



**For Immediate Release**

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# Media Release

## **Principal Larson encourages kindness above all things at Stall High School**

**R.B. Stall High School**

**Anita W. Huggins, M.Ed.**  
Superintendent of Schools

**Luke Clamp, Ed.D.**  
Deputy Superintendent

**Sherry M. Eppelsheimer, Ed.D.**  
Associate Superintendent of the  
High School Learning Community

**Steve Larson**  
Executive Principal

**North Charleston, SC** - Steve Larson *has a love and passion for working with “his kids.” It’s pretty clear from the heart he pours into the students at R.B. Stall High School.*

Larson is in his third year at R.B. Stall High School and he has organically transformed the atmosphere there. It’s clear to all: kindness comes first at Stall. Larson’s philosophy is that humans are more likely to succeed when they feel loved and valued. Larson leaned into his nearly 30 year experience of being an educator to build a community at Stall where students want to come and learn.

The Oregon native was a seasoned educator in that state and was ready for new challenges. His family chose Charleston to start their next chapter. Larson has held many positions as an educator (teacher, elementary and middle school principal, bilingual school principal, director of schools at the central office level, and even assistant superintendent), but he had never been a high school principal. He was honored when he was named as the principal of St. John’s High School in 2016. He describes it as walking into a gift.

“I didn’t know that I could be this fulfilled, personally and professionally,” said Larson. “I was able to take everything I learned, from instruction to leadership, and put it into practice. I became ingrained in the community and felt I was part of the fabric.”

Larson was inspired by the opportunity to transition to Stall three years ago, which is over six times the size of St. John’s, his previous high school. While Larson misses his Islanders, he says he loves being a Warrior, through and through.

Larson said that part of what makes Stall an amazing place for students is the teachers and staff.

“Stall has a reputation of having some of the very best teachers in our district and we’re proud of that,” said Larson. “They are among the hardest working. They know it takes a community to do the job. They rely on each other every day for

support, ideas, and different instructional strategies. The fact that they are so committed to our students here is what makes it so special.”

There are over 200 staff members at Stall and their number one job is to make a kid feel great every single day. The number two job is teaching the content, and number three, having a great time doing it.

Allison Cox is in her sixth year at Stall and is the lead teacher for the athletic department. She describes the environment at Stall as a family.

“Mr. Larson is a transformational leader,” said Cox. “His initiative about being kind to all of the students and building relationships is something I appreciate. He has taught us that in order to be effective in the classroom you have to let the students know that you care about them. The students have to be emotionally supported in order for them to be academically successful with that teacher. The students feel like they are part of the family.”

That wouldn’t be possible without the support Larson gives to faculty and staff.

“The level of support we receive from the administration is unprecedented for me,” said Cox. “The last three years of my career have been the best I’ve ever had and I attribute that to Mr. Larson because his beliefs and his level of professionalism are transferred into his administrators. He builds people up with the strategies that he knows will make teachers successful.”

### **Melting pot of cultures**

Over 1,000 students speak a language other than English at Stall. Larson said he has always been drawn to working with students from diverse communities. He has spent his whole life learning how to speak Spanish, and he is now practicing Portuguese.

“For many of our students, their journey has been a struggle,” said Larson. “If the one thing I can do for them is to connect with them through language, then we’ve overcome one hurdle. It is an eye-opening experience for the student to learn that we’re alike in some way. That makes a world of difference.”

Jacqueline Cruz is a senior and was surprised by this one evening during a parent/teacher night.

“I am used to translating for my mother since I am a Mexican immigrant,” said Cruz. “I was translating for my mom and he overheard us and he just came over and started speaking Spanish. That meant a lot.”

Cox said Larson is intentional in celebrating each individual culture through enriching activities, events, and more.

“Everyone in the building is a participant in each cultural celebration,” said Cox. “Mr. Larson allows us to explore music, and host festivals, and bring in food trucks.

Mr. Larson does a wonderful job of helping everyone mix and mingle within those different cultures so that everyone learns about each other.”

Stall is fortunate to be home to the district’s first Newcomer Center, which is designed to welcome students new to the country.

“It is a place for the students to incubate a little,” said Larson. “It is designed as a place for the students to be loved on and recognized for what they bring to our country and to let them know that we are glad they’re here. It’s a place where they can be assured we will take care of everything for them.”

The Newcomer Center offers comprehensive services but Larson said the primary responsibility is to make sure students are learning English as quickly as possible so they can earn the credits needed to graduate.

“It’s also that outreach to the community that says we know what to do, we know how to help you because we’ve been doing it for years,” added Larson.

Some of Stall’s Hispanic students have received full scholarships to nearby Charleston Southern University.

“A lot of our students might feel discouraged that there is not an opportunity for them post-high school,” said Larson. “Our relationships and our connection can get students full-ride scholarships if they put in the work. The opportunities are there. It is a little more complicated but we know how to do this work and we’re proud that we’re doing it.”

Stall boasts students from all over the world and it presents many opportunities to bring cultures together.

“It is the perfect social environment where kids from all different cultures and backgrounds can come together,” said Larson. “The most important thing we do is teach our students how to care for one another and how to interact with each other. We push our students to interact in class and it allows students to see the assets that they have in each other in this school and by doing that I think we’ve really created something special.”

Larson said he’s fortunate to have landed at Stall at this stage in his career.

“I’d say everything I’ve done has prepared me for this point in my life,” Larson added. “Every single experience I’ve had, positive, challenging, all of the opportunities I’ve had, all led me here to this school, and to make an impact on these 2,000 kids is a pretty special thing.”

As a principal who challenges himself to learn every student’s name, Larson is loved by the students.

Cruz said she could not have picked a better principal.

“I can’t explain enough how much he has done for this school and how much he has done for us,” added Cruz. “He goes above and beyond to make sure we have what we need and he never wants anyone to feel like they’re excluded.”

Larson is humbled by the appreciation.

“I look back on my nearly 30-year career and think what a ride,” said Larson. “I’ve loved every minute of it. I’m completely fulfilled.”

For more information, contact Principal Steve Larson at (843) 764-2200.

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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.

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