There is much to celebrate as we look back on the 2017-18 school year in Charleston County. The hard work, dedication, and commitment of every member of the CCSD family is evident in all of our triumphs and challenges. All of our gains are a result of the commitment from our CCSD family to ensure that every single day, students are the heart of our work.

This year we celebrate numerous accomplishments on the individual, school, and district level by our talented students and staff. To begin, the district's Early College High School program completed its inaugural year with great success, while the district as a whole saw improvement in reading and math scores in 11 of 12 grades on the 2018 state accountability tests. We had schools selected as Capturing Kids’ Hearts National showcase schools, Project Lead the Way Distinguished Schools, a National School to Watch, and a National Blue Ribbon School. Burke High earned the Best in Network Award from New Tech Network in its first year of the program and our teacher vacancies have continued to drop to their lowest level in years through increased retention, attraction, and reward measures the Board of Trustees and district have supported. Additionally, the district developed and approved a new five-year strategic plan with the help and input of its various stakeholders and sought its first-ever district-wide accreditation from a national agency. On the whole, we are seeing more students in work-based learning, internships, and apprenticeships, as well as in Advanced Placement courses surpassing the nation’s above in pass rate. In sum, we have a great deal to be proud of and celebrate.

Our focus continues to be centric around providing students with college and career pathways to success through equitable opportunities, access, and support.

It is with profound respect for the men and women of CCSD who serve our scholars everyday, that we at every level of the school district, honor them. These successes would not come without the support and guidance from our teachers, parents, families, community partners, district staff, Board of Trustees and Constituent Boards. I am so proud of our CCSD family. Together we must continue to create diverse and equitable opportunities for all students.

Sincerely,

Gerrita Postlewait
Superintendent of Schools
Charleston County School District
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CCSD WELCOMES STUDENTS BACK FOR THE 2017-2018 SCHOOL YEAR
Stono Park Elementary School students and staff are preparing for a return home. School leaders, along with Charleston County School District (CCSD) Board of Trustees Members, District 10 Constituent Board Members, City of Charleston Mayor John Tecklenburg, and CCSD officials participated in a groundbreaking ceremony on May 18, 2018 to celebrate the start of construction for the new building, which is scheduled to be completed by August 2019.

Stono Park has served children in the West Ashley area of Charleston since 1951. Students and staff have been at the former St. Andrew’s Middle School campus since the 2016-17 school year, allowing for the demolition of the original facility located at 1699 Garden Street, and construction of a new one. The two-story, 75,000 square foot building will be equipped to serve a capacity of 500 students.
Lucy G. Beckham High School (LBHS) is set to become Charleston County School District’s (CCSD) first new high school, in a new facility, in two decades. To commemorate this project, the district hosted a groundbreaking ceremony on May 24, 2018. CCSD Board of Trustees Members, District 2 Constituent Board Members, Town of Mount Pleasant Mayor Will Haynie, CCSD officials, and members of Lucy Beckham’s family gathered on the site of the former Wando campus for the event. The school’s mascot, the Bengals, was unveiled during the ceremony, surprising participants after a series of surveys were conducted throughout schools and the community to help narrow down the choice to one earlier this spring.

The school is named after former Wando High School Principal Lucy Beckham and long-time educator in Charleston County School District. Lucy was named principal of Wando in 1998 where she led the school and its students to great success, earning numerous state and national awards including being distinguished as one of U.S. News & World Report’s “best in the country” high schools. During her time in CCSD, Lucy was also named the State and National High School Principal of the Year and was awarded both the South Carolina Order of the Palmetto and Mount Pleasant’s Order of the Gavel. Before her passing, Lucy was serving in a new role as the Executive Principal of Moultrie Constituent District 2 Schools.

LBHS is scheduled to be ready for the start of the 2020-2021 school year. The three-story, 245,000 square foot facility will have the capacity to serve 1,500 students and will be lead by Principal Anna Dassing.
During half-time at St. John’s High School football games, people in the stands start ribbing each other about the Dallas Cowboys and Pittsburgh Steelers. Most parents and other locals who sit under the Friday night lights are fans of one of those two NFL teams. But when the Mighty Islanders return to the field, all the trash talking stops, said Mary Jones, who has lived on Wadmalaw Island for more than 25 years. Everyone focuses on the game.

That’s what it’s like at a rural high school like St. John’s on Johns Island, she said. The high school is central to the community, and adults show up to watch football games, even if they don’t have children in the school. Neighbors care about what goes on there and how students are doing. The school is a gathering place.

Jones is a graduate of Charleston’s Burke High School, but her connection to St. John’s runs deep. Her grandson is a senior there this year, and her son is a 1990 graduate of the island school. A nephew of hers also is a graduate, and her granddaughter attended there for a while. And she has been a volunteer at the school for years.

But Johns Island quickly is being developed, like much of the Lowcountry, and as the island changes, the high school likely will change as well. St. John’s Principal Steve Larson welcomes the challenge of leading a community through a major transition. He wants the school to grow and improve, but not at the expense of the students who already are there and the traditions that have kept the school and community intertwined for years.

Larson, who has been on the job since March 2017, said unabashedly that his goal in life is to change the world. And he’s going to make progress on that goal on Johns Island. “I want to do good where good is valued, where loving is valued, where kindness is valued. And I found it at St. John’s.”

“I want to do good where good is valued, where loving is valued, where kindness is valued. And I found it at St. John’s.” – Steve Larson,
St. John’s High School Principal
Like Family

About 310 students — most of them black and Hispanic — are enrolled at St. John’s this year. And students love the small classes, the individual attention they get from their teachers, and the academic opportunities they receive. Many of them said the St. John’s community feels like family.

St. John’s provides an amazing opportunity for students on Johns and Wadmalaw islands, Larson said. “Fifteen kids in a classroom, tutoring left and right, and an awesome football and sports program.” And students can take college-level courses, through a dual enrollment program with Trident Technical College, at no cost to them.

The school also has a high percentage of students who come from lower-income families. But it’s different than other “high-poverty schools,” Larson said. It feels calm, safe, and welcoming. “Take everything you think you know about a high poverty school and throw it out the window.”

But he also acknowledged the school has some issues. He wants to boost the graduation rate and increase academic opportunities at St. John’s.

And he wants to turn around a perception in many circles that St. John’s is not a very good school. This fall, 250 students chose to enroll at James Island Charter High School. And overall, half of the parents in the Charleston County School District’s Constituent District 9, of which St. Johns is a part, send their children elsewhere.

“I didn’t want to be here,” said Jalen Hammonds, when he thinks back on his freshman year. “People said St. John’s was a bad school.” Hammonds, who was a senior this year taking advanced courses and participating in three sports, said Larson started working to change the perception of the school, inside and out, as soon as he arrived. “He made an impression Day One.”

A.J. Frazier, who was also a senior taking three college-level courses and participating in three sports, said Larson motivates students to stretch themselves and do their best. And he has created pride and excitement in the school. “We haven’t had any spirit like Larson,” he said.

Jones said she also likes what Larson is doing and she feels hopeful about the school’s future. She would, however, like to see more vocational opportunities. And she thinks some teachers could do better reaching out to students who are not top-performers. “When students are struggling, teachers should come to their rescue.”

Tony Frasier, another senior, said that when he returned to school this year, the atmosphere had changed. He wishes the school had more opportunities in music, which is his passion. But he thinks things are turning around and Larson is a person who can make a difference. “He’s the key that unlocked the doors to bigger and better opportunities,” Frasier said.

Making Changes

Math teacher Anne Croom said this is her second year at St. John’s and teachers are committed to making the school a better place. “All teachers do something extra,” such as coaching, she said. And the academic program is great. “We have enough of a variety of courses that we could challenge any student,” she said.

Croom said she stayed in her last job for 12 years. “I wouldn’t be surprised if I spend my next 12 years here,” she said.

Larson says he pictures himself working with both hands, one to help improve the school and the students who are enrolled, and the other to reach out and bring other students back into the fold. He thinks the school could accommodate 450 to 500 students, he said. And if he had to, he would place portable classrooms on the campus. “I want that problem,” he said. Students will come back “if they believe in the brand and in what they can accomplish.”

Larson said he spends most Sunday mornings at churches — both predominantly black and predominantly white — on Johns and Wadmalaw islands getting connected to the community. And his message always is the same. “Our graduation rate is not acceptable and needs to get better and we must improve academics,” he said. But he also stresses that the school and its traditions have an important function in the community, and he’s committed to preserving that.

Larson thinks it will take three years to boost enrollment. “These things are slow to start,” he said, “but when they do, buckle up.”

Ben Campbell’s family is part of the change on Johns Island. The family is new to the area, and Campbell’s two children Corben and Ryan, who both are freshmen, started this year at St. John’s. Campbell was aware of the perception among some people that St. John’s wasn’t a good school, so he explored the idea of sending the boys to James Island Charter and a private school. But neither of those options worked out. He was “beyond nervous” when he realized he would have to send his children to St. John’s. “I was freaking out and stressed- I thought it was the end of the world,” he said. “But it turned out to be the exact opposite.”

His boys, who both have some medical and learning problems, previously attended a large school where they sometimes got lost in the crowd, he said. “When we walked into St. John’s, we were welcomed. We were home.”

He also was concerned that his children, who are white, might have problems in a school where most of the rest of the students are black and Hispanic. But race isn’t an issue at all, he said. His children will be in many racially mixed environments in their lives, he said, and they are learning now how to embrace differences.

Campbell thinks the size of the school and the small classes help all students feel important and a part of things. “They get much more of a chance than at a cattle-herding school like Wando or Ashley Ridge,” he said.

This year, St. John’s was the beneficiary of a generous $20,000 donation by Ernst & Young to the Kiawah Cares Foundation to purchase required textbooks for dual credit courses through Trident Technical College. The school also had its first known graduate, John Zepke, who was also the Class of 2018’s valedictorian, be accepted to Princeton University. Zepke applied much in part to Larson’s urging.

Larson said he thinks all students should be able to attend their home schools, get a great education, and feel good about where they are learning. And he’s committed to making that happen at St. John’s. “I’m trying to build something here that we’re all so proud of it leaks out of our pores.”

Steve Larson, Principal, St. John’s High School
North Charleston High School (NCHS) and Garrett Academy of Technology football teams were supposed to play each other on Friday, October 28, 2016. Unfortunately, deadly violence in the community, and threats of more violence, lead to a tough decision for school and Charleston County School District (CCSD) administrators to cancel the game for the 2016 season.

Due to weather-related schedule changes from earlier in the season, and the playoffs due to start in a few weeks, the rivalry game could not be made up. That ended a stretch of six straight years of the Cougars and Falcons facing each other on the football field.

“We were all disappointed that the game had to be canceled,” remembered former Garrett Principal Charity Summers. “Our hearts were breaking for our children. Our student-athletes, parents, and coaches were very disappointed. The parents and coaches understood and were grateful that we did not jeopardize the safety of students, however the students didn’t think it was fair for community issues to result in the cancelation of their game.”

“We are reminding our community that we all have to provide a safe and healthy environment for our children to thrive and grow.”

Charity Summers, former Garrett Academy of Technology Principal
Unity Day Game idea

Remembering what happened last year, and in light of incidents involving students bringing weapons to CCSD campuses this school year, the idea of the first Unity Day Game between the two programs was born. Leaders at both North Charleston and Garrett wanted to inspire and unite their students and the communities that support them.

“With the canceling of last year’s game due to security concerns, and some of the perceptions the public has had this year with school safety, I felt that we needed to do something,” said Garrett Assistant Principal Dale Metzger. “[If we could] create a family-friendly event, the parents in our community, and the teachers and staff at our schools, would feel good about bringing their children to [the game with North Charleston] and to be able to enjoy it as a family.”

“Irrespective of location or locale, it is a community affair,” thought North Charleston Principal Henry Darby. “It evinces a message to the community, and beyond, whereby a competition takes place that at the end of the game, win, lose, or draw, everyone can behave in a respectful manner.”

Earlier this month, Metzger, along with former Principal Summers and Athletic Director Michael De Jong, spoke with North Charleston leaders, Principal Darby and Athletic Director Raymond Knauer, about moving the regular season finale on Friday, October 27, 2017 to the following morning at 11:00 a.m. at Hibbie Ayoub Stadium, so the game could be a focal point of a day-long celebration in the city of North Charleston.

“Many of players and coaches had questions at first,” said Garrett Athletic Director Michael De Jong. “Now they are starting to see the event as an opportunity, and are excited about playing on a Saturday, just like colleges.”

“When I was approached with the idea, I refused to allow NCHS to be the obstacle that would prevent this from moving forward,” explained North Charleston Athletic Director Ray Knauer. “Some of our coaches already have prior commitments, but we’ll work around that. The community is bigger than the individual.”

Once school leaders made the decision official, and informed the South Carolina High School League, they began reaching out to community partners to involve them in the event. CCSD’s after school program, Kaleidoscope, local ministry “Take it to the Streets,” and Harvest Point Church readily signed on to support the cause.

“We are reminding our community that we all have to provide a safe and healthy environment for our children to thrive and grow,” Summers said. “We are asking our community to support our efforts to unify in doing what is in the best interest of our children.”

Why the game is being played

Leaders from both schools pointed out the emphasis from this event should be about promoting unity in all the neighborhoods of North Charleston, and what is possible when schools and community members come together to work towards common goals. They added sports, and athletes, can play a big role in leading the way.

“They (student-athletes) are looked up to by those most in need of a positive role model,” Knauer explained. “Sports [also serve as] a refuge for some students. For others, sports are a ticket out of a bad situation; an opportunity for bettering one’s future.”

Everyone involved with the planning of the Unity Day Game also stressed there are no issues between the players and teams from both schools. They are simply trying be a part of the solution, even if it means giving up an opportunity to play under the lights.

“This was never about conflict between the schools,” commented De Jong. “Student-athletes, coaches, and athletic directors have always been in good standing with each other; many of our players are neighbors or actually related to each other. Social media and threats made by other individuals are where the issues [come from].”

“These men have worked hard and get 10 opportunities to enjoy playing the game,” explained North Charleston head coach Sam Lesky. “The NCHS and Garrett players know one another and look forward to playing each other. The problems are not on the field.”

“Coach Lesky and I have known each other for eight years and talk on a regular basis,” added Garrett’s head coach, Nick Hopp. “His grandson plays on the same North Charleston Recreation football team as my son. We talk about our families, our football teams, and we get along great. [Many of our players] grew up playing against each other, so it’s a great atmosphere; they all know each other’s strengths and weaknesses.”

What occurred

The event began at 10:00 a.m. for community members with games, jump castles, and face painting in the parking lots next to Hibbie Ayoub Stadium.

The North Charleston Athletics Department hosted a tailgate party as well, preparing free food for every North Charleston and Garrett student who attended with their school ID.

Garrett also provided free admission to every elementary and middle school student from CCSD that attended with a paying adult chaperone; children six years old and under already receive free admission at the Falcons’ home games.

By creating a special time and date for the contest, the game added extra meaning for the players and coaches as well. Especially for Garrett’s seniors, who played in the final home game of their high school football careers.

According to scfootballhistory.com, North Charleston leads the all-time series with Garrett, 17-13, but the Falcons won the last two meetings. More importantly, the hope is that the Unity Day Game will become a tradition. “It could become a yearly affair whereby local businesses, civic leaders, and other stakeholders can build upon to build a greater relationship among all community stakeholders,” Darby said.

“The game of football is known to influence lives in all areas, so helping to take the lead in promoting unity and peace in the community is another great opportunity to serve” exclaimed Lesky. “We want what’s best for the community.”

“I would love to see this become an annual event that would include games played by all the high schools in North Charleston,” added Summers. “I sincerely hope that as a community, we learn that division and strife among us prohibits the potential for growth and success. Through unity, we can solve a multitude of problems.”
When it comes to volleyball in the state of South Carolina, Alexis Glover is a coaching legend. Wando’s head coach added to her legendary status when she was named the 2017 United States Marines Corps/American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) National High School Coach of the Year.

One of the honors associated with this award was the opportunity to be a head coach in the Under Armour All-America Volleyball Match on December 15, 2017 at the Sprint Center in Kansas City, Missouri. Glover, who had just completed her 31st year in charge of the Wando volleyball program, led Team East in the match.

“I am humbled and excited about this tremendous honor,” said Glover. “I am so excited to represent Wando High School and the state of South Carolina on the national level.”

This is Glover’s second national coach of the year honor in three years; Prepvolleyball.com gave her the title in 2015. Glover led the Warriors to a runner-up finish in the South Carolina High School League’s (SCHSL)AAAAA state playoffs last season, their 11th Lower State championship in program history, the Region 7-AAAAA title, and a 48-4-1 record. The team was also ranked 10th in the country according to the USA Today/AVCA Super 25 Poll earlier that year.

Glover is the all-time leader in career wins for SCHSL volleyball head coaches over 1,000, and has earned Region Coach of the Year honor 22 times. She has guided the Warriors to six SCHSL state titles during her coaching career.

“This is a very fitting honor for Coach Glover,” added Wando’s Athletics Director, Bob Hayes. “Her career achievements are outstanding and speak for themselves, but more importantly, she is a true leader of our student-athletes. She teaches them every day about the importance of character, sportsmanship, and teamwork, and, in turn, produces ‘champions’ on and off the court.”

The South Carolina State Department of Education and the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) named Mary Ford Elementary School’s Charlene Barbot the 2018 South Carolina School Nurse of the Year, and Ellen Nitz, Nurse Liaison for Districts 1 and 2, the 2018 South Carolina School Nurse Administrator of the Year.

Barbot has 25 years of pediatric nursing experience, and just completed her third year at Mary Ford. She graduated from Lander University with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in 1994, and is a member of the National Association of School Nurses and South Carolina Association of School Nurses (SCASN). Barbot manages clinic visits, medications, and health screenings for students at her school and also mentors nursing students from Trident Technical College, MUSC, and Charleston Southern University. Under her leadership, Mary Ford Elementary won the 2016-2017 Boeing Center for Children’s Wellness School Health Initiative Award.

“Without Charlene’s efforts, energy, and enthusiasm for building a school around Maslow’s Hierarchy, we would have never made the progress we have for children,” stated Mary Ford Principal LaDene Conroy. “She cares about the students, families, and teachers. Her boundaries are limitless for reaching out to the community-based sponsors and stakeholders. It seems like we have new partners once a week, and they do great work with their donations and commitment to the children and school. She is an amazing gift and a shiny, bright star in the Mary Ford Constellation.”

“Charlene is a dedicated advocate for the Mary Ford community,” said Melissa Prendergrast, CCSD’s Director of Nursing Services. “She is keenly aware of her school’s needs and works tirelessly to meet those needs. She is a thorough planner, an active member of the school team, and a wellness champion!”

Nitz has served as a CCSD Nurse Liaison for 10 years and, according to Prendergrast, is a key contributor to program development and management. She works closely with area pediatricians and DHEC to meet the needs of students. She serves as a consultant for her nurses on Individual Health Care Plans, emergency plans, immunizations, screenings, safety plans, and parent concerns. She has worked with Roper St. Francis staff to put an Automated External Defibrillator (AED) in every school and with MUSC and the American Heart Association as the lead CPR/AED/First Aid Instructor.

“Ellen is a lifelong learner who takes time to update and educate herself to be the best that she can be,” added Prendergrast. “She sets the bar high for her nurses as well as herself. She is a compassionate, informed, and professional school nurse administrator.”
Stephanie Haecherl’s 10th year in education is probably going to be the most memorable of her career thus far. That’s because she was named the 2018 Charleston County School District (CCSD) Teacher of the Year at this year’s Teacher of the Year Celebration. The second grade teacher at Mamie P. Whitesides Elementary School heard her name called in front of hundreds of her colleagues, the CCSD Board of Trustees, district partners, and sponsors.

“It feels very rewarding,” explained Haecherl. “I am just so overwhelmed. I am so excited and so happy to be able to represent my school and my district. It is worth it to be able to stand up and speak for students and teachers, to have a voice in how we can improve education, and keep doing the things that are good and make them even better.”

Haecherl is a National Board Certified teacher, and received her Bachelor of Arts in Communications/Public Relations from Mars Hill College (currently Mars Hill University) and Master of Education in Divergent Learning from Columbia College. Haecherl says she is committed to being a lifelong learner and leader, with current focuses on grant writing and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) initiatives.

“I am so very proud of her,” added Whitesides Principal Cynthia Perez. “I cannot think of anyone that’s more deserving, and we had a room full of teachers who were deserving of that [award]. She gives it her heart and soul every single day. She knows those kids in and out, not only in her classroom, but in her grade level and throughout the school.”

Haecherl will help lead the CCSD Teacher of the Year Roundtable during the 2018-2019 school year; she also received a one-year lease to drive a MINI Cooper. Haecherl follows 2017 honoree, Mia Pace of Julian Mitchell Math and Science Elementary School, on the acclaimed list of CCSD Teachers of the Year.

“Sherry Eppelsheimer (Wando’s current principal), former principal and mentor Lucy Beckham, and an administrative staff that believes in the power of the arts to impact and teach kids.”

Peeples, a product of Charleston County School District schools herself, was honored at an awards ceremony during 2017 South Carolina Art Education Association staff development conference at USC-Beaufort on Saturday, November 4, 2017.

“We are both pleased and honored to congratulate Ms. Peeples on being selected to receive the South Carolina Art Education Association’s Secondary Art Educator of the Year,” said Dr. Eppelsheimer. “Ms. Peeples is an integral part of our visual arts department’s acclaimed success. She has contributed so much to students through sharing her knowledge and instilling a true love and respect for the arts.”
Charleston County School District named the following individuals the 2018 Rookie Teachers of the Year:

- **Early Childhood**: Gabrielle Poe Speight, A.C. Corcoran Elementary School
- **Elementary**: Shelby Brockhausen, Chicora Elementary School
- **Middle**: Kathryn Muehleisen, Jerry Zucker Middle School of Science
- **High**: Emily Paul, St. John’s High School

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**CCSD Teacher of the Year Finalists**

**2018 Teacher of the Year Runner-up, Margaret Hale, James Island Elementary**

Hale is a sixteen year veteran in education who is serving as the teacher librarian at James Island Elementary School. Margaret received her Bachelor of Science in Psychology from College of Charleston and her Master of Library and Information Science from the University of South Carolina. She is certified by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards.

**Joyce Stewart-Gibbs, E.B. Ellington Elementary**

Gibbs is an accomplished teacher with 25 years of experience. Having taught second, third, and fourth grade, she currently teaches third grade at E.B. Ellington Elementary. She has a passion for building relationships with her students by creating a sense of community in her classroom.

**Kevin Short, Charleston County School of the Arts**

Short attended Clemson University, where he received his Bachelor of Science in Biological Science, and the Medical University of South Carolina where he received his Master of Science in Environmental Studies. He is pursuing a Master of Education in Interdisciplinary STEM Education at The Citadel. Serving as a science teacher, department chair and science liaison at the Charleston County School of the Arts, Kevin is celebrating his eighth year in education.

**Amanda Prohaska, Mount Pleasant Academy**

Prohaska teaches kindergarten through fifth grade Spanish and serves as the School Improvement Council chairperson at Mount Pleasant Academy. Amanda received a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Mass Communications from the University of South Carolina and a Master of Education in Languages from College of Charleston. She is celebrating her sixth year teaching.

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**CCSD Rookie Teachers of the Year**

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- **Early Childhood**: Gabrielle Poe Speight, A.C. Corcoran Elementary School
- **Elementary**: Shelby Brockhausen, Chicora Elementary School
- **Middle**: Kathryn Muehleisen, Jerry Zucker Middle School of Science
- **High**: Emily Paul, St. John’s High School
Maria Royle, an ESOL teacher at R.B. Stall was awarded the Charleston County School District 2018 Going the Extra Mile Award. Maria, who is also certified to teach science, embarked on a long process to lead ESOL students at Stall to be a part of a nationwide NASA project involving the total solar eclipse this past August. The project’s mission was to launch a weather balloon to record video and collect scientific data during the eclipse. Maria spent countless hours, days, weeks, and months doing whatever it took physically, emotionally, and financially, to keep the project going because she believed, and knew, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education would empower her students, and give the Spanish-speaking community of Stall pride. When the eclipse arrived on August 21, 2017, the balloon launch at Joe Riley Park was a success. Their story was well documented by local media, and served as a reminder to everyone in the Lowcountry what is possible, regardless of their background. Maria is still writing her story as an educator, and as an amazing representative for those who are deaf and hard of hearing. She was also honored by the Air Force as their Charleston County Teacher of the Year for her provision of STEM-related opportunities for students.

South Carolina Law Related Education Teacher of the Year

Liz Good, Buist Social Studies Middle School teacher, was named this year’s South Carolina Law Related Education Teacher of the Year by the SC Bar Association. Good consistently engages her students in Mock Trial, We the People, Civic Action Learning Projects, and other activities which prepare students for their role as educated citizens who are growing in their competencies toward civic readiness. She is dedicated to her students and to the field of social studies and its role in the development of the skills and dispositions of the Profile of the South Carolina Graduate.

USA Today Nominates North Charleston High Digital Arts and Design Teacher for National Award

Cory McBee, Digital Art and Design Instructor at North Charleston High School, was nominated this year in USA Today’s “Makers in the USA: Best Arts & Crafts” contest. The nomination for McBee's artistic work outside the classroom was the talk of the school, and her students voted daily in support of their teacher's national recognition.

"Students have really gotten into the spirit of the contest, but more importantly, the whole thing has sparked some terrific conversations about the career opportunities for professionals with Digital Arts & Design certifications and college degrees,” said McBee.

“It was so flattering to be recognized for my work outside school, but my passion continues to be my amazing students at North Charleston High School,” McBee added.
ATHLETIC STATE RECOGNITIONS

**FALL**

Individual winner (AA)
Name: Colin Baker
School: Academic Magnet
Year in school: Junior
Sport: Boys' Cross Country (15:54)

Individual winner (AAAAA)
Members: Chase Collier, Cameron Mehta, Johnny Gush, and Ryan Pitts
School: Wando
Sport: Boys' Swimming
Event: 200m medley relay (1:35.87)

Members: Ryan Pitts, Chase Collier, Piotr Tarala, and Johnny Gush
School: Wando
Sport: Boys' Swimming
Event: 400m freestyle relay (3:11.40)

**SPRING**

Individual winner (A)
Members: Kayla Bennett, Rosalyn Bryant, Aaliya Brown, and Alana Foster
School: Baptist Hill
Sport: Girls' Track and Field
Event: 4 x 100m relay (50.59)

Individual winner (AAAAA)
Name: Zaria Nelson
School: James Island Charter
Year in school: Senior
Sport: Boys' Track and Field
Event: 3200m (9:38.55)

**WINTER**

Individual winner (AA-A)
Name: Augustis Frasier
School: Military Magnet Academy
Year in school: Junior
Sport: Boys' Track and Field
Event: 400m hurdles (59.14)

Name: Johnny Gush
School: Wando
Year in school: Senior
Sport: Boys' Swimming
Event: 100m butterfly (50.11)

Name: Cameron Mehta
School: Wando
Year in school: Junior
Sport: Boys' Swimming
Event: 100m freestyle (59.74)

Name: Kelvin Holman, Aubrey Wright, Rashawn Brown, Rashard Smith
School: Military Magnet Academy
Sport: Boys' Track and Field
Event: 4 x 100m relay (42.89)

Name: Rashard Smith
School: Military Magnet Academy
Year in school: Senior
Sport: Boys' Track and Field
Events: 100m (10.85) and 200m (22.57)

Name: Zeniyah Lawrence
School: Wando
Year in school: Senior
Sport: Girls' Track and Field
Events: Discus (136-07) and Shot Put (41-03)

Name: David Kowalchick
School: Wando
Year in school: Junior
Sport: Boys' Track and Field
Event: Discus (166-09)

Name: Anthony "Jelly" Wells
School: North Charleston
Year in school: Senior
Sport: Wrestling
Event: 126 pounds

Name: Johnny Gush
School: Wando
Year in school: Senior
Sport: Boys' Swimming
Event: 100m butterfly (50.11)

Name: Cameron Mehta
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Events: Discus (136-07) and Shot Put (41-03)

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School: Wando
Year in school: Junior
Sport: Boys' Track and Field
Event: Discus (166-09)

Name: Anthony "Jelly" Wells
School: North Charleston
Year in school: Senior
Sport: Wrestling
Event: 126 pounds
Academic Magnet Boys’ Soccer (AA)
State Championship
Season Record: 19-3
Defeated St. Joseph’s 0-0 (4-3 F/PK)

ROSTER
Benji Vazquez
Chase Michaelsen
Manuel Gasper
Andrew Zimlich
David Novo
Niko Apostolou
Ishann Mehrotra
Bryan Bracy
Will Schnell
Ethan Ouelette
Jackson Bracy
Dhillon Wegner
Trap Puckette
Sam Maher
Mason Bishop
Lucas Dillard
Jonathan Ye
Nick Price
Adam Ziff
Dylan Odell
Conolly Burgess
Aidan Worthington
Rey Ortiz
Mills Jordan
Alex Hernandez
Brady Siegan
Simon Vaglienti

Head Coach
Jason Hamil

Assistant Coaches
CJ Macauley
Ryan McLaughlin

Trainer
Lindsey Clark

Academic Magnet Girls’ Soccer (AA)
State Championship
Season Record: 22-4-1
Defeated Southside Christian 2-1

ROSTER
Trinity McManus
Jourdan Gruber
Maisy Cochran
Abby Tickle
Sophia Ludman
Emma Sherman
Claire Hunt
Libby Jaskwich
Riley Haas
Emma Otey
Emma Ladd
Anna Grace Maher
Lauren Cuppy
Mary Ashron
Jenkins
Ashley Anderson
Anne Claire Purcell
Meredith Gee
Morgan Southworth
Riane Coman
Rown Burns
Molly Dickerson
Lauren Osborne
Emma Broucasault
Nora Powell

Head Coach
Alister DeLong

Assistant Coach
Doug DeLong

Trainer
Lindsey Clarke

Academic Magnet Boys’ Tennis (AA)
State Championship
Season Record: 12-2
Defeated St. Joseph’s 5-2

ROSTER
Sam Kavarana
Earl Navarro
Cameron Dawson
Vinod Pandey
Michael Pi
Timothy Wilson
Andrew Demetre
Forrest Moon
John McFee
Kyle Smith

Head Coach
Steve Percy

Baptist Hill Makes a Run for State Title in Football
Baptist Hill’s 2017 football team made history for their school and for the district. With a dominating 54-13 victory over C.E. Murray on a chilly Friday night in late November, the Bobcats captured the SCHSL A Lower State title for the first time ever. It was their 11th win of the season, a new program record, and they became the first CCSD football team to advance to the state finals since R.B. Stall in 1991. Even though Head Coach Marion Brown, star quarterback Corey Fields, and the rest of this special group fell in the state title game to Lamar, they galvanized the Baptist Hill community, made the entire county and district proud, and provided lifelong memories for everyone who experienced their amazing run.
Wando Boys’ Soccer (AAAAA) State Championship
Season Record: 27-0
Ranked 1st in nation by USA Today for second year in a row
Defeated Nation Ford 2-1 (54th straight win)

ROSTER
Will Kendrick
JR Carter
Cole Barnard
Logan McCoy
Brandon Jeffries
Dane Southard
Evon Posanski
Jonah Miller
Ben Fayssoux
Jacob Bauer
Alex Holloman
Theo Wichmann
Andrew Å
Liam Hudrock
Kevin Wray
Coach
Lance Renes

Wando Boys’ Track and Field (AAAAA) State Championship
ROSTER
Will Kendrick
JR Carter
Dane Southard
Evon Posanski
Jonah Miller
Ben Fayssoux
Jacob Bauer
Alex Holloman
Theo Wichmann
Andrew Å
Liam Hudrock
Kevin Wray
Coach
Lance Renes

The boys’ soccer team at Wando was not only the top program in South Carolina in 2018; the Warriors were the top program in the country. For the second year, Shilo Tisdale’s club won the SCHSL AAAAA state championship with a perfect 27-0 record, and finished the year ranked #1 in the USA Today’s Super 25 Poll for high school boys’ soccer. Led by Gatorade State Player of the Year Charlie Marino, Wando extended its state-record winning streak to 54 with a 2-1 victory over Nation Ford in the state championship match in mid-May. The boys’ soccer program has now won eight SCHSL state titles; they also won back-to-back state championships in 1991 and 1992.
TOP ROW (left to right): Academic Magnet Boys’ Soccer Team, Wando Girls’ Swimming Team with state trophy

MIDDLE ROW (left to right): Academic Magnet Boys’ Tennis Team, Wando Boys’ and Girls’ Swimming Teams, Wando Boys’ Track & Field

BOTTOM ROW (left to right): Wando Boys’ Lacrosse, Academic Magnet Girls’ Soccer Team
Lowcountry native Carlos Dunlap has made a name for himself in the National Football League. The Bengals’ star defensive end has appeared in two Pro Bowls, and is the franchise’s all-time sack leader. Despite his fame, and success on the national stage, he continues to be involved in his hometown. That involves his work with W.B. Goodwin Elementary School, where his mother, Dr. Diane Ross, was the principal; she retired at the end of the school year. Dunlap launched his anti-bullying and literacy campaign through his own foundation, the Carlos Dunlap Foundation (CDF), this year. He made a virtual stop at Goodwin in early November; he spoke with students for an hour through Skype about a book titled “Malik the Difference Maker” by Dr. LaMarque D. Ward, Sr., which has an anti-bullying message. Dunlap provided several copies for fifth grade students so they could read and discuss it with their friends and classmates.

“Reading the book made a difference to me. People need to stop bullying other people. It’s not right. I made a promise to stop bullying people and help others.” – Shawn Brown, 5th grader
Students answered questions and had a productive conversation with Dunlap; they addressed what bullying looks like and how it affects other people.

“Reading the book made a difference to me,” stated 5th grader, Shawn Brown. “People need to stop bullying other people. It’s not right. I made a promise to stop bullying people and help others.”

The opportunity to interact with Dunlap continued over the weekend, in another state! Sixteen students from Goodwin went to a Bengals’ game with the Jaguars in Jacksonville, FL a few days later. They were recognized before the contest, and met several players as well as Cincinnati’s head coach, Marvin Lewis. Students also signed an anti-bullying promise to help promote the campaign. Dunlap’s team ended up losing, 23-7, but it was still an amazing experience. The students received a little “airtime” during the CBS broadcast of the game.

The contest also featured a tense moment between Cincinnati’s standout wide receiver A.J. Green and Jacksonville’s cornerback Jalen Ramsey; they got into a serious altercation on the field. Third grader Daven Brown witnessed the situation, which led to a discussion among the students and chaperones about how bullying can lead to a fight.

“I had a good experience at the football game,” commented Brown. “When something happened in the game that was tied to bullying, it was not nice what [they] did. I can’t think about why [they] had to do that. No one should ever bully someone.”

Tiffany Shepard, Community Relations and Marketing Director for the CDF, helped Dunlap spearhead this initiative, which also included a total of six schools in Cincinnati, Cleveland, and Pittsburgh. Scholars go through an hour-long program with Dunlap, and discuss the dangers of bullying and how to be a difference maker in stopping it.

“Carlos made an impact on these students,” added Ross. “I know he hopes to share more books and speak with more students about what he calls his ‘Bully-Free Zone.’ We appreciate the opportunity to work with him and his foundation; the experience made a difference for our students.”

For more information about Dunlap’s anti-bullying campaign, contact Tiffany Shepard at TeamDunlap96@gmail.com.
Students at the Charleston County School District’s Early College High School don’t have a football team to root for, or a gym, or even their own cafeteria. But they have the opportunity to earn up to two years of college credit by the time they graduate from high school.

It’s a bold partnership between the district and Trident Technical College. The program, which completed its inaugural year this past May, has been an overwhelming success. It aims to identify highly motivated students in the academic middle, and then push them to achieve more than they thought possible. “We expect far too little from students,” said program director Vanessa Denney. “If we raise the bar high, and then support them, they will reach the goal.”

Customized attention

Denney said the program on Trident Tech’s Palmer Campus, has been an amazing success so far. Teachers work closely with students so they know each student’s individual needs. Denney checks students’ grades every other week and sends an email to parents updating them on their child’s progress every week. The program also offers a strong support component that teaches students how to study, take notes, and other skills that will help them in both high school and college. “The key is customized attention,” she said. “We know the kids.”

The district launched the program in the fall, with about 100 freshman. The plan is to add a freshman class each year, so enrollment eventually will be around 400 students. And the word is getting out. More than 240 qualified rising freshman from across the district applied for the 2018-2019 school year, and 115 of them were accepted. The program also will enroll an additional 20 sophomores, who strive to be educators, as part of the Teach Local program. “It’s one of the answers to the teacher shortage,” Denney said.

“We expect far too little from students. If we raise the bar high, and then support them, they will reach the goal.”

– Vanessa Denney, Early College High School Program Director
The students enrolled this year did well, she said. First semester end-of-course exam scores were great, with 98 percent of students passing the English exam, 87 percent passing the algebra exam and 85 percent passing the biology exam. And there were only 16 discipline referrals the entire year.

Ethan Bryant, a 15-year-old who would have attended West Ashley High School if he hadn’t been accepted in the Early College program, said he enrolled to get two years of free college and be around other dedicated, hard-working students. He’s happy with his choice, he said, especially because the teachers are there to help students. “I’m never stuck on anything for more than a few days,” he said. “I feel engaged. I want to keep my grades up.”

Kaylyn Jones, who also is 15 and would have attended North Charleston High School, said her mother first learned about the program, then encouraged Kayln to give it a try. She’s glad she did. “I won’t be the first person in my family to go to college,” Kayln said. “But I’ll be the first 18-year-old in my family to get my high school diploma and my associate’s degree.”

Students in the program complete their required high school courses early in their junior year. Then, they take dual-credit courses through Trident Tech, alongside college students. Denney said many graduates of the program will earn an associate’s degree by the time they graduate, and all students will leave the program with at least a year of college credit.

Jones also said the program feels like family, a sentiment echoed by other students and staff. And nowhere is it more apparent than in hallways, which are lined with pink ribbons students made to support Denney, who was diagnosed with breast cancer. Denney, who is doing well since the diagnosis, said she was touched by the gesture.

Lessons learned

Denney said her team was better able to describe the program to prospective students for the 2018-2019 school year because it had been up and running for several months. That’s important, she said, because it’s not a good fit for every student. It’s a very quiet, studious environment, and students move at a brisk academic pace. Help is always available, but students have to work hard and be dedicated to their studies. “They have to want it,” she said.

The programs needs some tweaks, but no major structural changes, she said. It needs more staff. And she would like to create a separate class for the academic support program.

What it needs most though is school spirit, she said, and she vowed to improve that next year. “I want to inject a tidal wave of spirit.”

She wants all of her students to be successful. And any student who is accepted and really wants it can succeed. “I define success as not quitting,” she said. “Success is cool here.”
Minnie Hughes Hosts Third Annual Literacy Night

Minnie Hughes hosted their third annual Literacy Night in partnership with Barnes and Noble of West Ashley on October 5, 2017.

Parents, students, and teachers came out to celebrate the importance of reading, while listening to violin music performed by the school’s strings instructor. Teachers dressed as superheroes “fighting for reading to succeed.” Parents received handouts of tips to practice when reading at home with their children.

Students also participated in story time and received a free book. The school’s Parent Teacher Association (PTA) supported the event by raffling off a free television for parents. The organization also won a $1,000 grant from National PTA to host another family literacy night during Take Your Family to School Week Feb. 11-17, 2018!

Garrett Gives Day

Gordon G. Garrett Academy of Technology hosted “Garrett Gives Day” on December 15 as a way to highlight several community service projects the scholars and staff have been involved in this year.

For the past six years, Garrett has selected local community service, international, and statewide projects for which students and staff have helped raise awareness and/or secured supplies or donations to as a way to give back. Last fall, students at Garrett chose four organizations to support.

For their international project, Garrett students chose Water Missions International for which they raised over $500. For the school’s statewide project, they hosted a domestic violence fundraiser and awareness event benefiting My Sister’s House in which they raised $350 cash and obtained nearly $800 worth of donated items and supplies. Locally, students served in a Hunger Awareness Project collecting hundreds of canned goods and non perishable items for the Lowcountry Food Bank. Students also started collected Toys for Tots in December around the time of the Garrett Gives Day celebration.

“‘You know, I think it builds character,’” said former Garrett Principal Charity Summers. “‘The reason why I like for my children to be involved in things like this is it helps them to understand that they, no matter how little or how much they have, they can still impact someone else’s life in a positive way.’”

During the “Garrett Gives Day” event, the checks and items collected by scholars were presented to representatives from the local organizations.

“It changes you inside and, like your mindset is different when you give back to the community,” said Garrett senior, Kenia Vargus. “You start to appreciate everything the people do for you and everything that you can do for them.”
The theme for Edith L. Frierson Elementary School’s Family Literacy Night in November was “Giant Steps to Change the World.” So maybe it was appropriate that an act of generosity, the donation of shoes, accompanied this year’s event.

A non-profit organization, Save the Children, partners up with the shoe company TOMS, to donate shoes at no cost to students in rural communities across the United States and around the world. After a successful campaign in the Midlands of South Carolina, Save the Children provided 200 pairs of shoes to Frierson.

Principal Dr. Deborah Davis-Cummings began the literacy night program by reading the book “Giant Steps to Change the World,” written by award-winning filmmaker Spike Lee and Tonya Lewis Lee, to the students and their families. Following the read-aloud session, families moved through a series of literacy-based stations. The staff, working with the school’s literacy coach, Erica McCarty, created engaging activities for the children and their parents. Then, at the final station, the students received a pair of TOMS shoes.

Considering the time of the year, and that it was “Giving Tuesday” around the nation, this event and moment had extra meaning for the Frierson school community. The staff was able to store plenty of extra shoes (there are 121 students that attend Frierson); they will be able to provide new pairs to students who outgrow their first ones during the school year, or give them to new students who arrive throughout the school year.

“It is my personal mantra that to whom much is given, much is required,” explained Dr. Davis-Cummings. “I believe that if we give our children what they need, they will work for the things they want. This is yet another blessing that fulfills a need.”

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**EVERY KID DESERVES A BIKE PART TWO!**

Students at Mt. Zion Elementary School received a pleasant surprise the morning of May 1, 2018. The non-profit, Going Places, founded by former Pepperhill first grade teacher and the 2017 CCSD Going the Extra Mile award recipient Katie Blomquist, supplied 300+ bicycles, one for every student at the school on John’s Island.

Mayor John Tecklenburg and Cool Ray, the SC Stingrays Hockey mascot, were on hand to take part in the celebration!

Blomquist was instrumental in getting bicycles donated to every student at Pepperhill last year, which served as a catalyst to turn her passion for brightening kids’ lives into a organization dedicated to performing acts like one at Mt. Zion every day.

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Hundres of Shoes Donated to Scholars at Frierson

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Student Get Hooked on Guitars from the First Chord

What do you get when you mix a group of enthusiastic middle-schoolers, a bunch of new guitars, and a nationally known recording artist? You get an afterschool program that rocks!

Eleven students from St. James-Santee Elementary-Middle School in McClellanville had their first guitar lesson in November, and they were totally focused on the instruments despite the lesson coming at the end of a long school day. Danielle Howle, artist in residence at Awendaw Green, who recently released a new CD, spent the first class teaching the children to connect with their instruments, tune them and strum a chord. “Every single being on the planet is endowed with the ability to create music,” she told the group. “This is an extension of your heart.”

Students at St. James-Santee weighed in on which musical instrument they would like to learn to play, and they overwhelmingly chose the guitar, said Ashley Peters, a program officer for the district’s Department of Expanded Learning.

She said her department is using a portion of a federal 21st Century Grant to run the program. The four-year, $700,000 grant is meant to bring after-school opportunities to students in rural schools that have a large percentage of lower-income students. Grant funds also are covering the cost of transporting students. That’s especially important in rural schools, because many parents must rely on the school bus to bring their children home at the end of the day. If the grant didn’t provide transportation, many students couldn’t participate in afterschool programs. “Kids in rural areas might not have the opportunity to do these things,” Peters said.

Seventh-grader Destiny Green said she’s excited about learning to play the guitar, and she hopes someday to be able to play “This Little Light of Mine,” one of her favorite songs. “I love music,” she said.

Kerry Hayes, another seventh-grader, said he likes the sound a guitar makes. And he hopes he eventually can learn to play a hip-hop song.

Stefani Timmerman, visual arts teacher at St. James-Santee, said the students’ first goal is to learn to play R. Kelly’s “I Believe I Can Fly.”

Timmerman, a songwriter who also plays the guitar, is working with Howle in the after-school program. She said music simply is another good vehicle to help students learn, and many students are receptive to it. They relate well to music because they hear it a lot in their homes and churches, she said.

For instance, her students were studying artist Romare Bearden, who is widely known for his work in collages. In addition to drawing and painting, the lessons include writing and recording songs. The music component helps the students engage in learning, she said.

The school now has 22 guitars, which were purchased by the grant, Timmerman said. In addition to using them in the after-school program, she keeps some in her classroom and uses them with younger students.

Timmerman hopes that someday soon the school will have enough guitars so students who are learning to play can take them home to practice. For now, the instruments have to remain at the school. She thinks the students would be even more excited about music if they could bring the instruments home. “There’s just something about holding a guitar.”

E.B. Ellington Students Turned Movie Producers

The Advanced Studies fifth-grade students at E.B. Ellington, led by their teacher Samantha Blake, have been busy in their studio, Eagle’s Nest Film Studio.

Throughout the entire year, they have learned the “behind the scenes” aspects of writing and producing a weekly news program for the school. Students were so adept at mastering the skills needed for the news program that they decided to take on the challenge of producing a movie during the spring semester.

Since January, students have written a script, composed the background music and theme song, created digital backgrounds, designed costumes, acted, filmed, and produced the movie, Corrupted.

The film is about technology that has gone awry and includes a little humor mixed in with suspense.

Visit E.B. Ellington’s YouTube channel to view Corrupted and other works produced by the school!
Charleston County School District (CCSD) is proud to announce two elementary schools have been awarded Distinguished Arts Program (DAP) grants from the South Carolina Department of Education (SCDOE). Ashley River Creative Arts Elementary School (ARCAES) and Sanders-Clyde Creative Arts Elementary School (SCCAES) are each receiving over $10,000 to provide ongoing professional development and arts integration for the 2017-18 school year.

DAP grants provide funds for one year projects. The purpose of DAP is to assist schools and districts in developing and implementing arts initiatives that support quality arts education programs, which significantly improve student achievement in the arts. DAP recipients must have a strategic arts plan that includes all forms of art: dance, music, theatre, and visual arts. Approximately $1.4 million was allocated to support DAP awards across the state for the current academic calendar.

ARCAES and SCCAES, along with North Charleston Creative Arts Elementary School and Wando High School, also recently received nearly $40,000 to enhance arts education through the South Carolina Arts Commission Arts in Basic Curriculum (ABC) Advancement grants. “At Ashley River Creative Arts, we are so grateful that the SDE makes the Distinguished Arts Program grant possible,” commented ARCAES Principal Michelle Conner. “It provides us with the opportunity to expand our arts program by funding the purchase of a variety of arts materials, musical instruments, and performance equipment. We are also grateful for the ABC grant, which funds artists in residency programs each year. With the help of these grants, Ashley River is able to provide an excellent education through the arts to all of our students.”

ABC Advancement grants provide three-year funding to support schools and districts committed to implementing standards-based arts curricula and to making the arts an integral part of the basic curriculum and daily classroom instruction. ABC Advancement grants support comprehensive planning, strategic projects, and implementation of standards-based arts education initiatives including, but not limited to, artist residencies. Over $880,000 in grants was allocated to 79 schools in 2017-18.

“If you visit any of these schools, you will see how the arts have had a positive impact on school culture and students,” said Catherine Hines-McCormack, CCSD Interim Arts and World Languages Coordinator. “I applaud the visionary educators who applied for and won these competitive grants.”

“The arts enhance and improve education in all other academic areas,” added Sanders-Clyde’s grants liaison, Deborah Bobo. “Our brains are wired to retain information when we include movement, visuals, and music.”

In 2017, CCSD schools have received over $109,000 so far in arts grants from many organizations, including the SDE, SC Arts Commission, Lowcountry ArtsFund, and Charleston Marathon.
On Wednesday, October 18, 2017, cadets and staff from Military Magnet Academy (MMA) and The Citadel honored one of our nation’s military heroes, Captain Florent “Flo” A. Groberg, during a special ceremony as part of The Citadel’s Leadership Day. CPT Groberg received the Medal of Honor, the highest honor bestowed upon someone who serves in the United States military, for his actions in Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom in August 2012. During the event, CPT Groberg gave a speech, and participated in a question and answer session with cadets.

The Citadel created Leadership Day (formerly known as Heroism Day) a few years ago as a way to support local community groups that want to know more about what it takes to be a “leader.” The military college, which encourages its cadets to lead by serving others, sent some of its cadets to visit MMA classrooms to speak about leadership and heroism for the event.

The following month, MMA held its annual Veterans Day ceremony to honor all military veterans in the community with a parade and wreath-laying ceremony on Friday, November 10.

In addition, participating branches of the military, local law enforcement agencies, and first responders had displays set-up and were on hand to speak with visitors.
Another Year of Success Reading Around the Bases

Students from CCSD had to dodge the raindrops at Riley Park on May 30 for the annual Charleston RiverDogs Education Day Game, but that didn’t dampen the spirits of the classes that were honored for winning the “Reading Around the Bases” competition at their school!

Charleston County School District (CCSD) students “read” their way to Riley Park this semester through “Reading Around the Bases,” a joint initiative with the Charleston RiverDogs and CCSD.

“Reading Around the Bases” started last school year as a way to encourage literacy. The Lowcountry’s professional baseball team and South Atlantic League affiliate of the 27-time World Series Champion New York Yankees was excited to help generate excitement for reading with second graders again in CCSD this year.

On January 22, at least 20 elementary schools throughout Charleston County started a 12-week baseball-themed incentive program. Each student received a Reading Challenge packet that included a score card, tracking sheet, and their very own personal baseball card.

To move around the bases on the score card, a student had to read a certain number of pages: 100 pages for a single, 200 pages for a double, 300 pages for a triple, and 500 pages for a home run. Students also earned points for their class depending on how far they advanced on the score card.

Special guests from the RiverDogs visited schools in the District throughout the 12 weeks to provide encouragement, fun, and serve as volunteer readers.

“We are thankful the RiverDogs want to continue to work with us in our goal of improving literacy throughout the district,” said Cindy Ambrose, CCSD’s Deputy Superintendent of Learning Services. “The enthusiasm they bring to our schools is contagious, and our teachers and media specialists enjoy having Charlie T. RiverDog visit their classrooms and libraries during this exciting program.”

The winning second grade class from each participating school was a part of a special pre-game parade, received special seating at the stadium, and participated in contests during the Education Day Game at Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Park on May 30.

“The entire RiverDogs staff is eager to get out to Lowcountry schools with the ‘Reading Around the Bases’ program once again,” added RiverDogs President and General Manager Dave Echols. “Promoting literacy in the local community continues to be an organizational goal, and we are proud to partner with CCSD for another year to bring our sense of reading and fun to Lowcountry second graders.”

“We are thankful the RiverDogs want to continue to work with us in our goal of improving literacy throughout the district. The enthusiasm they bring to our schools is contagious, and our teachers and media specialists enjoy having Charlie T. RiverDog visit their classrooms and libraries during this exciting program.” – Cindy Ambrose, CCSD’s Deputy Superintendent of Learning Services
CCSD teachers and staff enjoyed an evening of celebration with friends and family at this year’s annual Educators’ Night at the Riverdogs! On Friday, May 4, staff celebrated with fireworks and fun as they watched the Riverdogs take on the Lexington Legends. CCSD’s 2018 Teacher of the Year, Stephanie Haecherl, was on hand to throw out the ceremonial first pitch along with Chief Operating Officer Jeff Borowy. Both did an outstanding job kicking off the festivities!
Charleston County Seniors' ACT Scores Beat the State Average

Charleston County seniors’ scores on the ACT, a national college admissions examination, took a step up in 2017, an indicator the students are increasingly more prepared to succeed in higher education.

Students, on average, earned a composite score of 19.6, according to data released by the State Department of Education last fall. That’s up .3 points from 19.3 in 2016, a jump ACT officials confirmed as statistically significant.

That’s especially notable for a South Carolina school district. According to State Department of Education spokesman Ryan Brown, South Carolina is one of only 17 states in the country that required all students in their junior year to take the ACT, even those who had special needs, hadn’t taken the recommended preparatory courses and weren’t interested in pursuing a four-year degree.

The 2,828 Charleston County School District students who graduated in 2017 took the test in their junior year. They beat the state average composite score of 18.7 by .9 points. A composite score is a student’s average on the four subject-area tests: English, mathematics, reading and science. The highest possible score on the 215-question multiple-choice test is 36.

Inside CCSD, students who completed the core college-preparatory curriculum – four years of English and three years of math, social studies and science – had an average composite score of 21.5 compared to 17 for those who not completed such courses. And three district high schools had average composite scores that beat the national average of 21 – Academic Magnet High School, with an average score of 29.5; School of the Arts, 24.5; and Wando High School, 22.1.

CCSD data also showed that:

- 47 percent of seniors who took the test earned the “college-ready” composite score of 20 or higher.
- 52 percent earned an 18 or higher on the English portion of the test, a benchmark predictive of success in a college-level English composition course.
- 33 percent scored 22 or higher on the math portion of the test, a benchmark predictive of success in college-level algebra.
- 42 percent earned a score of 22 or higher in reading, a benchmark predictive of success in college-level social studies.
- 32 percent earned a score of 23 or higher in science, a benchmark predictive of success in college-level biology.
- CCSD students scored higher than the state average on all of the benchmarks above.

Katherine Gehr, director of accelerated learning, said district officials last year took a “radically different” and data-driven approach to improving ACT scores.

The district plans to use a similar, data-driven approach to improving ACT scores this year, Gehr said.

The 2016-2017 school year marked the last of three consecutive school years where all South Carolina students were required to take the ACT in their junior year, as required by the state legislature. The General Assembly in the 2017 legislative session rescinded that requirement.

Beginning in the 2017-2018 school year, high school juniors will be offered the option of taking the ACT or the SAT, another national college admissions examination, free of charge.

Brown said it’s important to let students know that they can take the ACT again if they are not satisfied with their initial scores. Waivers were available for students who can’t afford the test fees, he said. “Don’t let money be a factor re-taking it.”
W.B. Goodwin Elementary School (WBGES) is proud to announce the creation of a National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) Junior chapter. Representatives from the NSBE Charleston Professionals Chapter, Boeing South Carolina, and the Charleston County School District (CCSD) afterschool program, Kaleidoscope, worked together to establish the new group for Goodwin students. The community partners involved and students actually met for the first time on September 19, 2017.

“The initial meeting went very well,” said Boeing SC Strategy and Integration Education Relations Specialist, Frank Hatten. “The students seemed very excited to be a part of this new opportunity.”

Students will learn about the career fields related to engineering (i.e. electrical, chemical, and mechanical), and will be able to participate in hands-on projects with the community members and volunteers. The initial meeting set the ground rules and expectations. The program is funded in part by the Boeing Gift and Volunteer Match program.

Goodwin staff members are excited about the relationship with the local NSBE Charleston Professionals Chapter, and seek to continue exposing scholars to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), along with advance manufacturing.

“We are excited and fortunate to have this opportunity to partner with the National Society of Black Engineers and Boeing,” exclaimed former WBGES Principal Dr. Diane Ross. “I am also thankful for Amanda Workman (fifth grade teacher at Goodwin) and Seth Summers (the school’s Kaleidoscope Director), who are leading this endeavor here at Goodwin. We are all extremely grateful for this opportunity to serve the students at our school, and so thankful for members of our community who are volunteering to make a difference in the lives of our students.”

Ross mentioned that this partnership is expected to stimulate and develop student interest in the various engineering disciplines, increase the number of minority students studying engineering at higher levels of education, encourage students to seek advanced degrees in engineering or related fields, obtain professional engineering registrations, and promote public awareness of engineering and the opportunities for African-Americans and other minorities in world of engineering.

Murray-LaSaine Celebrates Peace Day

On September 21, 2017, Murray-LaSaine Elementary School celebrated International Peace Day by forming a human Peace Symbol with their families, students, staff, and community members!

Peace, Love, and Dolphins at Stiles Point

This year at Stiles Point, students had the opportunity to participate in Kindness Day by wearing their Parent Teacher Association (PTA) “Peace, Love, Dolphins” shirts and creating a kindness rock!

The school’s PTA also hosted a schoolwide Art Walk Night on April 26!
Students Excel in Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program

Charleston County School District’s (CCSD) Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program, housed at Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA), is making a difference for all of the students there. That includes Jeni Kim, a sophomore in the program.

Her story, along with her accomplishments, were highlighted in a Stories of CCSD video feature in May. She earned first and second place in the 2018 National Technical Institute for the Deaf’s annual Art and Essay Competition; her winning piece of work was titled “Underwater Silence,” and her second place entry was titled “Acne.”

“Underwater Silence” also picked up a Silver Key honor in the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards. She also finished in fifth place in the 2018 Atlantic Institute Art and Essay Contest with her entry “DEAF POWER.”

According to Jeni’s teachers, her abilities really came to light after she received an iPad Pro and an Apple Pencil through a grant from Engaging Creative Minds.

Jeni credits her success to the amazing educators in the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program, as well as the teachers and students at SOA.

CCSD’s Deaf program is located at School of the Arts in North Charleston. This program is part of the Department of Exceptional Children. Students in this program have an Individual Education Plan that has placed them in this program. The program serves students that reside in Charleston County and also students that reside in Dorchester District II. Students have the opportunity to complete one of three possible educational tracts: SC State Diploma, Occupational Credential w/standard testing & Occupational Credential w/alternative assessment and District Certificate. Depending on each student’s individual needs and level of performance, students have access to all academic and non-major classes offered at SOA, as well as any virtual school options provided by CCSD. The school also provides direct instruction of daily living skills and other skills necessary for students on a modified curriculum. Teachers and other staff assist students with transition skills, career and vocational training, and job experiences in the community.
Twenty-two Charleston County School District (CCSD) scholars received prestigious National Merit Scholarships from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC). They are part of the group of winners in the 63rd annual National Merit Scholarship Program.

The following CCSD students received 2018 corporate-sponsored, college-sponsored, or $2,500 National Merit Scholarships:

**ACADEMIC MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Scholarship Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evelyn Bi</td>
<td>National Merit Citizen Watch Scholarship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gregg Gardner</td>
<td>National Merit Boeing Scholarship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alexander Puckhaber</td>
<td>National Merit South Carolina Sports Medicine and Orthopaedic Center Scholarship</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jenny Yao</td>
<td>National Merit South Carolina Sports Medicine and Orthopaedic Center Scholarship</td>
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<td>Jasper J. Bishop</td>
<td>University of South Carolina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sophie M. Crosby</td>
<td>University of South Carolina</td>
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<tr>
<td>David W. Martin</td>
<td>Clemson University</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hannah R. Martin</td>
<td>University of South Carolina</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kevin T. Walsh</td>
<td>Clemson University</td>
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<td>Alexander P. Adragna</td>
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<td>Olive K. Gardner</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trystan W. Knowles</td>
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<td>Earl W. Navarro</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael J. Pi</td>
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To compete for Merit Scholarship awards, semifinalists first had to advance to the next round by fulfilling additional requirements. Each semifinalist was asked to submit a detailed scholarship application, which included writing an essay and providing information about extracurricular activities, awards, and leadership positions. Semifinalists also had to have an outstanding academic record, be endorsed and recommended by a high school official, and earn SAT® scores that confirmed the qualifying test performance. From the semifinalist group, some 15,000 students met finalist requirements.

NMSC finances most of the single-payment National Merit $2,500 Scholarships. Corporations and company foundations that sponsor awards through NMSC also help underwrite these scholarships with grants they provide in lieu of paying administrative fees. Scholars may use their awards at any regionally accredited U.S. college or university. Officials of each sponsor college selected their scholarship winners from among the finalists in the 2018 National Merit Scholarship Program who plan to attend their institutions. These awards provide between $500 and $2,000 annually for up to four years of undergraduate study at the institution financing the scholarship.

According to the NMSC, more than 1.6 million juniors in more than 22,000 high schools entered the 2018 National Merit Scholarship competition when they took the 2016 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®), which served as an initial screen of program entrants.

In September 2017, approximately 16,000 semifinalists were named on a state-representational basis in numbers proportional to each state’s percentage of the national total of graduating high school seniors. Semifinalists were the highest-scoring program entrants in each state and represented less than one percent of the nation’s seniors.

At the conclusion of the 2018 competition, about 7,500 finalists were selected to receive National Merit Scholarships totaling over $31 million.

NMSC, a not-for-profit organization that operates without government assistance, was established in 1955.
Congratulations to our 2018 CCSD Valedictorians!

Jenny Yao
Academic Magnet High

Ajani Brooks
Baptist Hill High

Shanequa Christian Rainey
Burke High

John Hendricks
Charleston Charter School for Math And Science

Findley McCormick Emge
Charleston County School of the Arts

Janett Lozano
Garrett Academy of Technology

Sharita Symone Gibbs
Greg Mathis Charter High

Simran Kaur Paintlia
James Island Charter High

Jacob Allen Rowe
Military Magnet Academy

Patrick S. Cunningham, Jr.
North Charleston High

Maria Rojas Alfonzo
R.B. Stall High School

John Robert Zepke, III
St John's High

Samuel Murk Caya
Wando High School

Mary Stokes
West Ashley High
Alliance for Young Artists & Writers Honors SOA Scholar

Malachi Jones headed to Carnegie Hall this year - not to perform though. Instead, the senior at Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA) visited the historic performing arts center to be honored for his talent and ability in writing. The nonprofit Alliance for Young Artists & Writers awarded him with a Gold Medal Portfolio as part of the 2018 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards; he was one of 16 high school seniors in the nation to earn this top honor this year (and one of two from South Carolina).

“I remember a loud silence when I received the phone call,” Jones said. “I felt like a siren was going off inside my head, but I was speechless. I had been submitting work to Scholastic since 7th grade, so it is insane to me to think an audience outside my family and peers want to read and appreciate my work.”

Jones received the Gold Medal Portfolio for his writing and received a $10,000 scholarship. According to the Alliance, a record-breaking 346,000 works of art and writing were submitted at the regional level for this year’s competition; the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards are divided into 29 categories, including poetry, photography, and video game design.

Jones said he submitted a portfolio titled *Forget Us Not*, a collection of poetry and nonfiction literary essays about racial identity in modern America. He added that he used experiences from his own life as launching points for his work, which was displayed in the Art.Write.Now.2018 National Exhibition in early June. He was also invited to participate in a week-long national celebration in New York City, which included an awards ceremony at Carnegie Hall on June 7, 2018.

“It is amazing to think my ability to write has led to being recognized in this way, and that my work will be seen by so many people,” said Jones.

The Scholastic Art & Writing Awards is the longest-running recognition program for creative teenagers in grades 7-12 in the country; it started in 1923.

“We are thrilled to celebrate this honor with Malachi and proud to have Charleston County School of the Arts represented among the Gold Medal Portfolio Winners!” exclaimed Dr. Shannon Cook, Principal at SOA.

To learn more about this honor, and to find a complete list of the 2018 Scholastic Art & Writing Awards national recipients, visit: www.artandwriting.org.

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Burke Scholar Wins Statewide Logo Contest for Shred360

Micah Brown helped start the Digital Arts program at Burke High School (BHS) in the 2016-2017 school year. If his students continue to win contests, the Digital Arts program is going to become a popular option for scholars there. Earlier this year, Shred360, a paper shredding company based in Columbia, announced Burke senior Hesham Hikal as this year’s logo design contest winner.

Over 1,000 entries were submitted for this year’s contest, which was open to every student in the state of South Carolina. Hikal’s design was placed on the back of one of Shred360’s trucks in June, and will remain there until June 2019. He earned $500 for the school as well.

“It feels really good to be selected as the winner out of all those entries,” said Hikal. “We have a great thing going thanks to Mr. Brown, and I hope this award shows what we are all capable of in this class, and at Burke.”

Shred360 opened its doors 11 years ago, and has used this statewide contest to determine their company’s logo each year of operation.

“It’s an honor winning two logo competitions consecutively since the inception of the Digital Arts program here at BHS,” Brown stated. “I look forward to the coming years and connecting with the community to enhance learning in this way.”

Last year, a student from Brown’s class won a contest sponsored by the local branch of the insurance brokerage and consulting firm, NFP. The business was looking for a logo to place on souvenir bags for a health expo in which they were participating.

Brown also pointed out another one of his students, Mia Washington, finished in the top eight in this year’s Shred360 competition as well!
Academic Magnet’s Jenny Yao Named 2018 U.S. Presidential Scholar

For the first time in three years, Charleston County School District (CCSD) has a United States Presidential Scholar: Academic Magnet High School (AMHS) senior Jenny Yao. The U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) made the announcement in early May. Ann Webb of Wando High School (WHS) also joined Yao on the list of semifinalists for this year’s U.S. Presidential Scholars Program.

Yao is one of three U.S. Presidential Scholars from South Carolina; Webb and Yao are two of 13 semifinalists from the state, and two of 630 semifinalists from around the nation that advanced to the final round of the 2018 U.S. Presidential Scholars Competition.

“I am incredibly humbled to have been selected as a U.S. Presidential Scholar and to represent Academic Magnet and the state of South Carolina on the national stage,” said Yao.

According to the USDOE, only 5,300 of the nearly 3.5 million high school seniors were identified as candidates for the program.

Yao, who will attend Harvard University in the fall, earned an expenses paid trip to Washington, D.C., and joined 160 more U.S Presidential Scholars at the National Recognition Program (which was sponsored by the White House). At the June 24 ceremony, each honoree received the U.S. Presidential Scholar Medallion, as well as met with government officials, educators, and other dignitaries.

Thanks to Webb, Wando had a semifinalist in the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program for the second year in a row. She will attend Princeton in the fall.

“It’s extremely honored to be recognized by the U.S. Department of Education in this way, and to have made it this far in such a prestigious program,” Webb said. “I feel very blessed.”

“It is with great honor that we recognize and congratulate Wando senior Ann Webb for being selected as a semifinalist for the 2018 U.S. Presidential Scholars Competition,” WHS Principal Dr. Sherry Eppelheimer stated. “She is an excellent example of what it means to be a Wando Warrior; she is a distinguished and accomplished young lady. She represents our future leaders of America well.”

Since Yao earned finalist status, her sponsor, AMHS’s Director of School Counseling Deborah Ware, was named a 2018 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program Distinguished Teacher.

“Jenny is an excellent representative of the kind of students who attend Academic Magnet, and this award sets high standards for those who will follow her,” commented Ware. “I have been personally affected by Jenny’s enthusiasm for learning and her compassion for others informs me about how to engage with future students. She is a truly amazing human and we are fortunate that she chose to attend AMHS.”

This is the fifth year in a row Academic Magnet has had at least one student reach the semifinalist stage of the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program.

Yao has been thoroughly involved in biomedical engineering research for most of her high school career and was named a finalist in this year’s Siemens Competition, winning a full-tuition scholarship at the 2017 Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Los Angeles in the fall with her latest project, “Engineering Metabolically Viable Stem Cell Spheroids for Human Cardiac Regeneration.”

Academically, Jenny has been named a National Merit Semifinalist and an AP Scholar. She has been the president of Mu Alpha Theta (Math Honor Society) since her junior year, and competes in the annual Trident Technical College Quest Competition and South Carolina Science Olympiad.

An active composer and pianist, Yao was named one of seven national finalists in the Music Teachers’ National Association Composition Competition and earned the opportunity to perform at Carnegie Hall in New York City. She also toured abroad in Russia, performing in community concerts with the Kostroma Symphony Orchestra. Inspired by that experience, she founded AMHS’s Fine Arts Youth Outreach Club, which creates arts showcases for Lowcountry students to engage them in the arts and foster future artists and enthusiasts.

“Jenny most certainly embodies the very best of Academic Magnet High School,” explained Principal Catherine Spencer. “Her outstanding achievement and involvement in the arts, academics, leadership, and service prompt me to consider her the perfect profile student representing the best qualities that have elevated our school to one of the best in the nation. Congratulations from our entire Raptor community go out to Jenny for her much-deserved recognition, and we are grateful for her shining star.”

Yao plans on double majoring in biomedical engineering and musical composition to further explore both her research and artistic interests.
Cario Scholar’s “Heart” Leads to Honor From YESCarolina

Thomas C. Cario Middle School eighth grader Olivia Crosby is a living example of paying it forward, and being rewarded for having a generous spirit and attitude. Crosby was a patient at the Medical University of South Carolina’s (MUSC) Children’s Hospital a few years ago. She was thankful for the service and treatment she received there, so she wanted to give back to the hospital and enhance patients’ lives in the process.

During her entrepreneurship class at Cario in the 2016-2017 school year, Crosby developed a business plan to raise money for the hospital. She started the business Next Steps, in which she created stress balls to ease juvenile patients’ anxiety while they were in the hospital to be treated. Crosby ended up raising $600 through her business; she donated $500 to MUSC and $100 to Cario’s Business Club.

Olivia Crosby was selected as this year’s winner of YESCarolina’s Ronald L. Motley “Big Heart” Award. Crosby, her parents, and her former entrepreneurship teacher, Donna Lange, attended the annual YESCarolina Gala on October 19, 2017 at the Gaillard Center in downtown Charleston where she received her honor and a $1,000 prize. In addition to being recognized at the gala, YESCarolina will produce a biography video of Crosby and her business model.

“Raising this money was a way to give to the kids who were in MUSC and should be outside playing and having fun,” Crosby explained.

Crosby noticed the games and art supplies in the Atrium at MUSC’s Children’s Hospital, and her hope is that the money from the prize can go toward enhancing the supplies at hand to give young patients more options to pass time.

“Olivia’s initiative is representative of Cario’s motto of challenging resourceful, positive, service-oriented leadership,” added former Principal Sharon Randall. “She identified a need and found a way to make others’ lives better. We celebrate her example!” Congratulations to Olivia for her wonderful idea and hard work.

Pinehurst Student Wins Drawing Contest

Congratulations to Irma Moctezuma!

The fifth grader at Pinehurst Elementary School was the first place winner in the South Carolina State Department of Education’s Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program (FFVP) Drawing Contest for 2018. She received a framed copy of her work, titled “Watch it Grow,” and a $100 check. FFVP Coordinator Diane Gillie made the presentation in Brenda Reyes’ art class on May 29, 2018.

Principal Dianne Benton also received a copy of Irma’s art work, and the district’s Nutrition Services Department gave Ms. Reyes a fruit basket to celebrate her student’s accomplishment.

This is the third year in a row a student from CCSD has earned first place in this competition, and the second year in a row CCSD scholars swept the top three spots. W.B. Goodwin Elementary School’s Cherriet Flowers (third grade) was the runner-up, and fellow Goodwin Gator Dayomi Banuelos (fifth grade) took third place.

The contest, which started in the 2008-2009 school year, is open to every school around the state that is part of the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Program.
Ajani Brooks is a leader at Baptist Hill Middle High School (BHMHS) in the classroom and in the school’s JROTC (Junior Reserve Officers’ Training Corps) program. The United States Department of the Army noticed too. For her academic excellence, military knowledge, and leadership, Brooks was the recipient of the Legion of Valor Bronze Cross for Achievement this past February.

Brooks, a senior at BHMHS, is the only JROTC cadet in Charleston County School District (CCSD) to receive this honor this year. She was presented the award during a ceremony at the school on February 1, 2018, promoted to the rank of Cadet Lieutenant Colonel, and designated the Battalion Commander of the Bobcat Battalion.

The Legion of Valor Bronze Cross is awarded annually to a senior JROTC cadet by the Department of the Army for scholastic excellence in military and academic subjects, along with civic service. Cadet Brooks was nominated by Lt. Col. John McLeod, Senior Army Instructor with the school’s JROTC program, and endorsed by Principal Vanessa Brown.

Brooks is one of 35 of 314,000 JROTC cadets worldwide to receive this honor in 2018, and one of only two in South Carolina.

“Cadet Brooks earned the award due to her achievements in academics, military leadership, academic leadership, academic and military honors, discipline, courtesy, and character as exemplified by her volunteerism over the course of four years at BHMHS,” stated Lt. Col. McLeod.

“As a student within our high school of 245, Ajani’s name is highly recognizable amongst the faculty and students as someone dedicated and focused to do her absolute best in all aspects of her life,” explained Principal Brown. “Her past seven semesters have been nearly flawless with a 4.5 GPA. She is a model student and cadet who frequently reaches out to faculty for greater challenges in order to improve herself.”

Brooks was also dually-enrolled at Trident Technical College and had 18 credit hours to apply to higher education when she graduated this spring. Brooks plans on attending college to earn a degree in environmental engineering, and hopes this honor will have an extremely positive impact on her future.

“Ajani is everything I expect a scholar and cadet leader to be: smart, articulate, mentally agile and tough, a critical thinker who is a humble, self-aware, and a selfless team player,” added Lt. Col. McLeod. “Most impressive is her character; she is morally and ethically straight, candid, and truthful. She possesses the intellect, skills, technical acumen, confidence, and strength of character to handle the rigors of college and life, and I’m proud that she is representing Baptist Hill with this award.”
Baptist Hill Middle High School (BHMHS) juniors Ajani Brooks and Marbella Campos Ochoa participated in a special celebration of Constitution Day in September of last year. They were part of the 9th Annual James Otis Lecture Series at the South Carolina State House in Columbia on September 15, 2017.

Brooks and Campos Ochoa were two of 95 students from the Palmetto State (and the only ones from Charleston County School District) to spend the afternoon in the chamber of the State House of Representatives and listen to U.S. District Court Judge for the District of South Carolina Richard M. Gergel speak about the separation of powers and judges’ roles in the federal government. Judge Gergel presided over the recent trial where Dylann Roof was convicted of murder for his role in the massacre at Mother Emanuel AME Church on June 17, 2015. State Court of Appeals Judge Aphrodite Konduro spoke as part of the lecture series as well.

Brooks and Campos Ochoa, both juniors at BHMHS, are cadets in the school’s JROTC program. They were nominated by Col. John McLeod (who oversees JROTC at Baptist Hill), and were selected as 2017 James Otis Scholars by the South Carolina Chapter of the American Board of Trial Advocates (ABOTA) and the ABOTA Foundation for their academic excellence and character. The lecture series is designed to provide educational programs each year around the anniversary of the signing of the Constitution about the history and value of the right to trial by jury.

“Having our students selected as James Otis Scholars is an example of our mission to inspire our students to become great citizens through education and overall excellence,” said Baptist Hill Principal Vanessa Brown. “The opportunity to participate in such an event allows our students to gain insight into new possibilities for their future.”

Brown added Brooks and Campos Ochoa were commended on their attire and appearance by other teachers, parents, and students who attended the conference. They enjoyed the field trip, and gained insightful information.

The ABOTA Foundation created the James Otis Lecture Series to provide scholars with a more in-depth study about how the Constitution affects them and our country’s legal system. The lecture program helps schools comply with the requirements of the federal statute creating Constitution Day. This law requires all federally-assisted schools, both public and private, to provide educational programs each year around the anniversary of the signing of the Constitution.

James Otis, Jr. was one of the most influential lawyers in early American history. According to John Adams (the second president of the United States), Otis’s eloquent argument presented in a Boston court room in 1761 challenging the British laws, known as the Writs of Assistance, lit the spark which led to the American Revolution. The quote “a man’s home is his castle,” is attributed to Otis; he challenged oppressive laws which permitted warrantless searches of homes and businesses.
Pair of CCSD Scholars Receive National PTA Recognition

Students Adam Starling and Mark Owens were honored in the 2018 National PTA (Parent Teacher Association) Reflections Contest. There were a total of nine winners from South Carolina, and 205 winners nationwide in this year’s competition; the theme was “Within Reach.”

Starling, a rising second grader at Jennie Moore Elementary School, submitted a song he wrote entitled Car Line. He earned the Award of Excellence at the state level and the Award of Merit in the Primary Composition of Music in the National PTA Reflections Contest.

“I made the Car Line song to have something to do while we waited in the car,” said Starling. “We were just having fun, but it turned out really good.”

Owens finished eighth grade at Camp Road Middle School (CRMS) this year. He won the Award of Merit in the Middle School Division of Film Production with his submission entitled Oosiboos; it is a short film about plastic skeleton that came to life.

“Mark is a well-rounded student who excels academically and athletically,” explained CRMS Principal David Parler. “He is polite, well-mannered, and respected by students and teachers for his character and dedication to school.”

The National PTA Reflections Contest is a way schools can encourage students to explore ideas through the arts. Hundreds of thousands of scholars show off their artistic talent by sending in various works. The submissions range from dance and choreography to photography and visual arts. Students of all grade levels, including kindergarten, can participate through their school PTA; there is no limit to the number of submissions for each individual.

“[I like that] anyone can enter as many times as they want,” added Starling. “I thought that was cool.”

The 2018 National PTA Awards and Reflections Celebration to commemorate the winners was held at the National PTA Convention and Expo in New Orleans on June 23, 2018. All of the winning submissions will appear at the U.S. Department of Education’s National PTA Student Arts Showcase and Exhibit in Washington D.C. January 22, 2019.

Friends from SOA Share Special Experience at Boys and Girls State

Attending Palmetto Boys and Girls State is an honor for any rising senior across South Carolina. To be elected to a statewide office during the week-long program is an even bigger honor. So imagine the level of joy and surprise when two best friends from Charleston County School of the Arts learned the other was elected State Superintendent for their corresponding weeks.

Jada Orr won her election at Palmetto Girls State at Presbyterian College, while Caleb Smith became State Superintendent at Palmetto Boys State at Anderson University last summer leading into the 2017-18 school year.

“I was so excited and so proud of [Caleb],” exclaimed Orr. “We shared with each other what the election process was like, how everything went with our speeches, and we were both just humbled by the process of it all.”

“It was mind-boggling, but only because we made history,” added Smith. “I don’t believe that anyone from the same school has held the same [state] office as their counterpart has.”

Speaking of history, Palmetto Boys State, which is run by the American Legion, started in 1940. The South Carolina Department of the American Legion Auxiliary has organized and administered Palmetto Girls State since 1947.

Boys and Girls State is a one-week leadership and citizenship training program created to educate outstanding rising seniors in high school, or delegates, about state and local government and citizenship. “Delegates” experience governmental procedure by simulating political campaigns, elections, and the political process. They also learn about the principles of citizenship and public service from guest speakers, expert panels, and staff members.

Delegates are selected for the program based on the leadership skills and involvement they have shown in their respective schools and communities. As citizens of either Palmetto Boys or Girls State, the delegates are divided into groups called “cities.” They create local governments, devise political party platforms, and ultimately elect a Senate, a House of Representatives, and state constitutional officers.
‘Something right up my alley’

Smith said he didn’t know much about Boys State, and only applied because his parents (including his father, Kevin Smith, who is the principal at C.E. Williams Middle School) asked him to apply. He was skeptical at first, but his thoughts about the opportunity quickly changed.

“It turned out to be something right up my alley,” commented Smith. “I appreciated the emphasis of the brotherhood the most at Boys State. No matter how different you were from the [guy] standing next to you, you both had two things in common: your white Palmetto Boys State shirt and the brotherhood you would look back on after the program.”

Smith won his city’s party chairman position early in the week, which built up his confidence. That confidence, coupled with the knowledge he already had about the education system from his father, paved the way for his electoral victory as 2017 Palmetto Boys State Superintendent.

“It was life changing,” Smith described. “It was so crazy to believe that you could gain such a strong and large support system in such a short amount of time. I was also impressed with myself, seeing where my personal drive ended up, at the end of the program. I stayed up until 3:47 a.m. writing a speech for my campaign. It doesn’t get any more authentic than that. I would have never done something that intense if it wasn’t for Boys State.”

Principal Smith appreciated the opportunity his son had as well. He could tell Caleb was going to learn valuable lessons when they arrived at Anderson University. He was able to keep track of what his son was doing, and accomplishing, throughout the week thanks to technology as well.

“We followed them on social media and watched their news broadcasts daily,” said Principal Smith. “Caleb told us he was running for office. First, [he became] their city party chairman, then the county superintendent of education, and then, campaigning and giving a speech as he ran for State Superintendent of Education. When he won, he was elated!”

‘More capable than I think’

Orr knew a little bit more about Girls State than Smith did; she had family members who participated in the past. Still, it was a learning experience once she got there; a learning experience she appreciated.

“Even though I don’t have any career interests in politics, I still feel obligated to understand the structure of our nation’s government and its values,” Orr said. “The opportunity to connect with so many young women from all over the state taught me about places and things in South Carolina I had no knowledge of beforehand. I realized that there were more young women like me from South Carolina than I thought.”

As the week continued, Orr felt called to run for the State Superintendent position. She said she has really learned about the need for quality education and equitable educational opportunities for communities over the past few years. This issue is now one of her passions.

Of course, she still had to make up her mind and take the initiative to put herself out there to run for office. The environment at Palmetto Girls State encourages students to get out of their comfort zone and take chances. Orr did that, and, was successful.

“I was taken aback I guess you could say,” Orr mentioned. “This wasn’t my first time running for something, but it was my first time without my mom guiding me and helping a lot. So after it all, I felt maybe I’m more capable than I think I am going into certain things.”

The experience gave Orr more confidence about pursuing different opportunities. She is also more “educated” about education and state government in general.

“When I was running for office, I found people who attended Boys State in other states as well,” said Principal Smith. “I saw a picture of President Bill Clinton as a citizen of Boys State, shaking the hand of President John F. Kennedy. I also saw an image of former CCSD student and Academic Magnet High School graduate, William Pugh, shaking the hand of President Barack Obama just two years ago.”

‘Amazing experience’

Winning the election for the office of State Superintendent was the highlight of the week for both Orr and Smith, until they learned about what the other one accomplished. The participants from Boys and Girls State got together later in the week for a parade in Columbia; that’s when they broke the news to each other. Smith was a little more subtle at first.

“He tried to surprise me when we met up for the parade, so until then, he was acting as if he lost,” Orr explained. “At first, I was a little upset for him, but then I figured out he was joking with me, and we laughed until the parade started. Everyone kept asking if we planned the whole thing before coming, but honestly, we didn’t even know what to expect when we got to Palmetto Boys and Girls State, so really it was all just by coincidence!”

“It wasn’t too surprising hearing that my friend won the same office,” Smith commented. “She is such an intelligent, well-spoken individual. I had a very good feeling that she would win the office, any office, she was to run for due to her professionalism and way of socializing with others. It was an amazing experience that I can proudly say I was able to walk down the state [capitol building] steps in front of an audience of over 1,200 people with my best friend.”

Learn more about Palmetto Boys and Girls State

Everyone who participates in this program won’t have the experience Orr and Smith had. However, everyone who attends can have their own powerful experience. Principal Smith is thankful for what his son learned and accomplished. He also hopes more students in Charleston County School District (CCSD) take advantage of this opportunity in the future.

“Not only [have I spoken with] people who attended in South Carolina, I found people who attended Boys State in other states as well,” said Principal Smith. “I saw a picture of President Bill Clinton as a citizen of Boys State, shaking the hand of President John F. Kennedy. I also saw an image of former CCSD student and Academic Magnet High School graduate, William Pugh, shaking the hand of President Barack Obama just two years ago.”

Caleb Smith, Jada Orr, and State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman at Boys and Girls State
Caleb Smith went to St. Louis, MO to simply represent his family, the West Ashley Optimist Club, school, and state to the best of his ability at the Optimist International Oratorical World Championships. He did that, and more. Smith, who graduated from Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA) this spring, won the 2018 world title on June 29, 2018 at Saint Louis University’s Center for Global Citizenship.

The two-day competition, which featured 54 students from a total of eight different countries, started on June 28 with nine regional contests. Smith bested six other students in the Southeast regional round to advance to the next stage where he competed for and won the international title.

“We are thrilled to celebrate Caleb’s success. He is an extraordinary communicator and remarkable young man”.

— Dr. Shannon Cook, Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA) Principal
“It is humbling and overwhelming,” exclaimed Smith. “To have been able to compete against such talented people from around the world was great. To be named the 2018 World Champion is a lot to take in. I am beyond grateful to Optimist International for giving me a platform to share my thoughts and my voice and for giving other young people the chance to do the same.”

– Caleb Smith, Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA) Graduate

Smith earned $15,000 in scholarship money for his victory on the world stage, and $5,000 for winning in the regional round. He already received a $2,500 scholarship check for winning the state title in May.

“We are thrilled to celebrate Caleb’s success,” added Dr. Shannon Cook, SOAs’ principal. “He is an extraordinary communicator and remarkable young man.”

The topic for this year’s competition was “What are My Roots of Optimism.” Smith actually started this journey by winning at the club (local) level when he delivered his speech at West Ashley High School. He advanced to the zone level, then to the district (state) level, and eventually, the World Championships in St. Louis.

“What distinguished his speech for me was that it was not just personal, but universal,” said Dr. John Cusatis, Smith’s English teacher at SOA. “After defining the roots of his own optimism, he stressed the importance of inspiring and sustaining optimism in others. Winning the world title was no minor accomplishment; it was a giant achievement that required the highest level of commitment, confidence, and charisma. Yet his acceptance speech was filled with gratitude and humility.”

To learn more about Optimist International, visit Optimist.org.
AMHS Wins CCSD Academic Bowl

Every year, Charleston County School District (CCSD) high schools compete in the annual Academic Bowl, sponsored by the Exchange Club of Charleston. After eight weeks of tough competition, this year’s season concluded on the evening of Thursday, March 1 in the 2018 CCSD Academic Bowl Finals.

The top three schools in this year’s double-elimination tournament were Academic Magnet High School (AMHS), Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA), and Wando High School (WHS). In the winner’s bracket finals the week prior, AMHS edged WHS in triple overtime, while SOA got past James Island Charter High School to advance to the consolation bracket finals.

In the end, Academic Magnet took home the victory.

James Simons Claims Charleston Promise Neighborhood Social Studies Bowl Title

Students from Chicora Elementary School (defending champion), Edmund A. Burns Elementary School, James Simons Elementary School, Mary Ford Elementary School, and Sanders-Clyde Elementary School competed in Charleston Promise Neighborhood’s (CPN) 2018 Social Studies Bowl on Thursday, March 1, 2018. James Simons unseated Chicora as reigning champions in the event!

CPN’s Social Studies Bowl is a quiz bowl competition where second through fifth grade students from Charleston County School District (CCSD) neighborhood schools display their social studies knowledge. This is the fifth year the schools have come together for this friendly competition, which is widely attended by students’ families and teachers. It is hosted by CPN in partnership with CCSD, the Charleston Museum, and the Historic Charleston Foundation.

During the event, students are challenged with an array of questions covering history, government, geography, sociology, and more. A brief awards ceremony followed the competition celebrating James Simons’ win.

About Charleston Promise Neighborhood

Charleston Promise Neighborhood (CPN) is a nonprofit organization incorporated in May 2010, whose vision and purpose is to transform the “Neighborhood” within a generation. The CPN Neighborhood, home to just under 27,000 residents—4,300 of whom are children under the age of 18—is a 5.6 square mile area of Charleston County that straddles portions of the cities of Charleston and North Charleston, and coincides with the attendance zones of four CCSD elementary schools with high concentrations of children living in poverty: Chicora, James Simons, Mary Ford and Sanders-Clyde. CPN’s current focus areas include education, healthcare, parenting engagement, and community engagement. For more information, visit www.charlestonpromise.org.

About Historic Foundation

Established in 1947, Historic Charleston Foundation (HCF) is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve and protect the historical, architectural and material culture that make up Charleston’s heritage. The Foundation is known for its education and outreach, preservation and advocacy programs including protective covenants and easements.
The South Carolina National Geographic State Bee started in 1989, and until 2018, a student from Charleston County School District had never won the title. Sam Henshaw, a seventh grader from Moultrie Middle School, changed that fact on April 6. He beat more than 100 students, ranging from fourth to eighth grade, to win this year’s state geography bee. The competition took place at the Brookland Baptist Church Banquet and Conference Center in West Columbia, SC.

Henshaw had to make it through a tiebreaker in the preliminary round to advance to the finals. He then clinched the championship by providing the correct answer to the question, “What major city is about 200 miles west of Qattara Depression?” Henshaw told the judges “Cairo, Egypt,” and the 2018 state title was his.

“It was really exciting,” Henshaw remembered. “I was kind of shocked actually. But, I have been looking at and reading maps, atlases, and geographic books ever since I was 3 years old. I’ve always been curious about the world and its people. It’s really fascinating.”


The national championship preliminary rounds took place Sunday, May 20, and Monday, May 21. The next few rounds, featuring the top 10 finalists, were held Wednesday, May 23, at National Geographic’s Washington, D.C. headquarters, and were moderated by humorist and journalist Mo Rocca.
Charleston County School District (CCSD) is proud of the schools that placed in the top three in each level of competition at the Odyssey of the Mind state competition on March 17, 2018 in Columbia, SC. Teams from R.B. Stall High School finished in first and third place, West Ashley Advanced Studies Magnet (ASM) won the middle school title for the second year in a row, and Lambs Elementary School was the runner-up in its division.

Teams that finished in the top two spots qualified for the World Finals, which were held at Iowa State University in Ames, IA May 23-26, 2018.

According to the organization’s website, Odyssey of the Mind is an international creative problem-solving program that engages students in their learning by allowing their knowledge and ideas to come to life in an exciting and productive environment. The state competition involves Spontaneous, a segment in which the teams have to answer a question or solve a problem on short notice, and a Long Term problem, where the students put on a performance to address a topic they received before the competition.

This was R.B. Stall’s first year participating in Odyssey of the Mind; the Warriors only had one student who had been a part of this program before this school year. They sent two teams, and brought back first and third place trophies. Georgetta Simmons, the lead coach of the winning team, said they successfully created and operated a vehicle in an “Odyssey Triathlon.” Gwendolyn Smith served as an assistant coach and was also heavily involved in the teams’ preparation for the state tournament.

“The students are super excited, and are trying to get use to the fact that they will be going to Iowa to compete in the World Finals,” stated Simmons. “One of my students said she cannot believe that they won after participating for the first time, and that she still feels the excitement from this past weekend.”

Jeff Beauchamp and Michael Marsico, teachers at West Ashley ASM, put together what they described as an all-star team of 6th grade students for this year’s competition. Students made it through several rounds of auditions that tested their acting, artistic, creative, and writing abilities. The end result was a reimagined, modern, and well-received adaptation of Lewis Carroll’s beloved classic “Alice in Wonderland.” They placed first in the Division II Mockumentary category in Columbia, and now look to build on the HarborCats’ 36th place finish in last year’s World Finals.

“Odyssey of the Mind is an inspiring experience. It opens many opportunities to make new friends, think creatively, and challenge your problem solving skills,” said 6th grader Kallie Klugman. “I will never forget this exciting journey!” Lambs was also invited to the World Finals in Iowa in May. The coach for Lambs, Danielle Behn, said her 4th and 5th graders composed and revised their play, constructed their sets, and practiced three times a week leading up to the competition.

“This is our second year participating in the Odyssey of the Mind program,” stated Behn. “Our students took the lead on putting together their version of Alice in Wonderland. We are so proud of their hard work!”

“Odyssey of the Mind is an inspiring experience. It opens many opportunities to make new friends, think creatively, and challenge your problem solving skills. I will never forget this exciting journey!”

– Kallie Klugman, 6th Grader
Two CCSD Schools Capture Championships at 8th Annual Charleston SeaPerch Challenge

Scholars and teachers from Buist Academy and Charleston Charter School for Math and Science (CCSMS) began their summer break a little later than the rest of their peers. Thanks to their victories at the 2018 Charleston SeaPerch Regional Challenge, Team #13 from Buist and Team #8 from CCSMS attended the International SeaPerch Challenge at the University of Massachusetts-Dartmouth in North Dartmouth, MA June 1-3, 2018.

Nearly 30 teams from schools throughout Charleston County School District (CCSD) and the rest of the Lowcountry competed at the Danny Jones Pool in North Charleston using their underwater remotely operated vehicles (ROV) in two different events this year: a challenge course and an obstacle course. Teams also received scores on their Engineering Notebook presentations.

In the end, teams from Buist and CCSMS captured the middle school and high school crowns, respectively.

The following teams finished first in the three separate competitions:

**Obstacle Course**
- HS - North Charleston High School Team #4
- MS – Buist Academy Team #13

**Challenge Course**
- HS - CCSMS Team #8
- MS – Laing Middle School Team #9

**Engineering Notebook**
- HS - CCSMS Team #1
- MS – Buist Academy Team #13

SeaPerch is an innovative underwater robotics program that equips teachers and students with the resources they need to build a ROV in an in-school or out-of-school setting. Students build the ROV from a kit comprised of low-cost, easily accessible parts, following a curriculum that teaches basic engineering and science concepts with a marine engineering theme. The SeaPerch Program provides students with the opportunity to learn about robotics, engineering, science, and mathematics while building an underwater ROV as part of a science and engineering technology curriculum. Throughout the project, students learn engineering concepts, problem-solving, teamwork, and technical applications.

CCSD would like to thank the many volunteers who gave their time to this competition, and to SPAWAR, the City of North Charleston, Lowcountry STEM Collaborative, CVS Pharmacy, STEM Centers SC, Charleston SCUBA, Little Caesars Pizza, Sea Grant, and NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) for their sponsorship and support of the Charleston SeaPerch Regional Challenge.

For more results and a full gallery, visit CCSD’s Career and Technology Education Department’s website: http://charlestonempowered.com/.

To learn more about SeaPerch, visit http://seaperch.org/.
Charleston County School District (CCSD) scholars collected plenty of honors at the Lowcountry Regional Science and Engineering Fair at TD Arena this April. Sixteen students from a total of five CCSD schools received awards and/or placed in the top three in their division and category, including Academic Magnet High School’s (AMHS) Anna Smirnova, who was one of the top two overall winners.

Smirnova and AMHS teacher Katy Metzner-Roop earned all-expenses-paid trips, courtesy of the College of Charleston, to the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Pittsburgh, PA this past May. Smirnova’s project was titled “The Effect of Fullerene Additives on the Nanoscale Morphology of Poly (3-hexylthiophene) Thin Films Processed from Binary Solvent Mixtures.”

CCSD students earned the following awards:

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Division</th>
<th>First Place</th>
<th>Second Place</th>
<th>Third Place</th>
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<tr>
<td>OVERALL</td>
<td>Senior 2 Division</td>
<td>Anna Smirnova, Academic Magnet</td>
<td>Emma Ladd, Academic Magnet</td>
<td>Katy Metzner-Roop, Academic Magnet</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Junior 2 Division</td>
<td>Luke Morris, Colby Nicholson, and Atticus Whistler, Orange Grove Charter</td>
<td>Third Place - Taj Barthelmas, St. Andrew’s School of Math and Science</td>
<td>First Place - Anna Smirnova, Academic Magnet</td>
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<td>Junior 1 Division</td>
<td>Calvin Volkmann, East Cooper Montessori Charter</td>
<td>Emma Ladd, Academic Magnet</td>
<td>Louisa Garrett, St. Andrew’s School of Math and Science</td>
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<td>CHEMISTRY &amp; BIOCHEMISTRY</td>
<td>Senior 2 Division</td>
<td>Anna Smirnova, Academic Magnet</td>
<td>Senior 2 Division</td>
<td>First Place - Anna Smirnova, Academic Magnet</td>
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<td>Junior 1 Division</td>
<td>Taj Barthelmas, St. Andrew’s School of Math and Science</td>
<td>Third Place - Louisa Garrett, St. Andrew’s School of Math and Science</td>
<td>Second Place - Lindsey Fauerbauch, East Cooper Montessori Charter</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES</td>
<td>Senior 2 Division</td>
<td>Emma Ladd, Academic Magnet</td>
<td>Gregg Gardner, Academic Magnet</td>
<td>First Place - Luke Morris, Colby Nicholson, and Atticus Wheeler, Orange Grove Charter</td>
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<td>Junior 1 Division</td>
<td>First Place - Ishraq Hague, Academic Magnet</td>
<td>Senior 2 Division</td>
<td>Third Place - Forrest Cummings and Dizz Oliver, Orange Grove Charter</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHYSICS &amp; ASTRONOMY</td>
<td>Junior 1 Division</td>
<td>Axel Gruber, St. Andrew’s School of Math and Science</td>
<td>Imari Brown and Valencia Stanely, Julian Mitchell Math and Science Elementary</td>
<td>First Place - Axel Gruber, St. Andrew’s School of Math and Science</td>
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<td>Second Place - Imari Brown and Valencia Stanely, Julian Mitchell Math and Science Elementary</td>
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<td>SPECIAL AWARDS</td>
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<td>MUSC Medical Scientist in Training Award - Emma Ladd, Academic Magnet</td>
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<td>Yale Science and Engineering Award - Anna Smirnova, Academic Magnet</td>
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Senior 2 Division is for 11th and 12th graders, Senior 1 Division is 9th and 10th graders, Junior 2 Division is comprised of 7th and 8th graders, and Junior 1 Division is for 5th and 6th graders.
Anna Smirnova
Academic Magnet

Axel Gruber
St. Andrew's School of Math and Science.

Calvin Volkmann
East Cooper Montessori Charter

Emma Ladd
Academic Magnet

Ishraq Hague
Academic Magnet High School

Valencia Stanley and Imari Brown
Julian Mitchell Math and Science Elementary
Charleston County School District spellers swept the podium at the 2018 Spellbound!, the Lowcountry’s regional spelling bee.

Ranitha Kumarasinghe, a sixth-grader at Orange Grove Charter School, locked up the championship by spelling “topeng” correctly. It was a sweet victory for Ranitha, who was the runner-up at the school-district level in January.

At the regional event, which was held in March 8, 2018 at Charleston Southern University’s Lightsey Chapel, Ranitha edged out Asher Wallen, an eighth-grader from Buist Academy, in the finals to win.

Finn Hayes, a fifth-grader from Ashley River Creative Arts Elementary School, finished in third place, giving CCSD the top three finishers from among 50 students in this year’s Spellbound!

“My heart picked up its speed,” Ranitha remembered. “I could feel my heart thumping in my chest when I heard the word ‘topeng.’ I said to myself, do not mess this up. This is my chance to win!”

His win landed him a trip to the Scripps National Spelling Bee on May 27 in the Washington, D.C. area. “It’s a big thing,” he said. “I am going from my state to compete against everyone from around the country.”

Jenna Zimmerman, a fifth-grader from Charles Pinckney Elementary School, was the winner of CCSD’s spelling bee Jan. 25, 2018. Moultrie Middle student Baker Storey placed third, follow by C.E. Williams’ Dalton Muse in fourth.

Jenna beat Ranitha in the completion by correctly spelling the word “vernacular,” a word she had studied. “I studied the word ‘vernacular’ a ton because that was a word I was actually having trouble with,” Jenna said. “I was studying it a lot, then I just got that word, and I knew I had it.”

**CCSD Students at Spellbound!**

John Anderson, Edmund A. Burns Elementary, 5th grade
Erin Baylock, Deer Park Middle, 6th grade
Michael Button, Oakland Elementary, 5th grade
Elias Doughty, Orange Grove Charter, 5th grade
Petton Fishburne, Advanced Studies Magnet West Ashley Middle, 8th grade
Maggie Garrigan, Haut Gap Middle, 8th grade
Melinda Guo, Lambs Elementary, 5th grade
Finn Hayes, Ashley River Creative Arts Elementary, 5th grade
Jackson Horst, Drayton Hall Elementary, 5th grade
Christopher Inabinet, Camp Road Middle, 8th grade
Ranitha Kumarasinghe, Orange Grove Charter, 6th grade
Dalton Muse, C.E. Williams Middle, 6th grade
Kanai Peeples, Charleston Charter School for Math and Science, 7th grade
Emily Russell, Charleston County School of the Arts, 8th grade
Baker Storey, Moultrie Middle, 7th grade
Asher Wallen, Buist Academy, 8th grade
Robert White, Laing Middle, 6th grade
Jenna Zimmerman, Charles Pinckney Elementary, 5th grade
Charleston County School District (CCSD) students and schools performed at a high level once again at the 32nd Annual Quest Academic Competition at Trident Technical College (TTC) on Saturday, March 3, 2018. Camp Road Middle School (CRMS) won the Level I team title, one of the major highlights of the day for CCSD.

“I am so proud of our Camp Road Quest teams,” exclaimed Nancy Vitali, the main CRMS Quest coach, who is also an English and Language Arts and Creative Writing teacher. “Being a brand new school, our goal was to work on team building through content knowledge and to give our all at the competition. When our Level I teams made it to the buzzer rounds in both math and science, we were shocked and excited! Then winning the overall Level I title was surreal! These students put in countless hours to prepare, many of them requesting materials to take home and study over the weekend; their hard work paid off. This title not only represents the dedication of our students, but also the hard work our teachers put in every day.”

CRMS was the only CCSD school to win an overall team title, but Academic Magnet High School, Wando High School, Buist Academy, Moultrie Middle School, and Thomas C. Cario Middle School all recorded top three finishes in the overall team standings as well.

Students participated in four levels of competition: Level IV (11th and 12th graders), Level III (9th and 10th graders), Level II (7th and 8th graders), and Level I (6th graders).

Students earned points in team competitions in math, science, and social studies, and in individual competitions in composition, public speaking and visual arts. Schools whose students earned the most total points won overall awards at each level. Special competitions that did not contribute points toward the overall awards were held in automotive, computer-aided design, computer programming, culinary, French, horticulture, Spanish, video/film, and welding.
Last fall, Buist Academy for Advanced Studies was named a National Blue Ribbon School, a prestigious national honor from the U.S. Department of Education.

Principal Shawntay White said Buist landed the award because it is a continuously high-achieving school.

“It’s a huge honor and we’re humbled to be recognized,” White commented. “It validates the good things we’re doing.”

The National Blue Ribbon Schools Program recognizes public and private elementary, middle, and high schools based on their overall academic excellence or their progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups.

On a tour of the downtown academic magnet school, White pointed out the colorful bulletin boards in the hallways highlighting this year’s space theme “Out of This World.” Having an annual theme that students, teachers, and parents can embrace is one of the many ways Buist works to form a strong community, she said. That community feeling is important in helping students learn.

“It’s the people and the children and the support we receive from our families that makes the school unique and a success,” said White.

Buist, an admissions-based countywide magnet which serves nearly 500 children in kindergarten through eighth-grade, was established in 1985. Students who receive a score of at least the 75th percentile on the admissions assessment are then put into a lottery process for selection.

The school provides a rigorous curriculum emphasizing language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and foreign languages. All students begin French or Spanish in kindergarten, and then continue to study the language until graduation.

In 2007, Buist became an authorized International Baccalaureate (IB) World School for the Primary Years Programme and in 2010, the school was fully authorized as a Middle Years Programme. IB is a rigorous academic program that emphasizes global, creative and critical thinking.

Sherlonda Adkins, whose daughter Kayla Adkins is a fifth-grader at Buist, said the award is “a huge deal.”

Adkins, whose other daughter graduated from Buist and now is a senior at the district’s Academic Magnet High School, also serves on the School Improvement Council (SIC) and the district’s Parent Advisory Cabinet. She said sometimes parents of children who don’t attend Buist ask her if being at a school with such a rigorous curriculum stresses out her child. But her experience is the opposite.

“They’re not little robots stressed beyond their capacity,” Adkins explained. “They come home happy because they are challenged and excited about learning. One of the amazing things about Buist is that the students cover advanced material and have fun at the same time.”

Adkins said her family also has experience with private schools, but she prefers Buist. Private schools can isolate children from the world, but at Buist, the school and her children feel connected to the community.

She appreciates Buist being a relatively small school, where she is able to get to know other parents.

“All the kids in a grade know each other, and I’ve been friends with the same parents since [my daughter was in] first grade,” added Adkins.

That matters because at a magnet school, students don’t live in the same neighborhood around the school. The parent connections helped Adkins and her children to stay connected outside of school hours and during the summer.

Karrie Loonie, the school’s guidance counselor for kindergarten through fourth grade, said she also was drawn to work at the school because of the community feeling.

“There’s just a feeling of trust,” said Loonie, who completed the application for the National Blue Ribbon Program and also serves as chair of the SIC.

White said State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman nominated Buist for the award; White was happy about that because she had been trying to bring more positive recognition to the school.

“We want to show people we are an exceptional school inside and out,” White stated.

CCSD Earns Spot on 2017 AP District Honor Roll

Charleston County School District was selected to the College Board’s 8th Annual AP (Advanced Placement) District Honor Roll. This is the second time in five years CCSD has received this honor; 2013 was the last year the district made this list.

Helping more students learn at a higher level and earn higher AP scores is an objective of all members of the AP community, from AP teachers to district and school administrators, to college professors. Many districts are experimenting with initiatives and strategies to see how they can expand access and improve student performance at the same time.

According to the College Board, the district Honor Roll is not a roster of higher performing districts, but is a roster of districts that are simultaneously expanding opportunity and improving performance.

In 2017, more than 4,000 colleges and universities around the world received AP scores for college credit, advanced placement, or both, and/or consideration in the admissions process. Inclusion in the 8th Annual AP District Honor Roll is based on a review of three years of AP data, from 2015 to 2017, looking across 38 AP exams, including world language and culture. The following criteria were used in the selection process:

- Increased access to AP courses by at least 4% in large districts, 6% in medium district, and 11% in small districts.
- Increased or maintained the percentage of exams taken by African American, Hispanic/Latino, and American Indian/Alaska Native students.
- Improved performance levels when comparing the percentage of students in 2017 scoring a 3 or higher to those in 2015, unless the division has already attained a performance level at which more than 70 percent of its AP students are scoring a 3 or higher.

CCSD met each of the three criteria used to qualify in the medium district level (student population between 8,000 and 50,000) for this recognition. First, access to AP coursework in Charleston County schools has increased by 8% annually since 2015; the number of students taking one or more AP exams increased from 2,343 students in 2015 to 2,739 in 2017. Secondly, the percentage of AP students who are African-American, Hispanic/Latino, or American Indian/Alaska Native was maintained at about 18% from 2015 to 2017. Finally, at the same time that access increased, so did the performance of students. The percentage of AP students who scored 3 or higher (out of a possible 5) on at least one exam increased from 72% in 2015 to 74% in 2017.

“This accomplishment highlights the dedication our students are making to their course work, and the ability of our teachers to create environments that prepare our scholars for this kind of rigor,” explained Cynthia Ambrose, CCSD Deputy Superintendent of Learning Services. “This honor should be celebrated by all of our staff members, and is a sign of the positive direction our district is going.”

Only three school districts in South Carolina made the 2017 AP District Honor Roll; Fort Mill School District – York 4 and the Diocese of Charleston Education Office join CCSD on this year’s list.

“Congratulations to all the educators and administrators in this district who have worked to clear a path for more students of all backgrounds to participate and succeed in AP,” said Trevor Packer, College Board’s head of AP and Instruction. “These educators and administrators are fostering a culture in their schools and classrooms that allows students to face new challenges and build the confidence to succeed.”

National data from 2017 shows that among American Indian/Alaska Native, Black/African American, Hispanic/Latino, and Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander students with a high degree of readiness for AP, only about half are participating. The first step to getting more of these students to participate is to give them access. Courses must be made available, gatekeeping must stop, and doors must be equitably opened.

CCSD is committed to expanding the availability of AP courses among prepared and motivated students of all backgrounds.
C.E. Williams (CEW) Middle School for Creative and Scientific Arts received initial designation as a School to Watch (STW) by the National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform in December 2017. CEW is the only school in South Carolina to receive initial designation for the 2017-2018 school year, and is the first in Charleston County School District.

The National Forum to Accelerate Middle-Grades Reform is an alliance of over 60 educators, researchers, national associations, and officers of professional organizations and foundations committed to promoting the academic performance and healthy development of young adolescents. In all, the program has expanded to 18 states across the country.

“The staff of C.E. Williams endeavor to support our learners through their middle school years as we prepare them for high school, college, and careers in a global economy,” said Principal Kevin Smith. “We are excited for our work to be recognized by STW. As a West Ashley native and product of CEW, I am humbled to be a part of our school receiving this award.”

The National Forum states on its website that the truly high-performing middle-level school embodies the intersection of academic excellence, developmental responsiveness, social equity, and organizational structure. National Forum also explains it is not difficult to find middle-level schools that excel in one of the four areas of high performance; however, it is extremely difficult to find schools that excel in all four.

Once a school receives initial designation, they must reapply every three years to maintain STW status.

The school celebrated the honor after winter break and was featured at the South Carolina Middle School Conference March 2-4, 2018. Additionally, CEW was honored this summer at the Annual National Schools to Watch Conference in Washington, D.C. June 28-30, 2018.

CEW’s very own seventh grader, Jordan Dunne, appeared in and narrated a Nickelodeon Black History Month commercial. This year, the filming took place in Charleston and out of all the individuals who auditioned, Jordan was one of just a few selected. The commercial aired throughout Black History Month in February and can still be viewed on Nickelodeon’s official Facebook page. Congratulations, Jordan!
Franklin Covey Education (FCE) announced this spring that Charleston Progressive Academy (CPA) has been certified and named a Leader in Me Lighthouse School. This recognition is evidence that the school has produced outstanding results in school and student outcomes by implementing the Leader in Me process with fidelity and excellence. It is also a testament to the extraordinary impact the school is having on staff, students, parents, and the greater community.

“We are honored to have been certified and named a Leader in Me Lighthouse School,” said Wanda Wright-Sheats, CPA’s principal. “We have seen a transformation of our school’s culture, instruction, and mindset of our students.”

Wright-Sheats said parents were attending less than 70 percent of the student conferences when CPA started using the Leader in Me model in 2013. The following year, the attendance rate for those conferences was up to nearly 100 percent, and the rate remains at that level.

The Lighthouse Certification is a highly-regarded set of standards by FCE that is attainable by every Leader in Me school. As it is a significant benchmark, applying for this certification typically occurs three to five years after a school begins the Leader in Me process.

“We are thrilled to recognize Charleston Progressive Academy as a Leader in Me Lighthouse School and the first in the Charleston County School District to achieve this certification,” stated Sean Covey, FCE President. “Schools who achieve this Lighthouse Certification are great examples of a strong leadership model and process, and of what it means to be a Leader in Me school. This school has experienced transformational results by implementing the principles and practices related to Leader in Me. We are so pleased and honored to celebrate the success they are experiencing.”

Since its official launch nearly a decade ago, nearly 4,000 public, private, and charter schools across 50 countries have adopted the Leader in Me process, while more than 300 schools have achieved the prestigious Lighthouse certification. The following must occur in order for a school to earn certification:

- The principal, school administration, and staff engage in ongoing learning and development as leaders.
- Leadership principles are effectively taught to all students through direct lessons, integrated approaches, and staff modeling. Students are able to think critically about and apply leadership principles.
- Families and the school partner together in learning about the 7 Habits of Highly Effective People and leadership principles through effective communication and mutual respect.
- The school community is able to see leadership in the physical environment, hear leadership through the common language of the 7 Habits, and feel leadership through a culture of caring, relationships, and affirmation.
- Leadership is shared with students through a variety of leadership roles and student voice leads to innovations within the school.
- School, classroom, family, and community leadership events provide authentic environments to celebrate leadership, build culture, and allow students to practice leadership skills.
- The school utilizes the 4 Disciplines of Execution (4DX) ® process to identify and track progress toward Wildly Important Goals (WIGs) for the school, classroom, and staff.
- Students lead their own learning with the skills to assess their needs, set appropriate goals, and carry out action plans. Students also track progress toward goals in leadership notebooks and share these notebooks with adults in student-led conferences.
- Teacher planning and reflection, trusting relationships, and student-led learning combine to create environments for highly engaged learning.

CPA will maintain its Lighthouse Certification for the next two years and will continue to foster its growth and proficiency by exemplifying a leadership culture and principles. At the end of the two years, CPA will be able to recertify through a virtual self-assessment by describing and celebrating its growth and accomplishments.

To learn more about the Leader in Me process, please visit http://www.theleaderinme.org/.

“We are honored to have been certified and named a Leader in Me Lighthouse School. We have seen a transformation of our school’s culture, instruction, and mindset of our students.”

– WANDA WRIGHT-SHEATS,
Charleston Progressive Academy Principal
Laing Middle School of Science and Technology continues to establish itself as one of the leading STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) middle schools in the nation. The International Technology and Engineering Educators Association (ITEEA) selected Laing Middle School of Science and Technology to receive its Program Excellence Award for 2018.

ITEEA is a professional organization for technology, innovation, design, and engineering educators. Its mission is to promote technological literacy for all by supporting the teaching of technology and promoting the professionalism of those engaged in this pursuit. Sponsored by ITEEA and Paxton/Patterson (a company dedicated to providing classroom technology learning systems), the Program Excellence Award is presented in recognition of outstanding contributions to the profession and students. It is one of the highest honors given to technology and engineering education programs at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. These award-winning programs serve as a standard for comparison and models for the development of other programs.

This wasn’t the only award ITEEA gave to Laing Middle; along with the Program Excellence Award, the school’s STEM Coach, Dr. Mel Goodwin, also received the Teacher Excellence Award.

Goodwin and other representatives from Laing’s staff were honored during a ceremony at ITEEA’s 80th Annual Conference in Atlanta, GA on April 12, 2018.

“Both these awards reflect a great deal of dedication and hard work by many people, including Laing students, faculty, and parents, as well as many others in the greater Charleston community,” Goodwin said. “It is great to be able to work with a group like this, and to see our collective efforts recognized and honored by an organization such as ITEEA.”

Laing launched its Whole-School STEM Initiative in 2012, with the goal of improving academic mastery, building 21st century workplace skills, fostering interest in STEM careers, and narrowing achievement gaps. The plan is unique in that it emphasizes an integrative approach that aims to use STEM tools in all curriculum areas. “This strategy helps make students more engaged with their classes and helps them understand how their skills are relevant to the world outside of school,” added Goodwin. “Scholars receive a new way to help reach their full potential, and they are given personal experiences with engineering design and technologies through which they may discover interests in STEM careers.”

This is the second year in a row Laing Middle School has earned a national accolade; they were named the top STEM middle school in the country at the 2017 Future of Education Technology Conference in Orlando, FL.

This year, U.S. News and Weekly Report ranked Academic Magnet and Charleston County School of the Arts as the top high schools in South Carolina. Additionally, Magnet was ranked as the #11 magnet school in the nation and the 43rd overall best high school to attend. Wando was also a part of the state’s top ten list, coming in at #8!
Daniel Jenkins Academy (DJA) is excited to announce it received the South Carolina Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development’s (ASCD) Whole Child Award.

The Whole Child Award recognizes schools that create a culture which exemplifies one or more of the five tenets of the Whole Child Initiative: Healthy, Safe, Supported, Challenged, and Engaged. The ASCD’s Whole Child approach is an effort to transition from a focus on narrowly-defined academic achievement to one that promotes the long-term development and success of all children.

DJA was selected for a Whole Child Award under the “Supported” tenet for its efforts to ensure each student has access to personalized learning, and is supported by qualified and caring adults.

Daniel Jenkins is a county-wide program located in North Charleston that provides individualized opportunities and alternatives for eighth through 12th grade students. Each student develops academic and socio-emotional skills within a comprehensive support system so they reach their fullest potential when they return to their home school. The school’s motto is, “Make a choice to take a chance to see a change.”

“We are so excited to be the recipients of the Whole Child Award from ASCD! It is wonderful to be recognized for the dedication of our faculty to ensure that students are supported, challenged, and engaged. We plan to use the award funding to continue focusing our efforts on multi-faceted supports to further develop our students and prepare them for future success.”

– Dana Hancock,
Daniel Jenkins Academy Principal

“Daniel Jenkins does not give up,” an 11th grade student who asked to not be identified commented. “They make it where every child has hope, and every child has another chance to get their lives together again. They make it where you can feel successful. There is hope for a better future. I am glad I came here, because without their help, I would be somewhere else that I wouldn’t want to be.”

DJA was recognized at the annual South Carolina ASCD Conference in West Columbia on October 19, 2017, and received a $2,500 grant for ongoing staff professional development.

“We are so excited to be the recipients of the Whole Child Award from ASCD” exclaimed Principal Dana Hancock. “It is wonderful to be recognized for the dedication of our faculty to ensure that students are supported, challenged, and engaged. We plan to use the award funding to continue focusing our efforts on multi-faceted supports to further develop our students and prepare them for future success.”

“It is an honor that Daniel Jenkins will be recognized at the state level for having children as the heart of their work,” added CCSD Executive Director of Alternative Programs and Services Jennifer Coker. “Every child deserves opportunities to be successful and it is exciting to see students be given a second chance and use it to their advantage. We are so proud of the students, staff, and administration at Daniel Jenkins.”
Charleston County School District is excited to expand learning opportunities in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) through Project Lead The Way (PLTW) to even more schools across the district.

PLTW is a non-profit organization that serves millions of K-12 students and teachers in over 10,500 schools across the United States through transformative learning experiences and pathways in computer science, engineering, and biomedical science.

The organization features five different programs:
- **Launch (K-5)-** taps into students’ exploratory nature, engages them in learning that feels like play, and encourages them to keep discovering through activities like designing a car safety belt or building digital animations.
- **Gateway (6-8)-** illuminates the range of paths and possibilities students can look forward to in high school and beyond through challenges like designing a therapeutic toy for a child with cerebral palsy, cleaning up an oil spill, or solving a fictional crime.
- **Computer Science (9-12)-** transforms students into builders of tech by engaging them in real-world activities like creating an online art portal or using automation to process and analyze DNA-sequence data.
- **Engineering (9-12)-** empowers students to engage in design thinking as they collaborate on real-world projects like working with a client to design a home, programming electronic devices or robotic arms, or exploring algae as a biofuel source.
- **Biomedical Science (9-12)-** allows students to see themselves in the roles of biomedical science professionals as they solve real-world challenges, such as preventing, diagnosing, and treating disease and investigating the death of a fictional person.

Students at North Charleston Elementary (NCES), Morningside Middle (MMS), and North Charleston High (NCHS) began participating in PLTW this school year.

PLTW provides students with amazing opportunities to experience science, technology, engineering, and math in new ways. The lessons within the programs allow students to engage in fun, hands-on projects, while learning skills they will need to be successful in the future.

Students from NCES, MMS, and NCHS showcased their PLTW work at the 1st Community STEM Day on Saturday, January 27, 2018 at the Felix Pinckney Community Center. This one of a kind event also included a career concourse for families to meet and speak with local industry professionals about pathways to STEM careers.
Three More CCSD Schools Recognized by Project Lead The Way

Three high schools in the state of South Carolina were honored this spring by Project Lead The Way (PLTW) as Distinguished Schools for the 2017-2018 school year. Two of the three are Charleston County School District (CCSD) schools: James Island Charter High School (JICHS), and Wando High School. Charleston Charter School for Math and Science (CCSMS) also received Distinguished School Gateway status for the PLTW opportunities offered to its middle school students. In all, 133 high schools and 110 middle schools received this award nationwide.

The organization's recognition program honors schools that are committed to increasing student access, engagement, and achievement in their PLTW programs. Schools that are recognized for this honor empower their students to thrive in an evolving world and have achieved exemplary results from their PLTW programs.

JICHS currently offers the following PLTW Engineering Courses:

- Aerospace Engineering
- Civil Engineering & Architecture
- Digital Electronics
- Introduction to Engineering Design
- Principles of Engineering

“I am very pleased on how our program has grown since we introduced it to our school in 2003,” said JICHS PLTW teacher Carolyn Bird-Whitley. “Receiving this honor validates all of the hard work and long hours that I have put into this program.”

Wando offers PLTW programs in engineering and biomedical science. The engineering program offers eight courses, while the biomedical science program offers four courses. Students develop in-demand, transportable knowledge and skills through these programs.

“Over the last five years, we have been working on creating a dynamic PLTW [Gateway] program that grows learners from grades 6-8 at CCMS,” added Wolfrey. “This takes commitment from the teachers and administrators to truly realize a program that vertically aligns sixth through twelfth grade instruction; we are always refining and working towards that goal. This vision is inspired by our mission at CCMS to create an environment where our scholar’s academic experience is innovative, equitable, and prepares them for college and careers outside of our walls.”

Northwoods Middle Receives $20,000 Grant from Project Lead The Way

Northwoods Middle School (NMS) is excited to announce it earned a $20,000 grant from Project Lead The Way (PLTW), which will allow students to have more access to computer science courses. In turn, that will give students at NMS an advantage in their education and future careers.

NMS is one of 72 schools across the country that received part of a $3 million grant made possible by a partnership between Verizon and PLTW. This is an expansion of an initial $5 million partnership that began in 2014 between the two organizations to increase students’ access to computer science curriculum and help students develop the in-demand knowledge and skills they need to succeed in the rapidly advancing, technology-based economy.

“We currently offer keyboarding and digital literacy,” NMS Principal Colleen Knauer stated. “PLTW in middle school will allow for our students to not just sit behind a computer, but explore the possibilities for the future and hopefully find an interest in something they want to pursue. We are excited to provide the students of Northwoods this opportunity for the first time and can’t wait to see where PLTW takes them.”

PLTW Gateway’s computer science units – App Creators and Computer Science for Innovators and Makers – are part of PLTW’s K-12 computer science pathway and are built on PLTW’s hands-on, project-based instructional approach. The units provide an opportunity for students to experience computer science in a relevant and engaging way, empowering them to solve real-world problems using the powerful ideas behind computational thinking, learn digital citizenship, and strengthen their critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills.

The program sets them up for further computer science learning via PLTW’s four-year computer science program in high school.

“Project Lead The Way is committed to preparing our nation’s next generation of problem-solvers and innovators,” said PLTW President and CEO Vince Bertram. “In partnership with Verizon, we are significantly increasing the number of students who have access to high-quality computer science education and will be prepared for these growing career opportunities.”

The PLTW/Verizon grant of $20,000 will be disbursed over a two-year period to offset startup costs associated with implementing the units. Grant funds will also support teacher professional development and provide for classroom equipment including tablets and software.
Much like the Carolina Dreamer unmanned sailboat that landed in Wales two years ago, Harbor View Elementary School Gifted and Talented students launched a 5-foot unmanned sailboat named HVES Cruiser on May 10, 2017 with assistance and support from the U.S. Coast Guard Base Charleston.

A few months later, near the end of July, as she approached the southeast corner of Newfoundland Canada, emails were exchanged with the school’s miniboat colleagues in that area, but HVES Cruiser sailed on by.

In early October 2017 as landfall looked eminent, emails were exchanged with the school’s colleagues in Ireland. On the morning of October 11, she was apparently reporting from the shore of a remote island of “Duvilluan More”. With only one or two buildings on this rocky island, it seemed likely the story was over, but later that same day, she reported underway and on route to the mainland. The following morning, the boat reported from a sandy beach in a sparsely populated area of Ballycroy! Later in the day, the school saw HVES Cruiser several miles inland heading north up Highway N59. Shortly after, she started reporting from what appeared to be a school! The school thought it might be the Drumgallagh National and, sure enough, they received a confirmation email on October 16 saying, “Hi all in Charleston. We just want to let you know that your HVES Cruiser has arrived safely in Ballycroy and we have examined the contents in our school today. All of the children are extremely excited. Best Regards Mary Calvey. School Principal”.

The vessel was taken to Drumgallagh National School in Ballycroy by Ethan and John Conway whose father found the boat. All of the children were extremely excited to discover and examine the contents of the waterproof compartment. Inside was a painting of the Charleston flag, a key ring, some coins, and some handwritten notes from children from the school.

On its voyage to Ireland, HVES Cruiser spent 154 days and 12 hours at sea. The boat also had a GPS tracking system that followed its progress and let students track its course through Educational Passages. Launched by Dick Baldwin, Educational Passages is a program to spread ocean and environmental literacy. Its GPS-equipped MiniBoats follow ocean currents and winds, allowing students of all ages to explore oceanic phenomena while developing transoceanic classrooms. The goal of Educational Passages is to introduce participants to sailing, engage students in collaborative learning through international cultural experiences, and increase understanding of the value of the hydrosphere as a shared resource through ocean literacy. The program brings the ocean to the classroom, whether a school is on the coast or landlocked.

On April 3-4, 2018, the HVES Cruiser was transported from County Mayo in northwest Ireland to Cork on the southern coast with travel updates by @HalpinCentre on Twitter. While in Cork, the boat underwent repairs under the direction of Cormac Gebruers, Head of Research at the National Maritime College of Ireland, in Ringaskiddy, County Cork.

Once repairs are complete, the HVES Cruiser will be launched off the coast of Portugal by an Irish Naval Services vessel on a scheduled deployment to the Mediterranean Sea.
During the first week of October, fifth graders at Mitchell Elementary celebrated National Science Day. With the support of South Carolina State University’s Cooperative Extension Office sponsored 4-H Club, students spent the morning creating a wearable device to monitor their heart rates. The technology they used is similar to the technology that is used to make a Fitbit work.

In addition to the National Science Day activity, the 4-H club learned about forces and motion using an aerospace curriculum. Within the program, students studied how it takes different forces to make an airplane or rocket fly. They made their own rockets and got the opportunity to launch them. As a culmination to their Forces and Motion unit, Mitchell students took a trip to Carowinds to actually experience the scientific concepts in real-life!

What is 4-H?

4-H empowers young people with the skills to lead for a lifetime. It’s a research-based experience that includes a mentor, a hands-on project, and a meaningful leadership opportunity. 4-H is delivered by Cooperative Extension—a community of more than 100 public universities across the nation that provides experiences where young people learn by doing. Kids complete hands-on projects in areas like health, science, agriculture, and citizenship, in a positive environment where they receive guidance from adult mentors and are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles. Kids experience 4-H in every county and parish in the country—through in-school and after-school programs, school and community clubs and 4-H camps.

PAWS Literacy Program Helping Students Overcome Reading Obstacles

Learning to read can be a very frustrating experience for some students. Struggling students often lack confidence and become very anxious and uncomfortable.

Kerri Price, a language and humanities teacher at Buist Academy, is passionate about dogs and reading. She started the non-profit Paws for Literacy, and has brought joy to people at schools, nursing homes, hospitals, and wherever there is a need.

The goal of the organization is to bring pet therapy into schools to encourage and promote literacy, provide a sense of comfort and companionship, and reduce anxiety. The overall goal is for students to practice their reading skills while interacting with a therapy dog.

Practical Use in CCSD Schools

The program at Buist gives students the opportunity to practice their reading skills with a non-judgmental therapy dog. The program is held on Saturday mornings once a month.

Erica Smith, a teacher librarian, runs the PAWS Literacy Program at Wando High School. Currently, six therapy dogs and their handlers volunteer their time twice a week to meet with exceptional education students.

The students use the dogs to practice sounds and speech through reading or being read to by the handlers. The presence of the dog has a calming effect on the students and truly gets them excited to try to read. During testing season, the dogs also moonlight as anxiety release dogs for Wando AP students.

At Chicora Elementary, the dog reading therapy was open to all students, grades CD-5, and ran 2-3 days a week. Students exhibited the same responses to the dogs as the Wando students, but they would literally beg to come read with the dogs. It also worked wonderfully as a behavioral management system. Students would try their hardest to be in control of their actions so they would not lose the privilege of spending time reading to the dogs. Teachers saw student reading ability increase as the program continued over several months.

The one-on-one reading environment gave the students the confidence to try reading out loud, as they realized the therapy dogs do not judge or tease them for stumbling over words. For most of the students in the program, reading became the brightest point in their day.

Future of the PAWS Literacy Program

Price has partnered with the Education Department at the College of Charleston to design a standards-based curriculum for the program.

In February, Price and Smith conducted a professional development seminar for all CCSD librarians about how to set up successful programs. The goal is for every school in the district to benefit from having the program available to their students.

For more information on this initiative, visit the Paws for Literacy Facebook page.
SUSTAINABILITY

James B. Edwards Elementary Greening the Future

Charleston County School District is always looking to implement ideas and practices to keep schools as environmentally friendly as possible. The Green Team at James B. Edwards (JBE) Elementary School is doing its job to positively influence the school and the surrounding community.

One major endeavor the JBE Green Team was involved with was the plastic bag ban in Mount Pleasant this past spring. They worked with the Coastal Conservation Committee and the Mount Pleasant Town Council to pass the ordinance. In fact, one JBE student, Olivia Owings, spoke about the matter at a town council meeting in April.

The Green Team, spearheaded by JBE team and green liaison, Nancy Platt, has organized a landfill, recycling, and composting station for students. The Styrofoam trays that are currently used are gathered and taken to a local supermarket for weekly recycling.

Another major success of the Green Team is their raised beds garden. Students actively participate in growing and harvesting produce on the school campus. This produce is used to supplement the local Backpack Buddies program, sending home fresh produce for families in need.

JBE has led the way in green practices in CCSD, receiving the Green Team of the Year Award for their Eco Club in the district and county-sponsored annual Green School Awards, as well as recently received the 2017 Gold Energy Award for their utility savings. Additionally, the school is a certified Carolina Yard by the CarolinaYards program run in concert with Clemson Extension and Carolina Clear.

Students from every grade at JBE contribute to the Green Team, which continues to work hard at making the world a greener place.

Murray-LaSaine and Hursey Elementary Receive SC DHEC Recycling Education Grant

Murray-LaSaine Elementary and Malcolm C. Hursey Elementary recently received a South Carolina DHEC Recycling Education grant this year.

The Recycling Education Grant can be used to support school recycling, composting or waste reduction activities, or for costs associated with field trips designed to improve student understanding of waste reduction and recycling issues.

Both CCSD schools that received the grant plan to increase composting to benefit their school gardens, an integral part of Montessori education.

Meredith Wallace, principal of Murray-LaSaine Elementary explains how their grant will be used: ”We will be getting stainless steel compost bins for every classroom and buckets to use during lunch to help reduce trash that accidentally ends up in the compost bin in the cafeteria. We will also purchase two large compost bins for outdoors. In addition, the grant will allow us to get a worm station and red wiggler worms to do vermicomposting. We are so excited to receive this grant and look forward to putting it into action.”

Liz Ramirez, outdoor classroom teacher at Hursey Elementary, received a $1,500 grant. Megan Minchener, a lower elementary teacher at Murray-LaSaine Elementary, applied for her school to receive a $1,400 grant.

In addition to onsite composting, both school participate in the district’s commercial food waste composting program in their cafeterias. CCSD’s commercial food waste program was recognized for its positive environmental impact by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 4 Division in November 2015, receiving their Outstanding Achievement in Food Waste Prevention and Diversion Award.
Five schools in the state of South Carolina were honored by The Flippen Group as Capturing Kids’ Hearts® National Showcase Schools for the 2017-2018 school year; three are Charleston County School District schools. Jerry Zucker Middle School is a first-time recipient of this award; Memminger Elementary School (second year in a row) and R.B. Stall High School (third year in a row) are repeat winners. CCSD now has a Capturing Kids’ Hearts® National Showcase School in each of the main Learning Communities.

Three years ago, Zucker staff members began an initiative to transform the campus into an emotionally safe and relationally connected place for students, staff, and parents. After researching programs used by some of the nation’s most successful schools, leaders at Zucker chose to work with The Flippen Group. Teachers and staff learned processes to increase students’ connectedness with both peers and adults on campus. They learned how to create a classroom environment where students are excited to enter and learn every day. As a result of their devotion to the program and their mission to serve every student, every day, without exceptions or excuses, The Flippen Group recognized Zucker Middle as a Capturing Kids’ Hearts® National Showcase School.

“Our school is honored to be recognized by Capturing Kids’ Hearts®. They (The Flippen Group) are the national gold standard in recognizing positive and supportive school culture.”

— Jake Perlmutter, Jerry Zucker Middle School Principal

Since 1990, campuses across the country have experienced amazing outcomes with Capturing Kids’ Hearts® tools and processes by creating socio-emotional safety conducive to learning. The Flippen Group provides educators the skills they need to change the trajectory of students’ lives. Openness replaces defensiveness. Judging and feelings of being judged are replaced with acceptance and real connectedness to the school. “Discipline problems nearly non-existent,” and “academic achievement constantly improving” are common feedback following Capturing Kids’ Hearts implementation.

“Memminger is grateful for the opportunity to work with The Flippen Group through Capturing Kids’ Hearts,” said Dr. Abby Woods, principal at Memminger Elementary. “It has helped us create a culture of love and learning, as well as improve our relationships with all involved at the school. We truly believe that the influence of education depends on relational capacity.”

Capturing Kids’ Hearts® campuses across the country were considered for these awards based on the following criteria: 1) nomination based on observation, 2) level of implementation of Capturing Kids’ Hearts® processes by all staff as measured by online surveys, and 3) data demonstrating that Capturing Kids’ Hearts has made a significant improvement in attendance, discipline, climate/culture, or academics.

A Flippen Group team visited each nominated campus to gather additional quantitative and qualitative data, and to interview students, teachers, administrators, and parents. They used a matrix of key measurements to gather information during the campus walk-through. Finally, an additional survey was conducted to collect feedback regarding the perceived climate and culture of the campus and its conduciveness to learning. Following this visit, the selection team reviewed all accumulated data and selected the campuses to receive the Capturing Kids’ Hearts® National Showcase Schools awards.

“Since our initial implementation in 2011, Capturing Kids’ Hearts has been the integral component shaping our school culture. Over the past seven years, it has become the way we do business at Stall High School.”

— Jeremy Carrick, R.B. Stall High Principal

“Since our initial implementation in 2011, Capturing Kids’ Hearts has been the integral component shaping our school culture,” explained R.B. Stall Principal Jeremy Carrick. "Over the past seven years, it has become the way we do business at Stall High School. It aligns with the core values of our teachers and allows us to make the greatest positive impact on our students. It is an honor to be recognized for the third consecutive year as a National Showcase School. This award is a result of the relentless dedication and commitment to our students by our exceptional teachers and support staff. Our focus is on the students and the recognition we received is just affirmation that what we are doing is making a difference.”
Mission, Values & Commitments

STUDENTS ARE THE HEART OF OUR WORK!

Our Mission
To educate and support every child in achieving college, career, and citizenship readiness

Our Vision
CCSD is a premier school system in which
- every child is supported in and out of school,
- every child succeeds academically,
- every child graduates from high school prepared for employment in the modern workforce or credential completion or postsecondary degree, and
- every student, teacher, principal, and staff member is valued and respected with the opportunity to learn every day.

Our Values
- Service - We are selfless in support of our students and each other.
- Integrity - We honor truthfulness, fairness, consistency, and transparency.
- Inclusiveness - We treat each other with dignity and mutual respect.
- Equity - We target resources, support, and attention where the need is greatest.
- Collaboration - We are stronger when we work together on behalf of every child.
- Excellence - We make decisions that are student-centered, data-informed, and evidence-based.
Charleston County School District

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Charleston County School District

#### DISTRICT PROFILE

- **Annual Budget**: $436 million
- **Number of Teachers**: 3,235
- **Number of Students**: 49,948
- **Number of Schools/Programs**: 140
- **Students Designated English Language Learners**: 3,851

**Ethnicity Breakdown**
- Caucasian: 47.1%
- African American: 39.1%
- Hispanic: 9.4%
- Asian: 1.6%
- Other: 2.8%