Barnwell County School District

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Barnwell County Students Experience Trip of a Lifetime in London

This summer, a group of students and educators from across Barnwell County traded their usual summer routines for an unforgettable week exploring the sights, sounds, and stages of London, England. Led by Mr. David Edwards, Barnwell County School District (BCSD) theatre teacher, the trip was part of EF Educational Tours' "Curtain Time in London" program and gave high school students—from Barnwell High School, Blackville-Hilda High School, and Williston-Elko High School—a chance to step outside the classroom and into an international experience that brought their learning to life.

The group included 13 travelers in total, with students joined by school and parent chaperones. After an overnight flight, they hit the ground running with a walking tour through the heart of London, taking in places like the Strand, Trafalgar Square, Leicester Square, and Covent Garden. Over the next several days, the group visited major landmarks including Big Ben, the Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey, Tower Bridge, Buckingham Palace, and St. Paul's Cathedral.



Some of the most memorable moments included a backstage tour of the legendary Royal Albert Hall, followed by an evening performance of *Hadestown*, the Tony and Grammy Award-winning musical. Later in the trip, they saw *Back to the Future: The Musical*, where the DeLorean famously flew above the audience, which was an experience none of the students will soon forget. The group also traveled to Oxford University, where they walked the same historic grounds seen in the *Harry Potter* films. At Shakespeare's Globe Theatre, they toured the space and participated in an interactive workshop that allowed them to step into the world of a Shakespearean performance.

In between stops, students sampled authentic British food (fish and chips was a favorite) and wandered through the bustling Borough Market. The itinerary also allowed for some personal exploration, and a few students even took the opportunity to attend additional shows like *Hercules* and *TINA: The Tina Turner Musical*.

Kelly Shealy, BCSD Director of Accountability and Secondary Education, reflected on the impact of the trip: “For our Barnwell County high school students to be able to reach out and touch the places that they have read about or have seen on television is truly a magical experience. I personally thank Mr. Edwards not only for providing this opportunity for our students but also for the opportunities that he provides his theater students every single day.”

Superintendent Dr. Crissie Stapleton also praised Mr. Edwards for making the trip possible, calling it a life-changing experience for those involved. “We are incredibly grateful for educators like Mr. Edwards who go above and beyond to create opportunities like this,” said Dr. Stapleton. “These experiences open our students’ eyes to the world and help them grow in ways that simply can’t happen inside the four walls of a classroom. It truly was a living classroom and provided our students with the kind of learning that stays with them for a lifetime.”

As the group returned home, it was evident that their experience extended far beyond sightseeing. This journey was not only a trip abroad but also an opportunity to gain new perspectives and develop a broader understanding of the world. The experience will leave a lasting impact on the students that extends well beyond the classroom.

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