



**For Immediate Release**  
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**Contact:**  
Melissa Brubaker (843) 745-7107

## Media Release

### **NCES second graders take state championship in READBowl '21**

#### North Charleston Elementary School

**Gerrita Postlewait, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent of Schools

**Karolyn Belcher**  
Chief Academic Officer

**Michelle Simmons**  
Associate Superintendent of  
Elementary School Learning  
Committee

**Melissa Brubaker**  
Principal

**Charleston, SC** – Jessica Kirkpatrick’s second graders at North Charleston Elementary School (NCES) learned that they had read their way to becoming the South Carolina State Champions in the K-2 Primary Conference for READBowl '21.

Additionally, Heidi Hocking’s third grade class, doing remote learning, became the schoolwide champions in the Big Three Conference, reading an average of 528 minutes per student per week. Teachers across the grades named 25 students as MVPs.

The class pulled into the lead early in the contest and read right through to a record number of minutes, averaging almost 370 minutes per week per student.

When 271 students at NCES joined the READBowl '21 championships they knew two things: they liked to read and they loved Malcolm Mitchell’s Book [The Magicians’ Hat](#). What’s not to love about the endearing story of how magical books can be, written by the 2017 SuperBowl champ Malcolm Mitchell?

What the students from NCES didn’t know is that they were competing with 71,000 other students nationwide who read over 55 million reading minutes in the four weeks leading up to the SuperBowl. That is pretty steep competition for anyone.

North Charleston Elementary’s eager readers in grades K-5 logged more than 155,000 minutes in the month they counted their daily reading time.

Every week during the championships, Malcolm Mitchell rewarded students with a new locker code leading to short video clips on his website [Read with Malcolm](#). The most inspiring of all is, perhaps, his own story of not knowing how to read as a child and being afraid to let anyone know. He learned to read when teachers took an interest in him personally and helped him.

Readers at NCES have a lot of help these days, as well. Teachers are their coaches and Principal Melissa Brubaker is their main cheerleader.

“Reading every day is so important for our students, not just to improve reading ability but to find joy in reading,” said Brubaker.

Brubaker participated in READBowl last year in her previous school in Albany, Georgia. It is one of many programs and incentives she uses throughout the year, with teachers following a rigorous 90-day-plan and using weekly data review meetings to strengthen their game.

During this time of social distancing, mask wearing, and students limited to their plexiglass pods in classrooms, READBowl '21 gave students a fun way to focus on reading improvement. As a badge on Malcolm Mitchell's website proudly states: "Reading is my sport." This February at NCES, everyone who reads is becoming a winner.

For more information contact the NCES at (843) 745-7101.

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#### **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, 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.