



**For Immediate Release**  
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## Media Release

### **Dunston Poetry Club students enter MUSC competition**

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Elementary School**

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Superintendent of Schools

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**Charleston, SC** – Last month, Matilda F. Dunston Elementary School’s media specialist, Eliza Bailey, taught several poetry lessons and challenged her students to write poetry by personifying a word. This technique enabled the most reluctant poet to come out of his shell. In the midst of the poetry unit, Bailey received an email about the MUSC’s 3rd Annual Septima Clark Poetry Contest. Not thinking more than a handful of students would be interested, she casually mentioned the contest and directed students to a signup sheet. Forty-five students expressed interest in entering the contest. Bailey scheduled students to come to the library during their recess and lunch, which led to the creation of Dunston’s Poetry Club.

The Poetry Club exposed students to a myriad of resources. They learn how to use a thesaurus, rhyme zone, express their thoughts in Google Docs, and share ideas with Bailey. Of the 45 students initially enrolled, 33 completed their poems, which were entered into the MUSC’s Septima Clark Poetry Contest.

The Septima Clark contest is statewide. Bailey acknowledges that the competition will be stiff.

“We are keeping our fingers crossed one of our students will be a contender in MUSC’s poetry contest,” said Bailey. “The students learned to brainstorm, expand their vocabulary, write, rewrite, and edit in order to complete poems. Whether or not they win, believing in themselves, starting something and finishing it is its own reward.”

Bailey also held an in-house contest at school.

“I asked three teachers to read the poems and choose the top three,” said Bailey. “From that list, we selected the grade level winners. The top three poems from students in each grade level were celebrated. Those winners received prizes, and the entire club was rewarded with a pizza party.

The following students placed in Dunston’s poetry competition:

**Third Grade**

Nathaniel Read  
Saria Aikens  
Yesenia Zavaleta Osorio

**Fourth Grade**

Jessyree Manuel- Santiago  
Lonnashia Smalls  
Ryleigh Brown

**Fifth Grade**

Estefani Rivera Garcia  
Kamori Jenkins  
Kevin Ramirez-Valazquez

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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.