ORANGEBURG COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
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Orangeburg County School District Crowns Imani Jean 2026 Spelling Bee Champion

Orangeburg, SC – Orangeburg County School District proudly announces Imani Jean, a sixth-grade student at William J. Clark Middle School, as the 2026 District Spelling Bee Champion. Imani first claimed victory at the William J. Clark Middle School Spelling Bee, advancing to the district-level competition where she competed against top spellers from schools across Orangeburg County. In a highly competitive rolling bee format, Imani emerged as the last student standing by correctly spelling the word *"fandango,"* securing her championship title and earning a $500 prize.

The district spelling bee followed official competition guidelines. When it was their turn, each speller was required to state the word, spell the word clearly and confidently, and repeat the word to indicate completion. Contestants could request that the pronouncer repeat the word, provide a definition, use it in a sentence or offer an alternate pronunciation. Judges evaluated clarity, accuracy, and adherence to the established rules throughout the competition.

Imani's victory reflects not only her mastery of language but also her poise under pressure. Beyond her academic excellence, she is an accomplished young author and national speaker. She also serves as a member of the district's Student Advisory Board, demonstrating leadership both inside and outside the classroom.

The 2026 District Spelling Bee featured outstanding representatives from across the district, including:

- Autumn Adams – Bethune-Bowman Elementary School (4th Grade)
- Londyn Aiken – Bethune-Bowman Middle/High School (8th Grade)
- Emily Gross – Branchville Middle/High School (8th Grade)
- Kailyn Jamison – Brookdale Elementary School (4th Grade)
- Kaylie Grace – Carver-Edisto Middle School (8th Grade)
- Wyatt Hodson – Dover Elementary School (5th Grade)
- Nevaeh Lambright – East Lake Elementary School (3rd Grade)
- Jamison Hair – Edisto Elementary School (5th Grade)
- Jabez Calawod – Edisto Primary School (2nd Grade)
- Karter Reaves – Elloree Elementary School (4th Grade)
- Neimiah Johnson – Hunter-Kinard-Tyler Elementary School (5th Grade)
- Jayden Thomas – Hunter-Kinard-Tyler Middle/High School (8th Grade)
- Caedince Green – Lake Marion Middle School (7th Grade)
- Anya Pelzer – Lockett Elementary School (4th Grade)
- Anieka Grace Robinson – Marshall Elementary School (5th Grade)
- Skyler Chavis – Mellichamp Elementary School (3rd Grade)
- Cazloe Duckson – North Middle/High School (6th Grade)
- Zy'mere Butler – Sheridan Elementary School (3rd Grade)
- Jeremiah Wright – Whittaker Elementary School (2nd Grade)
- Imani Jean – William J. Clark Middle School (6th Grade)

Beyond her spelling bee success, Imani Jean is actively engaged in numerous academic, leadership, and extracurricular activities that reflect her well-rounded excellence. She is a proud member of the Beta Club and serves on the Student Advisory Board for Orangeburg County School District. At William J. Clark Middle School, she is a member of the school choir and continues to prepare for upcoming academic competitions, including the district science fair. Imani also competes in volleyball with the Orangeburg Lady Cubs and participates in the district's summer STEM programs, further strengthening her academic foundation. Expanding her leadership footprint, she recently joined the school's first-ever all-girls SkillsUSA team and will compete in the coming weeks. Last summer, Imani served as a youth speaker at the nationally recognized Get Your Teach On (GYTO) Conference in Dallas, Texas, founded by Wade King, where she addressed more than 6,500 educators, the largest audience she has spoken before to date. Most recently, she was invited to serve as keynote speaker at Minnie Hughes Elementary School's Parent Expo in Charleston County after being noticed by an administrator at the national conference. There, she delivered her first 30-45 minute keynote address and led a breakout session for parents, continuing to inspire audiences well beyond Orangeburg County.

Superintendent Dr. Shawn D. Foster commended Imani and all participants for their dedication and academic achievement. "Imani Jean represents the very best of Orangeburg County School District. Her achievement is a testament to her hard work, preparation, and confidence. We are equally proud of every student who participated in this year's spelling bee. Academic excellence continues to thrive in our district," he expressed. Orangeburg County School District congratulates Imani Jean on this outstanding accomplishment and celebrates all students who demonstrated courage, preparation, and perseverance in this year's competition.

For additional information, please contact Taylor R. Johnson, Communications and Multi-Media Specialist, at taylor.johnson@ocsdsc.org or 839-253-2070.