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Media Release

Career and Technology Month – Students with passion for children earning credits towards an Early Learning teaching career

West Ashley High School

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Charleston, SC – Students at West Ashley High School are receiving hands-on learning all while “doing the teaching.” [The Early Childhood Education Pathway](#) at West Ashley High School allows students to earn college credits while preparing them to be early childhood educators. The bonus is that it is a real-world experience.

Students are learning strategies to teaching and learning to make lesson plans and are teaching the young children their numbers, colors, and shapes.

Isis Wilson, a sophomore at West Ashley, is taking her second Early Childhood course under the instruction of Bridgette Butler. She has learned the basic skills of caretaking and is now learning how to implement instruction to young children. The course enables them to work with Charleston County School District (CCSD) students at Goodwin Elementary School in addition to going on field trips to area childcare centers and working with exceptional needs students.

“Learning these important skills can broaden your horizons,” said Wilson. “Whether you want to work with children or not, these skills will help you well into adulthood when it comes to parenting and being around others with children.”

Butler, a 25-year veteran teacher, wants to ensure her students are getting a good foundation.

I am teaching potential teachers,” said Butler. “So I take it to the next level in my courses so they will be more than prepared to excel in their college-level courses and in the classroom.”

Wilson said the learning is two-fold. She is learning from her teacher, from the curriculum, and the young children she is practicing her skills on.

“Kids will teach you a lot,” said Wilson. “I am learning how their minds work and how they think. The kids will teach you how to do better because they will let you

know if they don't like something. It is instant feedback. I'm teaching them, but they're teaching me.

Keangel Powell, a senior, agreed.

"The more I work with these young children the more I learn their personalities and their feelings," said Powell. "It is about building relationships with the children. I can read to them and work with them to make their day better. Most importantly, I love watching them grow."

It is important to create a nurturing, and loving environment in a class like Early Childhood Education. It sets the tone for how these future educators will treat their students. Wilson said that Butler has done just that in her classroom and acts not just as an instructor, but a mother figure.

"She is there for us emotionally, physically, and mentally," said Wilson.

Powell is leaning towards a career where she is able to work with young children.

"This class is giving me real-world experiences and I will be working with the Kaleidoscope Summer Program to gain an even better understanding," said Powell. "It makes me feel valued as a student that the district provides opportunities like this because it is opening doors for my future."

There are four courses in the pathway. Completion includes college credit.

"The students that take these courses have a passion for children," said Butler. "That's why I think the actual engagement with young children is crucial. My students are not just learning how to teach but how to interact and teach a lesson."

Butler's students are also learning how to handle behavioral issues and anything else that occurs in a classroom. Students also attend professional conferences and are often asked to present what they're learning. Butler teaches the professional aspect of being an educator so that they are learning how to interact with parents and guardians, as well.

Butler is in her 15th year teaching this Pathway and has seen it grow and evolve.

"It's an opportunity not only for these students but for the district," added Butler. "Teacher recruitment is important now more than ever. If we can entice these students to return to CCSD to begin their careers, it is a win-win."

For more information, contact Principal Cumback at (843) 573-12013.

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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.