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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Orangeburg County School District's
\$190 million bond referendum approved**

ORANGEBURG, S.C. – Orangeburg County School District's (OCSD) comprehensive plan to dramatically improve all schools for all students was approved by the voters on November 8. The \$190 million bond referendum passed by more than 50 percent, paving the way to significantly enhancing OCSD facilities over the next three years.

"The vote in favor of the referendum reflects our community's deep commitment to public education and the families we serve," said Dr. Shawn Foster, OCSD Superintendent. "The referendum will allow the Board and leadership team the opportunity to provide state-of-the-art academic facilities for our students and teachers – which I know will enhance their educational experience," he continued.

Foster also expressed his sincere gratitude to all OCSD Board Members, principals, teachers, staff, parents, community and business partners, and students for their support, encouragement, and valuable input. "Over the past year and a half, we created the opportunity to listen and learn - more than 160 times, and I know that it is because of our collective efforts that we will be able to change our student's lives forever and for that, I say thank you," he espoused.

The referendum will allow the following facility improvements to be made. They are:

- Constructing and equipping a new Orangeburg-Wilkinson High School;
- Constructing and equipping a new East Elementary School;
- Constructing and equipping a middle school wing at Lake Marion High School;
- Constructing and equipping a new wing at Clark Middle School;
- Constructing and equipping renovations and improvements to convert Howard Middle School to an elementary school;

- Constructing and equipping renovations and improvements to Edisto Primary School;
- Constructing and equipping renovations and improvements to Ellore Elementary School;
- Constructing and equipping renovations and improvements to various components of facilities at multiple existing schools, including among others,
- athletic, auditorium, fine arts, and playgrounds; and
- Constructing and equipping site improvements at various existing facilities including, among others, demolition, traffic, and parking

In an effort to ensure that the community is aware of the process moving forward, in January 2023, a Citizen's Oversight Committee (COC) will be created. The COC will meet quarterly, comprised of members representing every aspect of our community, and will review design, building progress and financials and be able to offer feedback as necessary.

Finally, the sense of urgency to begin work is essential. Therefore the timeline to break ground on multiple projects is still expected in late winter or early spring. Further, should projects begin while students are still in parts of the facility, concessions will be made to maintain the integrity of the academic experience, including pausing construction during testing and other important dates as needed.

"The reason why we get up every day is to be able to see the smiles on the children's faces who we serve," Dr. Foster said. "And, if we can keep them smiling through the referendum, then we have accomplished our goals," he continued.

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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