

For Immediate Release

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Media Release

CCSD partnership with Riley Institute enriches student learning

Office of Communications

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Charleston, SC – Charleston County School District (CCSD) enjoys a strong partnership with the Furman University Riley Institute's [Diversity Leadership Initiative](#) (DLI). The program equips leaders from a variety of organizations and municipalities with the tools and perspectives needed to leverage diversity to improve organizational outcomes and drive social and economic progress in South Carolina.

Last year, a DLI group served as mentors for a Career Readiness program that involved a cohort of 15 soon-to-graduate seniors in CCSD. These students attended field trips building their awareness on the wide range of local employers interested in their talents.

"The sustained participation of CCSD with DLI Capstone group projects has led to deeply meaningful professional development for school staff and unique access-focused opportunities for district students," said Riley Institute executive director Dr. Don Gordon. "That far-reaching impact for educational outcomes is something we're really proud of."

This year, three following Capstone group projects born from the district's partnership with DLI created eye-opening experiences for students and opportunities related to career awareness:

Beyond Boundaries: Embracing DEIiversity

This initiative takes two groups of students - one from North Charleston High School and one from Lucy Beckham High School - on a day of discovery. Together, the students explore diversity in both nature and society. The goal is while students learn about salt marsh estuary biodiversity, maritime forests, reptiles, (along with many other things) and combining that with an introduction to Gullah Geechee culture, they will gain new insights about themselves and the way they relate to others.

Beyond Your Front Door

Through a series of experiential excursions, eighth grade students from Deer Park Middle School will discover and explore cultural, historical, and natural assets of the Lowcountry. Participating students will also create

meaningful connections with local organization leaders serving as chaperones and tour guides during the experiences.

Career Connectors for the NCHS Cougars

The program opens the door for a select cohort of approximately fifteen 12th graders at North Charleston High School (NCHS) to career opportunities with the support of the DLI project team and CCSD staff. The students, who are striving to become college and career ready, participate in worksite visits to the following area institutions: MUSC, Trident Technical College, SC State Ports Authority, Charleston County Government, and Wild Dunes Resort. Following the visits, the team members working on this project will engage with the students to help them build and improve their soft skills. The goal is that each student will have one or more options for what they will elect to do after their high school graduation in June of 2024.

"This program has been life changing for our NCHS participants," explained CCSD Career and Technical Education Career Specialist Antoinette Green. "Mentors took an active interest in the students' aspirations and life situations, often offering advice and sharing career expertise. They continue to be invested in each student and committed to supporting their success with future endeavors."

Contact CCSD's Office of Communications at (843) 937-6303 or the Riley Institute at Furman University at (864) 294-3368 for more information.

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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.