

For Immediate Release

August 14, 2015

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District 20 Middle School Named After Local Heroes

The Charleston County School District (CCSD) Board of Trustees recently approved (by a vote of 8 to 0) the name of the new middle school in District 20, Simmons Pinckney Middle School. The name honors two Charleston heroes - the late Philip Simmons, world-renowned blacksmith, and the late Reverend Clementa Pinckney, South Carolina State Senator.



Interim principal Nathan Nelson addressed his staff with optimistic expectations, about the upcoming school year. "It is indeed an honor and privilege to be a part of such an historic moment in our city and in our school district. I solicit your support, commitment, and dedication in honoring two great men as we serve ALL scholars that walk through our doors by providing a great educational experience," Nelson said.

The school is part of a plan to better align CCSD's strategic educational goals. The district met with community members to create a name for the school that symbolized the strength and unity of the community, while honoring these two local heroes.

About Philip Simmons



Noted as one of the most prominent iron workers of his time, Philip Simmons' masterpieces can be seen throughout the rich architecture of the lowcountry. Fascinated by ironwork at a young age, Simmons was taught the trade of ironwork by Peter Simmons. Simmons' (Philip) long-standing career in ornamental iron has received countless forms of recognition, such as the National Heritage Fellowship, Lifetime Achievement in the Arts, South Carolina Hall of Fame,

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and The Order of the Palmetto, just to name a few. Today, people from around the world marvel at his matchless metal work throughout Charleston, and in the Smithsonian Institute's National Museum of American History.

About Reverend Clementa Pinckney



Ordained at the age of 18, Clementa Pinckney was a champion for education and service to community. He served as a South Carolina State Representative for two terms and won the state senate seat, representing five counties in the Lowcountry. Some of his greatest accomplishments were serving as the pastor of Mother Emanuel A.M.E. Church and being a devoted husband and father. Taken from us too soon in the Emanuel Nine tragedy, his vision for educational growth and opportunity for students lives on through his charity, the Pinckney Foundation.

Committed to keeping the memory of both men alive, Principal Nelson acknowledged that Simmons and Pinckney were passionate about education and the opportunity for advancement for all children. "They were also passionate about removing the walls and barriers," Nelson said.

CCSD is committed to academic achievement through results, access, diversity and partnerships. Embodying these values, Simmons Pinckney Middle School is gearing up for a successful school year beginning this Monday.

Media partners have been invited to join Superintendent Gerrita Postlewait on her First Day School Visit Tour this Monday, which includes a stop at Simmons Pinckney Middle School at 2:15 p.m.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is the second largest school system in South Carolina representing a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools that span 1,000 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 86 schools and several specialized programs. With approximately 6,100 employees district-wide, CCSD is the fourth largest employer in the region.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, charter, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), and Montessori schools, and is divided into three Learning Communities led by associate superintendents. Options include specialized programs in science, engineering and mathematics; liberal arts; music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military and other public service enterprises.

About Vision 2016

Vision 2016 is the next phase of Charleston Achieving Excellence, CCSD's flagship reform initiative. The five-year plan aims to dramatically improve the achievement of every student in Charleston County and includes three fundamental goals: 1) close the achievement gap, 2) elevate achievement overall and 3) raise the graduation rate. These goals were developed through a series of community engagement meetings in partnership with the CCSD Board of Trustees.