



Wando High School

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Media Release

CCSD 2025 Teacher of the Year Finalist Profile - Wando's Eric Wilkinson will use platform to advocate for the importance of fine arts

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Mount Pleasant, SC - Eric Wilkinson, the choir director at Wando High School, said he has his dream job - he has dedicated 24 years to educating young students in music performance, and his award-winning program is a testament to his dedication to the importance of the arts in education.

In Wilkinson's classroom, he actively addresses the Profile of the South Carolina High School Graduate through a comprehensive approach that integrates world-class knowledge, world-class skills, and life and career characteristics, all within the dynamic environment of choral music education.

His students engage with a broad spectrum of musical literature, singing in multiple foreign languages, including Italian, French, German, Swahili, Chinese, and Estonian. Students work effectively with diverse groups, learning to listen, blend, and support one another to achieve a unified sound. Additionally, he emphasizes self-direction through activities that require motivation, goal setting, and accountability. Students set personal and ensemble goals, track their progress, and reflect on their growth.

"My students achieve musical excellence through this multifaceted approach and develop the knowledge, skills, and characteristics essential for success beyond high school," said Wilkinson. "As the District Teacher of the Year, my message to the teaching profession and the public would focus on the transformative power of Fine Arts education in building better schools and communities. Fine Arts teachers and programs are not just supplementary to education but foundational in fostering environments where students thrive academically, socially, and emotionally."

Wilkinson's vision for his students at Wando is that they realize that as they become better musicians, they become better people.

"It is a cyclical improvement," said Wilkinson. "My dream is that my students take the skills they learn and weave them into the fabric of who they are."

Wilkinson explained that thriving Fine Arts programs create dynamic school cultures where students are eager to attend. Preparing for performances motivates students, fostering a sense of purpose and belonging. For many, he said, Fine Arts classes are the highlight of their day, providing a creative outlet that nurtures their talents.

"This engagement improves attendance and academic performance," added Wilkinson. "Fine Arts programs also strengthen vertical alignment within school districts through regular communication with feeder and collegiate programs. This network supports both students and educators, fostering collaboration and a shared vision for arts education."

Wilkinson, whose students participate in his program during all four years in high school, believes that Fine Arts education is a catalyst for building better schools. He said it nurtures creativity, strengthens community ties, and prepares students to be innovative, empathetic leaders.

"As a spokesperson for the teaching profession, I am committed to advocating for the vital role of Fine Arts in education, ensuring every student has the opportunity to experience its profound benefits," said Wilkinson.

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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.

