

**For Immediate Release**

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## Media Release

### **Emergency Meals-to-You served more than 150,000 meals during COVID-19 school closures**

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**Charleston, SC** – When Charleston County School District's (CCSD) Department of Nutrition Services applied to partner with the Baylor University Collaborative on Hunger and Poverty (BCHP) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the Emergency Meals-to-You (eMTY) program in the spring, staff members knew this service would fill a need. This week, Baylor University released how many meals were provided and the number of individuals that were supported by this effort.

The eMTY service provided 156,040 meals at no cost to CCSD families between May and August of this year; the meals were delivered directly to the homes of students. In all, 7,802 boxes were delivered to 498 households, with 1,130 children receiving those meals.

Emergency Meals-to-You boxes were shipped directly to families' doors every other week for every child (ages 1-18) in their household. Each box included 10 breakfasts and 10 lunches, the equivalent of what they would receive at school for two weeks.

All of the items in the eMTY boxes were shelf-stable, meaning they would not expire anytime soon and did not have to be immediately refrigerated.

Families with students enrolled at the following schools were eligible to participate in the program:

- Angel Oak Elementary
- Baptist Hill Middle High
- E.B. Ellington Elementary
- Edith L. Frierson Elementary
- Haut Gap Middle
- Jane Edwards Elementary
- Minnie Hughes Elementary
- Mt. Zion Elementary
- St. James-Santee Elementary-Middle

- St. John's High

"CCSD Nutrition Services served more than one million meals through curbside and bus delivery during the COVID-19 school shutdown," said Kerrie Hollifield, the district's registered dietitian. "However, even with our efforts, we knew that meal gaps still existed. We wanted to ensure that families who face meal barriers were able to be provided nutritious and delicious meals. The eMTY partnership helped us do this by delivering these meals straight to our students' homes."

This initiative was an expansion of a regional pilot program that had previously served Texas households in 2019. As part of the federal government's pandemic response, the USDA asked the BHP to increase its meal delivery work to meet the needs of children in rural areas nationwide. The BHP accepted the challenge and called in key public and private partners to assist, ultimately growing the program from its origins of more than 475,000 meals to 4,000 students in Texas only to serving a total of 38,783,700 meals to 270,483 children in 43 of 50 states, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico.

Children in some of the most remote areas of the U.S. received meals, said Jeremy Everett, BHP executive director.

"In this unprecedented time of so much need, children in rural areas can be among the most vulnerable," said Everett. "Without access to school lunch programs, public transportation, and other resources, households in some of the country's hardest hit communities were left scrambling for ways to replace much needed meal resources. BHP's collaboration with the USDA and its partners filled that need for more than 127,700 households nationwide as our meal delivery brought resources right to their front door."

For more information, contact CCSD's Nutrition Services Department at (843) 566-7266.

Please note, all data in this press release is provisional and subject to change. Provisional data may be incomplete and are subject to change until final approval. Please understand adjustments may occur as data reviews continue.

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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.