



**Charleston Progressive
Academy**

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Media Release

Author/illustrators visit students at Charleston Progressive

Charleston, S.C. – Charleston Progressive Academy (CPA) students received a visit last month from children’s author/illustrator duo Matthew Swanson and Robbi Behr during their nationwide “Busload of Books Tour.” CPA was the only school in South Carolina to host the pair on this inaugural tour.

The couple are crisscrossing the United States in a school bus-home with their four children for the 2022-2023 school year. They are visiting Title I elementary schools in all 50 states and Washington, D.C., and by the end of the journey, they will have gifted 25,000 hardcover books to students and teachers.

“The enthusiasm that this book tour instilled in our students was truly amazing,” said teacher-librarian Jennie Richter. “After they got to meet and talk to Matthew and Robbi they made deeper connections to the books. Students were buzzing about the books all week and were so excited to take them home and share them with their families.”

This first-of-its kind tour combines a nationwide book giveaway and the ultimate family road trip with a major research study on the impact of creator/student engagement. The key objectives are raising awareness of the challenges facing America’s public schools and empowering reading, creativity, and collaboration in children ages 5 to 12.

During their visit, the couple demonstrated their work, read with the students and participated in literacy activities.

The couple developed the idea in 2019 when they received a \$30,000 grant to “do something awesome.” This initial support swelled with contributions from over 1,000 individual donors, making a nationwide tour a reality.

“We’ve seen hundreds of times the empowering impact author/illustrator visits can have on school communities,” said Swanson. “When kids realize we are just regular people, they recognize their own capacity to create. They start reading, writing, drawing, and telling their own stories.”

By visiting a Title I school in each state, Swanson and Behr (the products of Title I schools themselves) hope to bring books and creative learning opportunities to historically underserved communities and highlight the heroic work of public educators.

Swanson and Behr will also work with the departments of education and sociology at Washington College to measure the impact of one-time author visits in Title I elementary schools filling a critical gap in the research on this topic. The data could provide a powerful tool for promoting future literacy programming.

"This sparked an interest in reading that transcended the walls of our classrooms. I am so grateful that CPA was selected for this incredible opportunity," added Richter.

For more information visit the Busload of Books tour [website](#) or contact Principal Wanda Sheats at (843) 720-2960.

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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.