

SPOTLIGHT ONE

FALL 2024 EDITION



RICHLAND ONE
ENGAGE • EDUCATE • EMPOWER

A Publication of Richland County School District One



2024-2029 Strategic Plan • School Safety: A Shared Responsibility • Points of Pride
Attendance Counts: Show Up & Shine! • Staff and Program Spotlights • Key Dates

factsheet



ENGAGE • EDUCATE • EMPOWER



**ELEMENTARY
SCHOOLS**



**MIDDLE
SCHOOLS**



**HIGH
SCHOOLS**



**CHARTER
SCHOOLS**



**SPECIAL SCHOOLS
AND CENTERS**

Our Mission

We are Richland One, a leader in transforming lives through education, empowering all students to achieve their potential and dreams.

Points of Pride

- All 48 schools in Richland One have been recognized as America's Healthiest Schools, making the district the leader in South Carolina with the most award winners.
- Class of 2024 graduates earned nearly \$70 million in scholarship money.
- First District in South Carolina to Offer All 16 Nationally Recognized Career Clusters
- First High School CDL Program in South Carolina; One of Only Six Nationwide
- First Certified Pre-Apprenticeship Program in South Carolina
- Designated a Purple Star School District for Support of Military Families
- Home of South Carolina's Only Challenger Learning Center
- Diverse and Unique Magnet Programs Include Montessori, Language Immersion, Virtual School Programs, Career Magnets, Medical Magnet Academy, Health Sciences Magnet, and Middle College
- Two Richland One high schools were ranked among the "Best High Schools" in the nation by U.S. News & World Report for 2023-2024.
- Richland One had 87 students earn the South Carolina Seal of Biliteracy for the 2023-2024 school year, marking the highest number in the district's history.
- National Excellence in Financial Reporting Awards for 36 Consecutive Years

BY THE NUMBERS

10TH
largest school
district in SC

22,000
Students



4,066
Employees

(one of the area's largest employers)

52
Schools and
Special Centers



480
square miles



Richland
County



Our Website
www.richlandone.org



Richland One TV
Spectrum Cable Channel 1303



Facebook
www.facebook.com/richlandone



Instagram
[@richlandone](https://www.instagram.com/richlandone)



X
www.twitter.com/richlandone



InfoPhone
803-231-7512

CONTENTS

- 2 Richland One Fact Sheet
- 4 Superintendent's Message
- 4 Board of School Commissioners
- 5 Points of Pride
- 6-7 2024-2029 Strategic Plan
- 16-17 Directory of Schools
- 18 Key Dates



SPOTLIGHTS

- 8 School Safety: A Shared Responsibility
- 9 Attendance Counts: Show Up & Shine!
- 10 Coming Soon: esports
- 11 Teacher of the Year Joseph Bell
- 12 Classified Employee of the Year Mark Davis
- 13 Induction Teacher of the Year Julia Turner
- 14 District Ombudsman Basil Harris
- 15 International Welcome Center

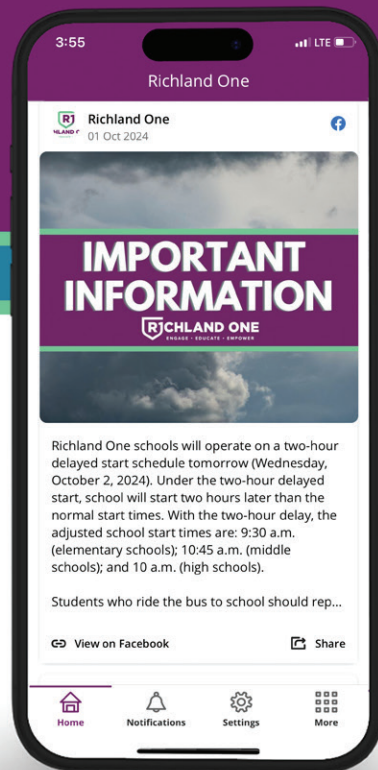
About This Publication: SPOTLIGHT ONE is published by the Richland One Office of Communications and distributed by bulk mail to Richland One residents.

DOWNLOAD OUR APP TO STAY CONNECTED!

RICHLAND ONE NEWS IS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS!

- DISTRICT & SCHOOL NEWS
- EMERGENCY NOTIFICATIONS
- EVENTS CALENDAR
- RICHLAND ONE TV
- AND MUCH MORE!

AVAILABLE ON



SUPERINTENDENT'S MESSAGE



In my Back-to-School Convocation address in August, I challenged staff throughout the district to show up for our students every day of the 2024-2025 school year. Team One has accepted and embraced that challenge. Showing up doesn't mean just being there; it also means showing our students we care about them and doing all we can to help them be successful.

We are now well into the first half of the school year, and we have begun implementing a new Strategic Plan that will serve as our road map for the next five years. Our 2024-2029 Strategic Plan ([see pages 6-7](#)) outlines our priorities and the actions we will take to achieve the measurable goals we have set, with student achievement continuing to be our core focus. We will ensure that our programs, processes and decisions are in alignment with the Strategic Plan.


While there is still much work to be done, we are proud of the progress and growth we have seen in student achievement across the district, including the gains reflected in our 2023-2024 school report card data ([see page 5](#)). We are moving students forward academically.

To realize even greater growth, we need our parents to support the work being done by our teachers, principals and support staff. One critical area in which we need that support from parents is student attendance ([see page 9](#)). Attendance counts and we need our students to show up and shine every day!

Community members who are looking for ways to help are encouraged to volunteer to serve as R1 CHAMPS in our schools. For information about R1 CHAMPS and how to sign up, contact Mr. Kerry Abel at kerry.abel@richlandone.org or (803) 231-7182.

SPOTLIGHT ONE is just one of the ways we keep our stakeholders informed about what's happening in Richland One. Please visit our new website (www.RichlandOne.org); download our mobile app; follow us on social media (Facebook, Instagram and X); and watch Richland One TV (Spectrum cable channel 1303 and RITV On Demand on our website). Also, be sure to check out The Richland One Story podcast at www.RichlandOne.org/podcast and on Spotify.

Sincerely,


Craig Witherspoon, Ed.D.
Superintendent
Richland County School District One

BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMISSIONERS

School board meetings are normally held on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. Open session begins at 7 p.m. Board meetings are livestreamed on the district's website. Board member profiles, the meeting schedule and meeting agendas are posted at www.RichlandOne.org/school-board.



Dr. Aaron Bishop
Chairman
Election District 1



Angela Clyburn
Vice Chairwoman
At-Large



Robert Lominack
Secretary-Treasurer
Election District 3



Jamie L. Devine
Parliamentarian
Election District 2



Cheryl Harris
Election District 4



Tamika Myers
At-Large



Barbara F. Weston
At-Large

**Board composition as of October 2024*

POINTS OF PRIDE



Highlights of Richland One's 2023-2024 School and District Report Cards (released in October 2024 by the S.C. Department of Education)

SC READY (South Carolina College- and Career-Ready Assessment)

- More elementary and middle school students across the district scored Meets Expectations or Exceeds Expectations.
- Third-grade math scores increased 3.5 percentage points, and sixth-grade English language arts (ELA) scores increased 4.5 percentage points.
- Fifty-two students had perfect scores in math, science or both subject areas.

End-of-Course Examination Program (EOCEP)

- Student performance improved in all end-of-course subjects (Algebra 1, Biology 1, English 2 and U.S. History).
- Biggest gains: Percentage of students passing Biology 1 (increase of 7.3 percentage points) and English 2 (increase of 6.4 percentage points)

Student Growth

- Increased student growth, specifically in all students, African-American students, White students, Hispanic students and students from low-income households, along with our lowest-performing 20% of students who outperformed the state
- Our multilingual learners demonstrated impressive progress in meeting proficiency goals, outperforming the state.

Graduation and CCR Rates

- Our graduation rate increased from 81.8% to 82.6%.
- Our College or Career Readiness (CCR) rate jumped 3.6 percentage points from 55.8% to 59.4%.

Teacher Retention Rate

- Our teacher retention rate increased from 77.5% to 83.7%.

Overall School Performance

- Fewer schools were rated as Unsatisfactory. Three of our schools moved from Unsatisfactory to Below Average; three schools moved from Below Average to Average; and three schools moved from Average to Good. Three schools were also removed from the state's underperforming schools list.
- Three of the four high schools that were rated Unsatisfactory last year improved to Below Average; the fourth high school had a five-point score increase.

The Richland One Teacher Think Tank

The Richland One Teacher Think Tank, which includes teachers from every school in the district, convenes three times during the school year. The Teacher Think Tank provides a forum for district and school staff to share information and gain insight from each other as they work together to support school, student and district growth. It's an opportunity for district staff to collaborate with teachers and for teachers to have a proactive voice in decisions being made in the Office of Teaching and Learning, which facilitates the Teacher Think Tank.





Our 2024-2029 Strategic Plan will drive everything we do in the district for the next five years. It is a comprehensive document that defines our mission, vision, core values and core priorities and aligns them to measurable outcomes.

The new Strategic Plan was developed with input and feedback from students, parents, teachers, classified staff, administrators, school board members and community partners. It is a living document that will be monitored continuously, reviewed annually, and updated as needed to adapt to evolving needs and priorities.

View the full
Strategic Plan at
www.RichlandOne.org
or scan the
QR code.



MISSION

We are Richland One, a leader in transforming lives through education, empowering all students to achieve their potential and dreams.

VISION

Richland School District One, in collaboration with an engaged community, is committed to ensuring that all learners achieve their potential in a safe, caring, academically challenging and diverse learning environment that will develop productive citizens for a changing world.

CORE VALUES

- Collaboration
- Compassion
- Courage
- Equity
- Excellence
- Safety

2024-2029 STRATEGIC PLAN

CORE PRIORITIES

- Ensure equitable experiences that support educational excellence for all learners.
- Recruit and retain quality professionals in all positions to ensure every student receives personalized opportunities for success.
- Communicate effectively and efficiently to ensure collaboration and engagement that supports student success with families and community partners.
- Address and support the social-emotional well-being of students and staff to ensure a productive learning and working environment.
- Provide and maintain high-quality facilities, technology and resources to support efficiencies and innovation.



ACTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- We will continue the tiered system of interventions and support (MTSS) to provide students with specific academic and behavioral supports to increase opportunities for success.
- Ensure students are reading at grade level when promoted to third grade.
- Expand, increase and continue implementing rigorous recruitment and retention processes.
- Increase kindergarten readiness for potential students of Richland One.
- Provide opportunities for all Richland One graduates to be considered college or career ready as defined by the Profile of a South Carolina Graduate.
- We will continue to implement systems and processes to support the district's work and achieve organizational efficiencies.



SCHOOL SAFETY: A Shared Responsibility

Keeping Richland One schools safe was the focus of a September forum that included representatives from the district, local law enforcement agencies and an organization that works to promote gun safety and responsible gun ownership.

"There is nothing more important than doing all we can to protect the safety of our students and staff, and that includes being proactive," said Richland One Superintendent Dr. Craig Witherspoon. "School safety is not just the responsibility of schools or school districts. It is a responsibility that is shared by students, staff, parents and community members. We all have a role to play in helping to keep our schools safe."

During the forum, "School Safety: A Shared Responsibility," Dr. Witherspoon and the other panelists shared their perspectives and expertise on matters related to school safety and answered questions from the audience. The panelists agreed that keeping our schools safe goes beyond having metal detectors, school resource officers, security systems, emergency plans, drills and response protocols. It's about relationships, they said.

"Our number one source of school safety is the kids," said Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott. "The kids are the ones who actually police the schools. They are the ones who don't want guns and drugs and gangs in the schools. When you hear that we've caught someone with drugs or a gun in a school, it's not because we're super-sleuths - it's because of the relationships that the SROs and the staff have built with the students. It's because the kids are ones who want these schools to be safe."

Toni Kelly Campbell, Richland One's school social work services coordinator, talked about some of the measures and initiatives the district has in place to address issues before they escalate into situations that could pose a threat to school safety, including mental health concerns among students.

"One thing that we invest in heavily is Youth Mental Health First Aid training, which is considered the gold standard across the nation. Our teachers, our school counselors, social workers and parent and family engagement specialists have access to that training," she said. "If we can identify when a student is in trouble, we can get the student into care."

Questions from the audience covered a variety of topics including teen dating violence, school security procedures, school resource officers, students not being allowed to have cell phones during the school day and whether teachers should be armed (the latter to which all panelists resoundingly responded no).

One audience member asked what parents can do to help keep schools safe.

"Be a parent, not your child's best friend," said Sheriff Lott. "That means you know who your child is talking to, who their friends are, what's in their bookbag, what's in their room. Be a parent. When we see the kids who get into trouble, it's usually because their parents are not involved in their lives."

Watch the school safety forum on our Richland One TV YouTube channel or on R1TV On Demand at www.RichlandOne.org.



Panelists were (from left) Columbia Police Chief Skip Holbrook; Richland One Superintendent Dr. Craig Witherspoon; Moses Brown, Jr., Richland One's security and emergency services coordinator; Toni Kelly Campbell, Richland One's school social work services coordinator; Angela Vandelay from Midlands Be SMART; Dr. Candice Coppock, Richland One's executive director of information technology; and Richland County Sheriff Leon Lott.

ATTENDANCE COUNTS: SHOW UP & SHINE!

Since the COVID-19 pandemic and the unprecedented closing of schools, educators across the country have been challenged with getting students back to attending school on a consistent basis. While most children miss a few days of school each year without long-term consequences, students begin to suffer academically when they miss two or more days a month.

“There are studies after studies that point to the relationship between a student being in school every day and how well that student will do academically, and it starts early. Having a student in school every day is going to be vital to that child’s later success, not only in the workforce but also in life,” said Toni Kelly Campbell, Richland One’s coordinator of school social work services.

Attendance counts and we want all Richland One students to show up and shine every day! Below are a few ways parents can help ensure that students attend school regularly:

- Schedule medical appointments on school holidays, late in the day or early in the morning and bring your child to school for a portion of the school day, instead of your child missing the entire day.
- Avoid scheduling vacations and trips when school is in session.
- Develop regular routines to assist your child with getting to school without rushing, such as packing backpacks and laying out clothing before bedtime.
- Speak positively about school, what your child is learning and the importance of regular attendance.
- Don’t permit missing school unless your child is truly sick.
- Talk to the principal or the school support staff immediately to discuss options if your child needs to be absent from school.
- Encourage your child to share any challenges that might cause anxiety related to school.
- Download the Richland One mobile app and select PowerSchool to monitor your child’s daily attendance and receive alerts.



ABSENT 8 DAYS OR LESS BUT EXEMPLARY IS BEST!



EXEMPLARY

Absent 3 days or less in a school year.



ON TRACK

Absent 4-8 days in a school year.



WARNING

Absent 9-17 days in a school year.



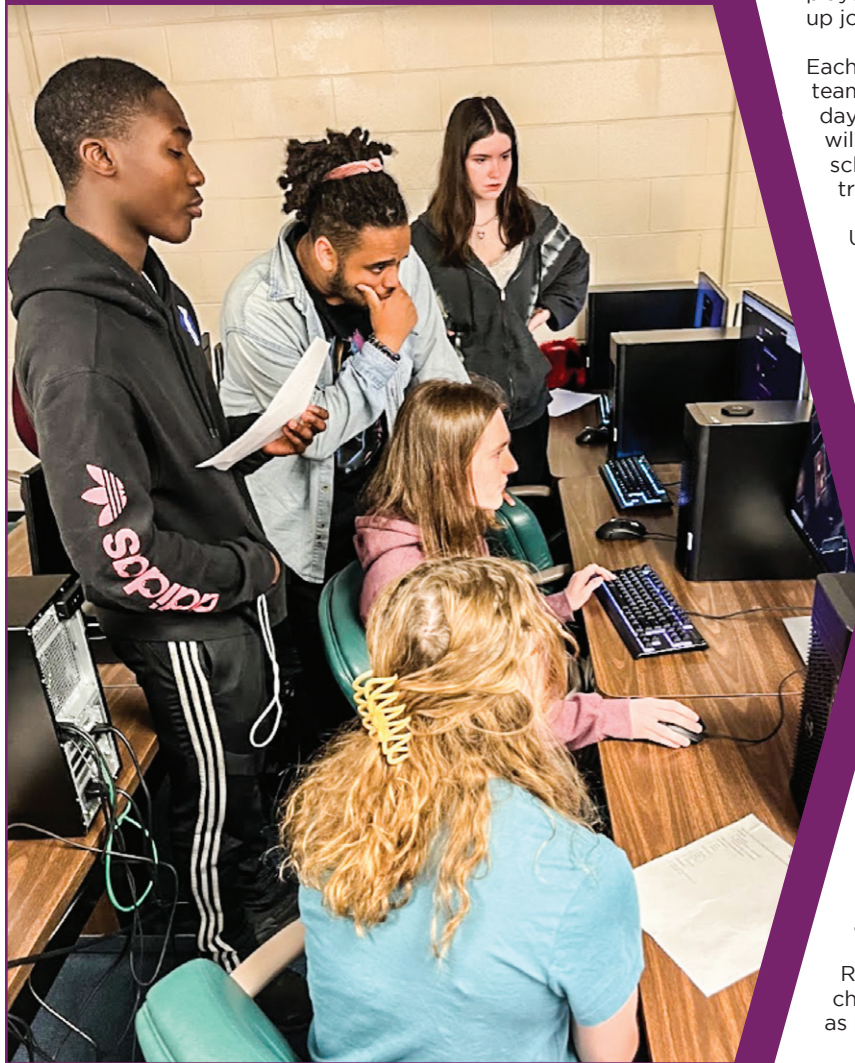
CHRONIC ABSENCE

Absent 18+ days.

Have questions about school attendance?
Call Social Work Services at 803.231.6757

ESPORTS

Coming Soon



Gamers at all Richland One high schools will soon have the opportunity to showcase their skills on a competitive level. Richland One will launch a competitive, district-wide esports program in the spring semester.

Dreher High School established its esports program in 2018. Senior Angelito “Riptide” Figueroa, who’s been involved in Dreher’s esports program for two years, says he’s excited about esports coming to all Richland One high schools because it will give more students who are serious about gaming a community to belong in.

“It gives them a chance to step up and be able to experience what they want out of high school on a higher level. I’m super excited to be able to branch out to other schools who I know have been wanting this,” Riptide said.

Each high school will receive 10-13 special computers designed for gaming and a Nintendo Switch. Students will have the opportunity to play games including “Overwatch,” “Mario Kart,” “Super Smash Brothers Ultimate,” “League of Legends” and “Rocket League.”

Dreher sophomore Jordan Jones says she joined the school’s esports program last school year because she enjoys playing “Overwatch.”

“I first heard about the program through one of my friends who also plays ‘Overwatch.’ They asked me to join and I said ‘Okay.’ I ended up joining and it’s been a lot of fun,” she said.

Each esports team will have the opportunity to compete with other teams across the Southeast. Teams will compete in scrimmages one day a week, with a game later in the week. Online platform PlayVS will organize the scrimmages and matchups, while also allowing schools to build and manage their teams, check schedules and track match stats.

Unlike regular sports teams, esports teams will have a fall and a spring season and will last approximately two months. The seasons will conclude with a month of playoff games.

Madalyn Hazlett, Richland One’s esports coordinator, says even though players on an esports team aren’t physically on a field or a court, she still expects them to act like they’re on one.

“You are part of a team. You need to show up. You need to communicate with your teammates. If something is happening, I want you to be consistent and I want you to be able to rely on your teammates,” she said.

Riptide says being part of Dreher’s esports program has helped him make new friends and gain skills he’ll take with him after graduation.

“This has not only been an experience getting to know people and gaining new friendships, but it has also taught me very valuable lessons in responsibility, leadership and really stepping up to the plate,” he said.

Hazlett says one valuable lesson students who participate in esports can learn about is failure.

“In esports, you are constantly learning how to get back up and how to take the emotions you feel about not succeeding and turning that into something positive,” she said.

Riptide says he hopes having a district-wide program will change how people view gaming, as colleges are seeing esports as more than a hobby.

Some colleges in South Carolina, including the University of South Carolina Sumter and Winthrop University, offer varsity esports programs. Other colleges, like Benedict College, Morris College and Coker University, offer degrees in esports administration and management.

“These opportunities in college give students who enjoy playing video games who aren’t exactly sure what they want to do after high school a chance at a future doing something they love,” Riptide said.

Hazlett says she’s working on organizing a district-wide tournament to kick off the esports program.

“This is just so everyone has a chance to meet and experience what it’s like to play games. I also think the rivalry will be really fun,” she said.



JOSEPH BELL
TEACHER OF THE YEAR

As a child growing up in the small South Carolina town of Salley, Joseph Bell would pretend he was a teacher. He had an uncle and cousins who were teachers and college professors. He says he was born to be a teacher, but his path to becoming one was not traditional.

Bell, an advanced academic programs (AAP) teacher at Pine Grove Elementary School, is Richland One's 2024-2025 Teacher of the Year.

He began working with students right out of high school. He started his educational career by working at child development centers for six years. While he was a pre-kindergarten teacher at the Center for Learning in Columbia, Bell says he had a chance encounter with a parent who worked as a school counselor in Richland One.

"I told her I was ready for something different. She told me there was a long-term substitute position open. She went back to her principal and told him about me. The next day, the principal gave me a call and asked if I wanted to tour the school. When I went there, I felt like Richland One was the place I needed to be at. It was a sign," he said.

Bell started his Richland One career in 2019 as a long-term substitute teacher at Arden Elementary School. After getting his bachelor's degree from Western Governors University in 2021 and his teaching certification seven months after graduating, Bell became a third-grade teacher at Pine Grove Elementary in the 2022-2023 school year. Last year, he followed his third-grade class to fourth grade. This year, Bell is teaching 24 second-grade AAP students.

He says his favorite part about being a teacher is when his students say that he taught them something new, like solving a math problem. He says some students have even taught their parents the methods Bell taught them.

"Being able to hear that the students are telling their parents what I taught them shows that I'm doing something positive. The students enjoy what I'm teaching so much, they go home and talk about," said Bell.

He says he also enjoys thinking outside of the box for his lessons. Last school year, Bell had his fourth-grade students split up into groups to create podcast episodes about different English language arts (ELA) strategies.

Bell has also been instrumental in making sure all Pine Grove students have role models they can look up to, especially males. For

"I'm outside throwing a football with my students. Some of the girls want me to play hopscotch with them. I do those things because I want them to feel like I'm more than a teacher."

two years, Bell has organized the school's "Real Men Read" event, which allows male volunteers from the community to read to students.

"People like our superintendent [Dr. Craig Witherspoon] are people our students can call their mentors, even though they only met them one time. One of the things I've noticed with our students is that they don't see a lot of males, especially in elementary education. Bringing in positive influences, besides the three male teachers they see every day, is great," he said.

Bell is also an advisor for Pine Grove's male mentoring program, the Premier Pandas. The program teaches male students in third, fourth and fifth grades how to be positive role models in their community. Lessons the students learn include how to dress, how to behave during events at school and outside of school, and how to handle anger issues, something Bell says males tend to struggle with.

"They don't know how to handle issues without fighting or arguing. I'm able to teach these boys strategies on how to walk away, talk to someone, write it out and get their feelings out," said Bell.

He says he wants to be the person his students can confide in and have a good time with, as long as their grades are where they need to be and they're on track with their lessons. Bell says some of his students even think he's one of them.

"My students don't ever feel like I'm just a teacher. I'm outside throwing a football with my students. Some of the girls want me to play hopscotch with them. I do those things because I want them to feel like I'm more than a teacher," he said.

Bell is also getting his foot in the door in educational leadership this school year. He is the second-grade team lead teacher at Pine Grove and he will be getting his master's degree in education administration from the University of South Carolina in December. Bell says his administrators and fellow staff members at Pine Grove have been very supportive of him throughout his educational journey.

"We're almost like a family at Pine Grove. We laugh and we have a good time, but at the end of the day, we work hard. We make sure that our kids get everything that they need. It's not a one-person show. We all work together," he said.



MARK DAVIS

CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

For 28 years, Mark Davis has been changing the mindsets of students throughout Richland One in many different positions. He's been a volunteer football coach, a lead substitute teacher, an in-school suspension (ISS) monitor and a therapeutic assistant.

"Working in Richland One allows you to really fulfill your goals of changing lives. Your goal is to see students go from adolescence to adulthood and be productive," said Davis, a therapeutic assistant at Horrell Hill Elementary School and Richland One's 2024-2025 Classified Employee of the Year.

Davis was born and raised in Hopkins. He attended Hopkins Elementary and Hopkins Middle schools before going to Cardinal Newman School for a majority of his time in high school. Davis returned to Richland One his senior year and graduated from Lower Richland High School in 1995.

One year after graduating from Lower Richland, Davis returned as a volunteer football coach. During his more than 20 years volunteering with Lower Richland's football program, Davis and the coaches he worked with stressed the importance of discipline and academics to the players.

He took those lessons with him when he became the head football coach at Hopkins Middle in 2020. During his four years as head coach, Davis says he turned the players around academically and behaviorally.

"In my four years at Hopkins Middle, there were no D's or F's because I would dismiss you from the team until you got your academics together. I had to instill in the players that it's 'student-athlete,' not 'athlete-student,'" he said.

After graduating from Morris College with a degree in history in 2001, Davis started his official Richland One career as a lead substitute teacher. In his three years as a substitute teacher, he worked at Annie Burnside Elementary School, Southeast Middle School and Caughman Road Elementary School.

During his time at Caughman Road, Davis recalled working one on one with a student who was only going to school for less than three hours every day.

"Within a month, the student went from going back home at 9:30 a.m. to staying the entire day, and I did that," he said.

Davis moved to Meadowfield Elementary School in 2004, where he started off as the ISS monitor. Davis doubled as ISS monitor and therapeutic assistant the following year before becoming Meadowfield's therapeutic assistant full time.

After 14 years at Meadowfield, Davis became the therapeutic assistant at South Kilbourne Elementary School in 2018. Two years later, Davis became Horrell Hill Elementary School's therapeutic assistant.

"Horrell Hill has such a family atmosphere. The environment has such a warm and gravitating feeling to where you want to come in and make a difference," he said.

Therapeutic assistants help students who are dealing with emotional issues at school. Davis' job is to work with students on ways they can control their emotions. One of the key ways Davis helps his students is by communicating with their parents about the strategies and techniques they can use when their child is home.

"You really got to get the parents on board. If we're disciplining their child at school, but when the child comes home and there's no discipline, then that's not going to work. If everybody is on the same page, it works," he said.

One resource Davis uses to help students control their emotions is Milo, one of the RoboKind robots available at all Richland One elementary schools. The robots help students work on their social-emotional learning skills.

"The robot helps with so many ways of communication. It talks about hygiene, mannerisms and different ways to channel your behaviors and techniques if you're feeling upset. The district's investment in the robots has been a success for us at Horrell Hill," said Davis.

When students with emotional issues are allowed to return to their general education classes, Davis makes sure the transition is smooth for the students and their teachers. He'll sit in the students' classes before stepping outside to observe their behavior, reminding his students about the lessons they learned about controlling their emotions.

"Working in Richland One allows you to really fulfill your goal of changing lives. Your goal is to see students go from adolescence to adulthood and be productive."

"This gives the students that feeling that they trust me. They'll have a few moments, but you've just got to continue to build the trust that they work in the classroom by themselves and believe in themselves," said Davis.

Outside of school, Davis is a professional drummer. His love for drumming came in handy when he helped form Horrell Hill's co-ed drumline in 2023 and all-girls drumline in 2024. The drumlines are part of Horrell Hill's comprehensive remediation program. The students performed during the program's end-of-the-year showcases in 2023 and 2024, as well as Horrell Hill's Christmas cantata and honor roll assembly. Davis treats the students in the drumlines just like his football players.

"The students in the drumlines know the only way they can stay in is if their grades and behavior are on point. If they're not, they can't be there," he said.

When Davis was named the Classified Employee of the Year, the two people he thought of were his mother and his wife, Angalese, who passed away from cancer in 2017.

"My mama was always the type who said 'Don't ever look to be validated or look for an award to say that's what you're doing. Let the work speak for you.' My wife would say the same thing. I took what they said as if God put me here to do what I need to do," he said.



JULIA TURNER

INDUCTION TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Think about your favorite song and why you love it. Is it because of the rhythm, the melody or the lyrics?

In music teacher Julia Turner's classes at A.C. Moore Elementary School, students are learning more than just the basics of music. They're applying those lessons to their favorite songs.

"I want students to see a part of them in music class," said Turner, who is in her second year teaching at A.C. Moore and Richland One.

The district's 2024-2025 Induction Teacher of the Year grew up in Kingston, New York, where she was involved in church and community choirs and played the clarinet in band. When she was in high school, Turner became a marching band section leader. She says that inspired her to go into music education.

"I was realizing how much I enjoyed teaching my peers and how much I liked teaching the music that we were playing. It was really awesome," she said.

Turner attended the State University of New York at Fredonia (SUNY Fredonia) for her undergraduate degree in music education. She says she initially had plans to become a band director. However, after taking an elective course in early childhood education during her first year of college, Turner says she realized she was meant to become an elementary school music teacher.

"I was in a room with four-year-olds and I was like 'This rocks. This is awesome,'" she said.

After receiving her bachelor's degree in 2021, Turner moved to Columbia to get her master's degree in early childhood and elementary music education from the University of South Carolina. While taking graduate courses, she met and became friends with A.C. Moore's orchestra teacher, who convinced her to apply for the music

teacher position at the school. Turner says she immediately felt at home while touring A.C. Moore.

"A.C. Moore was just so vibrant and homey. It was covered in student-made art, and it just felt really welcoming. As an arts teacher, seeing a school that was plastered in student art and showcasing all the artistic parts of the school, I immediately bought in with that," she said.

Turner loves to incorporate popular music into her lessons. One way she does that is by allowing students to submit song suggestions in a folder she has in her classroom. Turner will take a song suggestion and use it to teach her students music concepts.

She has also organized a March Madness-like bracket with music, taking not only student-suggested songs but also songs requested by some of the teachers at A.C. Moore.

"I love seeing the students lit up by songs that they already know and knowing that I can help them get a deeper understanding of those songs," said Turner. "I'm making music feel like an accessible part of their day and tying it into the things students already care about."

Second-grade through fifth-grade students in Turner's classes learn how to play different instruments including drums, xylophone, keyboard and ukulele. When students hit fourth and fifth grades, Turner encourages them to express their creativity through group projects. Using their knowledge of music theory and the instrumental skills they've learned, fourth-grade students are tasked with creating a cover of a song while fifth-grade students get to write their own songs.

"It was really awesome to see the students tie in the instrumental techniques that they learned and use it to actually write something unique to them," said Turner.

"I want students to come out of my class feeling empowered to make whatever music they want to make or listen to whatever music they want to listen to."

Turner also plays an active role in exposing students to music outside of class. She oversees A.C. Moore's chorus and modern band ensemble. Last year, Turner directed a short musical for kindergarten through second-grade students to participate in.

"The students got a chance to be on stage and perform for one of the first times in their lives and that was really great," she said.

One of the highlights of Turner's first year at A.C. Moore was the school's "Secret Garden Showcase" talent show, where students performed different acts on a new stage built outside the school. Turner's modern band students served as the event's house band, and she even organized a faculty band to serve as the finale.

"The event was just so much fun and rewarding. It was really awesome day to make music and a really cool moment for our community," said Turner.

She says she wants students who take her class to embrace music and not be afraid to express themselves.

"I want students to come out of my class feeling empowered to make whatever music they want to make or listen to whatever music they want to listen to," said Turner.

DISTRICT OMBUDSMAN

A graduate of Eau Claire High School and a former teacher and school administrator in the district, Basil Harris has returned to Richland One to serve as the ombudsman.

It's been about four years since Richland One has had an ombudsman, a district-level staff member whose job is to provide a safe and confidential forum to explore options that will resolve school-level issues and concerns that interfere with teaching and learning and a positive school climate.

Harris has nearly 35 years of experience in education, including working in several positions during his 21 years at the South Carolina Department of Education. He did his student teaching in Richland One, and he was a science teacher for eight years. He later served as an assistant principal and interim principal at W.G. Sanders Middle School.

As the district's ombudsman, Harris says he wants to make a positive impact on the lives of Richland One students. Some situations students face in school may not always be resolved during a meeting between the principal and the student's parents or guardians, or even after a meeting between district administrators and the student's parents or guardians. That's where the ombudsman steps in.

"I want internal and external stakeholders to see me as an advocate, focusing on what is in the best interest of the child and providing whatever support I can in those areas that have a direct impact on teaching and learning, as well as the students' social-emotional well-being," he said.

"I want to be a part of ensuring that the students receive the best possible education that they can, just as I was afforded a phenomenal education here in Richland One."

Some parents and guardians may not always be aware of what's going on in their child's school until there's an issue. Harris encourages them to be more involved in their children's lives at school.

"I encourage parents to come in and see not only what the teachers are doing, but what their child and other students are doing as well, and support the school in ensuring a positive teaching and learning experience for not just for their child but for all students."

Contact the Ombudsman's Office at ombudsman@richlandone.org or (803) 231-7612.



What the Ombudsman Does

- Encourages effective communication between parents and schools
- Assists parents and students with questions, concerns or complaints
- Serves impartially in addressing and seeking resolution to concerns and makes recommendations based on the student's best interest and safety
- Provides information on resources and referrals to applicable district offices/departments, and relays information about district programs, policies, regulations and procedures
- Assists in exploring options and empowers parents and guardians to advocate for their student's education, themselves and for a positive climate conducive to teaching and learning
- Facilitates conversations and/or meetings
- Collaborates with other district offices, as necessary, to resolve the concern or issue at hand
- Collects data on emerging trends and patterns while safeguarding anonymity
- Utilizes data to inform systemic improvement

When to Contact the Ombudsman

- When you are facing a problem and have not been able to resolve it by speaking to the school principal and/or applicable district office/department (e.g. Executive Directors of Schools, Student Support Services, Special Services, Student Transportation Services, Nutrition Services, etc.)
- When communication between the parent and school has broken down
- When you do not know where to go for assistance
- When you are having trouble finding information you need
- When there is a perceived lack of trust
- When there is a breakdown in communication and/or a power imbalance
- When you are concerned about confidentiality
- When you are concerned about retaliation
- When you feel your voice is not being heard

INTERNATIONAL WELCOME CENTER



International Welcome Center staff (from left): Astrid Fridriksson, Spanish interpreter; Paul Spence, coordinator of World Languages and Multilingual Learner Programs; Jonathan White, Multilingual Learner Programs consultant; and Demetrica May, school liaison and assessment specialist.

Many international families are not used to the education system in the United States, and that can be an issue when it comes time for parents to find and enroll their children in schools that fit them best. Richland One's International Welcome Center helps make that transition easier.

The International Welcome Center, operated by Richland One's World Languages and Multilingual Learner Programs department, started in the lower level of A.C. Moore Elementary School before moving to the lower level of Richland One's Adult Education Center in 2008.

The center's initial purpose was to screen and place students at schools that provide English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services. Paul Spence, Richland One's coordinator for world languages and multilingual learner programs, says the center has evolved over the years into a place where international families can be connected with different services across the district and in the community, such as enrollment, social work services and housing.

"We're the hub to help schools better serve immigrant and refugee families, and make sure these families have equal access to what Richland One offers," said Spence.

Of Richland One's more than 22,000 students, approximately 2,000 are international students. Between May 2023 and May 2024, Spence says Richland One had a 28% increase in the number of international students enrolling in the district. He says most of those students were

from Mexico and Central America.

To help manage the increase in international students, the International Welcome Center added a Spanish interpreter to its staff during the 2023-2024 year. Astrid Fridriksson, who is serving in that role, says her job is to help schools improve communication with parents.

"The Welcome Center gets a lot of calls from parents that need to get information to schools, and the schools call us for information they need from the parents.

Between May 2023 and May 2024, the number of international students enrolling in Richland One schools increased by 28%.

My goal is to support the communication between families and schools," she said.

The International Welcome Center has also organized and supported events, such as coat drives in specific school clusters, district-wide festivals and events for specific needs such as legal support and health services in the community.

Multilingual Learner Programs Consultant Jonathan White says the center is working with Richland One's parent and family engagement specialists and social workers on how to further connect with families.

"Over the last few years, we've started to connect with other district staff who do parent and family engagement. We're looking forward to what we can do," said White.

Spence says he understands the situations many families have gone through. He has lived in another country and knows what it's like to struggle with getting the information he needs.

"I understand where these families are coming from. It's difficult when your language skills aren't where they need to be," he said.

Spence says many families who utilize the International Welcome Center are grateful that there's someone available who understands their situation and that they have a place to go when they have questions.

"Many of them have been very happy and appreciative about what we can do to make them feel heard and make them feel connected to this community," he said.

The International Welcome Center is located on the lower level of the Richland One Adult Education Center (2612 Covenant Road, Columbia, SC 29204). The center is open Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. to noon for walk-ins. To book an appointment with the International Welcome Center after walk-in hours or for more information about services offered, call 803-212-1475.

DIRECTORY OF SCHOOLS

ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

Arden Elementary

1300 Ashley Street
Columbia, SC 29203
Telephone: 735-3400
Principal: Dr. Timothy Blackwell
Grades: PreK-5

Bradley Elementary

3032 Pine Belt Road
Columbia, SC 29204
Telephone: 738-7200
Principal: Dr. Kezia Myers
Grades: PreK-5

Brennen Elementary

4438 Devereaux Road
Columbia, SC 29205
Telephone: 738-7204
Principal: Tiffany Ligon
Grades: PreK-5

Brockman Elementary

2245 Montclair Drive
Columbia, SC 29206
Telephone: 790-6743
Principal: Sharonda Giles
Grades: PreK-5

Burnside Elementary

7300 Patterson Road
Columbia, SC 29209
Telephone: 783-5530
Principal: Dr. Janet Campbell
Grades: PreK-5

Burton-Pack Elementary

111 Garden Drive
Columbia, SC 29204
Telephone: 691-5550
Principal: Robin Hill-Davidson
Grades: PreK-5

Carver-Lyon Elementary

2100 Waverly Street
Columbia, SC 29204
Telephone: 343-2900
Principal: Dr. Monica Adams
Grades: PreK-5

Caughman Road Elementary

7725 Caughman Road
Columbia, SC 29205
Telephone: 783-5534
Principal: David Thorpe
Grades: PreK-5

Forest Heights Elementary

2500 Blue Ridge Terrace
Columbia, SC 29203
Telephone: 691-3780
Principal: John Greene
Grades: PreK-5

Gadsden Elementary

1660 South Goodwin Circle
Gadsden, SC 29052
Telephone: 353-2231
Principal: Dr. Shevawn Rivers-Grant
Grades: PreK-5

Hopkins Elementary

6120 Cabin Creek Road
Hopkins, SC 29061
Telephone: 783-5541
Principal: Audrey White-Garner
Grades: PreK-5

Horrell Hill Elementary

517 Horrell Hill Road
Hopkins, SC 29061
Telephone: 783-5545
Principal: Shannon Adams
Grades: PreK-5

Hyatt Park Elementary

4200 Main Street
Columbia, SC 29203
Telephone: 735-3421
Principal: Dr. Danielle Reilly
Grades: PreK-5

Lewis Greenview Elementary

726 Easter Street
Columbia, SC 29203
Telephone: 735-3417
Principal: Dr. LaShaunda Evans
Grades: PreK-5

Logan Elementary

815 Elmwood Avenue
Columbia, SC 29201
Telephone: 343-2915
Principal: David Copeland, Jr.
Grades: PreK-5

Meadowfield Elementary

525 Galway Lane
Columbia, SC 29209
Telephone: 783-5549
Principal: Myah Woods
Grades: PreK-5

Mill Creek Elementary

925 Universal Drive
Columbia, SC 29209
Telephone: 783-5553
Principal: Eddie Whack
Grades: PreK-5

A.C. Moore Elementary

333 Etiwan Avenue
Columbia, SC 29205
Telephone: 343-2910
Principal: John Allen
Grades: PreK-5

Pine Grove Elementary

111 Huffstetler Drive
Columbia, SC 29210
Telephone: 214-2380
Principal: Dr. Tracy Pickett
Grades: PreK-5

H.B. Rhame Elementary

1300 Arrowwood Road
Columbia, SC 29210
Telephone: 731-8900
Principal: Dr. Monica Owens Carter
Grades: PreK-5

Rosewood Elementary

3300 Rosewood Drive
Columbia, SC 29205
Telephone: 343-2930
Principal: Chris Lyons
Grades: K-5

W.S. Sandel Elementary

2700 Seminole Road
Columbia, SC 29210
Telephone: 731-8906
Principal: Claudia Brooks-McCallum
Grades: PreK-5

Satchel Ford Elementary

5901 Satchel Ford Road
Columbia, SC 29206
Telephone: 738-7209
Principal: Dr. Matthew Scandrol
Grades: K-5

South Kilbourne Elementary

1400 South Kilbourne Road
Columbia, SC 29205
Telephone: 738-7215
Principal: Derrick Theirse
Grades: PreK-5

Edward E. Taylor Elementary

200 McRae Street
Columbia, SC 29203
Telephone: 343-2924
Principal: Tiffany Brooks
Grades: PreK-5

J.P. Thomas Elementary

6001 Weston Avenue
Columbia, SC 29203
Telephone: 735-3430
Principal: Selina Latimore
Grades: PreK-5

Watkins-Nance Elementary

2525 Barhamville Road
Columbia, SC 29204
Telephone: 733-4321
Principal: Reynard Jefferson
Grades: PreK-5

Webber Elementary

140 Webber School Road
Eastover, SC 29044
Telephone: 353-8771
Principal: Dr. Sommer Jones
Grades: PreK-5



MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Alcorn Middle
5125 Fairfield Road
Columbia, SC 29203
Telephone: 735-3439
Principal: Kreshella Goodman
Grades: 6-8

Crayton Middle
5000 Clemson Avenue
Columbia, SC 29206
Telephone: 738-7224
Principal: Angela Burns
Grades: 6-8

Heyward Gibbes Middle
500 Summerlea Drive
Columbia, SC 29203
Telephone: 343-2942
Principal: Dr. Gregory Pickett
Grades: 6-8

Hand Middle
2600 Wheat Street
Columbia, SC 29205
Telephone: 343-2947
Principal: Dr. Patrice Green
Grades: 6-8

Hopkins Middle
1601 Clarkson Road
Hopkins, SC 29061
Telephone: 695-3331
Principal: Alexandria Williams
Grades: 6-8

W.A. Perry Middle
2600 Barhamville Road
Columbia, SC 29204
Telephone: 256-6347
Principal: Dr. Robin Colettrain
Grades: 6-8

St. Andrews Middle
1231 Bluefield Road
Columbia, SC 29210
Telephone: 731-8910
Principal: Jametta Hodges-Stewart
Grades: 6-8

W.G. Sanders Middle
3455 Pine Belt Road
Columbia, SC 29204
Telephone: 738-7575
Principal: Andrenna Smith
Grades: 6-8

Southeast Middle
731 Horrell Hill Road
Hopkins, SC 29061
Telephone: 695-5700
Principal: Chaddrick Myers
Grades: 6-8

HIGH SCHOOLS

Columbia High
1701 Westchester Drive
Columbia, SC 29210
Telephone: 731-8950
Principal: Dr. Shawn Washington
Grades: 9-12

Dreher High
3319 Millwood Avenue
Columbia, SC 29205
Telephone: 253-7000
Principal: Dr. L. Joseph Eberlin, Jr.
Grades: 9-12

Eau Claire High
4800 Monticello Road
Columbia, SC 29203
Telephone: 735-7600
Principal: Ekemam Montgomery
Grades: 9-12

A.C. Flora High
1 Falcon Drive
Columbia, SC 29204
Telephone: 738-7300
Principal: Susan Childs
Grades: 9-12

C.A. Johnson High
2219 Barhamville Road
Columbia, SC 29204
Telephone: 253-7092
Principal: Dr. Brenton Coe
Grades: 9-12

W.J. Keenan High
361 Pigsaw Church Road
Columbia, SC 29203
Telephone: 714-2500
Principal: Jabar Hankins
Grades: 9-12

Lower Richland High
2615 Lower Richland Boulevard
Hopkins, SC 29061
Telephone: 695-3000
Principal: Latayna Williams
Grades: 9-12

SPECIAL SCHOOLS & CENTERS

Adult Education
2612 Covenant Road
Columbia, SC 29204
Telephone: 343-2935
Coordinator: Dr. Marva Coates

Challenger Learning Center
2600A Barhamville Road
Columbia, SC 29204
Telephone: 929-3951
Director: Dr. Carolyn Donelan

Evening High School Program
621 Bluff Road
Columbia, SC 29201
Telephone: 738-7574
Principal: Nathan White
Grades: 9-12

Heyward Career & Technology Center
3560 Lynhaven Drive
Columbia, SC 29204
Telephone: 735-3343
Principal: Robert Washington
Grades: 9-12

Olympia Learning Center
621 Bluff Road
Columbia, SC 29201
Principal: Bobbie Hartwell, Jr.
Grades: 9-12

Pendergrass Fairwold School
5935 Token Street
Columbia, SC 29203
Principal: Fayette Redenburg
Grades: n/a

CHARTER SCHOOLS

Carolina School for Inquiry
7405-A Fairfield Road
Columbia, SC 29203
Telephone: 691-1250
Director/Lead Teacher:
Dr. Victoria Dixon-Mokeba
Grades: K-5

Richland One Middle College
316 S. Beltline Boulevard
Columbia, SC 29205
Phone: 738-7114
Principal: Dr. Carla Brabham
Grades: 11-12

SCHOOL START AND DISMISSAL TIMES

Elementary Schools 7:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Middle Schools 8:45 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.

High Schools 8:00 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.

FREQUENTLY CALLED NUMBERS

Richland One Main Line	(803) 231-7000
Adult Education	343-2935
Advanced Academic Programs	400-1688
Athletics	231-6772
Attendance Lines (Registrar)	231-6944
Career and Technical Education	735-3325
Challenger Learning Center	929-3951
Communications	231-7504
Dropout Prevention and Mentoring Services	790-6763
Early Childhood Education	231-6709
Elementary Education	231-6855
Elementary Virtual School Program	231-7521
Evening High School Program	738-7574
Extended-Day (Afterschool) Programs	231-6842
Executive Directors of Schools (Elementary Schools)	231-6847
Executive Directors of Schools (Secondary Schools)	231-7151
Federal and State Programs	231-6815
Four-year-old Kindergarten (School Readiness)	799-9494

Hearing Office	231-6926
Homebound Instruction	231-6887
Homeschooling	231-7459
Human Resource Services	231-7418
InfoPhone	231-7512
Information Technology (IT)	
Customer Care Center	231-7436
International Welcome Center	212-1475
Learning Environments and Instructional Resources	231-6799
Montessori Programs	231-7496
Nursing Services	231-6730
Nutrition Services	231-6953
Ombudsman	231-7612
Parents and Students Succeed (Homeless Initiative)	231-6914
Partnerships	231-6842
Registrar's Office	231-6944
School Board Office	231-7556
School Counseling Services	231-6940
School Improvement Councils	231-6842

School Psychologists	231-6773
Secondary Education	231-7459
Secondary Virtual School Program	231-6934
Security and Emergency Services	231-7130
Social Work Services	231-6757
Special Services	231-6773
Special Services (Pre-School)	691-3993
Standardized Testing	231-7450
Student Intervention Services	231-6756
Student Records (Archives)	231-6791
Student Support Services	231-6741
Student Transfers	231-6944
Student Transportation Services	231-7002
Superintendent's Office	231-7500
Teaching and Learning	231-6704
ThriveRichland	231-7174
Visual and Performing Arts	231-6858
Volunteer Programs	231-7144
World Languages & Multilingual Learner Programs	212-1475

KEY DATES

November 5	Election Day (Schools & Offices Closed)
November 25-26	Hurricane Makeup Days for Students (eLearning Days)
November 27-29	Thanksgiving Break
December 12	Richland One Magnet Choice Fair (Crayton Middle School gymnasium, 5:30-7 p.m.)
December 16-January 31	Magnet Choice Programs Enrollment – Round 1
December 20	Professional Development Day (Early Dismissal for Students)
December 23-January 3	Winter Break
January 6	Teacher Workday (No School for Students)
January 7	Students Return to School
January 13	Online Registration for 2025-2026 Pre-K and Kindergarten Begins
January 17	Professional Development Day (Early Dismissal for Students)
January 20	Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday (Schools & Offices Closed)
February 6	Superintendent's State of the District Address (C.A. Johnson High School auditorium, 6 p.m.)
February 14	Professional Development Day (No School for Students)
February 17	Student/Staff Holiday
March 3-April 30	Magnet Choice Programs Enrollment – Round 2
March 14	Teacher Workday (No School for Students)
March 28	Parent-Teacher Conferences (Early Dismissal for Students)
April 14-18	Spring Break
April 21	Hurricane Makeup Day for Students (eLearning Day)
May 1	Last Day for Comprehensive Remediation Programs and 21st Century Community Learning Centers
May 23	Richland One Middle College graduation at Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center, 11 a.m.
May 26	Memorial Day Holiday (Student/Staff Holiday)
May 27	High school graduations at Colonial Life Arena (Lower Richland, 8 a.m.; C.A. Johnson, 11 a.m.; W.J. Keenan, 2 p.m.; Columbia, 5 p.m.)
May 28	Last Day for District Childcare and Athletics Tutorial Programs
May 28	Last Day of School for Students (Early Dismissal)
May 28	High school graduations at Colonial Life Arena (Dreher, 8 a.m.; A.C. Flora 11 a.m.; Eau Claire, 2 p.m.)

The full 2024-2025 academic calendar is posted at www.RichlandOne.org/calendar01.



ThriveRichland Playgroups

ThriveRichland is a comprehensive birth to five model established in Richland One with the overall goal of increasing the percentage of children entering kindergarten ready to learn. ThriveRichland programs include weekly playgroups where each child receives a free book for participating.

Westminster Presbyterian Church (1715 Broad River Road, Columbia, SC 29210)

Playgroups every Wednesday from 3-4 p.m.

C.R. Neal Dream Center (2441 Atlas Road, Columbia, SC 29209)

Playgroups on Thursdays from 6-7 p.m.

- Bilingual playgroups (for Spanish-speaking families) every first and third Thursday
- English-speaking playgroups every second and fourth Thursday
- Playgroup for all every first Saturday noon-1 p.m.

Register for playgroups and other ThriveRichland events at [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) (search for ThriveRichland). For more information, contact ThriveRichland Coordinator Dr. Cassandra Legette at 803-231-7174 or thrivrichland@richlandone.org.



WE'VE LAUNCHED THE NEW RICHLAND ONE WEBSITE



Everything you need with a brand-new look!



Easier to
Navigate



Modern Look
and Design



Mobile
Friendly



www.RichlandOne.org





1616 Richland Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage
PAID
Columbia, SC
Permit 611



Our Website
www.RichlandOne.org



Facebook
www.facebook.com/richlandone



Instagram
[@richland.one](https://www.instagram.com/richland.one)



X
www.twitter.com/richlandone



Richland One TV
Spectrum Cable Channel 1303



InfoPhone
803-231-7512



Notice of Non-Discrimination

Richland County School District One does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, disability, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth or related medical conditions), sexual orientation, gender identification, age, lineage or national origin as required by applicable state and federal laws in its educational programs and employment practices.



RICHLANDONE.ORG/PODCAST

ALSO AVAILABLE ON SPOTIFY!