Fall 2024

the Buzz

Highlights from SCSDB Hornet's Nest

2024 Homecoming Court



Homecoming royalty from each school stand together for a photo with their principals and SCSDB President Jolene Madison.

Homecoming festivities, interrupted by Hurricane Helene, were held in October.



School for the Blind

Pictured with President Jolene Madison and SCSB Principal Valerie Feiling

Queen: Kaitland Davis
King: Felipe Canabal-Martinez
Princess: Mia Moldthan



Cedar Springs Academy

Pictured with President Jolene Madison and CSA Principal Elizabeth Baird

Queen: Melanie Gomez
King: Jacob Jackson
Princess: Halleigh-Catherine McKinney



School for the Deaf

Pictured with President Jolene Madison and SCSD Principal Sarah Davis

Queen: Dayana Orellana
King: Christian Washington
Princess: Eden Sanderson

Volume 4, Number 1
Fall 2024

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Distributed to the parents of students currently enrolled at SCSDB, parents of students receiving outreach services, the SCSDB Board of Commissioners, and the SCSDB Foundation Board of Trustees.

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Izzy Collins (sophomore), Kaylee Ellison (junior), Dacorion Horton (senior), Yakera Martin (junior), Brandy Mezquite-Reyes (senior), and each school for photographs.

School for the Deaf and the Blind

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South Carolina School
for the Deaf and the Blind

Dear Friends,

Our theme for the 2024-2025 school year centers around a powerful and transformative philosophy: presuming competence. Presuming competence means starting with the belief that every student, regardless of their background, abilities, or challenges, has the capacity to learn, contribute, and achieve great things. It's about seeing every child's potential and creating an environment that nurtures their strengths, talents, and aspirations.

At SCSDB, we are committed to building a community where every student feels valued, respected, and capable. We continue to engage, empower, and equip our students—and presuming competence is a core component of our work. We challenge students to think critically, explore creatively, and participate actively in their learning. We believe that when we set high expectations and provide the right supports, all students can thrive.

What are the key components of presuming competence?

• Presuming competence does not mean we pretend there is no challenge. It means we can still teach regardless of the challenge.

• Presuming competence is an attitude—one that shapes actions and includes a default assumption that the student is capable.

• Presuming competence is the least dangerous assumption because the consequences are not as dangerous as the alternative.

• In the absence of conclusive proof about a student's capacity to learn, the least dangerous assumption is that the barriers holding a student back from learning are in the instruction, not in the student.

This philosophy extends beyond the classroom. By presuming competence in one another—students, staff, families, and community partners alike—we strengthen our collaboration, our collective goals, and our relationships. At home, in the local school district, on campus, in the Spartanburg area, and across the state, we invite you to join us in setting the bar high and believing that our children will rise to the challenge!

"Presuming competence is nothing less than a Hippocratic oath for educators…By presuming competence, educators place the burden on themselves to come up with ever more creative and innovative ways for individuals to learn. We begin by presuming competence." – ***Douglas Biklen***

Best wishes!

Jolene Madison

Jolene L. Madison
President, SCSDB



New year, new look!
We're buzzing around SC in a newly wrapped activity bus, and our Hornet mascot got a major upgrade!





The Most Spirit at the Pep Rally



CSA students bang drums and noisemakers to show their school spirit.



Football team members who are deaf prepare to make loud noises by hitting gym mats on the floor.



School for the Blind cheers and makes noise to prove they have the most school spirit.



Buzz the Hornet encourages SCSB students to turn up the noise.



Buzz stands in front of the CSA students as they cheer and shout.



In the end, the School for the Deaf students won the spirit stick.

Spirit Week dress-up days









Left to right, in red for drug-free awareness: teacher Tony Merriweather, Da'Marion Townsend (3rd grade), and Cameron Stitt (9th grade); and Tazmin Hill (9th grade) with teacher Andrea Green. Wearing matching outfits for twin day: Ca'mayra Boulware (11th grade) with Coach Aly Davis in blue Special Olympics shirts; and Simon McConnell, Connor Miller, and Carter Harlan (10th grade) in matching white shirts and khaki pants.









School for the Deaf middle schoolers wear tacky and purple clothing. SCSD students gather together in orange. TJ Jones (11th grade), digital arts teacher Jeannie Harmon, Brandy Mezquite-Reyes (senior), and Yakera Martin (11th grade) wear shirts for their favorite sports teams.



Students congregate in front of the bonfire.



Azael Cruz (8th grade) and Tristan Bradley (10th grade) hang out.



Girls from Robinson Annex and TLC pose in front of the bonfire.

Spotlight on Success: SCSDB featured in 'The Empowered Program' with Meg Ryan

SCSDB was chosen from schools across the nation to be showcased in an episode of "The Empowered Program," hosted by the acclaimed actress Meg Ryan and produced for PBS audiences nationwide!

In the episode, students and staff engage in insightful on-air interviews, exploring questions such as the challenges faced by the Deaf community, particularly among younger individuals, and how SCSDB equips its students for lifelong success through academic achievement. We are incredibly proud of how our students and staff represented SCSDB.



Meg Ryan, actress, stands behind a white armchair in a modern room, filming the intro for the Empowered Program series.

Featured in the episode were SCSD Principal Sarah Davis, middle school science teacher Jessica Gribble; Christian Washington (senior), Jasper Womick (11th grade), and interpreters Mary Beth Grayson, Meghan Michels, and Ezelis Sanderson.

The Public Television segment was distributed in September to over 170+ participating Public Television stations throughout the U.S. as interstitial programming. The Empowered with Meg Ryan program seeks to illuminate the transformative power of education, fostering new connections, innovations, and conversations that can change lives. Hosted by Meg Ryan, the program reaches millions of homes, delivering valuable content to those who are passionate about learning. Learn more at www.empoweredprogram.com





Left: Christian Washington (senior) sits in Pulliam Auditorium and shares about his experiences at SCSDB.

Right: Jasper Womick (11th grade) is interviewed by the Empowered team, with Mary Beth Grayson, interpreter, assisting.

Watch the Episode

Scan the QR code to view this episode!

SCSB School for the Blind



Evelin Ordonez Ochoa (9th grade) examines a page with fingerprint patterns.

Solving crime one STEM workshop at a time

Middle and high school students at the School for the Blind sharpened their detective skills with a Fake Crime Scene activity, led by scientists Ashley Neybert, Charis Glatthar, and Greg Williams from Independence Science.

They immersed themselves in note-taking, problem-solving, fingerprinting, gait analysis, and spatial reasoning to unravel the mystery of what happened to Mr. Jones, affectionately known as "Bones." In addition, they gained hands-on experience learning how fake blood is created for movies!

Meanwhile, elementary students also joined the fun. They explored the wonders of carbonation and clouds with "Spooky Juice," discovered the fascinating properties of non-Newtonian fluids in "Fun With Slime," and learned about the components of plastics in the "Transforming Plastics" workshop.



"Mr. Bones," a skeleton model wearing a red sweater, lies on the floor of a classroom for the fake crime scene activity.



The scientists in residence explain the day's activities.



Left to right: Daniel Sanders (10th grade), Evelin Ordonez Ochoa (9th grade), and Isabella "Izzy" Collins (9th grade) use a whisk to create fake blood.



A close-up view of the fake blood spatter students created in the science lab.

Overcoming Obstacles

White Cane Awareness Day, observed on Oct. 15, is a significant date dedicated to honoring the accomplishments of individuals who are blind or visually impaired. This day also highlights the white cane, a powerful symbol of independence and mobility for many of our students.

White Cane Day was celebrated at the School for the Blind and Cedar Springs Academy (CSA). The event featured a variety of skill-building activities, such as navigating obstacle courses, which are designed to enhance mobility and confidence. These activities not only foster independence but also raise awareness about the daily challenges and triumphs of those who rely on the white cane.



Right: Melanie Payne (5th grade) loves gliding down the red slide at the White Cane Day activities.



Tazmin Hill (9th grade) utilizes his white cane to navigate through obstacle courses.



Hillary Key, IT, places a pool noodle in Anmariah Myers (7th grade) walking path.



Konstantinos Kakouras, teacher, assists Da'Marion Townsend (3rd grade) maneuver around the pool noodle obstacle.

Literary opportunities increase

School for the Blind students and staff are working to increase literary opportunities.

Teachers are increasing student engagement through reading and writing activities in the classroom. Teachers are working with administrators in the Goal Based Evaluation to address literacy goals that align with our campus's strategic goal. The collaboration, focused discussion on observation feedback, and reflective decisions for future lessons is enabling the staff to help students grow.

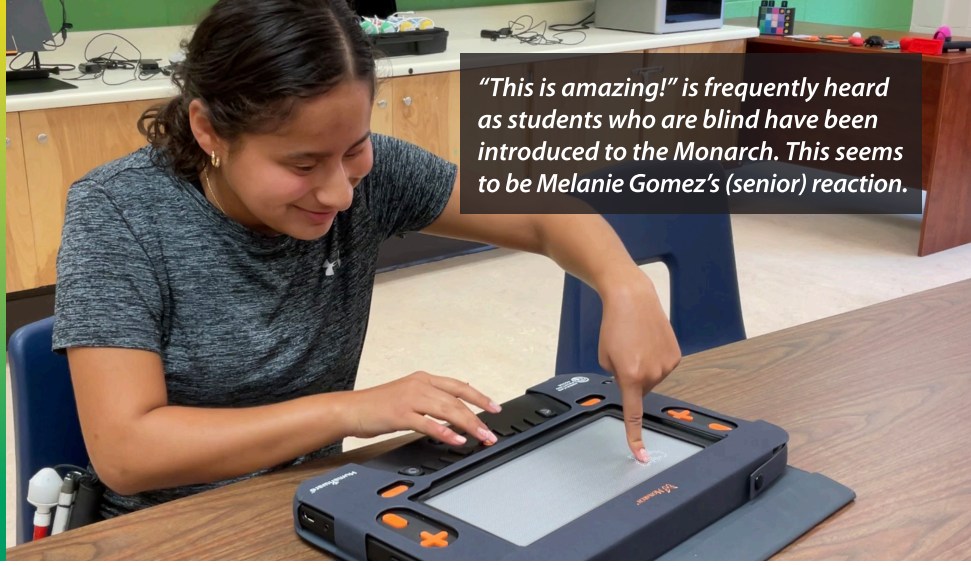
Students are participating in reflective writing, character and setting development within stories, and annotating text. Other opportunities are supporting thinking with textual evidence in written form.

Principal Valerie Feiling exclaimed, "We are proud of our Hornets!"



Photo caption: Reading Interventionist Brooke Confer works with student Mia Moldthan (1st grade).

CSA
Cedar Springs Academy



"This is amazing!" is frequently heard as students who are blind have been introduced to the Monarch. This seems to be Melanie Gomez's (senior) reaction.

The Monarch: dynamic tactile display device now wowing students

"Can we use the Monarch today... When I finish my work, can I have free time on the Monarch?" These are the eager questions from CSA students.

This device is an electronic braille computer with a 480 refreshable braille cell display. The large screen is able to create braille text and tactile graphics on the same display.

The Monarch has a fun startup tutorial and access to read electronic braille books. Students at CSA enjoy the zoom-in feature to increase line spacing between the braille sentences. The ability to take a huge variety of books offered on Bookshare's Library collection and make the lines of text easier to read is simply amazing. This creates a whole new world of access to literature.

The display is not only great for reading, but it is interactive through direct touch. Students can use a single finger to point, and then double tap an action button, to instantly move to that location in a document. They also use this same feature to play chess.

For the first time, students who use tactile graphics can touch and interact with graphics in the same way as sighted peers are able to on a computer screen. Tactile graphics can be zoomed in to see details such as architectural design on the side of the Eiffel Tower, and they can also zoom out to see the overall shape. They now have the use of panning and scrolling to navigate to different areas of a tactile graphics picture. These images appear just as quickly as when sighted peers do a Google search.



Selena Gregg (8th grade) explores some of the Monarch's features.

This is a huge leap from the previous braille computer devices which consist of 20 to 80 braille cells presented in a single line. These previous devices do not have tactile graphic capabilities. The Monarch has changed the computer world for students who read braille. They now have access to view, edit, and see formatting details in a full-paged, quickly editable, full-screen view.

"The smiles on students' faces, and multiple requests to use the Monarch, speak volumes of how this device is having a positive impact on their education," said CSA Principal Elizabeth Baird.

Making our way downtown

CSA students walked in the Annual Mayors' Walk & Roll that took place on Oct. 16. The event unites community members, local leaders, and individuals with disabilities in a downtown walk/roll, highlighting the significance of accessibility and inclusion in Spartanburg County. This year's theme, "Access to Good Jobs for Everyone," emphasized the importance of equal opportunities in the workforce.



Job coach Connor Miller, Elliot Germany (senior), job coach Sammie Gilreath, and Mya Cornelius (10th grade) walk downtown Spartanburg.



Hundreds of students from area schools participate in the walk.



Ca'mayra Boulware (11th grade) leads the walk and holds the official banner with a student from another school.



Ja'Aleeyah Riley (10th grade), job coach Elizabeth Crawford, and DJ Peake (11th grade) bundle up for the walk.



Brandy Mezquite-Reyes (senior) and Sierra Stefani (11th grade) are ready to Walk & Roll!



Jonathan Perez-Gomez (11th grade) smiles as he waits for the walk to begin.



Special Olympics

The Special Olympics volleyball team traveled to Landrum High School for their local competition. They played against two Area 12 teams, Gaffney and Byrnes, and won second place overall.

The Special Olympics bowling team traveled to Myrtle Beach for the 2024 Fall Games, enjoying the opening ceremonies, competition, a victory celebration, and some beach time. They competed in singles bowling and played three games against traditional athletes from several other areas.

At the bowling competition, Elliott Germany won a gold medal; Sierra Stefani, Ca'Mayra Boulware, and Jaka'i Coakley won silver; and DJ Peake and Brandy Mezquite-Reyes won bronze. Brandy had the highest average score of the SCSDB athletes.



Above, back row: Brandy Mezquite-Reyes (senior), Elliot Germany (senior), Jaka'i Coakley (9th grade). Front row: DJ Peake (11th grade), Sierra Stefani (11th grade), and Ca'mayra Boulware (11th grade).

Left, back row: Luis Zuniga-Ocampo (9th grade), Jaka'i Coakley (9th grade), Brandy Mezquite-Reyes (senior), Sierra Stefani (11th grade), Tristan Bradley (10th grade), Elliot Germany (senior) and Ca'mayra Boulware (11th grade). Front row: Jonathan Perez-Gomez (11th grade), Assistant Coach Nate Fuhrwerk, Head Coach Aly Davis, and DJ Peake (11th grade).

SCSD
School for the Deaf



Toby Allen and Lor'Reyel McClinton worked together to create their rover for transporting an egg.

Future engineers build rover to deliver fragile cargo

A STEM project challenged six students early in the semester to work in pairs to create a rover that will protect their egg when dropped from a second floor.

In part one, teachers Jessica Gribble and Kathy Jasko in the School for the Deaf guided students in the lab. Students strategized how to get their rover to roll the furthest with the egg after surviving the fall. The student pairs had to use their calculation skills to gather items to build a rover, including a parachute. Testing of the rovers and discussion of trials and errors followed. Students also received a mini lesson on how former rovers succeeded in landing on Mars.

In part two, later in the semester, the STEM class worked with Brett Grayson, teacher in the Applied Academic Center, in an egg drop challenge. Students spent two weeks designing and testing their rovers to make sure their egg could survive a drop from 20 feet or more. Staff asked a firefighter to bring his truck and climb 20 feet to drop each rover the students made. Only three survived the 20-foot drop.

The next challenge was to increase the drop to 40 - 60 feet. One egg survived the 40-foot drop. Congrats to Kamari Worthington! His project, including pictures and videos, was submitted to NTID's Tiger Science Challenge.



Kamari Worthington records Lucas Coates describing his rover and the planned drop.



A firefighter climbs to the end of the firetruck's extended ladder and drops one of the rovers.



Azariah Chalk readies her carefully constructed rover to be dropped.



Taelyn Shands examines the payload (an egg) for her drop.



Kamari and his teacher, Jessica Gribble, discuss his rover's preparation.



Zeaveon Washington and a firefighter observe the firetruck's ladder as it extends to 40 feet.

Trick or treat!



Dekoata Smales (3rd grade) requests two pieces of Halloween candy from AAC carpentry teacher Andy Breitenbach.



Left to right: Justin Pena Bravo (3rd grade), Kaison Smith (1st grade), and Yemaya Frazier (1st grade) proudly wear their Halloween costumes.



Calvin Holst, human resources, is startled by the Hulk!



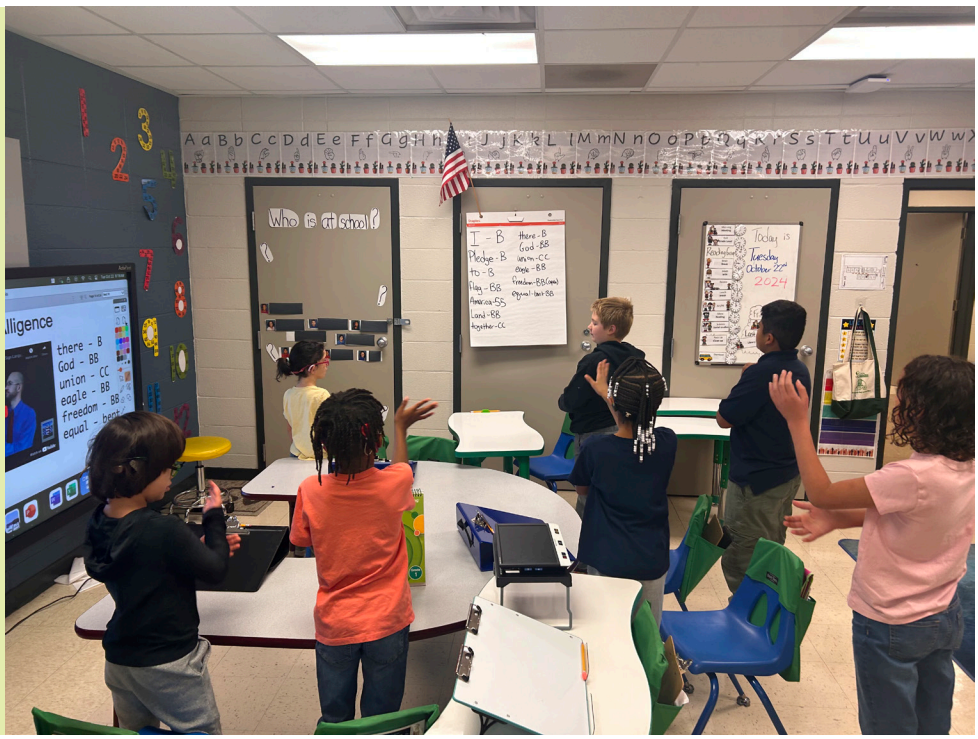
Elizabeth Crawford, job coach, dresses up as a witch and passes out candy to School for the Deaf elementary students.



Elementary students trick-or-treat through Walker Hall.

The Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America's flag just means more to the first and second graders in Jill Bechtel's class in the School for the Deaf.

Since ASL is a visual language, students learned the Pledge in ASL to perfect their signs. Students then used different handshapes to represent the meaning of the Pledge to create a Poem in ASL. They have also been learning about USA symbols, so they understand that when signing "Eagle" they are referencing freedom and liberty.



AAC
Applied Academic Center


Students and teachers from CSA pose in front of a fire truck.

A Safer Community is a Stronger Community!

Throughout Safety Week, students engaged in a variety of interactive workshops and seminars that emphasized the importance of safety in our daily lives. From CPR classes to emergency preparedness drills, participants gained hands-on experience and knowledge that could be crucial in real-life situations.

The highlight of the week was a community-wide safety day, where we welcomed special guests from the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office, South Spartanburg Fire District, Spartanburg EMS, and more who shared invaluable safety insights and demonstrations.


School for the Deaf middle schoolers take a tour of the SWAT vehicle.


Knightlyn Greene (4th grade) tries on one of the safety helmets.


A'She-Rah Jeter (9th grade), Ayden Johns (10th grade), and Kimberly Juan Santiago (9th grade) pretend to take the Department of Natural Resources boat for a spin.


Jennifer Jaime-Cruz (senior) feels some of the safety supplies during a demonstration.



School for the Blind students listen to the SWAT officer's presentation.


Alexiana Lopez (10th grade) pretends to be carted off on a gurney.

Student of the month, Business Advisory Committee meeting

The Applied Academic Center has begun a Student of the Month program. Each month, a student is chosen from each class to join principal Dee Stark and a rotating AAC staff member for lunch. Students enjoy Chick-fil-A and have the opportunity to provide feedback and suggestions on improving the center.

In October, AAC also held its semiannual Business Advisory Committee Meeting. Industry professionals joined AAC staff for dinner, learned about current projects and goals, offered their input on how AAC programs can better prepare students for the workforce, and forged new partnerships for potential work-based learning opportunities for students.



Dee Stark and Angela Collier host a lunch for the Students of the Month.



The Business Advisory Commitee members gather in Trades II for dinner.

Blooming together

Despite Hurricane Helene impacting our students' plans to open the Annual Fall Plant Sale to the community, our staff rose to the occasion and made a significant difference. In a display of support, they purchased all the stunning fall plants cultivated by our students, ensuring their hard work and creativity received the recognition it deserved.

This experience highlighted the strength and unity of our school community. We are proud of our AAC students for their determination and creativity, and when challenges arise, the SCSDB spirit truly shines bright!



From left to right: Felipe Canabal-Martinez (senior), Luis Zuniga-Ocampo (9th grade) and Jaka'i Coakley (9th grade) proudly display large yellow mums at the sale.



Morgan Whitehead, special education services, supports the student's efforts. Traeveon Jones (11th grade) assists by carrying the purchased plants to the staff members' vehicles.



Cailynn-Ann Campos (9th grade) pulls a wagon filled with plants to deliver them to the staff's cars.



Taylor Carvajal, employability teacher at AAC, assists Evelin Ordonez-Ochoa (9th grade) with accepting payment for the plants from Allison Tracy, assistive technology coordinator.

Transition Services

Learning on the job

SCSDB job transition coaches empower students by providing them with the skills and resources needed to successfully transition from school to the workforce. This comprehensive program offers personalized career counseling, job training, and placement services, tailored to meet the unique needs of students. Students gain valuable real-world work experience with local businesses and organizations.



Above: Brian Starkey (11th grade) is participating in a service-learning project at Spartanburg County Public Library Main Campus. Brian works closely with the teen services director sorting materials and preparing the space for teens to enjoy. His job coach is Connor Miller.



Juan Carlos Caudillo (senior) is participating in a service-learning project at Ruth's Gleanings distributing food and creating customers on pick up days. His job coach is Connor Miller.



Evan Gimmaka (10th grade) is participating in a paid Work-Based Learning at Ingles. Evan is doing great and loves gaining work experience at Ingles. His job coach is Connor Miller.



DJ Peake (11th grade) is gaining work experience at the CSA cafeteria. DJ is learning how to work with others, how to follow directions, and how to work independently while staying on task. DJ has a huge personality that shines through wherever he goes. His job coach is Elizabeth Crawford.

Spartanburg Community College field trip

Students toured Spartanburg Community College on Sept. 16 and received one-on-one guidance on how to access disability services on the SCC campus and the many benefits included.

Left to right: Jasper Womick, Kaylee Ellison, Akeylah Howard, Iris Hare, Dacorion Horton, Zacchaeus Reaves, Michael Clifton, Christian Washington, Felipe Canabal-Martinez, Ryleigh Rabon, Reuben Monroe, and Josh Holmes with SCC Disability Services.



Buzz Cafe

Angela Collier, AAC teacher, and job coaches from transition services assisted students in preparing and selling hot beverages and tasty treats. The Buzz Café's staff from Angela's Food Service class welcome guests to an experience for the senses: seasonal decorations, background music, aromas of brewing coffee, and the taste and textures of freshly-baked goods.

Clockwise from the top: Susan Cox gives a good witch's smile as Akeylah Howard (SCSB senior) receives payment; Iris Hare (SCSDB senior) observes the process using the new Point of Sale technology, a "Clover" cash register system. Ed Germany (CSA senior) is ready to hand a steaming cup to a waiting patron Sierra Stefani (CSA junior) fills an order, as Angela Collier points to the beverage options. Felipe Canabal-Martinez (SCSB senior) greets those coming in for October's treats. Kendriyana Brown (SCSD senior) offers a peace sign, as well as the baked cupcakes and cookies on the table behind her.











Library

Cleveland Learning Resource Center



Teacher Simon McConnell, wearing a pirate's black cap and an eye patch, offers a student an inflated toy sword. An inflated parrot is perched on Simon's arm.

Reading is on the move

As the new academic year began, SCSDB library services had to relocate to Swearingen Conference Center while repairs are made in the Cleveland Learning Resource Center.

In addition to the events featured in photos, staff have worked on some new programs. In September, library services staff started a study hall for afterschool students. Students come and work on their homework and enjoy snacks.

Beginning in October, ASL students from Converse began coming to read and help with scheduled classes.

In September, students had an Accelerated Reader Kickoff Party. The theme was "Arrrr you reading, matey?" Students made pirate hats and parrots and enjoyed pirate-themed snacks. They were challenged to read as many books as they can and score 100's on the tests in order to be entered into a contest in which there will be a drawing at the end of the school year for their favorite book.



6th grade SCSB students Aaliyah Zimmerman and Ashton Jackson walk the plank (boards in a line on the carpeted floor), as Kailen Knox waits to see if they will sink or swim at the end.



Ivan Rivas Avila, Frank Rivas Avila, and Lucas Coates (all SCSD 7th grade) engage in a sword fight with their inflated toys. A tropical ocean background behind them adds to the fun.







On Sept. 17, students and their teachers celebrated International Dot Day. Students made their own rice shaker dot.

Top left: Valerie Feiling, principal of the School for the Blind, reads the story about the day to the students. Jenny Scruggs sends images to be projected on the screen behind Valerie. Interpreter Wendy Lufkin signs the story.

Top right: Kaison Smith (SCSD 1st grade) enjoys choosing from the snacks in the shapes of dots, especially the variety of cake pops!

Bottom left; clockwise from the top: Leah Palma-Escobar, Hayden Peterson, and Mia Moldthan (SCSB elementary students) feel the dot-sized shapes of colorful candies, carrot coins, and grapes, as they eat the refreshments.







Students participated in the worldwide Read for the Record event Oct. 24 – 25.

Top left: Students in SCSD, Kaison Smith (1st grade), Hannah Fox (4th grade), and Knightlyn Greene (4th grade) added torn paper with their names on it to a piano keyboard and music notes on a mural that will be displayed in the library.

A popcorn bar offered great snacks to Zarannah Womick and Jayden Porte (both SCSD 4th grade), but Brantley Jones (SCSD 3rd grade) appears to prefer a turtle cookie in honor of his T-shirt's Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

Bottom: The book this year was "Piper Chen Sings", by Phillipa Soo. Hillary Key, information technology, read the story to the students.

Fine Arts



Kash Bradshaw (7th grade), Melanie Gomez (senior), Destinee Hall (11th grade), and Melvin Fuentes Gomez (8th grade) sing with the choir.

Art on Display

The SCSDB Foundation Art Show & Auction, held on Nov. 14 in Walker Hall, was a vibrant celebration of student creativity and talent. The event featured a diverse array of artwork, including ceramics, note cards, candles, and pottery, all crafted by our talented Fine Arts students. Also, the SCSDB Chorus delighted attendees with a performance, adding to the artistic atmosphere of the evening.







Above, left: Various pottery items such as mugs, bowls, and plates are available for purchase at the Inagural Art Show.

Above, right: Walker Hall is decorated for the art show, featuring a colorful balloon arch that welcomes visitors.

Left: The SCSDB Chorus, with students from all three schools, stand on risers during their performance.

Bob Doster teams up with fine arts students

Renowned artist Bob Doster collaborated with our talented Fine Arts students in all three schools to create beautiful pottery pieces for our Inaugural Art Show!

From hand-building to wheel-throwing, the students eagerly learned and participated, infusing their own creativity into each piece. Doster, known for his dynamic sculptures and public art installations, provided invaluable mentorship for the art show.



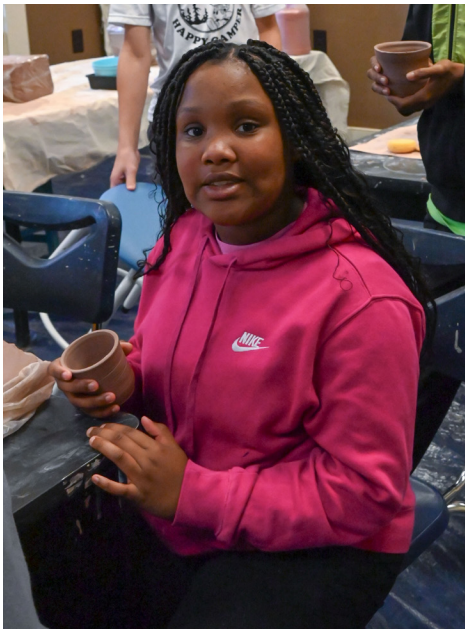
In Liz List's art class, Bob Doster collaborates with students at the School for the Blind.



Azaria Chalk (8th grade) draws designs on a mug.



Bob Doster helps Lucas Coates (7th grade) form the handle of a mug while Zeaveon Washington (8th grade), Azaria Chalk (8th grade), and Kamari Worthington (6th grade) work nearby.



Taelyn Shands (6th grade) smiles as she holds up the clay mug she crafted.



Bob Doster sits at a pottery wheel, forming clay with Lucas Shetley (8th grade).



Roger Shepherd-Dionne (6th grade) paints a finished pottery plate.



Kamari Worthington (6th grade) focuses intently on shaping the clay cup.

Athletics

INTRODUCING OUR FALL TEAMS...



Volleyball

Left to right: Brandy Mezquite-Reyes, Ron'Ziya Boyd, Jurnee Anderson, Lor'reyel McClinton, Yakera Martin, A'She-Rah Jeter, Kaylee Ellison, Dayana Orellana, Kenzie Childress, Azaria Chalk, Terah Allen, Assistant Coach Alyssa Carpenter, and Head Coach Jessica Creech

Goalball



Back row: Former Coach Tony Merriweather, Michael Clifton, Tomier Sanders, Tazmin Hill, and Manager Tyrek Capers; *Front row:* Melvin Fuentes Gomez, and Zacchaeus Reaves; *Not pictured:* Head Coach Gerald Hughes



Left to right: Coach Mary Lister, Reniece Vassell, Iris Hare, Piper Graham, Kaitland Davis, Kenzie Childress, and Izzy Collins; *Not pictured:* Manager Brian Starkey and Assistant Coach Sara Brownlee



Football

Back row: Assistant Coach Jon Placko, Coach Mike Sims, Assistant Coach Carl Duke, and Team Manager James Myers; *Middle Row:* Emmanuel Geronimo Marcos, Kyle Van Der Berg, Jasper Womick, Malakhi Monroe, Robert Wofford, and Aaron Sease; *Front row:* Wyatt Harvell, Carter Bryant, Tomier Sanders, Toby Allen, Christian Washington, and Ryleigh Rabon



Cheer

Left to right: Akeylah Howard, Iris Hare, Emily Hernandez, Coach Jacqueline Booker, Ellie Horton, and Buzz the Hornet

Special Olympics



Bowling

Back row: Assistant Coach Nate Fuhrwerk, Jaka'i Coakley, Elliott Germany, and Coach Aly Davis; *Front row:* Da'Juan Peake, Sierra Stefani, Brandy Mezquite-Reyes, and Ca'mayra Boulware



Volleyball

Back row: Luis Zuniga-Ocampo, Jaka'i Coakley, Brandy Mezquite-Reyes, Sierra Stefani, Tristan Bradley, Elliot Germany, and Ca'mayra Boulware; *Front row:* Jonathan Perez-Gomez, Assistant Coach Nate Fuhrwerk, Head Coach Aly Davis, and DJ Peake

Residential Life



Zeaveon Washington (8th grade) and Kamari Worthington (6th grade) make some funny faces for the party's photographer.

Halloween Dress in Black party

Residential life hosted a Dress in Black party for students at the Bock Activity Center including refreshments and fun games.



Izzy Collins (9th grade) is in awe of Dayana Orellana's (11th grade) Pokémon costume.



Toby Allen (9th grade) holds a black, star-shaped balloon.



Kamari Worthington (6th grade) and Yemaya Frazier (1st grade) play a video racing game.



Zoey Blackman (6th grade), Jasper Womick (junior), and Zaveon Washington (8th grade) sit around a table playing a game of Uno. A staff member looks on.



Iris Hare (senior), Akeylah Howard (senior), Ca'mayra Boulware (11th grade), and DJ Peake (11th grade) socialize and pose for a photo.








Trunk or Treat

SCSDB students enjoyed an evening of fun with Trunk or Treat where staff members and volunteers from the community decorated their vehicles for Halloween and gave out lots of candy and treats.

Photos above, left to right: Hailey Gundling (senior) models her Peanuts Great Pumpkin themed robe. Damari Heyward (5th grade) wears a Beetlejuice costume, while Justin Pena Bravo (3rd grade) is barely recognizable as a Ninja warrior. Brandy Mezquite-Reyes (senior) is a beautiful Day of the Dead doll. Ke'Mareon Turner (11th grade) wears his Dracula cape with style. Ryleigh Rabon (11th grade) is a not-too-scary Freddy Krueger.



Maddie Key, residential life, hands out candy from her "Cars" golf-cart to Zarannah Womick (4th grade) and Terah Allen (7th grade).



Black Panther Da'Marion Townsend (3rd grade) and Dr. Brayden Potter (3rd grade) receive treats from a Barbie-themed trunk.



Angel Destinee Hall (11th grade) offers her bag to be filled.

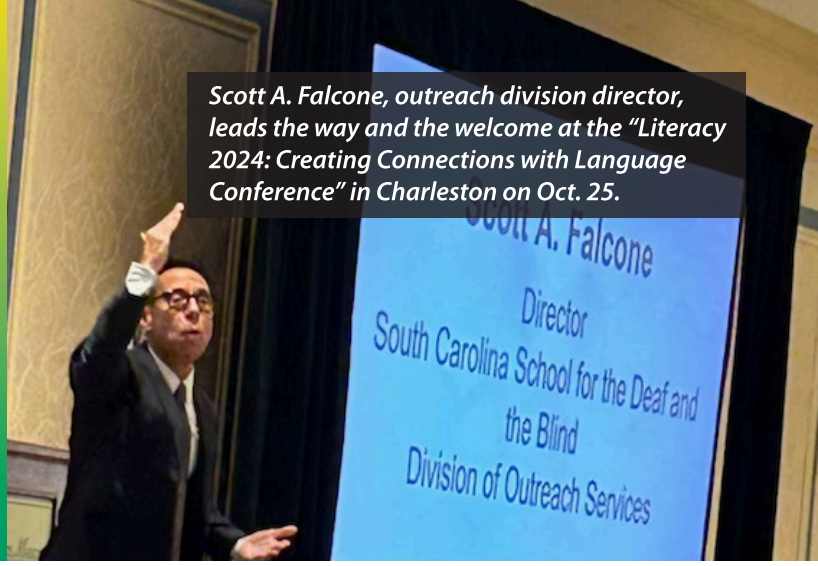


Zoey Blackman (6th grade), with her face paint and paint-splattered costume, chooses candy from a white bowl.



De'Naza Harrington (preschooler) is given a glow stick necklace along with her candy.

Statewide Outreach Services



Scott A. Falcone, outreach division director, leads the way and the welcome at the "Literacy 2024: Creating Connections with Language Conference" in Charleston on Oct. 25.

Leading in Literacy

"Literacy 2024: Creating Connections with Language Conference" was more than a professional development event held Oct. 25 – 26 in Charleston for approximately 215 attendees from 33 states and three countries.

This large and diverse group converged in the Lowcountry to learn, change, and lead in literacy instruction for students who are Deaf, hard of hearing, and DeafBlind. Regardless of place of origin, background, and experiences, classroom teachers, reading coaches, teachers of the Deaf, teachers of the DeafBlind, TVIs, SLPs, early intervention specialists, parents, and administrators gathered to benefit from each other's perspective while world-class presenters shared from their wealth of knowledge.

One of the many highlights of the event was from the powerful kickoff banquet that honored the field and provided prospective. Heather Withrow is a certified O& M instructor and mother of three amazing children: a CODA (child of Deaf adult); a hearing child; and a child who is DeafBlind. Heather shared her journey of providing three unique opportunities for literacy development through interactions, understanding customized instruction: "it worked for him," and a "systematic search" – an O& M strategy that has application to literacy and life. It was evident by night's end -- nobody was unchanged by her words, her perspective, or her personality.

Attendees had the opportunity to attend sessions such as "Literacy Experiences for Young Children, ages 0-9, with CVI"; "Language Profiles and Plans for Multimodal-Multilingual Communicators"; and "Maximize Language Acquisition with ASL Rhymes, Rhythm, and Repetition." The conference was a collaboration between SCSDB, the South Carolina Department of Education, Language First, and the American Society for Deaf Children, and offered three plenaries and 24 breakout sessions over the course of a day and a half of professional development that offered recertification credit, RID, and ASHA CEUs.

Transforming instruction in SC

The Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind Center for Assistive Technology Training (CATT) and the SCSDB jointly offered an assistive technology training event Aug. 21 - 22.

Twenty-two professionals from across SC gathered at Saluda Shoals Park in Columbia for "Transforming Instruction in South Carolina." They came to gain skills related to assistive technology pieces such as the Mantis Q40, the Chameleon 20, the Pix Blaster, and the Page Blaster to assist with instruction to students. These devices are used by Teachers of the Visually Impaired (TVIs), as well as students who read braille, to gain access to the general education curriculum, which enhances their literacy skills. Additionally, information was presented on the Jupiter, the Mag HD, and the Juno, which is the American Printing House (APH) line of video magnifiers.

The instruction was interactive and informative and, as always, there was a great deal of networking that took place among professionals.

Fall Procedures for Teachers of the Visually Impaired and Other Concerned Personnel

Fall Procedures for Teachers of Blind and Low Vision Students took place Nov. 6 at the Beach Cove Resort in North Myrtle Beach.

The conference title was "How the Standards for Evaluation and Eligibility Determination and the Functional Vision Learning Media Assessment with Expanded Core Curriculum Screening Complement Each Other."

During the morning session, presenters broke down the changes in the Criteria in Visual Impairments included in the latest revision of the "Standards of Evaluation and Eligibility Determination" (SEED) document. The presentation included clarifying language on each section of the eligibility criteria. Additionally, the use of guiding questions was discussed to assist teams in determining when a Functional Vision, Learning Media Assessment, and Expanded Core Curriculum Screening is appropriate.

The afternoon session explored how the Functional Vision, Learning Media, and Expanded Core Curriculum Assessment form fully supports the changes in the eligibility criteria for Visual Impairment. Information regarding determining appropriate media was provided including electronic text. Additionally, guiding questions to complete the Expanded Core Curriculum section of the assessment was discussed.

Association and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired SC Chapter (SCAER) Annual Conference

"Navigating New Horizons: Across the Lifespan" was the conference title for the event Nov. 7 – 8 at the Beach Cove Resort in North Myrtle Beach.

The focus was on orientation and mobility and how the TVI can collaborate with the O&M specialist to reinforce skills and helps students make great progress. There was also a presentation on "Using Microsoft Word to Produce Tactile Graphics." The vendor reception was also a huge hit with attendees, as many vendors were present to show the latest advances in technology and other areas as well.

Project Magnify clinics

Project Magnify clinics were held September 11 – 13. There were 31 students accepted into the program this year, with 25 able to attend one of three clinics offered.

The first clinic was held on the SCSDB campus in Robertson Hall. The other two clinics were held at the SCSDB Columbia Outreach Center. Each student received a clinical low vision exam by an optometrist highly experienced in the area of low vision. Then, the student was seen by an occupational therapist, who is also a certified low vision therapist. Recommendations were provided for devices which will improve the students' access to printed materials. The devices are provided by Project Magnify within certain limits and belong to the students.

The program is almost 20 years old and is highly successful! Statewide vision outreach services staff look forward to returning to holding a clinic in Charleston during the 2025-2026 school year.

SCSDB Foundation



Transition Services job coaches enjoy all sorts of snowcone flavors during Staff Development Week.

Snowie in August

A highlight of every August is when the Snowie (snow cone) Bus comes to campus the week our teachers and staff come back. This is always a nice little break on a hot day. This is just another way the SC School for the Deaf and the Blind Foundation shows its appreciation for all the hard work our teachers and stuff put in for our students.



A red and blue snowcone is in focus in front of the yellow "Snowie" bus.


Kathy Jasko and Victoria Roa, School for the Deaf, happily showcase their snowcones!

175 Days of Giving: Social Media Campaign

The SCSDB Foundation launched the "175 Days of Giving" as part of the celebration of the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind's 175th anniversary. The initiative aims to highlight how donations support educational programs for students who are deaf/hard of hearing, blind/visually impaired, and sensory multi-disabled. The Foundation has set a fundraising goal of $750,000 and is currently 78% toward achieving it. Throughout the campaign, posts will showcase the impact of donations and encourage further contributions. Supporters are invited to help change the lives of these students by visiting their website, as every donation helps advance the foundation's mission.



Right: Social media post for the "175 Days of Giving" campaign, featuring logos from the Foundation and the school.

Aim High & Let 'em Fly

The SCSDB Foundation hosted the 12th Annual Bobby Dobson Memorial Aim High & Let 'em Fly Sporting Clays Tournament at Cleghorn Gun Club in Rutherfordton, NC, with over 60 participants. The event honors Bobby Dobson, a beloved former Chairman of the Board of Commissioners for the SC School for the Deaf and the Blind and a generous benefactor. Dr. John Dunbar, the former Chairman of the Foundation Board of Trustees, leads the volunteer committee that organizes this successful annual event.



SCSDB staff volunteers to serve the BBQ lunch to Aim High participants.

Participants enjoyed a day of fellowship and competitive clay shooting, starting with a breakfast from Bojangles and concluding with a BBQ lunch and the announcement of winners. The event, supported by the community, has raised over $330,000 for SCSDB students.



One of the teams poses for a picture at a trail stand. The signs reads, "Did you know, this year, SCSDB is celebrating 175 years!"



The two winning teams decide on a tie-breaker.

175 YEARS
1849 - 2024
SC School for the Deaf and the Blind

355 Cedar Springs Road • Spartanburg, SC 29302

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit 196
Spartanburg, SC 29306

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

We want to meet your family!

SCSDB campus programs are always accepting applications for new students. Our online application can be accessed at **www.scsdb.org/apply**. Please contact **Michaela Wilson** at **864-577-7565** or **mwilson@scsdb.org** for more information about the application and enrollment process and/or to schedule a campus tour.

Come and see what SCSDB can do for you in your area of the state! The **SCSDB division of outreach services** provides a menu of options for parents, families, and the professionals who serve them that include and are not limited to, specialized early intervention services, school district educational services, sign language interpreting, and ASL classes! For more information on our statewide outreach services available in your area, please contact **Scott A. Falcone** at **sfalcone@scsdb.org** or **1-800-984-4357**.