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MEDIA RELEASE

Cario Middle recognized as finalist for Palmetto's Finest in 2025

Mount Pleasant, SC - Thomas C. Cario Middle School is proud to announce it is one of 12 finalists for the 2025 Palmetto's Finest Awards, an honor from the South Carolina Association of School Administrators (SCASA) that goes to schools that offer the best in innovative, effective educational programs. The Palmetto's Finest Award is celebrating its 45th year and is one of the most coveted and respected awards among educators.

Cario Middle is the only school in Charleston County School District to be a finalist this year and one of just two middle schools in the state to advance to this stage in 2025.

"We are incredibly honored to be selected as a finalist for such a prestigious award," said Principal Bryan Coleman. "We strive every day to find the perfect balance between achievement, innovation, and culture for our students and families. This recognition is truly a result of the amazing students, staff, and parents of the Cario community. We are one!"

This selection comes after extensive evaluations by a committee of fellow educators and previous Palmetto's Finest winners. The application process includes elements on student achievement, instructional programs, professional learning communities, and school culture.

Last fall, 29 South Carolina schools submitted a 20-page application followed by an onsite examination visit from a review committee. The finalists undergo a second onsite evaluation before the winners are selected this spring.

Each school will have the opportunity to celebrate with their local community, as the winners will be announced through a live stream via South Carolina ETV to each finalist school on April 30, 2025.

The finalists are as follows:

- Alice Drive Elementary School—Sumter School District
- Fairforest Elementary School—Spartanburg School District 6
- Gold Hill Elementary School—York School District 4 (Fort Mill)

- Socastee Elementary School—Horry County Schools
- West Pelzer Elementary School—Anderson School District 1
- McCants Middle School—Anderson School District 5
- Thomas C. Cario Middle School—Charleston County School District
- Fort Dorchester High School—Dorchester School District 2
- South Florence High School—Florence School District 1
- St. James High School—Horry County Schools
- Academy for the Arts, Science & Technology—Horry County Schools
- Center for Knowledge/Center for Knowledge North—Richland School District 2

“We are once again excited to recognize outstanding and innovative schools in South Carolina. These schools represent the many excellent school communities serving our state’s families,” said Dr. Quincie Moore, SCASA Executive Director.

SCASA, the professional organization for school leaders in South Carolina, has more than 5,600 members. From professional development opportunities and research to publications and legislative advocacy, SCASA’s focus is to support school leaders in providing the best possible education for South Carolina’s young people. As a state affiliate of three national associations for school leaders, SCASA also works on the national level.