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Media Release

Dr. Bramble named Top 5 Finalist for CCSD Teacher of the Year

**Ashley River Creative Arts
Elementary School**

Gerrita Postlewait, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Cynthia Ambrose
Deputy Superintendent of Learning
Services

Michelle Simmons
Executive Director of Elementary
School Learning Committee

Michelle Conner
Principal



Charleston, SC – Dr. Amy Bramble struggled as a student. She had difficulty in reading and math. Thanks to hard work and determination, today she is an Ashley River Creative Arts Elementary School (ARCAES) fifth grade math and science teacher. She’s also been named Charleston County School District’s (CCSD) [Top 5 Teacher of the Year Finalist](#).

Despite her struggle to learn, she knew early on she wanted to be an educator. It was the influence of some of her teachers along the way, which inspired her.

“The most energetic and spunky was Mrs. Hinchey,” said Bramble. “She was my fifth-grade teacher and made learning engaging.”

Bramble recalls the expectation for teachers in Connecticut to obtain a master’s degree, so she chose Special Education with inclusion.

“I wanted to help address the diverse needs of all children,” said Bramble. “Inclusion is so impactful for both students with exceptionalities and the general

education population. I love seeing the bonds that are made and acceptance between all students.”

After living in Connecticut her entire life, the long, cold winters began to take their toll on her. She had read a lot about Charleston, S.C. in novels, and, after a trip down to visit, she decided to make the Lowcountry her new home.

She moved to the Lowcountry without having a job lined up, but quickly found one at ARCAES.

“I wanted to work in a school where I believed in the mission and would be able to support the local community,” said Bramble.

“I had previous experience in a performing arts school and saw how powerful and impactful the arts could be to develop kids as a whole, not just academically,” said Bramble. “So I applied and was hired using a little persistence.”

Bramble’s admiration for CCSD continues to grow, as she becomes more involved in the District.

“The district is such a large system of schools and the overall success across it is amazing,” said Bramble. “I’ve been fortunate to have worked with some great leaders and colleagues with far more experience than me which is an invaluable learning opportunity. I’ve realized how much more I want to grow and learn as a professional.”

Those types of interactions motivated Bramble to earn her doctorate.

“I tell the kids all the time to be persistent and try their best so they can overcome challenges and failures to achieve their goals,” said Bramble. “I hope by being an example, I can inspire them.”

ARCAS is a unique elementary school that supports all areas of learning with arts, writing and reading. For example, the students go to special area classes for two periods per day (80 minutes). Fourth and fifth grade students are pulled for an extra forty-minute block at the end of each day to participate in clubs. Bramble is in charge of the club Helping Hands where students push into other classrooms to assist teachers and students. This includes the four self-contained classes in Ashley River where general education students support and build friendships with students with exceptionalities. Inclusion is another aspect that makes Ashley River a very special place.

“The success of our students just goes to show how well infusing the arts works,” said Bramble. “It makes all the difference. I try to focus on various forms of learning as well. My lessons are adapted for cooperative learning and independent learning.”

Just like Bramble, the students and their families are drawn to ARCAS.

"This school is so special because we're a family," said Bramble. "The teachers and students enjoy coming here. We're 100 percent committed to the whole well-being of the child. We're all involved and we all have a stake in it."

Principal Michelle Conner considers Bramble a phenomenal teacher.

"She is always full of positivity and great ideas to improve the learning for students," said Conner. "She is full of energy and works hard every day to be an effective, caring teacher. She helps make Ashley River a great place for kids. We are so lucky to have her at our school."

The community plays a role as well. Bramble said that after school and evening events are typically sold out with standing room only because parents and the surrounding community enjoy supporting the school.

"Everyone is so devoted to our students and our mission and that's what makes this school so great," said Bramble. "Principal Conner is fully supportive. It is important to have a leader that you can go to for help and encouragement."

In addition to the arts, there is a heavy focus on teaching students the soft skills they will need in their adult and professional lives.

"I really want children to be successful beyond academics," said Bramble. "I've grown so much because I was equipped with, and continue to develop, those soft skills. Some students are not equipped with those global life skills that are necessary to successfully function in society. So, I focus on instilling a sense of independence in students so they can confidently communicate, make responsible decisions, and accomplish their goals."

Bramble and her husband Jeff, were proud to announce the birth of their daughter in April. They marvel at the idea their daughter will attend CCSD schools and one day hopefully Ashley River.

"Like I teach my students, I will teach my daughter to be a lifelong learner and to take advantage of every opportunity your CCSD education offers you, to learn."

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is the second largest school system in South Carolina representing a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools that span 1,000 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 86 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.