



Charleston County School District
Office of Communications
 75 Calhoun St.,
 Charleston, SC 29401
 (843) 937-6303

Media Release



Vanessa Denney
 Executive Associate, St. John's High School

Executive Associate Vanessa Denney to Assume Additional Duties as St. John's High School Leader in 2026-27

Charleston, SC (March 18, 2026) - Charleston County School District (CCSD) announced today that Executive Associate of Strategy, Partnerships, and Planning, Vanessa Denney, will assume additional leadership responsibilities as the leader of St. John's High School, beginning July 1, 2026. Denney will assume this role following the appointment of Jermaine Joyner as Principal of the Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies, after the intended retirement of Vanessa Brown.

During his tenure at St. John's High School, Joyner helped strengthen student outcomes and expand opportunities. The school's College and Career Readiness rate increased from 62.1 percent to 96.2 percent, while the four-year graduation rate rose from 87.4 percent to 92.5 percent, both earning Excellent ratings on the state report card. He also expanded dual enrollment opportunities and helped launch new academic, arts, and athletic programs. A North Charleston High School graduate, Joyner will now return to the North Charleston community where he once attended school as he begins his next chapter leading the Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies.

"Mr. Joyner has served the St. John's community with dedication and vision," said Superintendent Anita Huggins. "His leadership helped move important initiatives forward while expanding opportunities for students. We are grateful for his service to St. John's High School and excited for the impact he will continue to make as principal of the Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies."

Denney will help guide the next phase of St. John's High School's work, including the continued implementation of the St. John's Initiative announced by Superintendent Huggins last year. The initiative focuses on expanding Academics, Arts, and Athletics to strengthen neighborhood schools and provide students with greater access to rigorous coursework, enhanced arts

programming, and increased athletic opportunities. St. John's High School will also continue expanding college access opportunities for students through programs such as the Charleston Southern University–CCSD Academy of Advanced Academics, which allows students to earn college credit while still in high school.

Denney brings more than two decades of experience in public education and district leadership to this role and is widely recognized for her ability to build innovative academic programs that expand opportunity for students. She previously served as the founding principal of Early College High School, where she helped create one of the district's most successful and nationally recognized school models. Under her leadership, Early College High School became a premier college access program, with 100 percent of seniors graduating with their four-year cohort and, at the time, 46 percent earning a full associate degree while still in high school, a remarkable achievement that placed Charleston County among national leaders in early college success. Since then, those numbers have almost doubled! The systems she established and the leadership she developed at the school have continued to thrive even after her departure, demonstrating the lasting strength and sustainability of the model she helped build.

Earlier in her career, Denney served as an assistant principal at North Charleston High School, where she helped improve graduation outcomes and expand Career and Technical Education opportunities for students. In her current role as Executive Associate of Strategy, Partnerships, and Planning, she leads major district initiatives, develops strategic partnerships with colleges and community organizations, and serves as a key member of the Superintendent's Cabinet, helping shape the district's long-term vision for student success.

"Ms. Denney is a visionary leader who understands how to build programs that transform opportunities for students," said Superintendent Anita Huggins. "Her leadership has helped create pathways for students to graduate with college degrees, expand partnerships that benefit our schools, and move forward innovative ideas that strengthen Charleston County School District. Her experience, creativity, and commitment to students will help St. John's High School continue building on the strong foundation already in place while expanding opportunities for the future."

Denney will continue serving in her district leadership role while providing executive leadership and strategic oversight at St. John's High School. The district will post a principal position for the school as part of the leadership structure moving forward. Her appointment reflects Superintendent Huggins' continued commitment to expanding academics, arts, and athletics while strengthening opportunities for students and families across the St. John's community.

Families and community members will have an opportunity to meet Ms. Denney during a Meet and Greet on March 25 at 5:30 p.m. at St. John's High School Cafeteria.

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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 51,000 students in 90 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.