



Military Magnet Academy

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Media Release

Dr. Perrineau celebrated during National Principals Month

North Charleston, S.C. — Faith drives all things that Dr. Robert Perrineau does. Through his faith, he is enabled and empowered to be the best educator and administrator he can be.

The 25-year veteran educator is now the principal at Military Magnet Academy (MMA), though Perrineau's students describe him as much more than that. To many of the cadet scholars at MMA, he is like a second dad.

"He is like a father figure to me," said senior Alma Enriquez. "He genuinely cares about me and is supportive. I feel like he loves us as if we were his own kids."

Perrineau is proud of the family oriented culture he has created at MMA and proud of his team for modeling that.

"I have built a team where everyone's expertise fits together like a puzzle," said Perrineau. "Collectively we are producing leaders who are progressing academically and performing as expected, on grade-level or above. We also collectively believe in letting kids be kids so they can enjoy their childhood."

Sharon Chua is an algebra teacher that previously worked alongside Perrineau in the math department at Burke High School. She recognized his leadership abilities many years ago and is grateful to work alongside of him in this capacity.

"Through the years I learned from him that we must build a rapport with the students," said Chua. "Mr. Perrineau is like an advisor, a friend, a brother, or a father figure to our students. They know he cares about them. I model that behavior and little by little those connections are built and trust is established."

Sara Ancrum has been at MMA for 16 years and currently serves as an instructional coach. She said Perrineau pushes her to try new things and actively supports her in her role of supporting teachers.

"He wants us to meet standards but encourages us to be creative in doing so," said Ancrum. "He emphasizes that success won't come unless we focus first on building

relationships with our students. That is how we know what strategies to use or implement to ensure their success."

Perrineau describes himself as an observant, servant leader.

"I believe in my professionals and I allow them to do their job," said Perrineau. "I also ensure that they have what they need to do their job. I want them to have what they need to be the best person for themselves. When their own social and emotional well-being is in a good place, they are better equipped to be impactful educators propelling our students to success."

Perrineau also stays on top of his students and their academic outcomes.

"He wants his students to perform above expectations and to do that he is there for them in all ways," said Chua. "He cares about them and is always there if he is needed."

Enriquez said the staff at MMA models his philosophy.

"His energy rubs off on them," said Enriquez. "They all want to be good to the students. They create a welcoming environment and everyone here is treated like family."

According to Ancrum, welcoming new students, so that they feel connected, is also important to Perrineau.

"Dr. Perrineau takes new students under his wing," said Ancrum. "If they are interested in chess, he will challenge them to a match, or if a child is interested in a certain sport he will connect them with the coach. He wants all students at MMA to feel like this is their school. He supports our families and the community in the same manner."

Eighth grade student Valeria Mayen appreciates how Perrineau works to get to know each student.

"He's very supportive and motivating," said Mayen. "He comes to our games and cheers us on, win or lose. He is also very visible in this school which shows us he is here and available to us if we need him."

Enriquez appreciates Perrineau's feedback.

"He is more than just a principal, he is also a mentor, and there for us when we need him," said Enriquez.

Unique learning environment

In his role as an administrator, Perrineau has also served at Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA), also a unique school. SOA is an arts-infused institution and MMA has a military focus.

"The progression of my career has taken on a life of its own," said Perrineau. "I never thought I would be in non-traditional schools like SOA and MMA. The experiences have allowed me to see different perspectives of leadership and contrast and compare best practices from my former schools to this school. My overall experience as an educator and administrator has made me well-rounded in terms of how I deal with students, staff, and teachers in general."

Perrineau, who is in his sixth year at MMA, said the staff works hard to balance the unique military dynamic with the academics.

"The beauty of it is that the two authentically go together because both teach leadership and being the best you can be," said Perrineau. "It has been an education for me in terms of understanding things I have never been a part of such as the customs and ceremonial aspects of the military."

Ancrum said she has watched Perrineau learn the culture at MMA with pride.

"He leaned on veteran staff to navigate through the events and parades our students perform," said Ancrum. "We do things here that other schools don't so he was somewhat vulnerable. That was nice to witness because it lets me know that I can be vulnerable too and it is safe and okay."

Perrineau enjoys seeing his cadet scholars compete, present, and perform. "They take the lead in all of their activities," said Perrineau. "They are ambassadors of MMA in and out of the school. When I see them take on something bigger than themselves it makes me the proudest."

Room to grow

Staff and students agree that Perrineau challenges those around him to go beyond their limits.

"He is very supportive and encourages us to try new things," said Chua. "He gives us room to grow, which makes me a better educator. He is more of a coworker than a supervisor. He is always willing to help me 'get there' when I am trying to reach a goal."

As a former teacher, Perrineau knows that teachers are busy. His leadership style is a boots-on-the-ground approach where he commits to taking unnecessary burdens off the shoulders of teachers so they can teach.

"He wants students to achieve all the success they deserve," added Chua. "So he is always willing to step in wherever needed so that we can do our jobs as educators."

Ancrum described it as a “we, not me model.”

“Perrineau has created a family-based approach here at MMA where we cheer for us when it is time to cheer and we hold each other close when we need it,” said Ancrum.

Cadet Major Devon Holmes is the Sr. Regiment Commander at MMA. He also thinks of Perrineau as a second dad and appreciates how he purposefully builds relationships with the students. It causes Holmes to love to come to school every day.

“Because of that, Mr. Perrineau is able to meet us where we are,” said Holmes. “However, he has high expectations for both students and staff. That does not mean he treats failure as a determination of the person. He uses those opportunities to push us harder. He pushes us out of our comfort zone and brings out the inner leaders in ourselves.”

Perrineau’s focus is to continue to grow in areas where improvement is needed, but he is extremely proud of how excellent the students and staff are at MMA.

“I have complete faith that we are all striving to be the best we can be,” Perrineau added.

Ancrum has the same faith.

“Perrineau displays his faith by putting hope in others and distilling pride,” said Ancrum. “We should all hope to have a leader like that.”

Holmes also appreciates Perrineau’s faith-based approaches.

“I know that he draws strength from his faith,” said Holmes. “I understand where he draws his guidance and temperament from. I rest easy in that.”

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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.