**For Immediate Release:**
September 10, 2024

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**CSRA organizations partner to increase certified teachers in Richmond County**

(AUGUSTA, GEORGIA) - Non-traditional educators in the Richmond County School System (RCSS) will have new opportunities to become certified teachers through a collaborative partnership with the Central Savannah River Area Regional Educational Services Agency (CSRA RESA) and Augusta University. This initiative, supported by $180,000 in scholarships from the ANGC Community Impact Fund at the Community Foundation for the CSRA will provide tuition assistance to non-traditional, or “waiver,” teachers to pursue certification programs.

"We are excited about this partnership, which directly supports the professional development of educators who want to teach in our schools," said Dr. Kenneth Bradshaw, Superintendent of Schools. "This endeavor strengthens our teacher workforce, ensuring our students receive the highest quality education. It also demonstrates how community collaboration can make a lasting impact on our schools."

Through this partnership, Richmond County teachers can apply for $2,000 scholarships to enroll in CSRA RESA’s Georgia Teacher Academy for Preparation and Pedagogy (TAPP) or $5,000 scholarships to pursue a master’s degree at Augusta University’s College of Education. Both tracks open up opportunities for increased compensation and professional development. Scholarship recipients are required to work in the school system for at least two years after earning their certification.

“Research consistently shows that teacher quality is one of the most important variables for student success, and that teachers with stronger qualifications produce higher student achievement,” said Dr. Debbie Alexander, executive director of CSRA RESA. The TAPP is a year-long program that offers non-traditional teachers with a bachelor’s degree or higher a pathway to full certification.

In addition to TAPP, non-traditional educators will also have access to financial aid to pursue an advanced degree at Augusta University. “It is critical that these new educators are well-equipped with the tools they need to effectively teach and lead in their pre-k through 12th grade classrooms,” said Dr. Judi Wilson, Dean of Augusta University’s College of Education and Human Development. “Augusta University is pleased to offer a Master of Arts degree to support these educators in becoming better at their craft. These scholarships will go a long way to supporting these new teachers in securing an advanced degree along with teacher certification.”

For more information about the scholarship opportunities available to Richmond County educators, please contact the Richmond County School System.

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