Vol. 1, Issue 3

BCSD BEACON

Introducing BCSD Showcase

The Beaufort County School District (BCSD) is proud to announce the launch of its BCSD Showcases, a new series of events designed to give families an inside look at the many opportunities available in BCSD schools—from Pre-K through high school.

More than 30 schools across the district will participate, highlighting a wide variety of academic, arts, and extracurricular programs. Families attending a Showcase will have the chance to:

- Meet principals, teachers, and students
- Learn about unique academic and extracurricular programs
- Explore career and technical education opportunities
- Get details about the Choice application process, which opens earlier this year on November 10

"Choosing a school is one of the most important decisions a parent can make," said BCSD Superintendent Dr. Frank Rodriguez. "We believe that BCSD offers the best choice and invite you to get to know all that we offer during our Showcases."

Each event will feature engaging presentations, student performances, and opportunities to experience the innovative programs that make BCSD schools special.

Showcase Dates and Locations

- Bluffton/Hilton Head Area Schools Joint Showcase
  - 📅 Thursday, November 13, 2025 | 6–7:30 p.m. 📍 TCL Culinary Institute of the South, Buckwalter Place, 1 Venture Drive, Bluffton
- Beaufort Area Schools Joint Showcase
  - 📅 Tuesday, November 18, 2025 | 6–7:30 p.m. 📍 Robert Smalls Leadership Academy, 43 W. K. Alston Drive, Beaufort
- Hilton Head Island School-Specific Showcases
  - Hilton Head Island Elementary School for the Creative Arts 5-6 p.m., Thursday, November 6, 2025
  - Hilton Head Island Elementary 6:15-7:15 p.m., Thursday, November 6, 2025
  - Hilton Head Island Early Childhood Center 5:30-6:30 p.m., Thursday, November 13, 2025
  - Hilton Head Island Middle 5-6:30 P.M., Wednesday, November 12, 2025
  - Hilton Head Island High 5-6:30 P.M., Thursday, November 13, 2025






Choice Applications Opening Earlier!

Beaufort County School District is announcing that Choice applications will open on November 10, 2025, earlier than in previous years.

Families can apply online to explore the district's unique programs and specialized learning options for students in all grades.

Students who do not live in the attendance zone of their desired program may still apply, but parents are responsible for transportation to and from the school.

Applications must be submitted by January 15, 2026.

For more information, scan the QR code below.

RSVP for a Showcase



District Principal and AP of the Year

The Beaufort County School District has named its 2025 Principal and Assistant Principal of the Year.

Bradley Tarrance, Principal of Robert Smalls Leadership Academy, was selected as the 2025–26 District Principal of the Year, while Geneva Young of Lady's Island Middle School earned the title of District Assistant Principal of the Year.

"We are extremely proud to celebrate our Principal and Assistant Principal of the Year," said Superintendent Frank Rodriguez. "Their outstanding leadership, dedication, and commitment to our students, staff, and community inspire excellence throughout our schools."

Tarrance called the honor a shared achievement. "This is an incredible honor not just for me, but for the entire Robert Smalls Leadership Academy community," he said. "Being a principal is about growing a community grounded in excellence, and expectations."

Young also emphasized teamwork and service. "Even though I'm being named Assistant Principal of the Year, it truly belongs to the staff, students, and community I serve," she said. "It's our award."

Winners were selected through peer nominations and applications for their exceptional leadership, hard work, and positive impact. Tarrance will now represent the district in state-level competition.



District Teacher of the Year

Allison Gallagher, an eighth-grade science teacher at H.E. McCracken Middle School, has been named the Beaufort County School District's 2025–26 District Teacher of the Year. The 16-year teaching veteran was recognized during a celebration honoring school-level Teachers of the Year.

"Teaching is who I am, and I am so thankful for this honor," Gallagher said. "I'm excited to continue sharing my love of teaching and representing our amazing students, families, and teachers."

Principal Dr. Roger Ward praised Gallagher as "the epitome of what any teacher should be," citing her strong relationships with students and her dedication to helping them reach their full potential.

Other finalists included Elizabeth Herring of Bluffton High, Audrey Kaney of Red Cedar Elementary, Alison Lopes of Hilton Head Island Elementary ECC, and Amy Turner of Coosa Elementary.

Gallagher has led innovative programs such as "River of Words," combining science, writing, and art, and expanded the school's Science Fair, mentoring more than 200 students each year. She holds a master's degree in Middle Grades Education and a bachelor's degree from the University of Georgia.

Gallagher will now represent Beaufort County in the South Carolina State Teacher of the Year program, with state finalists announced in February.

SCAN ME!



District Support Staff of the Year

Whale Branch Early College High School's Behavior Management Specialist, Kelvin Simmons, has been named the Beaufort County School District's 2025–26 Support Staff of the Year. The honor was announced during the district's annual Support Staff Celebration Breakfast.

Simmons earned the districtwide recognition through a competitive application process highlighting his impact on school culture, student achievement, and his ability to inspire and support others.

Assistant Principal Marcus Peacock described Simmons as a cornerstone of the school's positive environment. "Mr. Simmons is awesome! He greets the kids every morning—I think he knows every student by name," Peacock said. "If a student is having a tough day, he takes the time to talk with them. He brings warmth, energy, and a genuine care for everyone in the building."

Simmons said he was honored by the recognition. "Every day, we give 110% to make sure our students are safe and supported," he said. "I try to speak to every student, share a positive message, and help set them up for success in school and in life."

All school-level Support Staff of the Year honorees were also celebrated at the event, held at the Port Royal Sound Foundation's Weezie Educational Pavilion.

SCAN ME!

Student Spotlight

Whale Branch Early College High School Skills USA

Congratulations to the Warrior SkillsUSA Club, crowned 2025 State Champions in Advertising Design.

The team's creativity, hard work, and attention to detail impressed judges and earned them top honors at the state competition. From concept to execution, the students demonstrated industry-ready skills and a true passion for design.

Warrior Nation is proud of these talented students for pushing boundaries, inspiring others, and making their mark!

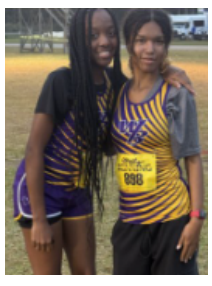
Warrior Cross Country Shines at Region 5 Championship

The Warrior Cross Country teams had an outstanding showing at the Region 5–2A Championship.

Raimund Roell captured first place, earning the title of Region Champion, while Roman Vasquez finished close behind as Region Runner-Up.

Many team members also achieved personal records, marking a strong performance across the board. Congratulations warrior nation!









August Student of the Month

Alejandro Martinez Llamas, an eighth grader at Robert Smalls Leadership Academy, has been named the August Student of the Month for Northern Beaufort County for demonstrating exceptional friendship and kindness.

Teachers say Alejandro stood out early in the school year for the respectful and inclusive way he interacts with classmates. One teacher shared how Alejandro went out of his way to include a student who was feeling left out during a class activity—an act of compassion that set the tone for the classroom.

Alejandro continues to support his peers and embody the leadership and empathy that the Student of the Month program celebrates. Congratulations to Alejandro Martinez Llamas on this well-deserved recognition!

September Student of the Month

Sophia Burns, a second grader, has been recognized for demonstrating the character education word of the month, Acceptance, through her inclusive and respectful behavior toward classmates.

Teachers say Sophia consistently goes out of her way to make everyone feel valued and included. When a classmate struggled with reading, Sophia stepped in to offer guidance and encouragement. She also volunteers to work with a variety of peers during group activities, showing that she appreciates everyone's ideas—not just those of her close friends.

Congratulations to Sophia Burns for embodying acceptance and making a positive difference in her classroom community!

Memory Project

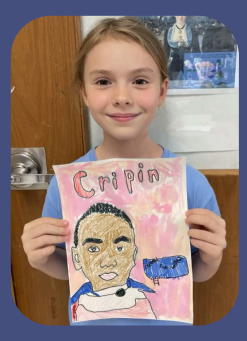
Art students across the Beaufort County School District are using their creativity to make a global impact through the Memory Project, a nonprofit organization that connects young artists with children living in challenging circumstances around the world.

This past year, students from Port Royal Elementary, Hilton Head Island School for the Creative Arts, Hilton Head Island Elementary, Hilton Head Island High School, and Bluffton High School created one-of-a-kind portraits for children in Malawi. The recipients' joyful reactions were captured in a moving video shared over the summer.

BCSD schools have participated in the Memory Project for more than 20 years, building cross-cultural connections and spreading kindness through art.

Scan the QR code to watch the video and see how Beaufort County's young artists are brightening lives around the world—one portrait at a time.







SCAN ME

BCSD Staff Spotlight

Director of Readiness Named EDmarket 2025 NexGen Rising Star

The Education Market Association (EDmarket) has announced its 2025 class of NexGen Rising Stars, recognizing Ashley Gould, Director of Readiness for the Beaufort County School District, among its honorees.



The NexGen Rising Star award celebrates emerging leaders in education who demonstrate exceptional dedication, innovation, and a measurable impact on student success.

Gould was selected for her leadership in transforming early childhood education environments and expanding access to quality learning experiences for all students.

She has led initiatives to embed research-based environmental design into instructional strategies, creating classrooms that are developmentally appropriate, inclusive, and supportive of the whole child.

Among her career highlights, Gould has expanded early childhood programs, launched a mobile preschool bus, and redesigned classroom environments to better support cognitive, social, and emotional development. She is also a strong advocate for equitable early intervention and access to high-quality early childhood education.

BCSD Principal Honored with Prestigious State Leadership Award

Battery Creek High School Principal Dee Dee Thompson has received the 2025 Inez Tenenbaum Leadership Award, one of South Carolina's highest honors in educational leadership.

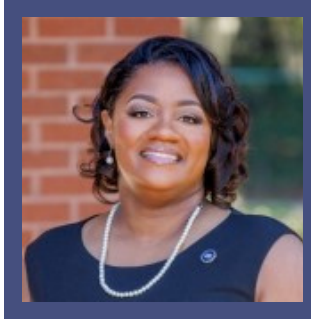


Presented annually to one principal statewide, the award recognizes exceptional leadership following completion of the School Leadership Executive Institute (SLEI)—a seven-month professional program focused on instructional leadership, change management, and motivational strategies.

SLEI, operated by the South Carolina Department of Education in partnership with Truist Bank, provides executive-level leadership training designed to strengthen school leaders' capacity to positively impact their schools and communities.

With 28 years in education, Thompson has served as a science teacher, assistant principal, and principal, crediting the Beaufort County School District for supporting his growth.
"It's a proud moment for me." Thompson said. "It's because of this district and the opportunities they've given me, and because of the mentors who have guided me, that I've been able to grow as a leader. I just want to pay it forward!"
The award is named in honor of Inez Tenenbaum, who served as South Carolina's State Superintendent of Education from 1998 to 2006.

BCSD Principal Recognized as Marquis Who's Who



Congratulations to St. Helena Elementary School Principal Constance Goodwine-Lewis for being recognized in the 2025 Marquis Who's Who publications. Marquis presents unmatched coverage of the lives of today's leaders and achievers from the United States and around the world, highlighting individuals who have made notable contributions in politics, business, science, education, and more.

BCSD Students Named National Merit Semifinalists for 2026

Five outstanding Beaufort County School District (BCSD) students have been named semifinalists in the prestigious 2026 National Merit Scholarship Program, advancing to the next stage of competition for college scholarships.

The district's semifinalists include Halle Tran of Beaufort High School; Jamie Ni and Katherine Riddle of Bluffton High School; and Irina Anikina and Coleman Jacobi of May River High School. These students entered the 2026 National Merit Scholarship Program by taking the 2024 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT).

Their exceptional scores placed them among the top one percent of high school seniors nationwide, qualifying them as part of an elite group of approximately 16,000 semifinalists across the United States. As semifinalists, they will compete for one of 6,930 National Merit Scholarships, collectively worth nearly $26 million.

"These students have achieved something truly remarkable," said Superintendent Frank Rodriguez. "Their hard work, dedication, and academic excellence have placed them among the top scholars in the nation. We are incredibly proud of them and look forward to seeing all they accomplish as they advance in this prestigious competition."

To become finalists, students must submit detailed applications showcasing their academics, leadership, and service, along with qualifying test scores, an essay, and a school endorsement. National Merit Scholarship winners will be announced between April and July 2026, joining nearly 389,000 distinguished Merit Scholars since the program began.

Let's Go Public!