



**For Immediate Release**  
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## Media Release



### Wando High School

**Donald R. Kennedy, Sr.**  
Superintendent of Schools

**Anita Huggins**  
Deputy Superintendent

**Sherry Eppelsheimer, Ed.D.**  
Associate Superintendent of High Schools

**Kim Wilson**  
Interim Principal

## **Wando's McGee named 2023 Top Five Teacher of the Year Finalist**

**Mount Pleasant, SC** – [Erin McGee](#) is in her 10th year as an educator and the foundation of her teaching philosophy is making sure she is putting the needs of students first. She began her career in a Title 1, urban school with a high rate of poverty. The emphasis at that school was to be a support system for students rather than simply pushing content.

"Assessments and standards are not everything when it comes to the business of teaching students," said McGee. "The bigger deal is meeting kids where they are and helping them push through."

Following in her mother's footsteps, McGee hopes to make her mark at Wando High School by not only imparting knowledge, but by being student-centered and doing what is best for students so they can learn global-thinking skills.

"I always tell people education is the family job," said McGee. "My mom, maternal aunt, maternal uncle, and paternal aunt were all educators. Outside of these factors, my mom was the greatest influence on me to become a teacher."

Growing up, McGee's mother Diane McGee would bring her to "Take Your Kid to Work Day" at her school nearly every year. The first time, she was teaching sixth grade math, and McGee was in elementary school. Her older students let McGee tag along and were acting like her babysitter. As she got older, McGee's mother would let her teach a math lesson and work with her students.

"Ms. McGee, from an early age, was influenced by her family members and mother to become a teacher," said Principal Kim Wilson. "As a result, she exhibits the maturity and knowledge that many veteran teachers possess."

### **The lightbulb moments**

"Like many educators, I call it the lightbulb moment that drives me," said McGee. "It is when a student gets it – that spark - which I love! I know in that instant the student will be influenced by whatever I taught. Students will now be able to enter their lives with a skill I taught them, and it will help make them successful. Those are the moments I live for as an educator. It influenced me to become a teacher, and it fuels me to stay a teacher."

McGee said that teaching at one of the largest high schools in the state is a dream come true.

"We are able to offer the students so many opportunities," said McGee. "Many think it is a detriment, but our size allows us to offer something for everyone. We have over 50 clubs and a laundry list of AP course options. The students not only meet others that are like them, but they also meet students that are different. The teachers and students all come from varying backgrounds and that makes Wando unique."

McGee teaches AP Human Geography which is a study of how humans have organized and changed the world to fit their needs. It is a modern-day, contemporary class where students are introduced to a variety of subjects.

"The class explains how we got to where we are," said McGee. "It requires critical thinking, not just memorization."

McGee enjoys teaching it because of her love for social studies and geography. She had a high school teacher that instilled in her a love for the subject and she hopes to do the same for her students.

According to Wilson, McGee believes the teaching profession is the highest calling one can have.

"She challenges her students to think critically, give their best effort, and establishes high expectations for students to take ownership of their own learning and behavior," added Wilson.

"I want to encourage my students to reach their maximum potential, to expand their knowledge, and to help them prepare for the global world," said McGee. "It is about making them strong students, but more importantly, it is about making them strong young adults."

### **Collaboration builds opportunities**

"Ms. McGee has always made decisions on what is best for kids," said Wilson. "Establishing strong positive relationships with students allows her to individualize the needs of each child."

McGee has successfully done that thanks to the support she receives from the district level and her colleagues. She hopes to pay that forward.

"My relationships with my colleagues have given me the opportunity to strengthen and improve the teaching profession," said McGee. "I wanted to strengthen the profession in a more targeted approach, so I jumped at the opportunity to be trained as a mentor. I have since mentored four teachers. This year, I have been working on the cognitive coaching aspects of the mentor program."

"Being the people person that I am, I love making connections," said McGee. "I enjoy interacting with my colleagues, our parents, and the community. You learn a lot about yourself in those interactions, which is the beauty of education."

McGee believes that each interaction forms who we are as a person. She makes it a point to collaborate with her colleagues across the district, so she can continue to improve who she is as a person. She leans on Jason McDermott, her counterpart at Lucy Beckham High School (who formerly taught at Wando). She also collaborated extensively with Kaith Young whom she met at Wando seven years ago.

"We worked together by sharing ideas," said McGee. "He developed an AP Human geography curriculum for Georgetown County that is still in use today."

Their friendship grew over the years and now McGee and Young are excited to celebrate their one-year wedding anniversary.

McGee is looking forward to advocating for her colleagues that have helped her along the way.

"In today's world, teachers are often overrun with political entities making decisions about what we should be doing in our classrooms," said McGee. "It can be extremely frustrating to be told how to teach, what to prioritize, and what resources we can or cannot use. I would use the platform as a CCSD Teacher of the Year to remind teachers and the public to do what is best for the kids. I would want to advocate that teachers regularly put students first and that our communities support those decisions. It encourages teachers and communities to remember our students' mental and emotional well-being."

For more information, call Kim Wilson at (843) 881-8200 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.