

For Immediate Release

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Media Release

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Michael Antonelli
Principal of Memminger Elementary School

SC Principal of the Year Finalist, Michael Antonelli, Appointed Memminger Elementary School Principal

Charleston, SC - Charleston County School District (CCSD) is delighted to announce that Michael Antonelli, a veteran principal with nearly two decades of leadership experience in CCSD, has been appointed as the new principal of Memminger Elementary School in downtown Charleston, effective July 1, 2025.

A 2025 finalist for the South Carolina Association of School Administrators' South Carolina Principal of the Year, Antonelli is currently the principal at Carolina Park Elementary School in Mount Pleasant where he has been since he opened the school in 2017. Under his leadership, Carolina Park quickly became one of the highest-performing elementary schools in South Carolina, earning consistent "Excellent" ratings on the South Carolina State Report Card and growth with all groups of students. He's known for bringing new, creative ideas to the table, building strong teams, and making sure every student and family has the support they need to succeed.

Antonelli has built a reputation for creating thriving school communities, fostering academic excellence, and putting students first. He's been a key leader in CCSD for years, and district officials are confident he'll bring the same energy and success to Memminger.

"We're honored Mr. Antonelli is willing to step into the principalship at Memminger," said Anita Huggins, Superintendent of Schools. "He's a passionate and experienced leader who knows how to build strong relationships, support teachers, and create a positive school culture. His track record speaks for itself, and we know he'll do great things for Memminger's students and families."

Before opening Carolina Park, Antonelli opened and led Laurel Hill Primary School for 11 years, founding CCSD's first-ever primary school and establishing it as a model for early childhood education. He helped the school earn National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) accreditation, a first for the district, and as such, set the stage for other schools to follow.

Antonelli has also received numerous local and state level awards/recognitions, including the Highest Primary School Absolute Rating in South Carolina from 2012-2016, SC Literacy Spot Award, SCPTA Award of Excellence, SIC Riley Award Finalist, Community of Readers Award, Red Carpet Award, CCSD STAR Principal Award, and Top Five Finalist for CCSD Teacher of the Year.

Beyond his work as a principal, Antonelli has played a major role in shaping leadership development within CCSD. He's been part of the Superintendent's Principal Roundtable, helped design the AP to Principal Pipeline leadership program, and has mentored many first-year principals. A Clemson University graduate with a degree in Architectural Design, Antonelli also earned his master's in Elementary Administration from The Citadel, where he graduated *Summa Cum Laude*. Before moving into education, he worked as an intern architect designing school facilities — giving him a unique perspective on how the learning environment impacts student success.

With his student-centered approach and a history of building strong, high-achieving schools, Antonelli is ready to bring his passion and leadership to Memminger Elementary.

"I am honored and excited about this new opportunity," Antonelli said. "My mission has always been to create schools where teachers choose to teach, families want to send their children, and most importantly, students love to attend each and every day. I look forward to working alongside the faculty and families of Memminger to create exceptional opportunities for learners."

As he transitions into his new leadership role, CCSD will ensure a thoughtful selection process to identify Carolina Park's next leader to continue the school's tradition of excellence. Antonelli will be part of the selection process and will help onboard the new principal.

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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.