

# Focus ON CCSD

News for, by and about Charleston County School District,  
the state of South Carolina's premier school district where *Students are the Heart of Our Work.*

Volume 4 | Edition 7 | July 2021

## CCSD celebrates Educators' Night

CCSD teachers and staff enjoyed an evening of celebration with friends and family at this year's annual Educators' Night at the Riverdogs! Staff celebrated with fireworks and fun. CCSD's 2020 Teacher of the Year, Lakevia Mills, was on hand to introduce the 2021 Top 5 Teacher of the Year Finalists (*pictured below*).



## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Juneteenth at Sanders-Clyde.....2	Top Wellness School named .....3	CCSD schools art display .....4
ECHS class graduation .....2	Rewards for Excellence.....3	Grant funds projects.....4
Reverend Pinckney scholarships.....2	Project Lead the Way.....3	Carlisle Cup winners .....4





## Sanders-Clyde honors Juneteenth

Sanders-Clyde Elementary School held their first 1st Juneteenth Jamboree last month. The school's coaches and Mrs. Hickman, Ms. Parker, Mrs. Trotter, and Ms. Loia worked diligently to put together a celebration of the Juneteenth Holiday for scholars. This day was dedicated to celebrating scholars' freedom to dream, succeed and achieve!

Macy artists came to help celebrate this momentous occasion. Also included was the Legendary Burke High School Drumline, Auntie Pearly Sue (Storyteller), Step Team Members of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity Inc., Christi Joy & The Partly Cloudy Band, Deninufay African Dance & Drum Production, Christal Heyward & the entire Sanders Clyde Creative Arts Department. Each scholar also received a copy of the Book I am my History by Brian Keith Harris.



## EARLY COLLEGE HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION FOR INAUGURAL CLASS

One hundred students walked onto the Early College High School (ECHS) campus in 2017, daring to successfully complete a program new to the district. That first year, 20 students left before the tenth day of school, and over the years others moved away from Charleston. Four years later, 71 remain. All of those students graduated with a high school diploma and nearly half with an associate's degree.

The school is a small, personalized learning program for students enrolled in Charleston County School District (CCSD). ECHS is a partnership between CCSD and Trident Technical College (TTC). Early College High School serves students who have the academic potential, desire, and determination to be successful in high school and beyond.

Located on TTC's Palmer Campus in downtown Charleston, priority is given to those who would be first-generation college students, (but all students are invited to apply).

Students from all over the district make up this diversified program. They must master the art of balancing their time between high school work, college work and extra-curricular activities.

Instructional Coach Jennifer Houston explained that even if students don't achieve an associate's degree, their earned credits are transferable so students can continue their course of study.

"Each student here has it in them to be successful in college-level courses," said Houston. "We just provide the support in order for them to tap into what they already have. We can offer all the support they need to be the best potential student they can be."

This first graduating class has a lot to brag about:

- 100% on-time graduation rate
- 29 associate's degrees (41%)
- 3,149 transferable college credits earned

Principal Vanessa Denney said that the school was designed based on models in other parts of the state and over the last four years, has morphed into something unique.

"This school has become what it is because of our student body and this first graduating class," said Denney. "The legacy they are leaving defines Early College. Everything that is the Early College way is because of this group of kids and who they are and who their parents are."



Assistant Principal Barrett Reese said the success of these students was a "family" effort.

"Every staff member is 100 percent dedicated to helping our students and teachers go above and beyond," said Reese. "Our families support each other and our students other students. All of that plays a role. We truly are a family, and we understand the importance of the work we do here at Early College."

Reese added that students have to "buy in" so that the faculty can support their dreams.

"Our families are so grateful for having this opportunity," said Denney. "They know how special this is and what they are accomplishing."

Senior Ivy Grinnage said that everyone at the school supported her and that her biggest motivation was not wanting to disappoint her mother. She also knows that she would be doing something for herself.

Grinnage learned about the program in ninth grade. A student at Garrett Academy, Grinnage was nervous to leave her home school that she loved so much. She was encouraged by Principal Denney, and once she enrolled, she committed to the Teach Local program to further her goal of becoming a teacher. Grinnage will come back to CCSD once she graduates from Winthrop University and teach in the very district she was educated in.

"My mom was a teacher for ten years and her word on the importance of an education meant everything to me," said Grinnage.

It was a leap of faith but on that first day of school, Grinnage saw a classmate she already knew in her homeroom who graciously introduced her to everyone. That moment made her feel like she had been welcomed into the family.

Dawn Althen, Senior Class Advisor, said it's been interesting to see so many kids work together as they navigate Early College.

"These students have been so successful because of the way they support each other," said Althen. "Having that experience and understanding what it is like to support each other will carry them through college, because best way to be successful is to ban together and support each other."

When James Carter looks back at his time as a student at Early College he credits staff, family, and friends for his success.

"A friend's mother was excited about the new school and encouraged me to apply," said Carter. "In fact, she applied for me, followed by my own mother. Over the last four years my mother reminded me constantly about how special this opportunity was."

Carter said he knew going in that the rigor would be tremendous. He began taking college courses in his sophomore year.

"I knew from the beginning had to give it my all," said Carter. "I was able to handle the load because I quickly became accustomed to the procedure and was able to learn how to balance my time," said Carter. "The teachers here have your back 100 percent and are with you every step of the way, and treat you like a family instead of just another student."

Wylen Cortez considers himself as a prototype, an original. He added that he struggled at first, but his teachers were there for him.

"You don't know what it is like until you go through it," said Cortez. "At Early College you have to put in the work."



Grinnage agreed that taking college courses on top of high school classes was difficult. She found comfort, however, in knowing that she had a voice and listening ears in the adults around her.

"I thank my teachers and principal who were there for me as I conquered challenges both academically and personally," said Grinnage. "It goes beyond teaching us the curriculum. These teachers became our school moms, our friends, and someone we will remember for the rest of our lives."

Denney said it has been amazing to see Early College become everything she knew it could be and to see the students become who she knew they could be.

"This class is so special because they have proven what some may have thought was impossible," said Denney. "They haven't shied away from their responsibility. Their legacy goes beyond these students being first generation graduates. Each student has a story of struggle of doubt, victory, and triumph. They might have faced their challenges in very different ways but they represent kids who persevered."

Althen agreed, describing the students as pioneers.

"I watched them struggle, procrastinate, and everything else normal high school students do," said Althen. "But they are good at rallying and catching up when they get behind."

Reese has been the assistant principal for only two years. He too is a first-generation college student and describes Early College as a tremendous opportunity.

"Education itself is part of social change," said Reese. "Early College has the tremendous power to direct that social change."

"I know this program is the best thing that can happen to a student," said Cortez. "No other experience can replace it."

"I am so proud of this first graduating class," said Reese. "It's bittersweet. I've gotten to know them all really well and to see them graduate is sad. But I know they are going on to start another chapter of their life and will always be a part of Early College as the first graduating class."

## District students earn Rev. Pinckney Scholarships

Coastal Community Foundation announced that eight Charleston County School District (CCSD) students were awarded Rev. Pinckney Scholarships, out of 14 total awarded this year.

The Rev. Pinckney Scholarship Program provides promising African-American students with financial support as well as regular supplemental programming throughout college to enhance their academic and professional development.

To qualify, students must be accepted into and complete the Rev. Pinckney College Readiness Program, which begins working with students in their junior years of high school to help them prepare for, research, evaluate and ultimately select which college is right for them.

### CCSD STUDENTS SELECTED INCLUDE:

- Eric Center - Early College High School
- India Crawford - James Island Charter High School
- Krya Freeman - St. John's High School
- Jalah Hill - West Ashley High School
- Cameron Jones - Charleston County School of the Arts
- Yorasia Randall - Charleston County School of the Arts
- Anyjah Sally - Academic Magnet High School
- Ariana Williams - James Island Charter High School

Through the Rev. Pinckney Scholarship Program, students are supported with \$10,000 scholarships each year, which are renewable as long as certain criteria are met. They attend professional development and network-building sessions and receive consistent support and coaching from Coastal Community Foundation scholarship staff as well as volunteer mentors. Scholars are able to hone their professional skills, increase their financial literacy, pursue exciting educational opportunities, and build a lasting community of peers and mentors.

The two programs were created by anonymous donors to honor the late Rev. Clementa Pinckney, one of the victims of the Emanuel AME Church tragedy who embodied what it meant to be a visionary leader. Since the scholarship program was created in 2016, more than \$1 million has been awarded in scholarships, and both programs have supported a total of 137 students.



# James Island Elementary named top Wellness School in CCSD



JIE was named the top CCSD Wellness School

The MUSC Boeing Center for Children’s Wellness (BCCW) in partnership with Charleston County School District celebrated over 80 schools and their wellness efforts last month.

During the 2020-2021 school year, 41 CCSD schools earned a Wellness Award.

The grand prize winner was James Island Elementary School. The second and third place winners were Sullivan’s Island Elementary School and Murray-LaSaine Montessori School, respectively. Deer Park Middle School earned the Charleston County Medical Society Rising Star Award which comes with an additional \$250.

The MUSC BCCW School-Based Wellness Initiative was created with the goal of improving nutrition and increasing physical activity for students and staff by motivating districts and schools to make policy, system, and environmental changes through participation in the School Wellness Checklist.

Wellness Awards range from \$250 to \$2,000. The award money must go into the wellness programs at each school to help grow and sustain their initiatives. In total, \$21,950 went to CCSD schools for the 2020-2021 school year.

In addition, CCSD schools received over \$150,000 in wellness grants this year to fund initiatives such as school gardens, increased water consumption, kinesthetic classrooms, and movement throughout the school day.

“Participating in the MUSC BCCW School-Based Wellness Initiative is key to developing the whole school, whole community, whole child

model (CDC’s framework for addressing health in schools),” said Holly Kut, Instructional Specialist for Health and Physical Education. “The School Wellness Checklist goes beyond the student health and wellness; it caters to employee wellness, which fosters higher morale, provides self-care opportunities, and community involvement supporting lifelong healthy learning. Happy healthy schools make happy healthy students.”

According to Dr. Janice Key, Director of the MUSC BCCW, despite the many unprecedented demands placed upon schools and teachers this year during the COVID pandemic, they did an outstanding job supporting wellness through healthy nutrition, adequate physical activity, and support of emotional needs.

“Healthy kids are better learners,” said Key. “It is only when kids are healthy and well that they can recover from the impact of this pandemic and excel in school.”

## A Culture of Wellness

“Creating a culture of wellness for the faculty, staff, and students at James Island Elementary is an initiative that is one of my top priorities,” said Principal Jonetta Gregory. “Making health a part of our mission has greatly empowered our students, faculty, and staff to get healthier and be happier.”

The Wellness Checklist has seven categories with various point-weighted actions. For example, the Nutrition category has 22 action items that range from posting nutritional analysis information for each menu item to offering a salad on a daily basis.

Meredith Barnette is a first year nurse at James Island. She partnered with Physical Education teacher Ginny Jones to kick the year off in high gear when it came to wellness.

“With this being such a crazy, different year we wanted the wellness initiative to be something positive to focus,” said Barnette. “We wanted it to be something to take their mind off of the anxiety and whatever other emotions came with this year.”

The Wellness Committee instituted various projects and activities such as a garden club, a running club, art projects, and communicated monthly on ways to improve wellness throughout the school.

“Our students, faculty, and parents worked really hard this year to achieve overall wellness for our school,” said Jones. “The wellness room was a huge success. Teachers signed up throughout the year to donate fruit, vegetables, and herbs for water along with healthy snacks.”

In addition, the school’s one mile loop was opened to not just students but the community at-large; teachers even participated in an after school walking club.

“Students in all grades participated in the Kids Heart Challenge; students in grades 2-5 had the opportunity to be a part of the recess running club where they recorded miles for prizes,” said Jones. “Students got to taste test strawberries. Our PE program received the Bowler’s Ed grant and was awarded a class set of bowling equipment. Parents helped with Physical Education donors choose projects to improve our PE equipment and bring new and exciting activities to the PE program.”

From self-care month in October to a water drinking camping in the fall, JIES students and staff were all-in when it came to any wellness challenge that presented itself.

“Ginny headed up the wellness initiative at her previous school so she had a lot of insight,” said Barnette. “Also, there were already many things in place so we worked together to improve our efforts.”


Barnette spent 20 years as an anesthesia nurse. She loved the hospital and her patients so the move to pediatric nursing in a school setting was quite a change.

“It was nerve-racking,” said Barnette. “I have four kids of my own ranging in ages 19 to six and it dawned on me that I pretty much know how to take care of children. The transition was easy and fun. I love interacting and getting to know the students. It’s been great to see how they responded to our wellness efforts, as well. They’ve really embraced them.”

“It was huge honor and didn’t realize how competitive it was,” continued Barnette. “I love my school and principal and couldn’t ask for a better staff. For us to win this together is a true bright spot in the middle of chaotic year and great way to cap off end of the year.”



Holly Kut presents Ginny Jones and Nurse Barnette with their Wellness Award



## DISTRICT PICKS UP 17 HONORS IN SC/NSPRA’S ANNUAL Rewards for Excellence program

Charleston County School District’s (CCSD) Division of Strategy and Communications, along with four schools, combined to receive 17 awards in this year’s Rewards for Excellence program, sponsored by the South Carolina Chapter of the National School Public Relations Association (SC/NSPRA). This includes a prestigious Medallion honor for the district’s Safe Restart and a “Best in Show” honor in the In-House School Video category for Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies’ promotional video.

SC/NSPRA celebrated 108 programs and projects from across the state during a virtual ceremony on Thursday, July 15, 2021 on YouTube. The event was co-hosted by CCSD’s Director of Communication, Andy Pruitt and included a Medallion Award presentation from CCSD’s Director of Strategic Engagement, Maggie Dangerfield.

This program recognizes outstanding communications and public relations efforts by South Carolina schools, school districts, and education agencies and associations. Public relations veterans with extensive experience in educational and business communications evaluated a combined 184 entries from the school and district levels.

The Rewards for Excellence Program features the following three awards programs:

- **Medallion** (for comprehensive public relations programs)
- **Golden Achievement** (for a single project or an aspect of a comprehensive program)
- **Publications and Electronic Media** (for individual products designed to improve communication)

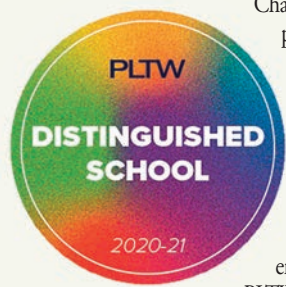
The following entries from the district and CCSD schools were honor in this year’s Rewards for Excellence program:	
DISTRICT	
Medallion	CCSD’s Safe Restart
Excellence in Writing	CCSD staff going the extra mile in the face of COVID-19 crisis
Excellence in Writing	Morningside works to address chronic absences
Excellence in Writing	Nurse’s intervention saves student’s life
Photography	SOA Drive-Thru Celebration 1
Photography	Stono Park Bike Reveal
Special Publication	2019-2020 Year in Review
Video (In-House)	Memminger School Tour Video
Video (In-House)	Garret’s Final Valedictorian – Stories of CCSD
Video (In-House)	Code to the Future – Stories of CCSD
Video (In-House)	Mission Critical Actions Update   February 27, 2020
SCHOOL	
Video	Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies (Promotional Video) - <i>Best in Show for School Video</i>
Video	Mary Ford Early Learning and Family Center (Morning News Show)
Video	Thomas C. Cario Middle School (CTV News)
Website	Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies
Video	North Charleston Elementary School
Video	Thomas C. Cario Middle School

“Our communication strategies at the school and district level during the pandemic were thorough,” said CCSD’s Chief of Staff, Erica Taylor. “The Division of Strategy and Communications is driven by energy and passion. Our team works tirelessly to serve the community and produces quality work day in, day out. I appreciate the judges recognizing the excellence and diversity of our efforts.”

Seventeen SC/NSPRA Reward for Excellence awards is the most CCSD has received in one year.

SC/NSPRA is an affiliate of the National School Public Relations Association. The state chapter is composed of 155 school public relations practitioners, superintendents, and other educational professionals from across the state. The organization strives to foster development in the field of school public relations and to encourage meaningful community involvement in and understanding of the public school system.

# Six CCSD schools honored by Project Lead The Way



Charleston County School District (CCSD) is proud to announce a record six schools were named Distinguished Schools by Project Lead The Way (PLTW), either as a Gateway School (middle school) or as a High School for the 2020-21 school year. A school earns the PLTW Distinguished School honor for its commitment to increasing student access, engagement, and achievement in their PLTW programs.

Moultrie Middle School received this award for the first time ever due to expanded course offerings that were available to students as well as the hard work and dedication of their PLTW teachers to get students interested in the program.

Wando High School is the first high school in South Carolina honored by PTLW four years in a row, and Thomas C. Cario Middle School is the only middle school in the state to pick up Distinguished School status four consecutive years for its PLTW Gateway to Technology program.

Charleston Charter School for Math and Science (CCSMS) is a Distinguished High School for the second year in a row, and the middle school program received Gateway honors for the third time in four years. CCSMS is one of just a few schools in the country to pick up multiple awards from PLTW in the same year.

In addition, Morningside Middle School was recognized for the third year in a row as a Gateway School and James Island Charter High School has earned this honor for the third time in four years.

This recognition program started in the 2017-2018 school year; four CCSD

schools picked up a PLTW honor in the inaugural year, followed by three in 2018-2019 and five last year.

“The Project Lead The Way Distinguished Schools exemplify their commitment to providing a variety of courses in Engineering, Biomedical, and Computer Science pathways to all CCSD students regardless of race, ethnicity, poverty, or gender,” said Tralice Reddock, the district’s Career and Technology Education curriculum specialist. “All Charleston County School District students in the PLTW programs have the opportunity to experience hands-on learning with problems that are reflective of real-world challenges.”

Morningside Middle School, Thomas C. Cario Middle School, Moultrie Middle School, and Charleston Charter School for Math and Science were four of the six middle schools in South Carolina to receive this recognition for the 2020-21 school year.

Wando High School, James Island Charter High School, and Charleston Charter School for Math and Science were three of just four high schools in the state to earn the honor this year.

PLTW is a non-profit organization that serves millions of K-12 students and teachers in approximately 12,200 schools across the United States. The organization’s recognition program honors schools that are committed to increasing student access, engagement, and achievement in their PLTW programs. Schools that are recognized for this honor empower their students to thrive in an evolving world and have achieved exemplary results from their PLTW programs.

“PLTW integrates the study of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) while best preparing our students for Future Readiness – on whichever path they choose to take,” added Rich Gordon, CCSD’s Executive Director for Career and Technology Education. “It’s academic, technical, and employability training designed around project-

based learning, open-ended problem solving, small group study, and learning by discovery.”

Wando offered Introduction to Engineering at the high school, and the students had access to six additional engineering courses, four biomedical classes, and Cybersecurity at the East Cooper Center for Advanced Studies.

Cario Middle carries all ten courses in the Gateway to Technology program: Computer Science for Innovators and Makers, Science and Technology, Automation and Robotics, Design and Modeling, Green Architecture, App Creators, Medical Detectives, Magic of Electrons, Energy and the Environment, and Flight and Space.

Morningside provided Energy and Environment, App Creators, Automation and Robotics, Computer Science for Innovators and Makers, Design and Modeling as options for students this past school year.

Moultrie offers Green Architecture, Medical Detectives, Design and Modeling, and Flight and Space. School staff are planning to add App Creators, Energy and the Environment, and Automation and Robotics for the 2021-2022 school year.

At the high school level, scholars at Charleston Charter were able to take Principles of Engineering, Civil Engineering Architecture, Introduction to Engineering Design, Aerospace Engineering, Digital Electronics, Principles of Biomedical Science, Biomedical Innovation, Medical Interventions, and Human Body Systems. Middle school students had the opportunity to take Medical Detectives, Automation and Robotics, Design and Modeling, and Science Technology.

James Island Charter offers the following four courses from the PLTW Engineering Program: Introduction to Engineering Design, Principles of Engineering, Digital Electronics, and Civil Engineering Architecture.



# Multiple CCSD schools using art display to increase cultural awareness



School staff members throughout Charleston County School District are providing students with an opportunity to “see” the world by bringing the world to the school through an art display. Angel Oak Elementary, James Island Elementary, and Memminger Elementary partnered with the Besharat Art Foundation Museum/Gallery to display “The Faces of Innocence” exhibit featuring the photography of Steve McCurry.

Starting in March, students at Angel Oak were asked to view and study images of children around the world in their hallways using Harvard Project Zero’s Artful Thinking strategies to promote higher order thinking, global and cultural awareness, empathy, and compassion. Angel Oak Elementary is arts-integrated school, so this initiative aligns with the school’s overall approach.

“The exhibit is a powerful reminder each day that there is so much to discover about our world,” explained Angel Oak Elementary Principal Judith Condon. “Our students are connecting with the images academically, socially and emotionally. They are describing, analyzing, interpreting, evaluating, writing about the images, exploring the countries the images are from and are having rich conversations about each one. They relate so well to the images because they, too, are children. It is really amazing to watch the learning process. Our hallways are now centers of learning”.

The images will change as new work is curated by the Besharat Art Foundation, an organization committed to sharing art with schools to teach children.

Right before the school year ended, images from the “Faces of Innocence” were placed in the hallways at James

Island Elementary. Principal Jonetta Gregory thanked the school’s art teacher, Suzanne Baranoski, for her work to bring the gallery to the building. They believe this program can unite as human beings, focusing on young children who can observe these large photographs and help further develop a more profound sense of empathy and sympathy.

“At our school, the students see other children their ages throughout our halls and can notice that while they may be dressed differently, be in seemingly unusual environments, and have different hair and skin, they are all still children like themselves,” added Gregory. “The comments, writing, and artwork our students made are proof this meaningful program is having an effect on our school community. We are honored to be a part of the Besharat Foundation.”

The photos for this display are visible in the main hallway and atrium area at Memminger Elementary. Principal Dottie Brown explained this gallery has a special meaning for their school community.

“The international faces in the gallery are beyond beautiful and will enhance our International Baccalaureate units of study,” said Brown “We have also dedicated our gallery to Mrs. Annette Mani, who was a long-time volunteer here at Memminger and recently passed away. We will be placing a plaque in her honor in the entrance near the gallery.”

The images are donated by the Besharat Art Foundation at no cost to the schools.

# Grant funded projects at Haut Gap teach socialization and collaboration

Collaboration is driving instruction at Haut Gap Middle School where it is not uncommon for students to be working together on anything from building birdhouses to taking care of chickens.

Throughout the school year, students in every grade level were active in designing and building projects funded through collaborative grants that take learning to the next level. Many were applied for and led by AVID Site Coordinator/Elective Teacher Robin Smith, a 30-year veteran educator.

Eighth grade Gifted and Talented students designed an outdoor growing area using quadratic equations. Seventh grade students built bird, butterfly and lady bug houses within their ecosystem and habitat units. Sixth grade students will install a Carolina Fence Garden using South Carolina History.

According to Smith, all of these projects involved collaboration towards a singular outcome.

“Not every project is instructional but they all focus on processes,” said Smith. “However, every project is structured and of high quality.”

Other examples include an irrigation and water table project completed by eighth grade College Preparatory students. Sixth grade Gifted and Talented students designed a chicken coop to scale applying geometric angles. AVID eighth grade students built the chicken coop in a leadership activity and AVID sixth graders raised four chicks that are part of building relational capacity within their flex times.

“Each core class teaches the fundamentals of any project we take on,” said Smith. “The most important part is the process of working together.”

Not surprising, the baby chicks were everyone’s favorite.

Sixth grader Noah Dailey loved how young, cute, and little they were when they first arrived.

“I loved watching them trying to learn to fly,” said Dailey.

Rebecca Somsy and her sixth grade friends enjoyed being tasked with feeding the growing chickens and changing out their water every day.

Some students chose to just observe the chickens and their behaviors, and that was okay, too, according to Smith.

Jackson Cowart and sixth grade classmate Cynthia Johnston both enjoyed holding the chickens and taking care of them. For Johnston, it was a dream come true.

This year alone, working with fellow teachers, Smith received \$10,000 in grants to facilitate many of the projects. Many of the grants were funded

through by Bosch, Seabrook Island Natural History Group, and the American Association of University Women.

Smith enjoys creative writing and grant writing is much like that for her.

“Many of these projects offer high quality instruction, which is the model here at Haut Gap,” said Smith. “The projects also target students in all grades.”

Principal Travis Benintendo said he wants every student to be a steward of the environment.

“We have an outdoor classroom next to our school garden and we want it to be a living testament to the agricultural powerhouse John’s Island once was,” said Benintendo. “With the advent of gentrification, we feel these grants and projects helps us with our mission.”

Many projects will continue into the summer where enrichment students will install a small garden and set up the school fish tank.

“It’s been quite an adventure but we have provided our teachers and students an opportunity to move out of their comfort zone and embrace some new ways to engage in real life experiences within their curriculum,” said Smith.

Smith explained that she is purposeful in finding projects that go hand-in-hand with the culture of the Sea Island where gardening, farming, and the ocean play leading roles.

“It is important for the children to understand where they come from and where they live,” said Smith. “Traditionally I would design field trips for the students to go to various places on the island to learn about the surroundings, but the pandemic limited that. So, I found projects we could do here on campus.”

Smith also routed the ability to take learning outside, especially during the pandemic.

Michelle Hammock, a sixth Grade teacher at Haut Gap, explained that even virtual students were able to get in on the fun. They had to take responsibility for their learning and complete the lessons with a family member, which created special bonds among them.

“All of these students will have some great memories,” said Smith. “I wanted to find something to make up for what was lost last year during COVID-19 when everyone was sent home to learn. Following social distancing protocols my students were still able to play and learn together through these projects.”



# CARLISLE CUP WINNERS

Wando High School is the recipient of the South Carolina Athletic Administrators Association’s Carlisle Cup at the AAAAA level for the 2020-2021 school year. This is the sixth consecutive year the Warriors have won the Carlisle Cup.

The honor goes to one school from each of the South Carolina High School League’s (SCHSL) five classifications and is based on the overall athletic program’s success in the postseason.

The Warriors collected three SCHSL AAAAA team state championships (girls’ swimming, volleyball, and girls’ soccer) and four individual state championships (one in girls’ swimming, two in girls’ track and field, and one in boys’ track and field). Wando also finished as the state runner-up in boys’ swimming, boys’ tennis, and girls’ and boys’ lacrosse.

“We are very proud of the dedicated hard work and effort put forth by the student-athletes, coaches, sports medicine team, administration, staff, and parents while navigating through the COVID-19 pandemic” said Wando’s Athletic Director, Mark Buchman. “Being recognized as the AAAAA Carlisle Cup Award Winner is a tribute to everyone’s dedication to hard work, skill development, knowledge, and effort. However, this year was also about adjustments, following guidelines, and emphasizing health and safety. All high school athletic programs should be proud and recognized for their efforts in completing seasons and the 2020-2021 school year.”

Wando has now won eight Carlisle Cups going back to the 2008-2009 school year.



## Focus ON CCSD

**Focus on Charleston County School District** is published for, by and about CCSD, the state of South Carolina’s premier school district where *Students are the Heart of our Work*.

Gerrita Postlewait, *Superintendent of Schools*  
Erica Taylor, *Chief of Staff*  
Sully Witte, *Communications Officer*

Charleston County School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or any other applicable status protected by federal or state law. Questions about non-discrimination policies should be sent to Charleston County School District, 75 Calhoun Street, Charleston, SC 29401 | Phone: (843) 937-6300 | communications@charleston.k12.sc.us