



Wando High School

**For Immediate Release**

November 7, 2024

**Contact:**

Chas Coker, 843-849-2830

## Media Release

### **Wando science teacher awarded the Order of the Palmetto**

*Binnicker recently moved to CCSD after serving as superintendent of Anderson 1*

**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

**Chas Coker**  
Principal

**Mount Pleasant, SC** - Robbie Binnicker, an astronomy and chemistry teacher at Wando High School, recently received the Order of the Palmetto. He earned South Carolina's highest civilian honor for his dedication to serving students and families in Anderson One for more than three decades, including six years as the district's superintendent. According to the Office of the Governor, the honor recognizes a lifetime of extraordinary achievement, service, and contributions nationally or statewide.

Binnicker retired from Anderson One at the end of the 2023-2024 school year. He and his wife moved to the Lowcountry and the pull to work with young people was too strong to ignore. There was an opportunity to return to the classroom, and he jumped at the chance.

"The best job I ever had was being a teacher," said Binnicker. "Working with young people and helping them succeed is what I've always loved to do, and getting back in the classroom was a tremendous opportunity for me."

Principal Chas Coker said Wando is lucky to have him there.

"In his short time here, he has made such a positive impact on his students and colleagues," said Coker. "He always comes in with a smile and a positive attitude that is infectious to those around him. We are so glad he called Wando and that he has come back into the classroom. This honor was no surprise to those who know him, and it is well deserved!"

That kind of dedication and commitment led to Binnicker being recognized with the prestigious honor.

In a surprise ceremony on September 24, 2024, Senator Mike Gambrell, joined by Representative Anne Thayer and Sallie Lee with the South Carolina State Board of

Education, Binnicker was presented with the Order of the Palmetto. He initially thought he was asked to attend the Board of Trustees meeting because a meeting room in Anderson One's new Conference Center was being named in his honor. Not only was the room named after Binnicker, but so was the whole building, a bonus to the entire evening.

Binnicker spent 34 years in Anderson One as a teacher and coach before moving into leadership roles at the school and district levels. He said being a superintendent allowed him to work with very talented people.

"I was fortunate that I had really good people around me, which allowed me to focus on the system-wide things that pushed our academics forward," said Binnicker. "I had an enormous support system. This award is dedicated to all of those individuals who worked so closely with me to ensure we made an impact on education. This award is a reflection of all the hard work we as a team put in."

During his tenure as superintendent, Binnicker strived to ensure all students could learn at high levels in a safe environment. Under his leadership, Anderson One continued its Tradition of Excellence, ranking among the top five highest-achieving school districts in South Carolina. In addition, he led the district to become the first Model PLC at Work District in the state.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Binnicker worked tirelessly to communicate with parents, teachers, staff, and students as he led them through the district closure in March 2020. He became a constant source of support and encouragement for these groups as they navigated the uncertainty of the pandemic.

Binnicker also played a vital role in addressing aging facilities through a bond referendum that passed with tremendous community support while maintaining a supportive atmosphere for teachers to succeed.

Binnicker continues to positively impact students as a science teacher at Wando. He said returning to the classroom was much like being a first-year teacher. He had not been a classroom instructor since 1997 and much had changed regarding technology and classroom culture. He says the amount of support he has received has been extraordinary.

Binnicker's friends and colleagues were not shocked at his humbleness upon receiving the award; he insisted that the credit be shared. His students, on the other hand, were shocked to hear the news that he was a former superintendent, never mind that he was the recipient of the state's highest honor.

Amelia Solari, a senior, said she thought Binnicker was just a new teacher. She said the fact that he came out of retirement to return to the classroom shows that Binnicker values the opportunity to work with young people.

"His experience and expertise will ensure that any student that comes through his classroom will receive a top-quality education," Solari added.

For more information, contact Principal Chas Coker at (843) 849-2830.

###

**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.