

**For Immediate Release**

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# Media Release

## **CCSD Work-based Learning Partnerships Coordinator earns national recognition**

Office of Communications

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**Charleston, SC** — The Work-based Learning Division of the Association of Career and Technical Education (ACTE) announced that Chadwick L. Vail was named the “2023 Brightpath Work-based Learning Professional of the Year Award.” The designation will be formally announced at ACTE’s National Work-based Learning Conference April 26–28 in Atlanta, Georgia. Vail serves as the Work-based Learning Partnerships Coordinator for Charleston County School District (CCSD).

“I am truly honored, and humbled by this recognition, and I share it with the Career and Technology Education support team, the school counselors, teachers, and all CCSD educators working to empower our students to maximize the amazing opportunities that await them in the Charleston region, and beyond,” said Vail.

The award recognizes the work-based learning (WBL) professional that has demonstrated overall contributions to student success through community engagement, leadership roles, student organizations, WBL classroom innovations, and WBL advocacy.

Vail has led the WBL program in CCSD for over 10 years. He recently served a three-year term on the South Carolina Career Development Professionals Board of Directors (SCCDP), including board president in 2021. SCCDP is a division of South Carolina’s statewide ACTE chapter.

Vail’s passion for education, specifically college and career readiness, comes from his time operating small businesses. Vail, along with his family, owned, operated, and successfully sold several businesses in the Charleston region, including three pretzel bakeries, a neighborhood deli, a coffee and ice cream store, and an early childhood development center.

“What sets Chad Vail apart from other professional educators is his extraordinary and unrelenting commitment to authentic career exploration opportunities for each and every scholar,” said Richard Gordon, executive director of CTE for CCSD.

Vail was an enthusiastic contributor on the initial planning team for the Charleston Regional Youth Apprenticeship program, which has become a national model. He remains active on the advisory committee for the program that now places more than 200 youth apprentices annually.

Vail has also been a leader on a team of area stakeholders in the planning and execution of a regional Career Awareness fair that over 2000 students attend annually. The event now includes a Hiring Fair targeting seniors not yet confirmed with a postsecondary destination.

Vail is actively involved in numerous community organizations and business/education collaboratives, including Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, Tri-County Cradle to Career, Charleston County Economic Development, South Carolina Maritime Association, and South Carolina Manufacturers Alliance. Vail has been a Rotarian for 21 years, serving as the 2014–15 President of the Rotary Club of Daniel Island and as an Assistant District Governor in Rotary District 7770 from 2018–2020. Vail has served on the boards of many other organizations in the Charleston region including Down Syndrome Association of the Lowcountry, Charleston Mayor’s Office for Children, Youth & Families, and Be A Mentor, and has volunteered as a youth soccer coach. Vail was president of Junior Achievement of Coastal SC for three years.

Vail served on the state delegation that visited Capitol Hill in support of WBL and CTE in 2013 and 2019. He also volunteered in November of 2020 with the initial ACTE committee Kelli Diemer formed in support of a new Work-based Learning sub-division and national conference focused on Work-Based Learning. This unique aspect of Vail demands multiple lines of effort as he accomplishes what seems to be his life’s purpose.

Gordon said that on a daily basis, Vail is recruiting business partners, coordinating extended learning opportunities for students, and collaborating with district leadership and school counselors to maximize student potential. Vail has also spearheaded Individualized Graduation Plan and College and Career Readiness initiatives across multiple grade levels district-wide, in an attempt to create “Future Ready” students with competitive advantages. He has also led multiple teams and committees that coordinate internship and apprenticeship programs with dozens of business and post-secondary partners - always recruiting, supporting, and celebrating students along the way.

“This is a well-deserved recognition for a special person who devotes his life to service and sacrifice for his community,” added Gordon. “The award declaration speaks for itself. CCSD is so fortunate to have him as our work-based learning partnership champion. Due to his efforts, entire family trees will be impacted for generations to come.”

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.