

For Immediate Release

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Media Release

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Seven CCSD schools named as 2023-2024 Project Lead the Way Schools

Charleston, SC - Seven Charleston County Schools (CCSD) schools have been identified as Project Lead The Way (PLTW) Distinguished Schools. PLTW is a national nonprofit organization that serves millions of PreK-12 students and teachers in schools across the U.S. A school earns the PLTW Distinguished School honor for its commitment to increasing student access, engagement, and achievement in its PLTW programs.

CCSD schools that were named include:

- North Charleston Elementary School (NCES) - Distinguished Launch
- Buist Academy - Distinguished Gateway
- Laing Middle School - Distinguished Gateway
- Morningside Middle School - Distinguished Gateway
- Moultrie Middle School - Distinguished Gateway
- East Cooper Center for Advanced Studies (ECCAS) - Distinguished High School
- Lucy Beckham High School - Distinguished High School

The PLTW Distinguished School recognition is based on the number of PLTW curricular offerings available to students, access and opportunity to the PLTW courses, the number of students engaged in PLTW courses, and student success in their PLTW coursework.

"Project Lead The Way prepares our students for the high-wage, high-skill, and in-demand careers of the future," said Rich Gordon, CCSD's Executive Director for Career and Technical Education. "Students learn how to problem-solve, think strategically, and work in teams, all the while building determination and grit."

Buist Academy's goal as an International Baccalaureate school is to educate students to be internationally minded while pursuing college and career readiness, according to Principal Shawntay White.

"Project Lead The Way provides these opportunities through inquiry-based STEM education that challenges our students to be risk-takers while exploring engineering and mathematical concepts," said White. "Scholars are making real-

world connections and bringing global perspectives into PLTW classrooms. We are thankful and honored to be recognized as a PLTW Gateway Distinguished School.”

This is the fourth consecutive year ECCAS has been recognized. Principal Jeff Blankenship said he was honored to be recognized and is proud of the school’s commitment to providing students with exceptional educational experiences while ensuring equitable access to all 17 PLTW Biomedical Science, Computer Science, and Engineering high school programs.

“PLTW empowers students with the knowledge and skills to succeed, not only in STEM subjects but also prepares them for future careers and life outside of the classroom,” said Blankenship.

Laing Middle School’s Principal Jay Whitehair said he is honored by this national recognition by PLTW.

“I am very proud of our teachers and students for the development and implementation of a STEM program that aligns with College & Career readiness,” said Whitehair. “We thank PLTW and their commitment to STEM education.”

This is Beckham’s first time receiving this award. Principal Anna Dassing said PLTW students and teachers worked hard to earn this distinction.

“Our instructors are committed to ensuring that our students are afforded access and opportunities in a variety of areas and our students are excelling because they have engaged deeply with engineering and biomedical courses,” Dassing explained. “We are honored to be recognized and look forward to continuing to grow our PLTW offerings.”

Morningside Principal George White said he was thrilled about the incredible impact that Project Lead The Way (PLTW) is having on his scholars.

“The opportunities provided through PLTW are sparking inspiration, fostering critical thinking skills, and promoting collaboration among our students,” said White. “As we continue to invest in the development of our scholars, we are witnessing their growth into future global leaders. In today’s ever-changing and complex society, the skills acquired through PLTW are essential for our students to succeed and thrive. I am excited to see the continued growth and success of our scholars as they navigate their educational journey at Morningside with PLTW.”

This is the second year NCES has been recognized.

“Our goal is to provide our students with real-world, hands-on STEM learning experiences that ignite curiosity, broaden knowledge of career opportunities, and prepare them to take advantage of further STEM learning options at the middle and high school level,” said NCES Principal Melissa Brubaker. “We look forward to offering our PLTW lab for years to come thanks to our partnership with the Liberty

Hill Stem Initiative and the commitment of our district to provide schools with flexibility through the Weighted Student Formula model of funding.”

Project Lead The Way empowers students to develop and apply in-demand, transportable skills by exploring real-world challenges. Through three pathways in computer science, engineering, and biomedical science, students not only learn technical skills, but also learn to solve problems, think critically and creatively, communicate, and collaborate.

“PLTW directly supports CCSD’s three pillars of rigorous grade-level instruction, high-quality teachers and leaders, and wraparound services, all while addressing CCSD’s goals of literacy, numeracy, and college and career readiness,” added Gordon. “Furthermore, students love it.”

For more information about the PLTW in CCSD, contact the Rich Gordon at richard_gordon@charleston.k12.sc.us.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 50,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse portfolio of educational options and specialized programs delivered to the students of CCSD through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools and programs. Rich educational opportunities for students include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; military; dual credit; and many more.