



**Memminger Elementary  
School**

**For Immediate Release**

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## Media Release

### Kory Roberts named Top Five Teacher of the Year Finalist

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

**Karolyn Belcher**  
Chief Academic Officer

**Michelle Simmons**  
Associate Superintendent of  
Elementary Learning Community

**Dottie Brown**  
Principal

**Charleston, S.C.** – Kory Roberts is only a third year teacher, but already a leader among his colleagues at Memminger Elementary School and in Charleston County School District (CCSD). He was named a finalist for Teacher of the Year and plans to use the opportunity as a platform to find solutions to address teachers' needs.

According to Principal Dottie Brown, Roberts is a consummate professional.

"From head to toe, he epitomizes the highest expectations of his profession," said Brown. "He inspires students and makes them believe in themselves."

Roberts, a College of Charleston (CofC) graduate, teaches fifth grade at Memminger. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, participated in the "Call Me Mister" program (CCSD's Summer residency program), served as a teacher leader in Summer Enrichment Camps, and is a Boys With a Purpose Advocate.

Roberts gives of his time freely, often serving on boards and organizations whose purpose is to lift up students of poverty in high-risk situations. He is frequently asked to serve on committees and has been instrumental in teacher recruitment efforts. Roberts has also held a position on the CCSD Teacher Cabinet and is a 2021 Planning Committee Member for CCSD's Summer Enrichment Program.

"The most distinguishing characteristic possessed by Mr. Roberts is his ability to connect," said Brown. "He is a person to whom others are immediately drawn. His relationships with families are equally impressive. In any group, he distinguishes himself and stands out. He holds himself to a high standard."

The fifth grade math and social studies teacher comes from a long line of educators. Roberts' father is a principal and his mother is a guidance counselor. Their experiences and stories about their profession inspired him to follow in their footsteps.

"When you have a gift, I say use it," said Roberts. "I can't see a profession better suited for me. I love connecting with students and watching them grow. I also

came to this profession because I want to see it grow, change, and blossom into something even better than what I remember it as growing up."

Roberts found his passion in his sophomore year at CofC when CCSD, working hand-in-hand with CofC, put him in a position to volunteer at Memminger. Once he began student teaching, he was sold on the idea of his future as an educator.

"The program connected us with potential careers and introduced us to CCSD district officials who we would one day work alongside," said Roberts. "I left CofC feeling confident about where I would be one day."

Even after three years, his professors and mentors at CofC check in on him to offer support and guidance.

"Often, we enter our chosen work fields feeling alone, like we have to navigate it by ourselves," said Roberts. "Thanks to CofC, the resources I needed, and still rely on, are abundant. This enables me to better focus on my work as an educator."

Roberts wants students to walk away from his classroom with the confidence that someone believes in them and is rooting for them. He also wants them to believe in themselves so that they can be the best version of themselves.

"My goal has always been to help create a school environment that feels like a second home to kids; a place where we want to see everyone succeed," said Roberts. "That is why I find it vital to make each student at Memminger feel welcomed, appreciated, and seen."

Roberts said that because education is an ever-evolving process, the flexibility to pivot is crucial.

"My education at CofC taught me some critical components," said Roberts. "I came to this career with a listening foundation. Listening is the most important part of communication and that enables me to teach to the whole child."

Memminger is a very special place for Roberts. His students remind him of his younger self.

"I often get told that I am a student's favorite teacher, or the best teacher, ever," said Roberts. "Nothing makes me the best teacher above my colleagues. I have learned that when I receive a compliment like that it is because I was the best teacher at that moment for that student."

Connections and bonds with students and their families are incredibly important to Roberts. He forges them with intention. The same goes for relationships with his colleagues.

Roberts said that teachers have the power to make a change when they are trusted and given the chance to do what they are meant to do.

"Teachers [can] use their talents and gifts to shed a light on making this world be a brighter place to live in," added Roberts. "I am beyond proud to be a teacher and everyone in the profession deserves to feel the same."

Roberts was overwhelmed to learn he was a Top Five Finalist.

"The real joy comes from seeing how proud my Memminger family was of me," said Roberts. "We all won because I will represent the school and the profession as a whole. It is an extreme honor to be a voice for my fellow teachers. I hope I can serve as an inspiration to my colleagues, as well."

In addition to using the Top Five Teacher of the Year finalist platform to find proper solutions to address teachers' needs, Roberts would also like to use this opportunity to represent the overshadowed and the discounted, and not only represent them but teach them as well.

"The impact I have on students, big or small, gives me purpose," said Roberts. "My purpose is to push students to be the best they can be."