



Charleston County School District
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Media Release

CCSD Earns Second Consecutive National Budget Award, Receives Special Recognition for Performance Measures

Charleston, SC (September 15, 2026) – Charleston County School District (CCSD) has earned the Government Finance Officers Association's (GFOA) Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its 2026–27 budget, marking the second consecutive year the district has received the national recognition. This year, CCSD's budget also earned special recognition for performance measures, an additional distinction awarded only when all three independent reviewers give the highest possible score in that category. Reviewers highlighted CCSD's use of multi-year performance measures aligned with district goals and priorities which included strategies and action steps to track progress. All three reviewers rated CCSD "Outstanding" in the performance measures category.

"Last year, we were incredibly proud to earn this recognition for the first time in CCSD history. Earning it again shows that this is becoming our standard of how we do business," said Superintendent Anita Huggins. "Our community should know where its dollars are going, and that those investments are being made for students and schools."

The Distinguished Budget Presentation Award is GFOA's highest form of recognition in governmental budgeting and represents a significant achievement for organizations that meet the program's rigorous standards. The recognition follows continued work by CCSD's Financial Services team to make the district's budget more useful and accessible, and to make it a tool that connects funding decisions with district priorities, programs, and results.

"This recognition reflects the discipline and intentionality our team brings to the budget process throughout the year," said Chief Financial Officer Daniel Prentice. "Our goal is to make sure that our budget is transparent and that our investments connect to the work happening in our schools. The special recognition for performance measures is particularly meaningful because it reinforces that connection between resources and results."

CCSD's 2026–27 budget continues the district's focus on making financial information readily available to employees, families, taxpayers, and the broader community. The district has expanded public access to detailed budget information, including funding, contracts, staffing, and school-level allocations.

Deputy Chief Financial Officer Jessica Carraher, who received notification of the award from GFOA, credited the Finance team for continuing to strengthen the district's budget presentation

year after year. “This is truly a team accomplishment,” Carraher said. “Receiving the award for a second year is exciting, but the special recognition tells us we are continuing to improve. Our team has worked hard to make the budget clearer, more meaningful, and more closely connected to the outcomes we are working toward as a district.”

GFOA’s Distinguished Budget Presentation Awards Program was established in 1984 to encourage state and local governments to prepare budget documents of the highest quality. Each submission is evaluated by independent reviewers, with organizations receiving scores and feedback across multiple categories.

CCSD’s award is valid for one year, and the district will continue submitting its annual budget for independent review as part of its commitment to strong financial stewardship and continuous improvement.

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, 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.