

**For Immediate Release**

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# Media Release

## **CCSD Expanded Learning increasing literacy activities in afterschool programs**

### Office of Communications

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**Charleston, SC** — Charleston County School District's (CCSD) Office of Expanded Learning has created and implemented a literacy guide that embeds literacy focused efforts in all afterschool activities.

Jason Sakran, Director of Expanded Learning (Kaleidoscope), said that afterschool programs within CCSD continue to improve and offer more robust learning opportunities for students.

"With the implementation of Vision 2027 – where all students are reading on grade level by fifth grade, it was a natural, next step to focus our efforts on improving literacy skills in our students," said Sakran. "We are currently offering several literacy based activities in all our after school programs. Literacy is the foundation for all learning and assisting our teachers and principals build literacy skills in our students makes sense on so many levels."

The effort supports the three "pillars" that uphold the district's mission of educating and supporting every child in achieving college, career, and citizenship readiness (rigorous grade-level instruction, high-quality teachers and leaders, and wrap-around services).

The literacy guide contains program goals, measures efficacy, and provides instructors with an abundance of actual content and activities.

"The Office of Expanded Learning and its afterschool programs (Kaleidoscope and 21st Century) is in a unique and purposeful position to build upon our success and our foundation and utilize its programs as a wraparound service with high-quality leaders serving students from birth through fifth grade," added Sakran.

The guide was developed to share the framework and resources for Kaleidoscope's staff and stakeholders that provide eight practical approaches to implementing literacy enrichment. District leaders selected these practices with recommended delivery methods and instruction in partnership with Kaleidoscope Site Coordinators and Program Officers.

Examples of activities include reading corners, read-alouds, vocabulary/word walls, and journal writing. An expansion of those approaches might include book clubs,

skits, plays and a reader's theater, poetry or music production clubs, and a media production club. The activities are all age appropriate with an emphasis on fun.

CCSD afterschool programs have transitioned from being childcare and playtime centered to an extension of the school day.

"The evidence is clear," said Sakran. "We have a tremendous opportunity to better leverage the after-school hours and deliver a high-quality learning experience for our students. It can be a game changer."

Lisa Fryar, the [21st Century](#) Director at E.B. Ellington Elementary School agreed. The program there truly is an extension of the classroom. Students arrive at 6:30 a.m. for the morning component which allows for additional time to complete homework and catch up on [IReady](#) with instructional support on-hand.

21st Century is a very dynamic instructional program, led by certified teachers. The program provides wrap-around services to students from academics to basic needs.

The afternoon program looks similar. Certified teachers are assigned to specific age groups and work with students on homework, reading and reading instruction, and IReady, but there I also an instructional component in which students are learning additional pieces of the curriculum being taught in their classroom.

"The constant communication and collaboration with teachers make this possible," said Fryar. "Communication is the key, even with our administration. We attend their planning meetings, and schedule face-to-face time with our educators so we can adjust 21st Century instructional time."

Lakeris Wine is the 21st Century lead teacher for second and third grade. She explained that the program requires students to sit for a certain amount of instructional time. That is offset by enrichment time, which consists of African Drumming demonstrations, karate lessons, Sweetgrass Basket sewing lessons, soccer, chess, dance, and more.

Wine said academic supports include reading and math intervention. She has created a literacy room where students can enjoy independent reading or work with an interventionist. Wrap-around supports include snacks, supper, and transportation.

To determine which students need extra help, Fryar pulls scores and works with teachers so that additional focus can be paid to those students.

"It's all very intentional so that we can assure students are reading on grade level," said Wine. "We also track their growth so we can ensure our efforts are beneficial."

Laura Strickland, the Site Coordinator at Drayton Hall Elementary said an example of their literacy activities include K-Scope News where students write scripts and record the news show. Others include read-alouds between students and staff members.

"The kids really enjoy the chapter books," said Strickland. "Also entertaining is a Reader's Theater that we've created where the students pick out a book (the reading center boasts over 300 titles) and we create a set where they perform a mini play based on the book."

Strickland said it is all about extending the school day where students are still learning but they are having fun.

"We're targeting first graders so that by the time they are in fifth grade they are reading on grade level as they should be," said Strickland. "We work closely with the teachers so that we know which students may need the extra help. We've found that reading back and forth with those students has helped and teachers are seeing improvement."

Getting kids to buy into it was the biggest obstacle, but according to Strickland, they realized that it's not just about books and reading, the literacy games, and journaling are fun, too.

Trina Noonan has been the site coordinator at Charles Pinckney Elementary School for six years and served there for a total of 14 years. She said the program has always included activities focused on STEM learning, and adding the literacy component to those activities has increased learning opportunities for students.

"A favorite activity among students is learning and creating recipes," said Noonan. "As a result, Trail Mix Tuesdays was implemented and a different student's recipe is the featured snack of the day each week."

Like other sites, her program features a book club. Noonan paired it with a treat and named it Lemonade and Literacy. It was an activity no one wanted to turn down because of the lemonade component.

"So far, the most popular activity has been taking care of our baby chicks, Pip and Squeak," said Noonan. "They are learning about chicks and caring for them as babies by reading books associated with how to handle them and what they can and can't eat. We have both fiction and nonfiction books to accompany the lesson."

Sakran said that all the site coordinators and staff are enthusiastic about encouraging reading among CCSD's youngest students.

"Reading is an adventure and so is Kaleidoscope," said Sakran. "We're proud to feature literacy activities that students willingly and voluntarily want to join in on."

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 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.