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Thursday, June 25, 2026

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Dawn Whitesides
Edisto Primary School Assistant Principal

Dawn Whitesides Named SCABSE Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year

ORANGEBURG, S.C. – Orangeburg County School District (OCSD) proudly celebrates Dawn Whitesides, Assistant Principal of Edisto Primary School, for being named the South Carolina Alliance of Black School Educators (SCABSE) Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year. The prestigious statewide recognition honors outstanding educational leadership, a commitment to student achievement, and a dedication to serving school communities with excellence.

Whitesides honor came as a complete surprise. "I was checking my email, and it just came across," she recalled. "At first, I thought it was some kind of spam message, but then I realized it was real. It was truly a shock, she said." The award recognizes a career built on servant leadership, collaboration, and a steadfast commitment to excellence in education. Throughout her career, Whitesides has been a champion for students, an advocate for teachers, and a trusted leader dedicated to creating positive learning environments where every child and educator can succeed.

With approximately 24 years of service in Orangeburg County schools, Whitesides has made a lasting impact on countless students, families, and educators through her unwavering commitment to academic excellence and student success. "I make sure teachers are supported and have the tools they need for success," said Whitesides. "My goal is to help everyone in the building and continue building a positive school culture."

This recognition follows another historic achievement for Whitesides. In 2024, she was named Orangeburg County School District's inaugural Assistant Principal of the Year, becoming the first recipient of the district honor. A proud graduate of South Carolina State University, Whitesides earned both a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education and a Master of Arts degree in Individual and Family Development. She later earned an Educational Specialist degree in Educational Leadership from Arkansas State University.

Whitesides began her career as a classroom teacher, teaching second and fourth grades before serving as a math coach and digital coach. Her experiences in the classroom and instructional leadership roles helped shape her student-centered approach to leadership. She credits Orangeburg County School District with providing opportunities to grow professionally while mentoring colleagues, supporting curriculum initiatives, and advancing instructional technology efforts. Despite the challenges that accompany educational leadership, Whitesides believes strong relationships, teamwork, and a shared commitment to student success are the keys to building thriving schools. For her, the greatest reward continues to be watching students and educators grow, achieve, and reach their fullest potential.

Orangeburg County School District Superintendent Dr. Shawn D. Foster praised Whitesides for her exceptional leadership and commitment to students, staff, and families. "Dawn Whitesides exemplifies the dedication, leadership, and commitment to student success that define Orangeburg County School District," said Dr. Foster. "This well-deserved recognition reflects the positive impact she makes on students, staff, and families every day. We are incredibly proud of her and grateful to have her as part of the OCSD family, he shared." Edisto Primary School Principal Dr. Steven Preast said Whitesides' recognition reflects the tremendous impact she has on the school community. "Mrs. Whitesides leads with integrity, compassion, and an unwavering commitment to children," said Dr. Preast. "She is a trusted partner to our teachers, a strong advocate for our students, and an integral part of the culture of excellence we strive to create every day at Edisto Primary School, he shared."

As Orangeburg County School District prepares for the 2026-2027 school year, Whitesides looks forward to continuing the positive culture that makes Edisto Primary School a welcoming, supportive, and engaging environment for students and staff. OCSD congratulates Dawn Whitesides on this well-deserved honor and thanks her for her outstanding leadership, dedication, and commitment to educational excellence.

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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