



**Charles Pinckney
Elementary School**

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Media Release

Charles Pinckney Elementary wins 12th chess state championship

Mount Pleasant, SC – When extracurricular activities shut down across the state due to the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, Charles Pinckney Elementary School's Chess Team got creative. They used a combination of Zoom and the website [ChessKid](#) to continue delivering weekly lessons to students remotely. On April 2, 2022, the perseverance paid off as 15 Pinckney students traveled to Greenville to play in the South Carolina State Scholastic Chess Championships.

"I was very nervous," said team organizer and Pinckney Gifted and Talented teacher E.C. Setser. "Only four of our students had ever played an in-person chess tournament before Saturday."

Despite the lack of experience, Pinckney Elementary won the state championship in the K-5 Division, giving the Pirates 12 state titles overall in this competition. Additionally, the school's K-3 team brought home the runner-up trophy. Pinckney now has eight titles in the K-5 Division to go along with four championships at the K-3 level, all since 2010.

"I am so proud of the performance by all of the students," said Coach Stuart Chagrin. "It was great for the kids to be able to play in person and enjoy the comradery of other chess kids across the state. They exceeded all of my expectations."

A total of 155 students in four divisions, K-3, K-5, K-8, and K-12, participated in the event sponsored by the Greenville Chess Club on April 2, 2022.

Fifth grader Aaron Wang led the way for Pinckney. He finished in sixth place overall in the K-5 division with three wins, one draw, and one loss. Wang started learning the game in December 2020 when he joined the school chess team. Fifth graders Ben Piazza and Beau Stamos finished in a tie for ninth place.

In the K-3 Division, third grader Finley Martin finished eighth with a 3-2 record on the day.

The rest of the team includes Anton Oltmann, Parker Leong, Silas Dewey, Graeme Kearny, Declan Flannery, Owen Patterson, Merrek Sandvig, Tyler Bobbit, Amelia Wallace, Nico Stamos, and Carter Piazza.

Coach Chagrin serves on the United States Chess Trust Board, and is the former President of the Marshall Chess Club. Setser has been the Pinckney Chess Team's sponsor since 2010.

"It was inspiring to watch kids fiercely compete at the boards, shake hands, and then become great friends," added Setser. "It was great to see high school kids create games of tag or variations of soccer and invite all the elementary kids to play between rounds. These kids have missed so much in the past two years, and it was great to see chess bring them together again."

For more information, please contact E.C. Setser at (843) 856-4585.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district 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 approximately 49,000 students in 88 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.