



Charleston County School District
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Media Release

Charleston Progressive Academy Earns 2026 Leader in Me Lighthouse Academic Honor Roll Recognition

CHARLESTON, S.C. (October 27, 2026) – Charleston County School District (CCSD) is proud to announce that Charleston Progressive Academy (CPA) has been named a 2026 Leader in Me Lighthouse Academic Honor Roll school, a distinction recognizing schools that demonstrate exemplary academic achievement while maintaining the rigorous standards of Lighthouse School Certification.

The recognition celebrates CPA's impressive academic growth, with the school's statewide percentile ranking rising from 46 percent in 2025 to 57 percent in 2026, an increase of 11 percentile points. The Lighthouse Academic Honor Roll recognizes Leader in Me schools that have achieved and maintained Lighthouse School Certification and demonstrated exceptional academic growth or proficiency on state accountability measures. Rankings are determined through independent data analysis by SchoolDigger.com, which compares similar schools across the state. To qualify through academic growth, schools must rank at or above the 50th percentile and demonstrate an increase of at least five percentile points over the previous year.

In a congratulatory letter to Principal Wanda Sheats, Sean Covey recognized Charleston Progressive Academy and its school community for their achievement, noting that schools earning this distinction serve as exemplars for Leader in Me schools worldwide.

"This recognition is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and collective commitment of our students, teachers, staff, and families," said Sheats. "At Charleston Progressive Academy, we believe that developing student leadership and fostering academic excellence go hand in hand. We are incredibly proud of the growth our students continue to demonstrate."

The Leader in Me framework supports schools in developing leadership, personal responsibility, and a culture of continuous improvement, empowering students to take ownership of their learning and success.

"Charleston Progressive Academy continues to demonstrate what is possible when a school community is united around student growth and achievement," said CCSD Superintendent Anita Huggins. "This recognition reflects the intentional work happening in classrooms every day and the dedication of Principal Sheats and her entire team to helping every child thrive. We are so proud of their continued success."



Charleston County
SCHOOL DISTRICT

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

As part of the recognition, Charleston Progressive Academy will receive a special Lighthouse Academic Honor Roll decal to display on its Lighthouse Banner, celebrating its achievement as a model Leader in Me school.

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.

Statement from CCSD Superintendent Anita Huggins Regarding Board Evaluation

I am deeply honored and grateful to receive an Exemplary evaluation from the Charleston County School District Board of Trustees. I sincerely appreciate the time, thoughtful feedback, and confidence of the Trustees who participated in this evaluation process, as well as the Board's continued partnership and commitment to our students. I am especially grateful to those Board members who took the time to meet with me and engage in meaningful conversations about our shared goals, district priorities, opportunities for my professional growth, and how we can continue working together to accelerate student achievement; I value the opportunity to reflect on both our progress and the important work ahead.

While I am personally honored by this evaluation, this recognition truly belongs to the extraordinary teachers, school leaders, and support professionals across CCSD who put STUDENTS first every single day. Our progress is the result of their tireless work and their unwavering commitment to ensuring every student has the opportunity to succeed. Throughout our district, our employees are the heart of CCSD; they are the ones turning our shared vision into meaningful action, overcoming challenges, and making a difference in the lives of children. I am incredibly proud to serve alongside such talented, dedicated professionals, and I want them to know that this recognition is as much theirs as it is mine.

I am also grateful to the Board for its bold, visionary leadership and willingness to make important investments in our students and employees. From historic increases in employee compensation, particularly teacher pay, to the approval of CCSD's innovative Weighted Student Funding model, the Board has demonstrated a strong commitment to creating the conditions for success. These decisions, combined with the extraordinary efforts of our educators and staff and our collective focus on academic excellence, are contributing to improved student outcomes, a 97% teacher retention rate, and stronger learning environments across our district.

While we have much to celebrate, I also recognize that important work remains. This evaluation is not simply a recognition of what we have accomplished; it is a reminder of our responsibility to keep moving forward, raising expectations, and delivering on the promise of an exceptional education for every child. I am more committed than ever to accelerating student achievement and ensuring that every child and young adult in Charleston County has access to the opportunities they deserve. I firmly believe CCSD can become a premier national model for what is possible in public education when a community, its elected leaders, and its educators unite around a shared commitment to children.

I am truly blessed to serve this extraordinary district and am, again, deeply grateful to the Board for its confidence and support. Most importantly, I thank the thousands of CCSD employees whose dedication makes our progress possible. Our students are our purpose, and our best work is still ahead of us.

— **Anita Huggins, Superintendent**
Charleston County School District