



Charleston County School District
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Media Release

Charleston County School District Names Dr. Jennifer Backman Interim Executive Director of Security and Emergency Management

CHARLESTON, S.C. (October 29, 2026) – Charleston County School District (CCSD) is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Jennifer Backman as Interim Executive Director of Security and Emergency Management. Backman, who has served as the district's Deputy Director of Security Operations since 2020, brings more than three decades of public safety experience and a demonstrated commitment to protecting students, staff, and school communities.

In her new role, Backman will provide strategic leadership and oversight of the district's comprehensive security and emergency management operations and fire safety programs, working collaboratively with district leadership, school administrators, law enforcement agencies, and community partners to strengthen safety measures, emergency preparedness, and coordinated response efforts across CCSD.

"I am honored to continue serving Charleston County School District in this new capacity," said Backman. "The safety and well-being of our students, staff, and school communities will always be our highest priority. I look forward to continuing our work alongside district leadership, school administrators, our dedicated security team, and local public safety partners to ensure our schools remain safe, supportive environments where teaching and learning can thrive."

Since joining CCSD in 2020, Backman has provided leadership for districtwide security operations, directed strategic safety initiatives, and overseen the development and implementation of emergency management programs, training initiatives, and crisis response protocols. Her responsibilities have included coordinating with local law enforcement and emergency management agencies, conducting security assessments, developing threat mitigation strategies, and managing critical incidents and large-scale events.

"Keeping our students and staff safe is foundational to everything we do, and Dr. Backman brings the experience, leadership, and dedication necessary to guide this critical work," said CCSD Superintendent Anita Huggins. "Her extensive background in law enforcement, combined with her firsthand knowledge of our schools and district operations, makes her exceptionally qualified for this position. We are grateful for her continued service and confident in her ability to further strengthen our culture of safety, preparedness, and collaboration."



Prior to joining CCSD, Backman dedicated 26 years to the Mount Pleasant Police Department (MPPD), where she served in progressively responsible leadership positions, including Lieutenant of the Office of Professional Standards and Lieutenant/Patrol Commander. She was the first African-American woman in MPPD history to rise through the ranks of several supervisor roles. During her tenure, she oversaw internal investigations, organizational audits, policy compliance reviews, patrol operations, school resource officers, and multi-agency emergency response efforts. She also developed a mentorship program pairing new officers with experienced personnel to support professional growth, retention, and performance.

During her time with MPPD, Backman served Laing and Moultrie Middle Schools before formal school resource officer positions existed. Splitting her time between the two schools, she educated students on important topics such as drug prevention, violence, and gang awareness. Committed to being proactive, she expanded her expertise through federal initiatives, including Gang Resistance Education and Training (G.R.E.A.T.), to better equip students with the knowledge and tools to make positive choices. In 1997, Backman was promoted to detective in the Family Crisis Unit, where she focused on protecting vulnerable individuals and investigating cases involving child abuse, domestic violence, and elder abuse.

Backman holds a Doctor of Public Safety Leadership from Capella University, a Master of Science in Community Psychology and a Bachelor of Science in Human Services from Springfield College, and an Associate Degree in Criminal Justice from Trident Technical College. She also completed Northwestern University's Supervision of Police Personnel program.

With more than 20 years of formal supervisory leadership experience, Backman brings a comprehensive understanding of school security, emergency management, incident command, risk assessment, and organizational accountability to her new position.

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.

