

Alumni Spotlight: Anna Brink

The district invites you each week to meet a Laurens Alumni who has joined as faculty and staff in Laurens County School District 55. The alumni has taken some time to look back on memories from high school, favorite teachers and faculty, and give us an opportunity to learn more about them and their accomplishments thus far.



The dedication and loyalty of Laurens alumni in the school district are legendary. Laurens alumni make extraordinary things happen in the classrooms and schools. If you see any alumni in the hallways or grocery stores, please stop and thank them for coming back to make a difference. This week's "Alumni Spotlight" shines on Anna Brink.

What year did you graduate? I graduated in 1999.

What is your overriding memory from high school? My overriding memory from high school was being involved in multiple areas in the school and making friends that have lasted into adulthood. I played tennis and basketball, ran track for a year, was in NHS, and FCA. I remember having a great group of friends who loved school spirit, dressed up for sporting events, went to school events and supported each other, and had great teachers who really cared about us. We tie-dyed T-shirts, used green and gold face paint, dressed up, and had a lot of fun. But for as much fun as we had, we worked hard, too! My high school experience felt like a family.

Who was your favorite teacher/faculty member at the high school? I had many favorite teachers. My senior superlative was "Teacher's Pet", so it was only natural that I become a teacher myself and even better that I come back and currently work in Laurens 55. Mrs. Faulkner's social studies classroom was one of my favorites! I also had Mr. and Mrs. Corley. Mrs. Corley helped develop my love of history and Mr. Corley helped me know how to properly write about it (and many other topics!). Debbie Simpson was one of my favorite English teachers. She had a passion for teaching reading and was able to keep all of her students engaged. LeyAnna Messick taught History and Psychology and not only was a

great teacher but was a mentor and coach and introduced me to Wofford College which became my alma mater. Dr. Strickland and Mrs. Dean were both principals and Dr. Harris and Dr. Ward were Assistant Principals while I was a student and were awesome advocates for students. I could also name Lewis Compton (Government and Economics), Sherry Wilson (Keyboarding), Susan Byars (French/Teacher Cadet), and Judy Word (Math). Many of these teachers are still in our district, retired from our district, or are still in education somewhere. These wonderful teachers and administrators were great examples and mentors for me as an educator.

What activities were you involved in at the high school? I played JV basketball in 9th and 10th grade, played tennis from 7th-12th grade, and ran track during my 10th grade year. I was also involved in National Junior Honor Society and Fellowship of Christian Athletes. During my senior year, Mrs. Debbie Simpson "bet" that if she could find a talent for me to do in the Miss LDHS pageant that I would have to participate. After she talked with my church music director, I participated in the Miss LDHS pageant, played solo handbells, and won the talent competition and was first runner up. I really enjoyed going to football and basketball games and events such as dances, concerts, and plays. And yes, I have also painted Raider Road!

Details of further / higher education (e.g. place of study and qualifications gained): After graduation, I went to Wofford College for my undergraduate degree in history and secondary education. I completed my Masters in

Elementary and Secondary Administration and Supervision from USC and I am currently working on my Ph.D from Clemson University in Educational Leadership. I will finish my doctorate in the summer of 2019 after four years of study. I really enjoy learning new things!

Where do you teach? What subject and grade level do you teach? To begin my career, I taught and was an administrator at Dutch Fork Middle School in Irmo, for six years. When my family and I moved back home, I taught sixth and seventh grade at Sanders Middle school for three years. After that, I worked as the Assistant Principal at Laurens Middle School for four years, spent one year at the elementary school level at E. B. Morse as the Principal, and I have now been back at Laurens Middle School for the last two years as the Principal.

Tell us about yourself, your family, where you live, etc. I am originally from Laurens and my family and I currently live in Laurens. My husband, Jeff, works as Instructional Technology Coach for L55 and we have two boys, Dylan (9) and Will (6) who attend Laurens Elementary School. My mom, Nancy Thompson, is retired from Laurens 55 and is my model and mentor educator. My dad, Carroll Thompson, is a small business owner and is a model of hard work and dedication. My grandparents were all from Laurens and were small business owners, so I am deeply rooted and committed to this community. My grandfather, Cromer Thompson, at age 97 is still living and is a veteran of WWII. I love to read and spend time with friends and family, be involved with our church family, and travel as a family when we can.

What do you think your greatest accomplishment is thus far? My greatest accomplishments are my two children. They keep me very busy, but they are our pride and joy and are my husband and my biggest blessing. I love that my children will be L55 alumni one day and I am proud that both my husband and I work for this district.

The "Alumni Spotlight" is a joint service of LCSD 55 and the Alumni Association of Laurens 55.



JUNIOR ACHIEVEMENTS — Congratulations to Angela Abercrombie's second grade class at Laurens Elementary on completing Junior Achievements "Our Community" curriculum presented by Angela Marlett - State Farm Insurance Agent. They learned how citizens benefit from and contribute to a community's success.

Celebrate Arbor Day by planting trees

National Arbor Day is Friday, April 26, this year, and the Arbor Day Foundation is making it easy for anyone to celebrate the annual tree-planting holiday. Join the Foundation in April and receive 10 free shade trees.

By joining the Foundation in April, new members receive the following trees: red oak, sugar maple, weeping willow, baldcypress, thornless honeylocust, pin oak, river birch, tuliptree, silver maple and red

maple. The free trees are part of the Foundation's Trees for America campaign.

"These trees provide shade in the summer and vibrant colors throughout the fall," said Matt Harris, chief executive of the Arbor Day Foundation. "Through the simple act of planting trees, one person can make a difference in helping to create a healthier and more beautiful planet for all of us to enjoy."

The trees will be shipped postpaid with enclosed planting instructions at the right time for planting in April or May. The 6- to 12-inch trees are guaranteed to grow or they will be replaced free of charge.

To become a member of the Foundation and receive the free trees, visit arborday.org/april or send a \$10 contribution by April 30 to: Arbor Day Foundation, Ten Free Shade Trees, 100 Arbor Avenue, Nebraska City, NE 68410.



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