

For Immediate Release

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Media Release

CCSD Board's Mission Critical Action to diversify Buist Academy is working

**Office of Strategy and
Communications**

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Charleston, SC – One of the critical pieces of the Mission Critical Actions adopted in December 2019 by the Charleston County School District (CCSD) Board of Trustees was to expand opportunities at Buist Academy for more students from high poverty school zones without lowering the rigor of high-quality academics. Based on results from the recent school choice application process, that effort is a tremendous success.

Last Friday, District staff notified 112 students to offer them seats into Buist next year as part of the Board's Mission Critical Action to expand access and opportunities, and thereby increase the school's diversity, through the expansion of new classes in grades 3-6. Ninety-six percent of the students offered are from high-poverty school zones.

Impressively, that was achieved without compromising the rigorous entrance requirements. All 112 of the students offered scored at or above the 75th national percentile, the established eligibility criterion. Of those, 108 students (96 percent) are from CCSD school zones that have 80 percent or higher student poverty. All of the students offered seats in the expanded classes are at or above the 75th national percentile on both MAP Reading and MAP Math. The 75th percentile was used as the entrance criterion on a different test for kindergarten admission in previous years.

Additionally, the demographic makeup of the students offered for the expanded classes is 51 percent minority students and 49 percent white students. By comparison, the current K-8 student-body at Buist is 82 percent white, with poverty at 14 percent.

"We are delighted that the Board's goal for increasing access without lowering quality is a reality," said CCSD Superintendent Gerrita Postlewait. "It proves that we can have a school with a student body that looks more like CCSD as a whole, providing access to students who are absolutely prepared for the academic challenge that awaits them."

The Mission Critical plan for Buist is to add one additional class of students in grades 3-6. In order to create space for the expansion, Buist will not admit a kindergarten class in Fall 2020. All students who currently attend Buist will remain there.

Parents of the 112 students offered seats in the expanded classes have until May 8 to accept and enroll their students for the upcoming 2020-21 school year.

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.