

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Orangeburg County School District's Carver-Edisto Middle School Celebrates Grand Opening of State-of-the-Art Weight Room

Orangeburg, S.C. – Orangeburg County School District (OCSD) proudly celebrated the grand opening of a state-of-the-art weight room at Carver-Edisto Middle School (CEMS), marking a significant milestone in the school's athletic and student development vision. The ribbon-cutting ceremony, held recently on campus, brought together students, staff, families, sponsors, and community leaders to witness the realization of a dream two years in the making.

Principal Karen James expressed profound gratitude to the coaches and staff who led the fundraising efforts and emphasized that the weight room was created with students' holistic success in mind. "This space was designed with our students in mind," said James. "It's not just about physical fitness—it's about motivation, engagement, and building a feeder program that prepares our athletes for high school and beyond. For many of our students, sports are the reason they work hard to maintain good grades and attendance. This facility will help us turn that effort into lifelong success."

The facility's completion was made possible through the generous support of local businesses and sponsors, including Davis Toyota of Orangeburg, SignsPlus, Mike's Fireworks, and Edisto Deer Processing.

Coach Brad Sutton, Athletic Director at CEMS, acknowledged the community's role in bringing the vision to life. "Our administration, parents, and sponsors truly understood the importance of our athletic vision and were eager to support it," said Sutton. "We hope our community will, in turn, support these sponsors as well."

Since assuming his role, Sutton has strategically focused on bridging the gap between middle and high school athletics. The new facility stands as a powerful symbol of that goal—providing students with the tools to succeed athletically, academically, and personally.

"I saw firsthand the impact of introducing weightlifting at the middle school level," he added. "This space became more than a gym—it was where students built discipline, perseverance, and confidence. It was where they pushed their limits and lifted one another. Most importantly, it was a space that said: We believe in them."

OCS D Superintendent Dr. Shawn D. Foster praised the initiative, recognizing its long-term value to students and the greater school community.

"This event was a celebration of vision, hard work, and the unwavering belief in the potential of our students," said Dr. Foster. "This weight room is more than a facility—it is a launchpad for leadership, resilience, and lifelong wellness habits. I am incredibly proud of Coach Sutton, the Carver-Edisto Middle School team, and our community partners for investing in our children's future."

As students explored the new facility with excitement and pride, it was evident that the space had already become a hub of growth, teamwork, and transformation, preparing stronger athletes and future leaders to lift their school and community to new heights.

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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