

**For Immediate Release**

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# Media Release

## **Pulse of CCSD – Stephanie Nettis takes in account the needs of all CCSD employees and students**

### Office of Communications

**Donald R. Kennedy, Sr.**  
Superintendent of Schools

**Anita Huggins**  
Deputy Superintendent

**Vanessa L. Denney, M.Ed.**  
Interim Executive Director of  
Communications

**Charleston, SC** – If Stephanie Nettis wins the Powerball she's really going to miss her work family in the Charleston County School District (CCSD) Accounting Department. Until then, she will continue to praise them and remain forever grateful for all of their hard work.

Nettis is the Director of Accounting and has been with CCSD for 15 years. She loves her work and especially loves her team of colleagues.

"I couldn't imagine working with anyone else but my team," said Nettis. "Everyone understands the importance of what we do. We could all go out into the private sector, but we don't. For me personally, I wouldn't want to put in this type of energy, time, and effort anywhere else."

Nettis is a numbers person and knew from a very young age she wanted to be an accountant.

"When I was four years old, I often visited with a family friend who happened to be in accounting," said Nettis. "I would accompany her to work sometimes and spent much of that time playing on her adding machine. I give credit to her for influencing me to become an accountant."

Originally from Savannah, GA, Nettis earned a degree in economics at a program now associated with Georgia Southern and an MBA from The Citadel. She went to college originally planning on going to medical school but when she took a few elective accounting classes, she fell back in love with numbers.

Shortly after moving to Charleston, Nettis met her soon-to-be husband and went into banking doing finance and accounting. In 2007, a staff accounting position became available with CCSD and she was hired.

"I was hired to handle accounts payable, accounts receivable, and fixed assets," said Nettis. "I loved it. It was a very small department then so I learned very quickly to be a jack of all trades."

Nettis was promoted to Director of Accounting in 2015 and has continued to thrive.

"I know the importance of this position and I enjoy the idea that what I do is contributing to the greater good," said Nettis. "I could do accounting anywhere. Working for kids and helping to improve their lives is what is fulfilling."

Nettis said a lot has changed in the many years she has been with the district. She said despite the transitions, the one constant has been the great team of people she has worked with.

"We have laughed together and cried together," said Nettis. "Whatever the day throws at us we will handle it as a team. We have fun too. We're known as the party department because we are always having potlucks and celebrating random holidays. We have so many great cooks and it is fun to try everyone's cooking."

The team of 12 handles a multitude of tasks, such as managing and paying bills for the district, asset tagging, managing bookkeepers, all billing, and managing operational cash.

Alicia Kokkinis, CCSD Grants Officer, said that when she thinks of Nettis, she is reminded of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr's quotation, "Whatever your life's work is, do it well."

"Stephanie does the work because it needs to get done, not for praise, not for self-advancement," said Kokkinis. "She is analytical, but she is also empathetic, which is a winning combination for a servant leader."

Nettis said there are a lot of moving parts in the district.

"Teachers don't need to be worried about paying the utility bill or buying classroom supplies," said Nettis. "That's our role so they can get through their day as smoothly as possible."

Accounting might be a behind-the-scenes job, but it is one of great importance.

"Many of my team members have been with CCSD a long time," said Nettis. "I depend on all of them, and they depend on me. Each and every one of us would drop everything to help each other out or the families of our district."

A shining example of that happened just before the holiday break when staff was shutting down their offices for a two-week break.

A call came in notifying the Office of Communications that a family had been displaced and needed emergency shelter. Money was made available from the Children in Crisis Fund, which was established in 2009 as a result of generous donations from community members and businesses. The fund provides varied crisis and emergency assistance for CCSD students and their families.

Nettis was notified of the need and the pot of funding that would be used. She then worked directly with Michelle Wright in the procurement office, and Kim Vargo, AP Technician, to ensure the family's hotel stay was paid for. Nettis, Vargo, and Wright stayed after hours to ensure the family had a safe place to lay their heads.

"We are so appreciative to be able to work with someone committed to our families," said Tyesha Drayton, Office of Communications Project Manager. "Mrs. Nettis could have left to go home for the holiday break, but she stayed and made sure the family was taken care of. She is definitely a leader who leads by example at CCSD."

Nettis said her team is used to emergency requests.

"We acknowledge and address every request no matter what," said Nettis.

Kokkinis added that Nettis doesn't get frustrated by silly questions nor flustered by urgent requests.

"She takes everything in stride," said Kokkinis.

### **Getting back to normal**

When the COVID-19 pandemic shut down CCSD offices, now Superintendent Don Kennedy was at the helm as Chief Financial Officer (CFO). Nettis said he guided the team through the unknown with amazing grace and support. She said he also ensured the smooth transition when he passed the baton to current CFO Channa Williams.

"It's strange that my former boss is now my *boss boss*," said Nettis. "The advantage is that I have somewhat of a relationship with the superintendent. Mr. Kennedy is a great motivator and supporter because he knows we are working hard and doing our best. It is great to have him as a leader."

Jacqué Carlen, Executive Director of Finance, has worked with Nettis on and off for 15 years.

"I have watched her grow personally and professionally," said Carlen. "She possesses strong leadership skills and a compassionate heart for others. Her banking and accounting experience, along with her soft skills, make her an outstanding Accounting Director here at CCSD. She really is one of our own that will continue to grow and excel in this district."

### **Family life**

Nettis and her husband (employed in the CCSD Information Technology Department) have a three-year-old son. When not doing the business of the district, the couple loves to travel and has crisscrossed the globe in search of

adventure. Her love of adventure and food may come from her Greek heritage. Nettis has traveled to the country three times and visited the towns of her ancestors.

"My family loves to cook so eating is a big part of all of our celebrations," said Nettis. "I love feeding people, and I am trying to instill an adventurous spirit in my son."

Nettis is also thrilled that she can brag about her work family and her immediate family.

"I am blessed," Nettis said.

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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 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.