

For Immediate Release

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Media Release

Keerthana Samuel takes top spot in CCSD's 2020 Spelling Bee

**Office of Strategy and
Communications**

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Charleston, SC – Forty spellers participated in the Charleston County School District (CCSD) 2020 Spelling Bee held January 16, 2020, at Burke High School. It took eight rounds for Keerthana Samuel of C.E. Williams Middle School to earn the top spot. Samuel struggled with the word "Sommelier" adding an "e" at the end but much to her relief spelled "Pruritus" with ease, giving her the title.

Samuel said she originally was unable to obtain the list to begin studying so she used the list from the previous year.

"I studied two pages a day and memorized each word," said Samuel. "Today, I stayed home from school to continue memorizing my words. I did my best but I certainly didn't expect to win first place."

Thirty-six schools sent competitors. Only four scholars took the top spots.

Samuel along with 17 other top spellers will advance to the Post and Courier's SpellBound! 2020 competition in March.

The winner of SpellBound! 2020 moves on to the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C.

The following CCSD students took the top four spots and will advance to the Post and Courier SpellBound! Spelling Bee:

1st place: Keerthana Samuel, C.E Williams Middle School, 6th grade

2nd place: Daniel Kagen, Buist Academy, 7th grade

3rd place: Piper Koziick, Haut Gap Middle School, 5th grade

4th place: Erin Baylock, Deer Park Middle School, 8th grade

Samuel said to prepare for the next round she will continue to study the words and learn more about root words and learn tips for memorizing words that originated from other languages.

"I am really looking forward to the next level," Samuel said.

The other fourteen students who will advance to SpellBound 2020 include:

- Shaniya Brown – Simmons Pinckney Middle School – 8th Grade
- Jacob Crosby – Haut Gap Middle School – 8th Grade
- Samajaye Garrett – St. James Santee Elementary-Middle School – 5th Grade
- Isis Hanna – Charleston County School of the Arts – 7th Grade
- Maxine Lussier – Moultrie Middle School – 7th Grade
- Parc Mudock – Orange Grove Elementary School – 8th Grade
- Luke Paggi – James B. Edwards Elementary School – 5th Grade
- Alanna Simmons – Charleston Charter School for Math and Science – 7th Grade
- Sadie Smith – West Ashley Advanced Studies Magnet – 7th Grade
- Mason Toporek – Orange Grove Charter School – 5th Grade
- Christina Washington – Oakland Elementary School – 5th Grade
- Gabriel Williams – Ashley River Creative Arts Elementary School – 5th Grade
- Victoria Williams – Jerry Zucker Middle School – 7th grade
- Jenna Zimmermann – Thomas C. Cario Middle School – 7th Grade

For more information, contact the Office of Strategy and Communications at (843) 937-6303.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD), a nationally-accredited school district, is the second largest school system in South Carolina representing a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 87 schools and specialized programs. With approximately 6,100 employees district-wide, CCSD is the fourth largest employer in the region.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, charter, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), and Montessori schools, and is divided into three Learning Communities. Options include specialized programs in science, engineering and mathematics; liberal arts; music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military and other public service enterprises.