

For Immediate Release

April 21, 2022

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Media Release

First Men of CHS Teach candidates now in CCSD classrooms

Division of Strategy and
Communications

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Charleston, SC - Charleston County School District (CCSD) is committed to building a diverse teacher workforce as part of its mission to prepare all students to be global citizens. High-retention alternative teaching pathways have been created to attract diverse teacher candidates. The first-year program, Men of Charleston (CHS) Teach, is among them.

CCSD's Division of Human Resources launched Men of CHS Teach in January to recruit male teachers of color for teaching positions in early childhood and elementary education. Recently, CCSD partnered with the University of South Carolina to provide support via the Carolina Collaborative for Alternative Preparation program. That partnership has been the springboard for CCSD's Men of CHS Teach.

Ja'Quan Evans is among the first candidates recruited for this program. He graduated from Benedict College in December with a degree in Psychology. However, Evans learned about CCSD's Men of CHS Teach at a career fair at his school. Apprehensive about a future career with a degree in Psychology, Evans said he saw the program as an opportunity - both for a productive, rewarding career and as a way to give back. He noted he didn't have a Black male teacher until he went to college.

After graduating from college, Evans entered Men of CHS Teach in January and started teaching kindergarten at E.B. Ellington Elementary School. He finds the program expeditious and supportive. The Blythwood native takes education courses online at the University of South Carolina while being mentored by experienced Black male teachers in the Charleston area.

"I was a little hesitant at first," Evans said. "However, I love seeing the children's excitement. I'm blessed and thankful for this opportunity and recommend the program to anyone who has a passion for teaching."

The importance of Men of CHS Teach

The number of individuals entering the teaching profession continues to dwindle nationwide, said April Butler, CCSD's Human Resources Department's Director of Pathways to Teaching.

Nearly half of CCSD's approximately 49,000 students are people of color. However, only four percent of the district's 3,600 certified educators are men of color; most teach at the middle or high school level.

Eric Stallings, a Pathways to Teaching support staff member, knows the importance of minority males in classrooms.

"I didn't see people who looked like me teaching in classrooms," said Stallings. "That motivated me to pursue a degree in education and become a teacher."

Stallings graduated from the College of Charleston and eventually taught English at Baptist Hill Middle High School. In fact, he was a CCSD Teacher of the Year finalist in 2017. Now he works at the district level, trying to recruit and support teachers.

Men of CHS Teach offers incentives to augment that kind of motivation and success. Candidates start the program as co-teachers with the benefit of earning full teachers' salaries. Butler emphasized that graduates with a bachelor's degree in any major and expectant graduates also are eligible to participate in the program. The program also looks for men of color who perhaps may want to change careers.

Butler wants to connect with as many candidates as possible. The program is reaching out to churches, barbershops, shopping malls, fraternities and sororities, and traditional venues such as college campuses and through newspapers and media outlets to identify candidates. Five candidates have already been recruited. Butler hopes to recruit 15 more by August.

State recognition

CCSD's Pathways to Teaching team was invited by the University of South Carolina (UofSC) to a Residency Exploration meeting on March 24-25, 2022. The invitation allowed the team to meet with partners from UofSC and Voorhees, representatives from state agencies such as the Commission for Higher Education, and human resources personnel from districts across the state. The time was centered around the work of alternative certification programs and residencies.

CCSD was commended for the innovative and intentional development of certification pathways (i.e., Men of CHS Teach, Classified to Certified, etc.) that provide increased opportunities which address the teacher shortage and diversity of its certified teaching staff.

"Teacher residencies like Men of CHS Teach offer one of the best district human capital investments imaginable," said Karen DeMoss, Executive Director of

Prepared to Teach. "The profound impact that Men of CHS Teach will have on the district by virtue of their status as teachers who look like the students they serve will be immeasurable, including long-term educational outcomes for the district's students succeeding in high school and attending college."

Financial benefits

Despite proclaimed low teacher salaries in South Carolina, starting pay for CCSD teachers with a bachelor's degree is about \$41,000 annually paid across 12 months – including unobligated summer breaks.

Teacher salaries increase with years of experience and advanced degrees obtained. Also, teachers are paid for performing other jobs in addition to teaching. The average CCSD teacher earns about \$60,000 annually. And as state employees, CCSD teachers receive significant benefits as well.

Butler said that as the state's second-largest school district, opportunities abound for CCSD teachers. For men of color looking for a great career, looking to change careers, or looking to change a child's life, CCSD's Men of CHS Teach represents vast opportunities.

Having two committed educators during the initial year in the classroom helps bridge learning opportunity gaps that COVID-19 exacerbated, improving student outcomes. Graduates of Men of CHS Teach will be prepared to accelerate student learning, which saves the district remediation costs and sets the youth of Charleston up for success. The training will also help the candidates avoid some of the first-year challenges many young teachers face, increasing retention and potentially saving the district roughly \$20,000 in turnover costs for each Men of CHS Teach graduate.

For information about Men of CHS Teach, contact April Butler, Charleston CCSD's Director of Pathways to Teaching, at (843) 937-6493.

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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.