

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OCSD Communications and Technology Team Earns Multiple Statewide Honors for Excellence in Strategic Storytelling and School Communications

ORANGEBURG, S.C. — The Orangeburg County School District (OCSD) proudly recognizes School Communicators Day 2026, by celebrating members of its Communications and Technology Team for earning multiple statewide honors through the South Carolina Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association's 2026 Rewards for Excellence program.

These prestigious awards recognize outstanding achievement in strategic school communications, storytelling, and community engagement across the state of South Carolina.

Taylor Simpson received two Publication and Electronic Media Awards for excellence in video production. His work, Dr. Shawn Foster 2026 SC Superintendent of the Year, earned recognition in the Video – Mid-Length category, while the OCSD commercial for South Carolina State Homecoming was honored in the Short-Form Video category. These awards highlight Simpson's ability to capture compelling narratives that elevate the district's mission and leadership.

Hatara Tyson was also recognized with multiple honors, including a Publication and Electronic Media Award in the Annual Report category for Lighting the Way with a Comprehensive Year in Review and Strategic Plan Culmination. In addition, Tyson earned a Golden Achievement Award for From Voice to Vote: Establishing Student Access to Governance Through the STAR Initiative, underscoring her commitment to amplifying student voice and aligning communications with meaningful stakeholder engagement.

Taylor Johnson was also recognized with multiple honors in the 2026 Rewards for Excellence program. Her project, Bruin Legacy: One Last Walk, earned a prestigious Golden Achievement Award, one of the highest honors presented for strategic school communications. In addition, her piece, Carson Shuler and the Heart of Edisto High School, received a Publication and Electronic Media Award in the Excellence in Writing category. Johnson's work reflects a powerful ability to tell meaningful, human-centered stories that elevate the voices and experiences within the Orangeburg County School District community.

In addition to the team's collective success, Dr. Erica S. Taylor, Assistant Superintendent for Communications, Business, and Community Partnerships, was named the 2026 SC/NSPRA Communicator of the Year. She will represent South Carolina at the National School Public Relations Association conference in July 2026.

These recognitions come as the district celebrates School Communicators Day on May 8, 2026, a time to honor the professionals who work behind the scenes to ensure clear, consistent, and strategic communication in support of students, staff, and communities.

"These recognitions affirm the intentionality, creativity, and impact behind the work of our Communications and Technology Team," said Dr. Taylor. "Taylor Simpson, Hatara Tyson, and Taylor Johnson exemplify what it means to lead through strategic communication. Their work not only tells our story, it ensures that our students, staff, and community see themselves reflected in that story. This is how we build trust, strengthen engagement, and advance our mission of helping every student discover their person, purpose, and platform, Dr. Taylor said."

Under the leadership of Superintendent Dr. Shawn D. Foster, OCSd has made significant investments in strategic communications as a core component of district success.

"The work of our Communications and Technology Team has been nothing short of outstanding," said Dr. Foster. "We have been very intentional about how we tell our story, ensuring transparency, consistency, and authenticity in every message. The strategic storytelling coming out of Orangeburg County School District reflects not only where we are, but where we are going. It highlights the incredible work happening across our schools and ensures our community understands the impact of that work every single day, said Dr. Foster."

The SC/NSPRA Rewards for Excellence program received 374 entries this year, judged by communications professionals from across the field, making these recognitions especially significant. Award recipients were recently honored at the Rewards for Excellence Luncheon on May 1, 2026, in West Columbia, South Carolina.

OCSd remains committed to excellence in communication as a vital tool in advancing student achievement, strengthening community partnerships, and sustaining organizational success.

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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