

**For Immediate Release**  
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## Media Release

Division of Communications

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Donald R. Kennedy, Sr.  
Superintendent of Schools



**Vanessa Denney**  
Interim Executive Director of Communications

### **Veteran Leader Vanessa Denney to lead CCSD Communications Division**

**Charleston, SC**– Charleston County School District (CCSD) proudly announces Vanessa Denney as Interim Executive Director of the Division of Communications.

A veteran of Charleston County School District, Denney has served CCSD for over 20 years. In that time, she has demonstrated a deep commitment to engaging with partners across the County and to working with students, families, and neighborhoods maintaining a focus on student outcomes.

Until August 2022, Denney served as the founding principal at Early College High School (ECHS) which first opened in 2017. In her tenure as principal, she demonstrated expertise in strategic planning and in bringing to life a vision that led to student success. As the principal, she successfully engaged with families and school communities across the District. The award-winning school provides college access to a diverse group of students, many of whom are first-generation college-goers. On average, 41% of ECHS students graduate with a full Associate's Degree.

During her time at ECHS, Denney coordinated with colleagues at Trident Technical College (TTC) to ensure that students had access to widely transferable college courses. She collaborated with colleagues from within CCSD, TTC, and with The College of Charleston School of Health Education and Human Performance in partnership to offer the Teach Local program, an

initiative devoted to igniting a passion for teaching among ECHS students and building future teachers for CCSD.

Denney has experience leading highly successful teams. At ECHS, she built a team of talented educators that propelled students to break barriers, realizing their academic potential. The only two graduating classes each boast 100% graduation rates with all graduates meeting South Carolina College and Career Ready indicators. Since ECHS's inception, collectively, the students have earned over 9,000 transferable college credits, and have outpaced the State on End of Course (EOC) exam results. ECHS is designated a National AVID Schoolwide Site of Distinction and was the recipient of the 2021 InnoVision Award, honoring innovation in education in South Carolina.

In 2018 Denney spearheaded efforts that led to the award of a \$595,476 Preparing College- and Career-Ready Graduates Grant benefitting EHCS students and funding support through AVID, summer enrichment and college visits.

Denney's leadership has been important in engaging with students, parents, community members, and a team of professionals to design and pave the way for construction of the new Early College High School support building set to open in 2024 located in the historic Eastside community of Charleston.

Denney is passionate about serving students from all backgrounds. She began her teaching career as a 7th grade Social Studies teacher, department chair, and grade-level chair at R.D. Schroder Middle School in Hollywood, SC. Next, she became an Instructional Coach and Administrator at Alice Birney Middle School in North Charleston. In an instructional leadership role at Burke High School, she then worked with educators and provided experiences that forged students' paths to college and careers. As the Secondary Learning Community (SLC) Career and Technology Education (CTE) Coordinator, she engaged local business partners in the creation of opportunities for CCSD students at three high schools: Burke, St. John's, and RB Stall—resulting in each school earning 100% Work-based Learning rates during Denney's tenure from 2012-14. While an Assistant Principal at North Charleston High School (NCHS), she expanded CTE offerings to include the addition of four new CTE completer pathways. Her work as the Graduation Rate Team Chairperson from 2014-16 resulted in a 12.46% increase in NCHS's graduation rate.

About her joining the Strategy team, Superintendent Donald Kennedy said, "We are fortunate to have someone with the leadership abilities and expertise of Ms. Denney to work with us centrally. Her successful background, creating systems of continuous improvement focused on student outcomes and communicating with all stakeholders to do so, will be a tremendous asset to our Communications team. Given her diverse experience in CCSD, and her knowledge of what communities need to know in order to be able to support schools and students at high levels, I am confident she will be able to collaborate, communicate, and strategically plan with teams for improved student outcomes for all students."

Denney holds a bachelor's degree in Elementary Education from The College of Charleston, a Master of Education in Elementary Administration, and a certificate in Secondary Administration, both from The Citadel. She also holds a Certificate in Education Finance from Georgetown University. In 2022, she was recognized as an Alumna of the Year from the School of Education, Health, and Human Performance at the College of Charleston.

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

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#### **About the Charleston County School District**

Charleston County School District (CCSD), a nationally-accredited school district, is the second largest school system in South Carolina representing a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 87 schools and specialized programs. With approximately 6,100 employees district-wide, CCSD is the fourth largest employer in the region.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, charter, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), and Montessori schools, and is divided into three Learning Communities. Options include specialized programs in science, engineering and mathematics; liberal arts; music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military and other public service enterprises.