

For Immediate Release

May 14, 2021

Contact:

Erica Taylor 843-937-6303

Media Release

Pulse of CCSD – Miranda Burton is a family advocate that everyone can depend on

Strategy and Communications
Division

Gerrita Postlewait, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Erica S. Taylor
Chief of Staff

Charleston, SC – What empowers C.E. Williams Middle School's (CEW) parent advocate is the ability to use her own life experiences to help others. Miranda Burton is dedicated to ensuring that the basic needs of her students and families are met. She serves as a support system and connects families to the resources they need.

Burton's mother was a social worker and a teacher, and she was exposed to benevolence at a very young age. Her career in education began as a teacher but her calling to give back to her larger community was strong.

"As a parent advocate, I felt like I could have a greater impact on the whole school rather than just one classroom," said Burton.

Burton, a graduate of Coker College, taught in Berkeley, Charleston, and Darlington. She has worked with troubled kids through non-profits. She has worked with foster children through government programs. But Burton's true calling was to be in the school building.

As the former parent advocate at Mary Ford, Burton established a clothes closet and food pantry. Both of the concepts were established at each C. E. Williams campus. Burton is a certified Darkness to Light facilitator (a local child sexual abuse prevention agency) and holds regular prevention training for parents. She has worked with over 1,000 children and trained more than 500 adults through the Darkness to Light program.

"Small conversations open eyes," said Burton. "The Darkness to Light training does just that."

"Since the beginning of this school year, Ms. Burton has worked tirelessly to find ways to support families," said CEW South Principal Kevin Smith. "She has organized virtual parenting sessions, game nights, and facilitated book clubs on student engagement in the virtual world. She has also engaged

community partners to make resources available to families from socks, to food, to a stylus for each student to use with their Chromebooks. It doesn't hurt that she also organizes food trucks to visit the campus for staff!"

"I love helping people," said Burton. "I find strength in helping others. I truly believe that we should never count anybody out. Lives can be transformed with the proper supports, resources, and encouragement. To change family's lives, you have to have a village."

For Burton, that village helps her help families at school, in the community, and through her non-profit.

At the school level, she helps families with utility assistance, food, community supports, and holistic supports.

"I am also a big proponent of family and parent involvement so I can develop relationships with these parents," said Burton. "The parents get excited about the events I host, and through word of mouth, the excitement builds and participation increases."

Burton recently started a book club with the parents, hosts family game nights, and created a curriculum that covers budgeting, career readiness, and more.

"I feel great compassion for these parents, especially the ones trying to help their children learn virtually," said Burton. "I have books that I send home with parents that enable them to help their children with homework. I provide them with a distance learning playbook, as well."

Burton goes to great lengths to recognize the parents for attending and participating, as well. She describes it as a social and emotional piece.

"As with anyone, praise and appreciation will go a long way," said Burton. "Parents just need a support system, and for our C.E. Williams families, I serve in that role."

Burton even goes as far as sharing her cell phone number with her parents to better impress upon them that she is part of their village.

"Miranda has been a stalwart in her work on the student support team/attendance team by making calls, home visits, and conducting attendance meetings to make sure students are attending classes even if they were learning from home," said Smith.

Burton splits her time between the campuses and is incredibly grateful to Principal Kevin Smith and Maite Poter.

"They have a heart for education, students and families," said Burton. "They are very different people, but what they have in common is that they think holistically

so that everything is focused on the entire child and their family. That is reflected in the staff at both schools as well. It's the highest level of compassion and work ethic I've ever seen.

Marion's House Survivors

Outside of her work with students, Burton still finds ways to reach those in need. Her proudest accomplishment is being the founder of [Marion's House](#), a non-traditional organization providing revolutionary services to those impacted by cycles of child sexual abuse. Through this work, Burton tells her own story of victimization so that others can be spared. Burton is relentless in her mission to bring child sexual assault and abuse awareness to her students and her community.

"The Mission of Marion's House is to interrupt the cycle of Child Sexual Abuse by giving an E.A.R (Empowerment, Awareness, and Recovery)," said Burton. "Activities are specialized to provide survivors, non-victims, and parents with safe spaces to express the emotional effects of being impacted by these cycles in constructive and healing ways as well as provide them with the knowledge that they are not alone in their social position. Their circumstances do not have to consume their lives."

Through Marion's House Mission, Burton was able to work closely and provide resources to students and staff at Greg Mathis Charter High. At the June 2018 Graduation the Principal presented her with a volunteer recognition for sharing her time and talents in the Guidance Department. Through this work she joined the Board of Directors and has been the Vice Chairman for the last three school years.

A recent shining moment for Burton was when she was featured as [April's fierce Female](#) by Grown Inspired Women during Sexual Assault Awareness and Child Abuse Awareness month.

"Ms. Burton is passionate about Marion's House and helping others heal," said Smith. "Her transparency and willingness to use what she experienced as fuel to help others is remarkable and brave. CCSD and CEW are fortunate to have Miranda Burton as a Parent Advocate and passionate person.

###

About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally-accredited school district that is 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 more than 50,000 students in 87 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, I.B. (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.