ORANGEBURG COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
We Are One
102 Founders Court • Orangeburg, SC 29118
Phone: (803) 534-5454

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Dr. Erica S. Taylor
Assistant Superintendent for Communications
and Business and Community Partnerships
erica.taylor@ocsdsc.org



From L to R: Keonia Gilliard, St. James-Gaillard, Dr. Shawn Foster, Tequilla Allen, Vance-Providence

ORANGEBURG COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT CELEBRATES NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR VANCE-PROVIDENCE AND ST. JAMES-GAILLARD ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

ORANGEBURG, S.C. — Orangeburg County School District (OCSD) proudly announces that Vance-Providence Elementary and St. James-Gaillard Elementary have been named among America's Healthiest Schools for the 2022-2023 school year. This notable recognition places our two schools in an elite group of just 781 schools nationwide to receive this distinction, awarded by the Alliance for a Healthier Generation (Healthier Generation), a premier children's health organization.

The award is a testament to the unwavering commitment of these schools to prioritize the health and well-being of students, staff, and families, particularly in the face of multifaceted challenges that have marked the educational landscape recently. These challenges include learning loss, declining youth mental health due to traumatic events like school shootings, vaping and nicotine addiction, curriculum modifications, and school meal insecurity.

Schools are recognized for implementing best practices in up to nine topic areas, based on criteria in Healthier Generation's Thriving Schools Integrated Assessment:

1. Strengthening Social-Emotional Health & Learning, presented in collaboration with Harmony SEL at National University and Kaiser Permanente
2. Cultivating Staff Well-Being, presented in collaboration with Harmony SEL at National University and Kaiser Permanente
3. Increasing Family & Community Engagement, presented in collaboration with Kohl's
4. Improving Nutrition & Food Access
5. Implementing Local School Wellness Policy

6. Bolstering Physical Education & Activity
7. Enriching Health Education
8. Promoting Tobacco-Free Schools
9. Supporting School Health Services

Tequilla Allen and Mary Brown were the forces behind Vance-Providence's application last spring, earning an impressive 6 out of 9 topic awards. St. James-Gaillard's commendable application was steered by Principal Keonia Gilliard and Charlotte Auton, securing 4 out of 9 topic awards.

"The recognition of Vance-Providence and St. James-Gaillard as two of America's Healthiest Schools is a testament to the relentless dedication of our educators, administrators, and the entire OCSD family. They have continually prioritized the health and well-being of our students, even amidst the various adversities schools face today," said Dr. Shawn Foster, Superintendent of OCSD.

The Orangeburg County School District extends its deepest gratitude to everyone involved in achieving this honor and is committed to maintaining and further enhancing the health-focused environment in all its schools.

Orangeburg County School District

The mission of Orangeburg County School District, the catalyst of innovation and excellence, is to ensure all students discover and develop their person, purpose, and platform through high-quality educational experiences distinguished by a culture of collaboration, equity, and inclusion; a creative learning environment with inspiring opportunities; a commitment to nurture the academic, physical, social and emotional well-being of all. Visit us online at ocsdsc.org

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