



Charleston County School District
Office of Communications
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Media Release

Ripken Foundation Donates STEM Center to Johns Island Elementary

Johns Island, SC (October 29, 2025) – [The Ripken Foundation](#) installed an age-appropriate STEM Center at Johns Island Elementary School on Wednesday, October 29, 2025. The STEM Center was funded by Allen Reed, a Johns Island native and friend of the Ripken Foundation, who is passionate about the Johns Island community.

The Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation empowers youth from under-resourced communities - from young learners in early childhood through high school - by providing access to engaging, age-appropriate STEM education. With support from trained teachers and mentors, science, technology, engineering, and math become both compelling and fun. Youth participating in well-implemented, high-quality STEM programs reap a range of positive benefits, including higher reading and math scores, increased self-esteem, higher school attendance, and decreased dropout rates. The Ripken Foundation's STEM program is turnkey and can be implemented seamlessly in any community, giving underserved kids in disadvantaged neighborhoods the opportunity to participate.

"The STEM Center will align directly to the STEAM programming we are building at Johns Island Elementary," said Principal Judith Condon. "It will allow our students to use their engineering and design skills in creative ways. It will also ensure they have access to new technology that incorporates robotics, computing, and digital literacy. We are grateful to Mr. Reed and the Ripken Foundation for this investment in our new school."

Each Ripken Foundation STEM Center includes:

- **Educational Products & Technology:** The Foundation partners with a diverse range of trusted educational vendors—including Sphero, VEX Robotics, Kid Spark Education, Elenco, Intelino, Boxlight, Joylabz, Squishy Circuits, and Terrapin—to provide high-quality STEM tools such as programmable robots, engineering kits, drones, tablets, and 3D printers that support hands-on learning in robotics, coding, digital literacy, and more.
- **Storage:** Each STEM center package includes practical storage solutions—such as collapsible carts and workbenches—to keep materials accessible, mobile, and easy to manage.
- **Resources:** The Ripken Foundation provides STEM lesson plans aligned with Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS), designed to help teachers and adult mentors introduce core STEM concepts to youth. These lessons are delivered through our Learning Management System (LMS) and are tailored to accompany Ripken Foundation STEM Center products, offering clear guidance on how to effectively use the materials provided.



- Hands-On STEM Center Training: Ripken Foundation STEM program staff and STEM professional consultants will provide ongoing program and technical support for all STEM Center partners.
- STEM Innovation Challenges: The Ripken Foundation offers a variety of engaging STEM opportunities for our program partners throughout the year, including the Ripken STEM Challenge—a competition where students apply STEM skills to solve real-world problems and present their solutions to a panel of judges. In addition, partners have access to virtual STEM activities and challenges designed to keep youth and mentors engaged year-round.

For more information, 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 50,000 students in 88 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.