



West Ashley Center for
Advanced Studies

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Media Release

The West Ashley CAS is home to first high school-certified welding testing facility in South Carolina

Charleston, SC — The West Ashley Center for Advanced Studies (CAS) made history this month, earning the American Welding Society's (AWS) Accredited Testing Facility certification, making it the first high school in the state to receive the designation.

The West Ashley CAS can offer more certifications within the field of welding, which should, in turn, allow the program at the school to grow due to the demand for quality, certified welders in our area. By becoming an Accredited Test Facility, the West Ashley CAS will be able to diversify the certifications offered and tailor a better fit for the students as they decide their path for employment, preparing students to take their place in the high-demand, highly skilled 21st-century workforce.

"If you want to weld Aluminum T-Tops for boats, we have a certification to prepare you for that test," explained Andrew Dock, West Ashley CAS Welding Technologies teacher. "You want to do heavy iron and fabrication; a couple of one-inch plate tests will fit that well. Some students get to the level to pursue pipe welding, and we offer them a wide array of pipe certifications."

Ultimately, the accomplishment of becoming the first school to achieve this feat adds another layer of pride and expectation for excellence for the school's administration, Dock, his students, and the overall West Ashley community.

"This brings credibility to the program here and will encourage other schools and students to rise to the challenge, to build a better, more rigorous, and high-quality program for welding - which South Carolina needs," explained Dock.

Dock added that the process to earn the AWS certification started two years ago when he became a Certified Welding Inspector (CWI), a professional certificate with a 25-35 percent pass rate on the test. Then, he completed his Quality Assurance Manual for the facility at West Ashley CAS, a manual the AWS audits to ensure the program and facility meet high standards to test and certify welders, followed by an in-person audit of the facility and supporting documentation. Lastly, once the facility audit and the additional contracted CWIs

that work for him were vetted, they earned a Certificate of Conformance, allowing the program to test welders on-site.

"I have tremendous pride in the program," added Dock. "Through constant support from the district, the school, and my peers, we made this program a standard for the state. The students' hard work, dedication to the craft, and willingness to learn to shine through when they come out of the class, graduating, taking on high-skill, high-paying jobs at 18 years old. I am so proud of our program here, and it truly is second to none in the state."

For more information, contact CCSD's 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.