ORANGEBURG COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
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OCSD Celebrates Orangeburg Advance College Cohort 2 Graduates; 33 Students Earn Associate Degrees and Diplomas

ORANGEBURG, S.C. — The Orangeburg County School District (OCSD) proudly celebrated the graduation of 33 exceptional students from Cohort 2 of the Orangeburg Advance College (OAC) program during a commencement ceremony held Tuesday afternoon at South Carolina State University.

This milestone marks a remarkable academic achievement, as each graduate earned an Associate of Arts degree while simultaneously completing the requirements for a high school diploma, an accomplishment that reflects discipline, perseverance, and a commitment to excellence at the highest level.

The Orangeburg Advance College program, a strategic partnership between OCSD and Orangeburg-Calhoun Technical College, continues to expand access to postsecondary opportunities for high-achieving students. Through this innovative model, students accelerate their academic pathways while gaining the skills, confidence, and credentials needed to succeed beyond high school.

Many of the students who participated in the OAC program contributed to the more than $20 million in scholarships and awards earned by the OCSD Class of 2026, further underscoring the academic strength and preparation of this cohort. Additionally, 98% of Cohort 2 graduates have already been accepted into colleges and universities, positioning them for continued success.

"This is truly a monumental accomplishment," said Robert M. Hemby, II, Director CTE, OAC and Early College. "These students embraced the rigor of college-level coursework while successfully meeting their high school expectations. Their success reflects not only their determination, but also the intentional design of a program that expands access, removes barriers, and creates real opportunities for students to excel, he shared."

OCSD Superintendent Dr. Shawn D. Foster emphasized the broader significance of the program and its impact on students and the community. "The Orangeburg Advance College program represents what is possible when we are deliberate about creating pathways that connect preparation to opportunity," said Dr. Foster. "Cohort 2 has demonstrated that our students are not only ready for the next level, but they are also already performing at it. Their success affirms our commitment to ensuring every student discovers and develops their purpose, platform, and potential."

For students like Jonathan Mendoza Marin, the Orangeburg Advance College experience has been transformative. A member of the Superintendent's Student Roundtable, National Honor Society, and AJROTC, Marin plans to attend the University of South Carolina this fall.

"The Orangeburg Advance College program challenged me to grow in ways I didn't expect," said Marin. "Balancing college coursework with my high school responsibilities taught me discipline and confidence. It gave me a head start and showed me what I'm capable of. I know I'm walking into college prepared because of this experience, he shared."

The commencement ceremony served as a celebration not only of academic excellence, but a promise each student carries forward. As the second cohort of graduates, these scholars have helped to solidify the Orangeburg Advance College program as a transformative opportunity within OCSD, setting a high standard and paving the way for future cohorts.

Rooted in the district's mission to ensure that all students discover and develop their person, purpose, and platform, the Orangeburg Advance College program continues to stand as a powerful example of how Orangeburg County School District is building capacity, sustaining success, and creating meaningful pathways for every learner.

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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