



**For Immediate Release**

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## Media Release

### **Candace Bare named CCSD Top-5 Teacher of the Year Finalist**

**Ladson Elementary School**

**Gerrita Postlewait, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent of Schools

**Karolyn Belcher**  
Chief Academic Officer

**Michelle Simmons**  
Associate Superintendent  
Elementary Learning Community

**Janet Brown**  
Principal

**Charleston, SC** – Being named a [2021 Top-5 Teacher of the Year Finalist](#) in Charleston County School District meant everything to Candace Bare. She has been an educator for 22 years and sees this honor as an opportunity to put Ladson Elementary School on the map. She also hopes to shine a light on all physical education (PE) teachers and the important work that they do.

Bare always knew she wanted to be a teacher. She comes from a family of educators. After a winding road through college, she received her Bachelor of Science in Education and her Master of Arts from Western Michigan University. Her love of children and sports led her to choose to teach PE.

Wherever Bare has taught, she is loved by everyone.

According to Principal Janet Brown Bare develops relationships with students with ease and those relationships are strong, beyond that of a typical teacher.

“In the morning, she opens car doors and greets every student by name – and we have over 500 students in-person right now,” said Brown. “Most of them run to her for a hug or high five. Her relationships with students are such that every student wants to make her proud. The impact she has on children academically and emotionally makes them excited to be at school and when students feel safe and loved and have just one trusted adult in their lives they are able to grow in all areas. Coach Bare has been that one adult in many of our students’ lives.”

Bare has worked in public schools, inner city schools, Montessori schools, and private schools. When Bare and her wife Amy moved to the Lowcountry in 2010, she found a position at a local private school. Two years ago she applied with Charleston County School District (CCSD) and was thrilled to be selected to teach at Ladson.

“Candace Bare improves the teaching profession simply by being a part of it,” said Brown. “What she brings to our students and our school cannot be measured. She brings passion, positivity, compassion, energy, excitement, humor and so much more to work with her every day.”

This year was quite different for teachers, especially PE teachers. Bare is teaching seven rotations with two being virtual. She had to think outside the box but is mostly able to have her virtual students do the same things as her in-person students. During the pandemic she connected with teachers around the world to share ideas on how to teach PE. Bare said it is a 30 minute, non-stop class that keeps the student's moving.

"When Coach Bare teaches, she is not just teaching her students the skills necessary to play sports or simply pass PE," said Brown. "It is clear that she is teaching them the skills necessary to be successful in life and PE is merely her mechanism for doing so. She treats her virtual students the same as her in-person students and whether they are in-person or not they are expected to get up and move."

Bare said that her colleagues are her village.

"I would not be where I am without their cross-collaboration," said Bare. "We are so bonded, especially this year. It has not been easy but we keep each other going and check in on each other."

This year, Bare has also taken on the added responsibility of staff fitness by starting a staff walking club. According to Brown, Coach Bare's greatest contribution to the profession, students, and community is the way that she cares deeply for everyone she comes in contact with.

"As teachers we all care about the children and families we work with but with Coach Bare it's just different," said Brown. "What Coach Bare brings may not be tangible or measurable but you only have to see her in action to realize she is so much more than just a PE teacher."

Bare is empathetic to her students, never dismissing a child because of their behavior. She truly believes in finding out why a child is struggling and figuring out what can be done to help. As a result, she has earned the trust of the students and she is the teacher they dart to in the hall for a hug. Bare is the teacher they seek out at recess to walk circles around the bus loop just to be in her presence.

PE class has evolved through the years and now incorporates grade level standards into the lessons of sportsmanship and skill.

When Coach Bare calls on students to lead warm-ups, she talks to them about their leadership skills. She teaches physical flexibility and dexterity along with the rules of a game while at the same time teaching problem solving, conflict resolution, and the parts of the body. She has taught colors and shapes with hula hoops and jump ropes, and has even incorporated math facts into her lessons. She works with teachers to determine what their current topic of study is and looks at grade-level standards to integrate with her own.

"When students go to PE they are certain to grow not only in their physical education but academically as well," said Brown. "It is truly amazing to watch as it all unfolds within the confines of one 45-minute lesson."

Bare is looking forward to representing her colleagues across the district as she serves on the CCSD Teacher Roundtable. She hopes to motivate fellow teachers to ask questions and voice their opinions.

"Those opinions are fresh ideas and should be shared," said Bare. "I am looking forward to being heard and able to express ideas that will be valued. I am also looking forward to being a voice for the PE department."

Bare said the opportunity to represent the school is beyond measure.

"This honor was the icing on the cake for me," said Bare. "If I never earn or do anything else, this will remain one of the most mind-blowing things that could happen to me. It means everything and I am grateful and thankful. I'm just so humbled."

For more information, contact the school at (843) 764-2225

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#### **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.