



For Immediate Release
February 25, 2020

Contact:
Leanne Sheppard 843-856-4585

Media Release

Shipmate Shake teaches students professional skills for success

Charles Pinckney Elementary School

Gerrita Postlewait, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Karolyn Belcher
Chief Academic Officer

Michelle Simmons
Executive Director of Elementary Learning Community

Leanne Sheppard
Principal

Charleston, SC – Charles Pinckney Elementary School hosted their inaugural Shipmate Shake competition during the month of February. This non-traditional learning model brought community leaders and role models to judge 266 fifth graders on their professional skills for success.

It culminated in a fourth and final round with the top six fifth graders competing for the top spot. Sterling Thornton earned that honor followed by Runner up Cheyenne Ivey. Thornton and Ivey will go to the national championship at the Ron Clark Academy in Atlanta, GA.

The top six participants also included Nathaniel Knotts, Parker Carmines, Riley Farrell, and Hannah Pinckney.

The competition tested fifth grade students through case-scenario stations set up around the school. Scenario topics included manners, discipline, respect, and professionalism.

Tiffany Henderson, Assistant Principal, and Paige Hoagland, Guidance Counselor, learned about the model from the Ron Clark Academy, which is hosted by Ron Clark, a former National Teacher of the Year.

In addition, Lake Carolina Elementary in Columbia has its own version and Henderson decided to model Pinckney's version around that.

The first round gauntlet involved 10 case scenario stations hosted by judges that every fifth-grader passed through. Those judges included local dignitaries, school board members, and business owners and leaders.

Only 60 students moved on to Round 2 to compete in the teamwork challenge. The remaining 20 students went on to Round 3 which was hosted at Trader Joe's where they were tasked with designing an advertisement for the grocery store and selling products to customers. Some of the judges posed as mystery shoppers.

The final six winners competed in the final round at the District office in downtown Charleston where they were asked to create a presentation encouraging parents to send their children to CCSD schools.

"I would love for this to spread to other schools in the district," said Henderson. "I believe these are life skills students will need to learn for their professional futures. If they receive this kind of preparation at a young age, then they will be better prepared as our future leaders."

Henderson explained that the interviews and presentations the students participate in during the competition expose them to their community. As part of that, local businesses recorded videos about these life skills as a way of teaching the students leading up to the competition.

"Kids are plugged into their small neighborhood, school, and family community and don't realize at this age they are a piece of something bigger," said Henderson. "There are a lot of lessons along the way in this competition that ties into that."

For more information contact the Tiffany Henderson at (843) 856-4585.

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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 spans 1,000 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 87 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.