BEAUFORT COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

# BCSD BEACON

Vol. 1, Issue 1

## Budget Forums



Two public forums are scheduled for educators, parents, and community members to learn more about the school district budget being developed by the Beaufort County Board of Education for the 2025-26 school year.

The first forum will be Bluffton High School at 6 p.m., Wednesday, April 30. The second will be at Beaufort High School at 6 p.m., Thursday, May 1.

Participants at each forum will hear a presentation on the budget and have a chance to work in small groups to explore various areas of the budget. Participants will be able to share their discussions and suggestions.

"We recognize that input from our key stakeholders is an important part of the budget process," said Superintendent Frank Rodriguez. "We look forward to hearing from our community members, parents, and employees at our public budget forums."

## NEW BOE Members

The Beaufort County Board of Education welcomed its new members in January.
Representing District 9, Beaufort County native Leah Frazier is a former educator with over a decade of teaching experience.

She holds advanced degrees in education from the University of South Carolina and The Citadel.

Representing District 1, Pastor Issac Gordon is a community advocate with a career in transportation, having served as a bus transportation area supervisor in Bluffton and safety officer in Summerville. He most recently served the students of Beaufort County as a bus driver.

Representing District 6, Alphonso Small Jr. is self-employed and a former law enforcement officer who grew up in Hampton, SC. He holds a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice/Sociology from Claflin University.



In addition to the three new Board members, reelected member Ingrid Boatright was sworn in for a new term.

Representing District 7, a relatively new member, Dr. David Carr was sworn in to the BCSD Board late last year when former Board member Dr. Rachel Wisnefski left the district. Currently a lecturer at Georgia Southern University, Carr had a 26-year teaching career at Ohio University and holds advanced degrees in education from Marshall and Virginia Tech universities.

The Board also elected its officers for 2025: Col. Richard Geier as chair, Carlton Dallas as vice chair, and Ingrid Boatright as secretary.

## BCSD School Counselor of the Year

Battery Creek High School Counselor Jessica Stone is the Beaufort County School District's 2025 School Counselor of the Year.

In addition to honoring Stone, the district also recognized River Ridge Academy's Zoe Greene as the Rookie School Counselor of the Year.

"We're extremely proud of Ms. Stone for earning this honor," said Superintendent Frank Rodriguez. "Extraordinary school counselors like Ms. Stone and Ms. Greene are essential to our schools."

Stone appreciated the recognition. "To win an honor like this is just so humbling," said Stone. "I love school counseling because I get the chance to connect with students...helping them be successful in their futures."

Battery Creek High School principal Denise Lessard also praised Stone for her ability to connect with students. "She understands who they are, helping them navigate the opportunities and choices that they have."

She is the one who got me started in dual enrollment," said Battery Creek High School student Makayla Brown. "That helped me a lot to prepare for college and for even more things in life."






## January STOM

January's Student of the Month character trait was "perseverance". Perseverance is defined as pursuing worthy objectives with determination and patience while exhibiting fortitude when confronted with failure. For southern Beaufort County, the January student of the month was James Miranda, a senior at Battery Creek High School.

James exemplified perseverance through adversity. After being assigned to the alternative school, he made a committed effort to turn things around. Facing personal challenges head-on, he returned to school with determination, and his grades, behavior, and communication skills improved tremendously.

## February STOM

February's Student of the Month traits were "honesty" and "integrity".

Honesty is defined as telling the truth and admitting wrongdoing. Integrity is defined as a firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values. For northern Beaufort County, the February student of the month was Lusila Garcia Barrios, a seventh-grade student at Whale Branch Middle School.

Lusila was nominated for the character education of the traits of Honesty and Integrity because she embodies these character traits every day. Many students will frequently take the easy path on assignments by Googling the answer to a question or writing prompt or simply copying the work of someone else in the classroom. Regardless of how difficult or easy the assignment is, or how long it takes to complete the assignment, Lusila prides herself on completing the work herself. Additionally, if the assignment is a team project, she will diligently work with her peers to ensure that her partner is not unfairly shouldering most of the work.

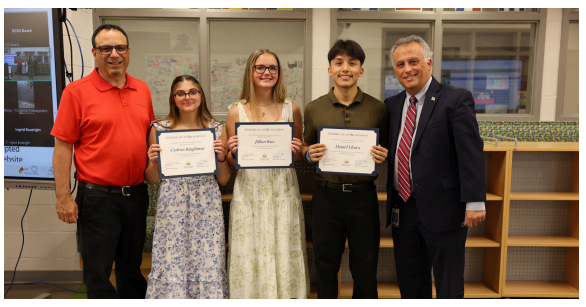
Lusila also demonstrates honesty and integrity with her friends, peers, and teachers by choosing to always do the right thing, even when it is not the popular or easiest choice to make. By choosing the right path, Lusila shines a light on the character that she and her parents have instilled in her.

## Career & Technical Education

Students from Beaufort Jasper Academy for Career Excellence (ACE) recently participated in the annual Skills USA competition, bringing home several awards.

The Skills USA Championships is a national competition that showcases the technical skills and career readiness of students in Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. It is the largest skill-based competition in the country, bringing together thousands of students from across the U.S. to compete in hands-on challenges that reflect real-world job scenarios.

Students participate in over 100 skill-based events across industries such as automotive technology, welding, healthcare, cybersecurity, culinary arts, robotics, and more. Competitions start at the local and state levels, with top performers advancing to the National Leadership & Skills Conference (NLSC), held annually in June.



## South Carolina Athletic Administrators Association's Middle School Athletic Director of the Year

Each year, the South Carolina Athletic Administrators Association recognizes Athletic Directors for their positive leadership and impact on interscholastic athletics, and their involvement and contributions in their Region, Classification, and State athletics.

This year's Middle School Athletic Director of the Year is Lady's Island Middle School's Haleem Barnes.

Superintendent Dr. Rodriguez was also named the Class 4A/5A Superintendent of the Year.





## Battery Creek High School Model UN

During their inaugural Model UN experience, the Battery Creek Dolphins excelled in the Model UN conference at Georgia Southern University! Model UN is a simulation of the United Nations where students role-play as diplomats, researching and debating global issues to find solutions, fostering skills in public speaking, negotiation, and critical thinking.



Students in the Canadian Delegation had a Resolution passed by the General Assembly of the Model United Nations. Israel Delegates received a recognition for Points of Order while serving as delegates in the General Assembly. Nicaragua delegates were a voting lead for the Organization of American States Bloc.

## Beaufort Middle Band Receives Excellent Award

Beaufort Middle School Band received an Excellent award in Performance and a Superior rating in Sight Reading at the State Concert Performance Assessment (CPA). This award signifies outstanding musical achievement, demonstrating both mastery of prepared pieces and exceptional sight-reading skills.




## Whale Branch Early College High School

Great News for Whale Branch Early College High School! Athletic Director Kaysee Sullivan has been honored with the 2025 South Carolina Athletic Administrators Association (SCAAA) 2A Region 5 Athletic Director of the Year award.

This recognition highlights her exceptional contributions to interscholastic athletics at the local, regional, and state levels. The SCAAA awards are based on a thorough nomination and voting process, reflecting Sullivan's outstanding leadership and impact in the field.



## Students Participate in Bicentennial Anniversary









On March 18, 2025, students from across the district helped to celebrate the bicentennial anniversary of Marquis de Lafayette arriving on the shores of Beaufort as part of his tour of the United States in 1824-1825. Taking place on the exact day of Lafayette's original visit toBeaufort, this event kicked off BCSD's participation in the celebrations for the 250th anniversary of the United States that will extend until July 4th, 2026. As part of the LafayetteDay celebration, elementary students participated in welcoming Lafayette to the shores of Beaufort at Waterfront Park and then in a parade procession through downtown to the Verdier House, also called the Lafayette House, where a historic marker was presented and placed by the state of South Carolina Historic Society, BHS French students held a booth representing the french language, and BHS Dance students performed period dances. Student artwork was displayed along Bay Street in celebration of the event. The historic celebrations continued with living history museum presentations for students from Beaufort Elementary, Mossy Oaks Elementary, Coosa Elementary, Robert Smalls Leadership Academy, Battery Creek High, Beaufort High and Whale Branch Early College High on Friday, March 21, 2025 at the Beaufort History Museum. These presentations allowed students to have hands-on experience in the life of a Revolutionary soldier.

## Eleven Beaufort County Seniors Named Heritage Classic Foundation Scholars

Eleven standout seniors from Beaufort County high schools have been named Heritage Classic Foundation Scholars for the 2024-2025 school year. Ten of those students are seniors in the Beaufort County School District. Chosen based on academic performance, community service, essays, and financial need, the students represent five local high schools. All high school seniors in Beaufort and Jasper Counties were eligible to apply, with fourteen finalists interviewed by the Scholar Committee.

At the awards presentation, Scholar Committee Chairman Scott Richardson praised the recipients as not only top students but also leaders in their communities. Six of the newly named Scholars will receive a $16,000 scholarship over the next four years. Four additional awards carry a $20,000 opportunity.

Next fall, a total of 41 Beaufort and Jasper County collegians will be attending school and will have received Foundation grants at an expenditure of $193,000. A grand total of $5.6M will have been awarded to 397 students after the 2025 distribution.

The Foundation also announced two $25,000 donations to its Scholarship Endowment Fund from the RBC Foundation and Sea Pines Resort Community Fund. Since its inception, the Heritage Classic Foundation has awarded $5.6 million to 397 students.



Photo courtesy of: Heritage Classic Foundation

The following graduating seniors were selected:

- Battery Creek High School - Emma Hamilton
- Bluffton High School - Genesis Hernandez Cabrera, Ava Elizabeth Rios, Vivian Zurakowski
- Hilton Head Island High School - Bryce Broome, Calvin Clayton, Mia Diamond, Emeli Perez, Mia Ruxton
- May River High School - James Holloman

# WE'RE HIRING!

Are you an exceptional educator ready to make a difference? Beaufort County School District is searching for the best and brightest educators for the 2025-2026 school year!

✨ Why BCSD?
✅ One of the top-paying school districts in South Carolina
✅ A supportive community dedicated to student success
✅ Opportunities to grow your career in education leadership

Don't miss this opportunity to join a district that values its educators and students. Apply today and take the next step in your teaching career!

We can't wait to meet you and share why BCSD is the best place to teach and grow.

Want to Apply? Scan the QR code to view current job listings.

SCAN ME!

