

**For Immediate Release**

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# Media Release

## **D20PCP initiative off to a successful start**

### Office of Communications

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

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**Charleston, SC** – Five principals from the Constituent District 20 schools, located in downtown Charleston, formed a collaboration to strengthen and direct the academic progress of students served in its feeder system of elementary, middle, and high schools. The derivative of this collaboration is now called the District 20 Principal Collaboration Program (D20PCP).

District 20 principals Janice Malone (Sanders-Clyde Elementary School), Amber Sainz (Julian Mitchell Elementary School), Wanda Sheats (Charleston Progressive Academy), Stephanie Spann (Simmons-Pinckney Middle School), and Cheryl Swinton (Burke High School) collectively agreed that addressing the most pressing needs that permeate D20's student population was crucial. Their efforts will not only address the Vision 2027 goal of all students in Charleston County School District (CCSD) reading on grade level by fifth grade but will also engage students in real-world experiences, broadening horizons, and removing barriers to success.

The D20PCP principals identified areas of need that they describe as "the most pressing needs that permeate our student bodies," including academic performance, chronic absenteeism, tardiness, discipline, engaging families, mental and physical health, access to youth-centered activities, and developing positive self-esteem. Another important focus of the collaboration is attracting and retaining excellent teachers and staff to support D20 schools.

The goals designed to address these needs are ambitious. As described by this group of dedicated principals, the proposal gives hope that change can be made for the betterment of D20 students and their families by banning together and creating the chain that overlaps and connects the overall growth of students who come through D20 schools.

"We don't pity our students, we empower our students and their families with the tools and skills needed to break the cycle of poverty and low expectations," said Janice Malone (Sanders-Clyde Elementary School) leader of the principal team.

Through this collaboration, these school leaders are looking forward to sharing measurable outcomes related to improvement. Positive outcomes for all students will be grounded in the collaboration's initiatives of student support, family support, community support, and teacher recruitment, as well as retention. Each positive outcome will, ultimately, support student achievement.

Using ESSER III funding, the principals sought the guidance and expertise of long-time educator and former CCSD Deputy Superintendent, Dr. Barbara Dilligard, to coordinate student and family support systems. The principals of each school have committed to working collaboratively on each of the initiatives outlined in the ESSER III proposal.

In the spirit of collaboration, this partnership has resulted in numerous community and civic organization partnerships. The City of Charleston Recreation Center enabled 18 students to successfully complete a swimming summer camp. The Burke High School Foundation, Inc. purchased school uniforms and other items for D20PCP students. School supplies were donated at two community Back-to-School events (Eastside and Westside parks), and a collaboration was established with the Preservation Society of Charleston to share historical projects on African American contributions to the Charleston area through the D20PCP Heritage School of Knowledge. The Lowcountry Period Project was re-established to provide feminine hygiene products for girls at Simmons-Pinckney and Burke.

One tenet of the collaboration, embedded in the multifaceted work, is that the collaboration will provide students with opportunities and experiences with cultural activities that stretch students' minds and promote social growth. Recently, CCSD Superintendent Don Kennedy accompanied students and teachers to the *Beyond Van Gogh Charleston: The Immersive Experience*.

It's clear that, even in its infancy, D20PCP is having a positive impact. More than 260 students with their teachers and volunteer chaperones attended the *Immersive Experience*. Students expressed great interest and many creative ideas about what they saw and what they learned from this enriching experience.

For more information about this and other uses of ESSER III funding, please visit <https://www.ccsdschools.com/ESSERfunds>.

For more information, contact the Office of Communications at (843) 937-6303.

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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.