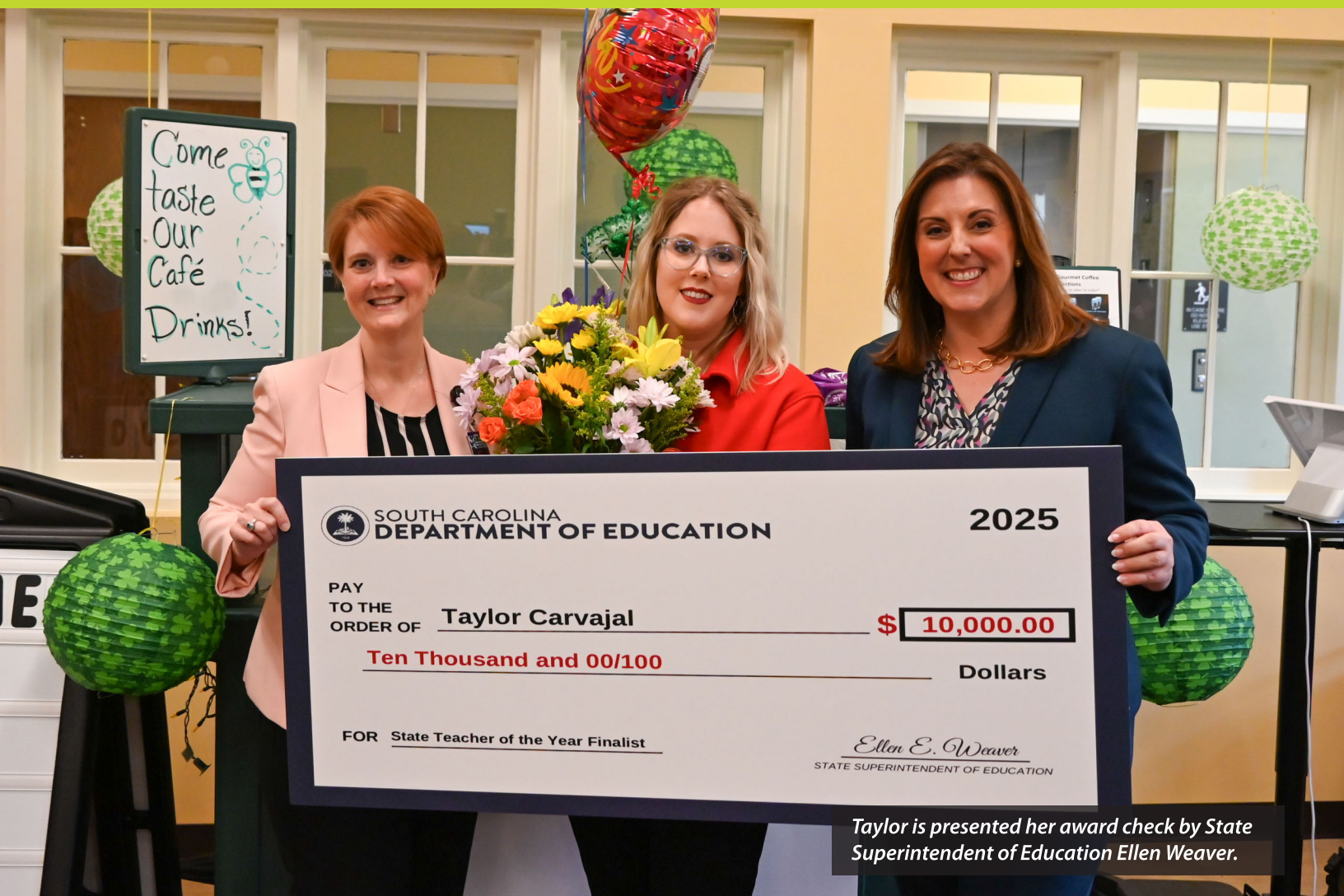


Winter 2024-2025 the Buzz



Highlights from
SCSDB Hornet's Nest



Taylor is presented her award check by State Superintendent of Education Ellen Weaver.

Applied Academic Center's Taylor Carvajal Named State Teacher of the Year Finalist

As a finalist, Carvajal will receive \$10,000 and advance to the next stage of the state Teacher of the Year Competition.

Taylor Carvajal's connection to her students runs deep. Inspired by her legally blind grandparents, she has spent her career ensuring blind and deaf students have the tools they need to succeed at SCSDB. Now, her dedication has earned her a spot as a finalist for South Carolina Teacher of the Year.

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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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Special thanks to Izzy Collins (10th grade), Kaylee Ellison (11th grade), Dacorion Horton (senior), Yakera Martin (11th grade), Sophie Chapman (10th grade), Brian Starkey (11th grade), and each department for photographs.



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South Carolina School
for the Deaf and the Blind

Dear Friends,

There are so many incredible things going on at SCSDb! I am continuously inspired by the expertise and commitment of our staff, and the resilience, work ethic, and competence of our students. I want to give a special recognition to one of our amazing teachers, Taylor Carvajal, who teaches employability skills at the Applied Academic Center. Taylor was our 2024 SCSDb Teacher of the Year. In mid-March, we received the news that Taylor is a top FIVE finalist for SC Teacher of the Year! State Superintendent of Education Ellen Weaver came to campus to surprise Taylor with the announcement. There are over 80 school districts in SC—to be in the top 5 selected is an incredible honor. But here's what you need to know—I'm not surprised in the least! Taylor is an outstanding teacher, supporting incredible students, in an environment focused on student growth and independence. I am thrilled that these efforts are recognized and am delighted that Taylor is representing SCSDb!

At the SC School for the Deaf and the Blind, we are committed to engaging, empowering, and equipping every student for success. We celebrate not only Taylor's achievement but also the collective accomplishments of our entire team. Together, we continue to raise the bar and support the growth of each and every student we serve, both on campus and across the state.

Thank you for the ongoing support of our mission.

With gratitude,



*Jolene L. Madison
President, SCSDb*



Ayden Johns (9th grade) and Seven Franklin (10th grade) hold up their artwork.

True Renaissance Artists Then, Now

Researching Renaissance artists and then creating their own paintings was the history classwork of high school students of teacher Heather Moffett in the School for the Deaf.

Students learned about the Renaissance, its global impact, and the different styles of artists from the time period. They compared and contrasted how "2-D" and "3-D" art has evolved.

While researching their artists, they selected their favorite painting and created it in their own style. Students learned what colors they wanted to use, what did not work, and how they had a vision.

Some of the things they pondered were: Did their vision come to fruition? What were their struggles? What was easy for them?

Do You Know What I Mean?

Elementary students from the School for the Blind and the School for the Deaf have been learning how to use accessible technology to communicate with one another. They have identified social skills through activities like reading, crafts, and snack time. Teachers who collaborated on the December activity are Lori Donguines, Elaine Morgan, and Jill Bechtel.

Right: Leah Palma-Escobar (3rd grade, School for the Blind) and Brantley Jones (3rd grade, School for the Deaf) practice communicating with each other.



Applied Academic Center's Taylor Carvajal Named State Teacher of the Year Finalist *(cont'd from page 1)*



Taylor helps Heilyin Sanchez (9th grade) use assistive technology to identify different money bills.

Taylor teaches high school Employability and Instructional Support, guiding students toward independence and job readiness. She also provides vision services to students who are deaf-blind at the Applied Academic Center, working to break down barriers.

"Taylor has dedicated her career in education to ensuring that every student has the skills and confidence to lead a successful life beyond high school regardless of their circumstances," said State Superintendent of Education Ellen Weaver. "Inspired by her own family's experiences, Taylor brings a passion

and personal connection to her work empowering her students to navigate the world with independence. We are honored to congratulate Taylor as a State Teacher of the Year finalist."

About Taylor Carvajal:

- She holds a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education from North Greenville University and a master's in Special Education from Converse University.
- She pursued additional certification as a Teacher of the Visually Impaired from USC Upstate, deepening her ability to serve her students.
- Her lessons go beyond academics, focusing on life skills, workplace readiness, and self-advocacy.

"Taylor's approach to education truly embodies our focus on engaging, empowering, and equipping students for success. She is very intentional in her development of learning opportunities designed to meet students where they are, while setting a high standard for growth and excellence," said SCsDB President Jolene Madison. "We are thrilled to join in this recognition of Taylor's talent for teaching essential life and employability skills to our unique population of students."

What's next: As a finalist, Taylor will receive \$10,000 and advance to the next stage of the state Teacher of the Year Competition which involves an interview with a panel of expert judges. The winner receives a total of \$25,000 and is provided with a brand-new BMW to use while serving for one year as a roving ambassador providing mentoring, attending speaking engagements, working with Teacher Cadets and Teaching Fellows, leading the State Teacher Forum, and serving as the state spokesperson for over 64,000 educators. The winner of the State Teacher of the Year competition will be announced April 24th in Columbia.



Taylor is interviewed by WSPA News Channel 7 and Spectrum News.

SoFly Hornets Soar

Our middle school and high school drone teams traveled to the Great Wolf Lodge near Atlanta, GA, to participate in the 3rd Annual NRSC-ADIB D/HH ADC Tournament.

Shoutout to the middle school drone team, the SoFly Hornets, for earning an Airmanship Award at the Aerial Drone Competition!

This was the girls' first time competing, and out of 28 teams, they stood out for their sharp judgment and impressive skills, completing all four missions like pros. Both teams showed great commitment to drone safety rules and really shined in leadership, teamwork, and communication.

High school Drone Team:

Coach, Josh Joseph

Seven Franklin (10th grade)

Victoria Raleigh (11th grade)

Middle school Drone Team:

Coach, Jessica Gribble

Zoey Blackman (6th grade)

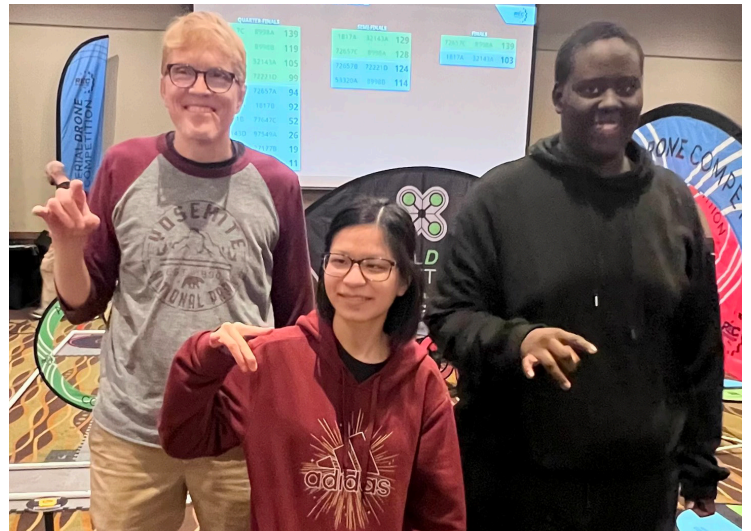
Azaria Chalk (8th grade)



Azaria Chalk (8th grade) and Zoey Blackman (6th grade) stand on a stage, smile, and hold up their awards.



The high school and middle school drone teams stand in front of the Great Wolf Lodge entrance.



The high school drone team stands in front of the obstacle course and holds the ASL sign up for "drone."



The middle school drone team maneuvers their drone through an obstacle course.



A trophy with a black and green "X" shape that reads "Aerial Drone Competition, Mission 2025, Gravity" on it.

SCSB

School for the Blind



Elaine Horton (9th grade), Emma Atkinson (7th grade), Breanne Sharpe (10th grade), Cailynn-Ann Campos (9th grade), and Reniece Vassell (10th grade) dance in the cafeteria.

Winter Dance

Students enjoyed a winter-themed dance at the School for the Blind that included refreshments, a dance-off, and fun with peers.



Principal Valerie Feiling and Kaitland Davis (senior)



Destinee Hall (11th grade)



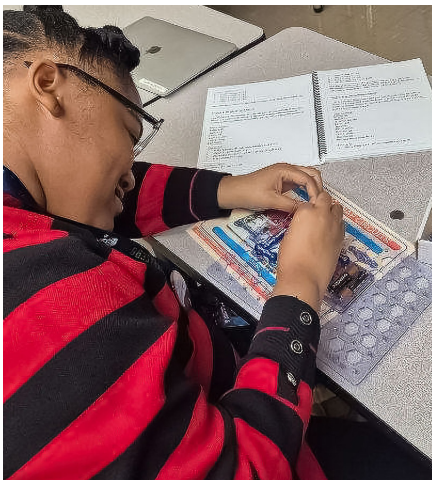
Evan Gimmaka (11th grade)



Emily Hernandez (8th grade) and Elaine Horton (9th grade)

GenCyber in Their Hands

The School for the Blind welcomed Ben Cummins and Ashley Mahoney from the Center of Cybersecurity Research and Education at The University of Alabama in Huntsville. They worked with Dr. Okungbowa's middle and high school classes on hands-on GenCyber activities.



Akeylah Howard (senior) connects wires on a circuit board.



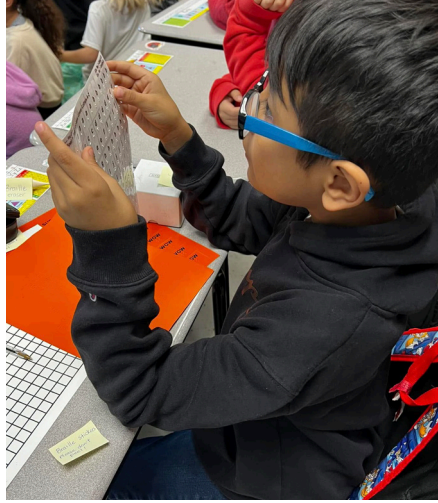
7th graders Anmariah Myers and Kash Bradshaw explore the inside of a computer.



7th graders Chayse Mole and Emma Atkinson take apart a computer.

Duncan Elementary Hosts Inspiring Braille and Navigation Demonstration

Duncan Elementary School of the Arts hosted Konstantinos Kakouras, School for the Blind teacher, to demonstrate the tools and techniques that our students use to learn braille and navigate independently.



Konstantinos Kakouras demonstrated the use of a white cane to a classroom of students. The students were actively engaged, learned about various braille materials, and even enjoyed a game of Braille Uno.

Ready, Set, Read!

At the School for the Blind, braille readers are leaders!

In honor of Read Across America—a program established to celebrate Dr. Seuss’s birthday and foster a love for reading among children—Koretta Parker, braille coach, and Hayden Peterson (Kindergarten) are immersed in learning. Sitting together at a table, they explore educational tools like a cube adorned with tactile symbols and swing cells, fostering an enriching and interactive experience.

Right: Hayden Peterson (Kindergarten) reaches for a tactile cube.



We’ve Got the Beat

Pronounced (O-re-she-re-she), the Yoruba word “Orisirisi” translates to “different things.” Since 1986, Orisirisi African Folklore has been a vibrant performing arts company dedicated to showcasing the richness of African life and culture.

Thanks to Chapman Cultural Center’s Muse Machine program, students at the School for the Blind enjoyed every aspect of Orisirisi’s performance, which was filled with African stories, drumming, songs, and dance!



High school students join the Orisirisi group in playing African drums.



Fine Arts Director, Josh Padgett, distributes various percussion instruments for students to try.

CSA

Cedar Springs Academy



The team presents their routine.

A Day of Cheer and Talent

Our Special Olympics cheerleading squad traveled to Gaffney High School for an exciting local competition. With eight talented teams from Spartanburg, Union, and Cherokee counties, our Hornet cheerleaders showcased their skills in cheer, mount, and chant, and they danced to the Kidz Bop hit "Dance the Night."

We are so proud to share that SCSDB did an amazing job and brought home 1st place.

Congratulations to these outstanding athletes:

- Elliott Germany (senior)
- Brandy Mezquite-Reyes (senior)
- Hailey Gundling (senior)
- Melanie Gomez (senior)
- Ca'mayra Boulware (11th grade)
- Ja'Aleeyah Riley (10th grade)
- Sierra Stefani (11th grade)

Left: The Special Olympics cheerleading team, with coaches Aly Davis and Nate Fuhrwerk, in black and green uniforms pose indoors with pom-poms.



The student athletes raise their pom-poms in formation.



The team strikes their final pose.

CSA Students Shine at Paradise Lanes

On Nov. 7 and Dec. 12, students from CSA participated in a Special Olympics bowling competition held at Paradise Lanes in Spartanburg. Among the competitors were two of our skilled bowlers, who showcased their talent by competing without the use of ramps or bumpers.

They faced off against students from McCarthy Teszler School. Each participant gave their best performance, earning ribbons based on their individual scores. More importantly, everyone had an enjoyable and memorable experience at this engaging local event.



Trinity Wilkins (4th grade) rolls an orange bowling ball down a ramp in a bowling alley.



Sierra Stefani (11th grade) releases a green bowling ball.



Remi Richardson (3rd grade) smiles as he pushes a bowling ball down a ramp designed like a pink dinosaur.



Halleigh McKinney (3rd grade) is about to bowl using a pink ramp.

SCSD

School for the Deaf



Jones presents from a Zoom video call displayed on a large screen.

Franklin Jones Jr. Illuminates Black Deaf Culture through BASL at SCSD

Franklin Jones Jr., an alumnus of SCSD, delivered an inspiring presentation for the School for the Deaf's Black History program. During his presentation, he delved into the richness of Black Deaf Culture, with a particular emphasis on Black American Sign Language (BASL).

To enhance understanding, he provided a demonstration of BASL, showcasing its unique characteristics and history.

Currently, Franklin is employed at Boston University, where he is also pursuing a PhD.



Didier Lorenzo (6th grade) asks Jones questions during his presentation.



A group of high school students gather in front of a large screen, showing Franklin Jones on a video call.

Egg-cellent Engineering

School for the Deaf STEM students, guided by teachers Brett Grayson and Jessica Gribble, took part in the Tiger Science Challenge through NTID (National Technical Institute for the Deaf in Rochester, NY).

This year's challenge was an egg drop competition, focusing on the most creative or the tallest drop. After two weeks of hard work and creativity, Kamari Worthington, 6th grade, designed a rover that protected his egg in a 45-foot drop from a fire truck lift!

Kamari secured an impressive 3rd place win in the tallest drop category among all the participating Schools for the Deaf. For his prize, he received an Amazon gift card and a full scholarship to the Tiger Tech Summer Camp at NTID in Rochester, NY.

Way to go, Kamari!



Kamari holds a colorful tower made of sponges and plastic cups, built to protect his egg during the drop.

Cast Your Vote!

Middle and high school students at the School for the Deaf took part in Student Council elections. Students gathered to submit their votes for new student leaders, taking an active role in shaping their school community.

Meet Your SCSD Student Council Leaders:

President: Christian Washington (senior)
Vice President: James Myers (senior)
Secretary: Kaylee Ellison (11th grade)
Treasurer: Jasper Womick (11th grade)
Social Media Representative: Dacorion Horton (senior)



Heather Moffett, teacher, helps Terah Allen (7th grade) vote using a tablet.



Zeaveon Washington (8th grade) holds a "SCSDB I Voted" green sticker.



Christian, James, Kaylee, Heather Moffett, Dacorion, and Jasper pose for a photo.

Triumph at the NTID Southeast Regional

The School for the Deaf middle school math team secured third place at the NTID Southeast Regional Middle School Math Competition. Along with their coaches, the team had a fantastic time competing and connecting with fellow students from other schools for the Deaf across the Southeast.

Congratulations to our team as they advance to the National Middle School Math Competition in April.



Coach Brett Grayson, Didier Lorenzo (6th grade), Carter Bryant (8th grade), Ivan Israel Rivas Avila (7th grade), Frank Anthony Rivas Avila (7th grade), and Coach Simon McConnell



The math team is recognized and shakes hands on stage with the Tiger Team Challenge award presenter.



Team members focus intently on a computer screen during the competition.

AAC

Applied Academic Center



Agriculture teacher Annette Bodie shares insights about the eggs produced by chickens raised at AAC.

Career Clusters

Every February, Career and Technical Education (CTE) Month is celebrated. CTE is designed to equip students with the skills needed for high-wage, high-skill, and high-demand careers.

At SCSD, the Applied Academic Center (AAC) provides courses in nationally recognized career clusters, endorsed by the South Carolina Department of Education.

Career clusters include:

Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources

Architecture and Construction

Arts, Audio/Visual Technology, and Communications

Education and Training

Human Services/Family and Consumer Sciences

Information Technology

Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics

STEM, Engineering, and Computer Science



Aaron Sease (11th grade) learns how to stabilize a vehicle lift.



Kaitland Davis (senior) and Sierra Stefani (11th grade) prepare snacks during class.



Brandy Mezquite-Reyes (senior) captures campus activities for yearbook class.



Iris Hare (senior) uses a device to magnify and identify different dollar bills.



Jonathan Perez-Gomez (11th grade) sands wood during carpentry class.



Isiah Pasha (7th) holds up a robot built in STEAM class.

Welcoming National FFA Officer Mary Schreiber to SCSDB

We had the privilege of hosting Mary Schreiber, National FFA Officer, at SCSDB! Accompanied by the South Carolina Agriculture Education state staff, Mary visited our campus as part of her tour during National FFA Week. This week is dedicated to highlighting the National FFA Organization's role in shaping future leaders and promoting agricultural education.

We are delighted to be one of only three schools in South Carolina selected for this special visit. It was an excellent opportunity for our FFA students to meet these distinguished guests and proudly showcase our campus.



SCSDB's FFA Club wears their designated blue jackets in front of planters at AAC. Back row: Jaka'i Coakley (9th grade), Luis Zuniga-Ocampo (9th grade), Michael Clifton (11th grade), and Hailey Gundling (senior). Front row: Dacorian Horton (senior), Dominic Williams (11th grade), Piper Graham (11th grade), Tristan Bradley (10th grade), and Annette Bodie, agriculture teacher.



FFA students lead the officers on a tour of AAC and Walker Hall.



FFA officers learn the signs for different FFA symbols. Here, Mary learns the sign for "owl."



Piper Graham (11th grade) reads a braille description in the museum and explains braille to the officers.

Hands-on Day with Money

AAC students have been learning how to use the new Clover Cash Register system, a modern point-of-sale platform that is pivotal for their understanding of financial transactions in retail environments. Students have also been learning how to manage money by deciding what they can purchase with given amounts of money; calculating tips, change, and discounts; and interacting with customers. They've also learned how to use tools and apps to identify different types of currency.



Teachers Tony Lee and Annette Bodie work with Carlos Caudillo (senior) and Yakera Martin (11th grade) on different money-related math problems.



Ryleigh Rabon (11th grade) manages the Clover Cash Register system.

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.



Brandy Mezquite-Reyes (senior) mops floors in the Walker Hall cafeteria.



Elliot Germany (senior) pushes a cart.



Ke'Mareon Turner (11th grade) wipes down windows on a school bus.



Dacorian Horton (senior) rolls towels while working at the Marriott.



James Myers (senior) works at Chick-fil-A.



11th graders Destinee Hall and Aaron Sease work with job coach Sammie Gilreath.

Library

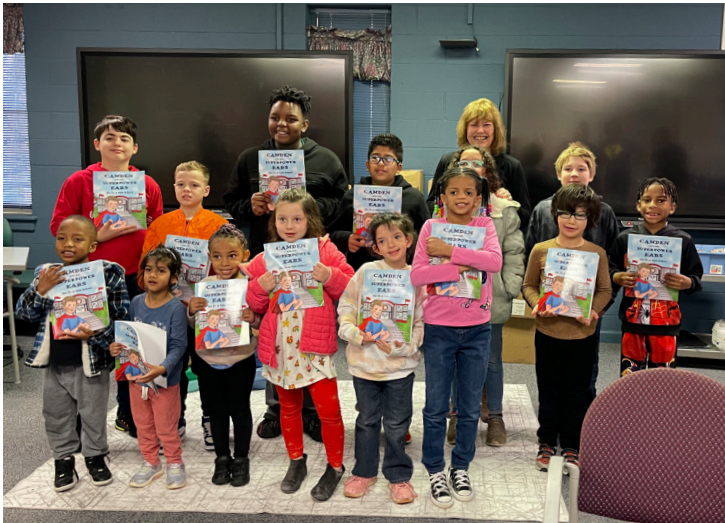
Cleveland Learning Resource Center



Middle schoolers showcase their own superpower ears.

Author Visit

Leigh Cutrone made a special visit to read one of her standout books, "Camden and His Superpower Ears Go To A New School." The book is inspired by her own experiences with her grandson, who is deaf, and the story follows Camden as he faces the ups and downs of starting at a new school.



School for the Deaf elementary students each receive a copy of Cutrone's book.



Middle schoolers smile and pose with the author.

Dr. Seuss Day!

ASL students from Spartanburg Community College brought the whimsical and chaotic tale of "Wacky Wednesday" by Dr. Seuss to life. Meanwhile, at CSA, ASL students from USC Upstate hosted their own Dr. Seuss celebration, delighting everyone with the story of "Ten Apples Up On Top." Through expressive signing and animated storytelling, these classic tales were shared in a fun, unique way.

No birthday celebration is complete without cake and ice cream! Following the storytelling, everyone enjoyed delicious birthday cake and ice cream.



Spartanburg Community College ASL students stand in front of students listening attentively.

Fine Arts



The Fairy Godmother wears a silver gown and a magical headpiece with illuminated pearls.

Enchanting Opera Experience

Converse Opera brought the magic of Massenet's "Cendrillon" (Cinderella) to the School for the Blind, enchanting students with selections from their upcoming performance. Our students enjoyed experiencing the technique and beauty of opera, especially learning about the art form's history.



The Fairy Godmother interacts with 3rd grade students, Leah Palma-Escobar and Da'Marion Townsend, who sit and touch her costume.



Cinderella sings with an expressive posture.



School for the Blind students engage with the stage performance.



Holiday Magic

Guided by Art Teacher Chris Turner, Didier Lorenzo, 6th grader at the School for the Deaf, created 3-D Christmas tree artwork that was selected to be featured on the cover of this year's holiday card!

Didier's artwork, vibrant and full of festive spirit, perfectly captures the essence of the holiday season.

From left to right: Chris Turner, art teacher, Didier Lorenzo (6th grade), and President Jolene Madison proudly display Didier's artwork and a certificate in recognition of his achievement.

Athletics



Evelin Ordonez-Ochoa (9th grade) rolls the ball across the court.



The boys and girls goalball teams sit on a charter bus in their uniforms as they travel to the Governor Morehead School for the girls to compete in a goalball tournament.

Lady Hornets Shine at Governor Morehead Goalball Invitational

Our Lady Hornets Goalball Team represented SCSDB well at the 2025 Governor Morehead Goalball Invitational, a tournament that was livestreamed. The SCSDB Girl's Goalball Team played the girls goalball team from the Governor Morehead School for the Blind in Raleigh, NC. The Lady Hornets won one out of three games against the Lady Chargers!



Reniece Vassell (10th grade) passes the ball to Iris Hare (senior).



Left to right: Akeylah Howard, Christian Washington, James Myers, and Dacorion Horton are recognized on Basketball Senior Night by the cheer coaches, Jacqueline Booker and Shannon Wright, and the assistant boys' basketball coach, Carl Duke.

Residential Life



Pageant winners in elegant formal wear proudly stand on the stage of Pulliam Auditorium. Each winner was awarded a sash, crown, and trophy as symbols of their achievement.

Celebrating SCSDB Pageant Winners

Congratulations to the winners of the SCSDB 175 Years of Excellence Pageant! The annual pageant, a hallmark of tradition and pride, highlights the exceptional talents and leadership of our students.

School for the Deaf

Queen: Ayden Johns
King: James Myers

School for the Blind

Queen: Reniece Vassell
King: Tyrek Capers

Cedar Springs Academy

Queen: Brandy Mezquite-Reyes

Miss Congeniality

Hailey Gundling



Sierra Stefani (11th grade) shows her love to the crowd.



Michael Clifton (11th grade) waves during formal wear.



Destinee Hall (11th grade), accompanied by Emily Jones, graces the stage.



Hailey Gundling (senior) signs "I love you" to her peers in the audience.



Ayden Johns (10th grade) performs "A Dandelion" by deaf poet Clayton Villi. On an easel next to Ayden sits a print of deaf artist Chuck Baird's "Dandelion" painting.



Akeylah Howard (senior) shows her best moves during the talent portion of the pageant.

Out on the Town

Students enjoyed field trips off-campus in Spartanburg and Greenville throughout the school year. Photos here are of some recent trips.

Residential staff try to prioritize field trip locations that students are interested in, such as Haywood Mall, Big Air, and local college basketball games.

Right: Students gather outside of The Cheesecake Factory to wait for the bus back to campus.



Students discuss where they want to shop at Haywood Mall in Greenville.



Nate Fuhrwerk and Evan Gimmaka (11th grade) take a break at the Food Court.



James Myers (senior) answers trivia questions on the USC Upstate basketball court during a time-out.



Rusten Heffington (11th grade) and James Myers (senior) bounce on the trampolines at Big Air.



Emmanuel Geronimo Marcos (10th grade) gives Big Air a big thumbs up.



Jasper Womick (11th grade) does a flip as his peers judge his skills.

Statewide Outreach Services

Middle School Students Declare Independence

Independence Day activities for middle school students who have visual impairments were held in Columbia on March 11 and in Spartanburg on March 12.

Students shared information about their eye conditions and the accommodations they need to be successful in different settings. They talked about their superpowers and received some initial training using monoculars and magnifiers.

They traveled to a local Wal-Mart where they completed a scavenger hunt to purchase the products to create a trail mix. They ended each day by making the trail mix and putting it into Ziplock bags to be shared with others.

Students traveled to a local restaurant each day and purchased their lunch, making the selections themselves. The independent living skills demonstrated in these activities are of immeasurable value!

Valerie Feiling, School for the Blind principal; Leslie Borton, lead teacher at SCSB; and Dr. Tina Herzberg from USC Upstate planned the event in great detail. Appreciation goes to the Association for the Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired South Carolina Chapter and to USC Upstate for providing funding for the student lunches and the trail mix activity.



Students use a magnifier to look around in the meat section at Walmart.



Chayse Mole (7th grade) holds a tray with the food he ordered at Moe's, including a burrito and a drink.

Family Living in a Snow Globe

Parents worked with their child to decorate and make a paper snow globe in December. Kelly's Kids hosted this fun parent engagement activity. Staff took a family picture and put it on the snow globe. The children and the parents had a great time and enjoyed the finished project.



Silas Sanderson and his mom, Ezelis Sanderson, use a cotton swab to paint the snow globe.



Pictured left to right: Jerrisha Harris (mom), James Glenn (dad), and JaKayla Glenn pose for their family picture.



Ivy Upchurch and his mom, Autumn Ashe, paint the snow for the snow globe.



A mom and her child paint the snow for the snow globe.

SCSDB Students Succeed in Braille Challenge

A large number of SCSDB students participated in the 17th Annual Regional Braille Challenge Feb. 13, at Segra Park, home of the Columbia Fireflies, as attendance returned to pre-pandemic levels.

Each of the 43 students who took part in the event received a participation medal. Then, students demonstrated their braille skills in competitions including spelling, speed and accuracy, and proofreading. Winners received cash prizes.

The event is a joint effort among several partners including SCSDB; the SC Commission for the Blind; the SC Department of Education, Office of Special Education Services; and the Association for the Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired South Carolina Chapter. A huge “thank you” to Jodi Floyd, Lead Teacher from Statewide Blind and Visually Impaired Education, SCSDB Division of Outreach Services, who has coordinated this event for the last 13 years!

Below is a list of winners for 2025. Some of the winners are served by Statewide Blind and Visually Impaired Education.



Middle and high school students from campus and some served by outreach compete against each other in the Braille Challenge.

Rookie Division

- 1st: Joseph Acob, PACE Academy
- 2nd: Reniece Vassell, SCSDB
- 3rd: Gideon Abiriga, SCSDB

Novice Division

- 1st: Tazmin Hill, SCSDB
- 2nd: Ashton Jackson, SCSDB
- 3rd: Tyrek Capers, SCSDB

Apprentice Division

- 1st: Akori Albritton, Charleston County School District
- 2nd: Peter Thao, Spartanburg 3
- 3rd: Carter Payne, Lancaster School District

Freshman Division

- 1st: Dayanna Barajas, Richland One School District
- 2nd: Alyse Woods, Newberry County School District
- 3rd: Leah Palma Escobar, SCSDB

Sophomore Division

- 1st: Breanna Sharpe, SCSDB

Junior Varsity Division

- 1st: Landon Bryson, Lancaster School District
- 2nd: Jenna Cross, Homeschooled
- 3rd: Emma Atkinson, SCSDB

Varsity Division

- 1st: Joshua Cross, Homeschooled
- 2nd: Michael Clifton, SCSDB
- 3rd: Destinee Hall, SCSDB

Kelly's Kids Staff Shine Brightly

Johnnica Leath and Lyndsey Parris were recognized for a high assessment score for their Kelly's Kids classroom at Quality Counts's annual “Night of the Stars” on March 10.

This night is a celebration of early childcare educators and their commitment to quality in early child care classrooms across Spartanburg County. The quality of the classroom is measured by an assessment tool called the Infant/Toddler Environmental Rating Scales (ITERS).

In December, the assessor completed a 3-hour comprehensive evaluation to determine classroom scores. Johnnica and Lyndsey's classroom scored in the highest top five ITERS scores for this assessment year!

Congratulations to Johnnica Leath (left) and Lyndsey Parris (right) who pose with their certificates and gift cards for being in the top five highest scores.



SCSDB Foundation



The SCSDB Chorus stands as they sing and sign holiday songs.

Historical Traditions

The 90th Annual Spartanburg Lions Club Holiday Luncheon was held on Dec. 2 at SCSDB, continuing a tradition that began with the first Lions Club Christmas Party in 1934!

This festive event's highlight is always the special performance from our SCSDB Chorus, making it a wonderful way to usher in the holiday season.



Emma Atkinson (7th grade), Kash Bradshaw (7th grade), Melanie Gomez (senior), Kenzie Childress (7th grade), and Elliot Germany (senior) perform holiday music for the audience.



Lions Club members in festive attire sit and listen to the SCSDB Chorus performance.



President Jolene Madison addresses the Lions Club members from the podium in the Habisreutinger Reception Area.



Lions Club members are seated at tables, clapping. The tables are covered with white tablecloths and have poinsettias as centerpieces.

Longstanding Fundraiser Raises Over \$1.1 Million

Over the past 15 years, the 'So You Think You Can Cook' Chili Cook-off, hosted by the SCSDB Foundation, has successfully raised over \$1.1 million to benefit students at SCSDB! On January 18, seven teams from Spartanburg businesses came together for the annual event to present their finest chili recipes in a heated cook-off competition. The event featured a festive birthday party theme in honor of the 175th anniversary of the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind (SCSDB).

This year's teams included: A Business Law Firm, Miss Marion's School of Dance, SC School for the Deaf and the Blind, Smith Drug Company, Sodexo, TD Bank and Two 95 Food & Spirits. Congratulations to the following winners of the 2025 chili cook-off, presented by Southern States Packaging Company:

Community Choice Award:

1st Place: Two 95 Food & Spirits
2nd Place: Smith Drug Company

Judges Choice:

1st Place: Miss Marion's School of Dance
2nd Place: Sodexo

Best Table Presentation:

1st Place: Smith Drug Company
2nd Place: SC School for the Deaf and the Blind

Golden Chili Award Winners:

(raised \$1,500+ before noon on the event day)
Two 95 Food & Spirits
Smith Drug Company



Smith Drug Company wins Best Table Presentation with their colorful "Candy Land" booth, adorned with sweets-themed decorations.



Chili tasters are gathered around Two 95 Food & Spirit's table at the chili cook-off.



The chili cook-off, held at the Spartanburg Country Club, was emceed by WSPA's Simone Jameson (left).



Miss Marion's School of Dance wins Judges Choice for their tasty chili recipe.



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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**.