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Media Release

Career and Technology Month – Computer Science courses open doors to numerous career pathways

Mount Pleasant, SC – Students in the East Cooper Center for Advanced Studies Computer Science classes are getting a leg up on their peers by successfully completing computer science courses that will benefit them in their future educational and career paths.

Project Lead the Way (PLTW) Computer Science Pathways, taught by Ian Banker, allow students to receive dual enrollment credit. Computer Science Essentials and Computer Science Principles focus on app development, computational thinking, and coding.

"Mr. Banker has done a phenomenal job with the first two courses in our PTLW Computer Science program with 99 percent of his Computer Science Essentials students earning dual credit weighting," said Principal Jeff Blankenship. "This brand new course provides an excellent opportunity to introduce the world of computers, boost students' grade point averages, and complete a graduation requirement all at the same time."

"Computer Science Essentials is a fun semester course that opens doors for student creativity," said Banker. "Students create apps and games. The second course is where students learn how the internet works. It is a deeper look into programming. Both courses set students up for not just the AP exam, but for life."

Banker explained that PLTW's curriculum is designed to teach students in a relevant, meaningful way.

"Regardless of what career a student chooses, PLTW gives students options and teaches them all of the background they will need in the next chapter of their journey," said Banker. "PLTW exposes students to different ideas and concepts. This is where education leads to a career."

East Cooper Center for Advanced Studies

Donald R. Kennedy, Sr.
Superintendent of Schools

Anita Huggins
Interim Deputy Superintendent

Sherry Eppelsheimer, Ed.D.
Associate Superintendent of the High School Learning Community

Jeff Blankenship
Principal

Bella Bausano is in 11th grade at Wando High School. She is completing Computer Science Principles and was inspired to take the courses because her father completed a similar program and it piqued her interest.

"We all use the internet but don't stop to think about how it works," said Bausano. "In this class, we are using a hands-on approach to learn the ins and outs of the World Wide Web."

James Connelly is a senior at Wando and is also completing Computer Science Principles. He said the physical skills he is learning could earn him a direct path to the job market.

"I will be able to market myself because I know the skills necessary to go into a line of work that is centered on computer technology," said Connelly. "These skills will be useful in day-to-day life as well."

Banker explained that cybersecurity is one of the fastest-growing fields.

"In these courses, we take a deep dive into the internet and how to keep things safe online," said Banker. "My students have never been exposed to this information and these are important skills to have regardless of what direction they go in."

Blankenship added that Banker has taught Computer Science Principles for several years and his PLTW End-of-Course and his AP Exam passage rates are over 95 percent, confirming he is one of the best Computer Science teachers in South Carolina.

Course pathways:

- PLTW Computer Science Essentials – (Grades: 9, 10) Computer Science Essentials (CSE) is an excellent entry point for new high school computer science (CS) learners. All students will have many opportunities for creative expression and exploration in topics of personal interest, whether it be through app development or connecting computing with the physical world. The course introduces students to coding fundamentals through an approachable, block-based programming language where they will have early success in creating usable applications. Students are able to take the PLTW End of Course Exam for dual credit weighting.
- PLTW Computer Science Principles – (Grades: 10, 11, 12) In PLTW Computer Science Principles, students develop the in-demand computer science skills critical to thrive in any of today's and tomorrow's careers. The course promotes computational thinking and coding fundamentals and introduces computational tools that foster creativity. It aims to build students' awareness of the tremendous demand for computer scientists and those who have computational thinking skills, and engages students to consider issues raised by the impact of computing on society. Students are

able to take both the PLTW End of Course Exam and the College Board Advanced Placement Exam for college credit.

- PLTW Computer Science Applications – (Grades: 10, 11, 12) In Computer Science A, students develop the in-demand computer science skills critical to thriving in any part of today's and tomorrow's careers. The course promotes computational thinking and Java coding fundamentals and introduces computational tools that foster creativity. It aims to build students' awareness of the tremendous demand for computer scientists and those who have computational thinking skills, and engages students to consider issues raised by the impact of computing on society. Students will are to take both the PLTW End of Course Exam and the College Board Advanced Placement Exam for college credit.
- PLTW Cybersecurity – (Grades: 11, 12) PLTW Cybersecurity gives students a broad exposure to the many aspects of digital and information security, while encouraging socially responsible choices and ethical behavior. It inspires algorithmic and computational thinking, especially outside-the-box thinking. Students explore the many educational and career paths available to cybersecurity experts, as well as other careers that comprise the field of information security. Students are able to take the PLTW End of Course Exam for dual credit weighting.

"The amount of courses we are able to offer at the CAS puts students at an advantage," said Banker. "The district is committed to providing access to courses that will benefit our students for life. No matter their career choice, technical skills like those that we learn in Computer Science will make a person more desirable in the workforce."

"What I am learning will apply to anything I plan on doing in the future in regard to my career," said Bausano. "Like my classmates, I enjoy the general expanse of knowledge I am gaining. It's not hard material to learn if you're willing to put the work in."

Connelly described the curriculum as one heavily focused on problem-solving.

"There are a lot of problems you must work through in coding, and we had to come up with unique solutions," said Connelly. "Those skills are important in any career."

Banker added that these skills will help them to stay relevant so they aren't left behind in this modern, technological world.

"Mr. Banker has been instrumental in leading professional development for his colleagues and by developing and sharing new best practices, our teachers and students have benefited," added Blankenship. "Mr. Banker has worked with his students to focus on STEM initiatives inside and outside of the classroom and was recently voted the East Cooper Center for Advanced Studies Teacher of the Year by his colleagues."

"As a CCSD student, your zip code does not dictate whether you have access to advanced computer science topics," said Rich Gordon, Executive Director of Career and Technology Education. "All students have access and opportunity to high-skill, in-demand, and high-wage Information Technology pathways. Furthermore, upon graduation and credentialing, students can immediately enter the workforce into a good-paying job, enlist in the military into a specialized MOS, or enroll at two and four year colleges and universities with the computer science knowledge, skills, and dispositions to be remarkably successful."

East Cooper CAS joins the Cooper River for Advanced Studies and West Ashley Center for Advanced Studies in offering computer courses, including computer repair, Fundamentals of Web Page Design, Game Design and Development, and Networking Fundamentals.

For more information, contact Principal Blankenship at (843) 856-5800.

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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.