

Focus ON CCSD

News for, by and about Charleston County School District,
the state of South Carolina's premier school district where *Students are the Heart of Our Work.*

Volume 2 | Edition 4 | April 2019



HAECHERL IS STATE TEACHER OF THE YEAR FINALIST



State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman surprised Mamie P. Whitesides Elementary School teacher, Stephanie Haecherl (HECK-ruh!), at her school with news that she has been selected as one of five finalists for the South Carolina Teacher of the Year award.

"As an elementary school teacher, Stephanie has the potential to make a tremendous impact on her students' futures," said State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman. "She rises to this challenge by engaging parents, mentoring others, and personalizing instruction for every student."

Stephanie Haecherl is a second grade teacher at Mamie P. Whitesides Elementary in Charleston County School District. As a National Board Certified educator, she served as an author contributor to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Ms. Haecherl received national recognition when she became one of twenty-two teachers on the Scholastic Book Clubs Teacher Advisory Board.

"The selection committee made an excellent choice in placing Stephanie Haecherl among this elite group of state finalists," said Charleston County School District superintendent Dr. Gerrita Postlewait. "She's dynamic, passionate, creative, humble, and has a heart for all children. An extraordinary educator, Ms. Haecherl is an excellent representative of the high caliber of teachers in Charleston County Schools."

Reaching out locally and nationally she has directly impacted student-learning school-wide by securing over thirty grants. Stephanie possessed the desire to teach at a very young age. She is a lifelong learner who after attending her first Engineering in Elementary workshop was "hooked" on STEAM. She refers to her teaching style as "eclectic"; a small window into her classroom reveals a variety of activities, such as oil pastels used to illustrate how students visualized a story. Her classroom inspires creativity, nurtures critical thinking skills and allows students to "think outside of the box." Stephanie is a community minded educator who is passionate about her profession and illustrates these commitments by finding ways for parents to participate in education by serving as weekly readers. She seeks mentoring opportunities wherever possible, mentoring student teachers from local colleges and universities and educators new to the profession.

As one of five finalists, Stephanie will receive \$10,000 and go on to the next stage of competition which involves an in-person interview with a team of expert judges. The South Carolina Teacher of the Year Gala will be held on May 8th in Columbia where the overall winner will be announced.

The winner receives a total of \$25,000 and is provided with a brand new BMW to use while serving for one year as a roving ambassador providing mentoring, attending speaking engagements, working with

teacher cadets and teaching fellows, leading the State Teacher Forum, and serving as the state spokesperson for over 50,000 educators.

The Teacher of the Year program celebrates excellence and strengthens the teaching force by honoring and recognizing exceptional teachers on the district, state, and national level. The Teacher of the Year Awards not only assist in retention efforts but serve as a powerful recruitment tool to the educator profession.

"The selection committee made an excellent choice in placing Stephanie Haecherl among this elite group of state finalists. She's dynamic, passionate, creative, humble, and has a heart for all children. An extraordinary educator, Ms. Haecherl is an excellent representative of the high caliber of teachers in Charleston County Schools."

DR. GERRITA POSTLEWAIT
CHARLESTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

E.B. ELLINGTON STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN DREAMLEARNERS

Boeing South Carolina's DreamLearners educational program has reached more than 460,000 students and community partners since 2012.

E.B. Ellington students were recently invited to the Boeing campus to participate.

DreamLearners offers the opportunity for South Carolina students in 5th grade and students in specialized Science, Technology

Engineering and Math (STEM) based programs to visit Boeing South Carolina and learn more about careers in aerospace, STEM and advanced manufacturing. Boeing also offers the opportunity for classroom speaking events, and visits from teachers, administrators and faculty. Special sessions are scheduled monthly on Saturdays for Boeing South Carolina teammates, their families and friends.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Volunteer Celebrated	2
Family Style Dining	2
Guest Author Visits Pinckney	3
Five CCSD Teachers Receive Grants	3
Taylor Named 2019 Educator Nominee	3
Sea Perch Challenge Championships	4
MUSC Telehealth Clinics	4
Jennifer Thrift Honored	4

Volunteer Celebrated for his 44 Years in Education

80-YEAR-OLD SUBSTITUTE TEACHER JOHN SMALLS



Rarely do surprise birthday celebrations come as a surprise to the honoree. More often than not, someone accidentally lets the cat out of the bag.

On one Sunday in February, John Henry Smalls Jr. had no clue that his family was having a celebration for him in the fellowship hall at Friendship AME Church in Mount Pleasant's Old Village. His three children John III, Carlton and Keymeil, invited friends and family to gather after worship to celebrate his 80th birthday.

Age isn't slowing the 44 year-educator down; he can be found every weekday at Charleston Progressive Academy (CPA) where he serves as a substitute teacher and school volunteer. He taught at Porcher Elementary School, McClellanville Elementary School, Wilmot J. Fraser Elementary, and Lincoln High School as a physical education teacher; and He has regularly served as a substitute teacher around Charleston County.

So why does he do it so many years after he initially retired?

"I see those kids in me," said Smalls. "Like them, I didn't have a lot when I was growing up. But I succeeded and they can too. I want to pass that on to them. I come here every day to be with these kids. They bring me as much joy as I bring them."

Smalls grew up in the Old Village of Mount Pleasant, and was one of 12 children born to John H. and Mary L. Smalls.

He was raised by his mother who worked in the cafeteria at Moultrie High School and other domestic work just to make ends meet.

"It was tough where economics was concerned," said Smalls. "We hardly had enough money for food, but the Lord provided and we were never starving or hungry."

As a child, he found himself on the basketball court every day after school but at the same time, his eyes were on the prize - education!

Coaches and the principal at Laing High School saw his potential and helped him secure a scholarship to attend Kittrell Junior College in

North Carolina. He later transferred to Claflin College in Orangeburg where he earned a degree in Physical and Health Education.

"I was always athletic and liked most sports," said Smalls. "I knew that sports would be my ticket to college. Athletics helped me get out of town to better my situation. When I left for college, I didn't have hardly enough money for the bus fare, but I managed."

His decision to go into education was an easy one.

"The community I came out of had lots of teachers," said Smalls. "If you did something wrong they would see your parents on Sunday at church. Our teachers and even the principal pushed us to do and be our best, and they helped us individually to succeed."

Smalls, for more than three decades, wrote the weekly column "Across The Cooper With John Smalls" for The Charleston Chronicle and has worked at local Walmart stores for nearly two decades.

He drives to the Peninsula every day from his home in Ladson because he wants to give back.

"My coaches saw the potential in me, and I see the potential in these students at Charleston Progressive," said Smalls. "I want to show them that with persistence they can be successful and rise above the poverty."

Principal Wanda Sheats is grateful for his service.

"Mr. Smalls has been a dependable and positive volunteer at Charleston Progressive Academy since we returned to downtown in 2013," said Sheats. "He arrives at CPA daily at 8:30 a.m. to volunteer, but as a certified substitute, he fills the role of the sub when a job goes unfilled and does it with a smile. Mr. Smalls knows our students and even the students' parents since he has been a sub in some of their classrooms."

Through the years he has taught the children of his former students and even works with some of them at Walmart. It brings him joy to see and hear their success stories, he said.

"The Lord works in mysterious ways," said Smalls. "Some days I am

not needed at the school, so I just assist. I want to help guide the kids towards their future. I want to inspire someone to do better than what I wanted to do."

Teacher Valerie Muhammad has worked with Smalls for years.

"Filled with sincerity, dedication, and commitment, Mr. Smalls is truly a blessing to our CPA family," said Muhammad. "We greatly appreciate his willingness to go the extra mile to support us all."

Smalls considers himself blessed.

"I come from a community of faith," said Smalls. "Everyone has their own definition of community. I consider my community my family, and we are one where education and giving back are the cornerstones of supporting and lifting up a community."

Sheats agreed, describing the school and those within her walls as a family.

"Mr. Smalls is one of our biggest assets and a part of the CPA family," said Sheats. "I salute his energy at 80 years old as he continues to share his love of educating children. I appreciate him each and every day he walks through the doors of CPA!"

"Filled with sincerity, dedication, and commitment, Mr. Smalls is truly a blessing to our CPA family. We greatly appreciate his willingness to go the extra mile to support us all"

VALERIE MUHAMMAD, CHARLESTON PROGRESSIVE ACADEMY TEACHER

CCSD OFFERS FAMILY STYLE DINING

at CD and HeadStart Schools



MARIE BENNETT AND SHIRLEY ALSTON TEACH THE 3-YEAR-OLD HEAD START CLASS AT SANDERS CLYDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The three-year-old students in Shirley Alston and Marie Bennett's class at Sanders-Clyde Elementary School have table manners that could rival most adults. That's because the teachers spend every single day modeling proper mealtime etiquette through Family Style Dining.

Federal guidelines dictate that Early Head Start and Head Start students must be served all meals using the pass/serve model. According to Sanders-Clyde Head Start Site Manager Frances Shaw, it helps students develop fine motor skills.

Charleston County School District (CCSD) Head Start and Early Head Start programs are funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to serve 877 preschool children, 152 infants and toddlers, and pregnant women. Head Start programs are offered at 13 sites throughout CCSD. Early Head Start is available at five CCSD sites as well as in the home-based option.

"Family Style Dining creates communication between the teacher and the students using food as the interaction," said Shaw. "The teachers discuss with the students the type of food we are serving and how we create the meals, which in turn helps to build their vocabulary. We're showing them that not everything comes out of the frozen food section and into the microwave."

For many of these students, it is the only time they sit down at a table with family or friends to enjoy a meal. Many come from a culture of eating in front of the television, Shaw explained.

"We hope they take what they learned and use their enthusiasm to encourage Family Style Dining at home," Shaw said. "This type of instruction gives the children a chance to show off what they've learned, such as what utensils they are using and portion control and ingredients."

Family Style Dining

Adult role-modeling, peer to peer interactions and teaching mealtime etiquette are the pillars of Family Style Dining being offered throughout CCSD.

Establishing healthier eating practices in schools demands innovative approaches and purposefulness that reaches beyond the focus of meeting children's physical food and nutrition requirements and economic hurdles. From that philosophy, the idea of Family Style Dining in the school cafeteria was born.

With this method, food is placed in the center of the table in common dishes and children are allowed to serve themselves. The shift from traditional school cafeteria service to Family Style Dining has resulted in positive outcomes. It allows students to take responsibility for the food selected and eaten.

According to Sarah W. Bates, Nutrition Services Officer, children learn and practice social and motor skills such as taking turns sharing and passing, pouring and scooping foods.

"Classroom teachers act as good role models for the students by sitting at the same table and eating the same meal," said Bates. "It creates an intimate, family-like environment."

Alston leads her students in a discussion about the daily menu, helping them to differentiate between fruits and vegetables and grains and proteins. Just before lunch arrives, she leads the students in song. Two students are then selected to pass out napkins and plates.

Before the food is placed in the center of each table, Alston leads the students in a hand washing routine to remind them how to properly handle food in the mealtime setting.

Midland Park Primary School is another is one of the many CCSD schools that features Family Style Dining.

Jasmine Wright's students use appropriately sized utensils to not only scoop food onto their plate but to feed themselves as well.

"Each student is given the recommended portion and is often treated to second servings of fruits and vegetables if they desire," said Wright.

Like all Head Start teachers, Wright sits with her students and instructs them on proper manners and corrects them when needed and is there to offer assistance.

How quickly the students catch on proves the model is a success, according to Bates.

"It's interesting to watch the students self-serve at the beginning of the school year and then by January you're awestruck at how capable they are and how their dexterity has improved," said Bates. "They can get the corn from the pot without making a mess and all the while the teachers are there at the table with them to help them navigate those skills."





The Power of Fairy Tales - Guest Author Visits Pinckney Students

New York Times best-selling Author Liesl Shurtliff visited Charles Pinckney Elementary School Thursday, April 4, 2019. She has written two children's series: Fairly True Tales and Time Castaways.

During her visit to Pinckney, she shared about the books that changed her reading life; many of them were fairy tales. It was an engaging and interactive presentation all about fairy tales - where they come from, how they change, and what they mean to us today.

Shurtliff grew up in Salt Lake City, Utah the fifth of eight children. She had a love of dancing, singing, playing the piano and reading books by Judy Blume, Beverly Cleary, and Roald Dahl. She also read Grimms' Fairy Tales, so often she wore through the binding.

When she writes, Shurtliff often wanders back to her childhood and gathers the magic that remains. She hopes to share that magic with children everywhere.

Five CCSD Teachers Receive Armed Forces Communications & Electronics Association Grants



Getting scholars hooked on Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) early is the key to increasing diversity and inclusion in these subjects in high school and beyond.

The Armed Forces Communications & Electronics Association (AFCEA) Lowcountry Chapter annually gives \$9,000 in STEM grants to Lowcountry teachers in grades 4-8. This year, five of the six grant winners are CCSD teachers.

Ashley River Creative Arts' Teacher of the Year, Jen Waldron, proudly leads the school's Science, Technology, Arts and Math (STEAM) robotics teams. These STEAM scholars have been peer-leaders in integrating the arts with science, technology, engineering, and math. The STEAM team will benefit from a Cue Robot thanks to the grant.

Buist Academy fourth and fifth grade scholars use STEM to solve real-world problems within the International Baccalaureate framework. For example, scholars design, model and test a robot to remove hazardous material from a fictional disaster site. Tracie Howe, STEM teacher, will use the grant to purchase VEX IQ robot design kits.

Deer Park Middle scholars are so enthusiastic about

robotics that the school created a second robotics team in addition to their First LEGO League team. The teams will use the grant to purchase spare parts for their robots and a 3-D printer to design and create both practical and whimsical items. Co-led by teacher of the year, Alana Lewis, and veteran mathematics teacher, Cathy Demers, the robotics teams are bursting with creativity.

Women in Charge, an engineering program for girls at Moultrie Middle School, will use their grant to purchase computer-building kits so girl-coders will have a concrete understanding of the inner workings of their computers and answer questions like, "What is a motherboard and how does it function?" Directed by Millibeth Currie, science department chair, the program is sponsored by Charleston Digital Corridor.

Orange Grove Charter eighth-grade scholars are apprenticing with Lowcountry Maritime Society to learn boat-building. While developing a connection to Charleston's waterways, scholars learn important 21st Century skills such as teamwork and perseverance, and world-class knowledge in carpentry, math, science, and engineering. Lori Berry, STEAM teacher, will use grant funds to support their next boat-building project.



Taylor Named a #WhatWomenBring Nominee

Erica Taylor, Charleston County School District's (CCSD) Chief of Staff, was named the 2019 Educator Nominee by the YWCA of Greater Charleston.

Lavanda Brown Executive Director of the YWCA announced the 2019 #WhatWomenBring honorees March 20, 2019.



ERICA TAYLOR
CHARLESTON COUNTY
SCHOOL DISTRICT
CHIEF OF STAFF

In the spring of 2018, YWCA of Greater Charleston brought a new, powerful event for professional women to the Charleston area. At the inaugural #WhatWomenBring power lunch at the Charleston Area Convention Center, women who are breaking barriers in 10 different industries were celebrated.

Those women then formed a panel to answer the audience's questions. This powerful panel discussion - a candid conversation among women - was emceed by WCBD News 2 TV anchor Octavia Mitchell and will be again this year. The conversation with the women leaders was a candid discussion about how they got where they are, the challenges they've faced, and their ideas for career growth.

The second annual #WhatWomenBring event is scheduled for May 21, 2019, where Taylor will be among the panelists.

What Taylor loves most about her job is knowing her work impacts the lives of students across Charleston County and prepares them to be successful.

In addition to her impressive educational background - she is currently pursuing a doctorate in addition to all else she does - she serves on the board of directors of the Teacher Supply Closet which provided school supplies and resources to teachers working in Title I schools, and on the board of the Mentoring Program of Charleston. She also serves on the boards of the Trident Urban League and the Charleston Leadership Foundation, and as a member of the Moja Arts Festival Community Advisory Committee.

Among other renowned leadership initiatives, Taylor is a graduate of The Riley Institute's South Carolina Diversity Leaders Initiative at Furman University.

Taylor has been recognized as the 2018 Outstanding Educator of the Year, a South Carolina Education Policy Fellow, a Racial Equity Leadership Network Fellow, and one of the Forty Under 40 by the Charleston Regional Business Journal, 20 Under 20 by Thomas Media Black Expo, and 35 Under 35 by the National School Public Relations Association.

"Last year's inaugural group of dynamic honorees set a very high bar," Brown said. "The #WWB stage will again be filled with stories of inspiration and wise words of counsel."

Taylor is honored to be among these trailblazing women.

"There have been so many women who have made an impact on our nation's history," said Taylor. "Here locally, it is no different. Women all around me are making strides that generations ago were unheard of."

Taylor's career in the education field has opened doors for more up and coming women.

"I have been fortunate in my career which enabled me to prove to other females of my generation and especially women of color, that anything is possible with faith and hard work," said Taylor. "My passion is to open doors to education for all children so that they too can blaze trails."

The public is invited to join the discussion at 11:00 a.m. on May 21. Tickets are on sale now. Your ticket includes a one-year YWCA Greater Charleston membership, a \$50 value.

CCSMS and Laing Capture Championships at 9th Annual Charleston SeaPerch Challenge



CCSMS TEAM 4 HS OVERALL WINNER



LAING TEAM #16 MS OVERALL WINNER

Teams from Charleston Charter School for Math and Science (CCSMS) and Laing Middle School beat out their peers in the 9th annual Charleston SeaPerch Regional Challenge to claim overall victories.

Team #4 from CCSMS and Team #16 from Laing are going to the International SeaPerch Challenge at the University of Maryland in College Park, MD June 1-2, 2019.

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

The following teams finished first in the three separate competitions:

Obstacle Course

HS – CCSMS Team #3

MS – Laing Team #17

Engineering Notebook

HS - CCSMS Team #4

MS – Buist Academy Team #9

Mission: Rescue & Recovery

HS – CCSMS Team #4

MS – Laing Team #16

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 will learn engineering concepts, problem-solving, teamwork, and technical applications.

As part of the Charleston Navy Week celebration (March 11-15, 2019), Navy personnel participated in the Charleston SeaPerch Challenge as divers, judges, and team escorts.

CCSD would like to thank the many volunteers who gave their time to this competition, and to SPAWAR, the City of North Charleston, North Charleston Police Department, CVS Pharmacy, Charleston SCUBA, and NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) for their sponsorship and support of the Charleston SeaPerch Regional Challenge.

CCSD Features 23 MUSC Telehealth Clinics Across the District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) has expanded school-based health offerings thanks to a combined community partnership that allows students to receive diagnosis and treatment through Medical University of South Carolina's (MUSC) School-Based Health Program.

MUSC Health operates the School-Based Health Program across the district so students can receive healthcare in the school setting. Services include sick visits and chronic disease management. Additional services offered in select schools include diagnosis and management of ADHD, sports physicals, and specialized telemental health services. Importantly, a note is always sent to the student's primary care provider as the service is meant to serve only as an additional layer of care.

According to Melissa Prendergast, Director of CCSD's Nursing Services the district is a longtime partner with MUSC.

"In particular, we have enjoyed a successful collaboration in providing interactive clinical interventions for students and families using Telehealth in 23 of our schools," Prendergast said. "Our school nurses are keenly aware that many of our families struggle with access to health care for a number of reasons. Transportation is one of the major barriers to this access. The School-Based Health Program removes this barrier, and provide easy, timely access to care for our students. The ability to provide an onsite clinical intervention positively impacts our student's wellbeing keeps them in school and results in improved academic performance."

An MUSC Health nurse practitioner or a doctor examines the students with the assistance of the school nurse or telepresenter. Computers and monitors are used so that patients and providers can see each other via a mobile cart, which enables them to talk clearly and share information. At times special equipment is used, like electronic stethoscopes or a camera to look inside a child's ears.

Telehealth has transformed health care in rural provider offices, emergency departments, skilled nursing facilities, and even correctional facilities.

Sanders-Clyde Elementary School Nurse Allison Wukovits said she uses the telehealth equipment quite frequently. She utilizes the delivery prescription service that is provided in select school as well.

"The doctor can prescribe medicine to the students, such as ADHD medicine," said Wukovits. It is then delivered to the school and dispensed daily. The delivery aspect of the program helps our parents who don't have access to immediate transportation."

"Telehealth is helpful in a lot of schools for a lot of different situations," said Prendergast. "In rural schools, where it is really hard to get kids to the doctor this has been very effective. Optimal health is crucial to improved academic success. We have witnessed the benefits."

This CCSD/MUSC collaboration includes Charleston Promise Neighborhood and Meeting Street Schools, which provide support to select schools. The School-Based Health Program is supported in part by the South Carolina Telehealth Alliance.

For more information about the MUSC School-Based Health Program contact Melissa Prendergast at (843) 745-2183 or melissa_prendergast@charleston.k12.sc.us.



SCARLETTE ORDONEZ AND BEHOLD SHOCKLEY, FIRST-GRADERS AT SANDERS CLYDE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL HAVE VISITED THEIR SCHOOL NURSE, ALLISON WUKOVITS ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS



CCSD SUPERINTENDENT DR. GERRITA POSTLEWAIT TOURS MUSC CENTER FOR TELEHEALTH

Jennifer Thrift named 2019 Library Journal Movers & Shakers Educator

Focus ON CCSD

Focus on Charleston County School District is published for, by and about CCSD, the state of South Carolina's premier school district where *Students are the Heart of our Work*.

Gerrita Postlewait, *Superintendent of Schools*
Erica Taylor, *Chief Officer, Strategy & Communications*
Sully Witte, *Communications Officer*

Charleston County School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or any other applicable status protected by federal or state law. Questions about non-discrimination policies should be sent to Charleston County School District, 75 Calhoun Street, Charleston, SC 29401.



JENNIFER THRIFT
CHARLES PINCKNEY
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL'S
TEACHER LIBRARIAN

students' instruction. She attended the Google Summit where she learned about digital Breakouts and began researching how to incorporate them at Pinckney.

Thrift trained teachers to create Breakouts that integrate with their standards and conducted numerous trainings for educators throughout the school district. She has even written Breakouts for Breakout EDU Company. Those can be found on the company's website, where Pinckney is also featured. See the "Pinckney Elementary School" video at breakoutedu.com/about/.

"You can hear students reflecting at the end of a Breakout EDU game about what they would have done differently," said Principal, Leanne

Charles Pinckney Elementary School's teacher librarian, Jennifer Thrift, has been named a 2019 Library Journal Movers & Shakers Educator March 6, 2019.

Low college grades and a rocky first year teaching didn't stop Thrift from becoming a school librarian - they just pushed her to try harder. She strives to instill that same resilience in her students, so she was thrilled to learn about Breakout EDU, a start-up company that creates escape room kits for classrooms.

Thrift was the first person in Charleston County School District to integrate Breakout EDU into

Sheppard. "Mrs. Thrift motivates everyone to get out of their comfort zone and remain on the cutting edge of best educational practices. As a result, our teachers are implementing innovative, high tech lessons and our students leave us with the world-class communication and technology skills that are outlined in the Profile of a South Carolina Graduate."

While many still believe that the school library should be a quiet environment, Thrift hopes these often boisterous games will shatter that perception.

"Noise can be productive as long as [students] are working," Thrift said.

Students solve puzzles to unlock a strongbox before time runs out. Thrift has watched kids take a wrong turn, but their excitement never wavers.

"I am a firm believer that 'FAIL' stands for 'First Attempt in Learning,'" Thrift said. "If you don't figure it out right away, keep trying."

Thanks to Thrift's passion, all 80 schools in the Charleston County School District have Breakout EDU kits, and she's trained the district's librarians and teachers, who serve about 50,000 students, on incorporating this dynamic activity into the classroom.

Thrift is a Nationally Board Certified Media Specialist who, a few years ago, was chosen by her colleagues as Pinckney's Teacher of the Year.

"In our school, Mrs. Thrift is seen as an instructional leader," added Sheppard. "As the media specialist, she plans and teaches collaboratively with teachers, supports the implementation of new reading strategies, and promotes school-wide literacy. Because she is so well respected, she is often a change agent within our school, helping others to move from the fixed mindset of resistance and adversity to a growth mindset of change and possibility."