

**For Immediate Release**

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**Contact:**

Andy Pruitt 843-937-6583

## Media Release

### **James B. Edwards wins CCSD's Battle of the Books competition**

**Division of Strategy and Communications**

**Donald R. Kennedy, Sr.**  
Interim Superintendent of Schools

**Erica S. Taylor, Ed.D.**  
Chief of Staff

**Charleston, SC** – Students at James B. Edwards Elementary School won the third annual Charleston County School District Battle of the Books. They competed against 12 other teams on Saturday, March 5, 2022. The event was held at Burke High School; teams competed in a quiz bowl, answering questions from 20 books on the 2021-2022 South Carolina Children's Book Awards nominee list.

Coached by Heidi Benton, the James B. Edwards team, called the Once Upon A Timers, competed in the finals against Drayton Hall Elementary School's Meteor Readers.

Benton said that her students prepared for the competition with diligence.

"The team came to the library to re-read the books during recess, and they met after school at each other's houses to create questions from the stories and quiz each other," Benton explained. "They showed great focus and initiative."

Battle of the Books is a reading incentive program for fourth and fifth grade students. The purpose is simply to encourage students to read good books and have fun while competing with peers.

Christy James, Charleston County School District's Library & Media Services Specialist, was the emcee for the district championship. The crowd included over 150 family and community members there to support their readers.

James explained that the championship is held as a culminating celebration for the district's Read Across America Week.

"This is the third year that CCSD elementary schools have competed in a district battle that even includes its traveling trophy," said James. "This is an exciting event that truly celebrates students' love of reading!"

District librarians comb through the South Carolina Children's Book Award list, choosing titles and writing questions that are asked of students and teams to test their knowledge of the books they have read.

Leslie Cooper, the librarian at Stiles Point Elementary School, organizes the event but said it takes an entire team to make it happen.

"Librarians start writing questions in May for the competition," said Cooper. "Teams were established in October, and the reading begins. There are multiple copies of each book on hand so that each team member can read the book they are assigned."

Teams were made up of five members, and they had to complete a reading list of 20 books by January. Teams competed against each other at the school level, and the top team from each school competed in the district event.

"The Battle of the Books promotes a variety of diverse books that students might not automatically select but often find they enjoy," said Cooper. "The competition aspect also encourages students who didn't necessarily like reading to look at it differently. We see a big difference in our students as readers and in the activity of our libraries when children participate in this."

Cooper added another positive aspect of the competition was that electronic devices were not necessary and students could unplug.

"The competition results in students getting excited about reading, and that shows in the increased number of checkouts we see," said Cooper. "This year at Stiles Point, we broadcasted our school tournament to every classroom, and the kids loved it. Students are now asking about how to participate next year."

In addition to promoting reading, the competition promotes leadership, cooperation, and a sense of accountability.

"I think the competition sets a great example that hard work pays off," said Cooper.

For more information, contact the Division of Strategy and Communication at (843) 937-6603.

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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.