

For Immediate Release

April 5, 2023

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Media Release

Four CCSD Acceleration Schools released from state improvement list

Office of Communications

*Research-based turnaround model leads to academic
achievement*

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Charleston, SC – [Acceleration Schools](#), a multi-year initiative to serve underperforming schools in Charleston County School District (CCSD), is proud to announce that four schools have improved their state ratings and were removed from the [South Carolina School Improvement List](#). Hunley Park Elementary, Morningside Middle, North Charleston Elementary, and Stono Park Elementary were designated Acceleration Schools in 2020. Each school received resources and training from state-of-the-art leaders and coaches to help implement engaging curriculum and programming to prepare students for the next grade level and beyond.

“One of the most important parts of educating students is having strong leaders,” said Jacqueline K. Haynes, Associate Superintendent of Acceleration Schools. “We are actively working with our teachers and principals to provide them with support and resources to be exceptional school leaders. Each principal, teacher, and coach has put in impressive effort, which led to incredible school improvement. Our students deserve the best education, and we’re working hard every day to give that to them.”

Schools recorded the following gains on the SC Ready English language arts (ELA) and math assessments:

- Hunley Park Elementary saw a 40 percent increase in ELA and 66 percent in math
- Morningside Middle School improved by 56 percent in ELA and 150 percent in math
- North Charleston Elementary ELA scores rose by 102 percent and math by four percent
- Stono Park Elementary improved by 32 percent in ELA and 71 percent in math

In addition to stronger SC Ready scores, these schools have seen an average of 2.8 percent decrease in staff turnover since 2019 and fewer student disciplinary actions needed.

Acceleration Schools identified and tracked school data, with the help of Harvard data strategist Abigail Benzine, to better understand how to serve students and teachers. Armed with this information, principals, teachers, and coaches identified areas needing support and where changes to curriculum, climate and culture, and leadership would benefit the school and, ultimately, improve student outcomes.

Dr. Katchia Gethers, Hunley Park's principal, has seen continuous advancement within her school thanks to her and the staff's commitment and dedication.

"If we place a sense of urgency on improvement initiatives, we can put a plan in place and stick to it because we cannot give up on these students," explained Dr. Gethers.

Melissa Brubaker, principal at North Charleston Elementary, noted that the gains her school has made prove how teachers impact the classroom while showing students that they can learn and achieve greatness in and out of the school.

"The school community feels empowered and validated for all their hard work over the past three years," added Brubaker.

In 2020, 11 CCSD schools were identified as Acceleration Schools, placing them on the S.C. School Improvement List, and requiring comprehensive support for improvement. These scores were based on state rankings and test scores that measured students' abilities in math and ELA abilities, among other factors, including academic achievement, student progress, school climate, and more. With hard work and dedication, all 11 Acceleration Schools raised their test scores and state rankings, most notably, the four schools that showcased sufficient progress to come off state improvement lists.

Each school received one-on-one coaching to help implement new education programs, monitor classroom progress, offer assistance for high-quality instruction, and close gaps in student learning. Teachers and principals also attended professional development opportunities and were invited to focus groups to voice opinions and offer feedback.

While these schools have shown impressive improvements, they will maintain access to support and resources to continue their excellent work. Each Acceleration School will continue offering unique and valuable opportunities to students, faculty, and staff to deliver exceptional education opportunities and become a world-class educational institution.

For more information about Acceleration Schools, visit their section of the [district website](#) and follow them on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#). Please contact the Office of Communications at (843) 937-6303 to schedule interviews.

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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.