



Montessori Community
School

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Media Release

Charleston's Poet Laureate participates in workshop with Montessori Community students

Charleston, SC – Charleston's first Poet Laureate, [Marcus Amaker](#), conducted a workshop with students from Montessori Community School on Tuesday, March 19, 2024.

Amaker served as the first Poet Laureate of Charleston, South Carolina, from 2016 to 2022. In 2021, he became an [Academy of American Poets fellow](#). He's also a prolific performer, the award-winning graphic designer of a national music journal ([No Depression](#)), a [musician](#), an [opera librettist](#), [the creator of a poetry festival](#), a teaching artist, and an [advocate for youth poets](#).

The workshop was a culmination of a five-week unit for middle school students on reading and writing poetry.

Amaker conducted a workshop on self-portrait poetry. He explained that humans are more alike than they are different.

"Poetry allows an artist to express themselves in a unique way," said Amaker. "No two people will write exactly the same, but we are all so connected in how we feel. Poets and writers tend to rush through trying to find something to write about, but I have found success in coming up with words when I am not trying."

Amaker walked the students through exercises that required them to look inside themselves at their qualities, traits, gifts, and uniqueness. They then took those keywords and crafted short poems. He left them with continuing exercises that focus on self-portrait poetry.

To wrap up the unit, students will publish their poems to share with friends and families. Additionally, students are eligible to submit their poems to Amaker for possible publication in his annual student poetry book.

For more information, contact Principal Rachel Young at (843) 769-0346.

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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 of 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, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools. Options include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military.