

For Immediate Release

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Media Release

Charleston County schools receive support from Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries

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Charleston, SC – Jane Edwards Elementary School and Murray-LaSaine Montessori School were named as two of the 205 schools from 43 states across the country to receive a grant through the Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries. Both schools received \$5,000.

Laura Bush joined Kelly Clarkson on "The Kelly Clarkson Show" last month to announce that the Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries awarded more than \$1 million in library grants this year.

The grant recipients' school library collections are outdated, averaging approximately 20 years old. The school libraries will use the funds to update their collection and offer more book titles.

"There are many students who don't have books at home, so having access to a library at school is essential," Bush said. "With the grants, school libraries across the nation can restock and update their collections providing opportunities for students for years to come.

Murray-LaSaine teacher-librarian Elizabeth Ryan said the money will be used to update the fiction collection, replaced worn copies, and update book topics to reflect the school's diverse student population and community.

"We will focus on providing stories that teach acceptance and that celebrate our differences," said Ryan. "We will be sure to include global views and traditions in the books we acquire. This will include updated fairy tales that depict accurate representations. We will add more books so students will know they are seen, accepted, and supported."

Grant money for Jane Edwards will be spent on similar updates to the school's library collection. Teacher-librarian Stephanie Smith said that areas of need include books for early readers, books that showcase the arts, and books that represent people and characters who are typically underrepresented in both nonfiction and literature.

"These under-representations include, but are not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental disabilities, social class, and spiritual practices," said Smith. "Sadly, these weaknesses in our library collection trickle down and create gaps in our students' learning. With the stress of COVID-19, our students are having to learn how to cope in a way many of them have never had to before. Books can help them with that."

Bush also revealed her 2021 summer reading list, which includes recommendations for young readers through middle school. Selections highlight books focused on diversity, inclusion and kindness; and the list features a title by the late Beverly Cleary.

"The summer reading list is a great resource for parents and caregivers," Bush said. "As libraries open back up all over our country, I hope children will take the list to their local library and borrow each of the featured titles. It is so important that all kids keep reading over summer break."

Grant applications for the 2021-2022 school year will open in late 2021. Visit www.bushcenter.org to learn more.

To learn more, about the Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries visit www.BushCenter.org. For more information on these grants and CCSD schools that have [previously been awarded the grant](#), contact the Division of Strategy and Communication at (843) 937-6603.

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The Laura Bush Foundation

The Laura Bush Foundation for America's Libraries supports school libraries with the greatest needs with the goal of encouraging all students to develop a love of reading and learning. Since its inception in 2002, it has awarded more than \$16 million to more than 2,800 schools across the country. The Laura Bush Foundation is managed as a restricted fund at the George W. Bush Presidential Center in Dallas, Texas. More information can be found at www.bushcenter.org.---George W. Bush Institute Housed within the George W. Bush Presidential Center, the George W. Bush Institute is an action-oriented, nonpartisan, policy organization with the mission of developing leaders, advancing policy, and taking action to solve today's most pressing challenges. Through three Impact Centers —Domestic Excellence, Global Leadership, and an Engagement Agenda—the Bush Institute delivers measurable results that save and improve lives.

About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally-accredited school district that is 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 more than 50,000 students in 87 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.