

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Right side: Craig James, Director of Transformation Academy | Student 1: Caden Keller, Lake Marion High School
Student 2: Jeketcia Callum- Jenkins, Orangeburg- Wilkinson High School | Student 3: Davonte Myers, Orangeburg -
Wilkinson High | Student 4: Ashley Rivers, Lake Marion High School | Mrs. Williams, Advisor at REFOCUS Academy Mr.
Zachary Thomas, Director of the Innovation and Entrepreneurship Hub

Refocus Academy Academic Team Shines at SC State's 53rd Annual Business Week Academic Competition

Orangeburg, S.C. – Orangeburg County School District (OCSD) is thrilled to announce that the Refocus Academy Academic Team made an outstanding showing at South Carolina State University's 53rd Annual Business Week Academic Competition, held on March 24, 2025. The competition, a hallmark event in the university's business education calendar, brings together high school teams from across the state to showcase their talents in areas such as entrepreneurship, marketing, and business strategy. This year's competition attracted top-tier students, each vying for recognition in a series of rigorous challenges that test both academic skills and real-world business acumen.

Competing head-to-head against the High School for Health Professions (HSHP), the Refocus Academy team captivated the judges with their impressive Case Study, Digital Entrepreneurship, and Social Media Marketing strategies. Centered around their dynamic product, Blue Essence Purified Flavored Water, the team delivered a compelling pitch, showcasing their ability to harness innovative business strategies and develop engaging, interactive content that promises to rehydrate and rejuvenate the body.

The students were evaluated in three key areas: trend utilization, content strategy, and user-generated content. Their ability to creatively tap into current marketing trends, craft a well-defined strategic approach, and incorporate interactive audience engagement set them apart. Their real-world readiness and business acumen were evident in their pitch, demonstrating the exceptional talent being nurtured within OCSD.

With professionalism and dedication, the team represented OCSD with excellence and earned second place, securing a trophy and a \$400 monetary award for their remarkable performance.

Refocus Academy Academic Team Members:

- Caden Keller, Lake Marion High School
- Ashley Rivers, Lake Marion High School
- Jaketcia Callum-Jenkins, Orangeburg-Wilkinson High School
- Devonte Myers, Orangeburg-Wilkinson High School

Dr. Shawn D. Foster, Superintendent of OCSD, praised the team's achievement, saying, "the impressive performance of the Refocus Academy Academic Team is a testament to the talent, creativity, and hard work that thrives in our district. These students showcased not only their academic abilities but also their entrepreneurial spirit and commitment to excellence. This success highlights the future we are shaping in OCSD, where every student is empowered to excel and prepared to meet the challenges of tomorrow's workforce. I am incredibly proud of their achievements and look forward to seeing them continue to shine in all their future endeavors."

In addition to the academic team's success, OCSD is proud to recognize Saniah Smith, an 11th-grade student at Lake Marion High School, and Jareona Johnson, a 10th-grade student at Edisto High School, who placed in the top five for college readiness. These students were awarded several SC State gifts for their exceptional preparation and potential, further exemplifying the district's commitment to fostering a culture of excellence.

For additional information, please contact Dr. Erica S. Taylor, Assistant Superintendent for Communications and Business and Community Partnerships, at erica.taylor@ocsdsc.org or 839-356-4040.

Orangeburg County School District

The mission of Orangeburg County School District, the catalyst of innovation and excellence, is to ensure all students discover and develop their person, purpose, and platform through high-quality educational experiences distinguished by a culture of collaboration, equity, and inclusion; a creative learning environment with inspiring opportunities; a commitment to nurture the academic, physical, social and emotional well-being of all. Visit us online at ocsdsc.org

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