

Thursday, August 1, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



From left: Brittany Hallman, Kristina Kittrell, Dr. Shawn Foster, Starleigh Jefferson, Peggy Lingard-Moorer

## ORANGEBURG COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT HOSTS 2024 CONVOCATION TO KICK OFF SCHOOL YEAR

**ORANGEBURG, S.C.** – Orangeburg County School District (OCSD) held its 2024 Convocation yesterday to mark the beginning of the new school year. The event, themed “Building Capacity. Sustaining Success.,” featured an inspiring keynote address by Chris Singleton from Charleston, SC. Singleton, a former professional athlete drafted by the Chicago Cubs in 2017, has transformed his life’s tragedy into a powerful message of unity and racial reconciliation. Following the loss of his mother in a racially motivated mass shooting, Singleton has become a sought-after inspirational speaker and best-selling author, sharing his story with NFL and NBA teams, multiple Fortune 500 companies, over 100 organizations, and more than 50,000 students annually.

This year’s convocation was not only a motivational kickoff for the school year but also a celebration of the outstanding achievements within the district. The winners for the 2024 academic year include:

- **Principal of the Year:** LaTonya Durant, Vance-Providence Elementary
- **Assistant Principal of the Year:** Dawn Whitesides, Edisto Primary School

- **Teacher of the Year:** Kristina Kittrell, Lockett Elementary
- **Alternate Teacher of the Year:** Brittany Hallman, Edisto Primary School
- **Support Staff of the Year:** Starleigh Jefferson, Bethune-Bowman Elementary
- **Alternate Support Staff of the Year:** Peggy Lingard-Moorer, Carver-Edisto Middle School



From left: LaTonya Durant, Dr. Shawn Foster, Dawn Whitesides

These individuals have demonstrated exceptional dedication, leadership, and commitment to fostering a positive educational environment. Their contributions have significantly impacted the lives of students and the broader community.

In a gesture of generosity and support, Marcus Johnson, CEO/Owner of Nissan of Orangeburg, gifted cars to both the Teacher of the Year and the Support Staff of the Year. Additionally, he provided monetary donations to the top five winners, highlighting his unwavering commitment to education and appreciation for the hard work of OCSD's educators and staff. The district extends its heartfelt gratitude to Marcus Johnson for his continued support.

Furthermore, we extend our thanks to the Farlow-Moyd Law Firm for their generous donation in support of the Principal of the Year and Assistant Principal of the Year awards. Their contribution underscores the community's recognition of the vital role that educational leaders play in shaping the future of our students.

We are also pleased to acknowledge Jostens, who will be providing rings for all the winners. This symbolic gesture celebrates their achievements and dedication, serving as a constant reminder of their excellence and the high standards they set within our district.

This year's convocation set a positive and hopeful tone for the new academic year. It celebrated the remarkable achievements of our educators and staff while inspiring the entire OCSD community to continue building capacity and sustaining success. As we move forward, we

remain committed to fostering an environment of excellence, unity, and growth for all our students and staff.

**Orangeburg County School District**

The mission of Orangeburg County School District, the catalyst of innovation and excellence, is to ensure all students discover and develop their person, purpose, and platform through high-quality educational experiences distinguished by a culture of collaboration, equity, and inclusion; a creative learning environment with inspiring opportunities; a commitment to nurture the academic, physical, social and emotional well-being of all. Visit us online at [ocsdsc.org](http://ocsdsc.org)

**###**