



Charleston County School District
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Media Release

CCSD Awarded \$300,000 Grant to Strengthen Instructional Leadership

CHARLESTON, S.C. (September 8, 2026) - Charleston County School District (CCSD) has been awarded \$300,000 from the South Carolina Department of Education through the state's Instructional Leadership Accelerator Pilot Fund to strengthen instructional leadership and improve teaching and student outcomes across the district.

The grant will support sustained professional learning, leadership coaching, mentoring, and peer-learning opportunities for educators at multiple stages of their leadership journey, from teachers and teacher leaders to instructional coaches, assistant principals, principals, and district leaders.

Through partnerships with the University of Virginia's Partnership for Leaders in Education and other leadership-development organizations, CCSD leaders will deepen their skills in classroom observation and feedback, instructional coaching, implementation of high-quality instructional materials, collaborative leadership, and continuous improvement. The investment will help develop a strong pipeline of instructional leaders equipped to support teachers, strengthen classroom instruction, and improve outcomes for every student.

"Charleston County School District is strengthening its commitment to instructional leadership through comprehensive leadership development strategies designed to improve teaching and student outcomes across the district," said Jamie Costner, CCSD's Director of Special Projects. "This initiative will provide targeted development and support for teachers, teacher leaders, aspiring instructional coaches, school-based coaches, assistant principals, principals, and district leaders."

A key component of the initiative is CCSD's partnership with the University of Virginia's Partnership for Leaders in Education, which will provide executive learning, leadership coaching, and yearlong implementation support. CCSD will also provide professional development grounded in Paul Bambrick-Santoyo's Leverage Leadership 3.0 work, along with additional learning opportunities focused on classroom observation and feedback, instructional coaching, high-quality instructional materials, collaborative leadership, and continuous improvement.

"Strong instructional leadership is at the heart of strong schools," said Superintendent Anita Huggins. "When we invest in the people who support teaching and learning every day, we create the conditions for teachers to grow, students to thrive, and schools to continuously



Charleston County
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Anita W. Huggins, M.Ed., Superintendent of Schools
Sully Witte, Public Information Officer

improve. This work is about building leadership capacity at every level so that excellence in instruction is not dependent on one person—it becomes part of who we are as a district.”

CCSD is also creating clear pathways for educators who want to expand their leadership roles. A teacher leadership pipeline is preparing educators to facilitate collaborative learning, strengthen instructional practices, and pursue future opportunities in instructional coaching or school leadership, also inspiring teachers to stay in the classroom. An instructional coach development pipeline supports aspiring coaches through focused professional development and provides mentoring for new instructional coaches.

Additional opportunities, including peer school visits, collaborative learning sessions, and instructional office hours, will give educators and leaders opportunities to learn from one another, share effective practices, and translate new learning into action in their schools.

We want to create a sustainable leadership pipeline that begins in the classroom and extends into school and district leadership,” Huggins said. “Our teachers and school leaders have tremendous expertise. Our responsibility is to create meaningful opportunities for them to develop that expertise, share it with others, and grow as leaders. Ultimately, every investment we make in leadership must lead back to stronger teaching and better outcomes for every student.

The initiative reflects CCSD’s broader commitment to a culture of continuous improvement. By investing in leadership at every level, CCSD is building a sustainable system of educators prepared to lead, coach, collaborate, and drive meaningful improvement across the district.

For more information, contact CCSD’s 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, 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.