

For Immediate Release

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Media Release

CCSD students attend regional job fair attaining employment on the spot

Office of Communications

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Charleston, SC – On May 1, 2024, Charleston County School District (CCSD) seniors attended a regional hiring fair hosted by the SC Department of Employment and Workforce (SCDEW) at the North Charleston Convention Center.

Students in attendance had the opportunity to meet with over 100 employer representatives, and many shared their resumes and discussed employment options in career fields like healthcare, hospitality and tourism, advanced manufacturing, and municipal government.

The “Your Next Step” regional hiring fair allowed students from the Trident region to explore in-demand opportunities to pursue following graduation. Following the event, Lt. Governor Pam Evette presented [Empowering Tomorrow's Leaders](#), a new statewide Youth Employment Initiative in partnership with local economic development professionals and the SCDEW.

According to Chad Vail the Work-based Learning Partnerships Coordinator with the district’s Career & Technical Education Department, said many of those CCSD students left the event with numerous job offers.

“Our students from high schools throughout the district arrived in professional attire, prepared to engage local employers and share their resumes,” said Vail. “I could not have been more proud to see them in action at the event.”

Shaquan Washington, a senior, from Septima P. Clark Academy, shared that he was actually pursued by two local electric companies, ultimately choosing Dominion Energy as his workplace of choice. Now, just two weeks later, he is moving swiftly through the application process with the promise of employment upon graduation.

Washington had his sights set on joining the military. However, he went to this career fair with an open mind and thought he might land on a construction team or maybe even with a real estate company.

“Both of the company representatives I spoke with described me as an old soul,” said Washington. “One man said I stood out and would be a natural fit with his crew.”

Washington thinks that is because of his upbringing. He was raised by his mother and grandmother and has mostly kept the company of people older than him. Those experiences and his family's household rules have allowed his maturity to flourish.

According to Kayvonna Brown and Sarah Yates, (the College and Career Team at Clark Academy), the representatives for several businesses liked Washington's spirit, preparation, and drive.

"This empowering engagement to prepare our future leaders afforded scholars of CCSD the opportunity to explore and impact the trajectory of their future success, said Dr. Nakeam Binyard, the interim principal at Septima P. Clark Academy. "Our parents, scholars, faculty, and staff were energized around this opportunity for the Class of 2024 scholars from Septima P. Clark Academy to attend. We look forward to continuing our participation as a choice program in the future."

Yates and Brown prepped with the students at Clark several weeks in advance.

"We prepared resumes, researched the business and vendors that would be on site, and tailored certain resumes towards those businesses," said Brown.

Washington, who is "Microburst EmployABILITY Skills" certified, felt confident going into the event. The professional skills certification confirms students have the traits that employers want their applicants to have. The Microburst EmployABILITY Skills program consists of 10 specific lessons, a pre-assessment, online modules, activities to provide soft skills practice, and assessments designed to equip students with the soft skills employers demand.

"Shaquan went in prepared and confident," said Yates. "He was prepared with a portfolio, reference page, and several copies of each so the companies had his information. All of our students were prepared, right down to their attire."

Brown added that the students felt like they were being poured into, and they felt valued.

Washington was a little nervous but excited. He said it was a big step to go from working in the fast food industry to a professional job.

Brown said the family members of the students were just as excited, knowing their child could potentially be fulfilling their dreams of a lucrative career.

"It was warming to see their enthusiasm," said Brown.

As Washington moved from vendor to vendor, you could see that he was impressing competing agencies, according to Yates.

Washington has moved through the CCSD system, having attended a large high school, and then briefly attending Daniel Jenkins Academy. He chose to go to Clark when he saw how much his grades had improved during his time at Daniel Jenkins.

"I wanted to continue on a successful academic track and Clark's small size and one-on-one attention would provide me with the support I needed," said Washington. "Having the opportunity to attend Clark has opened doors for me."

Yates is already looking forward to next year's "Your Next Step Career Fair" after seeing the value it has on her students.

In the lead-up to graduation, Washington is looking forward to hearing about the next steps in regards to joining the Dominion Energy team. In the meantime, he's working hard at Panera Bread as a team lead and is proud to be in the management pipeline at his neighborhood restaurant.

"A lot of things are falling into place for me," said Washington. "The career fair is just one of them, but I am anxious and excited to see where this opportunity will take me."

Washington said the career event opened his eyes to all of the options available to him.

"I also learned a lot about the energy business," said Washington. "I remember as a little kid seeing the bucket trucks come into the neighborhood and we always were wondering what they were doing. We convinced ourselves they were either coming to cut off the power or cut it back on."

Washington said after a brief conversation with agency representatives, he learned it is so much more. And, he's hooked.

For more information, contact the Office of Communications at (843) 937-6303.

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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.