



Charleston County School of  
the Arts

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

Sherry M. Eppelsheimer, Ed.D.  
Associate Superintendent of the  
High School Learning Community

Shannon Cook, Ed.D.  
Principal

**For Immediate Release**  
March 8, 2024

**Contact:**  
Dr. Shannon Cook, 843-529-4990

## Media Release

### **SOA wins team, individual honors at state championship competition**

**Columbia, SC** – Three students at Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA) set a high standard for chess at the school. In the inaugural season of the chess team at SOA, they won the middle school team and individual titles at the SC Scholastic Chess Championship in Columbia on March 3, 2024.

Sixth grader Aaron Wang captured the individual state title in the middle school division thanks to seven wins and a draw. This year, the tournament moved to a two-day format with 161 players competing on day one, and only top players moving on to the second day. Wang won all five of his matchups on the first day, then came in first place overall with two more victories (and the draw) on Sunday.

"It was certainly a memorable experience," Wang explained. "The moments I remember the most are those when I only had seconds to make a move. Under time pressure, I had to resort to patience and stay calm. The result was rewarding. One of the best things about chess is encouraging each other and celebrating with others. I hope more and more people get to interact with this exciting game."

Wang led the SOA team to a first-place finish in the state chess tournament along with teammates Abigail Lin and Jayden Zheng. Zheng earned two wins and a draw; Lin scored two points and won the middle school blitz (speed chess) championship.

The three teammates created the chess club at SOA this year. They meet on Mondays during their lunch period. Not only was it the first-ever state chess championship for SOA, but it was also just the second middle school state championship for a CCSD school.

Wang learned how to play chess with the Charles Pinckney Elementary School Chess team over Zoom in 2020 and studied hard to earn this win as one of the youngest but highest-rated players in his division. By taking the South Carolina title, Wang earned an invitation to the Barber National Tournament of Middle School State Champions in July in Norfolk, VA. He is the first CCSD player to represent South Carolina at the national tournament.

For more information, contact Principal Dr. Shannon Cook at (843) 529-4990.

###

### **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.