ORANGEBURG COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
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# Orangeburg County School District Partners with Carolina Panthers, Samaritan's Feet, and the David & Nicole Tepper Foundation to Provide New Shoes to Elementary Students Through PLAY 60 Initiative

**Orangeburg, SC** – Students at Whitaker Elementary School and Brookdale Elementary School experienced a day filled with excitement, encouragement, and community support as Orangeburg County School District (OCSD) partnered with the Carolina Panthers, Samaritan's Feet International, and the David & Nicole Tepper Foundation to provide brand-new shoes for every student as part of the NFL's NFL PLAY 60 initiatives. The event, which is part of a larger literacy and wellness effort across North and South Carolina, aims to encourage students to stay active, build confidence, and support the development of the whole child. Through the initiative, thousands of students across the region will receive new shoes designed to inspire them to stay active for at least 60 minutes each day.

According to David Stogdill, education manager for the Carolina Panthers, the effort goes beyond simply providing footwear. He stated, "We're partnering with Samaritan's Feet to provide shoes for every single student in the school. This is part of a larger literacy initiative that we are launching later this year. If students can play 60 minutes a day with their brand-new pairs of shoes, it helps strengthen their mind, body, and soul so they can do better in school."

Through funding from the David & Nicole Tepper Foundation, more than 5,000 pairs of shoes have been donated to support schools participating in the program across North Carolina and South Carolina. The partnership includes schools in Charlotte-Mecklenburg as well as selected communities including

Wilmington, Asheville, Greenville, Charleston, and Orangeburg. Whitaker Elementary and Brookdale Elementary were selected through collaboration with the OCSD as part of a long-term outreach strategy. The initiative will follow participating schools for three years, focusing on literacy, physical wellness, and social-emotional development.

For Alicia Morrow, regional program manager with Samaritan's Feet International, the program is rooted in dignity and hope. "A new pair of shoes changes a child's entire day. When students have something comfortable and well-fitting on their feet, they feel confident. They feel like they can conquer the day. Our goal is to bring hope and dignity while encouraging students to stay active and dream big," she expressed.

The event also highlighted community involvement, with volunteers from Orangeburg-Wilkinson High School's football team and cheerleading squad helping distribute the shoes. Younger students had the opportunity to interact with high school athletes they admire, reinforcing the importance of mentorship and leadership. District leaders emphasized that partnerships like these play a critical role in supporting students beyond the classroom. "This partnership allows us to focus on the whole child. When students feel comfortable and confident, they can better focus on learning and reaching their full potential," said Bernard E. Frost, assistant superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction for OCSD.

The PLAY 60 initiative aligns with a broader 30-60-90 literacy and wellness framework**,** encouraging students to read 30 minutes daily, remain physically active for 60 minutes, and develop healthy habits that support academic success. District officials say the partnership may expand in the future as the program grows across the region.

Dr. Shawn D. Foster, superintendent of OCSD, emphasized the deeper impact such partnerships have on students and the community. "When organizations come together to invest in our students, we're doing more than providing resources, we're creating opportunities. Initiatives like PLAY 60 remind our children that their community believes in them. When students feel supported, confident, and encouraged to stay active and engaged, they are empowered to reach their highest potential both inside and outside the classroom," he added.

For more information or to explore partnership opportunities with Samaritan's Feet International, visit www.samaritansfeet.org

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

**Orangeburg County School District**

The mission of Orangeburg County School District, the catalyst of innovation and excellence, is to ensure all students discover and develop their person, purpose, and platform through high-quality educational experiences distinguished by a culture of collaboration, equity, and inclusion; a creative learning environment with inspiring opportunities; a commitment to nurture the academic, physical, social and emotional well-being of all. Visit us online at ocsdsc.org

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