



East Cooper Center for
Advanced Studies

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

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

Jeff Blankenship
Principal

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Contact

Jeff Blankenship, 843-856-8500

Media Release

NASA honors East Cooper CAS students for second time in three years

Mount Pleasant, SC – East Cooper Center for Advanced Studies might be home to at least one future astronaut. A class project recently led to a special honor through NASA's (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) [TechRise Student Challenge](#). The students at the East Cooper CAS are designing experiments to measure the effectiveness of varying thicknesses of polycarbonate when exposed to UV (ultraviolet) radiation.

"Our team has done a tremendous job of designing their experiment," said Chris Sjolander, East Cooper CAS Engineering teacher and NASA TechRise Facilitator. "The entire effort has been student-led and managed. Our students are creating the future of safe space travel right here in Mount Pleasant."

This is the [second time in three years](#) a group of students from Sjolander's class has earned this honor from the TechRise Student Challenge.

This year's team is receiving \$1,500 to build their experiments and a NASA-funded spot to test them on a high-altitude balloon flight this summer. The group will also receive a suite of materials for preparing their payloads, access to flight simulator software, and technical support from experts.

"All of our participants are actively enrolled in the Project Lead the Way Engineering program at East Cooper CAS," added Sjolander. "The work they will undertake in developing their prototype will be an extension of the skills learned in various classes. It's always exciting for students to do something practical with knowledge they've acquired in class."

Administered by [Future Engineers](#), the NASA TechRise Student Challenge aims to inspire students to seek a deeper understanding of Earth's atmosphere, space exploration, coding, and electronics, as well as an appreciation of the importance of test data. More than 600 teams applied, representing over 5,000 students in grades 6 through 12 from throughout the nation.

For more information, contact Principal Jeff Blankenship at (843) 856-5800. For more about NASA's TechRise Student Challenge, visit www.futureengineers.org/nasatechrise.

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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.