ORANGEBURG COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
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Brookdale Elementary Becomes Orangeburg County's First Certified Green Steps School

Orangeburg, S.C. – Brookdale Elementary School has earned the prestigious Green Steps School Certification, becoming the first school in Orangeburg County School District to achieve this distinction. This certification recognizes schools that implement and sustain environmental education projects in three key areas: Conserve, Protect, and Restore.

Under the visionary leadership of Principal Kennedy and the dedicated guidance of Ms. Deloris Childs, Brookdale has established a model for environmental sustainability and student empowerment. Students at Brookdale are not only learning about environmental projects—they are doing them and teaching their peers to do the same. The student-led model ensures that knowledge and responsibility are passed from one class to the next, creating a sustainable cycle of stewardship.

"This program is truly student-driven," said Ms. Childs, who has overseen the initiative from its inception. "Our students take ownership of the projects, and at the end of each year, they mentor younger students to continue the work."

Brookdale's journey to Green Steps certification began when Ms. Childs was awarded a Champions of the Environment grant for her innovative hydroponics project. Her efforts, along with the unwavering support of school leadership and staff, have set a new standard for environmental education in the district.

Dr. Shawn D. Foster, Superintendent of Orangeburg County School District, praised the achievement, saying "We are incredibly proud of Brookdale Elementary for leading the way as our first Green Steps certified school. This recognition reflects the power of hands-on, student-led learning and demonstrates our district's commitment to sustainability, innovation, and academic excellence. Brookdale has set an inspiring example for all of us."

As the first school in the county to achieve this status, Brookdale sets a precedent for environmental education and sustainability practices within the district. This accomplishment not only highlights the school's dedication to fostering environmental stewardship among students but also positions Orangeburg County School District as a leader in integrating sustainability into education.

The school's mentor, Diane Curlee, who serves with the Orangeburg County Soil and Water Conservation District, has been instrumental in supporting the program. Curlee, who has been involved in Green Steps since its launch in 2010, encourages other schools in the region to follow Brookdale's lead. Brookdale's success is a shining example of how environmental responsibility and student leadership can work hand-in-hand to build a better future.

The Green Steps Schools program, established in 2003, encourages schools throughout South Carolina to engage in sustainability projects that involve students in learning, doing, and teaching others about environmental responsibility.

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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