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



Dr. Shawn D. Foster, Orangeburg County School District Superintendent

OCSD Superintendent Foster Delivers the State of the District Address

ORANGEBURG, SC – Dr. Shawn D. Foster delivered the 2022 State of the District Address to more than 150 school district stakeholders this morning, in person and virtually. Held at the Orangeburg County Conference Center and Library, Dr. Foster shared an update on the accomplishments that have been collectively realized over the past 30 months at OCSD. During his address, Dr. Foster focused on facility improvements, financial planning, recruitment and retention, technology, and instruction. In addition, he provided specific, deliberate, strategic, and academically enhancing examples of OCSD achievements and points of pride.

"It is an honor to stand before individuals I now call friends and family and share updates on the good work that we have accomplished for the students in Orangeburg County School District," Foster shared. "I am often reminded of how blessed I am to be able to serve the students and their families in Orangeburg and look forward to continuing the good work towards making OCSD one of the best school districts in the state and Nation," he continued.

Dr. Foster opened by sharing the importance of the event, and during the event, he focused on four areas, which include facility improvement, financial improvement, recruitment and retention, and technology and instruction. He said it is critical for me to "tell people what you

are going to do, update them on the process and tell them when it is completed - and that is why I have asked you to be here today.”

One significant area of focus for OCSD is facility improvement. Over the past 30 months, 100 touchless water bottle filters have been installed, 11 schools received new flooring, four schools have replaced windows, and fifteen schools have been painted. Also, as a result of our energy performance contract, 23 schools will receive LED lighting (interior and exterior), water conservation equipment, HVAC replacements, and lighting controls.

Dr. Foster shared that OCSD's finances were sound. As a result of excellent fiduciary management, the 2022 audit will show that OCSD's fund balance will be \$25,227,067.00, nearly an \$18 million increase from 2019-2020; and \$13 million from 2020-2021. Also, he provided an update on the debt structure and the success of aligning roles and responsibilities in the area of finance and District-wide. He further shared the details of the staffing study, and the positive impact that it has had on OCSD, to ensure that the appropriate positions were available and created as necessary, to support the students and teachers in OCSD.

Also, OCSD's recruitment and retention initiatives, have been strategic, deliberate, and focused on ensuring that the best and brightest educators are serving the students in OCSD. Several recruitment efforts are underway to recruit and retain talented educators in OCSD. They are the NEO Academy, the GROW Program, RECHARGE, the Leadership Academy, monthly principals' meetings, and professional development – in which all who serve OCSD can participate. Dr. Foster touted that the recruitment and retention efforts have positively impacted OCSD. He shared that at the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year, there were only 18.5 vacancies throughout the District, which is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our leadership team and human resources staff members.

When discussing technology and instruction, Dr. Foster shared the significant improvement in OCSD's graduation rate, which is now 80.4%. Also of importance is that the school culture and climate survey for teachers and students showed that our teachers are satisfied. The perception of the instructional focus, working conditions, and safety are close to, if not exceed, the state of South Carolina's average. Additionally, there was a remarkable increase in OCSD's student progress, which outpaced the state, and as it relates to college and career readiness, OCSD saw a nearly 8% increase from 2021 to 2022.

Dr. Foster also shared a bright future in academics at OCSD. The partnership with Waterford, a supplement to the District's curriculum aimed at strengthening and supporting reading, has made and will continue to make positive impacts and outcomes in our classrooms. He also highlighted other initiatives to increase student achievement, including data trackers, learning walks, grade band meetings, the iReady Diagnostic, school scorecards, and NIET. Lastly, Dr. Foster talked about the enhancements of our magnet programs in elementary schools and the expansion of the Orangeburg Advance College.

Dr. Foster concluded the address by thanking the community for supporting the \$190 Bond Referendum. He also acknowledged that he is aware that some did not support the referendum, but those who didn't still support students and education, and he expressed his gratitude.

The Orangeburg County School District State of the District Address can be viewed on OCSD's YouTube Channel at <https://youtu.be/3oz49Eygv2w>.

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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