

**For Immediate Release**

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**Contact:**

Andy Pruitt, 843-937-6583

## Media Release

### Office of Communications

**Anita W. Huggins, M.Ed.**  
Superintendent of Schools

**Vanessa L. Denney, M.Ed.**  
Interim Executive Director of  
Communications



## **NCCAES's McKenna Hakanson named 2024 CCSD Teacher of the Year**

**Charleston, SC** - Charleston County School District (CCSD) staff members surprised North Charleston Creative Arts Elementary School (NCCAES) teacher McKenna Hakanson today with the announcement that she has been chosen as the 2024 CCSD Teacher of the Year. She is the first-ever Teacher of the Year in school history.

"Ms. Hakanson is so deserving of this incredible achievement," said Principal LaToya Smith. "She has such a deep conviction towards ensuring that all learners are provided with equitable access and opportunities for learning. Ms. Hakanson's level of professionalism and commitment to excellence permeates the building. Our school community is honored to have such a passionate educator as Ms. Hakanson."

Hakanson is a K-2 resource teacher at NCCAES. She taught at a primary school in South Africa, an elementary school in North Carolina, and as a first grade teacher at Pinehurst Elementary School before joining NCCAES.

Hakanson earned a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education K-6 from Appalachian State University and a master's degree in Teaching, Learning, and Advocacy, with a concentration in Diverse Learners.

Hakanson has been a Teacher of the Year nominee at the school level three times since being employed with CCSD and was named College of Charleston's 2023 Outstanding Master's Student of the Year in Teaching, Learning, and Advocacy. At

NCCAES, she is the Exceptional Children department lead, a school-wide planning team member, and Ron Clark Academy House System Leader.

Hakanson believes some of her greatest accomplishments have been creating a sense of belonging for students and giving them the chance to take action using the tools they have gained from their education.

Hakanson considers herself a bridge between special education and general education. She supports all aspects of her students' academic endeavors as well as their social and emotional learning.

Hakanson considers herself a lifelong learner with a growth mindset. She pays close attention to what her colleagues are doing and learns from their successes. She hopes to use her position as Teacher of the Year to learn from her peers and district leadership, so she can continue to evolve in the profession.

"It is because of my school family and the students at North Charleston Creative that I look forward to coming to work every day," said Hakanson. "They are the reason I strive to be the best teacher I can be."

For more information, contact LaToya Smith at (843) 529-2831 or contact the Office of Communications at (843) 937-6303.

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#### **About the Charleston County School District**

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 50,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse portfolio of educational options and specialized programs delivered to the students of CCSD through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools and programs. Rich educational opportunities for students include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; military; dual credit; and many more.