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BCSD BEACON

BCSD Expands Early Learning Opportunities

The Beaufort County School District is making bold investments in early childhood education, celebrating a renovated library, a traveling preschool bus, and a new observation lab classroom to support young learners and their teachers.

Together, these efforts expand access to high-quality early learning for children across Beaufort County while investing in the educators who guide them.

Traveling PreSchool Bus

The bus will travel throughout Beaufort County, offering hands-on learning experiences for young children and connecting families with books, educational materials and referrals to community services.



“We believe early childhood learning experiences build the foundation for lifelong success and that all children should have access to these experiences,” said Ashley Gould, Director of Readiness.

The bus features interactive play stations and updated technology, including a virtual sand table where children can explore everything from dinosaurs to ocean habitats.





James J. Davis Renovation

James J. Davis Early Learning Center took on a whole new look with the ribbon-cutting and dedication of its renovated library, honoring longtime community advocate Pastor James E. Moore.



“It's an honor to be able to recognize Pastor Moore for his service to not only the community, but to the Beaufort County School District. He is one that is always engaged, always involved, and cares deeply about the children that we serve,” said Superintendent Dr. Frank Rodriguez.

The redesigned space offers literacy, STEAM, and play-based learning opportunities for children from birth through age five.
“Education and faith in God make a human being unstoppable in life,” Moore said. “I see our children now have the opportunity to go and be anything they want to be.”

The library features interactive sensory stations, collaborative building areas, and hands-on learning tools to foster curiosity, problem-solving, and language development, said Ashley Gould, Director of Readiness. The dedication was part of the district’s inaugural James J. Davis Day, which included student performances and tours of the new space.









Observation and Lab Classroom

The district has also opened a new early childhood observation and lab classroom in partnership with the University of South Carolina Beaufort and the Community Foundation of the Lowcountry.

The classroom allows future and current teachers to observe and practice in a real early learning environment, with a focus on purposeful, play-based instruction.

District leaders say the combined initiatives strengthen support for young learners while investing in high-quality teacher preparation, a commitment to building strong families, schools and a thriving community.

Scan the QR code below to get a first hand look at the new observation and lab classroom.

SCAN ME

Student Spotlight



November Student of the Month

St. Helena Island Elementary was proud to recognize Finn Kirkland for exemplifying the character traits gratitude and respect.

Finn is polite, hardworking, and committed to following school rules, and his kindness toward classmates and teachers makes the classroom a more positive place.

Finn treats others the way he wants to be treated, appreciates the people around him, and leads by example with quiet confidence. Outside of school, he enjoys spending time with his family and appreciates how they support one another.

Finn’s gratitude, respect, and leadership make him a true role model, and we are so proud of him.



December Student of the Month

Lady’s Island Middle School was proud to recognize Cole Porter as Student of the Month for exemplifying the character trait of compassion. Nominated by his homeroom teacher, Cole is described as a kind and caring young man who looks out for others.

Although all sixth graders are new to the school, Cole stepped up to support a student who enrolled later in the semester. He immediately showed empathy, offering friendship and helping the student adjust to the building, routines, and expectations.

Cole’s willingness to help others feel comfortable and included makes him a shining example for his peers. We are very proud of the compassion and leadership he demonstrates each day.



January Student of the Month

Whale Branch Middle School was proud to recognize Princeton Henry as Student of the Month for exemplifying January’s character trait of perseverance each and every day.

Princeton consistently pushes himself to do his very best in everything a middle school student is expected to do. He participates in challenging activities, works hard to keep up with his peers, and never gives up, even when things are difficult. In the classroom, he is bright, engaged, and always willing to help others, impressing his teachers and classmates with his positive attitude and determination.

Princeton’s resilience and strong spirit make him a powerful example of perseverance for the entire school community.

BCSD Earns Blue Ribbon Affiliate for Parents as Teachers Program

The Beaufort County School District has earned Blue Ribbon Affiliate status from Parents as Teachers, the organization’s highest recognition for quality and fidelity to its evidence-based home visitation model.

Parents as Teachers is a nationally recognized program that partners with families to support child development and strengthen early learning through personalized home visits and resources.

“This achievement reflects the dedication of our parent educators,” Superintendent Dr. Frank Rodriguez said. “Your partnership is central to this achievement.”

The honor underscores the district’s continued focus on building strong communities, supporting thriving families and preparing children for success in kindergarten and beyond.

The district’s Parents as Teachers program will be formally recognized at the Parents as Teachers International Conference in October 2026 in Portland, Oregon.

Dr. Rebecca Stempel, Coordinator of Early Childhood & Parent Education, and the district’s Parent Educator team were invited to receive the official certificate in recognition of their work.







District School Counselor of the Year

Beaufort High School counselor David Favata was recently honored as the Beaufort County School District 2026–2027 School Counselor of the Year.

Superintendent Dr. Frank Rodriguez praised Favata for his unique approach to supporting students. “What truly sets Mr. Favata apart is his ability to combine heart with structure,” Dr. Rodriguez said. “Mr. Favata’s own educational journey shaped his belief that every student deserves a strong advocate and that success is never defined by just one path.”

Favata, who has served as a school counselor for 25 years four of them in Beaufort County credited his team for much of his success. “I think what I’ve taken the most pride in is building a team,” he said. “And, my team is really why we’re successful.”

He also finds pride in helping students navigate their futures. “I take pride in seeing students achieve their goals - in whatever field in college or trades,” Favata said.

Beaufort High principal Ryan Walsh applauded Favata’s dedication. “Mr. Favata is incredibly deserving of School Counselor of the Year. He works tirelessly for his students, parents, and for the good of the school,” Walsh said. “There’s no work hours for him.”



Students Rock the Stage with Mark Wood

Orchestra students from five schools across the Beaufort County School District recently traded traditional concert formality for a high-energy, rock-infused performance during the “Electrify Your Symphony” workshop with electric violinist Mark Wood.

Wood, an Emmy Award–winning composer and the original string master of the Trans-Siberian Orchestra, spent the day rehearsing with students, helping them elevate not only their sound but also their stage presence. From posture and movement to performance confidence, he encouraged students to fully express themselves through their instruments.

“The most important thing is a constant reminder about why we’re doing this,” Wood told students. “We’re doing this to connect the performer to the audience. It’s important for us to exude joy, passion and emotion so the audience feels something from us.”

After hours of practice, students joined Wood on stage for a live concert, performing several high-energy selections that blended classical technique with rock elements.

This marks the third time Wood has hosted a workshop and performed with Beaufort County orchestra students, continuing a partnership that brings professional-level artistry and inspiration directly to local classrooms.

To see highlights from the performance, scan the QR code below.



BCSD Principal Receives Peggy May Inspiration Award

Dr. Kathy Corley, principal of Red Cedar Elementary School, has been honored with the Peggy May Inspiration Award, presented by the Foundation for Educational Excellence.

The Peggy May Inspiration Award recognizes a person, group, or family who demonstrates extraordinary dedication, passion and skill in ways that influence and inspire local students.

District leaders said Dr. Corley’s leadership, commitment to excellence and unwavering support for students and staff make her especially deserving of the recognition.

Under her guidance, Red Cedar Elementary — home of the Foxes — has continued to foster a culture focused on student achievement, strong relationships and high expectations for all learners.

Colleagues say Corley’s steady leadership and daily dedication leave a lasting impact on the school community.

The award celebrates not only her professional accomplishments but also the inspiration she provides to students and educators alike.

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BEAUFORT COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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BCSD Staff Spotlight

BCSD, United Way Partnership Boosts Community Support

A strong partnership between the Beaufort County School District and United Way of the Lowcountry is making a meaningful impact for students and families across the region.

District leaders were recognized for an outstanding 2025 workplace campaign that resulted in an 82% increase in fundraising, generating an additional $3,157.57 to support programs that strengthen families and expand opportunities for children throughout the Lowcountry.

United Way officials expressed gratitude for the leadership of Superintendent Dr. Frank Rodriguez calling the campaign a powerful example of what is possible when a community comes together.

Three schools were recognized for exceptional fundraising efforts: Lady's Island Elementary School, Okatie Elementary School, and Battery Creek High School. Lady’s Island Elementary was named the district’s top fundraising school, with special recognition given to Principal Marybeth Roulston and United Way Ambassador Jolanda Hazel for their leadership.



Local Students Among Nation’s Best

Five students from the Beaufort County School District have been named semifinalists in the 2026 National Merit Scholarship Program and will advance to the next stage of the prestigious national competition.

Recognized as semifinalists are 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.

The students qualified by taking the 2024 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test and are among the highest-scoring entrants in their state. Nationwide, semifinalists represent the top one percent of U.S. high school seniors.

More than 16,000 semifinalists across the country are now competing for approximately 6,930 scholarships worth nearly $26 million. “These students have achieved something truly remarkable,” said Superintendent Dr. 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 a detailed application highlighting their academic record, leadership, extracurricular involvement and honors. They must also write an essay, earn confirming SAT or ACT scores, and receive a recommendation from a school official.

Winners of the 2026 National Merit Scholarships will be announced between April and July. Recipients will join nearly 389,000 distinguished students nationwide who have earned the Merit Scholar title since the program began.



Pre- Registration for Kindergarten Now Open

The Beaufort County School District has opened pre-registration for kindergarten for the 2026–2027 school year, with families encouraged to enroll early. Children must be 5 years old on or before Sept. 1, 2026, to enroll in kindergarten. Students must be 6 years old on or before Sept. 1, 2026, to register for first grade.

Families should pre-register at the school in their attendance area.
Kindergarten plays a critical role in building the foundation for lifelong learning. During the kindergarten year, students develop early literacy and math skills, problem-solving abilities and routines that prepare them for future academic success.

For additional information, families may contact the district’s Office of Early Childhood at 843-521-2399 or email Ashley Gould at Ashley.Gould@beaufort.k12.sc.us.

Let's Go Public!