

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Dr. Erica S. Taylor
Assistant Superintendent for Communications
and Business and Community Partnerships
erica.taylor@ocsdsc.org

Friday, May 13, 2025



Orangeburg County School District Celebrates Three National Read 180 Award Winners Two Students and One Educator Honored for Academic Growth and Teaching Excellence

Orangeburg, S.C. – Orangeburg County School District (OCSD) is proud to announce that three members of its academic community have been named National Read 180 Award Winners: sixth-grade students Ansley Brunson (Hunter-Kinard-Tyler Middle School) and Ja’Keill Brown (William J. Clark Middle School), and veteran educator Ms. Tara Prezzy (Lake Marion Middle School). This prestigious recognition is awarded to outstanding students and educators who demonstrate exceptional progress and impact through the Read 180 program, a leading intervention model designed to support students with reading challenges.

Read 180 is a comprehensive, research-based program that provides intensive reading support for students who are reading below grade level. It blends personalized learning and adaptive technology with teacher-led instruction to help students improve reading fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. Its success in helping students close reading gaps makes national recognition through this program a significant honor for schools and districts.

Ansley Brunson, a sixth grader at Hunter-Kinard-Tyler Middle School, has emerged as a shining example of what’s possible when hard work meets opportunity. Since joining the Read 180

program, Ansley has shown remarkable academic progress and personal growth. Her reading fluency has accelerated significantly, and her IReady scores have improved by over 50 points. Equally impressive is her increased confidence and the leadership she displays among her peers. With focus, determination, and a joyful spirit toward learning, Ansley's story reflects the transformative power of student-centered learning environments.

Ja'Keill Brown, also a sixth-grade student at William J. Clark Middle School, transformed from a quiet, hesitant learner into a confident, independent reader. His reading level has advanced by over six grade levels. His passion for literature was ignited through the program, and he has embraced a growth mindset, routinely visiting the public library and taking ownership of his academic journey. His story exemplifies what can happen when students are given the tools, encouragement, and support they need to succeed.

Ms. Tara Prezzy, a 26-year veteran educator at Lake Marion Middle School, was also honored nationally for her dedication to teaching students who are neurodivergent. She is known for her commitment to educating the whole child, meeting their academic, social-emotional, and personal needs. Ms. Prezzy fosters a classroom culture where students are encouraged to take risks, learn from mistakes, and grow into independent, confident learners. Her use of best practices and differentiated instruction has made her a beacon of excellence in the OCSD community.

"This national recognition is a testament to the power of targeted intervention and the unwavering commitment of our educators and students," said Dr. Liana Calloway, OCSD Assistant Superintendent for Student Services. "Our Read 180 participants not only improve in measurable academic areas—they rediscover the joy of learning and gain confidence that carries beyond the classroom."

OCSD is among a select number of school districts nationwide to have multiple recipients honored in a single year. This distinction reflects the district's ongoing investment in evidence-based programs and professional development that meet students where they are and accelerate their success. It also speaks volumes about the leadership and dedication of the teachers who implement these tools with passion and care every day.

"We are incredibly proud of Ansley, Ja'Keill, and Ms. Prezzy," said Dr. Shawn D. Foster, Superintendent of OCSD. "These awards affirm the transformative impact of programs like Read 180 and the power of believing in every child's ability to succeed. This is a proud moment for our district and our community."

The achievements of these award winners underscore OCSD's dedication to academic equity and excellence. As the district continues its mission to support every learner, programs like Read 180 play a pivotal role in closing achievement gaps and empowering students to reach their full potential.

For more 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

###