



Charleston County School District
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Media Release

CCSD Awarded Grant to Address Opioid Crisis

Charleston, SC (October 15, 2025) – Charleston County School District (CCSD) staff members are committed to serving students in every capacity, including matters related to substance abuse. Now, CCSD has additional resources to support its efforts; the Public School Districts' Opioid Recovery Trust (PSDORT) has awarded CCSD a grant of nearly \$500,000 to fund programs designed to address the impact of the opioid crisis on students and their families. CCSD is one of 39 school districts nationwide to receive 51 grant awards.

"This multiyear grant allows us to build on the solid foundation of work we have developed in the district and community around substance use prevention and intervention," said Lisa Allison, CCSD's Executive Director of Student Support Services.

CCSD leaders will use this funding to strengthen their support systems for students, families, and staff impacted by the opioid epidemic. The district will develop targeted responses to enhance the education and well-being of students harmed by the crisis — including those requiring special education support due to neonatal exposure, and those who have suffered traumatic family loss or educational interruptions.

Specifically, CCSD will:

- **Provide comprehensive, evidence-based programs and curricula** that enhance social-emotional learning (SEL) and substance use education and awareness initiatives.
- **Deliver universal opioid prevention education** for students, parents, and staff to reduce stigma and increase awareness of opioid and substance use risks.
- **Increase access to targeted interventions and services** for students, staff, and families—particularly those with disabilities or directly affected by the opioid crisis.
- **Enhance existing prevention efforts** with opioid-specific education, including information on prescription pain medication.
- **Train CCSD staff** to implement evidence-based substance use prevention and harm reduction programs.
- **Disseminate prevention information and host educational speakers and presentations** for all students.
- **Expand specialized services** for students with disabilities identified through CCSD's Child Find program, including year-round and summer programming to strengthen speech and language, motor skills, social-emotional regulation, behavior, and cognitive



abilities.

- **Provide trauma-informed professional development** for special education and general education teachers, paraprofessionals, nurses, and clinical providers.
- **Offer direct mental health and wellness counseling, trauma-informed care, and substance use–related resources** for students and families.
- **Support the district’s summer Child Find team** and increase access to educational films, speakers, and community-based programs on the dangers of substance use.

“The grant will help CCSD and Charleston County move forward in addressing the effects of the opioid crisis and other substance use-related issues, including reducing the stigma of substance use, trauma, and overall mental health and wellness,” added Linda Ballinger, the district’s Substance Use Support Services Prevention and Intervention Coordinator.

Public schools are on the front lines of the opioid epidemic, forcing districts to respond to overlapping challenges: children born with Neonatal Opioid Withdrawal Syndrome who require costly special education services; students coping with addicted or deceased family members; and young people struggling with addiction themselves. The new funding will help districts provide the special education, mental health, and recovery supports necessary to keep students in school and on track toward success.

Created following national opioid litigation resolutions involving Mehri & Skalet and co-counsel with McKinsey & Company, Endo International PLC, and Mallinckrodt PLC, the Public School Districts’ Opioid Recovery Trust was established to ensure that resources are directed to the communities most affected by the epidemic. By investing in schools, the Trust seeks to address immediate needs while helping protect students’ long-term futures.

For more information about the Public School Districts’ Opioid Recovery Trust, visit www.psdort.org. For inquiries related to CCSD’s use of the funding, contact the Office of Communications at (843) 937-6303.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 51,000 students in 90 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse portfolio of educational options and specialized programs delivered to the students of CCSD through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools and programs. Rich educational opportunities for students include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; military; dual credit; and many more.