



Charleston County School District
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Media Release

Charleston County School District “LAUNCHES” Pilot Workforce Program with Regional Partners

Charleston, SC (April 21, 2026) - Charleston County School District (CCSD), in collaboration with regional industry and Trident Technical College, started the pilot cohort of its LAUNCH workforce development program, providing students with hands-on learning experiences and direct exposure to high-demand career pathways.

The LAUNCH program connects students to real-world workforce opportunities through structured industry engagement, career exploration, and skill development aligned to regional workforce needs. It represents the culminating phase of broader workforce discussions with regional partners, including Trident Technical College, The Charleston Regional Development Alliance (CRDA), and Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce. This initiative will help students transition from classroom learning to direct career opportunities.

The program includes direct engagement with manufacturing industry leaders such as Mercedes-Benz Vans Charleston, Boeing, and HII Newport News Shipbuilding, who are shaping learning experiences and exposing students to career opportunities available in the region.

The first LAUNCH session welcomed a cohort of students from R.B. Stall High School. Students are participating in a series of sessions that include interaction with business and community partners, exposure to career pathways, and opportunities to build both technical and professional skills. As part of the program, students will also design, fabricate, and launch their own mini-rocket, applying engineering concepts in a hands-on, real-world context. Students will earn a \$500 stipend furnished by the CRDA for their after-school work in the program.

This work is grounded in workforce demand across the Trident region. Data from sources, including a regional Talent Demand Study by Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce and Charleston Regional Development Alliance, highlights the need for hundreds of skilled workers in fields such as advanced manufacturing, construction, and technical trades, reinforcing the importance of early access to career-connected learning opportunities for students.

“Programs like LAUNCH are critical to ensuring our students are prepared for success beyond graduation,” said Superintendent Anita Huggins. “By connecting students with real-world experiences and industry partners, we are creating clear pathways to high-demand careers and strengthening the future workforce of our community.”

The program includes direct engagement with partners such as Mercedes-Benz Vans Charleston, Trident Technical College, Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, Charleston Regional Development Alliance, Boeing, and HII Newport News Shipbuilding, who are helping shape learning experiences and expose students to career opportunities available in the region.

While this initial cohort is a pilot, CCSD plans to expand the LAUNCH model to additional schools and student groups as partnerships continue to grow and evolve.

The LAUNCH program aligns with CCSD's commitment to preparing students for college, careers, and life by expanding access to high-quality career and technical education and strengthening connections between schools and the regional economy.

For more information about the LAUNCH program, visit:
<https://charlestonempowered.com/career-launch-2026/>

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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.