

For Immediate Release

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Media Release

Ten CCSD students graduate from MUSC Teen Science Ambassador Program

Office of Communications

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Charleston, SC – Ten Charleston County School District (CCSD) students were chosen to participate in the Medical University of South Carolina’s (MUSC) [Teen Science Ambassador Program](#) last year. Since 2019, the Teen Science Ambassador program has offered individuals from groups that are underrepresented in STEM and have a passion for science internship experiences through MUSC Youth Collaborative. The program is designed to give access to competitive internship and training opportunities.

The ten CCSD Ambassadors who participated discovered elements of clinical research, developmental neuroscience, addiction science, and professional development. At the conclusion, each ambassador prepared and presented a research exploration project. Ambassadors were provided with dinner, travel assistance, and compensation.

Ambassadors (first year in the program) include:

- Kayden Chisolm - R.B. Stall High School
- Christine Johnson - Charleston Charter for Math and Science
- Ariam Reyes Lucas - Military Magnet Academy
- Delaney Manigault - Lucy G. Beckham High School
- Maiah Matthews - Early College High School
- Paris McDaniel-Richard - Charleston Charter School of Math and Sciences
- Rahi Patel - West Ashley High School
- Trent Thornhill - West Ashley High School
- Yoshiyi Hernandez Vasquez - Early College High School
- Cristal Villegas - R.B. Stall High School

Near-Peer Mentors (second year in the program)

- Alayna Ancrum- James Island Charter High School
- Janaé Heyward- Early College High School
- Shakhruza Kamolova- West Ashley High School
- Briana Lawton- Early College High School
- Asante Lee- R.B. Stall High School

- Ely Navarro- West Ashley High School
- Peyton Poling- North Charleston High School
- Kenyetta Robinson- Burke High School

According to Ren Rountree, Community Outreach Coordinator and Program Coordinator, the MUSC High School Teen Science Ambassador Program aims to engage high school sophomores and juniors in research in an academic medical university setting to develop critical thinking and communication skills and encourage a sense of belonging in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math).

“Over the next five years, we will develop a community of trained Ambassadors who will help increase scientific literacy and outreach in STEM,” said Rountree. “The goal is to work to increase diversity in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and math.”

While the compensation is a draw to participants, what they learn is the reward. The program offers STEM experiences that include comprehensive and engaging didactics, hands-on research experiences, and mentorship. Training is done with peers, senior mentors, and STEM professionals. Future planning consists of assistance with career and college preparation, financial literacy workshops, and resume and interview training.

“By 2026, 54 students will complete our comprehensive STEM education,” said Rountree. “Additionally, diversity, equity, and inclusion are woven into every aspect of our program.”

Almost 100 percent of the completers continue on in a bio-medical track.

“A testament to the program is when I hear students say how much they enjoyed the experience,” said Rountree. “Students often express how much they learned and we can see that at our culminating graduation ceremony when they present their findings from their required research project.”

Students 16 years, or older, may find details on how to apply [here](#). The Teen Science Ambassador Program is possible through the [Science Education Partnership Award \(SEPA\)](#) from the [National Institute of General Medical Sciences \(NIGMS\)](#) at the [National Institutes of Health \(NIH\)](#).

For more information, contact the Office of Communication 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.