



**Camp Road Middle School**

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## Media Release



### **Camp Road's Spitzer named 2023 Top Five Teacher of the Year Finalist**

**Charleston, SC** – [Camp Road Middle School Band Director Chloe Spitzer](#) understands that community is important, especially when working with middle school students. That's why she prioritizes a community atmosphere and welcoming environment in her band program; her students feel included and connected.

"Being in the band relies on teamwork," said Spitzer. "Except there are no benchwarmers. Everyone is important. You rely on your peers to know their musical parts and you are working in tandem to put on the most effective performance possible."

Spitzer impresses upon students the importance of working together for a common goal. This creates bonds amongst the students.

"Students wear their band shirts and can immediately make a connection with someone in the hall, even if they don't know each other," said Spitzer. "It's a feeling of being on the same team."

Spitzer almost joined her middle school's chorus instead of band, but with her father's nudge, she chose to play the clarinet and fell in love with the familial atmosphere of being in band.

"It helped me to make friends," said Spitzer. "My best friend is someone I met in middle school on the marching band field. More importantly, being in band

provided me with many moments to hone leadership skills that ultimately encouraged me to pursue this as a career.”

Spitzer had the same band director for most of her schooling which allowed her to build a bond with her instructor. That continuity and consistency made her a better student, she said. Spitzer tries to do the same with her students by making connections early at the four elementary schools on James Island, remaining with her students throughout their middle school career, and partnering with the high school band program.

### **The benefits of band**

As a music major in college, Spitzer took classes that prepared her to teach any grade level through a wide variety of music courses. Knowing the academic and social benefits of music, she felt her biggest impact could be with the middle school age group.

“Benefits of being in music classes include life skills such as self-motivation, work ethic, commitment, and time management,” said Spitzer. “Not all students will continue in music throughout their schooling, but they will appreciate music because I am teaching them how to actively engage with the music and understand the effort put into a singular performance.”

On top of the work she does with students at Camp Road and the other schools she assists, she also hones her own talent by performing with local music ensembles such as the Charleston Concert Band and Charleston Wind Symphony.

“You can still go on to be an engineer and break out your trombone to play in the community band,” said Spitzer. “Being in music class doesn’t mean it has to be your whole life. You can do it all - be a stellar academic, an athlete, a theater star, a robotics team member, and a musician.”

As a 2023 Teacher of the Year Top Five Finalist, Spitzer said she will advocate for music and other fine arts courses to ensure equitable access is offered across the board to all age groups and in all schools.

“Societally we have seen a shift to push kids academically and hurry them into adulthood,” said Spitzer. “There is a fear that our kids won’t be ready for the next stage in their life, so students often skip the fine arts and focus solely on academics .”

Spitzer said that fine arts provide learning opportunities to prepare kids for the future that work in tandem with the core subjects.

“Fine arts offer fun experiences that build on all of the skills listed under the Profile of the SC Graduate,” said Spitzer. “I hope to use this platform to bring awareness to the benefit of fine arts in educating the whole child.”

Spitzer is continuing to use her experience in creating band programs to assist in implementing programs in schools across the district. In partnership with James Island Charter High School's band director, Dr. Gretchen Bowles, Spitzer is helping to start a marching band this spring. Spitzer also worked with administrators at Murray LaSaine Montessori School to create their band program. With the support of the district Visual and Performing Arts Department, five more schools in Charleston County started band programs last year.

Last year, Spitzer worked alongside an assistant band director whose position was shared between Camp Road and James Island Charter. This year, the schools were unable to fill that position. According to Principal Jaclyn Rowehl, Spitzer has kept the program going at the same level by keeping high expectations and bringing in other band directors from around CCSD and the state as guest clinicians.

"Ms. Spitzer is one of the most dedicated, caring, and compassionate people and educators that I have ever met," said Rowehl. "Her passion for music and her desire for making a difference in the lives of kids comes through, not only in how she runs her own band program but in how she advocates for it and the band programs of other schools."

The honor of being selected as a CCSD Top Five Teacher of the Year Finalist means the world to Spitzer. It makes all of her hard work worth it.

"This year in particular has been extremely busy," said Spitzer. "I was finishing my master's degree in the fall. I had the opportunity to conduct one of the honor bands at the South Carolina Band Director's Association (SCBDA) Region 4 Honor Band clinic this February and I am the site chair for the SCBDA Solo and Ensemble Festival in Charleston. That's along with all of our normal school performances and rehearsals. Watching students make music and enjoy being together in the band room makes it all worth it."

Spitzer credits her love of music to her parents. They encouraged her musical endeavors from a young age and they continue to attend nearly every performance she has as both a performer and band director. Spitzer credits her own teachers for desire to be an educator.

"I always thought school was a special place to be," said Spitzer. "Most of my favorite memories have to do with making music," said Spitzer. "My desire to be a teacher started long before I joined the band, so it only made sense to marry the two passions."

For more information, contact Jaclyn Rowehl at (843) 762-2784 or the District's 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 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 49,000 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.