

For Immediate Release

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Media Release

CCSD partners with IAAM to offer opportunities for students

Office of Communications

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Charleston, SC – Charleston County School District (CCSD) and the International African American Museum (IAAM) are proud to announce an exciting partnership for 4th, 8th, and 11th graders across CCSD. R.B. Stall High School was the first to participate via a field trip to the facility on January 11, 2024.

This strategic partnership will provide a diverse range of perspectives, ideas, and voices, contributing to the academic growth and achievement of CCSD students in support of their literacy and social science performance goals.

Located on one of the most sacred sites of African American history, the International African American Museum (IAAM) in Charleston is a museum, memorial center, and site of conscience that commemorates the foundational role Africans and their descendants played in the making of the United States. It is one of the most important historical and cultural institutions in the country presenting critical history and programming that will have a meaningful social impact. As an informal learning institution, IAAM is committed to supporting young learners in their formal academic pursuits using the power of informal learning and structured enrichment opportunities.

Field trips to the museum will be organized annually for every 4th, 8th, and 11th graders in CCSD schools annually, at no cost to the school. This experience includes smartly designed and curriculum-aligned pre and post-lessons for educators to engage for the purposes of deepening content comprehension and to provide structured support for teachers in the classroom.

Semi-annual engagements with 3rd, 7th, and 10th graders will also be included in the partnership and will include two on-site visits to CCSD classrooms, using the tools and resources the museum is uniquely equipped to offer including the museum's Center for Family History and education collection.

Professional development opportunities for educators will also be provided. Additionally, using a generous grant for this very purpose, the museum will reimburse CCSD for actual costs to transport students in district-run or approved transportation for any groups that require subsidy.

Malika N. Pryor, IAAM's Chief Learning and Engagement Officer said the museum is excited to launch the very first school district partnership with CCSD.

"We are so grateful for the commitment of the district to its students to making this a reality," said Pryor. "There is a well-known African proverb that reads 'It takes a village to raise a child.' I like to think of us as a member of the village. School districts and families should not be alone in the successful education of children. We live in a complex world, and as a mom, I know many hands make light work."

Pryor explained that the work the IAAM does every day positions the organization to support CCSD in closing two critical gaps.

- The confidence gap that many underrepresented students experience due to historic inequalities.
- The content gap as the museum is equipped to offer high-impact, inquiry-based activations that assist students in making the kinds of connections that deepen critical thinking, reading comprehension, and the transference of knowledge and skills in the classroom and beyond.

"K-12 learners are a high priority at the IAAM, so making this level of commitment to our youth was one of my education team's first objectives," said Pryor.

Chief Academic Officer Michelle Simmons said the district's 2022 Board-approved Goals and Guardrails document CCSD's intention to increase the percentage of Black/African American and Hispanic fifth grade students reading on grade level from 25.5 percent in July 2022 to 60.7 percent in July 2027.

"This breadth of improvement is significant, and we believe this creates an incredible opportunity for the IAAM to engage as meaningful partners in aid and execution of the goal," added Simmons.

For more information, contact the Office of Communications at (843) 937-6303.

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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.