

**For Immediate Release**

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## Media Release

### **University of Virginia's program inspires improvement in CCSD schools**

#### Office of Communications

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**Charleston, SC** – To fuel personal and professional growth, Charleston County School District (CCSD) Acceleration Schools' principals and coaches are attending University of Virginia's (UVA) Partnership for Leaders in Education at the Darden School of Business. The multi-year program is designed to equip school leaders with business-based learnings. Principals are encouraged to apply these lessons to ignite impactful changes and improvements inspired by corporate business models and case studies.

The program is part of Acceleration Schools' mission [to turn around underperforming schools](#). Acceleration Schools provides educators and leaders with tools and out-of-the-box solutions to improve school systems and enhance student learning.

"Thanks to the UVA program, I can better identify and articulate my vision for my school," said George White, interim principal at Morningside Middle School. "I have developed systems with my staff to establish goals so we can work towards achieving the vision together."

With teacher and staff collaboration plus support from Acceleration Schools' staff, each leader identified areas for school improvement and developed 90-day plans to address them. With strategies aimed at improving test scores, decreasing achievement gaps, building instructor confidence, and more, the plans have been instrumental in achieving school improvement.

"I really do believe in the work and the need to continue to do what is necessary for the school and our students," said Natasha Jones, principal of W.B. Goodwin Elementary. "It's not easy, and it won't happen overnight. But the changes we made so far are inspiring."

Jones always looks for ways to improve her school and her leadership abilities, and the program at UVA allowed her to reflect and put action behind her aspirations.

"We are responsible for our most vulnerable stakeholders: our scholars," Jones said. "The work we're doing at UVA continues to inspire me to put my best foot forward to bring about the best in my students."

Amber Sainz, principal of Julian Mitchell Elementary, said the program encouraged her to become more systems-oriented, which has helped her focus on her end goals and how she and her team will get there.

“When we look at case studies from business organizations and their systems and relate them to our work in the school, it keeps us focused on our end goals, helps us make adjustments, and become more systems-oriented,” explained Sainz.

Together, principals, teachers, and staff are working to create the best schools and learning experiences for students. Thanks to the Partnership for Leaders in Education at UVA, Acceleration Schools’ leaders will continue igniting positive change for students in their schools.

For more information, please contact the Office of Communications at (843) 937-6303 or visit the Acceleration Schools’ [section of the district website](#).

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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.