

**For Immediate Release**

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# Media Release

## **District's partnership with Lowcountry Food Bank addresses needs of at-risk students**

Office of Strategy and  
Communications

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**Charleston, SC** – Since 2006, the Charleston County School District (CCSD) has partnered with the Lowcountry Food Bank (LCFB) to serve at-risk students through a program called Backpack Buddies Program.

The mission is to meet the needs of children at risk of hunger or homelessness under the McKinney-Vento Act by providing them with nutritious and easy-to-prepare food to take home on weekends and school vacations when they do not have access to free and reduced-price school meals.

Through partnerships with civic, business, faith-based, academic and community organizations over the past eight years, the LCFB's Backpack Buddies Program has grown tremendously.

LCFB delivers items monthly to each school and students are sent home with food every Friday.

According to Sonya Jones, CCSD's Title I Programs Compliance Administrator in the Department of Federal Programs, the Lowcountry Food Bank began collaborating with the district's Department of Federal Programs, during the 2015-2016 school year.

"To date, over 29,000 bags have been distributed and currently, up to 177 students are receiving assistance each month," said Jones.

Just like with the traditional Backpack Buddies model, approximately 4-lb. bags of kid-friendly, shelf-stable food (including cans of pasta and vegetables, fruit cups, shelf-stable milk, cereal, fruit strips, pudding cups, and whole grain cookies) are sent home with students every Friday during the school year. Unlike the traditional model, these bags follow the students to the schools they may be attending.

Jones said the Lowcountry Foodbank wants to make a difference because they realized that students whose families are experiencing economic instability might end up moving multiple times during a school year, which can disrupt a student's learning in many ways, and they do not want hunger to be another challenge.

"CCSD is tremendously thankful to the Lowcountry Foodbank for providing this opportunity for students in need," said Jones.

If you have any questions contact Sonya Jones in the Department of Federal Programs at 843-937-7920.

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.