



CHARLESTON COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT

YEAR IN
REVIEW

2020-2021



INTRODUCTION



Gerrita Postlewait
Superintendent of Schools
Charleston County School District

Dear Charleston County School District Families, Educators, and Community Members:

Throughout a second school year during a global pandemic, our students, teachers, staff, and families demonstrated great strength, courage, and perseverance as we once again navigated the unknowns of COVID-19 and its impacts on our lives and community.

Despite the challenges of COVID, our district experienced many moments of celebration beginning with the opening of five new facilities for the 2020-2021 school year- Lucy Beckham High School, Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies, C.E. Williams Middle School South, Camp Road Middle School, and North Charleston's District 4 Regional Stadium. Additionally, it learned that the Class of 2020's SAT results improved from fifth to third in the state and remained above the national average despite last year's learning disruptions.

The Class of 2020 also boasted a record high of 24 National Merit Scholarship recipients and one of the state's two U.S. Presidential Scholars. For the second year in a row, Academic Magnet High School was ranked the second-best high school in the nation according to U.S. News and World Report, keeping the school in the nation's top two high schools over the last three years. Jerry Zucker Middle School and Laing Middle School also received national distinction for their commitment to creating social-emotional wellbeing and relationship-driven culture on school campuses as Flip Flippen Capturing Kids Hearts National Showcase Schools for the fourth and second year in a row, respectively.

The district was also the recipient of a five-year grant worth \$12 million for cultural competency training from the U.S. Department of Education with the goal of creating a culturally competent learning environment that adapts to and values diversity and institutionalized cultural knowledge. Six schools including Charleston Charter School for Math and Science, James Island Charter High, Morningside Middle, Moultrie Middle, Thomas C. Cario Middle, and Wando High were named Distinguished Schools by Project Lead the Way (PLTW) for their commitment to increasing student access, engagement, and achievement in their PLTW programs, and the district's Early College High School (ECHS) hosted its inaugural graduation ceremony with its first class of graduates earning 29 associate's degrees, 3,149 transferable college credits, and a 100% on-time graduation rate. The school also earned a national Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Schoolwide Site of Distinction award given to a select few schools in the nation for their extensive commitment to providing students with ample college preparation and supportive resources.

With a commitment to grow its own, CCSD hosted its inaugural signing day for students in its Teach Local program at ECHS designed to provide high school students with training to become a teacher, support to attend a college and earn a degree in education, and ultimately return to CCSD as an educator. The district embarked on an additional unique higher-education partnership with the College of Charleston to launch a Scholars Academy program where students can accumulate up to two years of college credits with successful completion of Advanced Placement exams and dual enrollment at two high schools. A CCSD principal was also the recipient of the Order of the Palmetto, the state's highest civilian honor, for his extraordinary efforts to support his students and their families.

The collective efforts of our community and stakeholders enabled CCSD to serve as a nationwide K-12 public school leader and model for physically and virtually opening its doors for instruction and safely serving students in-person throughout the entire school year. Thank you to every teacher, parent, leader, partner, and child who made this a possibility in a year of what felt like endless impossibilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gerrita Postlewait". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Gerrita Postlewait
Superintendent of Schools

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CELEBRATION



Jeremiah Benton, a junior at Academic Magnet, restored this 95 year old sewing machine (*left*); Sewing machine featured in display (*right*)

AMHS student refurbishes sewing machine and donates to SOA

A junior at Academic Magnet High School (AMHS) and his father had the opportunity to spend some quality time together working on an unlikely project.

Jeremiah Benton and his father Eugene were gifted a 1926 sewing machine by Mount Pleasant resident Shari Sebuck. The sewing machine belonged to her grandmother, Inez Ethel Arbogast Trent (born February 4, 1909), who was from a coal-mining town in St. Albans, WV. The sewing machine has a storied history.

“My grandmother used that sewing machine to sew anything and everything,” said Sebuck. “She sewed all of the family’s clothing, the bedding, and even the draperies. They were not a wealthy family, so the sewing machine was considered a necessity, not a luxury. It was utilitarian. My mom and her sisters would all switch dresses so people would think they had more clothes, and they did the same with shoes because they got one pair a year.”

Sebuck treasures the machine because it belonged to her grandmother but wanted to pass it on to someone who might use it and extend its useful life.



Shari Sebuck’s grandmother
Inez Ethel Arbogast Trent
(*seated*)

The Sebucks have known the Bentons for years. Eugene assisted Sebuck in cleaning out a storage unit after her mother’s death, and that is when they discovered the forgotten sewing machine. It occurred to Sebuck that Eugene and Jeremiah might enjoy refurbishing it. The father and son are known to tinker with various projects, so she offered it to them.

Eugene is not only handy with tools but is known to sew as well. As a volunteer parent at all of his children’s schools through the years, he made sewing repairs to athletic padding and practice jerseys, among other things.

“I already have a few fancy sewing machines because I like making things,” said Eugene. “I like the art of sewing. I learned from my grandparents, who worked in industrial plants around South Carolina. When I saw that sewing machine in the storage unit, I immediately knew how old it was. That’s not to say it wasn’t in good condition. It was in great shape for how old it was.”

Eugene got the sewing machine safely home and tucked it away for a future project. That future project presented itself sooner than later. The COVID-19 pandemic hit, and Charleston went into lockdown. To pass the time, Jeremiah started tinkering with his 3D printer, making N95 masks at the Medical University of South Carolina's request. It was a way for Jeremiah to give back to his community while earning community service hours required for graduation.

In the meantime, Eugene decided to pull out the sewing machine. He began taking it apart and looking at what kind of work would be required to restore it properly. This project piqued Jeremiah's interest.

The pair found the owner's manual in a drawer that dated the machine to 1926. Inside another drawer of the 95-year-old machine was a handwritten letter from Sebuck's mother to her mother (Sebuck's grandmother). There was an old Sears & Roebuck catalog, needle and thread, measuring tape, and buttons. The machine also had all of its original parts.

Jeremiah is a product of Laing Middle School, where he excelled in the STEM curriculum. He had the engineering know-how and all of the necessary tools needed to complete the project.

"The sewing machine was very delicate, so we had to be very careful when cleaning it," said Jeremiah. "It had been in storage for so long that we had to lightly wash the old wood and oil the hinges, especially the pedal. It all still worked perfectly."

"It was a slow process because paint and varnish must dry properly before reassembly," Eugene added. "Jeremiah used his Dremel to sand and polish. We matched the proper polyurethane and stain color for the base and paint color so we could refinish the cast iron base."

The pair used lemon juice to deoxidize some of the metal, which he learned in 7th grade.

"It was neat to put that knowledge to use," said Jeremiah.

The sewing machine is unique, according to Jeremiah, because it is operated by pumping a foot pedal which puts in motion a belt system. The belt is a genuine leather strap.

"We took great care to remove the leather strap for fear it would split or splinter," said Jeremiah. "We didn't want to damage it because you can't replace it with an original part. They're not available anywhere."

Eugene likened this project to those of the ones Jeremiah worked on while a student at Laing.

"It was a hands-on project, all about taking it apart and putting it back together as good as new," said Eugene. "Laing was a dream school for Jeremiah, and it prepared him greatly for Academic Magnet."

"It has been a great pleasure witnessing Jeremiah's service to our community through his skillful projects inspired by his interest in STEM," said AMHS Principal Catherine Spencer. "We at Academic Magnet are thrilled to support his passion

"It has been a great pleasure witnessing Jeremiah's service to our community through his skillful projects inspired by his interest in STEM. We at Academic Magnet are thrilled to support his passion and look forward to his future path!"

– CATHERINE SPENCER, Academic Magnet High School Principal

and look forward to his future path!"

The father and son donated the sewing machine to the costume and fashion design department at Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA), which shares a campus with AMHS.

"We wanted the legacy of Shari's grandmother to live on," said Eugene. "We wanted that legacy to live on through the kids in the fashion design program. We wanted to allow students to see how far technology has come, even with sewing machines. With this old machine, you had to control the needle and thread with your hands. We thought it was a great idea to have students in fashion design see something that was 95-years-old and still in proper working order."

"We are so grateful to receive such a unique piece of history," said Kelly Martin, SOA's costume and fashion design instructor. "It is an amazing way to show students how fashion has evolved and has been impacted by culture, economy, and location. To have something from a local family is an honor. This machine will show my students how past machines worked, how hard one had to work to make garments and how far technology has come."

Martin said part of her curriculum delves into fashion history and understanding the progress the industry has made.

"The first sewing machines made proved to be 40 times faster than what could be done by hand," said Jeremiah.

Jeremiah is interested in sewing himself. He became interested in it almost a year ago as he studied material science

in his mechanical engineering courses.

"I spent five hours sewing a pair of leather gloves," said Jeremiah. "I love fine fabrics and materials."

Jeremiah was also impressed with the sewing machine's beauty, made of dark wood during the industrial age, not long after World War I and the Great Depression.

"It was interesting to be part of that history, even if by simply restoring the piece," said Jeremiah. "It's even nicer to donate this sewing machine to the school to see what SOA does with it."

Jeremiah has a bright future ahead. Colleges such as Clemson University, Columbia University, United States Military Academy West Point, Georgia Tech, MIT, Virginia, Ohio State, and the University of Florida have expressed interest in his attendance. In fact, one of the deans in Clemson's Mechanical Engineering Department helped Jeremiah choose his senior classes.

"If I enroll at Clemson, I will be a sophomore in the Mechanical Engineering program and can get my masters within four years," said Jeremiah. "My dream job would be to work at The Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency or with Space X until I start my own company."

SOA Principal Shannon Cook is appreciative of the gift.

"We at SOA appreciate the gift of this special sewing machine and the care and effort that resulted in its restoration," said Cook. "It has found a place of honor in our hallway where it can be admired and appreciated."



Sewing machine before (left) and after (right)

“Champion Kids” from A.C. Corcoran Elementary

We are the CHAMPIONS! That is exactly what Elijah and Xavier Jackson get to say for MUSC, as they had the great honor of being named Champion Kids for MUSC. These two young scholars from A.C. Corcoran Elementary also participated in the MUSC Cares for Kids radiothon on Kickin 92.5 and Mix 95.9.

Elijah and Xavier, who are also Charleston Miracle Kids for the Children Miracle Network, were 24-week micro-preemies born at MUSC. Eli spent 143 days in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NNICU), and Xavier spent 342 days in NNICU and the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU). Eli made a full recovery and went home in five months with a feeding tube. They removed the feeding tube after three months. Xavier went home with a trach, ventilator, oxygen, and a gastrostomy tube. MUSC told his parents he was one of the sickest babies they ever had. After Xavier went home, he beat the odds and did an amazing job. He had airway surgery in August 2019 and made a miraculous recovery. These two young boys have inspired doctors, residents, nurses, and staff. Mr. and Mrs. Jackson stated they are very proud of their boys' progress.

Xavier's teacher, Lyric Richardson, stated that Xavier Jackson has been in her class for almost two years. When he first started, he was barely using any words, had difficulty sitting in anything other than a rocking chair, and did not enjoy most activities.

“I have had the pleasure of seeing him grow into one of the happiest and most brilliant students I have ever worked with,” said Richardson. “Xavier loves being the calendar helper in our classroom, and his favorite job is to feed our classroom pet

hedgehog. He enjoys reading books, jumping on the sensory trampoline, doing math activities, and dancing. When we choose centers in our classroom, Xavier will always choose puzzles. He especially enjoys completing puzzles that make sounds when you match the piece on the board. Although Xavier's favorite mealtime is breakfast, you can always see the excitement on his face when we have pizza for lunch. He is a caring friend and a joy to have in our classroom. We are fortunate to be his teachers!”

Elijah's teacher, Blakely Peper, said Elijah is with her for a second year at A.C. Corcoran as a half-day student.

“It has been such a joy to see the amount of progress Elijah has made so far,” explained Peper. “He is now communicating his wants and needs using a combination of his low-tech picture communication system and reaching for a teacher's hand for assistance. He has made great strides in his social and emotional skills, as evidenced by his increased eye contact, affection shown for familiar adults and peers, and smiling for pictures. Elijah has a smile and a laugh that are absolutely contagious.”

Peper added Elijah is a fearless risk-taker in the classroom and on the playground. He shows such curiosity for the world around him. He has a true love of music, whether it's playing instruments or listening to his favorite songs, especially “Wheels on the Bus” and “Hickory Dickory Dock.”

Principal Quennetta White and the whole A.C. Corcoran family are so glad to have these two amazing “Champions” at their school!



Elijah and Xavier Jackson named Champion Kids for MUSC

“Donut Stress the test, Do Your Best!”

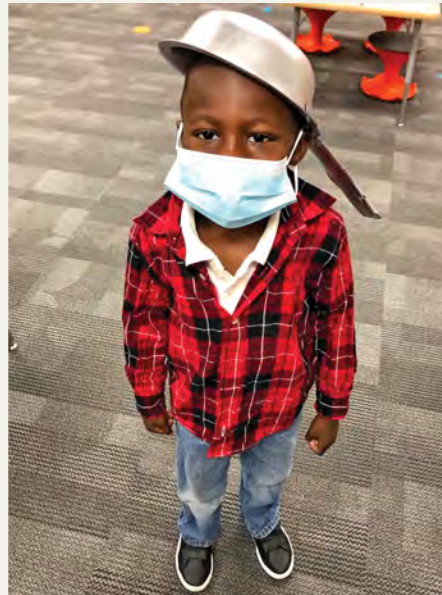


The theme at James Island Elementary Schools was “Donut Stress the test, Do Your Best!” and treated to a Krispy Kreme doughnut and they enjoyed every bite!



Ashley River Creative Arts Elementary School fairy tale parade

The Kindergarteners at Ashley River Creative Arts Elementary School treated the entire school to a fairy tale parade, dressed as their favorite fairy tale characters!



Johnny Appleseed Day at North Charleston CAS

North Charleston Creative Arts Elementary School kindergarten students celebrated Johnny Appleseed Day both virtually and in-person!



Popsicle party

Congratulations to students at Ladson Elementary School who earned a popsicle dance party for good bus behavior. Parents were encouraged to talk to their children about practicing good and safe behaviors on the bus. Drivers awarded the PAWsitve Bus Tickets to students who followed the rules! Every week, 20 names were drawn.

National Custodian Appreciation Day

Angel Oak Elementary School celebrated National Custodian Appreciation Day October 2, 2020. They love Mr. Davis. He works extra hard year-round and is greatly appreciated.



World Down Syndrome Day

Springfield Elementary School celebrated World Down Syndrome Day! In honor of it, many staff and students rocked mismatched socks. When you look DOWN at your feet and see the DIFFERENT socks, remember that we are ALL different and that different is a GOOD thing to CELEBRATE!



DISTRICT CELEBRATES WEEK OF THE YOUNG CHILD

The Week of the Young Child is an annual celebration hosted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children to celebrate early learning, young children, their teachers, and families. This year's celebration marked the 50th anniversary.

Schools across Charleston County School District (CCSD) hosted activities to inspire, encourage, and educate children and their parents in a variety of methods. This year's theme was Step It Up.

At Midland Park Primary, the students and staff cut the ribbon to kick off a week of celebrations.

CCSD Head Start and Early Head Start programs are funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to serve 817 preschool children and 184 infants and toddlers, and pregnant women. Head Start programs are offered at 11 sites throughout Charleston County. Early Head Start is available at 7 of our sites as well as in our home-based option.

End of state testing

Students at Pepperhill Elementary School celebrated the end of state testing with an Olympic ceremony which also marked the end of another successful school year!



James Simons alumni return to inspire students

On June 17, 2021, James Simons Montessori School hosted its 5th Annual Eighth Grade Promotion Ceremony. This year's event included nine honored guests that personify the bonds and relationships created at James Simons.

While James Simons has been in existence for 101 years (the school celebrated its centennial last year), the middle school program is only in its sixth year. The Montessori model at the adolescent level combines seventh and eighth grade in the same classroom. So now, if students attend James Simons from start to finish, they could be there for close to a decade (PreK3 to 8th grade). This was the case for both of the speakers at this year's event, Anareia Coe and Jalen Brown-Singleton. Anareia and Jalen reflected on being a part of the program since their primary years and the ways in which their teachers and classmates have become part of their school family.

Those completing their time at James Simons this year were also asked to reflect on what their biographies will read and sound like. Then the alumni walked down the halls to the Pomp and Circumstance Graduation March and were met with cheers and applause from students and staff throughout the school. Younger scholars made posters and danced along to the graduation march, while the graduating seniors connected with their former teachers and enjoyed being honored by their alma mater. It was a special experience for everyone involved and reminded those in attendance that James Simons will always be home for so many who enter its doors.



EDUCATOR AWARDS

MARSHA NEAL WINS SCHOLARSHIP AND GRANT



Marsha Neal won a \$1500 professional development scholarship

Marsha Neal wins PSTA scholarship

Deer Park Middle School teacher Marsha Neal has been selected as one of ten winners of the 2021 Dr. Elizabeth Gressette Professional Development Scholarship. The scholarship is sponsored by Palmetto State Teachers Association's (PSTA) Foundation for Professional Development and is awarded annually to encourage and support PSTA members in pursuing advanced degrees. Neal is a sixth grade math and science teacher at Deer Park. She is pursuing a Doctorate of Education degree at American College of Education.

The scholarship winners were each awarded \$1,500 and were recognized at the Palmetto State Teachers Association Annual Business Meeting in May.

"We are extremely proud of Ms. Neal and her devotion to lifelong learning," said Shanitra Deas, Principal of Deer Park Middle. "Every day we remind our scholars to put their futures into focus. As we continue to focus on college and career readiness, Ms. Neal provides an example to our scholars that learning never stops."

Deer Park teacher awarded grant from Kappa Delta Pi

Marsha Neal, a sixth grade teacher at Deer Park Middle School, has been awarded a \$150 classroom teacher grant from Kappa Delta Pi, International Honor Society in Education.

Neal, a 24-year veteran in the classroom, will use her funds to provide robotic kits for the after-school robotics program. In the past, Deer Park participated in the LEGO League robotics program. However, with the grant money's help, Deer Park students will now be able to compete in the First Tech Challenge robotics program, which is a higher level of robotics and coding.

Neal submitted a written proposal last fall, describing the classroom project or materials she wanted to provide to her students and how she would allocate the funds. A review committee evaluated all educator proposals and selected the recipients in December 2019.

"This grant is significant to the future robotics program at Deer Park Middle School," said Neal.

"Since we are changing the program for our robotics team, we need to purchase all new robotic kits and supplies. This grant will enable us to purchase some needed equipment and allow the students to compete next

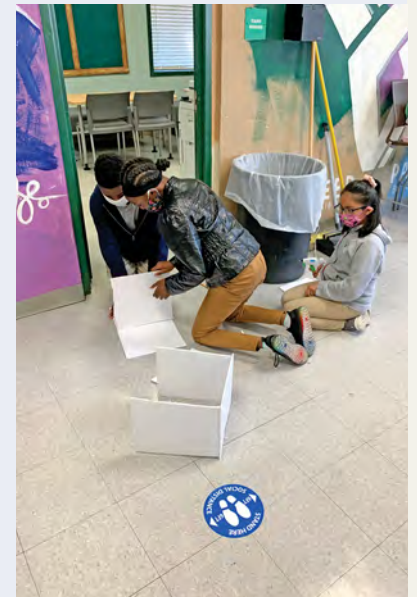
year at a much higher level. I believe all students, regardless of where they attend school, should have every opportunity afforded to them to ensure each student has a chance at a better future."

Kappa Delta Pi believes that a teacher's effectiveness has the most significant impact on students' achievement and learning. As part of its efforts to provide members with tools to be more effective educators, Kappa Delta Pi offers Classroom Teacher Grants. These grants offer members who are practicing teachers with funds to support specific innovative and creative programs or activities at the classroom level. These projects are designed to engage students in the learning process through interactive activities, purchase classroom supplies,

or fund field trips for which school funds aren't available.

Founded in 1911, Kappa Delta Pi, International Honor Society in Education, is a dynamic learning community that maintains memberships for 40,000 pre-service and practicing educators. Kappa Delta Pi recognizes and enhances growth in scholars and leaders. The Society's vision is advanced through:

- Recognizing and confirming the status of scholars and educators to achieve and sustain preeminence in teaching, scholarship, and service;
- Focusing on effectively addressing the needs of members through the phases of their careers as scholars and educators; and
- Providing an energetic, diverse learning community that enhances professional growth through high-quality programs, services, and products.



Marsah Neal's class



Two Northwoods Teachers receive Guiding Light Awards

Ms. Jacksa (sixth Grade Science teacher) – *left* and Ms. Freeman (Chorus teacher) – *right* were both presented with Guiding Light Awards. The Guiding Light Award is presented to first-year teachers who stand out to their Teacher Effectiveness Specialist.

WEST ASHLEY HIGH'S SCHOOL COUNSELORS HONORED BY ASCA

The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) named West Ashley High School's School Counseling Department as a Recognized ASCA Model Program. The distinction exemplifies the commitment of West Ashley High's school counselors to their students as well as the school counseling profession.

The national RAMP designation recognizes schools that are committed to delivering an exemplary school counseling program. RAMP school counseling programs are assessed in 12 different areas of program expertise. Honorees are awarded for aligning their program with the criteria in the ASCA National Model, a framework for a data-informed school counseling program.

Since the program's inception, more than 900 schools have earned the RAMP designation. According to the ASCA, West Ashley High is one of 19 schools to receive this honor this year.

Research findings indicate fully implemented comprehensive school counseling programs are associated with a range of positive student educational and behavioral outcomes.

The school counseling team at West Ashley High set the following four goals for the previous school year that helped lead to their department earning the RAMP designation:

- Increase the graduation rate
- Increase the number students receiving Career and Technology Education completers
- Increase student enrollment in dual credit/enrollment course work
- Decrease student referrals for students related to missing class

"Our school counseling department works tirelessly on behalf of all our students," added Principal Ryan Cumback. "They set lofty yet attainable goals that help our school continue in the right direction. They are an amazing team, and I am honored to work alongside of them."

Eyamba Williams (the school's Director of School Counseling Services), Winifred Caetta, Melissa Estes, Nicole "Jordan" Johnson, Lindsay Johnson-Hansen, Rebecca Kyzer, Perry Metz, and Mary West serve on the school counseling team at WAHS.

"The Department of School Counseling Services and I are proud of the tremendous commitment Ms. Williams and her school counseling team has made to ensure their school counseling program has a positive impact on student achievement and outcomes," said CCSD's Director of School Counseling Services Fronde Stille.



West Ashley HS School Counseling Department

R.B. STALL'S TABYTHA WALLS EARNS NATIONAL RECOGNITION FROM ASBDA FOUNDATION



Tabytha Walls

The American School Band Directors Association Education (ASBDA) Foundation announced that R.B. Stall High School's band director, Tabytha Walls, is a recipient of the prestigious Outstanding Potential Award. This honor recognizes young band directors who show great potential and promise in the field of instrumental music education.

The award was presented by Principal Jeremy Carrick, Charleston County School District (CCSD) Fine Arts Coordinator Dr. Denisse Santos, and Basil Kerr, representative of the South Carolina chapter of the American Band Director's Association.

The Outstanding Potential Award is presented to instrumental music teachers who have had less than five years in teaching, and who have demonstrated initiative and leadership early in their careers. Only one director from each state may be nominated per year for this award. Because of this, recipients are considered among the very

best young band directors in the nation.

"Since Ms. Walls started her teaching career with CCSD, she has been an example of hard work and determination," said Santos. "She has a love for her work and her students, and

has been committed to doing whatever it takes to build a quality music program from the start. Her students love and appreciate her, and work hard to meet her expectations. This award is so well deserved!"

Walls was nominated in 2020 but the presentation was delayed due to the pandemic. There has been no nomination from South Carolina for the current year.

"Ms. Walls has exemplified excellence in the teaching profession," said Carrick. "It is even more exceptional that she has taught at such a high level so early in her career. I am pleased that she has received this award and been recognized for all the hard work and dedication she has shown to her students. The Stall High School community is fortunate to have her investing in our students to develop quality musicians."

The ASBDA is a national organization of elected members, dedicated to promoting quality band education through research, study, promotion, and publication. Their most famous publication, The ASBDA Curriculum Guide, is considered the industry standard curriculum guide used by successful school districts and college music education departments across the nation. Other research published by ASBDA includes studies on music and the brain, music administrator guides, discographies, lesson plans, and other supplemental materials for school band directors and music administrators.

"Tabytha Walls exemplifies the best and brightest of the next generation of outstanding educators," said Kerr. "The Outstanding Potential Award is a reflection of her efforts and the support and encouragement of the school district administration. Her students are lucky to have her."

Lakevia Mills named CCSD 2020 Teacher of the Year



St. John's High School science teacher, Lakevia Mills, served as Charleston County School District's 2020 Teacher of the Year (TOY). She was honored to have been chosen and used the opportunity as Teacher of the Year to express the importance of creating equitable learning environments across the entire district.

FINALISTS FOR 2020 CCSD TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Stephanie Ganacoplos



Dr. Amy Bramblee



Mev McIntosh



Lakevia Mills



Margo Quigley

Mills was selected from over 80 school-based TOYs, and helped lead the CCSD Teacher of the Year Roundtable during the 2020-2021 school year.

Mills followed 2019 honoree Jayuntay Williams.

Mills' interest in teaching was sparked along the way by people who inspired and encouraged her.

Mills teaches Principles of Biomedical Science and the Human Body, along with biology to 9th through 12th graders. She holds a Bachelor of Science and a master's degree in Biology from Virginia State University. She taught in the Charlotte-Mecklenberg Schools from 2014-2017 before joining CCSD six years ago. She serves on the School Improvement Council at St. John's and the Regional Health Advisory Board.

Principal Stephen Larson described Mills as kind, caring, conscientious, and expects the very best for herself and her students.

"Mrs. Mills is St. John's," said Larson. "She is highly regarded among her peers and stands out as a leader in professional learning, collaboration, and attitude. I can't say enough about her, but I'm willing to whenever I'm given the time!"

In addition, Wando High School's Margo Quigley was named Teacher of the Year Runner-Up.

Quigley teaches math to 9th through 12th-grade students at Wando High School (WHS) where she has taught for the last 12 years. She was nominated as Teacher of the Year at WHS two years in a row. She holds a Bachelor of Science in mathematics teaching from Clemson University; a master's degree for teaching for math and science teachers from the College of Charleston; and a Master's in Administration from the University of South Carolina.

Other finalists for 2020 CCSD Teacher of the Year included Dr. Amy Bramble (Ashley River Creative Arts Elementary School), Mev McIntosh (North Charleston High School), and Stephanie Ganacoplos (C.E. Williams Middle School).



"Mrs. Mills is St. John's. She is highly regarded among her peers and stands out as a leader in professional learning, collaboration, and attitude. I can't say enough about her, but I'm willing to whenever I'm given the time!"

— STEPHEN LARSON, St. John's High School Principal

CCSD's Top 5 Finalists for 2021 Teacher of the Year

Charleston County School District (CCSD) officials surprised five unsuspecting teachers by announcing their selection of the Top 5 Finalists for 2021 Teacher of the Year.

The finalists are Coach Candace Bare (PE Teacher) from Ladson Elementary School, Coach Adam "AJ" Barnes (Social Studies Teacher) from West Ashley High School, Abby Best (Third Grade Teacher) from James B. Edwards Elementary School, Kathryn "Katie" Johnston (PLTW Engineering Teacher)

from East Cooper Center for Advanced Studies, and Vicki Klatt (Third Grade Teacher) from St. Andrew's School of Math and Science.

One of those finalists will take over the reigns from the district's current Teacher of the Year, Lakevia Mills, (St. John's High School).

CCSD Superintendent Dr. Gerritta Postlewait presented each finalist with flowers and a certificate. At each stop along the route, live announcements and updates were provided on the District's social media platforms of Facebook and Twitter (@CCSDConnects). Photos from the day can also be found there.



Candace Bare

Candace Bare is in her second year of teaching Physical Education at Ladson Elementary School. Prior to teaching at Ladson she taught at Addestone Hebrew Academy but felt a pull to return to public education. She graduated from Western Michigan University with both her Bachelor's and Master's degree in Physical Education. Coach Bare strives to inspire healthy, active living within every student through both modeling and a personal connection. Her goal is to provide a positive experience that offers students the best opportunity to excel both physically and academically.



AJ Barnes

Adam Barnes is a Social Studies teacher at West Ashley High School. He has eight years of teaching experience, including three years teaching internationally in St. Kitts and Nevis.

Barnes received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History and a Master's Degree in Educational Leadership from Otterbein University. He currently teaches AP European History and US History and serves on the school's leadership and MTSS teams. During the 2020-2021 school year, he spearheaded an effort to provide teachers with a one-stop-shop of digital resources. The goal was to assist them through the complicated process of providing both in-person and virtual instruction during the pandemic. Barnes hosts monthly roundtables that provide teachers with the opportunity to share tips, strategies, and resources with one another to ensure students continue to receive the very best West Ashley High School has to offer.

Barnes is an active member of West Ashley High's Professional Development Committee and the Culturally Relevant Education Leadership Team. He is an advocate for all students and strives to ensure that every student receives every opportunity available.

Barnes and his fiance, Kristen, live in the West Ashley community and are dedicated to making it the very best.



Abby Best

Abby Best is a third grade teacher at James B. Edwards Elementary School (JBE). She taught kindergarten at JBE for several years as well. Best serves as the Parent Teacher Organization teacher liaison and has been a grade-level chair. Born in North Carolina, Best moved with her family at an early age and grew up in Mount Pleasant. Best attended Anderson University, where she earned a Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education with an add-on certification in Early Childhood Education. Upon graduation, she returned to the Lowcountry and began teaching at JBE in 2017. She also holds a Master of Education in Educational Leadership from The Citadel. In her free time, she serves as a cheerleading coach at Lucy Beckham High School and a small group leader at The Church at LifePark.



Katie Johnston

Katie Johnston is the first Teacher of the Year at the East Cooper Center for Advanced Studies (ECCAS). Johnston has taught for eleven years at Wando High School and the ECCAS. Johnston attended Auburn University, where she received a five-year Professional Bachelor's Degree in Architecture. Before her teaching career began, Johnston was an architect and worked for Reggie Gibson Architects while also owning her own jewelry business. After several years in the field of architecture, she decided to pursue a lifelong dream of teaching. Johnston teaches several Project Lead The Way engineering courses, including Civil Engineering and Architecture, Environmental Sustainability, and Principles of Engineering. Johnston plays an integral role in the ECCAS School Improvement Council, ECCAS Engineering Club, ECCAS STEM Advisory Board, the Metro Chamber of Commerce Engineering Career Academy, and National Council of Architectural Registration Board.



Vickie Klatt

Vickie Klatt has taught for 22 years in almost every grade level. Most of her years were in the Upstate and the last two years in Charleston at St. Andrews School of Math and Science. Klatt is currently teaching a virtual third-grade class. Beyond the informative lessons, Klatt meets with small groups after school for tutoring and support with the virtual platform. Her Veteran's Day Display at the school this past November was featured by the district and local media. She also wrote a fine arts grant for the entire third grade to experience drumming and instruments worldwide.

CELEBRATING OUR
Teacher of the Year
FINALISTS



Candace Bare



AJ Barnes



Abby Best



Katie Johnston



Vickie Klatt

ATHLETICS



Military Magnet brings home first state title in basketball

The Military Magnet Academy (MMA) girls' basketball team just missed out on the state championship last year, falling in the finals. This year, the Eagles would not be denied; they captured the South Carolina High School League Class A crown with a 54-49 victory over Southside Christian on Saturday, March 6, 2021, in Aiken, SC.

Sophomore guards Chazmin Bradley and Kaelin Davis combined for 12 points in the fourth quarter for Military Magnet, and Bradley hit two free throws with six seconds left to seal the championship.

Three players scored in double figures for the Eagles (10-3): Bradley (18 points), Rykia Jakes (12 points), and Davis (10 points).



“Our big three [Bradley, Davis, and Jakes] performed great,” said MMA head coach Danny Taylor. “However, it is important to point out Jataya Brown, who stands 5-foot-3, was assigned to defend some of the best talent in the state. She guarded a six-foot All-in the first round, a 5-foot-9 all-state player in the second round, an all-state point guard in the Lower State finals, and a player committed to Georgia Southern in the championship game. Brown came up big time for us on defense in the last four games.”

The Eagles won every single playoff game on the road this year.

This is the MMA's first state championship in girls' basketball, the school's first-ever state championship in a girls' sport, and the second team state title overall in school history.

FALL

Individual Winner (AAA)
Name: Kyle Hertwig
School: Academic Magnet
Year in school: Sophomore
Sport: Boys' Swimming
Event: 50-yard freestyle (22.10)

Individual Winner (AAAA)
Name: Hannah Vroon
School: James Island Charter
Year in school: Freshman
Sport: Girls' Cross Country
Information: Won with a time of 18:25.39

Individual Winner (AAAA-AAAAA)
Name: Piper Charney
School: Lucy Beckham
Year in school: Sophomore
Sport: Girls' Tennis
Information: Defeated ??? in the finals

Individual Winner (AAAAA)
Name: Gil Shaw
School: Wando
Year in school: Senior
Sport: Girls' Swimming
Event: 100-yard breaststroke (1:04.49)

WINTER

Individual Winner (AAA)
Name: Joseph Lawson
School: North Charleston
Year in school: Senior
Sport: Wrestling
Weight: 195

SPRING

Individual Winner (A)
Name: Brett Jones
School: St John's (Montessori Community)
Year in school: 8th grade
Sport: Girls' Track and Field
Event: Javelin (126'2") and Discus (103'3")

Individual Winner (AAAA)
Name: Avery Belk
School: James Island Charter
Year in school: 8th grade
Sport: Girl's Track and Field
Event: 800-meter race (2:14.59)

Name: Tia Lucas
School: James Island Charter
Year in school: Junior
Sport: Girls' Track and Field
Event: High Jump (5'2")

INDIVIDUAL WINNERS

Name: Hannah Vroon
School: James Island Charter
Year in school: Freshman
Sport: Girls' Track and Field
Event: 1,600-meter race (4:58.24) and 3,200-meter race (11:15.35)

Members: Avery Belk, Tia Lucas, Terri Admore, Hannah Vroon
School: James Island Charter
Sport: Girls' Track and Field
Event: 4 x 400m relay (3:56.57)

Members: M.K. Huddleston, Terri Admore, Avery Belk, Hannah Vroon
School: James Island Charter
Sport: Girls' track and Field
Event: 4 x 800m (9:45.84)

Individual Winner (AAAAA)
Name: Sophie Heinold
School: Wando
Year in school: Senior
Sport: Girls' Track and Field
Event: 400 meter hurdles (1:03.47)

Name: Hannah Togami
School: Wando
Year in school: Sophomore
Sport: Girls' Track and Field
Event: Pole Vault (12'0")

Name: Caleb Walker
School: Wando
Year in school: Senior
Sport: Boys' Track and Field
Event: Javelin (194'2")

STATE CHAMPIONSHIPS

James Island Charter Girls' Cross Country (AAAA) State Championship

ROSTER

Julia Beebe	Hannah Vroon	Assistant Coaches
Amelia Carson	Avery Belk	Joe Eshelman
Anna Sofia Crews	Kirra Borg	Ed Carson
M.K. Huddleston	Sierra Wiggins	Kelly Kimbal
Carlisle Miller	Head Coach	Chris Covert
Anikka Pace	David Lee	

Military Magnet Girls' Basketball (A) State Championship

Season Record: 10-3 | Defeated Southside Christian, 54-49

ROSTER

RyKia Jakes	Satoya Martin	De-Jamari Pugh
Jataya Brown	Kataya Clinton	Coach
Kaelin Davis	Jada Davis	Danny Taylor
Ty Froggy Ferrell	Morgan Richardson	
Amauni Price	Sabri Mitchell	

James Island Charter Boys' Soccer (AAAA) State Championship

Season Record 16-1-1 | Defeated Eastside, 1-0

ROSTER

Grayson Pedone	Travis Samatov	Charles Maxwell	Head coach
Ben Garrett	Daniel Barney	Eli Boyce	Todd Robinson
Grant Smith	Tyler Pettapiece	Nathan Leader	Assistant coaches
Jackson Taylor	Cade Reynolds	Ethan Luckie	Gerard Walker
Matthew Freedy	Michael Caton	Alden Alea	Michael Rentz
Holden Silverman	Teddy Sturm	Keegan Lynn	Ed Carson
Ethan Cooper	Unai Sancho	Daniel Busby	Adrian Fernandez
Aidan Worthington	Levn Masindet	Ammar Mohamed	

Wando Girls' Volleyball (AAAAA) State Championship

Record: 20-1 | Defeated T.L. Hanna, 25-17, 17-25, 17-25, 25-22, 15-11

ROSTER

Ansley Albrecht	Ava Grace McCarthy	Head Coach
Reese Campbell	Ellie Middleton	Alexis Glover
Taylor Feher-Hall	Emma Sanders	Assistant Coaches
Aureana Fisher	Emily Sturdivant	Jennamarie Lesky-Aull
Lauren Garrett	Chandley Thompson	Cole Condon
Kat Hranowsky	Hannah Togami	Amelia Dawley
Ella Hudock	Brynn Whitehair	Tracy Carper
Emily King	McKinley Wing	
Grayson Lutz	Hastings Witt	
Taylor Martel		

James Island Charter Girls' Track and Field (AAAA) State Championship

ROSTER

Terri Admore	Kylie Stephens	Emily Crocker
Avery Belk	Hannah Vroon	Makyla Stanley
Meghan Cassells	Head Coach	Chris Covert
Anna Sofia Crews	Joe Eshelman	Carson Stewart
M.K. Huddleston	Assistant Coaches	
Monica Green	Yvonne White,	
Tia Lucas	Jeremy Morris	
Antonazia Major		

James Island Charter Girls' Soccer (AAAA) State Championship

Season Record: 22-1 | Defeated Catawba Ridge, 1-0

ROSTER

Caroline Arnold	Alarie Hodge	Daphne Robinson	Head Coach
Hailey Boyd	Taylor Hurteau	Emmy Ross	Kim Cohn
Olyvia Briggs	Mac Lehr	Kate Ross	Assistant Coaches
Ella Chanthabane	Kayla McGary	Yuria Sloane	Greg Webster
Ellie Davis	Kaitlyn Overla	Alexis Spivey	Greg Bennett
Clara Etnoyer	Camille Perna	Marley Walker	Jenna Snead
Matson Floyd	Hayden Rape	India Weimann	Brian Garvin
Maggie Gardner	Lilli Ray		
Vann Hagood	Gabby Redman		

Wando Girls' Soccer (AAAAA) Championship

Season Record: 16-1 | Defeated J.L. Mann, 2-1 (F/OT)

ROSTER

Zaria Ascue	Taitum Maxwell	Lennon Leithauser	Assistant coach
Emma Keiser	Julia McKellar	Kylie Cino	Alex Dunnigan
Gwen Keiser	Allie Seigel	E.G. Dillard	Managers
Taylor Read	Anna Sheppard	Ansley Douty	Isabella Pecunes
Kaleigh Bosak	Caroline	Ashton Douty	Julia Shallo
Caroline Brinson	Richvalsky	Finley Dybik	
Macey Brooks	Grace Waite	Head coach	
Morgan de Barros	Kennedi Walker	Shannon Champ	
Alyssa Graham	Zoe Carpenter		

Wando Girls' Swimming (AAAAA) Championship

ROSTER

Eliza Baxter	Illy Lightfoot	Jenna Thrift
Estelle Bauer	Caitlin Mason	Coaches
Sophie Frece	Ellis Pitts	Cheryl Durden
Mara Goodrich	Halle Schart	McKenzie Nash
Regan Leach	Gil Shaw	

ATHLETIC STATE TITLES

SOCCER



Wando High School Girls
Soccer SCHSL AAAAA Champions



James Island Charter High School Boys
Soccer State Class AAAA Champion



James Island Charter High School Girls
Soccer State Class AAAA Champion

TRACK AND FIELD



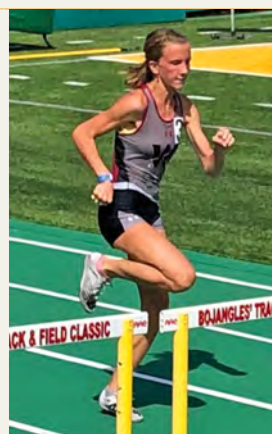
Caleb Walker - Wando
High School Javelin
State AAAAA Champion



Hannah Togami - Wando
High School Pole Vault
State AAAAA Champion



Hannah Vroon - JICHS
Girls cross country
State AAAA Champion



Sophie Heinold - Wando High
School 400-meter hurdles
State AAAAA Champion



James Island Charter High School Girls Cross Country
State AAAA Champions



St. John's student-athlete captures two individual state titles

Brett Jones, an eighth-grader on St. John's High School's track and field team, won two individual state titles at the South Carolina High School A state meet on Saturday at Lower Richland High School.

Jones, who attends the Montessori Community School, captured the championship in the javelin with

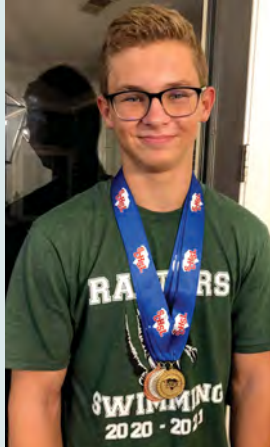
a throw of 126'2" (nearly 34 feet better than the runner-up in the event). That distance would have been good enough to win the AAAAA, AAA, and AA titles as well (and finish second in the AAAA meet). She also brought home the title in the discus with a toss of 103'3".

ATHLETIC STATE TITLES *continued*

SWIMMING



Gil Shaw - Wando High School 100-yard breaststroke State AAAAA Champion



Kyle Hertwig - Academic Magnet 50-yard freestyle individual (swimming) State AAA Champion

Wando captures fourth title SCHSL state championship in girls' swimming

The Wando High School girls' swimming team continues to be a dynasty at the AAAAA level. The Warriors, led by coaches Cheryl Durden and McKenzie Nash, captured their fourth straight state championship (and sixth overall) at the South Carolina High School League AAAAA state championship meet at the new North Charleston Aquatic Center.

Wando held off Spartanburg for the team title; Gil Shaw added an individual state title by winning the 100-yard breaststroke event with a time of 1:04.49.

It was a strong showing for other CCSD programs in the girls' championships; Lucy Beckham High School came

in third place in the AAAA meet in their first year of competition, and James Island Charter High School finished fifth. At the AAA level, Academic High School finished in fifth place.

In the boys' swimming state championships on Monday, Academic Magnet's Kyle Hertwig won the 50-yard freestyle AAA state championship with a time of 22.10. Hertwig helped the Raptors come in third place in the team standings.

Wando was the runner-up in the AAAAA state meet, and at the AAAA level, Lucy Beckham took third place and James Island came in fifth place.

WRESTLING



Joseph Lawson - North Charleston HS 195-pound wrestling Class AAA Champion

VOLLEYBALL



Wando Volleyball team wins state title

ATHLETIC STATE TITLES *continued*

TENNIS

Beckham girls' tennis team wins first state title in school history

Piper Charney also captures individual SCHSL state championship in program's inaugural season

Lucy Beckham High School has only been open for one tennis season, but the brand new school already has a South Carolina High School League state championship. The Bengals' girls' tennis captured the AAAA title with a 5-1 victory over Greenville in the state finals at the Florence Tennis Center.

Two days later, Piper Charney added to the LBHS tennis program's impressive start by winning the SCHSL AAAAA-AAAA individual state title (17-1); teammate Ella DeFord finished in third in the individual bracket.

"They are both skilled athletes, who work incredibly hard," said Beckham's head coach, Lizl Kotz. "Piper plays number one for our team and her opponents are hungry to play against her. She helps raise their level of play and has always handled 'being the one to beat' so well. Piper is great at noticing when a teammate needs encouragement and steps right up. Ella, who is an 8th grader, plays with maturity and laser-like focus. I am excited to see the places her tennis will take her!"

Before winning it all, the Bengals rolled to Region 7-AAAA and Lower State titles. They finished the season with a 21-1 record.

"I believe that performing well starts with a mindset rooted in gratitude," said Kotz. "Gratitude is a perspective changer and the antidote needed to ease the pressure some of these athletes feel. This year, in particular, many of the tournament players on the team had most of their tournaments canceled due to COVID-19. Therefore, it was not difficult to convince the players to view competition as an opportunity to feel grateful for instead of something to feel intimidated by."

"We are so proud of our LBHS girls' tennis team," said Principal Anna Dassing. "They have worked hard this season and their Bengal spirit, focus, and determination drove them to success. When you combine committed athletes, stellar coaches, and a winning spirit and attitude, you get champions."

Beckham Athletic Director Scott McInnes said that in his many years of being involved in athletics, he has never seen a better group of girls try out for a tennis team.

"They're the best team I've been around in a long time," said McInnes. "I had a couple of other championship teams in the past and I could tell on that first day that we were going to be very good. For me, it is so refreshing, especially in the middle of COVID-19. It was so nice to have athletics and to be able to celebrate outside together was amazing."

During the team's first practice they couldn't even touch each other's tennis balls. Everyone was required to wear masks, have their temperatures checked, and social distance. No fans were even allowed to attend the first match.

"The girls did great," said McInnes. "I am super proud of them. They have a really good coach in Mrs. Kotz and it all starts with her. She is an excellent mental coach and that separates her from everyone else."

"As a coach and an athlete myself I of course enjoy winning but mostly I enjoy seeing these players learn life lessons through competition that I know will serve them well for the rest of their lives," said Kotz.



SCACA honors late Wando icon, Bob Hayes



Bob Hayes

The South Carolina Athletic Coaches Association (SCACA) announced that Bob Hayes, former athletic director and football coach at Wando High School, has been posthumously elected to the SCACA Hall of Fame. He will be inducted with the rest of the Class of 2021 on July 25, 2021, during the SCACA's Annual Awards Ceremony at the Greenville Convention Center.

Hayes passed away at the age of 60 last June.

“Bob Hayes was a pillar of the CCSD community and the South Carolina High School League but especially the Wando High School Community – our students, our athletes, our faculty and staff,” said Wando’s principal, Dr. Sherry Eppelsheimer. “It is impossible to describe how much he meant to all of us. I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with Bob for 13 years and call him a true friend. He stood for all that is great about our school: commitment to students, athletes, family, and staff along with a dedication to excellence and an amazing work ethic.”

Hayes spent 37 years in the coaching profession, including 33 in the Lowcountry, first at Stratford High School, then the last 20 years at Wando High School. He served as the Warrior’s athletic director from 2000-2020 and the head football coach from 2000-2009. During Coach Hayes’ tenure at Wando, the Warriors captured 53 state championships in various sports and seven Carlisle Cups (which recognizes the state’s most successful athletic program).

In May of 2020, Charleston County School District (CCSD) and its Board of Trustees honored Coach Hayes by naming the field at the District 2 Regional Stadium, built on Wando’s campus, “Robert E Hayes Field” in recognition of his dedication to the high school, the Mount Pleasant community, CCSD, and South Carolina.

“Bob participated in countless meetings as we worked through the planning, design, and construction of the District 2 Stadium,” added Dr. Eppelsheimer. “I am thankful the field at the District 2 Regional Stadium bears his name so everyone will know about his legacy and contributions to Wando. We lost a good man too soon, but we’ll continue to celebrate his legacy.”

“Bob Hayes was a pillar of the CCSD community and the South Carolina High School League but especially the Wando High School Community – our students, our athletes, our faculty and staff. It is impossible to describe how much he meant to all of us. I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to work with Bob for 13 years and call him a true friend. He stood for all that is great about our school: commitment to students, athletes, family, and staff along with a dedication to excellence and an amazing work ethic.”

– DR. SHERRY EPPELSHEIMER, Wando High School Principal



NCES Basketball

Students at North Charleston Elementary school enjoyed a great day of basketball with local police officers and College of Charleston basketball players!

CCSD RECOGNIZES STUDENT ATHLETES ON NATIONAL SIGNING DAY

Even though Charleston County School District (CCSD) could not hold its annual National Day Signing Day Ceremony due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the district recognized 38 student-athletes, in 11 different sports, from six schools on National Signing Day.

The following CCSD student-athletes from the Class of 2021 are going to play a sport at the college level:



Academic Magnet

Isabella Darce – Davidson College – Track and Field
James Island Charter
Margaret Barfield – Columbia College – Soccer
Julia Beebe – Converse College – Swimming
Katie Beebe – Converse College – Swimming
Nolan Bullard – Brevard College – Football
Amelia Carson – Seton Hall University – Cross Country
Taeven Drayton – Bluefield College – Football
Cohen Gaskins – Converse College – Basketball
Alarie Hodge – College of Charleston – Soccer
Kayla Hulseberg – Spartanburg Methodist College – Softball
Ayrton Leichner – Coker University – Baseball
Marvin Matthews – Livingstone College – Football
Blakely Paradis – Presbyterian College – Competitive Cheerleading
Farley Park – Mars Hill University – Softball
Julius Reynolds – Florence-Darlington Technical College – Baseball
Stephen West – Western Carolina University – Baseball
Bailey Wiseman – Converse College – Basketball
Chase Worrill – Limestone University – Baseball



North Charleston

Courtland Washington – Bluefield State College – Football



R.B. Stall

Stefone Smalls – Bluefield State College – Football
Janae Whaley – Coker University – Basketball



Wando

Estelle Bauer – Nova Southeastern University – Swimming
Brad Brooks – Newberry College – Baseball
Bridger Faber – SUNY Maritime College – Football
Reed Garris – Clemson University – Baseball
Zane Gibson – Indiana Wesleyan University – Football
Matthew Gush – Nova Southeastern University – Swimming
Zach Jennings – Rhodes College – Lacrosse
Gwen Keiser – Presbyterian College – Soccer
Michael Nastro – Lander University – Baseball
Taylor Read – Ouachita Baptist University – Soccer
Brynn Whitehair – Marshall University – Volleyball
Marshall Whitmer – Georgetown University – Baseball



West Ashley

Jacob DeAntonio – Coker University – Soccer
Brianna Heffner – Erskine College – Competitive Cheerleading
Hobie Meekins – USC-Lancaster – Soccer
Garrick Murray – Florence-Darlington Technical College – Baseball
Alex Smalls – USC-Lancaster – Baseball

CCSD schools get creative when it comes to physical activity

Health and physical education are an important part of Charleston County School District's curriculum. Holly Kut, Instructional Specialist for Health and Physical Education encourages physical education (PE) teachers across the district to get creative whenever possible.

A growing trend among PE instructors is the use of climbing walls. Their use aligns with national standards and South Carolina standards for PE. Oakland Elementary School had one installed this year and joins Sanders-Clyde Elementary School, Drayton Hall Elementary School, Hunley Park Elementary School, Ladson Elementary School, Laurel Hill Primary School, and Thomas C. Cario Middle School.

Oakland PE teacher April Blanton has taught at the school for 15 years. Their campus features a large gymnasium that could easily accommodate a climbing wall. Blanton's colleague, Jonathan May, knew the benefits of a climbing wall from witnessing them firsthand at the previous school he taught in. They agreed that the students at Oakland would love such an addition to their PE class. The problem she faced was funding the equipment.

Most fundraisers the school hosts don't make enough to cover the average \$4,500 cost of a climbing wall. Blanton knew she would have to get creative. Ultimately a Fun Run was held and the order for the climbing wall was placed.

"This climbing wall allows us to provide an opportunity and experience to our students that they may not otherwise have access to," said Oakland Principal Elizabeth Nicodin. "We are teaching our students that there are many ways to stay active and physically fit through nontraditional modes of exercise which include activities such as this. We are excited and grateful for this wonderful addition to our PE department. We are very thankful for all of the people who helped make this dream a reality including Mrs. Blanton, our PTO, and Oakland families."

The climbing wall was installed over Thanksgiving break and Blanton and May installed the handholds, which can be changed to keep things challenging for the kids. Blanton explained that the handholds allow for maneuvers such as tossing, and turning to changing direction. Everlast

Climbing also sells additional handholds, Hula-hoops to climb through, and more.

"The climbing wall helps build flexibility, upper body strength, and muscles in the arms and legs, which we discuss during our fitness unit," said Blanton. "Also important to note is that the climbing wall promotes problem-solving. This type of activity is something new to most of the students at Oakland. There are few places open to the public that are not out of reach financially for some of our students."

"There are infinite things you can do with a climbing wall," said Blanton.

The additional physical benefits include increased brain stimulation and improved balance. Additionally, the use of the climbing wall encourages cooperation amongst classmates because it requires concentration, goal setting, and decision making.

"Climbing in PE benefits the whole child, not just physically but socially and emotionally," said Kut. "It builds confidence, allows students to overcome fears, all while building self-esteem. When the teacher creates lesson plans effectively, the climbing wall will also provide an opportunity to enhance leadership skills."

Steve Kamp is the PE instructor at Hunley Park. At a high school he previously taught in, the students had access to an extensive climbing wall with belay ropes. The high school student-athletes there used the climbing wall as part of their strength and conditioning routines.

At the elementary level, the first time students use the wall they're experiencing pure enjoyment, Kamp explained.

"As they progress, I incorporate varying skill levels that I continue to modify as we move through the unit," said Kamp. "The wall can be used as one of three fitness stations. Students must work as a team and problem solve. They must decide who is going to be the spotter, for example. This requires communication and thinking about the safety of themselves and their teammates. The wall provides so much more than fun."

Dr. Katchia Gethers, principal of Hunley Park Elementary

School said she was encouraged about the potential of the climbing wall.

"I imagine that our students will be taught endurance and flexibility," said Gethers. "Once they are successful, rock climbing can build students' self-esteem and encourage them to take risks and persevere during difficult times. Additionally, rock climbing requires students to concentrate and think strategically about what it takes to reach a goal. All of these soft skills are transferable to the content areas, which impacts academic performance."

Everlast Climbing provides an entire lesson plan, tests, rules, and safety procedures. Mats line the floor underneath the climbing wall for protection against injuries should a student fall. The mats also lock into place against the climbing wall so that the equipment can't be accessed without a specialized key.

Blanton enjoys teaching the K-5 age group because the students are easy to engage and persuade to try new things.

"As a PE instructor I love knowing I can expose my students to various types of physical activity that they can continue for a lifetime," said Blanton. "It's a way to introduce the students to different types of sports and activities."

Kamp is the head coach for varsity and junior varsity boys' lacrosse, football, and basketball. He knows all too well the importance of offering students and athletes a variety of physical activities.

"The climbing wall allows me to combine my coaching knowledge with my teaching knowledge," said Kamp. "What my colleagues and I try to do with our students is promote lifelong physical fitness, and we hope the kids carry that mindset with them. Maybe they'll be inspired by the climbing wall to one day go climb a mountain."

Blanton said the students are excited about the climbing wall and she is excited for them.

"Teaching problem-solving in a world that is 100 percent technology-based is so critical," said Blanton. "Technology often creates a situation where thinking doesn't have to happen. With a climbing wall, students can't just 'Google it.' They have to use their brain to figure it out."



COMMUNITY AND PHILANTHROPY

Charleston Promise Neighborhood partners with Blackbaud to offer “Camp Blackbaud”

Eight students from James Simons Montessori School had the opportunity to participate in the annual Camp Blackbaud, along with students from Chicora and Sanders-Clyde. The camp is a STEM-based camp designed for 5th graders to engage in hands-on learning projects and to educate them about careers in STEM fields.

Attending Camp Blackbaud has been an honor that James Simons (and other Charleston Promise Neighborhood schools including Sanders Clyde and Chicora) have enjoyed for many years. This year, however, like most things in the 2020-2021 school year, the camp looked a lot different. Instead of the students physically going to Blackbaud Headquarters on Daniel Island, Blackbaud brought the experience to them in a Covid-friendly environment.

Principal Christine Ryan of James Simons reflected on the experience, “I appreciate the opportunity Blackbaud affords our students to engage in meaningful, relevant, and innovative programs. Our students have been the beneficiaries of their generosity for several years. I’d also like to thank CPN (Charleston Promise Neighborhood) for coordinating the event for us. CPN is a valued partner. They continue to provide multiple opportunities/programs that enhance the lives of our students and families”.

The students were engaged and inspired in the work that they were doing. Students were also treated to lunch from local favorite, D’Allesandro’s Pizza, who delivered to campers all over Charleston.

At the end of the day of virtual learning, students from all three of the Charleston Promise Neighborhood Schools had the opportunity to present their projects to the entire group via Zoom. Exercising their public speaking skills, students proudly shared all that they had learned and created that day.

Even amid the Covid19 pandemic that plagues our lives and learning environments, Blackbaud and Charleston Promise Neighborhood found a way to be innovative to bring a great hands on learning experience to our students and to help them make memories that they will never forget.



LITTLE LENDING LIBRARY

April 26, 2021 was the official opening of Mount Pleasant Academy’s little lending library. Mrs. Paquette’s fifth grade Gifted and Talented students bonded during their time together as temporary remote students. When they finally got together face-to-face in Mrs. Graham’s SAIL class, they wanted to do something for the school community. The class came to Principal Kimberly Jackson with a written proposal requesting they be allowed to build a little lending library for our neighborhood. The group worked together to make sure their proposal included sizing, materials, and partnership opportunities. Once the decisions were made, the group began work. Once it was finished the students hosted a ribbon-cutting event on April 26, 2021. The library is nestled just along the sidewalk at the entrance of campus.

Charleston Marathon awards grants to local schools



2020 Charleston Marathon Grant Murray-LaSaine Montessori School Check



2020 Charleston Marathon Grant Baptist Hill Middle High School Check



2020 Charleston Marathon Grant RB Stall High School Check

Organizers of the Charleston Marathon® hit the road in November to surprise schools in the community with checks in support of the arts. As a result of the funds raised through the 2020 race, over \$4,000 went to local schools. Additional funding goes to support Engaging Creative Minds (ECM), a local educational nonprofit that promotes Arts Integration in area schools.

Schools awarded the grant money in Charleston County School District include Baptist Hill Middle High School (teacher Melissa Murdock), Murray-LaSaine Montessori School (teacher Rylee Coppel), and R. B. Stall High School (teacher Leanne Mattie).

As in years past, the official charitable partner for the Charleston Marathon® race is ECM, an educational non-profit that provides Arts Integration programming in local schools as well as their national award-winning Summer STEAM Institute®.

ECM partners with local artists and art organizations to provide unique educational programming for Kindergarten through 8th grade. This year, they are in 26 schools across Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester counties and will impact over 10,000 students. In addition to supporting ECM programs, the Charleston Marathon® also distributes grants to local schools and classrooms through funds received from the race.

Kiawah Island Club & Real Estate volunteers help build community

The Kiawah Island Club spent a week at Angel Oak elementary School completing an Outdoor Enhancement Project. They created an outdoor classroom space, built a greenhouse, created an interactive music wall, built picnic tables and benches, replenished the gardens, and revitalized the covered play area!

Kiawah in the Community, a program designed to engage its employees in volunteer opportunities in an effort to serve the greater Sea Islands community. This company-wide volunteer program launched November 9th, with each Kiawah in the Community team working on individual volunteer efforts around Johns Island.

This project was initiated to meet an identified need to provide more outdoor spaces for the students to learn and recreate. As the region's population has expanded, Angel Oak Elementary School has experienced increased enrollment which has created the necessity for additional space for students and teachers, an issue that has been

exacerbated by COVID. Kiawah Island Club & Real Estate is honored to be partnering with the School to upgrade an area to support their goals of cultivating creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, and communication.

Over the course of three days, Kiawah Island Club & Real Estate volunteers constructed:

- Outdoor Classroom
- Third Grade Play Area
- General Play Area
- Greenhouse
- Planter Boxes
- Kindness Rocks

“We were honored to work hand-in-hand with Angel Oak Elementary School to bring this project to fruition. With our Kiawah in the Community initiative, we hope to identify the needs of our neighboring communities and work to fulfill them,” said Scott Dawson, General Manager, Kiawah Island Club.



HANDS-ON INTERNSHIPS MADE POSSIBLE EVEN IN THE TIME OF COVID



Charleston County School District (CCSD) students participated in a paid internship program last summer. The Green Heart Project was able to provide this work-based learning opportunity, live and in-person, despite COVID-19, through their inaugural Youth Internship Program.

The Green Heart Program hired a total of eight young people in an effort to develop career preparedness and healthy living skills and promote engaged citizenship through urban farming. CCSD students that participated included Will Brown (rising 11th grader at Academic Magnet High School), Z Dunigan (James Island Charter High School graduate), Jayvon Ford (rising 10th grader at Burke High School), John-Paul Gadson (rising 10th grader at Charleston Charter School for Math and Science), Aaron Johnson (rising 11th grader at Charleston Charter School for Math and Science), Sage Braziel (Academic Magnet High School graduate), and Harper Reed (rising senior at Charleston County School of The Arts).

According to Allie Astor, Farm to School Program Coordinator with The Green Heart Project, the idea for a youth internship program was born many years ago and was recently finalized as a program modeled and adapted around other successful programs conducted across the country, including flagship program The Food Project out of Boston, MA.

“This program is more than an internship, it’s a comprehensive youth development program aimed at supporting diverse groups of young people as they begin their career paths,” said Amanda Howell, Program Director. “The paid aspect of the program is a critical piece - youth employment programs are shown to positively impact graduation and job placement rates, decrease the likelihood of incarceration, and contribute additional family income which helps to lift young people out of poverty.”

The interns spent their mornings in Green Heart gardens and building the new half-acre Urban Farm at Enston Home and

in the afternoons tuned in for lessons over Zoom. The program was more than just an internship. It was an opportunity to teach.

The Green Heart Project’s Youth Internship Program empowers young people to be active leaders who are connected to the land and their community by cultivating: workplace and leadership, financial literacy and business skills; health and wellness, cooking and nutrition knowledge; environmental literacy, food systems, and sustainable agriculture proficiency through farm-based experiential learning.

“Additionally, the paid opportunity acknowledges that we appreciate and see the value in the work that our interns are doing,” said Astor. “We recognize that young adults need to make and save money and as they develop skills in financial literacy through this internship, what better way to practice those skills than managing their own income.”

In addition, interns helped manage a weekly “pay what you can” farm stand, harvested Green Heart produce, and prepared the community-supported agriculture (CSA) bundles for community pick up and delivery to the William Enston Home residents, many of whom are senior citizens.

“The students were also actively participating in building our new urban farm-site that is currently under construction,” said Astor. “It is located within the William Enston Home, an affordable workforce housing community located at 900 King Street and will feature 65 raised garden beds. The project has been in the works for nearly five years and is expected to be completed by the end of Summer. The half-acre urban farm will serve as a hub for fresh food access and community building and will also be utilized for educational field trips and workshops for students and the community.”

The internship also featured contributors who support the program such as restaurant owners, business entrepreneurs, chefs, and dietitians. They were invited to conduct demonstrations and offer lectures.

Kerrie Hollifield, the registered dietitian with CCSD’s Office of Nutrition Services explained that the district’s partnership with The Green Heart Project continues to gain traction, especially with opportunities that directly impact students.

Nutrition education is an important part of the curriculum taught in CCSD. According to Hollifield, this internship was a great way to continue those efforts. Hollifield was a presenter in the program, showing the interns how to read food labels, cook meals, teach unit costs, and grocery shop.

“The interns were bright and eager to learn,” said Hollifield. “This partnership is extremely important to CCSD and Nutrition Services as we continue to expand our nutrition education programs. This type of internship is not just for the students. We are passing along knowledge and recipes that students can bring back home to their families. In this way, we are expanding the knowledge of our students and their families.”

Astor added that health, wellness, nutrition, growing food, and getting hands dirty has a lasting impression on the interns. She said that many have expressed an interest in seeking future employment or volunteering in related fields. However, they didn’t all necessarily apply because they were seeking a career in the industry of farming or horticulture.

Applicants came from a wide array of interests and backgrounds, according to Astor. Some had interests in sustainable farming and others were just looking to spark new interests and get more involved in their community, Astor explained. The eight interns were selected from 42 competitive applications.

At the end of the eight-week internship, students left with a better understanding of how to manage money, the confidence to learn recipes, harvest, prepare, and cook nutritional meals, and the passion and drive to serve their community and work for social change.

Students at Chicora receive desks from generous couple



Anita and Neil Gorfain with their dog Molly

Anita and Neil Gorfain aren't from Charleston County; they moved here from Connecticut a few years ago. However, thanks to their past involvement with and dedication to public education, they developed a connection to Chicora Elementary School.

The Gorfains constructed desks for three students at Chicora who are learning remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic. They were inspired to build the desks from a story they saw during a newscast where a family did the same thing in another part of the country.

The Gorfains began reaching out to organizations in late October to see if they could help children in the Charleston community. Charleston County Social Services pointed them to Charleston

County School District. After a couple of emails to CCSD, Chicora's interim principal, Debbie Smith, contacted the Gorfains and informed them there were three families who could use their support.

"Since woodworking has been a hobby of mine, this serves a number of benefits," said Neil Gorfain. "It keeps me busy during the day which is important for mental health and even better, it provides kids and families who are in need something special. When we were raising our kids, we felt it was important for them to have their own space for studying and creating."

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, we learned that many kids are home and have no place to do their school work. Since plenty of people are having a tough time making ends meet right now, buying a desk or piece of furniture is not realistic or possible."

"From start to finish, a desk takes approximately three to four hours," explained Neil Gorfain. "It is not a production operation. They are made one by one."

Anita Gorfain taught at the elementary school level in the past and Neil Gorfain taught high school as well as at the American School for the Deaf. The family has been involved with several organizations committed to community service, and that involvement continued with their move to the Lowcountry.

"We are so thankful for the Gorfains and their act of love and generosity," Smith explained. "They made a significant difference in the education of three of our scholars. More importantly, they showed our families that there are good and kind people who are willing and able to help them, even if they don't know them."

Neil Gorfain added they are willing to help other families at Chicora and throughout the area if the opportunity presents. In fact, they are set to build three more desks for students at Chicora.



Charles Pinckney Food Drive!

Charles Pinckney Elementary School held a week-long Holiday Food Drive. The event brought in an impressive 2,882 items for families in need and the community. Pinckney students and families exemplified the true "spirit of giving" during this holiday event!

The idea was presented by a House Leader who wanted the Houses to 'give back' during the holidays. Almost a year ago, Pinckney Elementary implemented a House System inspired by Ron Clark Academy in Atlanta, Georgia. The program is made up of four unique Houses each with its own name, country of origin, color, symbol, and meaning. The Houses are Amistad "House of Friendship," Altruismo "House of Givers," Isibindi "House of Courage," and Rêveur "House of Dreamers!" All students belong to one of the four Houses and are tasked with the responsibility of earning House Points throughout the year, through academic achievement, good character, effort, and participating in school spirit. The House program encourages friendly competition while at the same time, celebrates the school's accomplishments as a whole.

After the House Leaders finalized the Food Drive plan, they went to work and took on major roles during the school-wide event. The Leaders designed posters; recorded videos for the morning news; and collected, sorted, and boxed the food throughout the week. Finally, the House Leaders delivered the non-perishable food items to families in need at our school, multiple Charleston area Blessing Boxes, and East Cooper Community Outreach.



NCHS hosts ESOL Family Connection Walk



Staff members from North Charleston High School, Charleston County School District's ESOL Department, and local community members participated in an outreach called North Charleston High School ESOL Family Connection Walk (Caminata de Conexión con las familias ESOL de NCHS) which was held Saturday, March 27, 2021. The purpose of this effort was to build positive relationships between NCHS and the ESOL (English as a second or foreign language) families, and to develop trust between the community and police and firemen.

Members of the North Charleston Police Department joined volunteers from NCHS and walked around areas where the NCHS ESOL students live. The participants wanted to address some misunderstandings held by some of the Hispanic families in the area.

The organizers of the NCHS ESOL Family Connection Walk described the event as successful.

Along with the volunteers, they were able to reach out to 20 ESOL families.

"This family connection walk was meaningful because we clearly observed that the families and students encountered a moment of care, awareness, consciousness, and hope," said CCSD ESOL employee Lydia Cotton.

"There are few words to describe how this was such a rewarding experience," said Christiane Camarillo, who is the Executive Director of Art Pot. "We saw students' faces light up when we arrived. It was not just because we arrived with items and necessities, but simply sitting and talking with them, listening to them, and making existing connections even stronger. Also, it gave the students a chance to see their teachers, other educators, community members, and police officers in a different and personal setting."

NEW BIKES

Students at Stono Park Elementary School and Jane Edwards Elementary Schools received huge holiday surprises thanks to former CCSD teacher Katie Blomquist, her non-profit Going Places, local businesses, and volunteers from the community: FREE BIKES!

More than 400 students at Stono Park found out through a live school-wide Zoom call they were getting brand new bicycles. Then on Thursday, another 70 scholars at Jane Edwards watched a message from Blomquist that broke the news they were all getting a new bike.

In the past few years, Blomquist and her non-profit Going Places have arranged for new bikes to be donated to every student at six schools: Pepperhill Elementary (2017), Mount Zion Elementary (2018), Edith L. Frierson Elementary, Sanders-Clyde Elementary (2019), Stono Park Elementary (2020), and Jane Edwards Elementary (2020). Several more schools have been a part of smaller bike reveals as well.

Overall, more than 2,000 students have received new bikes, locks, and helmets from Going Places

Charleston County School District thanks Ms. Blomquist, Going Places, and all the local businesses and volunteers who have donated and continue to donate their time and resources to make this effort a reality.



Goodwin participates in their 10th annual Relay for Life

W.B. Goodwin Elementary School participated in the Relay For Life, sponsored by the American Cancer Society, for the tenth year in a row. The Goodwin school community has consistently raised enough money to be one of the top three fundraisers in the Charleston area and is one of a very few elementary schools in the Charleston County School District that participates consistently.

COVID-19 limited the way the Relay for Life was held this year. There were no large gatherings where teams lapped the track. However, Goodwin held a mini relay in their car rider loop, lined with luminary bags in memory or honor of loved ones. The Goodwin Gators then joined other Relay for Life teams in the area and placed their luminaries around the traffic circle in Park Circle.

Goodwin teacher Ylonda Nero-Anderson spearheaded the effort ten years ago as a way for the school to give back. She chose Relay for Life simply because it was a favorite charity of hers. Great effort goes into planning mini fundraising events throughout the school year, and co-worker Suzette Schiffiano assisted her. Schiffiano is now retired, but her dedication to Relay For Life is just as strong.

Nero-Anderson and Schiffiano are both cancer survivors. In 2014, Nero-Anderson was diagnosed with breast cancer, and Schiffiano was diagnosed in 2009 with leukemia.

“Now this fundraiser is even dearer to us,” said Schiffiano.

“Former Principal Diane Ross was very supportive when I came to her ten years ago with the idea,” said Nero-Anderson. “The first three years we participated, all we did is raised money and turn it in. In 2015, Goodwin assembled a team and attended the event at West Ashley High School. Co-workers, family, friends, and students joined the team. In 2016 we got creative and dressed around the theme of TuTu Cute for Cancer complete with tie-dyed shirts and tutus and won Best Dressed.”

Before the pandemic, the school raised about \$5,000 each year, totaling an estimated \$45,000. Families, staff, the community, and even students donated. They held events throughout the year, such as crowning a king and queen of the school, dollar dress-down days, loose coin donations, and the sale of luminary bags. This year they are relying solely on donations and bag sales. To make a donation or purchase a luminary bag, visit the Relay for Life website and search Goodwin Gators.

“Seeing those bags and the memorials is emotional if you have any ties to cancer at all,” said Schiffiano. “When you see a family member’s name, it’s hard not to cry and even harder not to cry for yourself as a survivor.”

While the world faced a pandemic, cancer did not sleep. Fundraising has been slow for the school, but Nero-Anderson and Schiffiano are not giving up hope.

“All the money raised goes to the Cancer Society, and the benefits that come from that include rides to doctor or therapy appointments, a plethora of assistance to patients and families, and research,” said Schiffiano. “Cancer has gone by the wayside because of COVID-19. I have all the empathy in the world for COVID-19 victims, but we can’t turn our back on cancer.”

“We appreciate the response we’ve gotten so far,” said Nero-Anderson. “We could not do this without the support of our faculty, families, and current Principal Natasha Jones.”

Principal Jones is proud of the efforts of the school community over the years, and especially Nero-Anderson and Schiffiano.

“It is wonderful that they have created an opportunity to join forces with a team that is so passionate about their cause,” said Jones. “We recently lost a valued member of our team to cancer, and many of us have been personally touched by cancer in some way. We can achieve great things when we work together for a good cause.”

Nero-Anderson encourages other schools in the district to consider fundraising for Relay for Life.

“It is a great event and way to include students in fun activities all year,” said Nero-Anderson. “I am happy to work with any school to get started.”

Schiffiano added that it is also an opportunity to make children aware of giving.

“Through our various activities, we’re making children aware of charity, and they made their donations with pride,” said Schiffiano. “They also learned the facts about cancer.”

“I’m proud of our Gator family,” said Goodwin teacher Mary Stansell. “We strive to create a nurturing environment, and supporting Relay for Life is one way we show it.”



CCSD LAUNCHES NEW MOBILE APP

Charleston County School District (CCSD) has launched the new CCSD Mobile App where parents, students, and the community can find the latest news and information using their smartphones and mobile devices.

CCSD has expanded its communications outreach with a free mobile app that is now available in the online Apple App and Google Play app stores.

The CCSD Mobile App will offer an updated feed of district news and events with photos and links to the district website. The app can also be customized by the user by selecting the schools they are most interested in for news and updates. Multiple schools can be selected as the user customizes the app to align with their family needs.

Users will be able to see and receive real-time notifications as they are sent from the school. Direct access to the school’s social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram

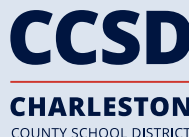
will be just a click away.

“We are very excited about this new initiative,” said Erica Taylor, CCSD Chief of Staff. “With our new user-friendly mobile app, parents and community members can stay connected with our district and schools, and with activities, our students are engaged in every day.”

In addition to calendars and notifications from the district and schools, a link to the breakfast and lunch menus, transportation, news, and media will be available.

A link to the department directory at the district level will allow users to send messages directly to building administrators.

Parents, students, and community members are encouraged to download the CCSD Mobile App to their smartphones. Search “Charleston County Schools, SC” in both app stores to find the app!



STUDENT-TEACHER TEAM AT CHICORA USES SODEXO GRANT TO ADDRESS FOOD INSECURITY

Megan Godinez Santeliz, a second grader at Chicora Elementary School, and her English language teacher, Kristen Singleton, earned a Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation Youth Grant through Youth Service America (YSA). The \$500 grant supported a community service project led by Godinez Santeliz that addressed childhood hunger.

Godinez Santeliz and Singleton gathered with students and their parents at Fresh Future Farm, a local community garden, to teach families how to grow vegetables in containers and provide them with information about food pantries in the area.

“I don’t want my friends to ever be hungry,” explained Godinez Santeliz. “I want to help teach them to grow food just in case they ever need it.”

Godinez Santeliz is one of 106 young leaders across the country awarded grants to organize projects to help end childhood hunger. Grantees educate and mobilize their peers around the issue to help end childhood hunger through awareness, service, advocacy, and philanthropic activities. They joined millions of other young people worldwide in recognition of Global Youth Service Day, April 23-25, 2021. Celebrating 33 years of youth changing the world, Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) is the largest youth service and civic action event globally.

“The Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation is committed to identifying, investing in, and scaling innovative, youth-designed and youth-led solutions to childhood hunger,” explained Joan Rector McGlockton, Chairperson, Sodexo Stop Hunger Foundation and Associate General Counsel, Corporate Affairs & Litigation.

According to Sodexo, in 2019, 34 million people lived in poverty in America. As a result of the



COVID-19 pandemic, one in 6 people (more than 50 million people), including one in four children (approximately 17 million children) in the United States, are experiencing food insecurity in 2021.

CCSD partners with local hydroponic farm, Vertical Roots

Charleston County School District (CCSD) has partnered with Vertical Roots, a leading indoor hydroponic container farming company in the country. Vertical Roots produces nutrient-rich lettuce with globally recognized food safety standards inside its eco-friendly, upcycled container farms.

The district’s Office of Nutrition Services has incorporated lettuce from Vertical Roots in the salads offered in school cafeterias. As part of the rollout, students at Chicora Elementary School participated in a taste-testing event with representatives from Nutrition Services and Vertical Roots.

“CCSD knows that students, communities, and farmers win when schools implement farm to school practices,” said Kerrie Hollifield, the district’s registered dietitian. “This

partnership with Vertical Roots is going to allow students to eat local salads every day of the week. We plan as a district to be the gold standard of supporting local agricultural programs and building vibrant communities.”

Vertical Roots farms use 98 percent less water than conventional farming methods to sustainably grow non-GMO lettuce that is full of flavor and pesticide-free. Their farms also generate eight-times more produce per acre of land compared to traditional farms. For example, Vertical Roots four acre-farm in Columbia, SC is equivalent to 350 acres of traditional farmland.

Vertical Roots grows lettuce every day of the year at their farms in the Charleston and Columbia areas. Their produce

is harvested at the peak of freshness and delivered to grocery stores within one to three days.

“The partnership with Charleston County School District is very important to Vertical Roots and our mission,” added Andrew Hare, Co-Founder and General Manager of Vertical Roots. “Our youth is our future. This will create a hyperlocal farm experience for students, and educate them on nutritional benefits of local produce as they better understand where their food comes from.”

Vertical Roots’ produce is available in 1,200 grocery stores across the Southeast at Publix, Harris Teeter, Whole Foods, and Lowes Foods.



Staples makes donation of school supplies to district

Four Staples stores across the Lowcountry made significant donations to schools in Charleston County School District (CCSD) through their annual “School Drive.” With their customers’ help, the local Staples stores in Mount Pleasant, West Ashley, North Charleston, and Summerville donated over 3,000 bags to elementary and middle schools. Supplies donated included binders, pens, glue, folders, and art paper.

According to Morningside Middle School Principal Michael White, supplies like these are a necessity.

“We are so truly appreciative of this donation, and we are looking forward to a continued and expanded partnership with Staples,” said White.

Morningside received over 400 bags of supplies that contained folders, glue, pens, markers, tissues, hand sanitizer, and banner and poster paper.

Paul Ferreri, General Manager of Staples store #1583 on Folly Road, worked with Michelle Wright, Procurement Agent for CCSD, to identify which schools had the greatest need for supply donations.

In addition to Morningside, schools such as Chicora Elementary School, HarborView Elementary School, Mary Ford Early Learning and Family Center, Oakland Elementary School, Sanders-Clyde Elementary school, and James Island Elementary School all received bags for each student – in many cases, over 300 per school.

“Charleston County School District is so thankful for the generous community partners in the Lowcountry that support our students and families,” said Wright. “Staples and their customers went above and beyond to collect and donate these much-needed supplies. That kind of generosity is so appreciated.”

The drive continues throughout the summer at all Charleston area Staples stores. Customers have the option to donate a \$5 bag of

supplies that will be set aside for donation at a later date.

“We chose to do a year-round event so that we can kick next school year off with the supplies already on hand,” said Ferreri.

Each store handles its collections differently, Ferreri explained. For example, in Mount Pleasant, the store partnered with the Mount Pleasant Police Department (MPPD) and hosted a “Fill the Cruiser” event. Customers donated enough to fill three police cars.

Brian Begley, General Manager Staples store #826 in Mount Pleasant, said they have established a solid relationship with MPPD that makes collections like this possible.

“It is fantastic working with the community,” said Begley. “What is even more heartwarming is going to the schools and seeing the kids and the staff when we present the donations. They are so thankful and appreciative of anything we can do to help students get supplies.”

Ferreri said the generosity shown by the community has been overwhelming.

“Each school has varying needs,” said Ferreri. “By working with the district, we were able to pinpoint those so that our donations made sense for their school community. The core value at Staples is to support our communities – local businesses and schools. We like to partner with the community because a thriving community makes us thrive.”

Mary Ford Early Learning and Family Center Principal Ruth Taylor is thankful for their contribution.

“Because of the generosity of Staples, we were able to stock our student supply room to offer items needed in the classroom to support teaching and learning,” said Taylor. “The Mary Ford families and staff are indeed grateful to Staples for thinking of us, especially during this challenging time when COVID-19 has prevented some acquisition of resources for some students.”



Waving Wednesdays

Charleston County Sheriff Deputies celebrated Waving Wednesdays this year offering morning and afternoon greetings to students around the district in hopes of adding a little extra cheer to their busy days. Here is their visit to E.B. Ellington Elementary, Murray LaSaine Montessori School, and Sullivan’s Island Elementary School.



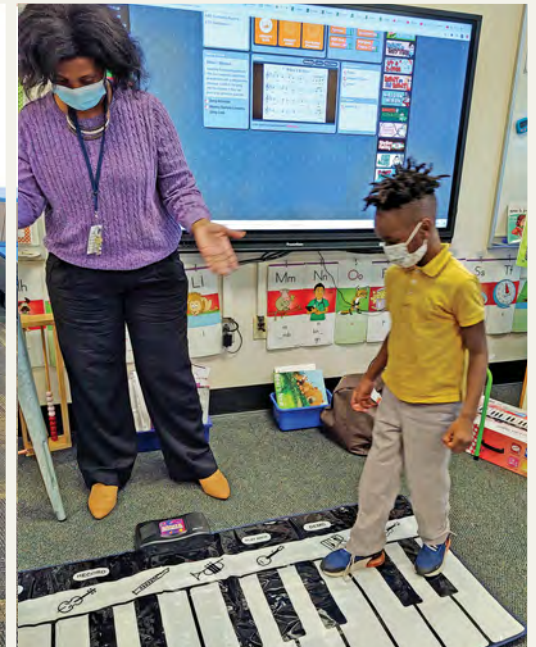
ARTS



Artists at Ashley River Creative Arts



Harbor View musicians



Sanders Clyde making music

5 CCSD Schools Recognized for Arts Excellence

Three CCSD schools were identified as a Distinguished Arts Program (DAP) by South Carolina Department of Education: Ashley River Creative Arts, North Charleston Creative Arts, and Sanders-Clyde Elementary.

In addition two visual and performing arts teachers were recognized by South Carolina Department of Education for demonstrating that Innovative Arts Works: Shelly Goughnour, music teacher at Harbor View Elementary and Cindy Jesup, art teacher at Mt. Zion Elementary.

The five schools received funding for arts integration, arts resources, and professional learning.

Memminger at the 2021 North Charleston Arts Festival

Thirty Memminger Elementary School students had artwork accepted to exhibit at the 2021 North Charleston Arts Festival.



Multiple CCSD schools used art display to increase cultural awareness



School staff members throughout Charleston County School District provided students with an opportunity to “see” the world by bringing the world to the school through an art display. Angel Oak Elementary, James Island Elementary, and Memminger Elementary partnered with the Besharat Art Foundation Museum/Gallery to display “The Faces of Innocence” exhibit featuring the photography of Steve McCurry.

Students at Angel Oak were asked to view and study images of children around the world in their hallways using Harvard Project Zero’s Artful Thinking strategies to promote higher-order thinking, global and cultural awareness, empathy, and compassion. Angel Oak Elementary is an arts-integrated school, so this initiative aligns with the school’s overall approach.

“The exhibit is a powerful reminder each day that there is so much to discover about our world,” explained Angel Oak Elementary Principal Judith Condon. “Our students are connecting with the images academically, socially and emotionally. They are describing, analyzing, interpreting, evaluating, writing about the images, exploring the countries the images are from and are having rich conversations about each one. They relate so well to the images because they, too, are children. It is really amazing

to watch the learning process. Our hallways are now centers of learning”.

Right before the school year ended, images from the “Faces of Innocence” were placed in the hallways at James Island Elementary. Principal Jonetta Gregory thanked the school’s art teacher, Suzanne Baranoski, for her work to bring the gallery to the building. They believe this program can unite as human beings, focusing on young children who can observe these large photographs and help further develop a more profound sense of empathy and sympathy.

“At our school, the students see other children their ages throughout our halls and can notice that while they may be dressed differently, be in seemingly unusual environments, and have different hair and skin, they are all still children like themselves,” added Gregory. “The comments, writing, and artwork our students made are proof this meaningful program is having an effect on our school community. We are honored to be a part of the Besharat Foundation.”

The photos for this display are visible in the main hallway and atrium area at Memminger Elementary. Principal Dottie Brown explained this gallery has a special meaning for their school community.

“The international faces in the gallery are beyond beautiful and will enhance our International Baccalaureate units of study,” said Brown “We have also dedicated our gallery to Mrs. Annette Mani, who was a long-time volunteer here at Memminger and recently passed away. We will be placing a plaque in her honor in the entrance near the gallery.”

The images are donated by the Besharat Art Foundation at no cost to the schools.



SOA student wins Congressional Art Competition



Enrique Boyd's *Cedric*

Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA) senior Enrique Boyd, won the 2021 Sixth District Congressional Art Competition, and his work will be displayed in the U.S. Capitol as part of a national art exhibition. Boyd's piece is called "Cedric."

"It's an honor to win, and I was so surprised when I heard the news," said Boyd. "I'm so excited to have my work displayed at the Capitol for a year!"

Each spring, the Congressional Institute sponsors a nationwide high school visual art competition to recognize and encourage artistic talent in the nation. Since the Artistic Discovery competition began in 1982, more than 650,000 high school students have participated

Students submit entries to their representative's office, and winning entries from each congressional district are chosen for display in Washington, D.C. in the Cannon Tunnel that connects the U.S. House of Representatives' offices to

the U.S. Capitol for the next year. Boyd and a guest will be invited to the Capitol for the unveiling and a reception at a later date. Two round-trip airline tickets will be provided, and Boyd will be eligible for an academic scholarship.

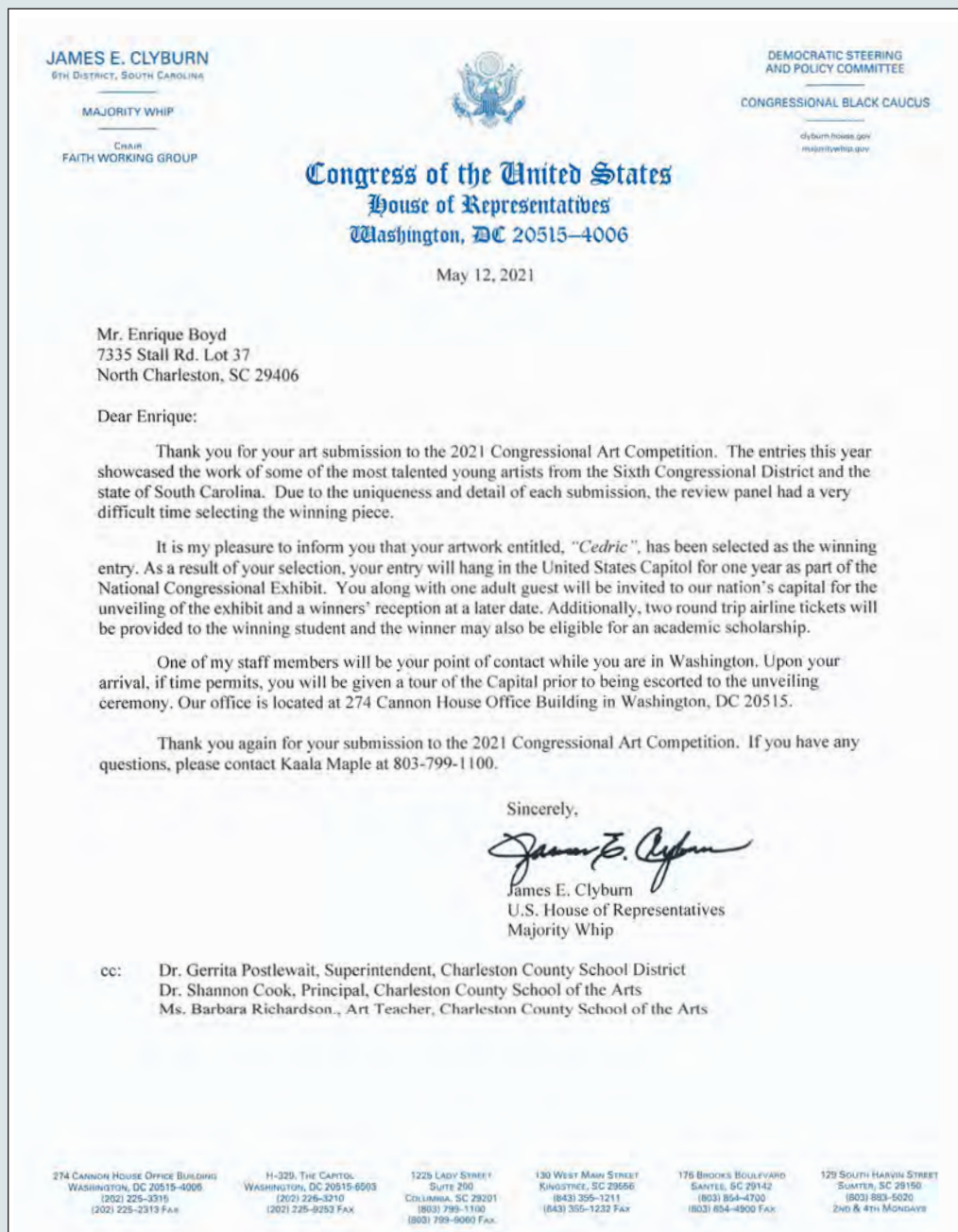
"In this unprecedented time, it is even more special to be able to recognize Enrique for his outstanding art," added Barbara Richardson, Visual Arts teacher. "Even though he has been a virtual student since March of 2020, it has not affected his art. Enrique's use of colored pencils coupled with his photorealistic style has landed him numerous awards and scholarship offers. I am immensely proud of Enrique and I cannot wait to see what he is going to do at the Rhode Island School of Design!"

U.S. Rep. James E. Clyburn, South Carolina's 6th District representative, said Boyd's artwork stood out among the entries in this year's competition.

"This year's art competition showcased the work of exceptionally talented young artists across the Sixth District. Among the unique and impressive entries, Enrique's artwork rose to the top," said Congressman Clyburn. "I commend him for his soulful drawing of a man who seems very relatable. Enrique's work will represent the district well in the halls of Congress."

"This piece depicts a man who was worth more to me than I realized, a man who was kind, just, and selfless," said Boyd. "Cedric, also known as Ceco, is such an important part of me and my family's lives. From being the first to alert us when my father had a life threatening accident to something as simple as helping me walk across busy streets, he has always been there for us. To me he is so unique and I just had to put it to paper."

"Enrique's artwork is extraordinary," said Denisse A. Santos, Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator, "What an honor for CCSD to be represented nationally by Enrique's work!"



SOA dominates state's 2021 Junior Duck Stamp program

Julia Boyer wins Best of Show in South Carolina and named a finalist for national honor

For the second year in a row, a student from Charleston County School of the Arts earned Best of Show in the South Carolina Junior Duck Stamp art competition, sponsored by the Southeastern Wildlife Exposition (SEWE). Freshman Julia Boyer recently won the Best of Show honor for her entry "The King Has Arrived." Boyer's work of art advances to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Junior Duck Stamp program.

Boyer is also one of 15 finalists for this year's top national honor. If her work of art is selected, it will serve as the design for the Junior Duck Stamp, which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service produces annually. This stamp has become a much sought-after collector's item. One hundred percent of the revenue from the sale of Junior Duck stamps supports recognition and environmental education activities for students who participate in the program.



Julia Boyer

"I worked on the piece for two months," explained Boyer. "I had hoped to do well but tried not to get my hopes up. I think it's cool to make it to the national level. I didn't think it would get that far, and I'm really excited."

Boyer said she chose the King Eider duck because it is colorful, then found an image on Instagram to use as her inspiration. She has been corresponding with the photographer of that image on social media as well.

This is the fourth time in the last five years a student from Charleston County School District won the state competition.



The King Has Arrived

The following is a list of the SOA students that placed in the 2021 Junior Duck Stamp program:

BEST OF SHOW

Julia Boyer

BEST OF SHOW RUNNERS UP

First runner-up - Abigail Short

Third runner up - Angel Magana Alfaro

Fourth runner up - Nikki Wu

GROUP IV (GRADES 10-12) ARTWORK PLACE WINNERS

First place - Abigail Short and Evelyn Bueschgen

Second place - Angel Magana Alfaro, Philia Walker, and Sarah Sweeten

Third place - Kayla Herrman and Lauren Holladay

GROUP III (GRADES 7-9) ARTWORK PLACE WINNERS

First place – Julia Boyer, Nikki Wu, and Connelly Sexton

Second place – Ava Dawson and Tulah Crumer

Third place - Amalia Steblynenko, Charlotte Gibbes, and Ella Kay

Julia worked on this piece consistently every day for two straight months – even after school. She's a perfectionist. You can tell by looking at her piece.

This is so exciting; it is the first time in my teaching career I've had a student make it this far in this competition. I'm just over the moon!"

– BARBARA RICHARDSON, SOA Fine Arts teacher

CULTURE

CAROLINA PARK ELEMENTARY EXPLORES BRAZIL



Mrs. Snyder, Mrs. Anderson, and Mrs. Haugaard's 2nd grade classes at Carolina Park Elementary School learned about countries and cultures all over the world this year! They learned all about Brazil from special guest, Dr. Evandro Valente. He taught students about life as a child in Brazil, Brazilian cuisine, the currency, geography, traditions, and special goods that are made there. He sent in many artifacts and resources for students to explore. One of their second graders is also from Brazil! She sent in different words from the Portuguese language and translated them with each class. Amamos o Brasil!



Unity Day at Minnie Hughes

Students at Minnie Hughes Elementary celebrated Unity Day by wearing orange clothing to promote kindness, acceptance, and inclusion.

Students at St. John's building relationships with police officers one conversation at a time

St. John's High School students had honest and frank conversations with members of the Charleston Police Department (CPD) this year. These talks, called Community Circles, are part of a department initiative that puts officers in front of Charleston County School District (CCSD) students so that a structured dialogue can be used to bridge the gap between communities and law enforcement.

Master Police Officer Adam Deming is in his fourth year as the School Resource Officer at St. John's and facilitates the Community Circles. The idea came about last year before COVID-19 shut down schools and before the nation witnessed the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota on May 25. Floyd's passing was the latest in a series of high-profile killings of unarmed Black people by police in the country.

According to Deming, the Community Circles were designed simply to provide a safe place for open discussion where students could ask questions, not just of him but of other police officers as well.

"I wanted the students to come and share and feel that they could be open and comfortable," said Deming. "There will be instances where a student may interact with law enforcement outside of school and I want them to have a positive experience with the next officer they come in contact with."

At St. John's the theme is "stronger together." Principal Steve Larson believes in giving his students a voice and with this endeavor, he hopes the takeaway is that "we're all in this together."

The students in attendance are allowed to participate with parent permission. On average there are about 25 students in attendance and the hope is that the circle will continue to grow.

Working with Director of Student Engagement Theresa Griffith and Instructional Coach Leslie McLaughlin, Deming was able to use the structure of the program to introduce students to his colleagues at the department. The format of the Community Circles follows the school's belief in restorative practices that addresses the needs of the whole student. There are set expectations of the circle keeper, the students, and the officers.

"We're creating activists and future leaders," said Griffith. "We



Ofc. Jose Bordallo and senior Bruna De Jesus



Community Circles

McLaughlin added the students can take the skills they are learning through this process to the outside world and use them in their everyday lives.

For St. John's senior Bruna De Jesus, Community Circles are a safe place to ask questions and have productive dialogue.

De Jesus explained that students pick the topics they want to discuss, prior to each meeting. Those topics range from police brutality, to how officers feel about how society views them, to general policing policies. Not all of the topics are law enforcement related, however. Social media, current events, and typical teenage concerns are also discussed.

"A lot of students had a prior mindset about police officers," said De Jesus. "As they got to know the officers, their minds changed and they realized these men and women were more than just a uniform or someone in authority. The conversations can be tough but they take place in a respectful way."

Ofc. Jose Bordallo is Latino and a Johns Island native. He is also the Latin liaison for CPD. Bordallo was chosen to participate in the Community Circle so that he could create connections with the Latino students at St. John's.

"It's good for the students to see a Latino officer in uniform serving his community," said Bordallo. "I am from John's Island so I am easily able to help provide resources and connections to things the students and their families may need."

Bordallo said he has witnessed an increased comfort level with

access to us, should they need an officer," said Bordallo.

De Jesus said the experience has been positive for her and she is learning about policy.

"Knowing my rights and the policies that officers and departments must follow makes me feel safe," said De Jesus. "I know what I should and should not do and being armed with knowledge makes me feel safe."

CPD Lt. Jeff Harrison described the conversations as restorative because questions are raised, answers are given, and a better understanding is the end result.

The first Community Circle lasted three hours, and according to Harrison, it set the tone for being open and honest.

"We're seeing barriers being broken down and the students are getting more personal and interactive," said Harrison. "They are not as guarded and feel like they can ask us anything."

De Jesus has also formed a bond with SRO Deming and feels empowered to go to him with questions or concerns outside of the Community Circle. She said the experience has allowed her to feel connected to the other officers that participate as well.

"Communication is a great way to de-stigmatize everything," said De Jesus. "It changes the opinions we may have had growing up."

Swarkena Foggy, a junior, was nervous at first. After seeing her classmates make the leap and actively participate in the Community Circle, she jumped in with questions of her own.

CCSD educators nationally recognized in Black History Month SEL video series

Seven Charleston County School District educators were nationally recognized during Black History Month in February. Committee for Children, a non-profit best known for its innovative social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum, Second Step, hosted a national Black History Month video series celebrating Black educators. All elementary and middle schools in CCSD have Second Step, facilitating evidence-based lessons in social, emotional wellness.

Jennifer Coker, Executive Director of the Department of Alternative Programs and Services, was thankful to the Committee for Children for providing this platform.

"We are so incredibly proud for the voices of these seven incredible Black Educators in Charleston to be elevated and honored by the Committee for Children during Black History Month. We know the value and excitement these educators bring to their schools and children every day. We understand the powerful impact this can have for our students of color to see and hear from educators that look like them. We are appreciative of the work they do every day in CCSD and are thrilled to share these incredible people with the rest of the world."

— JENNIFER COKER, Executive Director of the Department of Alternative Programs and Services

Educators willing to participate submitted videos to Committee for Children detailing their experiences, careers, successes, and hopes for the future.

"It's an honor to use Committee for Children's platform to celebrate such phenomenal Black educators and amplify their voices during Black History Month," said Shauna McBride, vice president of public relations and communications at Committee for Children. "We're thrilled to elevate the stories and experiences of those who are working diligently to develop the next generation of Black leaders and innovators."



THE FOLLOWING CCSD EDUCATORS WERE RECOGNIZED:

- Andrea Gadsden, Assistant Principal at Jerry Zucker Middle School
- Barbara Moses, Behavior Support Teacher, Pepperhill Elementary School
- Kylene Gerideau-Grant, Business Education/Computer Science Teacher Career & Technical Education at Jerry Zucker Middle School
- Naquita Page-Dawson, School Counselor at Jerry Zucker Middle School
- Sharese Pearson-Bush, Strings Teacher, Northwoods Middle School
- Shnickaqua Mustipher, Assistant Principal at Carolina Park Elementary School
- Shujuan Shannon, School Counselor, C.E. Williams Middle North Campus
- Wanda Izzard, Teacher, Sanders-Clyde Elementary School



C.E. Williams Ambassadors

C. E. Williams Middle School 6th Grade Ambassadors did a wonderful job showing 5th graders (and future Wolverines) around the campus at the end of the school year.

CCSD AWARDED \$12 MILLION GRANT FOR CULTURAL COMPETENCY TRAINING



OFFICE OF Elementary & Secondary Education

Charleston County School District (CCSD) was awarded an Education Innovation & Research (EIR) grant from the U.S. Department of Education. It is a five-year grant worth \$12 million.

The purpose of EIR is to generate and validate solutions to persistent educational challenges and to support the expansion of effective solutions. The grants encourage entrepreneurial, evidence-based, field-initiated innovations to improve student achievement and, rigorously evaluate such innovations.

This year, for the first time, the U.S. Department of Education sought projects centered on teacher choice in professional learning.

CCSD's grant project focuses on teacher choice in cultural competency training. Teachers will receive an allowance to choose their own professional learning. After attending training, teachers will provide feedback so the district can collectively build a resource bank of cultural competency training.

This professional development will serve as an extension of the Board of Trustees' plans to train all CCSD employees in Cultural Competency. Training at the district level will differ from the school level. For example, teachers and school administrators have more direct interaction with students and their families, while district leaders must develop wide-range strategies that benefit communities throughout the district

"Empowering our educators with authentic professional learning of their choosing supports our commitment to developing our teachers while developing our understanding across cultural differences, inclusive practices, and conversations that will remove barriers faced by our students, said Dr. Abby Woods, a member of CCSD's Cultural Competency Team, who is serving as an advisor for the EIR grant.

The project involves research to see if the training makes a difference in the classroom. The goal is to create a culturally competent learning environment that adapts to and values diversity and institutionalizes cultural knowledge. Project outcomes include improved school climate, improved student engagement, and improved student achievement.

"This is an incredible opportunity for Charleston County," said Don Kennedy, CCSD's Chief Financial and Administrative Officer. "The innovative aspect of this project allows CCSD to explore our work on improving the cultural competency of our workforce and our students. The fact that the project strategies will be teacher-led ensures the greatest possible outcomes for preparing our students to live effectively in a multicultural world."

The initial schools chosen to participate in the project were from District 3 and District 23: 5,765 students and 433 teachers at Baptist Hill Middle/High, Camp Road Middle, E.B. Ellington Elementary, Harbor View Elementary, James Island Charter High, James Island Elementary, Jane Edwards Elementary, Minnie Hughes Elementary, Murray-LaSaine Montessori, and Stiles Point Elementary.

A team including teachers, principals, assistant principals, and instructional coaches, developed the competitive grant application. Lakevia Mills, CCSD Teacher of the Year is a member of the grant team.

"This grant will allow teachers to have access to the latest methods, strategies, and pedagogy to help us deliver dynamic content to support diverse learners within our classrooms," said Mills.

The grant team met with community organizations to develop the project. Partners include Charleston Forum, Charleston Shared Future, College of Charleston's Avery Research Center, Gullah Geechee Cultural Heritage Corridor Commission, Sophia Institute's Social Justice Racial Equity Collaborative, South Carolina Department of Education, South Carolina State

University, Tri-County Cradle to Career Collaborative, and YWCA.

According to Brian Duffy, Charleston Forum committee member, a recent survey of local residents done by Charleston Forum found an across-the-board recognition for the need for equitable access to quality education.

"The District's thoughtful and successful grant proposal is an important step toward reaching our community's goal," said Duffy.

"We are honored to be one of only 28 educational organizations throughout the country to be awarded the grant, and only five of those being school districts. This grant will allow us to tap into our greatest assets - our community and our teachers - to come up with new ways to consider the unique, diverse cultures of Charleston in our teaching and learning. I am excited to see what we learn."

— KAROLYN BELCHER, CCSD Chief Academic Officer



Hispanic Month

In celebration of the National Hispanic Heritage Month, Hunley Park Elementary School counselor Mr. Myers, received some special guests to do a Hispanic traditional musical presentation on the morning news.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

2021 National Merit Scholarship recipients

CCSD had a total of 31 semifinalists, 30 finalists, and 24 scholarship winners in the 66th annual National Merit Scholarship Program

ACADEMIC MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL

College sponsored



Justin D. Baek
*National Merit College of
Charleston Scholarship*



Lillian S. Bluestein
*National Merit Emory
University Scholarship*



Owen C. Chapman
*National Merit
University of South
Carolina Scholarship*



Landon C. Ethredge
*National Merit Clemson
University Scholarship*



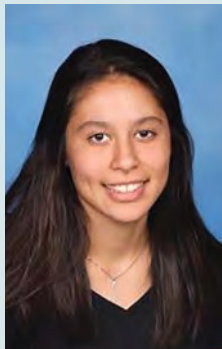
Adam J. Gatch
*National Merit Clemson
University Scholarship*



Simon J. Hughes
*National Merit Clemson
University Scholarship*



Kyle L. Jonsson
*National Merit Clemson
University Scholarship*



Ruth M. Liu
*National Merit Clemson
University Scholarship*



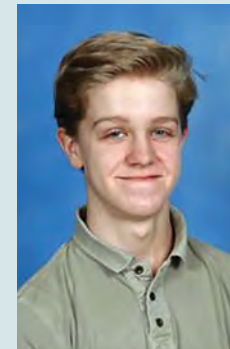
Charles R. Medlock
*National Merit Clemson
University Scholarship*



Karoline K. Surdyk
*National Merit Clemson
University Scholarship*



Molly C. Tippey
*National Merit Clemson
University Scholarship*



Porter D. Zach
*National Merit Clemson
University Scholarship*

ACADEMIC MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL

Corporate sponsored



Adam S. Frye
*National Merit State
Farm Companies
Foundation Scholarship*



Lily A. Lassiter
*National Merit South
Carolina Sports Medicine
and Orthopaedic Center
Scholarship*

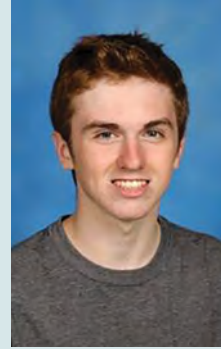


Simon Y. Li
*National Merit
Boeing Scholarship*

\$2,500 scholarships



Lydia R. Cox
*\$2,500 National Merit
Scholarship*



Brendan P. Elliott
*\$2,500 National Merit
Scholarship*



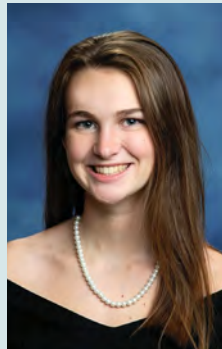
Ethan A. Ouellette
*\$2,500 National Merit
Scholarship*

WANDO HIGH SCHOOL

College sponsored



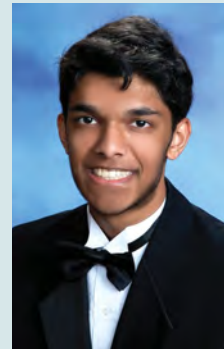
Cameron J. Boni
*National Merit Clemson
University Scholarship*



Claire P. Gaddy
*National Merit Florida
State University
Scholarship*

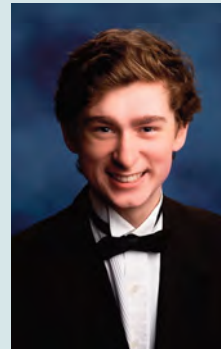


Montanna M. Lussier
*National Merit Clemson
University Scholarship*



**Hrishikesh M.
Namboodiri**
*National Merit Clemson
University Scholarship*

Corporate sponsored



Bo P. Suthon
*National Merit
Boeing Scholarship*



Audrey C. Wessinger
*National Merit South
Carolina Sports Medicine
and Orthopaedic Center
Scholarship*

About National Merit Scholarship Program

To become a Finalist, each Semifinalist had to complete a detailed scholarship application, which included writing an essay, describing leadership positions and contributions in school and community activities, showing an outstanding academic record, and being endorsed and recommended by a high school official. Semifinalists also had to take the SAT® or ACT® and earn scores that confirmed their performance on the initial qualifying test. From the Semifinalist group, about 15,000 attained Finalist standing, and about half of the Finalists were chosen to receive

National Merit Scholarships.

NMSC, a not-for-profit organization that operates without government assistance, was established in 1955 to conduct the National Merit Scholarship Program.

The majority of National Merit Scholarships offered each year are underwritten by some 400 independent corporate and college sponsors that support NMSC's efforts to honor the nation's scholastically talented youth and encourage academic excellence at all levels of education.

Congratulations to our 2021 CCSD Valedictorians!



Lily Adele Lassiter
Academic Magnet High



Kinsey Page
*Allegro Charter School
of Music*



Jessica Delgado
Baptist Hill Middle High



Kyla Cheyenne Hutchinson
Burke High



Kelsea Bridget Carmichael
*Charleston Charter School
for Math and Science*



Michelle Kristen Schultze
*Charleston County School
of the Arts*



Aaliyah Candace Head
Greg Mathis Charter High



Katelyn Grace Xiangmeng
Wyandt
James Island Charter High



Kaytron Aziyah Holmes
Military Magnet Academy



Theresa Davanna Jones
North Charleston High



Hunter Don Kirby
R.B. Stall High



Bruna Vitoria Messias
De Jesus
St. John's High



Aaron James Lemke, Jr.
Wando High



Elise Morgan Petit
Wando High



Katie Ann Fulmer
West Ashley High

“ACE” STUDENT AT BURKE RECEIVES \$20,000 SCHOLARSHIP

Burke High School senior Kaiasia Williams has pursued an engineering career for several years. This spring, her pursuit of that goal became a little easier thanks to a \$20,000 CMiC-Allen Berg Memorial Scholarship from the ACE (Architecture, Construction, and Engineering) Mentor Program of America. Williams is one of 37 students nationwide to receive this particular scholarship.

The CMiC—Allen Berg Memorial awards are worth between \$4,000 and \$20,000 (and a total of \$400,000 this year). They are named in honor of the late founder of the construction management software company CMiC. The scholarships are intended to assist talented and deserving students planning to study architecture, engineering, or construction in college.

Williams will study Mechanical Engineering at Clemson University in the fall. She participated in Clemson’s Architecture Career Camp during the summer before her junior year.

The scholarship competition is competitive. From among 10,000 students nationwide, each of ACE’s 77 national affiliates could nominate one student. Nominees went through a two-stage review process assessing their merit and financial need. Kaiasia has participated for three years in the program run by ACE’s Greater Charleston affiliate.

“I am so excited for Kaiasia and her gaining scholarship support from the ACE Mentoring Program,” said Burke’s Career and Technology Education Chair, Roy Joe Kemp. “It’s a golden opportunity for young people and is a reminder that not only are these professionals building our infrastructure through commercial and residential projects, but they are also building our future - and the futures of their industry - through investment in outstanding students like Kaiasia.

Since its start in 1994, the ACE Mentor Program nationwide has awarded \$23 million in scholarships to help its students with post-secondary education and skilled crafts training. ACE is supported at the national and local levels by major companies in the integrated construction industry.



Kaiasia Williams

AMHS scholar earns full scholarship to attend Notre Dame



Rey Ortiz Bautista

Students from Academic Magnet High School (AMHS) earn significant amounts of money in scholarships every year to attend prestigious colleges and universities throughout the United States. Rey Ortiz Bautista joined the long list of Raptors moving on to institutions of higher learning on a full-ride; the senior at AMHS will attend the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, IN thanks to the funding he received through QuestBridge’s National College Match Scholarship (Match Scholarship).

Bautista is one of over 18,500 applicants in QuestBridge’s 2020 Match Scholarship program, one of 6,885 Finalists to be considered for the Match Scholarship, and one of 1,464 students (highest number since the program started in 2003) who have been recognized as Match Scholarship Recipients.

Bautista is interested in studying pre-med and economics at the college level; he plays soccer and is part of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. “Rey Ortiz Bautista is an extraordinarily deserving young man and this scholarship recognition confirms all of our hopes and expectations for Rey’s future,” said Principal Catherine Spencer. “He has challenged himself with eight Advanced Placement

courses over his high school career while maintaining an exceptional GPA. We are certainly not surprised that he merited the attention of the University of Notre Dame, and we could not be prouder of this Raptor!”

The Match Scholarship is offered as part of a financial aid package provided by the college that covers the full cost of attendance, including tuition, room and board, books and supplies, and travel expenses.

The 2020 Match Scholarship recipients have an average unweighted GPA of 3.93, and 94 percent are in the top 10 percent of their graduating class. Of the students who reported standardized testing, 82 percent scored above 1260 on the SAT and 84 percent scored above 27 on the ACT. Financially, 87 percent qualify for free or reduced-price school meals.

The majority of these new QuestBridge Scholars (78 percent) are among the first generation in their families to attend a four-year college in the United States.

Since 2003, the QuestBridge National College Match has successfully connected over 8,850 students with full scholarships at college partners. These 2020 Match Scholarship Recipients become the first QuestBridge Scholars for the Class of 2025. Based on previous years, it is estimated that over 2,000 Finalists will be admitted to QuestBridge college partners later in the year through Early and Regular Decision processes.

Two West Ashley High students awarded NJROTC scholarships



Darius Brown (*left*) and Saniyah Drayton (*right*)

Darius Brown and Saniyah Drayton, two West Ashley High School (WAHS) NJROTC cadets, were recognized in a ceremony to celebrate their academic achievements. Each received \$180,000 in scholarships to continue their educational careers at the post-secondary level.

To be eligible, the student-cadets had to meet rigorous academic and physical requirements, answer essay questions, and complete a 20-page application. Upon graduation, both will be required to serve for a minimum of five years as officers in the United States Navy.

ROTC Instructor Davis described the honors as rare.

“Both Saniyah and Darius received the scholarship not only because they were deserving but also because they were two of our top ranking, motivated, hardest working cadets we have in the program,” said Davis. “It means a great deal to them because not only will they be able to receive a debt-free education but they will be able to serve the country as an officer in the United States Navy.”

Brown said he decided to apply for the Navy Preparatory Program Scholarship because it offered an extra year of college to sharpen important skills that will be necessary to succeed in college and the military.



Two WAHS students receive \$180,000 in scholarships

“I was very happy when I found out I got the scholarship,” said Brown. “It gave me a sense of relief and reassurance that all of the hard work my mom and I put in paid off.

Drayton said she applied for the scholarship because college loans were not an option for her. If a scholarship wasn't available, she was willing to directly enlist.

“I hope that the students at West Ashley High or anywhere can find some motivation from my achievement to take whatever they're passionate about and become great with it,” Brown added. “You never know what kind of benefits can come from it.”

Parnell-Glover selected to 2021 Congress of Future Medical Leaders

Burke High School student Alexia Parnell-Glover was recognized for academic excellence and was selected as a Delegate representing Burke and the state of South Carolina at the 2021 Congress of Future Medical Leaders. This program has strict requirements for selection which include a minimum 3.5 GPA and College Board selection high PSAT score.

“Alexia is an extremely talented student both in the classroom and in extracurricular activities,” said Principal Cheryl Swinton. “She’s a strategic basketball player and leader. I can’t wait to see where her intellectual promise will take her.”

The National Academy of Future Physicians and Medical Scientists was chartered as a nonpartisan, taxpaying institution to help address the growing shortage of primary care doctors and specialists, by working to identify, encourage and mentor students who wish to devote their lives to the service of humanity as physicians, medical scientists, technologists, engineers, and mathematicians.

“You make the path you take,” said Parnell Glover. “Either you’re going to stop and make it a dead-end or keep going.”



Alexia Parnell-Glover

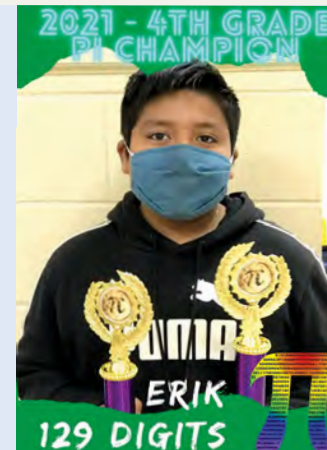


Students earning string ninja belts

These Cario Park strings students earned their string ninja belts by practicing and performing musical selections of advancing degrees of difficulty. Kaygo is the first Coyote to earn a black belt!

Pinehurst Pi Champions!

A tremendous congratulation goes out to the Pinehurst Elementary School fourth and fifth Grade Pi Champions for the 2020-2021 school year. Erik in Ms. Primiano's class is the fourth Grade Pi Champion with reciting 129 digits of Pi and Alexandra in Ms. Osha's class is the fifth grade Pi Champion with reciting 165 digits of Pi. Awesome job teachers and students!



CCSD student discovers unsung heroes who changed the world

Nicholas Turco, a Charleston County School of the Arts sixth-grader, was named a \$1,000 winner of the Lowell Milken Center (LMC) for Unsung Heroes' annual Discovery Award competition – Outstanding Elementary School Award.

Turco's research led to his documentary Discoveries for the Centuries, sharing the struggles and achievements of unsung hero Mary Anning. Anning defied sexism in the scientific community as a successful fossil collector and paleontologist who made several discoveries that changed paleontology forever. Carolina Park Elementary School teacher Mary Huffman encouraged Turco to complete the project while he was in her fifth-grade class last year.

"As Mary Anning had perseverance facing poverty, I had perseverance completing the project," said Turco. "That goes to show that everyone should follow Mary Anning's example always having the proper mindset. Mary Anning did not have fame or riches, yet she lived her life to her best and truly did her impact on Earth. We should not just have perseverance and motivation, we should also have the attitude of being content with what we have and make a change on Earth, not wanting riches in the process. Mary Anning demonstrated this extraordinarily."

"Nicholas has always been a hard worker, but his strong work ethic really shined during our COVID lockdown in the spring because he was completing his schoolwork along with research for this Discovery Award," said Huffman. "Nicholas and I conferenced using Zoom at least six times throughout his presentation development process to make sure that his research included the passion of Mary Anning along with evidence to support her accomplishments."

LMC awarded elementary, middle, and high school students a total of \$13,000 in cash prizes in its



Nicholas Turco

2019-20 Discovery Award competition. The international competition is designed to inspire students by prompting them to conduct primary and secondary research projects on unsung heroes from history whose accomplishments remain largely unknown to the public.

The \$13,000 in cash prizes can be used in any way students see fit. Due to COVID-19, students were notified about their winnings via video call.

LMC's Discovery Award provides U.S. and international students in grades 4-12 a unique opportunity. Projects can take the form of documentary/multimedia, performance, or website and require robust research, an annotated bibliography, and a process paper. The unsung heroes' stories must show potential for life beyond the development of the project, and an ability to inspire students and others to take sustainable actions that carry out the legacies of their subjects.

"In modern-day society people have lost sight of their spark," said Turco. "If we only just listen and see what people did in the past so magnificently, then our society would be magnificent. Mary Anning was only eleven years old when she found her spark, now it takes decades for people to find their spark. Some people may disagree with this statement, but having humility in this day of age will have everyone bring change as Mary Anning did. Therefore, let's listen and study not just Mary Anning, but all of the unsung heroes throughout time so we can make ourselves heroes to make an impact."

"Real heroes' tower and guide," said LMC Founder Lowell Milken. "But their stories need to be discovered and heard. When we do, we have the opportunity to motivate new generations to aspire to values that are essential during the challenging times we face individually, as a nation, and as a world community."

Early College High School hosts graduation for inaugural class



One hundred students walked onto the Early College High School (ECHS) campus in 2017, daring to successfully complete a program new to the district. That first year, 20 students left before the tenth day of school, and over the years others moved away from Charleston. Four years later, 71 remain. All of those students graduated with a high school diploma and nearly half with an associate's degree.

The school is a small, personalized learning program for students enrolled in Charleston County School District (CCSD). ECHS is a partnership between CCSD and Trident Technical College (TTC). Early College High School serves students who have the academic potential, desire, and determination to be successful in high school and beyond.

Located on TTC's Palmer Campus in downtown Charleston, priority is given to those who would be first-generation college students, (but all students are invited to apply).

Students from all over the district make up this diversified program. They must master the art of balancing their time between high school work, college work, and extra-curricular activities.

Instructional Coach Jennifer Houston explained that even if students don't achieve an associate's degree, their earned credits are transferable so students can continue their course of study.

"Each student here has it in them to be successful in college-level courses," said Houston. "We just provide the support in order for them to tap into what they already have. We can offer all the support they need to be the best potential student they can be."

This first graduating class has a lot to brag about:

- 100% on-time graduation rate
- 29 associate's degrees (41%)
- 3,149 transferable college credits earned

Principal Vanessa Denney said that the school was designed based on models in other parts of the state and over the last four years, has morphed into something unique.

"This school has become what it is because of our student body and this first graduating class," said Denney. "The legacy they are leaving defines Early College. Everything that is the Early College way is because of this group of kids and who they are and who their parents are."

Assistant Principal Barrett Reese said the success of these students was a "family" effort.

"Every staff member is 100 percent dedicated to helping our students and teachers go above and beyond," said Reese. "Our families support each other and our students other students. All of that plays a role. We truly are a family, and we understand the importance of the work we do here at Early College."

Reese added that students have to "buy in" so that the faculty can support their dreams.

"Our families are so grateful for having this opportunity," said Denney. "They know how special this is and what they are accomplishing."

Senior Ivy Grinnage said that everyone at the school supported her and that her biggest motivation was not wanting to disappoint her mother. She also knows that she would be doing something for herself.

Grinnage learned about the program in ninth grade. A student at Garrett Academy, Grinnage was nervous to leave her home school that she loved so much. She was encouraged by Principal Denney, and once she enrolled, she committed to the Teach Local program to further her goal of becoming a teacher. Grinnage will come back to CCSD once she graduates from Winthrop University and teach in the very district she was educated in.

"My mom was a teacher for ten years and her word on the importance of an education meant everything to me," said

It was a leap of faith but on that first day of school, Grinnage saw a classmate she already knew in her homeroom who graciously introduced her to everyone. That moment made her feel like she had been welcomed into the family.

Dawn Althen, Senior Class Advisor, said it's been interesting to see so many kids work together as they navigate Early College.

"These students have been so successful because of the way they support each other," said Althen. "Having that experience and understanding what it is like to support each other will carry them through college because the best way to be successful is to band together and support each other."

When James Carter looks back at his time as a student at Early College he credits staff, family, and friends for his success.

"A friend's mother was excited about the new school and encouraged me to apply," said Carter. "In fact, she applied for me, followed by my own mother. Over the last four years, my mother reminded me constantly about how special this opportunity was."

Carter said he knew going in that the rigor would be tremendous. He began taking college courses in his sophomore year.

"I knew from the beginning had to give it my all," said Carter. "I was able to handle the load because I quickly became accustomed to the procedure and was able to learn how to balance my time," said Carter. "The teachers here have your back 100 percent and are with you every step of the way, and treat you like a family instead of just another student."

Wylen Cortez considers himself as a prototype, an original. He added that he struggled at first, but his teachers were there for him.

"You don't know what it is like until you go through it," said Cortez. "At Early College, you have to put in the work."

Grinnage agreed that taking college courses on top of high school classes was difficult. She found comfort, however, in knowing that she had a voice and listening ears in the adults around her.

"I thank my teachers and principal who was there for me as I conquered challenges both academically and personally," said Grinnage. "It goes beyond teaching us the curriculum. These teachers became our school moms, our friends, and someone we will remember for the rest of our lives."

Denney said it has been amazing to see Early College become everything she knew it could be and to see the students become who she knew they could be.

"This class is so special because they have proven what some may have thought was impossible," said Denney. "They haven't shied away from their responsibility. Their legacy goes beyond these students being first-generation graduates. Each student has a story of struggle of doubt, victory, and triumph. They might have faced their challenges in very different ways but they represent kids who persevered."

Althen agreed, describing the students as pioneers.

"I watched them struggle, procrastinate, and everything else normal high school students do," said Althen. "But they are good at rallying and catching up when they get behind."

Reese has been the assistant principal for only two years. He too is a first-generation college student and describes Early College as a tremendous opportunity.

"Education itself is part of social change," said Reese. "Early College has the tremendous power to direct that social change."

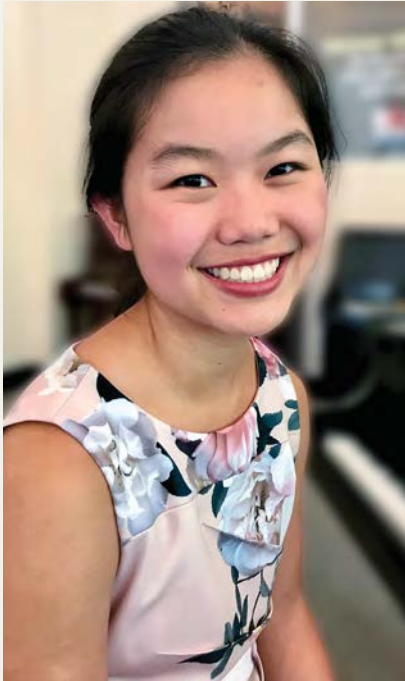
"I know this program is the best thing that can happen to a student," said Cortez. "No other experience can replace it."

"This school has become what it is because of our student body and this first graduating class. The legacy they are leaving defines Early College. Everything that is the Early College way is because of this group of kids and who they are and who their parents are."

— VANESSA DENNEY, Early College High School Principal



Academic Magnet's Lily Lassiter honored as 2021 U.S. Presidential Scholar



Lily Lassiter

Lily Lassiter, her family, and the Academic Magnet High School (AMHS) community celebrated a major honor; the senior is a 2021 United States Presidential Scholar. The U.S. Department of Education announced the 57th class of U.S. Presidential Scholars today. This award is considered one of the nation's highest awards for students.

Lassiter is one of two U.S. Presidential Scholars from South Carolina this year, and she is the second Raptor in four years to receive this award (Jenny Yao was named a U.S. Presidential Scholar in 2018).

"Being recognized as a U.S. Presidential Scholar is an incredible honor," said Lassiter. "I am humbled and so grateful to everyone who has supported me over the years."

According to the U.S. Department of Education, approximately 6,000 of the 3.6 million high school students expected to graduate this year were identified as candidates for the program. The White House Commission on Presidential Scholars selects scholars annually based on their academic success, artistic and technical excellence, essays, school evaluations and transcripts, as well as evidence of community service, leadership and demonstrated commitment to high ideals.

Lassiter, who will attend Yale University in the fall, and the rest of the Presidential Scholars Class of 2021, will be recognized for their outstanding achievement by the White House this summer.

"Over the past four years, I have had the great pleasure of witnessing the continued growth and grace of this extraordinary young woman," added Principal Catherine Spencer. "Her academic achievement is only one piece

of her multifaceted accomplishment in the arts, service, and leadership. Lily and I have shared many special moments over the years, and this well-deserved recognition gives our entire Raptor community great pride."

With Lassiter earning finalist status for this honor, her sponsor, AMHS AP Physics I teacher Kirk Lindgren, was named a 2021 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program Distinguished Teacher.

As directed by Presidential Executive Order, the 2021 U.S. Presidential Scholars are comprised of one young man and one young woman from each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, and U.S. families living abroad, as well as 15 chosen at-large, 20 Scholars in the arts and 20 Scholars in career and technical education.

Created in 1964, the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program has honored over 7,600 of the nation's top-performing students. The program was expanded in 1979 to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, literary and performing arts. In 2015, the program was again extended to recognize students who demonstrate ability and accomplishment in career and technical education fields.

"The 2021 Presidential Scholars represent extraordinary achievements for our extraordinary times," said U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. "I am delighted to join President Biden in saluting these outstanding young people for their achievements, service, character and continued pursuit of excellence. Their examples make me proud and hopeful about the future. Honoring them can remind us all of the great potential in each new generation and renew our commitment to helping them achieve their dreams."

Heisman Scholarship program winner

Burke High school's Jacoby Johnson was chosen as a school winner of the Heisman High School Scholarship program.



Baptist Hill senior earns Legion of Valor Bronze Cross



Angel Simmons-Bocanegra

Baptist Hill Middle High School announced that Angel Simmons-Bocanegra was named a 2020 recipient of the Legion of Valor Bronze Cross for Achievement. This award is presented to top Army JROTC (Junior Reserve Officer's Training Corps) Cadets around the world during their senior year.

Baptist Hill's JROTC program continues its tradition of excellence; this is the fifth consecutive year a Bobcat cadet has earned this award from the Legion of Valor of the United States of America, Incorporated. Class of 2020 Valedictorian Nykara Heyward received the honor last school year.

Simmons-Bocanegra is one of three Cadets in South Carolina, and the only student from Charleston County School District (CCSD) and the Lowcountry to earn the honor this school year. Additionally, she is one of just 29 of the approximately 315,000 Army JROTC Cadets worldwide to receive the Legion of Valor Bronze Cross.

"I am very elated and equally humbled to receive this award," Simmons-Bocanegra said. "Representing CCSD adds to this honor. I have always given my best and worked hard to

do well. I am grateful to my family, friends, and teachers for supporting me."

Simmons-Bocanegra will formally receive the award and be promoted to the rank of Cadet Lieutenant Colonel and designated the Bobcat Battalion Commander of the Bobcat Battalion at a later date.

The Legion of Valor Bronze Cross Achievement Award, which was created in 1951, is awarded annually to senior JROTC Cadets. To be considered for this honor, Cadets must apply during their junior year and be in their third year of the Army JROTC. They must also be in the top 25 percent of their overall graduating class and Army JROTC class academically. Finally, Cadets have to demonstrate outstanding military leadership qualities.

Cadet Simmons-Bocanegra was nominated by Lt. Col. John McLeod, Senior Army Instructor of the school's JROTC program, and endorsed by the principal.

"Angel is one of the most well-rounded scholars and students-athletes here at Baptist Hill," stated Principal Dale Metzger. "She is a well-respected, high-performing scholar, leader, and is dual credit student with Trident Technical College. She has the complete respect of the faculty and her peers, and possesses great intellect, skills, confidence, and strength of character. I am proud that she is representing our school with this award."

"Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Simmons-Bocanegra is a mentor to other Cadets and students here at Baptist Hill, and a selfless team player," added Lt. Col. McLeod. "Her energy and smile are infectious and motivates her peers to do their best. She has faithfully and diligently performed and conducted herself well and exceeds all of my high expectations. She is a 'go-to' student and friend that everyone can count on."

Simmons-Bocanegra plans to attend college and dual major in Chemical Science and Marine Biology with the goal of working in both fields.

CCSD students place in Septima Clark Poetry Contest

Belle Hall Elementary School fifth-grader Adair Dombrowski won first place (at the elementary school level) in the (state-wide) third annual MUSC Septima Clark Poetry Contest in collaboration with Charleston Poet Laureate Marcus Amaker.

The theme was "Life During Covid." As a first place winner, Dombrowski received a Chromebook, hoverboard, and bicycle.

The awards ceremony featured the top three finalists from each division (elementary, middle, and high school) who read their poems.

Other Charleston County School District students who placed in the competition include:

- Christina Crowell of Charleston Development Academy Public Charter School – second place (Middle School)
- Callie Ingram of C.E. Williams Middle School – third place (Middle School)
- Bethany "Autumn" Rouse of Charleston County School of the Arts – third place (High School)

This annual contest honors acclaimed Charleston native, teacher, and "Grandmother of the Civil Rights Movement" Septima P. Clark (1898-1987) for her dedication to service, education, and equality. As a recipient of the 1979 Living Legacy Award from President and 2002 Nobel Prize Winner Jimmy Carter, she was known for developing literacy and citizenship workshops to promote civil rights and equality. She was also recognized by the State of South Carolina in 1982 with South Carolina's highest civilian award, known as the Order of the Palmetto.



Adair Dombrowski

NAME THE CRANE



Jaden Warren (*left*)
Promise Washington (*right*)

Jaden Warren, a 5th grader at Drayton Hall Elementary School, was one of five winners in the SC Port Authority's "Name the Cranes" Contest. His entry, "No Crane, No Gain," is the name of the middle of the 5 ship-to-shore cranes at the new Leatherman Port Terminal.

Third-grader student, Promise Washington, also won with her submission, Nifty Lifty.

She is a student at North Charleston Elementary School.

Students from around the Lowcountry have named South Carolina Ports' five ship-to-shore cranes at the Hugh K. Leatherman Terminal.

The names are on the massive blue cranes in big block letters: Nifty Lifty, Sir Lift-A-Lot, No Crane No Gain, South Craneolina, and The Reel Steel.

Students in Berkeley, Charleston, and Dorchester counties came up with these creative names as part of SC Ports' Name the Cranes contest. Third through fifth grade students submitted their suggestions for crane names. The selection process is anonymous.

"South Carolina Ports enjoys partnering with local schools to engage students and connect them to our operations and workforce. Our Names the Cranes contest is a really special way for students to connect with the port," SC Ports Chief Operating Officer Barbara Melvin said. "Students always come up with creative names for our cranes, and we hope that it sparks a lifelong connection to the maritime industry for them."

Cario students selected for Lowcountry Region Orchestra

Congratulations to the Thomas C. Cario Middle School Orchestra members selected to the 2020/2021 Low Country Region Orchestra.

String orchestra members auditioned to earn a place in the competitive Low Country Region Orchestra sponsored by the South Carolina Music Educator's Conference. There are three orchestras (6-8 grade orchestra, 9-10 grade orchestra, 11-12 grade Orchestra). If selected to this honors-level group, students get the opportunity to perform under the direction of guest conductors at the college level as well as composers of the literature the orchestra performs.

"Cario Middle School orchestra members have continuously been selected to Region Orchestra and SC All-State orchestra since the program began in 1999," said Orchestra director Pamela Heine. "I am proud to say many of them continue on as members of the Wando orchestra with involvement in Region and All-State Orchestra.

Congratulations to the following students: Rebekah Appleton (violin), Fisher Bond (bass), Natalie Gizzo (viola), Makoto Thompson (violin), Madison Villafane (violin), Davis Waites (violin) Maxwell Winters (cello), and Natalee Wright (cello).



Cario Middle School Orchestra 2020-2021

BUIST AND AMHS STUDENTS ADVANCE TO NATIONAL HISTORY DAY COMPETITION



Oliver Abar and Augustus Dickinson



Jack Oakman, Daniel Kagan, and Avery Bosier did a group documentary on the Navajo Code Talkers in WWII.

Students from Buist Academy and Academic Magnet High School won National History Day at the state level. This year's theme was "Communication in History: The Key to Understanding." The state contest was held virtually in April.

South Carolina History Day, the affiliate program for National History Day, engages elementary, middle, and secondary school students in historical research and analysis while developing essential skills. Students chose to present their research from different categories: paper, website, documentary, performance, or exhibit. Students compete at various levels of competition across the state before advancing to the national contest. The Department of History at Coastal Carolina University in the Edwards College of Humanities and Fine Arts supports this program throughout the state.

Liz Good was the team teacher for Buist Academy. Their project was a group documentary entitled "Key to US Victory in WW2." Students Avery Bosier, Daniel Kagan, and Jack Oakman participated.

Academic Magnet High School (AMHS) teacher Kimberly Zerbst led the team project, which was a group website entitled "Daniel Webster." Oliver Abar and Augustus Dickinson participated.

"We had the highest hopes for the success of these two students as we witnessed their dedication and commitment to producing an exceptional National History Day project," said Principal Catherine Spencer. "We look forward to their continued success at the national level as they represent AMHS and South Carolina with great style and purpose!"

Abar and Dickinson are juniors at AMHS. They have participated in NHD each year since middle school.

"It has allowed us to gradually hone and perfect our skills at historical thinking and reasoning," said Abar.

"We at AMHS have thoroughly enjoyed being a part of their academic journey and wish the best for them this year at the competition while looking forward to seeing next year's project as well," said Zerbst.

Good said that National History Day is an opportunity for teachers to engage students in rich historical content led by student choice and voice.

"Through the process, students practice rich historical thinking skills and conduct high-level research," said

Good. "I'm always amazed by my student's work product, dedication, and enthusiasm."

Buist Principal Shawntay White is proud of her scholars.

"Although there were many challenges this school year, they continue to excel and give their all to achieve success," said White. "Many thanks to Mrs. Good for encouraging students to dig deeper through research and to question everything. The skills that they are learning now will continue to benefit them as they further their education in high school and beyond."

Bosier, Kagan, and Oakman agree that it was a great learning experience.

"I loved learning about a new topic and collaborating with my group and my teacher," said Oakman. "NHD is great for students because it allows them to be a creative way to learn."

Kagan added that he was impressed that he could learn a foreign language at such an in-depth level.

"NHD was a great way to learn about different ways of communication," added Bosier. "I have been interested in cryptography, so learning about code talkers was fun. NHD is great for students across the nation because it allows them to connect with other students and be creative in their own way!"

"Although there were many challenges this school year, they continue to excel and give their all to achieve success. Many thanks to Mrs. Good for encouraging students to dig deeper through research and to question everything. The skills that they are learning now will continue to benefit them as they further their education in high school and beyond."

— SHAWNTAY WHITE, Buist Principal

Wando's Olivia Potter is the 2021 SC Scholastic Journalist of the Year



Olivia Potter

Olivia Potter, co-editor in chief of Legend, Wando High School's award-winning yearbook, was named the 2021 South Carolina Scholastic Journalist of the Year by the South Carolina Scholastic Press Association.

Potter graduated this year and is the sixth student from Wando to earn this honor in the 52-year history of the award, and the fourth Warrior to receive this award in the past five years. It is the highest honor a high school journalist can receive in the state.

"Potter has been an astounding asset and representative of Wando yearbook and our commitment to excellence," said Wando English teacher and yearbook adviser Phillip Caston. "Her work ethic and dedication to our program over the past three years has been incredible, and her leadership skills this year as a co-editor in chief were valuable as she guided our large staff through yearbook production during the pandemic. She serves as a role model to our younger staff members and leads them not only as a mentor and editor, but also like a big sister. She is protective, supportive, and celebratory of their accomplishments."

Potter completed an online portfolio of work ranging from writing, photography, design, editing, and entrepreneurship, as well as several letters of recommendation and a personal essay. Her portfolio can be viewed at <https://oliviapotterjoy.weebly.com/>.

Potter will receive \$500, and her portfolio will represent South Carolina in the Journalism Education Association's National Journalist of the Year competition.

"I have always looked up to the past winners from Wando so to be added to that list means a lot to me," Potter explained. "I definitely cried when Mr. Caston told me about the news in class. I wasn't expecting to win because there was some incredible competition but I am really proud of my portfolio and I'm lucky to be a part of such an amazing journalism program at Wando. From the upperclassmen who I met as a freshman that inspired me to pursue journalism, to my teachers that have believed in me and been there for me, I have had an incredible community that made this possible."

Potter will be honored by the SC Scholastic Press Association during a virtual ceremony scheduled for later this month.

"Olivia's commitment to journalistic endeavors, integrity, and work ethic define the essence of the Journalist of the Year award, and she is a superb representative of the state of South Carolina for this honor," added Caston.



Olivia Potter with parents



Keerthana Samuel

C.E. Williams' Keerthana Samuel defends CCSD Spelling Bee crown with virtual victory

C.E. Williams Middle School's Keerthana Samuel wasn't able to go to Washington, D.C. to compete in the Scripps National Spelling Bee last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This year, however, the seventh-grader captured her second straight district title by winning the virtual event.

CCSD made an abrupt pivot to host the annual spelling bee contest online on Thursday, February 11, 2021 rather than in-person. In an abundance of caution, it was determined that an online competition platform, designed by Scripps International, would be the safest avenue.

One fifth-grader from each elementary school and one student from each middle school earned a chance to compete in the CCSD competition. At the school level, administrators could conduct a socially distanced, in-person format or an online format.

CCSD's online completion was structured much like a traditional in-person competition. Students had 30 minutes to spell 25 words. The online format allowed the student to hear the word, see the word on their computer screen, and then provided the word's origin, part of speech, and a sentence that the word could be used.

Samuel was able to spell almost every word correctly, making her the clear winner.

SCHOOL AND DISTRICT AWARDS

Two CCSD schools repeat as Capturing Kids' Hearts National Showcase Schools



The Flippen Group recently announced Jerry Zucker Middle School and Laing Middle School are Capturing Kids' Hearts® (CKH) National Showcase Schools™ for the 2020-2021 school year. This is the fourth year in a row Zucker Middle has earned this distinction and the second year in a row (fifth overall) for Laing Middle.

This honor recognizes and celebrates schools that go the extra mile each day, creating social-emotional safety on school campuses conducive to learning. Only 325 schools across the nation were named National Showcase Schools™ this year.

“During this school year, more than ever, it has been crucial to

developing trusting relationships with our students and staff,” said Laing’s principal, Jay Whitehair. “This recognition represents that our faculty and staff are committed to building a culture of caring. It is an honor to work alongside such a wonderful group of professionals.”

Because of the rigor of the evaluation process, the Capturing Kids' Hearts® National Showcase School™ award is both a high aspiration and an exemplary recognition of excellence.

Capturing Kids' Hearts® campuses across the country are considered for this award based on the following criteria:

- Nomination based on observation by Flippen Group personnel
- Level of staff implementation of Capturing Kids' Hearts® processes as measured by online surveys
- Perceived climate and culture of the campus as measured by staff surveys
- A student survey to gauge their attitude and connectedness to school

“This year was definitely a challenge for us because our Zucker Middle School culture is built on connectedness - handshakes and hugs,” explained Principal Jake Perlmutter. “Since positive relationships are a core value of our school, our faculty and staff

found a way to make them a priority, even in the face of a pandemic. I’m very proud to accept this honor for the heroic work that they have done this year.”

Capturing Kids' Hearts® is the premier source of professional development for educators nationwide. Through experiential training, expert coaching, and personalized support, K-12 educators can implement transformational processes focused on social-emotional wellbeing, relationship-driven culture, and student connectedness.

Capturing Kids' Hearts® processes provide educators the skills they need to change the trajectory of students' lives. Campuses using these approaches consistently report improvements in academic, behavioral, and cultural outcomes.

According to the Flippen Group philosophy, when kids and teachers are connected, there is a significant positive transformational effect.

These campuses, including Jerry Zucker Middle School and Laing Middle School, will be honored and celebrated throughout the coming year as Capturing Kids' Hearts® National Showcase Schools™. In addition to public recognition, the campus has a banner to display their achievement proudly.

Principal's generosity draws national attention from NBC's Today Show

North Charleston High School (NCHS) Principal Henry Darby normally shies away from the limelight. However, a revelation of his generosity put him in the spotlight both locally and nationally. Darby, who is also a longtime county councilman, took on a third job with Walmart to help low-income students and families pay their bills. He was surprised with a \$50,000 donation from his part-time employer. The NBC Today Show was on hand to capture the moment.

Local media outlets learned recently that Darby took the job stocking shelves so that he could help the families in his school community. For Darby it was all about paying it forward.

Darby was born and raised in the Liberty Hill community and has seen first-hand the suffering caused by poverty. Darby wanted to try and find a way to help his students, if even in a small way.

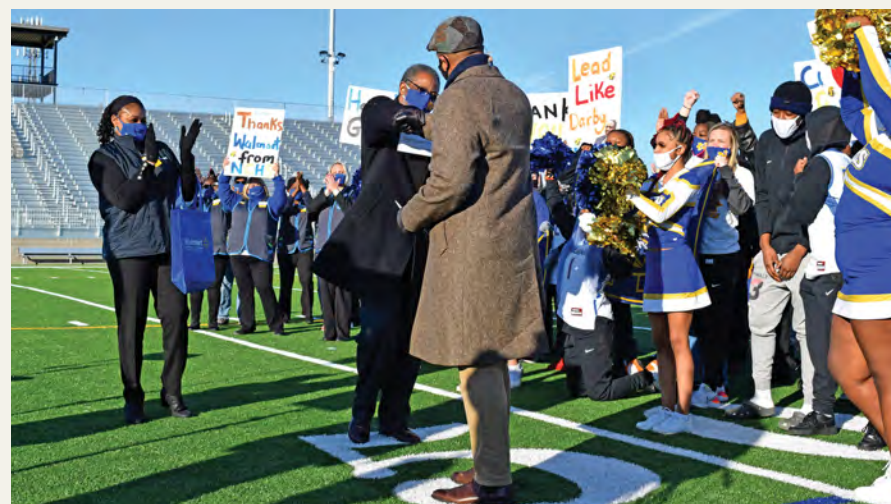
Darby quietly went to work and, when he was made aware, he used the money he earned at Walmart to provide for his students. Darby was interviewed by reporters, and his story inspired readers and viewers across the Lowcountry to contribute to the fund. Over \$50,000 has been donated by local citizens, in addition to the Walmart donation. Darby's efforts have also resulted in newly formed scholarships for the seniors at NCHS.

Darby is no stranger to holding multiple jobs. At one point in his life, he had four jobs for nine straight years. He is honored to be able to give back to his community. The real motivation, he said, is showing by example what the face of hard work looks like.

NCHS student Kalik Dickson described his principal as one of the hardest working people he knows.

“He will do whatever he has to do to give back to his community and his high school,” said Dickson.

Darby is beyond grateful for the donations that have been contributed by the public. Darby blushes at the attention he's received but is even more motivated, knowing he can help more families than



Principal Henry Darby honored

he initially dreamed of.

“All men and women are brothers and sisters,” said Darby. “If we can't help one another, then how can we help? I will keep on working at Walmart. My efforts are genuine and not for show. In spite of all the dollars we have accumulated, I plan to stay on.”

WANDO'S YEARBOOK RECEIVES ANOTHER PRESTIGIOUS HONOR



Wando High School's yearbook, known as Legend, is earning legendary status outside South Carolina. The Warriors' publication was named the 2020 Scroggins Award winner by the Southern Interscholastic Press Association (SIPA). Essentially, Wando's yearbook is the top yearbook in the South. The news comes four months after the Warriors received significant national recognition through the Quill and Scroll Yearbook Excellence Contest.

Wando has earned SIPA's Scroggins Award for the first time, which also goes to the top student newspaper, broadcast program, and literary magazine. The announcement came during the organization's annual conference and workshop.

SIPA is a scholastic journalism organization that started the University of South Carolina almost 100 years ago and now represents all student media throughout the Southeast region of the United States.

During SIPA's annual conference, student media organizations enter their work in a variety of contests.

Wando's 2020 volume of Legend, with the theme "Decide to Rise," earned Best in Show of all yearbooks represented at the SIPA conference. The Legend staff also broke their previous year's record in individual awards, picking up 43 total awards, including 19 first-place honors. The closest competitor to Wando's yearbook staff this year had 14 awards and five first-place recipients.

The following is a list of first-place awards from Wando in this year's SIPA conference:

- Academic Copy - Samantha Finkenber
- Community Copy - Mary Michael O'Hara
- Clubs Copy - Lily Higgins
- Theme Copy - Merritt Redden
- Club Photo - Anna Jane Morrall - Club Photo
- Environmental Portrait Photo - Joseph Grech
- First-year Student Photography - Olivia Estoppey
- Sports Reaction Photo - Joseph Grech
- Photography Portfolio - Joseph Grech
- Alternative Copy Spread - Katie Brown
- Club Spread - Harper Duffy
- Endsheet Design - Brynn Burke, Alexis Kramer, Olivia Potter
- Opening Spread Design - Brynn Burke, Alexis Kramer, Olivia Potter
- Section Divider - Brynn Burke, Alexis Kramer, Olivia Potter

- Sports Spread - Carlyn Garner
- Student Life Spread - Katie Brown
- Yearbook Design Portfolio - Clara Barresi
- Best Overall Team On-Site Production - Clara Barresi, Lily Higgins, Anna Jane Morrall, Millie Rice
- Best Design Team On-Site Production - Clara Barresi, Lily Higgins, Anna Jane Morrall, Millie Rice



The historic Legend volume and the 52-person staff were led by editors-in-chief Legare Kerrison, Erin O'Leary, and Merritt Redden (now freshmen at Tulane University, Centre College, and Clemson University, respectively).

ECCHS earns national honor as AVID Schoolwide Site of Distinction



Charleston County School District's Early College High School (ECHS) earned the Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID) Schoolwide Site of Distinction award this year, an honor given to a select few AVID schools for their extensive

commitment to providing students with ample college preparation and supportive resources.

ECCHS is one of just 344 of the 4,636 eligible secondary schools nationwide to receive this honor this year.

Schoolwide Site of Distinction is the highest rating that a school can achieve on the AVID certification rating scale and demonstrates schools' outstanding commitment to their students by ensuring equity and opportunity for all, providing rigorous academic opportunities, and implementing superb instructional practices to ensure success for first-generation college students.

ECCHS has been an AVID campus since opening in the 2017-2018 school year. Eighty-four percent of the staff members at ECCHS are AVID-trained, contributing to the fact that 100 percent of all current ECCHS students are on track to graduate in four years. Of the current 10th through 12th grade students, 92 percent have completed at least one college-level course (freshmen are not eligible

for enrollment in those classes). Ninety-one percent of the senior class have earned at least 20 college credits and 49 percent of the Class of 2021 will graduate high school with a full associate's degree.



Scholars at ECCHS have the opportunity to earn an associate's degree with Trident Technical College (the school is located on TTC's Palmer Campus in downtown Charleston) along with their high school diploma by the time they graduate.

"Early College is proud to have earned this distinction after just three years. We believe in the AVID principles and are honored to share them daily with our students," Principal Vanessa Denney said. "We know that the standards-based instruction that students receive in their AVID Elective class coupled with the AVID principles of Writing, Inquiry, Collaboration, Organization, and Reading employed in all ECCHS classes is key to our students' success now and in their

future endeavors."

AVID is the driving force behind every class offered through ECCHS. Each student is enrolled in an AVID elective class every year, and staff members are dedicated to teaching students the tools they need to be successful in every class, whether a high school or college-level course.

National publication honors family engagement initiative from North Charleston Elementary



North Charleston Elementary School is the first school from Charleston County School District to be featured in the annual National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) Promising Partnership Practices handbook. The Dolphins are in the 2020 edition thanks to their initiative, Painting on Purpose with Parents.

The publication provides other schools with quality examples of community engagement from schools, which create better educational atmospheres and opportunities for students and their families.

North Charleston Elementary School's (NCES) Painting on Purpose with Parents, which was held at the school in February 2020, linked artwork with behavioral goals of the school's PBIS (Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports) program. An art activity reinforced the underlying goal of PBIS to support students' positive behaviors and positive emotions about their own skills and talents. With a parent/guardian partner, students also gained immediate family support and encouragement during a fun experience.

"The project was important because painting is therapeutic and we wanted to offer families a wonderful experience and reward students," said Parent Advocate Tyra Johnson. "The school community is grateful because applying for an award or recognition is uncertain. However, we are overwhelmed with excitement to see our program highlighted in the Promising Partnership Practices handbook and to know we are the first school in our district to be recognized in this publication. We hope this will help other schools in CCSD pursue this kind of honor, and more importantly, increase their level of engagement with families."

Lucy Beckham High to provide financial literacy course through grant

Every student in the 10th grade at Lucy Beckham High School (LBHS) will be able to take a financial literacy class thanks to a \$10,000 grant from Next Gen Personal Finance. Next Gen Personal Finance's mission is to revolutionize personal finance instruction in all schools and improve the next generation of Americans' financial lives.

Bill Joy, a Mount Pleasant resident and long-term substitute teacher at LBHS, helped the school secure this grant. He has already been teaching financial literacy to sophomores at the school.

"This is truly a surprise and an amazing opportunity to build upon our goal of teaching kids financial literacy," Joy said. "It's an idea I've had for a long time, and I was thrilled to find out that there is a terrific organization that is already doing this."

"The class has been a real success so far, and little did we know that our goal of simply exposing our children to personal finance topics would turn into something much more," added Principal Anna Dassing.

Dassing says personal accountability and financial readiness align with the school's motto of "Intelligence, Integrity, and Involvement." Those attributes are also consistent with the beliefs of the school's namesake, the late Lucy Garrett Beckham, a former principal at Wando High School and educational pioneer in the Lowcountry.

"Lucy was focused on relationships and building student independence," explained Dassing. "We are thrilled that this grant will allow us to build on her legacy and, most importantly, prepare our kids for life after high school."



CCSD remains near the top of the state, above national average in SAT results

SAT results for the Class of 2020 released by The College Board released once again indicate Charleston County School District (CCSD) is ahead of the national average. CCSD's 2020 graduating class also ranked third (up from fifth in 2019 and eighth in 2018) in South Carolina, only behind York 4 (Fort Mill) and Pickens County.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE RESULTS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- 71.8 percent of CCSD's Class of 2020 took the SAT test (compared to the state average of 56 percent)
- CCSD earned an average of 543 in Evidence-based Reading and Writing (ERW) and 523

in Math for a total composite score of 1065. The state average for the Class of 2020 is 519-499-1019, and the national average is 520-510-1030.

- Among the 10 largest districts in South Carolina, CCSD had the highest SAT composite average. CCSD is also the highest-ranking district in the lower part of the state.
- Academic Magnet High School had the highest SAT composite score among all high schools in South Carolina.
- Composite scores in seven CCSD schools improved from the year before
- More CCSD seniors took the SAT than in previous years, with the percentage of seniors tested increasing by 3.7 percentage points.

CCSD High School 2020 SAT Composite Scores

High School	% Seniors Tested	Composite Score	Change from last year
Academic Magnet	97.7%	1368	-18
Baptist Hill	27.7%	892	-1
Burke	53.5%	827	-27
Charleston County SOA	89.1%	1166	+19
Charleston Charter SMS	75.0%	1054	+25
Garrett Academy	13.8%	864	+52
James Island Charter High	73.1%	1055	-13
Military Magnet Academy	62.1%	892	+25
North Charleston	23.7%	848	+54
R.B. Stall	61.7%	857	-58
St. John's	45.8%	889	+38
Wando	84.7%	1131	-2
West Ashley	69.9%	954	+16

CONGRATULATIONS TO CCSD STAFF AND STUDENTS

BEST Grant Winners: 133 CCSD educators were awarded a 2020-21 Bosch Eco+STEM Teacher (BEST) grant. The teachers collaborated on 66 winning grants valued at \$118,000. The BEST Grant Program supports innovative inquiry-based learning experiences by awarding grants of up to \$2,000 to PreK-Grade 12 educators. This is the first year that CCSD educators have been eligible to apply for the BEST Grant Program which is being rolled out in communities where Bosch has a corporate presence



BOSCH
Invented for life

BEST TEACHER GRANTS
Powered by Bosch Community Fund

LITERACY

LOCAL INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKER VISITS BUIST



Motivational speaker Chris Singleton

The students at Buist Academy for Advanced Studies were treated to a special guest. Motivational speaker Chris Singleton read his latest book *Different: A Story About Loving Your Neighbor*.

The book teaches kids that differences - whether through race, nationality, gender, or more - are something to accept and celebrate.

Singleton, a Goose Creek native, is a former professional baseball player in the Chicago Cubs organization as well as an inspirational speaker who has traveled the country speaking to over 60,000 students. He graduated from Charleston Southern University, and now works for the Charleston RiverDogs.

Singleton's mother, Sharonda Coleman Singleton, was murdered along with eight other victims at Mother Emanuel AME church in Downtown Charleston, on June 17, 2015, by an individual who wanted to start a race war in the United States.

Singleton inspired his city and the nation by forgiving the man who murdered his mother and stating that "Love is stronger than hate." He inspires his audiences through his personal experiences of adversity and his belief that God can guide them through any storm they go through.



Buist Academy students being inspired

Daniel Jenkins Academy Teacher invites NYT Bestselling author into the English Classroom



J. Elle, *New York Times* bestselling author

When Monique Collins, an English teacher at Daniel Jenkins Academy, invited J. Elle, a *New York Times* Bestselling author, to speak with her students, she was ecstatic when the author agreed. "I knew this would be an amazing opportunity," said Collins.

Collins wanted her students to meet an acclaimed author who looked like them and wrote about characters who represented their cultures. "Diversity and inclusion are critical in education," said Collins. "Students need to see themselves in the authors and in the books they read."

As a Charleston native and an African-American English teacher, Collins personally understood the need for diversity and representation in the classroom. Representation she found lacking in

her classrooms as a child.

She scheduled J. Elle's first visit during Black History Month.

"February is the start of the new semester, but I want my students to see themselves in books every day."

J. Elle, the debut author of *Wings of Ebony*, visited Daniel Jenkins Academy for the first time on February 23, 2021. Her visits will be held virtually. J. Elle will speak to students about creative writing, her new novel, and finding their voice.

Students at Daniel Jenkins Academy will be reading *Wings of Ebony* in English classrooms and in Book Clubs. They will meet with the author periodically, as they reach reading milestones.

Dunston Poetry Club students enter MUSC competition



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. 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.

"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	Fourth Grade	Fifth Grade
Nathaniel Read	Jessyree Manuel- Santiago	Estefani Rivera Garcia
Saria Aikens	Lonnashia Smalls	Kamori Jenkins
Yesenia Zavaleta Osorio	Ryleigh Brown	Kevin Ramirez-Valazquez



Heidi Benton receiving Intellectual Freedom award

JBE librarian receives 2021 Intellectual Freedom Award

Heidi Benton, James B. Edwards Elementary School (JBE) teacher-librarian, received the 2021 Intellectual Freedom Award from the South Carolina Association of School Librarians (SCASL).

This award recognizes those who advocate for the First Amendment Rights of students, teachers, and citizens of South Carolina. The South Carolina Association of School Librarians supports and upholds the U.S. Constitution, the American Library Association's Library Bill of Rights, and the freedom to read. The Intellectual Freedom Award is the celebration of this advocacy.

"Heidi Benton has had a huge impact on our school community," said Principal Robin Fountain. "She has broadened the thinking of students, teachers, and parents alike by introducing books with diverse characters and ideas in a kind and nonjudgmental way."

Benton shared her journey and learning with others, including a session at the SCASL Summer Institute that was well attended and very well received.

"Everyone's story matters, everyone's life deserves to be shared, and identity is never inappropriate," said Benton.

CCSD AWARDED GRANT FOR 4K LITERACY



Literacy grant for district 23

Charleston County School District (CCSD) was one of six districts in the state to receive a one-year grant focused on improving children's readiness for kindergarten.

The funding program, South Carolina Community Block Grants for Education Pilot Program, was a one-time appropriation in the state budget and administered by the South Carolina Education Oversight Committee (EOC). The funding targets rural areas of the state. CCSD's project focuses on District 23 (Ravenel/Hollywood/Edisto Island) and aims to improve both home and school literacy environments.

The \$85,580 grant provided each four-year-old kindergarten (4K) student with a set of take-home books and accompanying "take and make" activities, which focus on five key early literacy practices: Read, Write, Talk, Sing, and Play. Practiced regularly, these activities help a child be prepared to learn and read as they get older.

"The opportunity for students to grow their personal libraries and be surrounded by books both at home and school is invaluable," said Christine Zamboki, CCSD's Director of Early Learning. "Take-home books are a great way for families to read together and build a love for reading at a young age."

Charleston County Public Library (CCPL) is a key partner in the project. Families were encouraged to participate in the 1,000 Books Before Kindergarten program and use the resources at the new St. Paul's Hollywood library.

"This project is another example of the importance of the partnership between CCSD and CCPL and how we are working together to build a community of readers," said Christy James, CCSD's Library Services Coordinator.

The grant also provided teacher training and classroom devices to increase access to high-quality digital literacy resources. The South Carolina Early Learning literacy standards for 4K students taught in the classroom need to be reinforced at home. In order to ensure that 4K students have access to high-quality digital instruction in the classroom and at home during eLearning days, the 4K classrooms are receiving 1:1 iPads to access the digital literacy program LEXIA Core 5. LEXIA has a phonemic awareness component where the instruction is individualized for each child.

This grant supports the district's Mission Critical efforts to redesign early childhood programs in Charleston County to improve educational outcomes for kindergarten and first grade students.

FINANCIAL LITERACY

Students at Septima Clark Academy participated in a Lunch and Learn to meet virtually with Mellissa Roper from Edward Jones Investments. Roper enthusiastically answered questions from students about YouTube growth and the best ways to achieve their future goals whether it be attending college, joining the armed forces, or going straight into the workforce.



Financial Advisory *Lunch & Learn* at Clark Academy

CCSD celebrates Day of the Child/Day of the Book

Charleston County School District (CCSD) unveiled a literacy webpage Friday, April 30, 2021 to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Día in CCSD this year.

Día is the Day of the Child/Day of the Book and is sponsored by the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), part of the American Library Association. It emphasizes the importance of literacy for children of all linguistic and cultural backgrounds.

The website was accessible to all CCSD students and featured 24 stories in 24 hours for students to enjoy. These were stories from all over the world and were read by CCSD teachers, families, and students in multiple languages. Seventy different languages are spoken among students and staff across the district.

This was a collaboration between the ESOL (English as a Second Language), World Languages, and Library/Media Services departments in the district.

“Research shows that exposure to a different language at an early age increases a child’s ability to learn languages later in life,” said Katey Hines-McCormack, Professional Development Coordinator/Instructional Specialist for World Languages. “My hope in participating in Día was that these young students recognized the richness of other languages and cultures, which will lead to their acceptance and celebration of those who are different from them. In turn, this acceptance will encourage them to study a language or two in their career as a CCSD student.”

CCSD has had an increased focus on diversity and inclusion. This new website celebrated children and diverse languages and literacy across the district.

“The idea is so that students who speak those languages see a reflection of themselves on the website and everyone will see the diversity across the district,” said Christy James, Library Media Services Coordinator and District Textbook Coordinator. “We’re hoping for this to be an annual event and build momentum. This year was the first time we’ve ever tried anything like this. It was exciting.”

Chris Hagy, ESOL Coordinator, was thrilled they were able to build this website among three different departments to celebrate the diversity of CCSD.

“We hope that the students saw themselves in the stories or have a deeper understanding of how diverse the Charleston County population is,” said Hagy. “We seek that they embraced that and enjoyed the beauty that is children’s books. This was another fantastic opportunity for the district to celebrate diversity and literacy together. This was a chance for students to hopefully see many windows and mirrors with these languages and stories from our community.”

Día is a nationally recognized initiative that emphasizes the importance of literacy for all children from all backgrounds. It is a daily commitment to linking children and their families to diverse books, languages, and cultures.



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



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

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.

Murray-LaSaine teacher-librarian Elizabeth Ryan said the money will be used to update the fiction collection, replace 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 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 under-represented 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.”

READ ACROSS AMERICA WEEK 2021



Hunley Park Elementary

Hunley Park Elementary School's second-grade students enjoyed a recorded read-aloud on Streamable Learning. The book was called "What If" by Samantha Berger, read aloud by Charleston County School District's Executive Director of Instructional Programs, Robin Jones

Read Across America at Lambs Elementary

Read Across America (RAA) was a huge success at Lambs Elementary School thanks to a generous donation and the leadership of media specialist Calli Collins. Lambs aligned their RAA week with the district's theme of "Reading is Your Ticket to the World." In the weeks leading up to Read Across America, students put their art skills to work creating murals for the hallway depicting the themes of Read Across America and the school's chosen book for the week. Students read "The Wild" while on Spring Break.

Kona Ice came to the school and they donated books to the students. In addition, the school held their Virtual Family Literacy Night. The week was rounded out with a donation of almost 1,000 books from the citizens of James Island, clients of Folly Road Animal Hospital, Mr. K's Bookstore, Trade-a-Book in Mount Pleasant, and Captain's Comics and Toys in West Ashley. The donations were made possible thanks to veterinarian Dr. Tom Sherridan who wanted to give back. He is a fellow parishioner of Lamb's ESOL teacher Kristi Childers and he was aware of the needs in her school. His motivation to give back inspired his community and each student received two books. Many were made available for Spanish speaking students as well.



Laurel Hill Primary

Laurel Hill Primary School celebrated the completion of their nonfiction writing, All About Animals, with a publishing party. Students shared reading and asking questions to each other about their animal research. Also, students dressed as what want to be when they grow up.



Jane Edwards Elementary

The Child Development class at Jane Edwards Elementary School spent some time in the library where they got to play Hide and Seek - stuffed animal style! They found the animals and then got to read with them as part of Read Across America Week!



Charleston Progressive Academy

During their week-long celebration of literacy, students and staff at Charleston Progressive Academy had a blast celebrating “Reading - Your Ticket to the World of Seuss!” They dressed up as their favorite Dr. Seuss characters and enjoyed cupcakes while listening to their favorite Dr. Seuss books!



C.E. Williams Middle

C.E. Williams Middle School students and staff participated in DEAR: drop everything and read, during Read Across America Week.

Dunston Elementary

Matilda F. Dunston Elementary School students celebrated their love for reading. Check out Dunston’s 3rd graders reading to their stuffed animals!



Septima P. Clark Academy

Read Across America was a whole school celebration at Septima P. Clark Academy!



Simmons-Pinckney Middle

Students at Simmons-Pinckney enjoyed Read Across America Week.



James B. Edwards Elementary

Everyone at James B. Edwards celebrated Read Across America Week! Check out the JBE office staff as they Drop Everything and Read!

STEM



Latoya Bennet with Abii Robots



A student works with the Abii

GRANT PROVIDES TUTORING ROBOTS TO ST. JAMES-SANTEE STUDENTS

Latoya Bennett, Career & Technology Education (CTE) Teacher at St. James-Santee Elementary-Middle School, received a product grant from Van Robotics for eight Abii robots.

Abii robots are Artificial Intelligence robots used to help tutor students. At St. James-Santee, they are being used for intervention. Each Abii robot is worth approximately \$1,000.

The award provided more robots than the school actually needed, so the organization agreed to send the rest of the robots to Stono Park Elementary School where Bennett's children attend.

Not only do the robots help struggling students with their academics but they detect

attention spans and refocus children by dancing and singing. Each student has their own unique user name and login, and the intervention is specifically tailored for each student's needs.

"The students are excited when it is their time to use the robots," said literacy interventionist Kimberly Snipe. "They treat the robots gently and follow the rules to care for them. They're so engaged in their lessons with the Abii that by the time the lesson is over, the student doesn't realize how much time has passed."

The robot operates on the individual student's level so that not only can the teachers notice the improvements, but the student can measure their success based on their level and see their progress first-hand.

Hursey Montessori receives Bosch Echo+ STEM teacher Grant



Malcolm C. Hursey Montessori School students were thankful for the Bosch Echo+ STEM teacher Grant that allowed for the purchase of two Theremins for the music program

Stiles Point Elementary students make volcanoes



Volcano Fun was had at Stiles Point Elementary School with Mrs. Cleavenger's and Mrs. Martin's fourth grade in-person class

Rigamajig® comes to North Charleston Elementary



North Charleston Elementary School (NCES) encourages students to explore and pursue their interests in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) skills in fun and engaging ways. The school received a new Rigamajig®, granted through a partnership between The CarMax Foundation and KABOOM!, to provide a fun, play-based learning experience focused on building 21st-century skills.

North Charleston Elementary was one of only 10 schools/community organizations across the country to be awarded a Rigamajig® set through the Future Innovators Program in 2020.

Rigamajig® stimulates inquisitive minds through creative thinking and problem-solving skills that are developed during experiential play and hands-on, active learning. The collection of wooden planks, wheels, pulleys, nuts, bolts, and rope allows children to follow their curiosity through play.

“We are thrilled to offer our students creative learning opportunities,” said Principal Melissa Brubaker. We look forward to adding to our Dream Learning Lab so that the students of North Charleston Elementary have access to the highest quality STEM programming.”

All students at NCES, in Pre-K to fifth grade, will have access to the Rigamajig® for grade-level appropriate exploration during their special area rotation through the Dream Learning Lab (makerspace).

“The Rigamajig® is a wonderful addition to the Dream Learning Lab, which is supported by the Liberty Hill STEM Initiative,” added Lynn Clegg, a STEM Coordinator for Charleston County School District. “The mission of the Liberty Hill STEM Initiative is to provide high-quality programs in the Liberty Hill

neighborhood schools that will provide all students with a rigorous and relevant academic and technical education in order to prepare them for the high-skill, high-demand, and high-wage STEM occupations of the 21st-century economy.”

East Cooper CAS teacher-librarian earns grant from Toshiba America Foundation

Staff members at East Cooper Center for Advanced Studies are committed to providing students with life-changing educational and career opportunities. Thanks to a grant the East Cooper CAS teacher-librarian Melissa Beyel received, students there will have more opportunities.

Beyel is the first CCSD educator to receive a grant from Toshiba America Foundation.

She applied in summer 2020 and didn't receive a grant. But, she didn't give up; she reapplied in fall 2020 and her persistence paid off with a grant award!

Beyel credits her success to reaching out to the foundation staff to get feedback on her project idea.

Beyel, who is the first-ever CCSD educator to receive this grant, learned a few weeks ago that the Toshiba America Foundation awarded her with a STEM (science, technology, engineering, and technology) grant worth \$4,012. The funding will allow her to utilize Google Expeditions Virtual Reality kits; teachers can provide their students with immersive learning experiences through this program. Beyel is also going to ask teachers to provide her with nominations of students who will assist in creating a virtual tour of the East Cooper CAS.

“The media center within the East Cooper Center for Advanced Studies has become a true innovation center under the leadership of Mrs. Beyel,” explained Principal Jeff Blankenship. “She has established a wide variety of opportunities for students to explore their interests and the addition of these Google Expedition Virtual Reality kits will only enhance their experiences. We appreciate the Toshiba America Foundation and their efforts to promote STEM education here in South Carolina.”

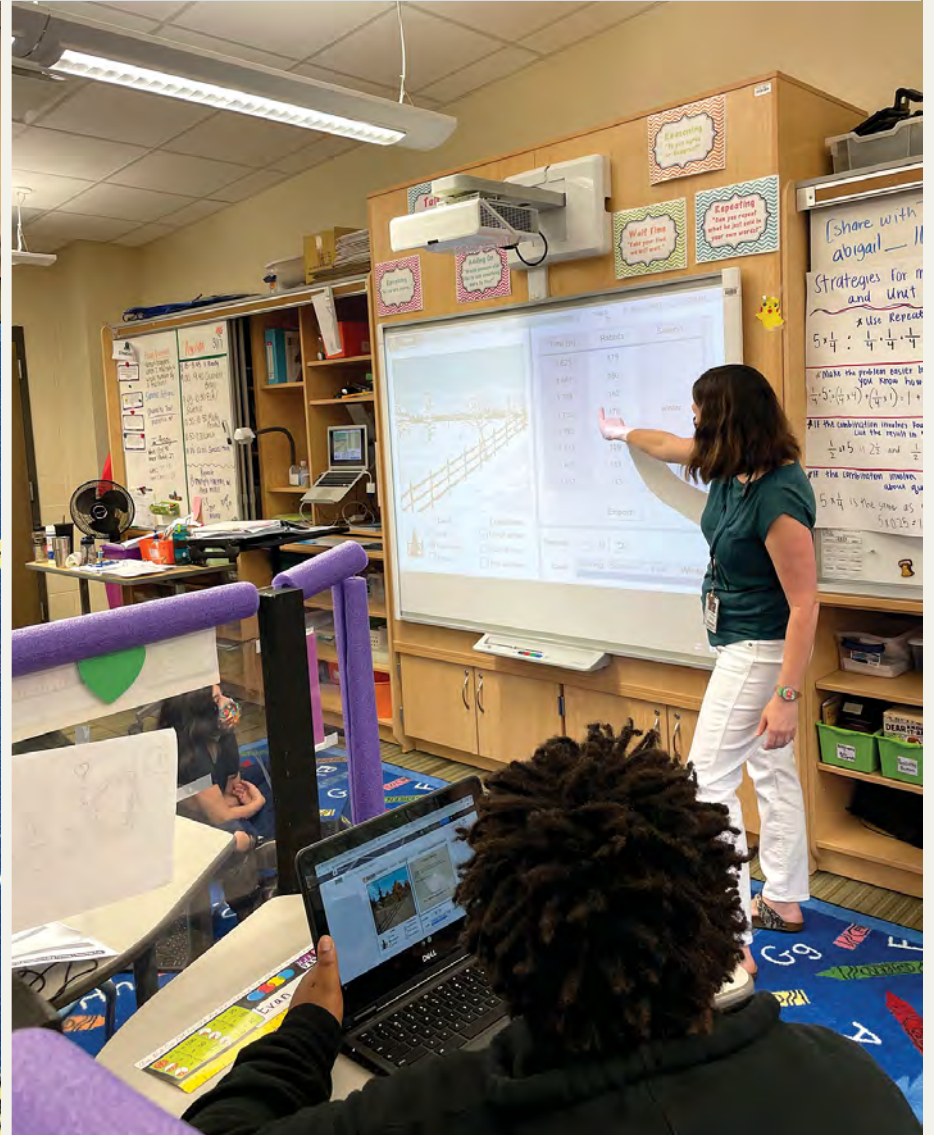
Blankenship added the kits should be available for students to use in January 2021.

Toshiba America Foundation's grants fund projects designed by individual classroom teachers. This “direct-to-teacher” approach brings immediate results. Teachers are able to change the way they teach STEM subjects because the grant supports equipment for hands-on experiments and inquiry-based approaches to the curriculum. The organization believes STEM is a lot more fun than just reading a textbook. These grants provide teachers with the tools they need to be more effective educators as well as make the classroom a more exciting place for both teachers and students.



Melissa Beyel

BOSCH COMMUNITY FUND SUPPORTS STEM IN CCSD CLASSROOMS



The COVID-19 pandemic created multiple challenges for educators, including how to provide hands-on, interactive lessons and opportunities in the classroom. Charleston County School District's (CCSD) new Science Instructional Specialist Deborah Batzer recognized that challenge. When the district applied for a grant from the Bosch Community Fund, she requested funds to acquire Gizmos for every CCSD elementary school.

For the past eight years, Bosch Community Fund has awarded CCSD a grant for project-based inquiry projects. This school year, CCSD received nearly \$20,000 to purchase Gizmos, the interactive math and science simulation program for third through fifth graders (the district had already purchased Gizmos to supplement middle and high school classrooms).

"Gizmos align with the latest state standards that help educators bring powerful new learning experiences to their classes," explained Batzer. "The interactive design allows for extensive manipulation of variables and 'what-if' experimentation."

Gizmos are available for every teacher in the district to supplement their lessons and instruction in math and science. They give students something to graph, measure, and compare, even predict and prove. Students can discover concepts, analyze data and go deeper with in-depth activities creating moments to explore, learn, and apply new ideas.

"Gizmos provides hundreds of opportunities where students don't just act like scientists and mathematicians...they are scientists and mathematicians," added Batzer. "Gizmos use innovative technology to create new pathways for learning in both the virtual and in-person classrooms."

CCSD received the funding in the fall, teachers were trained on Gizmos in the winter, and students started using them this spring. Once the school year ends, teachers, administrators, and district staff members will discuss the program's effectiveness and collaborate on an implementation plan for next year.

West Ashley High robotics team wins state tournament championship

Robotics Team 9623Z took the top spot at the VRC High School State Championships

West Ashley High School's robotics team, 9623Z - Zulu, competed at the VEX Robotics Competition (VRC) High School State Championship in Greenville, SC, and came away as the 2021 Tournament Champions. The victory secured West Ashley's spot in the World Championship in May.

"I always set the expectation for my teams to qualify for the state championship," said West Ashley Robotics Coach

Nicholas Holmes. "Nationals and Worlds are different but State is kind of mandatory here at West Ashley Robotics. The last time we won was in 2016 and this time felt about the same as that, amazing! We work so hard all year to get to this point and we have had it slip through our fingers a few times. It was also special because the team that won in 2016 came to cheer on our teams this year. It was nice to have everyone there."

West Ashley's robotics team 9623Z - Zulu was named the Tournament Champions in the final alliance round with Palmetto Scholars Academy's robotics team 9447H.

Team 9623Z includes seniors Oriana Perez and James Thorne, junior Brandon Gillner, and sophomores Karl Brenkert and Syniah Brown. The team also received the Innovate Award, which goes to the team whose unique engineering element demonstrates a group that thinks outside the box.

West Ashley High robotics team 9623X - BotX also participated in the state competition and finished in ninth place. The team consisted of seniors Gavin Wilgus and Khue Nguyen, juniors Emily Taylor and Sullivan Markland, and sophomore Charlie Stavros. Nguyen's coding skills helped them receive the Think Award which is given to a team with impressive and effective autonomous programming.

Gillner relates being a part of the robotics team to joining a sports team or another group where everyone matters and it takes the collective team to get things done well.

"It's a sense of duty to perform and be the best and produce the best robots and win," said Gillner. "My favorite part of being on the robotics team is when the countless hours after school that are put in around friends pay off, and you are able to say that you got to the place you are because of your whole team."

This year, robotics teams competed against each other in a game called "Change Up." Teams form an alliance made up of two robots that work together in a timed challenge to put 32 balls in the nine goals located around the field. One goal equals one point. However, if teams create a connected row of goals in any direction (horizontally, vertically, diagonally), that team receives six bonus points.

Part of this year's learning curve dealt with training themselves how to function in a COVID-19 world. Typically, the West Ashley Robotics Team consists of roughly 36 students building six robots, but due to current restrictions, the team is down to ten students and two robots. Despite a virtual start to the season, there were a few advantages. The team was able to compete with groups from all over the world without ever leaving their classroom



West Ashley High School sent two robotics teams to compete at this year's state competition -- Team 9623Z and 9623X. Team 9623Z received the Innovate Award and was named Tournament Champions while 9623X earned the Think Award. Both teams pose after the award ceremony at the VRC High School State Championship on February 13. (Back row, l to r) Coach Nick Homes, Oriana Perez, Brandon Gillner, James Thorne, George Stavros, Gavin Wilgus, Khue Nguyen, and Sullivan Markland. (Front row, l to r) Syniah Brown, Karl Brenkert, and Emily Taylor.

West Ashley High robotics team wins state tournament championship – *continued*



Junior Sullivan Markland makes a few tweaks to his robot during the state competition in preparation for the next round. Calibrating and making small repairs to a team's robot is essential to make sure it is functioning properly and functioning as best it can.

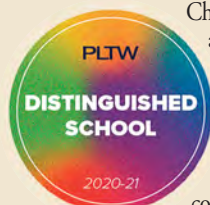


West Ashley High's robotics teams 9623X and 9623Z were paired in an alliance during the VRC High School State Championship. Team 9623X members George Stavros, Gavin Wilgus, and Khue Nguyen competed alongside Team 9623Z members James Thorne, Brandon Gillner, and Oriana Perez.



Syniah Brown, Karl Brenkert, Brandon Gillner, Oriana Perez, and James Thorne of West Ashley High robotics team 9623Z pose with their robot after the VRC High School State Competition in Greenville, SC on February 13

SIX CCSD SCHOOLS HONORED BY PROJECT LEAD THE WAY



Charleston County School District (CCSD) announced a record six schools were named Distinguished Schools by Project Lead The Way (PLTW), either as a Gateway School (middle school) or as a High School for the 2020-21 school year. A school earns the PLTW Distinguished School honor for its commitment to increasing student access, engagement, and achievement in their PLTW

programs.

Moultrie Middle School received this award for the first time ever due to expanded course offerings that were available to students as well as the hard work and dedication of their PLTW teachers to get students interested in the program.

Wando High School is the first high school in South Carolina honored by PLTW four years in a row, and Thomas C. Cario Middle School is the only middle school in the state to pick up Distinguished School status four consecutive years for its PLTW Gateway to Technology program.

Charleston Charter School for Math and Science (CCSMS) is a Distinguished High School for the second year in a row, and the middle school program received Gateway honors for the third time in four years. CCSMS is one of just a few schools in the country to pick up multiple awards from PLTW in the same year.

In addition, Morningside Middle School was recognized for the third year in a row as a Gateway School and James Island Charter High School has earned this honor for the third time in four years.

This recognition program started in the 2017-2018 school year; four CCSD schools picked up a PLTW honor in the inaugural year,

followed by three in 2018-2019 and five last year.

“The Project Lead The Way Distinguished Schools exemplify their commitment to providing a variety of courses in Engineering, Biomedical, and Computer Science pathways to all CCSD students regardless of race, ethnicity, poverty, or gender,” said Tralice Reddock, the district's Career and Technology Education curriculum specialist. “All Charleston County School District students in the PLTW programs have the opportunity to experience hands-on learning with problems that are reflective of real-world challenges.”

Morningside Middle School, Thomas C. Cario Middle School, Moultrie Middle School, and Charleston Charter School for Math and Science were four of the six middle schools in South Carolina to receive this recognition for the 2020-21 school year.

Wando High School, James Island Charter High School, and Charleston Charter School for Math and Science were three of just four high schools in the state to earn the honor this year.

PLTW is a non-profit organization that serves millions of K-12 students and teachers in approximately 12,200 schools across the United States. The organization's recognition program honors schools that are committed to increasing student access, engagement, and achievement in their PLTW programs. Schools that are recognized for this honor empower their students to thrive in an evolving world and have achieved exemplary results from their PLTW programs.

“PLTW integrates the study of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) while best preparing our students for Future Readiness – on whichever path they choose to take,” added Rich Gordon, CCSD's Executive Director for Career and Technology Education. “It's academic, technical, and employability training designed around project-based learning, open-ended problem solving,

small group study, and learning by discovery.”

Wando offered Introduction to Engineering at the high school, and the students had access to six additional engineering courses, four biomedical classes, and Cybersecurity at the East Cooper Center for Advanced Studies.

Cario Middle carries all ten courses in the Gateway to Technology program: Computer Science for Innovators and Makers, Science and Technology, Automation and Robotics, Design and Modeling, Green Architecture, App Creators, Medical Detectives, Magic of Electrons, Energy and the Environment, and Flight and Space.

Morningside provided Energy and Environment, App Creators, Automation and Robotics, Computer Science for Innovators and Makers, Design and Modeling as options for students this past school year.

Moultrie offers Green Architecture, Medical Detectives, Design and Modeling, and Flight and Space. School staff are planning to add App Creators, Energy and the Environment, and Automation and Robotics for the 2021-2022.

At the high school level, scholars at Charleston Charter were able to take Principles of Engineering, Civil Engineering Architecture, Introduction to Engineering Design, Aerospace Engineering, Digital Electronics, Principles of Biomedical Science, Biomedical Innovation, Medical Interventions, and Human Body Systems. Middle school students had the opportunity to take Medical Detectives, Automation and Robotics, Design and Modeling, and Science Technology.

James Island Charter offers the following four courses from the PLTW Engineering Program: Introduction to Engineering Design, Principles of Engineering, Digital Electronics, and Civil Engineering Architecture.

SUSTAINABILITY AND WELLNESS

School gardens a growing trend at district schools

School gardens can be a great asset in reinforcing many classroom concepts. They are also an essential aspect of teaching healthy eating and proper nutrition. A husband and wife team David and Melissa Wingard, teachers at St. Andrews School of Math and Science, have taken the rooftop garden to a whole new level.

The Green Heart Project was founded in 2009 as a small school garden at Mitchell to reconnect their students with fresh, locally-grown produce. As a Title-1 public school in a labeled food desert, most Mitchell students come from low-income households that lack access to the whole, fresh fruits and vegetables that we all need to lead a healthy lifestyle.

The project quickly became a success and was duplicated in varying ways in other schools.

“The benefits of teaching science standards via a garden are clear,” said Melissa. “The



curriculum we designed, however, uses gardening to teach about the benefits of healthy eating, engineering, and math.”

“We have a great group of parent volunteers who restock and fertilize,” said Melissa. “Our cafeteria is supportive of our

efforts and hosted a taste testing for the entire school. We’ve used our school news show to relay information on the nutritional value of certain foods to the students.”

David has a green thumb and enjoys the

actual work. Melissa is the facilitator.

“For many people, gardening is out of their comfort zone,” said Melissa. “So we’re demonstrating the benefits to working in the garden and the fun it can be for the kids.”



Like many schools, Laurel Hill Primary boasts a school garden in which students can enjoy hands-on experiences.

Mobile healthcare benefits CCSD students and their families



Over 300 students and families at Baptist Hill Middle High School and Jerry Zucker Middle School have medical services right on their school campuses thanks to a partnership with Fetter Health Care Network and the Charleston County School District.

A fully equipped medical truck was stationed in the school parking lot this year to offer students and their families a whole host of services. From well checks to immunizations, students and families in nearby communities can receive primary care.

According to Markita Johnson, the nurse at Zucker, the benefit is that students don't have to miss a day of school to go to the doctor. Additionally, as required by law, students must be immunized and many parents in this particular school community don't have transportation to get to those types of services. The mobile medical unit eliminates barriers such as transportation, Johnson explained.

Fetter works with families to have services paid through

Medicaid or traditional insurance. The health center also provides a sliding fee discount program for those without insurance.

"This partnership is appreciated by the families because there is no service that the mobile medical unit can't provide," said Johnson. "The mobile health unit is also a big boost for me because the unit is steps away from my office and I can take a sick student to them for additional support."

Zucker Principal Jacob Perlmutter explained that the school is a Capturing Kids' Hearts School. As part of that, the philosophy is to "serve the whole child."

"Through research in our own school we learned that few students had a primary care doctor," said Perlmutter. "Most of our students were being seen in clinics or emergency rooms. That's why it was imperative to me that we find a way to bring primary care to the entire community so that not just our students could be served, but their entire family as well."

Heather Rocha is a Family Practice Physician Assistant with Fetter. She said it is important to bring healthcare to the community to fill the void in an area with a lack of services.

Perlmutter explained that even well visits to the doctor can cause a student to be out of school for the entire day. Now with the Fetter medical unit, most basic health care services can be offered onsite.

More than 70 Zucker families utilize the service.

"We're getting great feedback from the parents," said Perlmutter. "The feedback has been uniformly positive and in fact, families are asking for additional services."

"We're getting the word out by building relationships with families in the area and of course the school is promoting the partnership," said Rocha. "Everyone wins because the kids are healthy and learning and the whole family is taken care of."

"We have to meet each child's basic needs before we can teach him or her," said Perlmutter. "This is how we start."



Farm to cafeteria

Students at Julian Mitchell Elementary School, and throughout Charleston County School District, tried something new in the cafeteria: butternut squash soup. This recipe is part of CCSD's farm to cafeteria program (partnering with Green Heart Project) in which a different vegetable or fruit is featured in items available for students every month. Cafeteria managers were allowed to get creative and submit recipes involving butternut squash to make on the line as well. For example, apples were incorporated into the butternut squash soup at Mitchell.

The Green Heart Project and CCSD also put together a short video for students to watch in their classrooms, which demonstrated how to make this recipe at home and why butternut squash is good for them. Virtual students were also able to go online to view the video to make the dish at home as well. Also related to this initiative, each month (through the USDA Farm to School Grant), schools in the district received locally-grown products from the local food hub, Grow Food Carolina on a revolving basis. Specifically, at Mitchell students received a take-home "recipe bag" which included South Carolina grown butternut squash, apples, and more to create the recipe on the line and watched in the video at home.



GRANT FUNDED PROJECTS AT HAUT GAP TEACH SOCIALIZATION AND COLLABORATION

Collaboration drives instruction at Haut Gap Middle School where it is not uncommon for students to be working together on anything from building birdhouses to taking care of chickens.

Throughout the school year, students in every grade level were active in designing and building projects funded through collaborative grants that take learning to the next level. Many were applied for and led by AVID Site Coordinator/Elective Teacher Robin Smith, a 30-year veteran educator.

Eighth grade Gifted and Talented students designed an outdoor growing area using quadratic equations. Seventh grade students built bird, butterfly and lady bug houses within their ecosystem and habitat units. Sixth grade students will install a Carolina Fence Garden using South Carolina History.

According to Smith, all of these projects involved collaboration towards a singular outcome.

“Not every project is instructional but they all focuses on processes,” said Smith. “However, every project is structured and of high quality.”

Other examples include an irrigation and water table project completed by eighth grade College Preparatory students. Sixth grade Gifted and Talented students designed a chicken coop to scale applying geometric angles. AVID eighth grade students built the chicken coop in a leadership activity and AVID sixth graders raised four chicks that are part of building relational capacity within their flex times.

“Each core class teaches the fundamentals of any project we take on,” said Smith. “The most important part is the

process of working together.”

Not surprising, the baby chicks were everyone’s favorite.

Sixth grader Noah Dailey loved how young, cute, and little they were when they first arrived.

“I loved watching them trying to learn to fly,” said Dailey.

Rebecca Somsy and her sixth grade friends enjoyed being tasked with feeding the growing chickens and changing out their water every day.

Some students chose to just observe the chickens and their behaviors, and that was okay, too, according to Smith.

Jackson Cowart and sixth grade classmate Cynthia Johnston both enjoyed holding the chickens and taking care of them. For Johnston, it was a dream come true.

This year alone, working with fellow teachers, Smith received \$10,000 in grants to facilitate many of the projects. Many of the grants were funded through by Bosch, Seabrook Island Natural History Group, and the American Association of University Women.

Smith enjoys creative writing and grant writing is much like that for her.

“Many of these projects offer high quality instruction, which is the model here at Haut Gap,” said Smith. “The projects also target students in all grades.”

Principal Travis Benintendo said he wants every student to be a steward of the environment.

“We have an outdoor classroom next to our school garden and we want it to be a living testament to the agricultural powerhouse John’s Island once was,” said Benintendo. “With the advent of gentrification, we feel these grants and

projects helps us with our mission.”

Many projects will continue into the summer where enrichment students will install a small garden and set up the school fish tank.

“It’s been quite an adventure but we have provided our teachers and students an opportunity to move out of their comfort zone and embrace some new ways to engage in real life experiences within their curriculum,” said Smith.

Smith explained that she is purposeful in finding projects that go hand-in-hand with the culture of the Sea Island where gardening, farming, and the ocean play leading roles.

“It is important for the children to understand where they come from and where they live,” said Smith. “Traditionally I would design field trips for the students to go to various places on the island to learn about the surroundings, but the pandemic limited that. So, I found projects we could do here on campus.”

Smith also touted the ability to take learning outside, especially during the pandemic.

Michelle Hammock, a sixth Grade teacher at Haut Gap, explained that even virtual students were able to get in on the fun. They had to take responsibility for their learning and complete the lessons with a family member, which created special bonds among them.

“All of these students will have some great memories,” said Smith. “I wanted to find something to make up for what was lost last year during COVID-19 when everyone was sent home to learn. Following social distancing protocols my students were still able to play and learn together through these projects.”

Septima P. Clark Academy Celebrates Arbor Day



Students and staff at Septima P. Clark Academy celebrated Arbor Day by planting trees donated to the school through the Palmetto Pride Tree Grant. This grant is a non-monetary award that donates trees to be used in beautification projects throughout the state of South Carolina. In full bloom, the awarded Pink and White Dogwoods will be a beautiful addition to an already treasured area of the campus.

Additionally, this grant includes “The Great American Cleanup,” which is the nation’s largest organized annual cleanup, beautification, and community improvement program. This annual event is a platform for a wide range of initiatives embraced by Keep America Beautiful’s mission, such as litter prevention education, recycling drives, graffiti removal, and beautification, and community projects.

Cooper River CAS hosts school and community blood drive

Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies (CAS) hosted a school and community blood drive. This was the first of two blood drives the school planned.

Dr. Tawnya Cox, Cooper River CAS health science teacher, has been organizing school blood drives for the last four years at North Charleston High School where she is a former teacher. Dr. Cox partnered with the American Red Cross to host community blood drives at the new CAS, so her students could get hands-on experience.

“The blood drive is part of our vision to integrate the skills our students are learning back into our community,” said Principal Vanessa Brown. “I am proud to know that the Cooper River Center can sponsor community service projects like this and

many others that will positively impact the lives of our students and the families we serve.”

COVID-19 has limited the number of blood donors that could be accommodated. Cox is confident that next year the blood drive will return to normal. Traditionally that would mean her health science students not only host the blood drive but handle recruitment among their peers and the community and run the operation from registration to collection.

Jade Reyes is a senior in Cox’s class and plans to pursue nursing. By taking pharmacology classes at Cooper River, she has secured all the certifications she will need to work as a pharmacy technician upon successful completion of her exam. She was on hand Tuesday as a volunteer for the blood drive and as a donor.



CEW-North Yoga Mondays

Every Monday, C.E. Williams North school psychologist and certified yoga instructor Carrie Rittle offered the faculty and staff a guided practice for the adults in the building to leave their day on the mat and participate in self-care. Yoloha Yoga (on James Island) donated several beautifully hand crafted cork mats for their practice.



SPECIAL PROGRAMS



CCSD earns \$150,000 grant for online enrichment

Charleston County School District's (CCSD) Office of Expanded Learning (Kaleidoscope) has received a \$150,000 grant from Outschool.org to provide free online enrichment classes for hundreds of students in the district.

Outschool's interactive online classes provide schools and youth programs with easy and flexible enrichment that kids are passionate about and likely couldn't otherwise access. There are thousands of courses to choose from, including STEM (e.g., Python coding, intro to architecture), arts (e.g., singing lessons with music from Hamilton, drawing anime characters), sports (e.g., karate, ballet), academics (e.g., African American history; multiplication facts; paragraph writing; rocks, fossils, crystals).

"Having a partner that can help provide engaging, live online learning that is customized for our students is very exciting,"

said CCSD's Director of Expanded Learning (Kaleidoscope) Jason Sakran. "We know all of our students deserve a well-rounded education and having this option is a true benefit. This educational platform has been amazing as it inspires the children in our program to follow their passions."

The Office of Expanded Learning is currently piloting this program in five after school programs at Title I schools and will expand next school year.

"The partnership between Outschool.org and Kaleidoscope provides our students a choice and a voice," said Mari Alice Jones, Site Coordinator at Ladson Elementary School. "The students are engaged and always excited for the next class."

Sakran pointed out the grant that allows for more access and equity as well. The high quality online classes help CCSD close the opportunity gap between communities.

Outschool.org is the non-profit arm of Outschool.com, an innovative education platform that offers a variety of engaging, small-group classes online. Unlike traditional classes, Outschool.org gives kids the unique opportunity to explore their interests in-depth with live interactive classes taught by experienced teachers. Outschool.org offers classes free of charge to families with an economic need as well as offering grants to help close the education gap due to wealth inequality.

"We are delighted to support Charleston County School District's efforts to provide more high-quality learning opportunities to its students, particularly those from marginalized or low-income backgrounds," commented Justin Dent, Executive Director at Outschool.org. "We are proud to have more than 10,000 teachers and over 100,000 classes that students can choose from to deepen their love of learning."

Breast Cancer Awareness

The Moultrie Middle School family showed up in October to raise over \$600 for Breast Cancer Awareness! The student government organized the event to support patients and families.



Students in Ireland plan to relaunch Harbor View miniboot

Nearly four years after a miniboot from Harbor View Elementary School landed in Ireland, a return journey to the United States by the HVES Cruiser is set to begin. The vessel is currently on display at the Old Cork Waterworks Experience in the town of Cork, Ireland. Students there have collected artifacts and written letters they plan to include in the waterproof compartment of the miniboot prior to the relaunch. Once the boat "sets sail," Educational Passages tracks the craft in real-time so students from Harbor View, Cork, or anywhere else in the world can monitor the ship's location.

The date for the launch has been not scheduled but is anticipated to happen within the next few months.

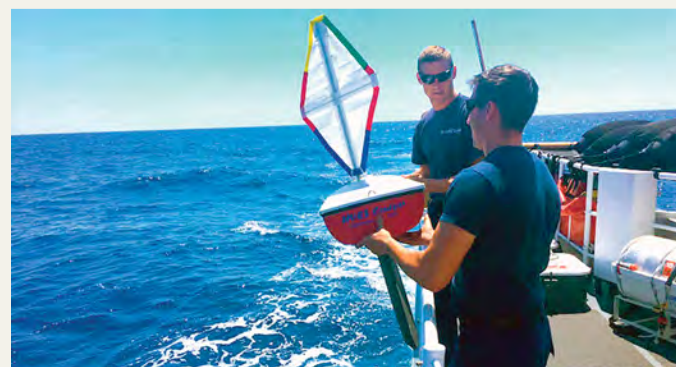
The history of the HVES Cruiser

In 2017, Lisa Laughlin, a SAIL (Students Actively Involved in Learning) teacher at Harbor View, began working on this project with her students. They constructed the unmanned miniboot (approximately three feet in length with a small sail) with a GPS tracker in spring 2017 as part of the Educational Passages Miniboot Program. Students also placed letters (to children who might find the HVES Cruiser) inside the ship's hull, along with artifacts, recipes, and written work from and specific to the Charleston area.

A parent from Harbor View, who served in the United States Coast Guard, offered to launch the craft in the Gulf Stream outside of the Charleston Harbor, and after a five-month journey across the Atlantic Ocean, the Harbor View community learned the HVES Cruiser landed in Ballycroy, Ireland.

Attached to the miniboot was a note directing the person that recovered the vessel to take it to the nearest school. Fortunately, a parent of a student at the Drumgallah National School found it washed up on the beach. The boat was then transported to Cork, Ireland for repairs and now, a crest of the City of Cork is on the new sail for the ship.

The HVES Cruiser was originally scheduled to be relaunched towards the U.S. in the summer of 2020 by members of the Cork community but delays pushed the voyage back to this year. "We did a wonderful interdisciplinary study of research, writing, weather pattern study, as well as communicating with and learning about Ireland," explained Laughlin. "This is an ongoing, engaging experience for us at Harbor View. We can't wait to see where the wind and current take [the HVES Cruiser] next."



HVES Cruiser launch by Coast Guard (*top*)
Harbor View students with HVES Cruiser (*bottom*)



CCSD, COUNTY LIBRARY LAUNCH L² PROGRAM THROUGH EXPANDED PARTNERSHIP

County School District (CCSD) continues to expand and improve their partnership with the Charleston County Public Library (CCPL).

L2 allows all CCSD students to have full access to CCPL's physical and digital collections, simply by using their CCSD username. This will remove barriers to student access and greatly increase the number of resources available to them. Students using CCSD's new eBook and audiobook platform, Sora (Overdrive for Education), will be able to simply toggle to the CCPL's digital collection.

CCPL has an incredible amount of digital resources, which will greatly expand student access. According to Christy James, Library Media Services Coordinator, the two agencies keep finding ways to connect resources for students and families.

"The Summer Reading program really opened opportunities for other smaller partnerships, volunteer opportunities, and ways to work together throughout the year," said James. "This is a huge step to give all students access to the public library. Especially now, it is more important than ever."

Through the Summer Reading program, officials from both agencies learned that kids often have transportation issues and are unable to get to the physical branches throughout the school year and even more so in the summer.

"We are proud to partner with CCSD for the L2 program and we are committed to supporting our students whether it is in person or virtually," said Angela Craig, Executive Director Charleston County Public Library. "Returning to school looked different this year, and while there were challenges there were also great opportunities. With the L2 account, students can access the public library and its resources any time they need them. This partnership proved that we are stronger together, and we are fully equipped to support our students with opportunities to learn and to grow."

With L2, students are automatically registered and there is no need to keep track of a physical library card. Similar to Summer Reading, students use their CCSD username as a log-in or in place of a traditional library card or account number. In addition, a new online platform, Sora (Overdrive for Education), connects the district to the library system. When a student is logged into

the school library's digital collection, they can now simply toggle between the school district digital library and CCPL's to unlock even more age-appropriate books and audiobooks.

To use L Squared in a CCPL branch to check out materials, students simply enter their credentials into any self-check kiosk or provide their information to a staff member at check out. Students who wish to access the internet on CCPL computers must abide by the system's rules for internet use in the library (visit ccpl.org/l2 for details).

"This partnership really increased the number of resources available to students in a huge way," said James. "Not only will the libraries see more usage, but it helps CCSD knowing kids have more access to books inside and outside of school."

L2 accounts are fine-free, which means students will not accrue late fees or fines for materials returned beyond the due date (though some lost item fees still apply). This is being done in an effort to eliminate possible barriers. The hope is to increase family participation and provide literacy support using family involvement strategies.

COVID RESPONSE

District employed 104 nurses to provide full-time service for CCSD

Charleston County School District (CCSD) employed full-time school nurses in every elementary, middle, and high school.

According to Ellen Nitz, Director of Nursing Services, CCSD employs 104 nurses, some of whom are part-time and serve in larger schools as an addition to the full-time nurse. She said the district's commitment to the health and safety of students and staff is evidenced in not only the hiring of so many full and part-time nurses but in the most recent updates of every school clinic.

Because of new protocols around COVID-19, Plexiglas was installed in front of each nurse's station and floor markers or chairs were spaced to provide six-foot distancing.

"The district did a fantastic job preparing our clinics and school buildings for the return of children," said Nitz. "Our plans were well thought out so that as many safety and health precautions as possible could be implemented. Nurses took contact tracing courses to be versed in the procedures and can answer questions from parents and administration. We extended our contact tracing team to include additional resources, and we are fully equipped to provide the quickest guidance and education to anyone who has been diagnosed or been in close contact with a COVID patient. We also had a team of 16 school nurses that worked more than 800 hours alongside DHEC during the school closure to provide contact tracing for the lowcountry region."

Nitz explained that each clinic has an isolation area or bay with a cot and a curtain that can be wrapped around to act as a protective barrier. Nitz said the goal is to keep students isolated when they are present in the clinic with COVID like symptoms. All clinics have a HEPA-rated/UV air scrubber as well. To mitigate risk of COVID-19 transmission, the clinics were fogged nightly.

"All of these things put us at a great advantage to care for children showing symptoms," said Nitz.

Kathryn Bouziane, a nurse at R.B. Stall High School said CCSD

should serve as an example to others across the nation as far as a Safe Restart. Our model can be replicated in so many places in the United States.

"I have to brag about the district because in years past, we only had one nurse for every 750 kids," said Nitz. "Due to the district's insight, we now have one nurse for every 600 students."

Bouziane explained that nurses are ambassadors to healthcare delivery.

"Nurses are very important and COVID-19 is demonstrative of that," said Bouziane. "In the case of the school nurses, we are prepared to recognize symptoms in staff and students and educate on how to manage COVID-19. It's not just the clinical skill nurses bring to the table but the education piece which is important now more than ever."

School nurses are very much the frontline when it comes to the health and safety of those in a school building. According to Nitz there is a sense of security knowing there is a healthcare professional in each clinic.

Kathy Nash is the nurse at Belle Hall Elementary School. She serves hundreds of students at her school and on her busiest days, she can see up to 80 children. That was before COVID-19. She foresees the return to school being a challenge for medical professionals across the district, especially when flu and allergy season arrives.

For Nash and the other nurses across the district, a typical day is never typical.

"You never know what you're going to get," said Nash. "Medicines have to be administered, we must check on our special needs students, speak with parents about various situations, and treat sick children. I suspect symptoms will be very difficult to distinguish when it comes to strep throat and the flu versus COVID-19."

Nurse Wendy Dunigan works at Angel Oak Elementary School. She described school nurses as an integral part of the education system.



"We play a large role in ensuring the basic health needs of these children are met," said Dunigan. "We're often helping families integrate healthy routines into their home. We serve hundreds of children with chronic conditions such as asthma. We notice and respond to those students when we see their condition has changed as well."

Bouziane and Nash shared the same confidence as Dunigan in regards to feeling safe about returning to the school building.

"The clinics were equipped to handle any spectrum of severity that walked through the door whether it was to diagnose COVID-19 symptoms or apply a Band-Aid," said Bouziane. "We have the same PPE that you would expect in a hospital. We are experienced and equipped to manage anything that walks through the door."

"It is important for the community to understand that we employ some of the top nurses," said Nitz. "We have risen in the ranks by hiring professionals such as nurse practitioners, neonatal nurses, emergency room nurses, orthopedic nurses, and more. They all come from a vast array of specialties and bring a lot of professionalism to our group. They truly are a wealth of knowledge."

Mary Ford works to connect school and home, despite COVID challenges



The team dances with the children and families participating virtually

As a new Early Learning & Family Center, Mary Ford was poised to serve the youngest of scholars through kindergarten, and their families. While their scholars were still getting the strongest academic foundations possible, inviting families to engage in their child's early school experience, in a COVID environment, was challenging.

To address this challenge, Mary Ford conducted a series of family events that take place virtually while allowing participants to share a common experience. The first of these events was the Virtual Family Pizza Night in November. Families were given a bag of supplies including ingredients for homemade pizza, a book about diverse families, and a series of academic and social-emotional activities to complete together.

Mary Ford hosted the second event in December to include a virtual concert, giveaways, a book talk, a Christmas tree with decorations, five days of learning activities, and ingredients for holiday cookies. In total, over 130 families participated in these events, far surpassing the attendance of most face-to-face events.

Ms. Ruth Taylor, Principal of Mary Ford stated "events like these are only possible when you assemble a team with a common vision, that works seamlessly together, as we have done. With the support of our Parent Advocate: Iroasha Washington, Guidance Counselor: Patti Clerc, and Teacher Librarian: Katherine Freligh, we can create a full multi-media, interactive, and inclusive experience."

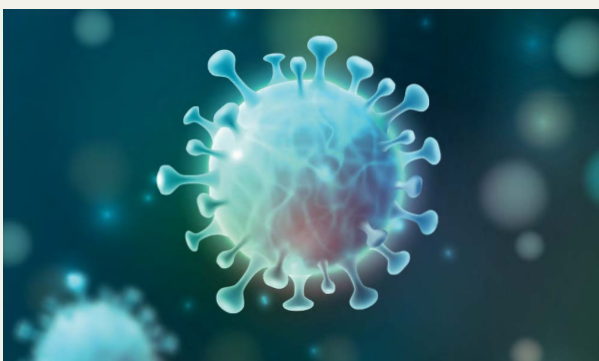


State Superintendent of Education visits Dunston

State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman visited Matilda F. Dunston Elementary School at the beginning of the school year and met with school and CCSD staff and toured the facility and learned more about the district's Safe Restart Plan.



CCSD COVID RESPONSE OVERVIEW



Summary

Charleston County School District's (CCSD) Board of Trustees and leadership knew the heavy majority of students needed to return to in-person learning to start the 2020-2021 school year. However, with the COVID-19 pandemic in full swing, convincing the overall community our schools were going to safe learning environments would be a significant challenge. Encouraging parents to send their children back to school and helping teachers feel confident about returning to the classroom weren't the only obstacles; so was time. The 2019-2020 school year ended in early June, giving our district less than three months to physically prepare our buildings while at the same time planning for multiple models of instruction.

As far as we can ascertain, CCSD was the only district of our size in the country to offer 5-days/week, in-person instruction for PK-12 as well as provide virtual options for the entire school year!

Things to note

- Installed 60 miles of plexiglass dividers to get students back in classrooms
- Upgraded air filtration systems; ramped up sanitization protocols

- Timely contact tracing for positive cases and COVID-19 testing offered in all schools, and nurses delivered 10,000 COVID-19 vaccination shots and 2,500 saliva tests in schools
- Operated new K-8 Virtual School; with other districts, formed regional Virtual Learning School for 2021-22 - 8 districts now part of LCEC Virtual School
- Implemented several new digital programs and a new learning management system
- Increased social-emotional and mental wellness supports significantly
- Developed many improved data collection and reporting processes
- Security & Emergency Mgmt, IT, Nutrition Services, Transportation, Communication: all devised new ways to respond to COVID conditions and support students and staff
- Teachers altered schedules, class rosters, teaching modalities multiple times as more parents elected in-person learning and COVID protocols changed
- Improvisation across every school and department! Heroic leaders at every level

Inputs And Outputs

- Opened six new facilities on time, within budget
- Transitioned with high success to new transportation vendor and in-house routing
- Centralized screening for child development; 1900 students screened
- Submitted and were awarded a new 5-year competitive Head Start/Early Head Start Grant with a focus on certifying all teachers in the program
- Opened Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies; readied CAS @ WAHS campus
- Stood up new Scholars Program in partnership with the College of Charleston

- Made significant progress on staff development in cultural competency
- Ramped up services to English language learners; met DOJ settlement timelines
- Operated two successful teacher residency programs-- Memminger/College of Charleston and C. E. Williams North/USC
- Launched a new data analytics platform for staff across district
- Developed and implemented CCSD Mobile App; improved communication metrics
- Increased student/family outreach, including establishing Learning Pods
- With the new board, established goals; provided 1st quarter report in June

Outcomes:

- Through revised processes and relentless outreach, completed Spring MAP assessments for 97% of K-8 students
- Mary Ford Early Childhood and Family Engagement Center evidenced aboveaverage growth in reading and math assessment indicators*
- 40 of 47 elementary schools experienced high achievement and/or growth in reading and/or math based on MAP indicators*
- Across grades 2-5, CCSD students exceeded the national typical growth by 5 percentage points or more in reading and 13 points or more in math*
- 72% (13 of 18) middle schools demonstrated high achievement or high growth in reading and/or math*
- Increased number of 4th year students achieving silver or higher on WIN
- Alternative schools improved restorations and graduate readiness

A behind the scenes look at how CCSD prepared buildings for a 'Safe Restart'



Every summer Facilities Maintenance crews tackle a laundry list of projects to prepare Charleston County School District's (CCSD) buildings for the start of a new school year. It's a monumental task when you consider that CCSD has 87 schools and programs. It's even more monumental when preparing for an unprecedented semester.

This year presented a challenge as crews had to retool their way of thinking and implement mitigation measures to ensure that classrooms, offices, and common areas could accommodate COVID-19 social distancing protocols taking into account each school's unique location, facilities, programs needs, and available resources.

The CCSD Facilities Maintenance Department took significant steps forward in ensuring safe environments for each campus.

Not only did deep cleaning and sanitizing have to take place,

but HVAC systems required a complete upgrade so that air purifying systems would be in place. Sneeze guards and Plexiglas dividers and partitions had to be constructed and put in place in all schools and every single district office.

"The conviction was always to bring the students back into the classroom," said Ron Kramps, Executive Director of Facilities Management. "We started seeing vendor catalogs with partition prototypes. After much discussion, we determined we could replicate these at less of a cost and produce a much better product."

A prototype was created in-house and production got underway in earnest. All the while, masks, gloves, face shields, foggers, and air scrubbers were being shipped to the district in mass quantities.

"We were fortunate that it was the end of the fiscal year and we were able to use 'sweep up' money," said Kramps. "In total, the overhaul and improvements cost \$6 million. Also when you have a crisis, you have to have funding in place. We did, of course, because it is part of our crisis planning and drill practices."

Kramps explained that the district's programs that are in place are well funded. In addition to past sales tax allocation money, the district was in a good position to stay within the budget.

"CCSD is well structured to handle the unexpected, even this pandemic," said Kramps. "The communication and interaction between operations, security, and nursing services were and continue to be critical. If not for the strong centralized leadership at CCSD operations of this magnitude wouldn't have gone as well as they did. Our schools will be open and ready to accept children."

The district used every resource available to find hard-to-find

things that were in high demand. Fortunately, custodial services within the district are outsourced. Because custodial is a tremendous industry, the district's custodial contractor knew right where to go to obtain and purchase much-needed supplies such as paper products and sanitizing items.

Kramps said the district already had many of the needed items such as the fog machines and sanitizer, but that they needed much more of it. For example, the district has over 50,000 air filters. That is outsourced and using professional guidance on recommended filters CCSD was able to upgrade the filtration system and all mechanical equipment. Air scrubbers were also needed in every nurse's clinic across the district. Those were bought in bulk at a reduced cost of \$3100 apiece.

"We're a pretty well-resourced organization with great people in the right places, which quadrupled the success of our efforts," said Kramps. "That allowed us to focus on immediate critical needs like our feeding program, internet services, sanitizing our buses and schools. We had to keep the ball moving forward on all fronts. Our leadership was helpful on so many levels which allowed us to successfully finish the school year remotely all while preparing for the start of this school year."

District officials across all departments planned for all contingencies and are ready, Kramps said.

"Everyone is in place and knows what to do," said Kramps. "We have tried to think of all possibilities of exposure and have positioned all facilities and classes to be prepared. The facilities management team has always been about safe, healthy, comfortable facilities by anticipating needs. We have done that in this situation and we are ready and prepared. We were already prepared to provide safe environments for children and we just took it a step further."



Outdoors at Firerson

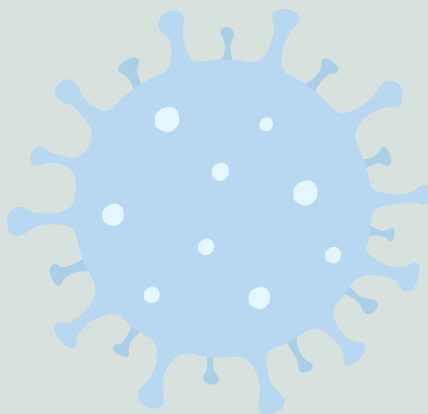
Mrs. Smalls-Robinson was the first to try out the new outdoor classrooms at Firerson Elementary School with her primary learners. They took part in a read-aloud of Little Tree and celebrated the autumn leaves falling down.



KINDERGARTEN STUDENTS HELPING EACH OTHER!

Plexiglass can't stop acts of kindness at Oakland Elementary

COVID-19: 2 Testing Methods



1. Saliva Testing
2. Rapid Antigen Testing

CCSD USED TWO METHODS TO TEST FOR COVID-19

Charleston County School District (CCSD) made available two methods to test for COVID-19 at every school. A saliva test was made possible thanks to a continued partnership with the Medical University of South Carolina's (MUSC) Infectious Disease Department. In addition, Rapid Antigen Testing was made available to schools across the state, by the order of South Carolina Governor Henry McMaster. Those tests will be used in conjunction with the saliva test.

According to Ellen Nitz, CCSD's Director of Nursing Services, one of CCSD's biggest goals was to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 within the school setting.

"This testing allowed for students or staff with symptoms to come into the clinic be tested using their saliva," said Nitz. "It was sent away and within 12 to 24 hours we received the results. At that point, we would let the patient know whether they can return to school or not."

The saliva tests have a 92 percent sensitivity (accuracy) rate.

Results are sent in a text to the patient/guardian within 12-24 hours from MUSC.

Nitz explained that once the Rapid test is administered (with permission by a parent) results can be obtained in less than 15 minutes.

If a person was found to be positive schools followed district protocols that were in place and began contact tracing. A positive result required the person to isolate for 10 days per DHEC protocol. Each school had identified an isolation area for students to wait for their parent/guardian to pick them up from school.

"We had DHEC trained contact tracers who could turn around cases within a couple of hours," said Nitz.

"The district worked hard to continue to put layers of protection in for staff and students and this saliva test was one of those layers of protection," said Nitz. "We sincerely appreciate the support and guidance that MUSC has provided," said Nitz. "We are fortunate to be in partnership."

CCSD Thanks School Nurses for extraordinary work during challenging year

2020-2021 school year proved even more so how necessary school nurses are to the overall well-being and operation of schools. With that understanding, Charleston County School District (CCSD) proudly celebrates and recognizes school nurses and members of the Nursing Services Department on National School Nurse Day on May 12, 2021.

"The CCSD 'Nurse Corps' answered the call for us in a big way this year," said Chief Operating Officer Jeff Borowy. "There is no way could we have safely had students in-person five days a week for the entire school year without their efforts in contact tracing, COVID-19 testing and vaccinations, all while still being our first responders in schools."

Shortly after the COVID-19 pandemic closed schools in South Carolina last spring, many of the district's school nurses began working with medical organizations and hospitals to understand the virus and how to conduct contract investigations. That knowledge became a critical component in CCSD's Safe Restart Plan, which allowed the district to offer in-person instruction five days a week throughout the entire school year.

"School nursing is a dynamic profession rooted in public health," explained Ellen Nitz, CCSD's Director of Nursing Services. "CCSD nurses have proudly risen to the challenge this year with dedication and professionalism. They are not only tasked with managing their normal clinic duties but to attend to all the needs that arise from the pandemic. Today we celebrate their contributions that ensure the health and learning of our students. Thanks to each of them for

keeping our schools and community healthy!"

CCSD school nurses and nurse liaisons have been working long hours, weekends, and holiday breaks to ensure school administrators and district officials have the most up-to-date information on COVID-19 positive cases and close contacts. That information allows leaders at the district and school level to make informed, responsible decisions that keep students and staff as safe and healthy as possible.

Throughout the year, school nurses and nurse liaisons embraced additional tasks, such as administering the rapid and saliva-based COVID-19 tests at school and participating in the district's partnerships with local hospital systems and medical providers to administer COVID-19 vaccines to staff members and students.

Normally, CCSD selects one District School Nurse of the Year. However, the Nursing Services Department felt that was a collective award this year.

"We were unable to choose one nurse of the year; we feel that each of our nurses has stepped up to do their best," added CCSD Nurse Liaison Celeste Dailey. "Every nurse has gone above and beyond all of our expectations during the pandemic. They are all deserving of this special title."

The district sent out tokens of appreciation to schools nurses this week and produced a highlight video to honor them during the Board of Trustees Regular Meeting on April 26, 2021.





CCSD offering cost-free Kaleidoscope to teachers with school aged children



As part of its effort to support staff with children during the 2020-21 return to work, Charleston County School District (CCSD) is offering cost-free Kaleidoscope, (a fee-based after school and summer child care program) to teachers and staff. The program began this week and will be available on August 18 and 19, and August 31-September 4, 2020. This is in addition to the opportunity that teachers have been afforded for school-aged children to accompany them to classrooms where children must remain for the day, socially-distanced, and with masks.

To ensure everyone's safety, locations and capacity have been limited.

Charles Pinckney Elementary School, Drayton Hall Elementary School, Garret Academy Annex, James Simons Montessori School, Mamie P. Whitesides Elementary School, Murray-LaSaine Montessori School, and C.E. Williams Middle School North (formerly West Ashley Middle School) are the facilities serving as Kaleidoscope locations.

STRICT SAFETY PROTOCOLS HAVE BEEN PUT INTO PLACE AND INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- Curbside drop-off and pick-up procedures
- Only students of CCSD employees and some CCSD staff are allowed into the school building's interior
- Group sizes are being limited to no more than 10 students and one counselor
- Staff is utilizing social distancing at all times

"We are glad to help our teachers and staff during this difficult time. One of the most important needs for our families right now is safe, high-quality child care and I hope we can continue to offer our services as the school year begins. My staff are rock stars. Give us a challenge, and we will meet it."

– JASON SAKRAN, Director of Expanded Learning

According to Sakran, Kaleidoscope will continually update health and safety procedures based on guidance from the Center for Disease Control and the Department of Health and Environmental Control

CCSD ROLLED OUT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS TO TEACHERS AND SCHOOL STAFF

Charleston > excellence is our standard
County SCHOOL DISTRICT



In partnership with MUSC, Charleston County School District (CCSD) administered COVID-19 vaccinations to CCSD employees and students.

School-based employees received the vaccine first. Followed by students ages 12 and up. Total number of doses for all ages was 848 (first round) and 741 (second round).

DISTRICT NEWS

Opportunity for students and the community highlighted in Cooper River CAS dedication ceremony



The Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies, in Charleston County School District's (CCSD) Constituent District 4, will provide life-changing opportunities for the students who take advantage of the opportunities offered in that new facility. The new facility was highlighted and celebrated at a dedication ceremony.

Featured speakers at the event included City of North Charleston Mayor Keith Summey, CCSD Board of Trustees Chair Rev. Dr. Eric Mack, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Gerrita Postlewait, and Principal Vanessa Brown.

"This is a place where students can put into practice the hope they have for the future," said Brown. "Now students who live in the same neighborhoods I grew up in will have access to explore and study careers they may have previously considered beyond their reach. My staff and I pledge that this is where we will develop highly-trained professionals."

The new state-of-the-art, 84,000 square-foot building is designed to

seat 600 students and is located across from North Charleston High School. The building includes both classrooms and lab spaces for programs such as health science technologies, information technology pre-engineering, arts, and audio-visual technologies.

Cooper River CAS also has high-bay facilities for Auto Collision Repair, Mechatronics and Building Construction, labs for STEM classes, Biomedical and Health Sciences, Cyber Security, Computer Repair, and 'Project Lead the Way' classes. Other areas of the building include maker spaces, a two-story exhibition space, and a 150-seat lecture hall.

"I don't think I've walked into any building that is classified as a school in Charleston County that has demonstrated so much beauty and a welcome approach," said Mayor Summey. "I think this is one of the greatest and wisest things that we've done in the greater Charleston area in years. Our children and grandchildren are going to benefit from what's happening here."



Dedication ceremony held for new Camp Road Middle School

Charleston County School District (CCSD) dedicated the newly-constructed Camp Road Middle School Tuesday, December 15, 2020 after opening its doors to students for the 2020-2021 school year. As part of the celebration, the David Parler Gymnasium and J. Arthur Brown Media Center were dedicated.

David Parler retired as principal of Camp Road earlier this month. He was previously the principal of Ft. Johnson Middle School for 16 years and has held various administrative teaching roles throughout the district.

J. Arthur Brown's accomplishments as president of the NAACP in SC include the desegregation of Edisto State Park and others in the late 1950s, desegregation of the Charleston Municipal Golf Course in 1961, desegregation of Charleston School District in 1963, as well as organizer and leader of multiple social movements such as sit-ins, and boycotts as well as participating in crucial court cases throughout the state of South Carolina.

The \$52 million project resulted in a new building of

approximately 137,000 square feet to serve an initial population of 900 students with a core and expansion space for a future capacity of 1200 students.

Built on the old Fort Johnson Middle School site, this new facility is long-awaited for the middle school students on James Island. Starting in 2018, the two District 3 middle schools



were combined and housed the old James Island Middle School. "The library on the second floor is prominent at the front corner and creates a treehouse feel for the students inside," said Robert Sturman CCSD's Interim Director of Capital Programs. "Our design firm, construction team, and program manager did an amazing job building the new campus. Faculty and visitors will have adequate parking on the campus and the students will enjoy a larger facility with an increase in natural lighting, play space, and an array of colorful accents for a most enjoyable learning experience."

The building is spacious, bright, clean, and colorful. The new furniture is color coordinated with the carpets, floors, and walls. The amenities include state-of-the art technology in all classrooms: sound systems in the gym and all performing arts rooms, nine science labs, a performing arts wing, a 9,500 square foot gym with a stage; and a 7,000 square foot cafeteria with outdoor dining for 60 students. The campus offers ample space for parking, buses, morning and afternoon car traffic, and green space for recess.



After over 30 years, Lala Fyall continues to serve CCSD

Lala Fyall, also known as “Bea,” is a lifelong North Charleston resident. Almost everyone from the area has either been a student in her classroom, attended her Sunday School classes and church youth programs, or served with her in the numerous civic and non-profit capacities she has taken on in her 92 years.

Serving others is a part of Fyall’s make-up. That’s why a re-election run for a seat on the Charleston County School District’s (CCSD) Constituent District 4 Board (Cooper River School District) was the only natural thing to do.

Fyall’s held the seat for 30 years and ran unopposed in the most recent election. She is now the oldest and longest serving constituent board member in CCSD.

A call to serve

Like so many Lowcountry residents, Fyall is a product of CCSD. She attended Liberty Hill Elementary School, Six Mile Jr. High School, and Burke High School. Her next stop was R.B. Stall High School where she received her Adult Class Diploma. Fyall promptly enrolled in Trident Technical College and went on to attend Baptist College (now Charleston Southern University) and the College of Charleston. She earned her Early Childhood Education certificate from Stanford Career Institute.

Fyall started her career teaching at Bonds Wilson High School. She taught there under Principal Ted Collier for 23 years. Since then she has been a classroom teacher or substitute teacher in every high school in CCSD and every school in District 4.

Military Magnet Academy Principal Robert Perrineau, Jr. is appreciative of her dedication to students.

“There aren’t enough words to truly express appreciation for one of Charleston County School District’s long-time supporters,” said Perrineau. “The families and communities in the North Charleston area have truly been blessed by the presence and service rendered to them by Mrs. Lala Fyall. She has also been an influence on the lives of my own children during their time as students. The knowledge and wisdom she has imparted on those she has encountered over the years has surely been priceless. I believe part of my professional success is at least in part due to her sincere support and encouragement.”

Fyall is so well loved at Military Magnet that during the annual Veterans Day program, Fyall was surprised when then principal Anderson Townsend honored her for her birthday.

“The students are my heart,” said Fyall. “I love them all and, because of that, I got no problems from my students. I knew how to keep them straight.”

Serving her community

In addition to serving CCSD, Fyall has also served as a poll manager for 50 years, she has been dedicated to her church, Royal Baptist, since 1939, and serves in a multitude of capacities. She was also first lady for 20 years at Friendship Baptist Church where her husband was the pastor. She is a member of the YWCA, the NAACP, and the North Charleston Arts Advisory Committee. Fyall has done everything imaginable to ensure she lives by her creed “Reaching Out to Help Others.”

Fyall has earned numerous honors from a variety of organizations, such as a volunteer service award, Woman

of the Year, lifetime achievement awards, church recognitions, as well as local and state acknowledgments. Serving her community as an elected official was an idea not out of the ordinary for Fyall.

As a teacher, Fyall noticed that an inordinate number of students were being expelled from school for minor infractions. She wanted to run for the constituent board to see if she could bring change to the system. When Fyall ran, she said there was only one other Black female on the board. Both of them were concerned with the number of expulsions.

Today, CCSD has alternative programs that allow a student to continue with their school but in an environment, where they can receive additional behavioral guidance. On occasion she is also a substitute at Greg Mathis Charter High School under the leadership of Principal Eleanor H. Hardy where she can see the alternative programs in action.

“You have to keep moving and stay involved. I’ve had two full-length careers in one lifetime, and both of those have allowed me to serve and help others. That is what has been a joy for me.”

– LALA FYALL, Lifelong North Charleston resident

“Mrs. Fyall has truly been a servant leader to the community of North Charleston,” said R.B. Stall High School Principal Jeremy Carrick. “I have worked with Mrs. Fyall in recent years as a faithful constituent school board member and substitute teacher. As a constituent board member, her high expectations for student behavior and concern for all students made an impact on me. She believed in holding students accountable for their actions. As a substitute teacher, Mrs. Fyall served many long-term substitute positions at R.B. Stall High School.”

In fact, she has worked at Stall under the leadership of six principals including former CCSD Superintendent Lynda Davis and current principal Jeremy Carrick.

Fyall’s sincere investment in her students allowed her to easily recognize if a student was having a bad morning. She knows when to reach out to a student that may need some extra attention.

“She always carried positivity and the same high expectations in the classroom,” said Carrick. “I always felt her consistent presence in the schools as a substitute helped her maintain a connection to her schools and made her a better advocate for all as a constituent board member. I was honored to work alongside Mrs. Fyall during my time at R.B. Stall High School. My favorite memory of Mrs. Fyall was when she was substituting at Stall on her 90th birthday. We were able to present her with a card signed by her students and a bouquet. It was a small token of what she deserves as District 4 icon!”

At 92 years old, Fyall has no plans of slowing down. When not volunteering or in the classroom, Fyall enjoys time with her husband Leroy, her daughter Jacquelyn, and her extended family.

“You have to keep moving and stay involved,” said Fyall. “I’ve had two full-length careers in one lifetime, and both of those have allowed me to serve and help others. That is what has been a joy for me.”

DISTRICT PICKS UP 17 HONORS IN SC/NSPRA'S ANNUAL REWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

Charleston County School District's (CCSD) Division of Strategy and Communications, along with four schools, combined to receive 17 awards in this year's Rewards for Excellence program, sponsored by the South Carolina Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association (SC/NSPRA). This includes a prestigious Medallion honor for the district's Safe Restart and a "Best in Show" honor in the In-House School Video category for Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies' promotional video.

SC/NSPRA celebrated 108 programs and projects from across the state during a virtual ceremony on Thursday, July 14, 2021 on YouTube; the event was co-hosted by CCSD's Director of Communication, Andy Pruitt.

This program recognizes outstanding communications and public relations efforts by South Carolina schools, school districts, and education agencies and associations. Public relations veterans with extensive experience in educational and business communications evaluated a combined 184 entries from the school and district levels.

The Rewards for Excellence Program features the following three awards programs:

- Medallion (for comprehensive public relations programs)
- Golden Achievement (for a single project or an aspect of a comprehensive program)
- Publications and Electronic Media (for individual products designed to improve communication)



THE FOLLOWING ENTRIES FROM THE DISTRICT AND CCSD SCHOOLS WERE HONORED IN THIS YEAR'S REWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE PROGRAM:

District

Medallion – CCSD's Safe Restart
Excellence in Writing – CCSD staff going the extra mile in the face of COVID-19 crisis
Excellence in Writing – Morningside works to address chronic absences
Excellence in Writing – Nurse's intervention saves student's life
Photography – SOA Drive-Thru Celebration 1
Photography – Stono Park Bike Reveal
Special Publication – 2019-2020 Year in Review
Video (In-House) – Memminger School Tour Video
Video (In-House) – Garrett's Final Valedictorian – Stories of CCSD
Video (In-House) – Code to the Future – Stories of CCSD
Video (In-House) – Mission Critical Actions Update – February 27, 2020

School

Video – Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies (Promotional Video) - Best in Show for School Video
Video – Mary Ford Early Learning and Family Center (Morning News Show)
Video - Thomas C. Cario Middle School (CTV News)
Website – Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies
Website – North Charleston Elementary School
Website - Thomas C. Cario Middle School

“Our communication strategies at the school and district level during the pandemic were creative, yet thorough. I am thankful for the energy and passion our division serves the community with, which in turn, leads to us producing quality work day in, day out. I appreciate the judges recognizing the excellence and diversity of our efforts as well.”

– ERICA TAYLOR, Chief of Staff

Seventeen SC/NSPRA Rewards for Excellence is the most CCSD has received in one year.

SC/NSPRA is an affiliate of the National School Public Relations Association. The state chapter is composed of 155 school public relations practitioners, superintendents, and other educational professionals from across the state. The organization strives to foster development in the field of school public relations and to encourage meaningful community involvement in and understanding of the public school system.

CHARLESTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT (CCSD) OPENED FIVE NEW FACILITIES TO STUDENTS FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR.

They include Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies, District 4 Regional Stadium, Lucy Beckham High School, C.E. Williams Middle School South Campus, and Camp Road Middle School. All five projects were funded by a “Yes” vote of the Charleston Education Capital Improvements Sales and Use Tax Referendum of 2014.



Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies



District 4 Regional Stadium



Lucy Beckham High School



C.E. Williams Middle School (South Campus)



Camp Road Middle School

Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies

One of CCSD's three regional career centers, the Cooper River CAS gives high school students an opportunity to expand their CTE education. The new state-of-the-art building is 84,000 square feet and designed to seat 600 students, and is located across the street from North Charleston High School. The facility serves high school students enrolled in the District 4 area and Burke High School. The building includes both classrooms and lab spaces for programs such as health science technologies, information technology pre-engineering, arts, and audio-visual technologies.

The Cooper River CAS offers high bay facilities for Auto Collision Repair, Mechatronics and Building Construction, labs for STEM classes, Biomedical and Health Sciences, Cyber Security, Computer Repair, and "Project Lead the Way" classes. Other areas of the building include maker spaces, a two-story exhibition space, and a 150-seat lecture hall.

The construction team worked in tandem with local and state agencies to open the school on time and within the approved budget of \$42.7 million.

In addition to the construction management team, Cumming/Brownstone, the architect was Steven & Wilkinson/Red Iron Architects, and the general contractor was McKnight Construction. The Project Manager was Margarita Perez and the Site Manager was John Calvin.

District 4 Regional Stadium

The \$22.5 million complex was built on 36 acres located on West Montague Ave. and serves Academic Magnet High, Military Magnet Academy, North Charleston High, and R.B. Stall High Schools. The teams use the stadium in a rotational format.

The new state-of-the-art facility includes a synthetic turf field, home and visitor's halftime rooms, home and visitor's restrooms, concessions, and support buildings, has a seating capacity of 6,000 people.

In addition to the construction management team, Cumming, the architect was LS3P, and the general contractor was J.E. Dunn Construction. The Project Manager was Matt Campbell.

Lucy Beckham High School

The new building can accommodate 1,500 students in grades 9-12. The three-story facility is situated on 44.1 acres and was constructed on the site of the former Wando High School located at the intersection of Mathis Ferry Road and Whipple Road in Mount Pleasant. The building totals 245,000 square feet.

It opened to 9th and 10th-grade students and will phase in 11th and 12th grades, relieving overcrowding at neighboring Wando High School. Thanks to the Charleston County residents, students will enjoy a new facility of learning to include new Career Technology Education labs, general classrooms, a cutting-edge auditorium, and a state-of-the-art kitchen.

The project budget was \$103.7 million.

The new high school also contains science labs, a performing arts wing, cafeteria, main gymnasium, auxiliary gymnasium, media center, and administration spaces. The site will also include a competition track and field, two practice fields, as well as parking for staff and students, and separate parent and bus drop-offs.

In addition to the construction management team, Cumming, the architect was McMillan Pazdan Smith, and the general contractor was Contract Construction. The Project Manager was Harold Lee and the Site Manager was Joe Edmonds.

C.E. Williams Middle School (South Campus)

The new \$53.3 million state-of-the-art building is a two-story, 137,227 square foot facility designed to serve 900 students, and can be expanded to accommodate a total of 1,200 students. It is at 3090 Sanders Road, next to West Ashley High School. Seventh and eighth-grade students attended the school this year.

The Bees Ferry West Ashley Library is being built in the same area, helping create an educational hub for Charleston County students in District 10. The building includes large classrooms for band, orchestra, and strings. Career Technology Education is highlighted in the multiple technology-centered classrooms, and computer labs. Project labs and other meeting and learning spaces were also included throughout the facility.

In addition to the construction management team, Cumming, the architect was LS3P, and the general contractor was Contract Construction. The Project Manager was Bobby Bryant and the Site Manager was Chuck Lather. Manager was Matt Campbell.

Camp Road Middle School

The \$52 million project resulted in a new building of approximately 137,000 square feet to serve an initial population of 900 students with a core and expansion space for a future capacity of 1200 students.

Built on the old Fort Johnson Middle School site, this new facility is long-awaited for the middle school students on James Island. Starting in 2018, the two District 3 middle schools were combined and housed at the old James Island Middle School.

The library on the second floor is prominent at the front corner and creates a "treehouse feel" for the students inside. The building is spacious, bright, clean, and colorful. The new furniture is color-coordinated with the carpets, floors, and walls. The amenities include state-of-the-art technology in all classrooms, sound systems in the gym and all performing arts rooms, nine science labs, a performing arts wing, a 9,500 square foot gym with a stage, and a 7,000 square foot cafeteria with outdoor dining for 60 students. The campus offers ample space for parking, buses, morning and afternoon car traffic, and green space for recess.

In addition to the construction management team, Cumming, the architect was Rosenblum Coe, and the general contractor was TQ Constructors. The Project Manager was Joe Christian and the Site Manager was Jack Duane.

District celebrates educators during Teacher Appreciation Week

Charleston County School District (CCSD) honored teachers May 3-7, 2021 during Teacher Appreciation Week. Educators were recognized for their continued commitment to the children of CCSD.

“Our teachers and staff have been the difference maker this year,” said Michelle Simmons, Associate Superintendent of Elementary Learning Community. “They showed up on behalf of students and delivered each and every day. We couldn’t be more grateful for their resilience, professionalism, and ingenuity.”

At the school and district level, teachers were showered with surprises and treats to thank them for all that they do.

“I am inspired by those who are humble and selflessly give of themselves in order to support a vision that is for the good of others,” said Dr. Joe Williams, Associate Superintendent of Middle and Secondary Learning. “Our CCSD teachers and school staff have been my biggest source of inspiration this year, for being courageous and doing what was right for children. As our children look back and reflect on this pandemic experience in the years to come, they will always remember the courage and grace that these amazing educators have shown. They are the best!”

Janet Brown, Principal at Ladson Elementary School explained that this year teachers have been pushed to their limits physically, mentally, and emotionally as they faced the challenges brought on by teaching during a pandemic.

“This school year has tested the passion and perseverance of every teacher yet they have risen to the occasion time and time again,” said Brown. “What I have seen is nothing short of miraculous. When we thought teachers couldn’t love their children any more than they already did, they showed us they could. They made sure every child knew they were smiling, even if they couldn’t see that smile through the teacher’s mask. They made sure every student felt loved, even if they couldn’t hug them.”

Jerry Zucker Middle School Principal Jacob Perlmutter believes that a school is only as good as its teachers.

“Great teachers equal a great school,” said Perlmutter. “This year our teachers have done (and are still doing) heroic work under stressors that are hard to even explain. If our communities reflect the values and resilience of our teachers, our future is bright!”

“When we thought teachers couldn’t work any harder than they already did, they put in extra hours to make sure they connected with each and every student and their families whether virtual or in-person,” Brown added. “They embraced the plexiglass and made it a fun part of everyday instruction.”

Zucker teacher Tasherkia Manigault described her co-workers as resilient.

“Although this school year has been challenging, great teachers learn to adapt to these challenges and persevere, continuing to educate the impressionable minds of students, and for that we celebrate,” said Manigault. “We are committed and to ensuring that every student is valued because dreams weigh more than excuses.”

In addition, Brown explained, her teachers helped students see that they could still love school and enjoy learning even though it was different.

“They showed up every single day,” Brown said. “Yes, there were tears shed for what used to be but they never let it show. The only thing that showed was love for the children and a love of the job. This year, more than any other, I appreciate every teacher, assistant, cafeteria worker, custodian, and support staff member. However, it’s probably more accurate to say that I admire and remain in awe of them every day. They are my heroes.”

In that new facility. The new facility was highlighted and celebrated at a dedication ceremony.

Featured speakers at the event included City of North Charleston Mayor Keith Summey, CCSD Board of Trustees Chair Rev. Dr. Eric Mack, Superintendent of Schools Dr. Gerrita Postlewait, and Principal Vanessa Brown.

“This is a place where students can put into practice the hope they have for the future,” said Brown. “Now students who live in the same neighborhoods I grew up in will have access to explore and study careers they may have previously considered beyond their reach. My staff and I pledge that this is where we will develop highly-trained professionals.”

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Mission, Values & Commitments



STUDENTS ARE
THE HEART

OF OUR WORK!



Our Mission

To educate and support every child in achieving college, career, and citizenship readiness

Our Vision

CCSD is a premier school system in which

- every child is supported in and out of school,
- every child succeeds academically,
- every child graduates from high school prepared for employment in the modern workforce or credential completion or postsecondary degree, and
- every student, teacher, principal, and staff member is valued and respected with the opportunity to learn every day.

Our Values

- SERVICE - We are selfless in support of our students and each other.
- INTEGRITY - We honor truthfulness, fairness, consistency, and transparency.
- INCLUSIVENESS - We treat each other with dignity and mutual respect.
- EQUITY - We target resources, support, and attention where the need is greatest.
- COLLABORATION - We are stronger when we work together on behalf of every child.
- EXCELLENCE - We make decisions that are student-centered, data-informed, and evidence-based.

Charleston County School District

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Edward Boyd, *Chief Communications Officer*
Andy Pruitt, *Director of Communications and Technology*
Toshiba Champaigne, *Constituent Board Liaison*
Maggie Dangerfield, *Director of Strategic Engagement*
Tyesha Drayton, *Project Manager*
Lauren Gandy, *Project Specialist*
Clara Heinsohn, *Public Affairs Officer*
Alicia Kokkinis, *Grants Officer*
Libby Smalls-Tisdale, *Administrative Support*
Dennis Muhammed, *FACE Officer*
Mike Rabon, *Multimedia Manager*
Crystal Rouse, *FACE Officer*
Todd Shaffer, *Multimedia Manager*
Claire Wilson, *Project Manager*
Sully Witte, *Public Relations Officer*
Stephen Wyatt, *Webmaster*

Charleston County School District

DISTRICT PROFILE



Annual Budget
\$541,425,487



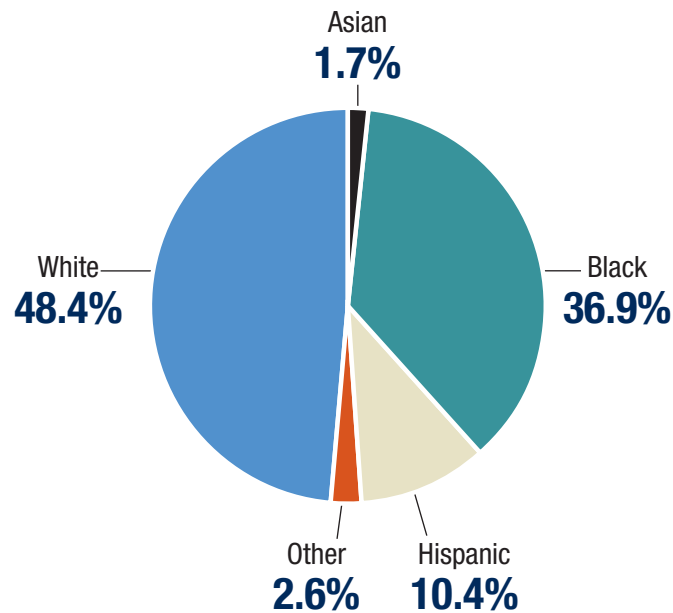
Number of Students
47,620



Number of Schools/Programs
139



Number of Teachers
3,476



Students Designated
English Language Learners
11%

