



For Immediate Release
March 4, 2022

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Media Release

Burke, HBCUs provide important opportunity for band students

Burke High School

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Charleston, SC – Burke High School, led by Band Director Linard McCloud, hosted the 17th Annual Burke High School Band Scholarship Fair. Approximately 60 students from 11 high schools across the state participated. Equally as many Historically Black Colleges and Universities from around the Southeast participated.

Once the day was over, McCloud estimated the high school students in attendance were offered about \$1.1 million in scholarships, which could turn into \$4.4 million over four years (if the students attend four years at the institution of their choice).

McCloud, a Burke High and Florida A&M University graduate, began inviting colleges to audition his band students after he became Burke Band Director in 1979. In 2001, he asked more colleges to participate, and in 2003, he asked more high schools to participate. Seventeen years later, Burke's band auditions have become a notable opportunity for band students, high school band directors, and college band directors throughout the state and Southeast region.

Brendon Johnson was a senior at Darlington High School in 2009. He attended the band auditions at Burke and was offered a band scholarship to attend Bethune-Cookman University. Johnson is now the band director at Darlington High School and brought 10 students to audition at this year's Band Scholarship Fair. He has brought students to the audition each of the past five years.

"This is very special," Johnson said. "It's an opportunity for a student to get thousands of dollars in scholarship money. They get to see the value of all the work they put in. It's a tremendous advantage to college directors who can audition multiple students in one place."

Anthony Jones, band director at Livingstone College in Salisbury, NC recognizes that advantage.

"I get a chance to reach out to the most talented students and they get a chance to see what we have to offer," explained Jones. "It's a great opportunity for networking and we don't have to travel from place to place. I've auditioned 18 students and I hope I get all 18 of them!"

Mullins High School drummer Aaliyah Slaughter was among the students auditioned. She hopes this experience will be open to all high school band students in the future, not just juniors and seniors.

“It would help younger students see how they need to grow,” said Slaughter.

The auditions represent an opportunity for students at small schools in rural communities to get exposure they might not get otherwise, McCloud said. With sponsors who might finance overnight stays for students and band directors that opportunity can grow, he said.

Iconic band director Lonnie Hamilton attended this year’s scholarship far as well. For 20 years, he molded young musicians at the former Bonds-Wilson High School, taught music to over 1,200 students during his teaching career, and secured 131 college scholarships.

“McCloud has done a tremendous thing,” Hamilton said. “Nobody has done the math, but the economic impact in the Tri-County are alone has been immeasurable! McCloud deserves a lot of credit.”

For more information, contact Linard McCloud at linard_mccloud@charleston.k12.sc.us.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally-accredited school district that is committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all of its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents 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.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools. Options include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military.