



**For Immediate Release**

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## Media Release

### **Wando Culinary Arts program dominates state competition**

**Wando High School**

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**Mount Pleasant, SC** – Students from Wando High School’s award-winning Culinary Arts program recently brought home several first-place honors from two state-level Career and Technical student organization competitions: the Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) State Leadership Conference (February 5-7) in North Charleston and the [South Carolina ProStart Student Invitational](#) (March 3-5, 2024) Myrtle Beach.

#### **FCCLA State Leadership Conference**

At the State Leadership Conference in North Charleston, Wando’s FCCLA chapter dominated the awards. Every participating Warrior earned either first or second place in their competitive event.

One of the highlights was Carter Clark taking First Place Gold in the FCCLA Culinary Arts STAR Event; this was the third year in a row that a student from Wando won this event. In addition, the following students finished first or second place in their respective competitions:

Kyle Wallace - First Place Gold, Career Investigation STAR Event  
Breanna Williams - Second Place Gold, Entrepreneurship STAR Event  
Cooper Stapleton, [Sarah Dzielinski](#), and Ramell Bagtas - First Place Gold, Hospitality Tourism and Recreation STAR Event  
[Liam Pendergrast](#) - Second Place Bronze, Baking and Pastry STAR Event  
Sebastian Uribe – Second Place Silver, Culinary Arts

Molly Munroe and Honesty Muccio also finished as one of the top-15 national qualifiers in the National FCCLA Online STAR Event Instructional Video design thanks to their creative, healthy fast food alternative demonstrative video titled “From Greasy to Green”.

A total of eight students from Wando qualified to compete at the FCCLA National Leadership Conference in Seattle, WA this summer.

In addition, Bagtas and Muccio were both inducted as South Carolina FCCLA State Officers at the conference and will represent the state at the national conference as the state president and the state vice president of development, respectively.

“Please join me in congratulating these outstanding students for their hard work, professionalism, and our record-breaking success this year,” said Molly Gordon, Wando’s Chef Instructor. “This truly is a testament to all the great work CTE students are doing in our district and state. It is an honor to lead these incredible students each day.”

Gordon earned major honors as well; she was recognized as the 2024 South Carolina FCCLA Adviser of the Year and was nominated for the National FCCLA Master Adviser Award and Alumni Achievement Award. She will have the honor of serving as the new state Executive Council Adviser for South Carolina FCCLA and will work with officers from around the state to help lead the association this upcoming year.

### **South Carolina ProStart Student Invitational**

More than 150 students from 20 high schools participated in this year’s South Carolina ProStart Student Invitational. Once again, Wando took home a big award in their first appearance in four years at this competition – first place in the Restaurant Management event.

The team of Bagtas, Dzielinski, and Stapleton earned the top spot with their concept of “Southern Strides,” a coastal seafood-focused upscale restaurant.

“Our win is a true testament that hard work does pay off,” Gordon said. “We are so excited and proud of this extremely coveted achievement and can’t wait to represent South Carolina on the national level.”

With the victory, the students, along with Gordon, advance to the National ProStart Student Invitational in Baltimore, MD on April 25-29, 2024.

For additional information, email Molly Gordon at [molly\\_gordon@charleston.k12.sc.us](mailto:molly_gordon@charleston.k12.sc.us).

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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.