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00:00	Hi, and welcome back to the Lansing USD 469 Lion Pridecast. I'm Sharon Burns, Director of Communications and Marketing. And I'm Miles Azzeh, Director of Teaching and Learning, and we are very excited because today we have a special guest joining us, no other than our Superintendent, Marty Kobza. It is wonderful to be here with you. That's great to have you back on. I know last time we had you on, we were talking bond initiative last February, so it's been a minute. It has been a minute. But yes, yeah. Well, let's not talk about that. What's next?
00:27	Well, we're excited to talk about some things that are happening behind the scenes in the district, as well as give some shout - outs to some various students and staff. So with that being said, do you want to start off with some shout - outs? Yeah. I think we want to shout out to some of the activity teams that are out there. In particular, our volleyball team that just finished 4th in state continues their long, historic run of being very good and making that second day of the state tournament.
00:56	Very proud of the girls and the effort that they put forth. I had an opportunity to watch them, and they really represented the school well and was proud of them. And then our football team, who won their first playoff game here this last weekend against Fort Scott pitching a shout - out and just doing a tremendous job, again, representing our community and our school in the right way, with class integrity, and and just effort. And it's fun to watch.
01:26	Yeah. And so you're heading to Eudora this weekend. Yes. Do you want to talk about this rivalry and your connection there? You've got a connection there. There's not really a rivalry other than my connection there, I guess. I was in Eudora for 14 years and actually was the head football coach in Eudora for a brief period of time before becoming a principal and then superintendent for seven years. The place I started out as a superintendent, and so I actually have a grandson who attends school there as well.
01:55	He's not in the high school yet, but in the middle school. And so lots of connections, lots of dear old friends who live in the community lots of kids of kids I coached playing on the other side of the ball. And so it'll be fun to to watch and fun to take that game in. So is that going to make it a little bit hard on, like, in terms of who we're rooting for that weekend or that game on Friday? Or do you feel pretty solid to still be a Lion? We're Lansing Lions. Okay.
02:24	If my grandson was in high school and playing, that would be a different story. That'd be good. But at this point in time we're Lansing Lions and we're wishing the Lions and Coach Hoots the best over there. Yeah. That's awesome. Yeah, the rivalry I was talking about your grandson, because I thought you were saying that he was kind of jabbing a little bit. He was, yeah. He may be talking about that. He's Eudora through and through. And he went to school. He started. Lansing for a couple of years. Yeah.
02:51	He was a manager for the football team when he was here and knows some of the boys who are still playing, and I'm sure if he gets a chance, he'll talk to them a little bit. He's quite a little player himself. I'm excited. I say little, but he's getting he's, he's

7th grader now? 7th grader. 7th grade. So I'm excited to see what he what he ends up doing the next couple of years. Yeah. It'll be fun. And I know yesterday we sent out our family newsletter, and hopefully some of our listeners, a lot of our listeners, have read that.

03:18 But you wrote about the unwritten curriculum in that. Do you want to expand on that a little? Yeah. Activities, whether we're talking debate, forensics, music, sports of all kinds theater, that those activities and those events that happen outside of the classroom we really call that the unwritten curriculum. It's where kids learn some of their most valuable life lessons, how to contribute and be part of a team be part of something special.

03:49 And truly, through those activities in sports, they learn the value of the harder I work, the more I get. That there is that true test that's there. And then how do I pull the best out of those the best out of others who are around me and those who are part of my team and really get them to contribute in meaningful ways and then give of myself be sacrificial in the way that I give in order to help everyone and help the collective be better.

04:25 And there's just so many of those lessons that translate into life. And it doesn't matter if you're in the marching band, you have your part to do. You do your part exceptionally well, and it contributes to the whole. Same with the football team, the volleyball team, basketball, whatever it is. And so it's kind of what makes the United States unique is our public school systems.

04:50 We can go all the way back to Thomas Jefferson and kind of when the idea of public school started in the United States, that an educated electorate is essential to the success of a nation, a true democracy, that you want people voting who know something. And can discern things and think for themselves and all of those kinds of things. And prior to public schools in the U.

05:19 S., I mean, you just had a select group of people who were able to become educated. And that critical thinking piece is just so, so important in a democracy. So it's, it is what makes it even more unique is we take that and what has happened, we talk about the United States and we talk about whether it's capitalism, whatever else it is, our form of government, and the fact that we believe you work hard to get what you get.

05:57 And other countries do not have school - sponsored activities, school - sponsored sports like the United States has. Many other countries, they go and they go to a club or they pay to be part of an organization or they do whatever else. Where truly in the U. S., the idea is, is that all kids get to participate, all kids get to be part of it, and competition is a good thing and that we breed competition and that translates into other parts of life.

06:29 And so I think that is still a uniquely American concept. I think it's one of the things that makes America unique, makes America different than the rest of the world. And I think it's an important thing that we continue to fund those things. I think it's an important thing that we continue to have those activities within our school systems. That's beautifully said. Yeah. And I've seen you a lot of times, whether it be board meetings or just talking with our teachers or just things that we're planning out, even within our executive team, just the role those play because you, you understand the impact of it.

07:04 And I definitely agree with you. I'm proud of our country. It's one of the things I'm really proud of our country is the fact that everybody gets a chance at a public education, but also a chance to be involved in these activities that. Absolutely. You're

right. Other places, it's an arm and a leg to be able to be in some of them. So. Yes. And I know we talked about sports and you did touch on the band. My son is in the band and I got to give a shout - out to our new band teachers. We have a new one at the middle school and the high school, their husband and wife, and they've been exceptional. I know it's hard coming into a role, especially for that, but band has been a great experience for him.

07:34 And I know we do have a great arts program here as well on top of the sports. Yeah, we do. Our arts program, I mean, our, our choirs at the high school have been award - winning for many, many years. Our high school from our band program to our theater program to all of those really do an exceptional job with our kids and representing our community. And for a lot of our community or people from outside of our community, some of the only chances they get to be exposed to what's going on in our schools is, well, going to a game or going to those programs.

08:08 And I'm always very proud of what we present and what, what we offer. You're exactly right. I remember bringing up this a couple summers ago, a couple years ago, talking to somebody about where I work, and they said, "Oh, you guys have a great debate squad," you know, because I think either their son or somebody was involved in debate that was over in Johnson County somewhere. So yeah, we're well-known for a lot of our different extracurriculars, even outside of sports. So yep, I'm proud of us. So let's shift gears a little bit.

08:35 This morning, we had an admin team meeting and a lot of things are going on in the district and things, you know, the conversations we have in there, a lot of things that sometimes staff doesn't get to hear or see. Would you want to share some of the priorities of our leadership team or some things that are working well this year? Yeah. You know, I think one of the things that we're, we continuously focus on, but we have a renewed focus on it this year in particular is student safety and really around what are some of those pieces that may have been missing in Lansing before that we want to make sure that are in place.

09:08 We're implementing a new Raptor Badge Alert System. And that is a system by which our teachers have badges, lanyards that have a button on them that can notify internally that there is a situation that they need help with or notify directly that God forbid we're ever in a situation where we have to go into a lockdown for real and there's a dangerous situation going on that that automatically goes out to law enforcement and the police you know, identifying where an incident is occurring within 10 feet within our buildings or on our campus.

09:49 And so we, again, we pray that never is a situation that we're in, but if it is we want to be as prepared as possible and make sure that we get response times as quickly as we possibly can. And so those systems are being implemented as we go along, as well as everything from that to reunification should we evacuate a building to make sure that we're able to communicate with parents and get children back to parents as quickly and safely as we possibly can.

10:22 And so those are things that are always on our mind. Those are things that keep us up at night that we want to make sure that students are safe and that they go back home every day as safely as they came to us. Right. And so those are, are really, really important pieces. You know, I think some of the other things that are going on Miles, you jokingly said you didn't want to talk about the bond issue, but, you know, when the bond issue failed the projects that we have didn't go away.

10:53 The needs with roofs, with HVAC systems, parking lots, all those things are still present. And we continue to patch to the best of our ability and make the best of our situation that we can. And so from that perspective, I really want to give a shout - out

to our facilities and maintenance people who are just doing an exceptional job in prioritizing what it is that we need to do and get done and keeping our buildings functioning in a very challenging situation and environment.

11:29 Right. What is one thing that's happening behind the scenes that you could say that you're you wish people understood more and knew about? You know, I think one of the things, really two things. One is, and they both are similar. What is happening at Lansing Elementary School and Lansing Intermediate School with our leadership there Mr. Eshbaugh, who's come into the elementary school, and Mrs.

11:57 Settles, who's at the intermediate school have really done an exceptional job in creating very welcoming very safe, very non-distracted learning environments for our students. And so I think our staff feels it and feels those that culture and environment within there. And I know our students do as they enjoy it. And we've gotten a lot of feedback from parents as well who are, who are feeling that.

12:26 And so those pieces where we create cultures in which kids want to be and want to be there every day and staff wants to be there every day are critically important for learning. Those feelings of, of safety, those feelings of attentiveness, those feelings of belonging are essential for a child to be in the right mindset to learn. And I feel like we've made some tremendous progress in that in both the elementary and intermediate school this year. I agree 100 %.

12:57 We're hoping to have Chad and Michelle on the podcast soon. I talked to Michelle this morning about that. Yeah, I'm excited about those. Yeah. So Marty, I'm going to shift to a little bit more of a personal perspective and questions here. You've worked in education for a really long time. You've served in multiple different communities.. Seasoned. You're seasoned. You're, you're, you're, you're, you're a young, seasoned man. But what continues to motivate you in this work? Seasoned is a good way to put it.

13:24 The salt and pepper whatever you want to call it, more salt now than pepper. No, this is my 37th year in education, 37th, going into 38th year in education. So yeah, I've been at it a while. My 26th as a superintendent.

13:45 So you know, there's your career has seasons, I think, as well as your wife, that you go through periods of time of of high motivation, high change, high energy, all those things into more of a settled-in phase and then back into a high energy phase. And so really the focus is coming back to students.

14:14 And as a parent, and I think about it personally as a parent when I was going through, you were involved in all the parent things, right? You were chasing your kids around to their activities. You were making sure you go to parent - teacher conferences, making sure that they're doing what they need to do as far as their work and their homework and all those kinds of good things. So there was that period of time, but now I'm a grandparent. I have four grandchildren. And with that comes a different perspective.

14:44 And you really have a chance to step back because you're not so deeply involved in the day - to-day with your children. And having that opportunity to reflect just brings back how essential it is that we're doing a good job within the schools and, and really presenting the kids with every opportunity we can to learn because the preparation for life the preparation that all doors to them remain open and that they can make choices.

15:19 And that happens when we do a great job of providing a very comprehensive, very solid education to kids to where they have the skills and the mindset that they need in order to be successful. And I think that's the one thing that I think we find out over

and over and over again is what makes a kid successful in college. A 30 ACT score is awesome and is going to help tremendously.

15:48 But what we know over and over and over again, it's grit. It's when they face adversity, how do they respond? How do they overcome that? For a kid who's never gotten anything below an A in their life and they get a B, how are they going to respond to that adversity? And how are they going to be able to do that? And so just thinking through what that looks like as far as making sure that students have that ability to face something they haven't faced before, work through it, keep going, don't give up, don't quit keep working toward that finish line.

16:27 And so that's what's really, really important to me as a superintendent, but also as I reflect on it as, as a grandparent, that I want my grandchildren to have those attributes as they go forward. I think that's a great way to wrap up. That's it. I can't imagine asking anything else. Well, no, there's one more question I have to ask. Oh, I know it's okay. The answer's no, right? You still haven't seen Back to the Future? Okay. All right. Have you seen any good movies or shows lately? Protest and then protest. Yeah. Yeah, it's a shame.

16:58 Have you seen anything good lately? Have you watched anything? Let's see. I went to The Odyssey. Okay. That was interesting. Interesting movie. It was a good one. Okay. Yeah, that's kind of it. Reacher Lioness some of those that are. Okay. Pretty intense, but yeah, some good ones. All right. All right. Yeah, my mom gave feedback on our first episode this season and she was disappointed that you didn't talk about Rocky or. No, we didn't bring it back.

17:26 I just. What were we thinking? There we go. I didn't even put that in the script. You're welcome, Mrs. Ingles. There you go. You got it. All right. Well I think for that is a great way to wrap it up. Marty, thank you again so much for being here. Yeah, thank you. So for more updates and stories on Lansing USD 469, you can visit us at www.usd469.net. And if you don't already have it, download the free Lansing USD 469 mobile app on Apple and Android. That app allows you to be the first to know about all the fantastic things happening in the district.

17:54 And if you like our content and 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. And that's a wrap on episode two of season five. Woo. Thanks for listening. Bye. Thank you.