

For Immediate Release

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Media Release

CCSD staff members to participate in Racial Equity Institute training

Office of Strategy and
Communications

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Charleston, SC — Around 300 Charleston County School District staff members will take part in Racial Equity Institute (REI) workshops offered in partnership with YWCA Greater Charleston (YWCA.GC). CCSD staff in leadership and teaching roles will participate in REI Phase 1 virtual workshops; the training starts this month and will continue through June 2021.

REI is designed to develop the capacity of participants to better understand racism in its institutional and structural forms. Moving away from a focus on personal bigotry and bias, the workshop presents a historical, cultural, and structural analysis of racism.

"REI training is one of the critical CCSD initiatives designed to increase the capacity of teachers, principals, and district staff members to better serve all of our students," said CCSD's Chief Financial and Administrative Officer, Don Kennedy. "By doing so, we prepare our young people to live and thrive in a multicultural world."

"In order to effectively address the achievement gap in the district, it is crucial that CCSD leaders and staff begin with a common language, framework, and analysis in which to evaluate how they do their work and its impact on black and brown children," added Tina L. Singleton, director of programs at YWCA.GC.

This training is part of the Board of Trustees' plans to train all CCSD employees in Cultural Competency. The initial training for more than 1,000 employees began in the summer and continues to reach across the organization. All district leaders, as well as hundreds of teachers, engaged in the Implicit Bias Professional Development. Each participant watched the Ohio State University's Kirwan Institute Implicit Bias [Modules](#), followed by a circle conversation via Zoom to explore implicit biases and how they affect our day-to-day lives.

Training at the district level will differ from the school level. For example, teachers and school administrators have more direct interaction with

students and their families, while district leaders must develop wide-range strategies that benefit communities throughout the district.

Cultural competency is comprised of the following four components:

- Awareness of one's own cultural worldview
- Attitude towards cultural differences
- Knowledge of different cultural practices and worldviews
- Cross-cultural skills

The policy adopted by CCSD's Board of Trustees last year contains the following elements that are essential for its employees to contribute to the district's ability to become more culturally proficient:

Value Diversity - Incorporate differences in the curriculum; students must see themselves in their curriculum and instructional materials; acknowledge the contribution of various cultural and ethnic groups through teaching and learning

Institutionalize Cultural Knowledge - Incorporate cultural knowledge and training into the professional development of all District staff to ensure educators' pedagogy is culturally responsive; structure opportunities to engage parents and communities in cultural awareness

Adapt to Diversity - Develop structures for revisiting community needs and values to align school policies and resources

For more information, contact CCSD's Office of Strategy and Communication at (843) 937-6303.

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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.

About YWCA Greater Charleston

For 113 years, YWCA Greater Charleston has worked to eliminate racism and empower women in Charleston, Berkeley, and Dorchester Counties. Among its initiatives to eliminate racism are its 10-day MLK Celebration, one of the city's longest running events; its annual Stand Against Racism; and its Racial Equity Institute trainings equipping local leaders to address racism. It empowers women with its annual What Women Bring event, attended by hundreds to empower South Carolina's women in business, community, and culture; WE 360, helping women of color overcome barriers in entrepreneurship; Own the Room public speaking workshops empowering women's success; and Choose Well, reducing unintended pregnancies. It brought the first Girls Who Code club for middle school girls to Charleston, and its Y Girls Code program includes female students of all ages. It also hosts

SheStrong, empowering high school girls to develop as leaders and change makers. For more information, visit ywcagc.org.