



Charleston County School District
Office of Communications
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Media Release

Belle Hall Strings Instructor Performs at the Grand Ole Opry

Charleston, S.C (July 28, 2026) - A full-circle music moment happened for Dr. Derek Deakins, a Charleston County School District (CCSD) strings instructor. Belle Hall is one of three elementary schools where Deakins works. For the past few years, he has had the pleasure of teaching Sloan and Miller Booth at Belle Hall. They never mentioned that their grandfather is country music legend Steve Gatlin (of the Gatlin Brothers).

At the final strings concert in April, their mom, Aubrie, came up to thank Deakins for teaching her daughters. She mentioned that they used to live in Nashville and that their grandfather was in the country music business. As they talked, Deakins discovered that his bluegrass band, Daniel Grindstaff and the Uptown Troubadours, had recently recorded one of Steve Gatlin's songs, Denver, a 1980s hit.

The Booth family sent his recording to their grandfather, and he loved it.

Fast-forward to July 15, when the Gatlin Brothers helped arrange for Daniel Grindstaff and the Uptown Troubadours band to make their debut on country music's biggest stage: the Grand Ole Opry!

"What an unforgettable night," said Deakins. "We had the incredible honor of performing on the stage that made country music famous. Then, to top it all off, the Gatlin Brothers surprised us by joining us on stage to sing one of their biggest hits."

For more information, please contact the Office of Communications at (843) 937-6303.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district dedicated to ensuring every student has access to a high-quality education and the support needed to thrive. As South Carolina's second-largest school system, CCSD serves more than 50,000 students across 91 schools and specialized programs throughout 1,300 square miles of coastal communities, representing a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools.

Under the leadership of Superintendent Anita Huggins, CCSD is focused on accelerating student achievement, expanding opportunities, and preparing every student for success in college, career, and life. Recent district accomplishments include record-high academic performance on state assessments, increasing graduation rates, and significant gains in college and career readiness,



Charleston County
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Anita W. Huggins, M.Ed., Superintendent of Schools
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reflecting the district's commitment to continuous improvement and educational excellence. Through the Peninsula Promise, CCSD is also expanding access to early learning, college and career pathways, arts, and family support services to create seamless opportunities for students living on the historic Charleston Peninsula.

CCSD offers a diverse and expanding portfolio of educational choices, including neighborhood, magnet, charter, Montessori, and International Baccalaureate (IB) schools and programs. Students have access to rich learning experiences in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); visual and performing arts; world languages; military and leadership programs; career and technical education; dual enrollment and early college opportunities; and other innovative pathways designed to meet a wide range of interests and aspirations.

Working in partnership with families, community organizations, higher education institutions, and industry leaders, CCSD remains committed to creating equitable opportunities, fostering student success, and ensuring that every graduate is prepared to contribute and compete in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

