Jerry Zucker Middle School
Chris Haynes, Principal
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Media Release

Chris Haynes Named 2025 Star Principal for CCSD's Middle School Learning Community

Charleston, SC (December 10, 2025) - Charleston County School District (CCSD) is proud to announce Chris Haynes, principal of Jerry Zucker Middle School of Science, as the 2025 Star Principal for the Middle School Learning Community. Haynes is being recognized for his transformational leadership and his success in improving academic, behavioral, and social-emotional outcomes for students.

Haynes joined Zucker in 2021 after leading Liberty Hill Academy, where he united a merged school community, reduced recidivism for returning students, and strengthened restorative practices. At Zucker, he shifted the school's focus to academic achievement, especially for Multilingual Learners (ML), who now represent nearly half the student population. Through strategic investments in an ML Coach, a bilingual teaching assistant, and the district's first real-time classroom translation pilot, he helped boost ML reading proficiency from 15% to 35%, with 70% of one targeted cohort meeting their stretch growth goal.

Haynes strengthened instructional quality by implementing high-functioning weekly Professional Learning Communities, delivering targeted professional development, and raising expectations for classroom walkthroughs. He also elevated hiring practices by requiring live teaching demonstrations, resulting in a more skilled and stable teaching staff.

Under his leadership, Zucker has seen steady, measurable gains: chronic absenteeism decreased from 49% to 26%, office-managed referrals dropped by 50%, reading proficiency increased from 32.6% to 40.8%, and sixth-grade science proficiency more than doubled. The school's state rating improved from Below Average to Average, reflecting both academic progress and a stronger school culture.

Superintendent of Schools Anita Huggins praised Haynes's leadership, saying, "Chris Haynes is a principal who strengthens teaching and learning by building systems that last. He has expanded opportunities for multilingual learners, strengthened instruction, and helped lift Zucker's school report card rating through consistent, focused work. His belief in what every scholar can achieve makes him an exceptional leader and a deserving Star Principal."

Haynes began his career as a high school social studies teacher in Florence One before serving as an assistant principal at Southside Middle and South Florence High. His leadership remains centered on the belief that every scholar can succeed with high expectations, consistent support, and a unified, data-driven school community.

CCSD congratulates Chris Haynes on this well-deserved honor and his steadfast commitment to “Every Student, Every Day.”

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.