved Herner Construction as the general contractor to lead the project. Construction is planned to begin in late October 2026, with the goal of welcoming students into the new facility in August 2027.

The learning lab will build on Lawson's agriculture education program and FFA opportunities, giving students more room to learn by doing. Through hands-on projects, students will develop technical skills, solve problems and work together. These experiences will help prepare them for college, technical training, careers and life beyond graduation.

"From a student's perspective, this new space will mean more opportunities to take an idea and turn it into something real," said Ms. Morgan Watkins, Lawson agriculture education teacher and FFA advisor. "Students will have room to build, practice, and work together while discovering their interests and developing skills they can use beyond high school."

Voter support for the April 2026 no-tax-rate-increase bond helped make this project possible while maintaining the district's total tax levy.

That investment reflects our community's commitment to helping students explore their potential and prepare for their next steps.

Community partnerships are helping to grow that vision. A grant secured through Goppert Bank will support a future greenhouse connected to the learning lab, expanding opportunities for hands-on agriculture education. The district will also pursue available Perkins and enhancement grants to help provide instructional tools and equipment for areas such as metalworking and woodworking.

We look forward to sharing construction milestones and celebrating the learning that will take place in this new space. Thank you to our voters and community partners for investing in Lawson students. Your support is helping turn today's plans into tomorrow's possibilities.

Health Room HIGHLIGHTS

As always, the start of the new school year has been hectic.

IMMUNIZATION RECORDS

In the health rooms we have been busy reviewing records for immunization compliance and health plans. If you have any immunization forms or "Exempt" or "In-Progress" cards that have not been turned in, please do so quickly. In accordance with state and district policy, immunization information should be on fille and current prior to students attending school. Just like "kindergarten" shots are required for incoming kindergarten students, the 8th grade students must show proof of current Tdap and meningococcal vaccines and 12th grade students must show proof of their final meningococcal vaccine. It is very helpful for the nurses if this information is provided to them in a timely fashion—it takes a minute to review all the records. We appreciate your help with this.

MEDICATIONS

We always get lots of medication questions at the beginning of the year. If you have a student who takes a daily medication, it is always best to take it at home before or after school if possible. If a medication does need to be given at school there must be a Medication Authorization Form on file in the health room (for prescription and non-prescription medications) before medication can be administered at school. Prescription medications/inhalers must be delivered to the health room in their original container/box with the current pharmacy label attached that includes:

- Name of student
- Name of medication/RX number
- Dosage/dosing instructions
- Purchase date (must be a current prescription)
- Prescribing physician's name

For safety reasons, prescription and non-prescription medications must be delivered to the school by a parent/guardian or other responsible adult—it must never be sent on the bus with the student.

Non-prescription medication should be in original/sealed container and be appropriate for the age of the student per the label or else must have a doctor's order (i.e. if the label reads ages 12 and younger consult a physician for dosing and the student is younger than age 12, we will not administer that medication without a doctor's order even if this is a medicine the student uses at home).

PREVENTION

We are already seeing allergy symptoms, respiratory illnesses, stomach bugs and all the other reminders of what happens when students come back together! It's always good to remind your students of the importance of thorough and frequent handwashing and to cover coughs/sneezes to help prevent the spread of germs. Parents, we ask that you also perform a daily/morning assessment of your student(s) to help us keep our student body and staff healthy. Please keep your student(s) home until they feel better and are symptom-free for at least 24 hours if you note any of the following:

- Temperature greater than 100 degrees
- Symptoms that might spread germs or interfere with learning like excessive coughing
- Vomiting/diarrhea

IMMUNIZATIONS

Many families in our area rely on the Ray County Health Department for vaccinations and services. The Health Department has staff that are happy to help with immunization and health questions and concerns. The Health Department usually comes to the Lawson Community Center every third Wednesday each month from 1-3 p.m. It is always a good idea to call ahead to make sure that the schedule hasn't changed and that the vaccine you need will be available. In October, flu shots should be available. The Health Department also does immunizations by appointment at their office in Richmond, MO (816-776-5413).

CONTACT INFO

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Tina Murdock, BSN, RN, NCSN at (816) 580-7272 or Brittany Sousley, RN at (816) 580-7279/7270.





SPECIAL OLYMPICS:

One Heart, One Team

The Lawson Cardinals Special Olympics program is off to an exciting start! What began as a new program has grown to include seven amazing athletes, and we are hoping to continue expanding and welcoming even more athletes into our Cardinals family.

This year, our athletes will have the opportunity to participate in several local competitions and events, including basketball and track & field. We are excited to watch our athletes represent Lawson while building confidence, friendships, and a love for competition.

We also had a very special first this year! The Lawson Cardinals Special Olympics athletes participated in their first homecoming parade! It was a huge success and a wonderful way for our school and community to come together to celebrate our athletes.

We are also honored to have our athletes sing the national anthem on Oct. 16. We can't wait to see them take the spotlight and represent Lawson Cardinals with pride!

As our program continues to grow, so does our need for support. We are always looking for athletes, volunteers, buddies, and community members who want to be part of this program. There are many ways to help, whether it is assisting at practices, attending events, supporting our athletes, or simply cheering them on.

Interested in getting involved? Contact Miss Riley at Lawson Middle School.





Special Olympics athletes in the 2026 homecoming parade on Sept. 18. *Photo courtesy of Andee Riley*







Special Olympics athletes compete with their buddies alongside during a track meet on Wednesday, Apr. 22, 2026, at Lathrop. *Photos courtesy of Aleah Johnson*

Spotlighting NEW PEOPLE

District welcomes incoming faculty and staff members.

LAWSON MIDDLE SCHOOL



CASSIDY PEARON
Lawson Middle School
5th Grade Science

Hobbies/Interests: Spending time with my 3 kiddos - River, Finley, and Winnie. Being apart of our church, Rayville Christian Union. Gardening, raising chickens, and my mini aussie, Bandit.

What is your favorite part of this job?: Making kids introduction to middle school memorable. Changing their mindset on science and realizing that science is FUN! It's good to have questions, it's okay if their predictions are wrong, and to learn how to observe the world around them in a new way.

When you think of the year ahead with Lawson School District, what are you most excited about?: Being apart of the school that I grew up in. Cardinal pride!



KALEB CHRISTMAN
Lawson Middle/High School
6th-12th Grade Band

Hobbies/Interests: Playing, making, or listening to music, watching sports, being the best father I can.

When you think of the year ahead with Lawson School District, what are you most excited about?: I'm most excited about representing the Lawson band program, continuing the proud traditions, and growing a program of my own.

What is your favorite part of this job?: I believe my favorite part of the job will be making amazing music with amazing students. I'm super excited to be a Cardinal! The community has already been extremely welcoming and I'm beyond excited to settle in.



MICHAEL TURNER
Lawson High School
English

Hobbies/Interests: Languages of all kinds, computer programming, science fiction & fantasy literature

What is your favorite part of this job?: I'm looking forward to establishing meaningful relationships with students and seeing them grow as thinkers, readers and writers.

When you think of the year ahead with Lawson School District, what are you most excited about?: My favorite part of this job likely will be the back and forth with students as we progress towards developing new skills and understanding.

Anything else you would like to add?: Everyone in the district and community has been so welcoming and encouraging.

LAWSON HIGH SCHOOL

LISA RHODES HOLT
Lawson High School
English & ACT Prep

Hobbies/Interests: Reading, travel, yoga, my family, learning everything

What is your favorite part of this job?: My favorite part of this job is the freedom and privilege of sharing and exploring nearly any topic with my students. I learn so much from them!

When you think of the year ahead with Lawson School District, what are you most excited about?: I am excited to be back "home" and develop connections with a new generation of students. Additionally, this is the first year in four decades that I haven't had a literature course and I'm waiting to see if that ends up being a win or loss (for me).

Anything else you would like to add?: I'm so happy to be a Lawson Cardinal. Red has always been my color.





LAURA MCCLARD
Lawson High School
Counselor

Hobbies/Interests: Playing golf and tennis; watching sporting events (particularly my two sons); being outdoors; travel; photography; vintage shopping

When you think of the year ahead with Lawson School District, what are you most excited about?: I'm looking forward to getting to know my students and their families.

What is your favorite part of this job?: My favorite part of school counseling has always been helping students find their success and discover their path after high school.



CHRISTINA BUSBY
Lawson Middle School 7th Grade Math Teacher

Hobbies/Interests: Reading, watching grandchildren's activities

What is your favorite part of this job?: My favorite part of this year will be seeing my students master new math skills.

When you think of the year ahead with Lawson School District, what are you most excited about?: This school year, I'm excited to bring a variety of new teaching techniques to 7th grade math. I am excited to be back in the classroom for another school year teaching and new class of students.

SHELBY HARMAN
Southwest Elementary School
4th Grade & Asst. Softball



Hobbies/Interests: I enjoy hanging out outside with my family.

When you think of the year ahead with Lawson School District, what are you most excited about?: I am excited to work alongside a lot of wonderful educators at Southwest and the greatest group of students!

What is your favorite part of this job?: My favorite part of this job is my students! The lightbulb moments are so great to see and getting to push them to their full potential as a learning is so exciting for me!

SOUTHWEST ELEMENTARY

CHANGING ROLES
AMY OLINGER
SW Elementary Assistant Principal
Former Position:
SW Elementary Title I Teacher

Hobbies/Interests: Hiking, working out, antiquing, spending time with friends

When you think of the year ahead with Lawson School District, what are you most excited about?: I am excited to continue to build and grow our agriculture education program and FFA chapter! We have such an exciting and talented group of students involved, and I am excited to capitalize on that to provide them the best opportunities.

MORGAN WATKINS
Lawson Middle/High School
7th-12th Grade
Agriculture & FFA



LAWSON SCHOOL DISTRICT FINANCIAL OUTLOOK

Preserving Today's Opportunities. Preparing Responsibly for Tomorrow.



A Community Information Series

From Dr. Michael Stephenson, Superintendent of Schools

A STRONG FOUNDATION. A BRIGHTER TOMORROW.

Lawson remains financially stable. Years of responsible planning have allowed our district to strengthen student opportunities, support educators and staff, improve facilities, and build healthy reserves. Today, projected reductions in state funding and the rising cost of operating our schools are creating a new challenge. Planning now gives Lawson time to respond thoughtfully while protecting the educational opportunities our students and community value.

THREE THINGS TO KNOW

1. **Lawson is financially stable.** Reserves give us time to plan.
2. **State funding is declining.** Operating costs continue to rise.
3. **We are planning early.** More choices protect opportunities.

RESPONSIBLE PLANNING HAS SUPPORTED PROGRESS

Financial stability has allowed Lawson to invest in students, staff, facilities and the future.

S STUDENTS

- Early childhood
- Academic interventions
- Curriculum and real-world learning
- Agriculture and career programs
- Robotics, fine arts and more

E EDUCATORS & SUPPORT STAFF

- Salary growth
- Schedule advancement
- Competitive benefits
- Professional learning
- Recruitment and retention

F FACILITIES

- Classroom technology
- Roofs and HVAC
- Safety improvements
- Parking, athletic and common spaces
- Deferred maintenance

$ FINANCIAL STABILITY

- Conservative budgeting
- Careful spending
- Healthy reserves
- Long-range planning

LAWSON'S FINANCIAL PICTURE AT A GLANCE

$14.25M	$14.76M	48.9%	$514K
FY27 operating revenue	FY27 operating expenditures	Projected operating fund balance	Planned operating gap

FY27 TOTAL TAX RATE **$4.7573** **UNCHANGED** **THIRD YEAR AT SAME RATE**

2026 operating levy $3.8473 | Debt service levy $0.9100 | Total rate also $4.7573 in 2024 and 2025

WHERE OPERATING REVENUE COMES FROM

Not every dollar comes from the same source—and not every dollar can be used for every purpose.

$4.60M	$4.20M	$1.54M	$1.04M	$2.87M
State Foundation Formula	Local Property Taxes	Proposition C	County & Utility Revenue	All Other Operating Revenue

Nearly 62% of operating revenue comes from the first two sources.

WHY LAWSON IS PLANNING AHEAD

State revenue is projected to decline while the cost of serving students continues to rise.

$ STATE FUNDING IS DECLINING

$8.13M → **$7.53M**

FY26 actual → FY27 forecast

−$599K

projected reduction

This includes the Foundation Formula, Classroom Trust, transportation reimbursement, Proposition C and other state programs. Lawson's applicable weighted attendance increased, yet total state-distributed revenue is projected to decline.

+ OPERATING COSTS HAVE INCREASED

$12.28M → **$14.76M**

FY23 actual → FY27 adopted budget

+20%

(+ $2.48M)

These costs support the people and services that make school possible—educators and support staff, instruction, transportation, utilities, insurance, supplies and student services.

DIFFERENT FUNDS. DIFFERENT PURPOSES.

District dollars are kept in separate funds, each with a specific purpose.

Funds 1 & 2	**Daily operations** — Staff, instruction, transportation, utilities and programs
Fund 3	**Debt repayment** — Principal and interest on voter-approved bonds
Fund 4	**Capital projects** — Construction, renovations, equipment, paving and HVAC
Fund 6	**Designated dollars** — Student activities and retiree insurance premiums

Bond and capital dollars cannot sustain recurring operating costs.

LONG-RANGE OUTLOOK

Operating fund balance (percentage of expenditures)



These are planning projections, not adopted future budgets or guaranteed results. Actual revenue and expenditures will be monitored and projections updated as conditions change.

KEEPING STUDENTS AT THE CENTER

As we plan for the years ahead, decisions will be guided by this straightforward standard: Does the investment strengthen learning, meet a student need, or support the safe operation of our schools? We will also consider ongoing costs and the impact decisions have on students, families, educators and support staff.

SCAN FOR THE SERIES

Every number represents an opportunity for a Lawson student.

Our goal is to provide the strongest education and opportunities we can for Lawson students today while protecting our ability to do the same for the students who follow.









Wyatt Covey (12) was recognized during the Ray County Fair for his year of service as the new Missouri State 4-H President! In this statewide leadership role, Covey represents thousands of 4-H members across Missouri, advocating for youth leadership, agricultural education, and community service. His dedication and accomplishments are a source of pride for the Lawson FFA chapter and our community. Congratulations!!





The Lawson FFA Chapter was invited back this year to the Ray County Fair Ham Breakfast and Auction. This was a unique opportunity for our members to connect with community members and give back to their county. *Photo courtesy of Anita Duncan*

FFA KICKS OFF A NEW YEAR

Nine FFA members traveled to the state fair in Sedalia for Food Insecurity Day. During Food Insecurity, Lawson FFA members packed 252,564vto help food insecurity. **Brody Wilson** (9), **Addison McConnell** (9), **Adelaide Vesser** (10) and **Alayna Quesenberry** (10) competed in the novice knowledge contest. They earned 3rd place overall. Wilson earned 1st place individual. *Photos courtesy of Morgan Watkins*





Ryker Jackson (11), **Grayson Gadberry** (11), **Bailey Payne** (11), **Caitlyn Cline** (11), **Isabella Bain** (10), and **Izzy Spencer** (10)competed in the advanced Knowledge contest. They got 1st place overall. Payne earned 1st place individual, Cline earned 2nd place individual and Gadberry earned 3rd place individual.

Lyviah Deardeuff, **Kylee Barker** (11), **Hannah Caraway** (10), and **Aubrey McCleary** (12) competed in the entomology contest. They placed 3rd overall. McCleary earned 3rd high individual and Deardeuff earned 2nd high individual. *Photos courtesy of Morgan Watkins*







TARGET: SUCCESS IN THE NEW YEAR

Archery is starting back up for this school year. Students from 5th to 12th grade can shoot in the middle school gym at 7 a.m. Tuesday and Thursday. Students can enter the school at the double doors of the middle school. If you have questions email Mr. Dreesen at dreesend@lawsoncardinals.org.







GIRLS GOLF TEAM WINS INAUGURAL KCI CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIP



Team results were as follows:

1. Lawson 385
2. Mid-Buchanan 434
3. East Buchanan 451
4. Plattsburg 488
5. North Platte 524
6. Penney 613

LHS made KCI Conference history on Oct. 2, as this was the first year in which girls golf had an "official" KCI Conference championship.

It takes 75% of the conference schools to participate in a sport for an official conference championship to be determined and this was the first year in the history of the conference that we reached that requirement in Girls Golf.

Congratulations to the JV, finishing in 2nd place in their portion of the tournament with a team total of 529. Special congratulations to Maryke Carter (129) and Aubrey McCleary (129) as they finished in a 3-way tie for 4th place in the JV division.

Congratulations to our C-Team as they took 1st place in their portion of the tournament with a team score of 569. Special congratulations to Zayda Matney (135) as she finished in 2nd place in C-Team division.



Harrold Earns 400TH CAREER VICTORY

Lawson High School proudly recognizes girls varsity volleyball head coach Becky Harrold for earning her 400th career high school coaching victory on Saturday, Sept. 19, 2026. Coach Harrold reached the milestone while leading the Lawson Cardinals, adding another achievement to a distinguished coaching career that spans four programs and decades of success. In her 13 seasons at Lawson High School, Coach Harrold has built a competitive and respected Cardinals volleyball program, highlighted by a Final Four appearance in 2020, an Elite Eight appearance in 2021, five District Championships, and six consecutive KCI Conference titles.

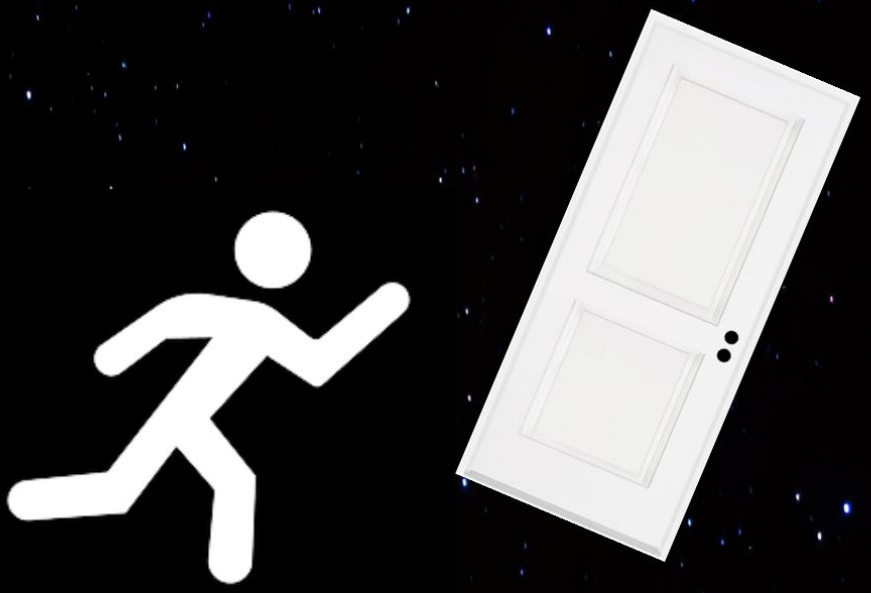
Prior to Lawson, Coach Harrold coached six seasons at Marshall High School, four seasons at Cameron High School, and four seasons at Liberty North High School. Harrold's 400 wins include several championships and playoff appearances while leading all four programs: including a Final Four appearance, an Elite Eight appearance, six district championships, and 10 conference championships.

Across all four programs, Coach Harrold's 400 career victories reflect not only sustained on-court success, but also a lasting impact on student-athletes through leadership, discipline, and a commitment to excellence.

Lawson High School, home of the Cardinals, congratulates Coach Harrold on this historic milestone and thanks her for her continued dedication to the school, community, and the game of volleyball. *Photos courtesy of Lisa Glenn*



LAWSON CARDINAL THEATRE PRESENTS



LOST IN THE ZONE

5 STORIES FROM BEYOND THE DOOR OF IMAGINATION

NOVEMBER 19th, 20th, & 21st

The Lawson Cardinal Theatre proudly presents **"Lost in the Zone: 5 Stories from Beyond the Door of Imagination."**

An old former TV writer invites his greedy family to his home one stormy night. He's on his way out, and before he goes he has some stories to share. Stories about a magic camera, a devilish fortune teller, a very quiet town, and a cozy little neighborhood with visitors from beyond. All leading up to the dramatic climax where his true intentions are revealed in a twist no one will see coming! 5 classic sci-fi stories, alive, on stage, and ready to thrill you and chill you! Step through the door and get lost!

Show Dates:

Thursday, Nov. 19
Tickets: Adults $5 | Students $3 | Preschoolers FREE
Doors open at 6:30 p.m.
Show at 7 p.m.

Friday, Nov. 20
Enjoy a special dinner theater event at 6 p.m. followed by the performance.
Tickets: Adults $20 | Students $15 | Preschoolers FREE

Purchase a dinner theatre ticket in the high school office by Friday, Nov. 13
Dinner begins at 6 p.m.
Doors open at 6:30 p.m.
Show at 7:15 p.m.

Saturday, Nov. 21
Tickets: Adults $5 | Students $3 | Preschoolers FREE
Doors open at 6:30 p.m.
Show at 7 p.m.

Choral Students Shine

SUMMER HONOR & DISTRICT CHOIR

AMANDA COVEY
LMS/LHS Vocal Music Teacher

Choral music is alive and well at Lawson Middle School and Lawson High School. Cooper's Chorus has kicked off the '26-'27 school year with 44 members. Select Choir has 22 members and Cardinal Collective has 15 members. All three choirs have been preparing for their very first concert of the year scheduled for 7 p.m. Oct. 14, in the Sellers Performing Arts Center. The concert will feature a variety of literature with the choirs collaborating on a Dolly Parton tribute and a call for hope in today's world. There were nearly 70 students who auditioned for Cardinal Chorale, our after school choir for 5th/6th grade students. All four of these choirs will join together on Dec. 16 for a 5th-12th grade holiday concert to wrap up the first semester.

We once again had students participate in the Missouri Choral Directors Association Summer Honor Choirs held in Springfield, Mo. in July. The 11 students who were selected for this year's choirs joined a growing roster of 146 students from Lawson who have participated in this annual event since 2009. Representing the 4/5/6 choir were **Brynn Briegel** (7), **Taden Fizer** (7), **Rhysse Johnson** (6), **Kamryn McClure** (7), **Charlotte McDowell** (7) and **Aspen Sloop** (6). **Leahmarie Romazon** (9) was a member of the 7/8 choir and **Christopher Bolinger** (10), **Destiny Dreesen** (11), **Kailyn Johnson** (10) and **Emma Thompson** (10) were in the 9/10 choir.

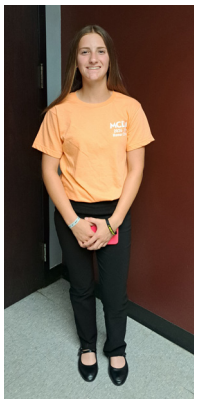
On Sept. 12, 14 Select Choir students auditioned for the Northwest High School All-District Choir. For seven of these students, it was their very first time to audition. The often intimidating process consisted of identifying two key signatures, sight reading two excerpts, and singing a solo for a panel of adjudicators. There were 11 students selected for this year's District Choir. **Christopher Bolinger** (10), **Janie Braune** (10), **Halle Briegel** (9), **Grayden Crawford** (11), **Destiny Dreesen** (11), **Lindsay Jones** (12), **Kailyn Johnson** (10), **Allison Koeberl** (11), **Elle LaFleur** (9), **Ben Mayne** (11) and **Joanna Wood** (10). They will perform on Saturday, Oct. 24 at Platte County HS. The juniors and seniors will also have the opportunity to audition for the All-State Choir on that day.



MCDA Summer Honor Choir 4th/5th/6th Grades



Select Choir Students Who Auditioned for Northwest High School All-District Choir



MCDA Summer Honor Choir 7th/8th Grades



HOOPS FOR HOPE RETURNS FOR 4TH YEAR

Lawson Girls Basketball will be hosting their 4th Annual Hoops for Hope on December 21, 2026. There will be 7 girls basketball games throughout the day at Lawson High School. Teams with female head coaches will be participating while featuring female officials. The Lady Cardinals, along with the participating schools, will be raising money and awareness for breast cancer. Money raised will be donated to cancer research through the Triple Negative Breast Cancer Foundation. Lawson's Head Coach Lisa Glenn is a 4-year survivor of Triple Negative Breast Cancer.

Did you know that you can turn your purchases at Casey's into a donation to our school? Download the Casey's App today and start earning points that you can redeem as a donation to one of our buildings!
Visit https://www.caseys.com/rewards to learn more!



ACT PREP CLASS ADDED TO HS COURSE CHOICES

This year Lawson has added an ACT prep course to the schedule in the high school taught by returning veteran teacher Lisa Rhodes Holt. Whether the goal is to improve scores on the ACT, PSAT, SAT, or another standardized test, this course provides students with a roadmap, strategies, and built-in accountability to reduce test-day anxiety and maximize impact. A test prep class offers students a safe, comfortable environment to practice these skills.

The key benefits of an ACT prep course include:

- Test strategies: process of elimination, consistency of response, managing difficult reading passages, and memorizing key math formulas
- Time management: practicing under timed conditions to learn pacing
- Targeted focus: identification and remediation of weak areas through diagnostic testing
- Accountability: consistent study and a coach directing attention to key areas/ concerns
- Reduced anxiety: familiarity with the test--formatting, question types, and pacing endurance

Many students in the post-COVID era may believe that an ACT score is irrelevant as more than a few universities removed test scores from their entrance requirements. While test-optional admission policies benefit most, a universally accepted test such as the ACT or SAT will assist students seeking merit-based scholarship and prove academic readiness. Students who take dual credit courses in high school will also benefit from an ACT/SAT score (at or above benchmark) relieving them from having to take an Accuplacer or alternate placement test to qualify for college credit. Benchmark scores are English: 18; math: 22: reading: 22; science: 23.

Juniors, seniors, and sophomores looking to improve their skills on standardized tests may contact Mrs. McClard to sign up for this semester long class.

Lawson R-XIV School District
(816) 580-7277

Dr. Michael Stephenson, Superintendent
Rob Kellam, Board President
Tyson Miller, Director Student Services

Southwest Elementary
(816) 580-7272
Christina Cross, Principal & District P.R.
Amy Olinger, Assistant Principal

Lawson Middle School
(816) 580-7279
Travis Zahl, Principal
Wade Proffitt, Asst. Principal

Lawson High School
(816) 580-7270
Daniel Petet, Principal
John Haley, Asst. Principal
Tara Crawford, A+ Coordinator
Lisa Glenn, District A.D.

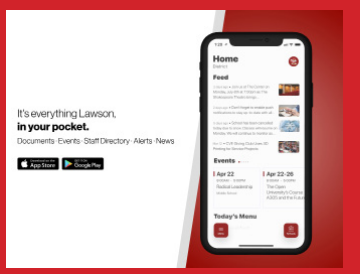
Karen Johnson, Newsletter Compiler

Cardinal Connection
Lawson R-XIV School District
PO Box 157
Lawson, MO 64062

Cardinal Connection is a publication of the Lawson School District. To comment, write to the above address, or call 580-7270.

Lawson School District Website
lawsoncardinals.org

2025-26 School Calendar
https://bit.ly/Lawson25-26Calendar



To stay connected, download the "Lawson R-XIV" app in the app store:
Download for Android: https://bit.ly/3Enkb5N
Download for iPhone:
https://apple.co/3T1aNsA

Also, patrons can request to stay connected through text alerts by following the link below (parents of the district are automatically enrolled):
https://forms.gle/wJSqdNRtVK47zTJR7

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Lawson High School: 34 CLASS OF 2026 GRADS EARN A+ SCHOLARSHIPS

BACKGROUND

Lawson High School has been a proud A+ designated school since the early '90s, providing 1000+ LHS students with the opportunity to pursue post-secondary education without the cost of tuition.

The graduating class of 2026 included 34 members who met requirements and qualified for the A+ Scholarship Program.

Congratulations to the following 2026 graduates who earned A+: Aubryanna Allen, Lola Bolinger, Jadon Hussey, Cooper Stephenson, Brenna Ayers, Aleah Johnson, Peyton Swope, Leah Baldwin, Gabrielle Knoch, Payton Vosika, Dallen Barnett, Nyle Krieger, Paxton Warren, Ethan Behounek, Joanna Mayne, Sophie McCleary, Brayden Burk, Mason McConnell, Jilliyn Busby, Megan McFall, Philamena Caresia, Patrick Myers, Madison Cross, Kayla Phipps, Robert Dorrell-Ruhl, Michelle Qualman, Emily Fisher, Cole Reynolds, Kamryn Florea, Desiray Santucci, Lillyn Holman, Kadence Schwab, Shawn Holthouse and Kaitlynn Starliper.

DEADLINE

- Students must sign up for the A+ Schools program by Dec. 1 of the student's senior year.

REQUIREMENTS

- Attend a designated A+ School at least two (2) years prior to graduation.
- Graduate from a designated A+ School with a grade point average of at least 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.
- Maintain at least a 95% average attendance record during all four years of high school.
- Maintain a record of good citizenship and avoidance of the unlawful use of alcohol and drugs.
- Perform at least 50 hours of unpaid tutoring or mentoring for younger students.
- Complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the funds that do not require repayment. (Parental income and financial need are NOT factors for A+ tuition incentives reimbursement. The FAFSA must be completed during the senior year.)
- Score Advanced or Proficient on the Algebra I End of Course Examination or complete a state-approved alternative to the Algebra I End of Course Exam.
- Note: All funds for the A+ Schools Program are subject to annual state budgetary appropriations.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Tara Crawford, A+ Coordinator at Lawson High School (580-7270).
- Paperwork regarding the program and enrollment may be picked up in the high school office, or by visiting www.lawsoncardinals.org and clicking on the Students and Parents tab, Lawson High School, and then the the A+ Program link. The A+ link will then redirect you to a wide variety of helpful resources.

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