

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.*

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CCSD Promotion Ceremonies

Charleston County School District celebrated not just high school graduations this month, but promotion ceremonies in many grade levels. Check out this small sampling of images from across the district and find more on your school's website.



Moultrie Middle



C.E. Williams Middle



Oakland Elementary



Sanders-Clyde Elementary



Charles Pinckney Elementary



Laurel Hill Primary

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CCSD CELEBRATES STATE CHAMPIONSHIP TITLES

Soccer state titles



Wando High girls' soccer team wins the South Carolina High School League AAAAA championship



James Island Charter High boys' soccer team makes first appearance in boys' state finals since 1997 and wins first South Carolina High School League AAAA championship



James Island Charter High girls' soccer team wins first South Carolina High School League AAAA championship

Track and field state titles



James Island Charter High girls track and field team chase down AAAA state title



4 x 800 meter – M.K. Huddleston, Terri Admore, Avery Belk, and Hannah Vroon



4 x 400 meter – Avery Belk, Tia Lucas, Terri Admore, and Hannah Vroon



Tia Lucas – high jump



Avery Belk – 800-meter race



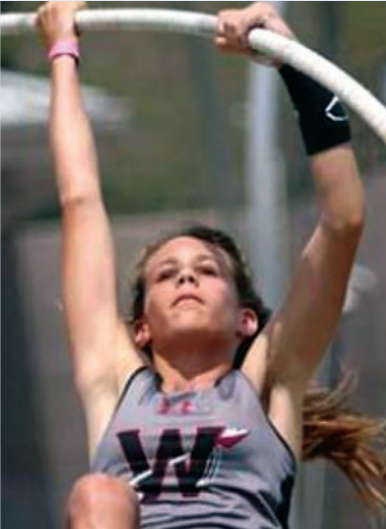
Hannah Vroon – 1,600-meter race (458.24 – school record) and 3,200-meter race



St. John's Brett Jones wins javelin and discus state titles



Wando's Caleb Walker



Wando's Hannah Togami



Wando's Sophie Heinold

Academic Magnet’s Lily Lassiter honored as 2021 U.S. Presidential Scholar

Lassiter is the second Raptor in four years to earn prestigious award



Lily Lassiter

Lily Lassiter, her family, and the Academic Magnet High School (AMHS) community are celebrating a significant honor; the senior is a 2021 United States Presidential Scholar. The U.S. Department of Education announced the 57th class of U.S. Presidential Scholars. This award is considered one of the nation’s highest awards for students.

Lassiter is one of two U.S. Presidential Scholars from South Carolina this year, and she is the second Raptor in four years to receive this award (Jenny Yao was named a U.S. Presidential Scholar in 2018).

“Being recognized as a U.S. Presidential Scholar is an incredible honor,” said Lassiter. “I am humbled and so grateful to everyone who has supported me over the years.”

According to the U.S. Department of Education, approximately 6,000 of the 3.6 million high school students expected to graduate this year were identified as candidates for the program. The White House Commission on Presidential Scholars selects scholars annually based on their academic success, artistic and technical excellence, essays, school evaluations, and transcripts, as well as evidence of community service, leadership, and demonstrated commitment to high ideals.

Lassiter, who will attend Yale University in the fall, and the rest of the Presidential Scholars Class of 2021, will be recognized for their outstanding achievement by the White House this summer.

“Over the past four years, I have had the great pleasure of witnessing the continued growth and grace

of this extraordinary young woman,” added Principal Catherine Spencer. “Her academic achievement is only one piece of her multifaceted accomplishment in the arts, service, and leadership. Lily and I have shared many special moments over the years, and this well-deserved recognition gives our entire Raptor community great pride.”

With Lassiter earning finalist status for this honor, her sponsor, former AMHS AP Physics I teacher Kirk Lindgren, was named a 2021 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program Distinguished Teacher. Academic Magnet sent 14 students to the semifinalist stage of the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program this year. As directed by Presidential Executive Order, the 2021 U.S. Presidential Scholars are comprised of one young man and one young woman from each state, the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, and U.S. families living abroad, as well as 15 chosen at-large, 20 Scholars in the arts and 20 Scholars in career and technical education.

Created in 1964, the U.S. Presidential Scholars Program has honored over 7,600 of the nation’s top-performing students. The program was expanded in 1979 to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, literary, and performing arts. In 2015, the program was again extended to recognize students who demonstrate ability and accomplishment in career and technical education fields.

“The 2021 Presidential Scholars represent extraordinary achievements for our extraordinary times,” said U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona. “I am delighted to join President Biden in saluting these outstanding young people for their achievements, service, character, and continued pursuit of excellence. Their examples make me proud and hopeful about the future. Honoring them can remind us all of the great potentials in each new generation and renew our commitment to helping them achieve their dreams.”

Two West Ashley High students awarded NJROTC scholarships

Darius Brown and Saniyah Drayton, two West Ashley High School (WAHS) NJROTC cadets, were recognized in a ceremony to celebrate their academic achievements. Each will receive \$180,000 in scholarships to continue their educational careers at the post-secondary level.

The NROTC Navy scholarship pays full tuition and fees, provides an allowance for books, and a monthly stipend of \$250 - \$400 for four years of college. Brown’s scholarship covers five years.

Brown is a NROTC National Preparatory Program Scholarship recipient and plans to attend Southern University and A&M College in the fall and participate in their NROTC program. Drayton is a NROTC National Minority Scholarship recipient and will attend Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University and participate in their NROTC program.

To be eligible, the student-cadets had to meet rigorous academic and physical requirements, answer essay questions, and complete a 20-page application.

Brown’s scholarship helps cadets get ready for the rigors of Navy ROTC by giving them an extra year to prepare. Students are only eligible to use the Preparatory scholarship at certain universities. The application process requires the student to be accepted into the college first, then apply for the scholarship. Recipients must have an 1100 on the SAT or a 44 on the ACT or 2.75 GPA. Also Brown had to pass a physical fitness test with a minimum of 62 sit-ups, 51 push-ups and a one mile run in 11:00 minutes.

Drayton had to meet the same academic requirements for her scholarship. The physical fitness requirements for females are slightly different. Drayton had to be able to do 62 sit-ups, 24 push-ups and a one mile run in 13:30 minutes.

Upon graduation, both will be required to serve for a minimum of five years as officers in the United States Navy.

Carlos Nelson of Stand and Serve, a non-profit organization that assists student applicants, helped both Brown and Drayton navigate the application process.

Charleston County School District Board of Trustees Chairman Rev. Dr. Eric Mack, City of Charleston Mayor John Tecklenburg, Principal Ryan Cumback, and NJROTC instructor Petty Officer Fredrick Davis officiated the ceremony to honor the student-cadets.

“We are so incredibly proud of Darius Brown and Saniyah Drayton,” said Cumback. “They are both amazing students and have, for the last four years, served as student leaders in and out of the classroom.”

ROTC Instructor Davis described the honors as rare.

“Both Saniyah and Darius received the scholarship not only because they were deserving but also because they were two of our top ranking, motivated, hardest working cadets we have in the program,” said Davis. “It means a great deal to them because not only will they be able to receive a debt-free education but they will be able to serve the country as an officer in the United States Navy.”

Brown said he decided to apply for the Navy Preparatory Program Scholarship because it offered an extra year of college to sharpen important skills that will be necessary to succeed in college and the military.

“I was very happy when I found out I got the scholarship,” said Brown. “It gave me a sense of relief and reassurance that all of the hard work my mom and I put in paid off. My plan after graduating college is to go into the military as a Naval Flight Officer, and then pursue a career in accounting.”

Drayton said she applied for the scholarship because college loans were not an option for her. If a scholarship wasn’t available, she was willing to directly enlist.



Two WAHS students receive \$180,000 each in scholarships

“I decided to apply for this specific scholarship because I knew that I met the scholarship requirements and that it would be an amazing opportunity for me if I was awarded the scholarship,” said Drayton. “I also applied for the scholarship because the U.S. Navy has a history of having a shortage of minority officers allowing me to have a greater chance of receiving the scholarship.”

“One of the things I like to tell the cadets as it pertains to NJROTC, their goals, and future career is to begin with the end in mind,” said Davis. “It always seems fitting.”

Drayton and Brown followed that advice.

“Knowing that I will be graduating college at 21 debt-free is really a blessing and an opportunity of a lifetime,” said Drayton. “I will not have to worry about fitting college debt within my budget in life, which allows me to have more financial freedom later in life.”

Drayton plans to become a Naval Officer with a specialization within Surface Warfare. She also hopes to further her education so that she can transition to the Nurse Corps.

“I hope that the students at West Ashley High or anywhere can find some motivation from my achievement to take whatever they’re passionate about and become great with it,” Brown added. “You never know what kind of benefits can come from it.”

SOA student wins Congressional Art Competition

Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA) senior Enrique Boyd, won the 2021 Sixth District Congressional Art Competition, and his work will be displayed in the U.S. Capitol as part of a national art exhibition. Boyd’s piece is called “Cedric.”

“It’s an honor to win, and I was so surprised when I heard the news,” said Boyd. “I’m so excited to have my work displayed at the Capitol for a year!”

Each spring, the Congressional Institute sponsors a nationwide high school visual art competition to recognize and encourage artistic talent in the nation. Since the Artistic Discovery competition began in 1982, more than 650,000 high school students have participated.

“We, at Charleston County School of the Arts, are so proud of Enrique and who he has become as an artist,” said Principal Dr. Shannon Cook. “He has an ability to capture the subtle details of his subjects but also conveys emotion and a soulful kind of depth that makes his artwork captivating.”

Students submit entries to their representative’s office, and winning entries from each congressional district are chosen for display in Washington, D.C. in the Cannon Tunnel that connects the U.S. House of Representatives’ offices to the U.S. Capitol for the next year. Boyd and a guest will be invited to the Capitol for the unveiling and a reception at a later date. Two round-trip airline tickets will be provided, and Boyd will be eligible for an academic scholarship.

“In this unprecedented time, it is even more special to be able to recognize Enrique for his outstanding art,” added Barbara Richardson, Visual Arts teacher. “Even though he has been a virtual student since March of 2020, it has not affected his art. Enrique’s use of colored pencils coupled with his photorealistic style has



Cedric by Enrique Boyd

landed him numerous awards and scholarship offers. I am immensely proud of Enrique and I cannot wait to see what he is going to do at the Rhode Island School of Design!”

U.S. Rep. James E. Clyburn, South Carolina’s 6th District representative, said Boyd’s artwork stood out among the entries in this year’s competition.

“This year’s art competition showcased the work of exceptionally talented young artists across the Sixth District. Among the unique and impressive entries, Enrique’s artwork rose to the top,” said Congressman Clyburn. “I commend him for his soulful drawing of a man who seems very relatable. Enrique’s work will represent the district well in the halls of Congress.”

“This piece depicts a man who was worth more to me than I realized, a man who was kind, just, and selfless,” said Boyd. “Cedric, also known as Ceco, is such an important part of me and my family’s lives. From being the first to alert us when my father had a life threatening accident to something as simple as helping me walk across busy streets, he has always been there for us. I’ve known Cedric as long as I can remember. When looking for a subject matter for this piece, I strived to depict someone that my mother holds in high regard, as she is someone that I admire greatly. The process of getting this shot was difficult, Cedric doesn’t like pictures of himself and always thought it wasn’t good enough. To me he is so unique and I just had to put it to paper.”

“Enrique’s artwork is extraordinary,” said Denisse A. Santos, Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator. “I am thrilled for his accomplishment, and this wonderful honor for him and for the teachers who have worked with him at SOA. What an honor for CCSD to be represented nationally by Enrique’s work!”

PRIMARY MUSIC STUDENTS MAKE SILENT FILM



“The students had creative control of the movie from writing the script to writing the music,” said Boardman. “It allowed them to express themselves and make something they could look back on with pride.”

Dorsey explained that arts education is so important for the development of young students.

“In the primary grades, it is essential to expose children to arts as we focus on developing the whole child,” said Dorsey. “Three years ago, we had our first school wide musical program where all students participated in singing songs from Broadway shows. With the restrictions of COVID, we wanted a way for our students to showcase their musical talents. Ms. Boardman’s creativity led to the creation of the silent film and we are so impressed with the work of our students with her guidance.”

Boardman said that COVID-19 was a blessing in disguise because this project may not have presented itself otherwise.

“To see these kids come to life while they’re creating, rather than having to do what they’re told, is just beautiful,” said Boardman. “The students really dove into the process. They played various percussion instruments to see what would make their scene feel more realistic and chose various musical elements

such as loud versus soft, long versus short, high versus low, and fast versus slow for the music to match the mood of the scene. As we near the completion I can see how the students have truly connected with the process of creating something bigger than themselves. We all had to work together, each of the students gave the project their unique touch, and now we have a silent movie that is completely and uniquely ours.”

Boardman’s classroom became a movie set and the students were treated (and behaved) like professional musicians and performers.

“The students really took ownership of the project and are very proud of it,” said Boardman.

According to Boardman, the production of the silent film allowed her to teach the curriculum components of percussion, and the associated sounds that come from a scrape, shake, or hot. It also touched on the history of the 1920s. Students watched old Charlie Chaplain movies which then led into a jazz lesson and the history of jazz in the Charleston area.

“This project and the music associated with it gave my students a chance to shine without the need for words,” said Boardman.

The project was a whole school initiative, involving the technology class creating the invitations, the art class creating the posters announcing the film, and the PE class learning the Charleston dance.

“Music in schools is so powerful and necessary,” said Boardman. “It gives students a safe space for innovation, creativity, and expression which are hugely important life skills to have when things get tough, like it was during this school year. My hope with the silent film project is for my students to feel that their voice and vision matter, even when so much is out of their control and even when they have masks on. Music has taught me how to be resilient, get creative, and make beauty out of struggle. I want to pass on that same message to my students.”



Charleston County schools receive support from Laura Bush Foundation for America’s Libraries

Jane Edwards Elementary School and Murray-LaSaine Montessori School were named as two of the 205 schools from 43 states across the country to receive a grant through the Laura Bush Foundation for America’s Libraries. Both schools received \$5,000.

Laura Bush joined Kelly Clarkson on “The Kelly Clarkson Show” last month to announce that the Laura Bush Foundation for America’s Libraries awarded more than \$1 million in library grants in May.

The grant recipients’ school library collections are outdated, averaging approximately 20 years old. The school libraries will use the funds to update their collection and offer more book titles.

“There are many students who don’t have books at home, so having access to a library at school is essential,” Bush said. “With the grants, school libraries across the nation can restock and update their collections providing opportunities for students for years to come.”

Murray-LaSaine teacher-librarian Elizabeth Ryan said the money will be used to update the fiction collection, replaced worn copies, and update book topics to reflect the school’s diverse student population and community.

“We will focus on providing stories that teach acceptance and that celebrate our differences,” said Ryan. “We will be sure to include global views and traditions in the books we acquire. This will include updated fairy tales that depict accurate representations. We will add more books so students will know they are seen, accepted, and supported.”

Grant money for Jane Edwards will be spent on similar updates to the school’s library collection. Teacher-librarian Stephanie Smith said that areas of need include books for early readers, books that showcase the arts, and books that represent people and characters who are typically under-represented in both nonfiction and literature.

“These under-representations include, but are not limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental disabilities, social class, and spiritual practices,” said Smith. “Sadly, these weaknesses in our library collection trickle down and create gaps in our students’ learning. With the stress of



LAURA BUSH FOUNDATION FOR AMERICA’S LIBRARIES

“Once a child learns to use a library, the doors to learning are always open.”
—Mrs. Laura Bush

COVID-19, our students are having to learn how to cope in a way many of them have never had to before. Books can help them with that.”

Bush also revealed her 2021 summer reading list, which includes recommendations for young readers through middle school. Selections highlight books focused on diversity, inclusion and kindness; and the list features a title by the late Beverly Cleary.

“The summer reading list is a great resource for parents and caregivers,” Bush said. “As libraries open back up all over our country, I hope children will take the list to their local library and borrow each of the featured titles. It is so important that all kids keep reading over summer break.”

Grant applications for the 2021-2022 school year will open in late 2021. Visit www.bushcenter.org to learn more.

“There are many students who don’t have books at home, so having access to a library at school is essential. With the grants, school libraries across the nation can restock and update their collections providing opportunities for students for years to come.”

— LARA BUSH
LAURA BUSH FOUNDATION FOR AMERICA’S LIBRARIES

CCSD students place in Septima Clark Poetry Contest

Belle Hall Elementary School fifth grader Adair Dombrowski won first place (at the elementary school level) in the (state-wide) third annual MUSC Septima Clark Poetry Contest in collaboration with Charleston Poet Laureate Marcus Amaker.

The theme was “Life During Covid.” As a first-place winner, Dombrowski will receive a Chromebook, hoverboard, and bicycle.

The awards ceremony aired live May 14, 2021; the top three finalists from each division (elementary, middle, and high school) read their

poems and the winners were announced.

Other Charleston County School District students who placed in the competition include:

- Christina Crowell of Charleston Development Academy Public Charter School – second place (Middle School)
- Callie Ingram of C.E. Williams Middle School – third place (Middle School)
- Bethany “Autumn” Rouse of Charleston County School of the Arts – third place (High School)

This annual contest honors acclaimed Charleston native, teacher, and “Grandmother of the Civil Rights Movement” Septima P. Clark (1898-1987) for her dedication to service, education, and equality. As a recipient of the 1979 Living Legacy Award from President and 2002 Nobel Prize Winner Jimmy Carter, she was known for developing literacy and citizenship workshops to promote civil rights and equality. She was also recognized by the State of South Carolina in 1982 with South Carolina’s highest civilian award, known as the Order of the Palmetto.



Adair Dombrowski

WINNING POEM

Coronavirus

THE SOARING WALL THAT SEPARATES US
THAT SHIELDS US FROM SICKNESS
THAT TEARS US APART
FAILING TO DO ITS JOB
AS THE COMMUNITY FALLS
INTO THE BOTTOMLESS PIT
REMEDIES ARE SLOW TO COME
PEOPLE EVERYWHERE ARE GETTING SICK
POLICIES BEING NEGLECTED
MASKS FALL BENEATH THE NOSE
ANOTHER LIFE CAST AWAY
FAMILIES GRIEVING ACROSS THE WEB
SOCIAL-DISTANCING IN THEIR HOME
STUDENTS STUDYING ON ZOOM
THE EARTH SEEMS SO DETACHED

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