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Media Release

Vanessa Brown Named 2025 Star Principal for CCSD's High School Learning Community

Charleston, SC (December 10, 2025) - Charleston County School District (CCSD) is proud to announce Vanessa Brown, principal of the Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies (CRCAS), as the 2025 Star Principal for the High School Learning Community. Brown is being recognized for her transformational leadership, her commitment to equity, and her track record of expanding academic and career opportunities for students.

Brown has dedicated her career to schools serving multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. At Baptist Hill Middle High School, she led steady academic gains, expanded access to rigorous coursework, tripled dual enrollment participation, strengthened literacy initiatives, and launched the school's first internship and career pathway expansions.

As the founding principal of CRCAS, Brown built a unified, career-focused center serving students from Burke, Military Magnet, North Charleston, and R.B. Stall high schools. Despite opening in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, she established high expectations, strong instructional systems, and deep community and industry partnerships. Enrollment has grown from 130 to more than 420 students annually, and students have earned over 2,000 industry certifications, with increased participation in internships, apprenticeships, and work-based learning. Brown has also expanded access to programs traditionally underrepresented by female and deaf students.

Under her leadership, CRCAS has earned the National School Public Relations Association Award for Excellence in Social Media and Website for three consecutive years. Students rate school climate above district averages, and teachers consistently describe the center as a supportive, collaborative place to work and learn.

Superintendent of Schools Anita Huggins celebrated Brown's impact, saying, "Vanessa Brown is a visionary leader who refuses to let a student's background determine their future. She builds systems that open doors, she leads with unwavering belief in students' potential, and she brings together schools, families, and industry partners to create opportunities that transform lives. She is deeply deserving of this recognition as the Star Principal for the High School Learning Community."

Brown previously served as a teacher, assistant principal at R.B. Stall High and Garrett Academy, and principal of Baptist Hill Middle High School before leading the launch of CRCAS.

She continues to prioritize academic achievement, professional training, equity, and ensuring every student graduates prepared for college, career, and life success.

CCSD congratulates Vanessa Brown on this outstanding achievement and her continued leadership on behalf of students across our district.

For more information, please 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.