



Pinehurst Elementary School
Paul Pallagi, Principal
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Media Release

Paul Pallagi Named 2025 Star Principal for CCSD's Elevation Learning Community

Mount Pleasant, SC (October 21, 2025) - Charleston County School District (CCSD) is proud to announce Paul Pallagi, principal of Pinehurst Elementary School, as the 2025 Star Principal for the Elevation Learning Community. Pallagi is being recognized for dramatically improving student outcomes, strengthening instructional practices, and building a collaborative, inclusive school culture at Pinehurst.

Since becoming principal, Pallagi has led a schoolwide effort to ensure all students, especially multilingual learners, students with disabilities, and pupils in poverty, receive rigorous, grade-level instruction. He eliminated instructional silos by embedding multilingual teachers and interventionists into PLCs, common planning, and daily classroom instruction, creating true co-teaching teams across the school. As CCSD's pilot site for the Clemson Co-Teaching Program, Pinehurst now provides every student with access to two trained educators during ELA instruction, ensuring both content expertise and targeted language support.

Pallagi's focus on standards-based instruction, teacher-led PLCs, and consistent coaching cycles has led to measurable gains. Walkthrough data showed a 45 percent increase in aligned small-group instruction, and iReady reports showed students meeting typical growth jump from 48 to 67 percent. Pinehurst earned an Average rating in academic achievement for the first time and achieved Excellent growth two years in a row.

Superintendent of Schools Anita Huggins praised Pallagi's leadership, saying, "Paul Pallagi is a leader who always puts students first. His commitment to collaboration, strong instruction, and building relationships has transformed Pinehurst Elementary. The growth we are seeing is no accident, it is the result of intentional systems, high expectations, and a deep belief in what children can achieve. We are incredibly proud to recognize him as the Star Principal for the Elevation Learning Community."

He also strengthened attendance and school climate. After identifying high chronic absenteeism particularly among multilingual learners Pallagi and his team revamped Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports, launched attendance recognitions, expanded family engagement events, and partnered with the International Welcome Center for targeted support. Chronic absenteeism dropped by 8 percent, daily attendance rose to 95 percent, and family participation nearly doubled.

Pallagi began his career as a fourth-grade teacher at Ladson Elementary, later serving as a coach and assistant principal at Northwoods Middle, Chicora Elementary, and Springfield



Charleston County
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Anita W. Huggins, M.Ed., Superintendent of Schools
 Jennifer Swearingen, Ph.D., Associate Superintendent of the
 Elementary Learning Community

Elementary. His leadership at Pinehurst reflects his belief in modeling learning, protecting teacher time, and ensuring every student feels supported and capable of success.

CCSD congratulates Principal Paul Pallagi on this well-deserved honor and celebrates his commitment to excellence at Pinehurst Elementary.

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.