



**Military Magnet Academy**

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## Media Release

### **Celebrating CTE Month - Information Support and Service completers leave MMA prepared for work in cyber security**

**Charleston, S.C. - [Military Magnet Academy](#)** (MMA) is now officially a 2025-2026 school year Cyber Security Career Kickstart Pilot School. This is a new innovative program created by the College Board and powered by AP. This designation is a testament to the dedication TSGT Carla Ferrette-Clark and Darwin Shorters have put into teaching the career pathway, Information Support and Services - which is in line with the school's vision of offering the widest range of opportunities for students.

Ferrette-Clark is a Career and Technical Education (CTE) teacher for Charleston County School District at MMA. She has devoted her career to fostering academic success through real-world applications and hands-on instruction. Ferrette-Clark is the leader of the IT Department and advisor for two FIRST Robotics teams and three Cyber Patriot teams. According to her colleague Shorters, she has been the main cog in MMA's Computer Science Education machine that is churning out incredible students year after year.

An ardent advocate for STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) education, Ferrette-Clark believes in the power of community collaboration to enhance learning. Through initiatives in Robotics, Cybersecurity, and STEM career exploration, she works to inspire all students, especially young women, to pursue STEM degrees and careers.

Shorters is a former Computer Programmer Analyst/Computer Systems Analyst turned nationally award-winning Master Teacher and Curriculum Developer. He has combined his background as an industry professional and an educator to help organizations design, pilot, and implement curricula locally and nationally. As the president of the Computer Science Teachers Association of South Carolina, Shorters has been instrumental in helping our state become a national leader in Computer Science education over the last decade. As a middle and high school computer science educator, coach, and mentor, Shorters creates an environment that encourages high confidence, high skill, and high performance for hundreds of students over his career.

In class and in their extra-curricular activities, their students are learning everything from computer repair and service to fundamentals of computing and cyber security, to work-based learning. Their completers leave with required industry certifications as well as soft skills like problem-solving, critical thinking skills, networking, and an understanding of the cyber security threats that exist.

"Our students are exposed to a variety of things such as exploratory computer science, digital literacy, programming, and more," said Shorters. "At MMA, we can give these kids up to seven years of computer science exposure. We tailor what we're doing and set the groundwork for them to matriculate (if so desired) into the armed forces. The military climate at our school coincides with what they are learning."

Rich Gordon, Executive Director of Career and Technical Education said Military Magnet's efforts in creating a top-notch computer science program have changed the lives of countless students and positively affected educational opportunities for years to come.

"It starts at the top," said Gordon. "Dr. Perrineau's focus on future-readiness has resulted in outsized student success and accomplishment. But of course, it cannot happen without competent, caring, and committed teachers in the classroom. We are so honored and fortunate to have Carla Ferrette-Clark and Darwin Shorters as our computer science teachers."

When Ferrette-Clark took the job eight years ago, she was also assigned to be the Robotics Club Coach. She has watched both the curriculum program and the club grow to astounding numbers.

"The number of years we get to spend with our students creates a family environment which then allows us as instructors to push them and encourage them to 'lock in' because everything they learn in this program will be relative to their future careers," said Ferrette-Clark. "Opportunities in the Lowcountry continue to grow and expand. There are jobs everywhere that need people with these skills and we're here to support that mission."

Shorters agreed, saying the program is churning out the next leaders with security certifications and extensive understanding and skills to be successful whether in the armed forces or commercial industry.

"Our students engage in what we offer wholeheartedly," said Shorters. "We have a waiting list for our two Robotics Clubs and three Cybersecurity Teams. "The students are excited to be learning real-world skills."

Additionally, both Ferrette-Clark and Shorters are committed to bringing in industry professionals to discuss and explain their roles at companies around the Lowcountry.

Christian Anderson is a ninth grade at MMA who just recently enrolled in the Fundamentals of Computing course and is learning to code.

"No matter what my future holds as far as a career, these skills will help me in most professions," said Anderson. "With the skills I am learning, just in this course, I will be able to create my own website, for example. We live in a digital world and all of these skills are necessary for me to be digitally sound in any profession."

Shorters said that Anderson is a perfect example of students seeing the bigger picture.

DeJamari Pugh is a senior and wants to learn everything there is about computers.

"I like the hands-on aspect of what we're learning in this program of study," said Pugh. "Should I go into the military, I will have the fundamental background I will need just from being a student at MMA and I will have the technical basics of cyber security, which is crucial to being in the armed forces."

What Pugh and Anderson are learning is intense, and careful attention must be paid, but real-world exposure is the reward.

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#### **About the Charleston County School District**

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 50,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse portfolio of educational options and specialized programs delivered to the students of CCSD through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools and programs. Rich educational opportunities for students include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; military; dual credit; and many more.