

**For Immediate Release**

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## Media Release

### **Pulse of CCSD – Rodney Simmons keeping students and staff ‘plugged in’**

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**Charleston, SC** – Charleston native Rodney Simmons was drawn to the field of information technology because of the ever evolving nature of it. What he didn't anticipate was how the day to day operations would change in his position as Field Support Supervisor with Charleston County School District (CCSD).

Simmons supports technicians that go out to the school to manage day to day user interface devices, customer trouble shooting, maintenance, repairs and new project roll outs.

A new normal was created when a mandatory shutdown of schools was ordered by the governor. Learning and educating could not stop so his team worked with department heads across CCSD to provide distance learning opportunities for every student such as issuing Chromebooks for every scholar. His team worked around the clock to ensure all students were given equal access to learning.

"We've distributed more Chromebooks and iPads than ever before," said Simmons. "Wi-Fi buses are new and that idea pushed our team to think outside of the box. We all quickly learned how to deal with social distancing and staying safe, as well as keeping the students safe when they came by for a repair. We're being safe, but being helpful so this was just a bend - not a break for my team."

Simmons was born and raised in the heart of downtown Charleston. After graduating from college he did some freelance work in commercial graphics and eventually secured a position as a network technician at SRC (Scientific Research Corp) where he worked his way through the ranks to lead supervisor.

Simmons has held various positions at major corporations over the years. He loves his industry, but his true passion is coaching childhood sports. Over the last 20 years Simmons has coached hundreds of kids and today, gets to coach his own son.

"My passion is for kids," said Simmons. "I always wanted to be a teacher but life took me in a different direction. It is not, however a coincidence, that I am now working for CCSD which allows me to serve children. I went from just having a job to having a career that is fulfilling and has purpose."

The COVID19 Pandemic in essence, fast-tracked the expansion of technology, Simmons explained.

"I enjoy the challenge of coming up with new ideas and concepts and making those things fit," said Simmons. "In recent months, we have had to make adjustments like moving learning to their homes and bringing the technology to do that to them in some cases."

It is the goal of the District to provide students with the best technology and experience possible and to meet the needs of all students across the district.

"We are a leader in technological offerings considering the size of our district," said Simmons. "We are making great strides to get ahead of the curve with Tom Nawrocki at the helm. Corona virus sped that up by getting every child a device. We were originally doing that in stages but suddenly we had to do it all at the same time. We had good team and a good foundation to make that happen."

Simmons described it as a 'bend but not break' mentality.

"It could have easily flopped but we got over the speed humps and kept on going from there," said Simmons.

Nawrocki called Simmons a natural leader.

"He is admired and appreciated by so many by his humble and determined approach," said Nawrocki. "He always serves with a smile. He is a great father, coaches many youth activities, and prefers to remain strong from the background. He lets others shine, rather than being in the limelight. A true pleasure to be around."

Judy Wyndham, Director of Customer Support for CCSD is Simmons' immediate supervisor. Simmons said that she puts her team in positions that allow them to be innovative.

"A great supervisor gets a great core group of people together," said Simmons. "It takes talent to recognize talent and not limit those on these team from looking for opportunities."

Simmons is grateful for the technicians he works alongside and believes they should get the credit for getting out there and putting themselves in harm's way.

"It's just been an amazing experience, overall," said Simmons. "We were faced with a challenge and our team came through and continues to do so."

"Rodney is committed to all things good," said Wyndham. "He's part of a great team that shares responsibilities for the leadership of the IT field support work. He leads with kindness, thoughtfulness, integrity, and a healthy dose of humor."

Challenges bring the opportunity to flourish and Simmons and his wife Simone, who is a mental health therapist for the state, stationed at West Ashely high school, have committed their lives to giving back to children. With three children of their own, they know first-hand how important it is.

Whether at the forefront or behind the scenes service to children is what drives the Simmons.

"I like to see children win," said Simmons. "I am a volunteer coach and I want to see kids win on the field, or the court, but more importantly in life. It does me some good to see kids I coached at 5 years old and now in college or beginning careers. They are flourishing because they had people in their lives, not just me, that cared about them. I liken that to the work we do with CCSD. We're a whole team of people that care for these kids."

"He never wants to take the spotlight and always shares credit for successes with his team," said Wyndham. "He's rock solid and his teammates enjoy his 'make it happen' attitude. Rodney's willingness to take on the IT Repair bus program has been crucial to the support we've provided for students and staff during the closure."

*Deepest Fear*

*We are all meant to shine,  
As children do.  
We were born to make manifest  
The glory of God that is within us.*

*It's not just in some of us;  
It's in everyone.  
And as we let our own light shine,  
We unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.  
As we're liberated from our own fear,  
Our presence automatically liberates others.*

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#### **About the Charleston County School District**

Charleston County School District (CCSD), a nationally-accredited school district, is the second largest school system in South Carolina representing 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. With approximately 6,100 employees district-wide, CCSD is the fourth largest employer in the region.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, charter, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), and Montessori schools, and is divided into three Learning Communities. Options include specialized programs in science, engineering and mathematics; liberal arts; music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military and other public service enterprises.