



For Immediate Release
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Media Release

Culinary students from Wando clean up at state competitions

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Mount Pleasant, SC – Five Wando Warriors are on their way to the Family, Career and Community of Leaders of America (FCCLA) National Leadership Conference after two successful showings at the state level. Taiye Akinjobi and McKenzie Miller won their events at the state FCCLA conference in North Charleston on March 11, 2022, while Alex Henderson, Maggie Newton, and Darya Zlati advanced thanks to their performances on March 25, 2022, at the Culinary Institute of the South in Bluffton.

Akinjobi and Miller took home the gold in their respective STAR (Students Taking Action with Recognition) Events. Akinjobi finished first in Chapter Service Project Display, and Miller won the Career Investigation competition.

"The conference was amazing," explained Akinjobi. "I learned about how to be a leader. I was so honored to have shown my work to judges that hadn't seen it. I am very proud of my product and I am very blessed that I was able to do this amazing project for the student body."

During the competition in Bluffton, Newton placed first in Baking and Pastry, while Zlati and Henderson won both first and second place, respectively, in the Culinary competition (prepared an entrée). Blake Bynum completed the award-winning day for Wando with his runner-up finish in Culinary Arts.

The National Leadership Conference (NLC) for FCCLA, which includes the Culinary Competition, will be in San Diego, CA from June 28 through July 4, 2022.

"As a 10-year member and alum of FCCLA, it is so fun to take on this new position as an advisor," said Molly Gordon, Wando's Chef Instructor. "Seeing my students excel with their STAR Events brings me so much happiness and nostalgia. I remember my first NLC and how much fun I had on the trip with my advisor. I cannot wait to take my students to San Diego and bring gold home to South Carolina. Most importantly, they will come back to the Lowcountry with state-of-the-art leadership experience."

STAR Events allow members to compete at the region/district, state, and national levels so they can be recognized for proficiency and achievement in chapter and

individual projects, leadership skills, and career preparation. STAR Events allow students to compete individually or as a team. There are more than 30 STAR Events students can choose to compete in, all of which recognize participants who demonstrate their knowledge, skills, and abilities to actively identify an issue concerning families, careers, or communities, research the topic, and develop and implement a project to advocate for positive change.

"I feel like [the state competition] went really well and I met some amazing people that were nothing but supportive and happy for me," added Miller. "I am so excited to go to nationals and see not only the beautiful city of San Diego, but also get to meet even more talented people."

For more information, contact Molly Gordon, at molly_gordon@charleston.k12.sc.us.

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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.