



Charleston County School of the  
Arts

**Anita W. Huggins, M.Ed.**  
Superintendent of Schools

**Luke Clamp, Ed.D.**  
Deputy Superintendent

**Sherry M. Eppelsheimer, Ed.D.**  
Associate Superintendent of the  
High School Learning Community

**Shannon Cook, Ed.D.**  
Principal

**For Immediate Release**

April 25, 2025

**Contact:**

Dr. Shannon Cook, 843-529-4990

## Media Release

### **SOA Boasts Only Lowcountry Public School Student to Win 2025 Corporate-Sponsored National Merit Scholarship**

**North Charleston, SC** – Only nine seniors in South Carolina are receiving corporate-sponsored scholarships through the 70th annual National Merit Scholarship Program, and Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA) has one of them. Brooks Burns Wetmore is the only public school student in the Lowcountry to earn one of these financial rewards through the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) in 2025.

Wetmore won the National Merit Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Memorial Scholarship.

"Brooks exemplifies the very best of Charleston County School of the Arts," said Dr. Shannon Cook, SOA's principal. "She is not only a gifted vocalist, but also a dedicated scholar with a strong academic record. We are incredibly proud of her being awarded a Corporate-Sponsored National Merit Scholarship — a testament to her hard work, talent, and character."

Approximately 830 distinguished high school seniors earned scholarships financed by 124 corporations, company foundations, and other business organizations. Most of the awards are renewable for up to four years of college undergraduate study and provide annual stipends from \$1,000 to \$10,000 annually. Some offer a single payment ranging from \$2,500 to \$5,000.

High school juniors entered the 2025 National Merit Scholarship Program when they took the 2023 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) as an initial screen of program entrants.

Once students were selected as semifinalists, they fulfilled the requirements to become finalists. They submitted a detailed scholarship application, which included writing an essay and providing information about extracurricular activities, awards, and leadership positions. Semifinalists also had to have an outstanding academic record, be endorsed and recommended by a high school official, and earn SAT® scores that confirmed the qualifying test performance. From the semifinalist group, over 15,000 students met the finalist requirements.

By the conclusion of the 2025 competition, about 6,930 finalists will receive National Merit Scholarships totaling nearly \$26 million. According to NMSC, winners are finalists who have the strongest combination of academic skills and achievements, extracurricular accomplishments, and potential for success in rigorous college studies.

Contact Dr. Shannon Cook at (843) 529-4990 for more information about Brooks Burns Wetmore.

###

#### **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.