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00:00	Hi, everybody, and welcome to the first episode of season four of the Lansing USD 469 Lion Podcast. I'm Miles Azzeh, your Director of Teaching and Learning. And I'm Sharon Burns, the Director of Communications and Marketing. We're here to bring you the latest news updates and highlights from across Lansing USD 469. Yep. Whether you're a student, a parent, or a part of our incredible Lansing USD 469 team, we're glad you're here. Yes, we are. And we are so happy to be back for season four. I can't believe it's already January and all the craziness of the year is finally. I wouldn't say it's settling down, but not really.
00:29	We didn't have just a whirlwind beginning of the year. So we're sorry we didn't come to you sooner, but we are committed to come weekly now. Yes, we are. And so let's just jump right in. We're going to start with highlighting our school board appreciation, correct? Oh, yes. So January is a very important month, as most of you probably know. It is School Board Appreciation Month. And we are very appreciative of our school board. Yeah, they dedicate a ton of their time. You know, a lot of people forget or just might not know that it's all volunteer-based. You know, it's not like they're employees or they get paid or anything like that.
00:58	And they do a lot of things that impact our students, our staff, and the future of the district and everything that comes along with it. So yeah, thank you for all you do. Yes, yes. And we want to welcome Jackie Kennedy and Greg Penfield. There are two new board members. And Jeff Bollin was reelected. So we get another term with Jeff. And if you listen to our podcast, we did interview Jeff a few years ago. We did. We had a good conversation about Rocky. About Rocky, yes. It was a good time. I was wondering how long we go into this podcast before Rocky came up. This time, I'm so proud of us.
01:30	I'm proud of you. Yes. And Jackie, Kenny and Greg Penfield, they will be officially sworn in at the board meeting on Monday, January 12th. Yes, and you can watch that live. We stream those meetings on YouTube, shared the link just the other day on the website with the agenda so anybody can follow along and then welcome them. So we're excited about that. And thank you for all, once again, to all of them and past members for all your service to the board and the district. So we'll jump into something I know that both of us are really proud of and we do great things with.
02:01	We're especially proud of the work with our first year teacher cohort. This is a first year new to the profession teacher cohort that we're talking about. Last year was our first inaugural year of having it. I guess that was redundant. And we had 18 participants. Yes. And this year we have seven. So these are 18 new to the profession and this year seven new to the pressure. And this is entirely case. Yeah, and that speaks to our retention rate, which we're very, very proud of.
02:28	Our admin do a great job of making sure our staff are heard and supported. And this is another way that we can do that, supported at the district level. And so we are so

happy that we only have seven new teachers. And it's kind of nice to be able to have a little bit more of a one-on-one relationship with some of them because 18 was great, but there were a lot. There was a lot. Yeah. There were a lot. And you know what else was nice is you know the fact that of last year, everybody returned. And I think that that's just something I'm sorry, everybody but one that wanted to go back.

02:59 We miss you, Callie. Yes, we do, Callie. But she wanted to go back to her home district, I believe, or like where she went to school. But that also shows the retention. So less number that we need, but also the return rate, obviously. The first year can be difficult. They literally have crafts and books and PD sessions and workshops for that first year of teaching and the phases that you go through. And we've done a good job of recognizing that and supporting the teachers during those phases. So it's been great. Plus they get to come together and ask questions, learn from each other, network with each other.

03:30 Big piece. Yeah. And I want to thank Emerald Peters and Becky Wekas, who will be attending our first-year teacher meeting in January to talk about self-care. So making sure that they're all taking care of themselves mentally, taking those breaks, not taking work home. You know So it's a nice, they're great people at the middle school, the counselors there, and we're very appreciative of them for coming and talking. Yes, thank you both for doing that. And I'm really happy, like I said, that we're continuing this, and we will continue this program, this cohort.

03:59 It's not something every district does. And we're going to do it because we are dedicated to keeping our teachers and making them feel supported. Yes, not just feel supported, but actually supported. No, just feel. I'm just kidding. Absolutely. And once again, thank you to the principals for supporting their teachers as well because you're the ones with the boots on the ground. Shifting gears a little bit, another important piece of work that we've been doing this year connects to our participation in the PLC Institute recently. Yeah, PLC, which stands for Professional Learning Communities.

04:29 And we went to a conference in December, brought all of our DLT. Almost all of us made it. And it was incredibly beneficial. Even for me, as a communications person, it's not just educational. It's about leadership and how we can work together as a team for the best interest of our students. And it was incredible. It really was. Marty has been pushing for us to go to that. The people that were speaking there, people like Dr. Anthony Mohammed, Dr. Mike Mattos, like these are well-known people.

04:57 They get to spend some time specifically with us in our district. It's gonna be great because we already have a lot of the building blocks in place, a lot of the aspects of a PLC, but now it's just a matter of tightening it, especially when it comes to collaborating around common formative assessments and then looking at that data to help support our students in both directions, whether they need intervention or whether they need enrichment. So that collaboration is going to be great.

05:22 And now that we have like a level playing field and a refreshing of the knowledge, I think that we're all set to do really well there. Exactly. And we've changed the format of our admin meetings based on feedback we got from there. We now have an admin hub where there's all of the information that they need is all in one place. And it kind of spun out of the professional learning community. So just as a system, we are overall better for participating. And it's kind of cool if you think back when Marty first started Superintendent Kobza first started, he talked about Anthony Mohammed.

05:53 And I have it on my whiteboard, just some of the philosophies. And then to get to hear Anthony Muhammad in person and get to meet with them. And you want to talk

about getting to meet him with us. Yeah, it was wonderful. So since we brought so many people, we were able to have like a session with him at the end where we were just in a large circle and he answered questions. Just our district. Just our district. Yeah. And it was great because, yeah, first of all, he's obviously amazing and knows a lot. But we were able to talk to him and get direct feedback that's relevant to our district because we ask them specific questions.

06:25 Yeah yeah And ultimately when it comes down to this is this is just a great chance for our teachers to collaborate, to improve with one another, to understand what the PLC process is so that our students can improve. We do all this for the kids. Anybody that thinks we do this otherwise is wrong. We do this for the kids. And so it's going to be great for us to do that. And like I said, we have a lot of the pieces in place. It's just a matter of making sure that we're on the same page of monitoring. And I do love the admin hub, by the way.

06:54 You did a great job with that because the idea of having one place for all admin to go to find anything. And then even, like you said, tailoring our admin meetings. It's almost like a PLC. Now people, they have to bring things and collectively learn. It's going to be great. Yeah, yeah. Doing great things here. So we're going to shift gears now again. So we want to make sure our community is aware that you'll be hearing more about an upcoming bond initiative. Marty, Superintendent Cops, will be presenting to our board on Monday night about it. So again, we encourage you to listen.

07:24 There's lots of good information there. And he will also be speaking to various groups and organizations in Lansing to give them information. Our job is to be transparent, to make sure that our voters are informed and can make the best decision based on what we provide to them. So you know whether they're a parent or just a community member, we want to make sure they're informed.

07:49 And I can say as somebody who has been in other districts, as employees, as an employee and as a resident in other districts, like of what I'm seeing that we're talking about, it's important to share the why. So the transparency, but also the why behind it. And I think that that's something that when I look at the presentation, when I have a conversation with Marty, that's one thing that I would urge our listeners too, is to come to the website, watch the presentation, seeing the why is important. And so not only transparent, but why we're doing it.

08:18 And I think it would open eyes for a lot of people. Yeah, yeah. So if you're somebody that is part of an organization, whether you're a homeowner's association or a club in the area, and you want Superintendent Kobza to present and just give the information, feel free to reach out to the district office, 913-727-1100, or you can contact me directly at Sharon.burns@USD469.net. Quick question for you, Sharon. Yeah. Four or three, which one's bigger? Four. Okay.

08:48 I think I agree. That's a great way to wrap up the episode. The Rocky Four is better than Rocky 3. Great way to wrap up the first episode of season four. For more updates and stories on Lansing USD 469, you can visit us at www.usd 469.net. That was a really smooth transition there, Miles. And I will tell you, it's not the other way around. It's not on the, it's not on the script. That was all me. I'm growing. So if you don't already have it, download the freelancing USD 469 mobile app on Apple and Android.

09:17 The app allows you to be the first to know about all the fantastic things happening in our district. It's Snow Days. Don't forget the snow days. If you like our content, want

to stay up to date on the latest episodes, please follow us wherever you're listening and leave a review to help others find us and learn more about our great district. We did it. That's a wrap on season one of episode. Yeah, it is. Oh, sorry, episode one of season four. Exactly. Rocky Four. No.