

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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Lt. Junior Grade Ron Blake



Official establishment

Beckham hosts school dedication and Coast Guard JROTC Congressional Establishment ceremony

Lucy Garrett Beckham High School (LBHS) opened its doors in Mount Pleasant just one year ago. Currently serving grades 9-11, the school was officially recognized on October 8, 2021, as being the only Coast Guard JROTC unit in South Carolina and the third in the nation. The celebration was also held to dedicate the school.

Principal Anna Dassing explained that the pandemic delayed the dedication ceremony but created a blessing in disguise by allowing the ceremonies to be combined.

About the school

Beckham will accommodate 1,500 students once all four grade levels are housed in the 242,000 square-foot building. The 44.1-acre campus is located at the former Wando High School site.

Spaces in the new school include two gymnasiums, a performing arts center, student commons, collaborative learning areas, classrooms, science labs, and specialty spaces for Career and Technology Education programs. The facility also houses a state-of-the-art media center with a makerspace.

The state-of-the-art facility is a true reflection of the vision Lucy Garrett Beckham had for the school. As a district official, the former Wando High School principal had been tasked with overseeing the design and construction of the new East Cooper high school. Beckham passed away unexpectedly in December of

2015.

The role was passed on to Anna Dassing, who considered Beckham a mentor.

"Lucy always put students first," said Dassing. "She instilled that in me and hundreds of other educators. Her motto was always 'do what is best for the students,' and that motto lives on today here at Beckham. Her impact was mighty and we will honor her with this building and all that we do inside it."

About the Coast Guard JROTC

A congressional undertaking spearheaded by S.C. District 1 U.S. Rep. Joe Cunningham and Majority Whip, S.C. District 6 Congressman James Clyburn. On July 8, an amendment to the Fiscal Year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) was passed that authorizes the establishment of Coast Guard JROTC units in high schools across the country. It took Principal Anna Dassing several years to get that needed approval, but 2021-2022 will mark the program's inaugural year.

"Master Chief Kevin Leask and I are very excited to see where the cadets can take the program in the years to come," said the JROTC unit's Senior Maritime Science Instructor Lt. Junior Grade, Ron Blake, USCG ret. "As a graduate of Navy JROTC and the Citadel, having a CGJROTC unit at LBHS means a great deal to me. I

know the skills and benefits a program like this can provide cadets is invaluable. It puts them leaps and bounds ahead of many of their classmates. We are very appreciative of the super supportive administration and staff here at LBHS and look forward to the excitement that will be the Coast Guard JROTC program."

According to Commander Clay Cromer, JROTC Program Manager for the Coast Guard, this establishment marked a significant moment for the Coast Guard.

"LBHS is the first unit we're establishing under recently-expanded federal law," said Cromer. "While our program may be small, we're now officially on a big stage alongside the other service branches. With a supportive administration such as this at Beckham, this unit is primed for growth. I am glad we have had the opportunity to partner with them in the establishment."

Per federal statute, the program teaches citizenship, service to the United States, personal responsibility, and a sense of accomplishment.

The CGJROTC Program Pillars, captured in the acronym COAST, stand for citizenship, operations, advancement, service, and teamwork. "These pillars guide the learning that takes place in and outside of the classroom," said Cromer. "Our mission is to develop service-minded citizens of character."

BOEING AND CCSD PARTNER WITH MUSC TO EXPAND MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES IN SCHOOLS



The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] and Charleston County School District (CCSD) each announced a \$1 million investment in the Medical University of South Carolina's (MUSC) Boeing Center for Children's Wellness (BCCW) to expand the program's offerings to include resources addressing children's mental health in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The funding from Boeing and Charleston County School District will support the current school-based wellness initiative while adding mental health support offerings for schools in Charleston County. Supports will include training for classroom teachers to help children find appropriate coping mechanisms and ways to deal with stress as well as integration of MUSC Telehealth which will bring high quality, evidence-based, trauma-focused mental health services to children in a school setting. In addition, this funding will support the development of a plan to substantially change and improve the mental health system.

Over the past decade, the MUSC BCCW, which reaches 17 school districts in South Carolina, has

focused on wellness and obesity prevention by working directly with schools to implement programs that promote healthy eating, physical activity and social-emotional learning. The programs have demonstrated positive outcomes in connection to Body Mass Index (BMI), asthma, school attendance and suspensions/ expulsions, and high school graduation rates. With Boeing's and CCSD's investment, the MUSC BCCW will expand school wellness to include more targeted mental health support by leveraging relationships with schools, state agencies and the hospital's vast expertise.

"The Boeing Company is once again leading the way in its support of our efforts to address the needs of children through working with schools. They supported our initial work to turn the tide of childhood obesity and have now recognized the current community need, improved mental health services," said Dr. Janice Key, Executive Director, Boeing Center for Children's Wellness.

For more information about Boeing's philanthropic efforts, please visit the Company's Global Engagement website. For more information about Boeing South Carolina, visit www.wereboeing.com.

Mask mandate extended

The Charleston County School District's Board of Trustees voted to extend the face mask requirement inside district schools and buildings through at least November 12, 2021, to help limit the spread of COVID. This means that the face mask requirement will be enforced for all students, staff, and visitors on district property and school buses.

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Baptist Hill dance teacher wins Social Emotional Learning award



Melissa Murdock

Melissa Murdock, Baptist Hill High School dance teacher, won a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in Action Award. In partnership with the NoVo Foundation and Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors, she was selected as one of 105 recipients from 800 applications nationwide and is the only CCSD educator to win this award.

Murdock used the \$1,915 award funds to attend Breathe for Change training, a yoga certification program designed specifically for teachers. Breathe for Change integrates social-emotional learning, meditation, and traditional aspects of yoga.

Murdock said her students, from 6th grade to 12th grade, love to meditate and do yoga; so much so that they ask for it daily.

“Yoga and meditation have been my gateway to teaching dance,” said Murdock. “Students are much calmer, focused, and they’re able to process and retain information and embody movement. Students have used breathing techniques as a way to ground themselves and settle in.”

Murdock uses her training to teach meditation and yoga to reduce class disruptions, outbursts, and frustrations. In addition, she teaches SEL strategies and techniques to colleagues so they can better support students in ways that are healthy, emotionally, and culturally responsive.

Anya Smalls is a student in Murdock’s class.

“I love that we are doing yoga,” said Smalls. “Doing yoga relaxes you.”

“I think how Ms. Murdoch addresses SEL, by using techniques that anyone and everyone can participate in, is great,” said Principal Brendan Glaze. “SEL is a major focus in schools, especially now during the COVID-19 pandemic. We need a variety of supports to provide our students coping mechanisms and ways to deal with stress. I am proud Mrs. Murdock pursued this opportunity to encourage positivity at Baptist Hill.”

“It helps my body do things that I haven’t done before,” added student Rubi Santos-Antonio. “It also helps me a lot when I’m stressed.”

The students are not the only ones benefitting from SEL in action.

“I’m now able to offer yoga classes to the faculty and staff at Baptist Hill after school and share SEL strategies with them as well,” said Murdock. “I’m also incorporating this knowledge in my graduate work on somatics in dance.”

Since 2016, the Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) in Action Fund has celebrated educators who practice innovative ways to support and center students’ social, emotional, and academic needs, and who strive to overcome systemic barriers for those farthest from opportunity. Funded projects prioritized student social, emotional, and academic outcomes, contained an orientation and analysis of racial, gender and/or social justice, and created restorative approaches to conflict.

Belle Hall recognized as 2021 National Blue Ribbon School



Belle Hall Elementary School is proud to announce they have earned a prestigious distinction; they are one of five schools in South Carolina named 2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools. Belle Hall is the first school in Charleston County School District (CCSD) to receive this award in four years (Buist Academy in 2017).

The U.S. Secretary of Education Miguel Cardona announced the 2021 National Blue Ribbon Schools (NBRS) earlier this morning.

The NBRS Program recognizes public and private elementary, middle, and high schools based on their overall academic excellence or their progress in closing achievement gaps among student subgroups. Every year the U.S. Department of Education seeks out and celebrates great American schools, schools demonstrating that all students can achieve to high

levels. Now in its 39th year, the NBRS Program has bestowed almost 10,000 awards to more than 9,000 schools, with some schools winning multiple awards. Schools are eligible for nomination after five years.

“The entire Belle Hall Elementary School community takes great pride in this prestigious recognition,” said Principal Kevin Conklin. “For over three decades, the teachers, parents, staff, and community members have collaborated to create this extraordinary environment for students. Over the years, we’ve upheld our reputation of ‘Rigor and Relationships,’ which features high expectations and support for all learners bolstered by adults working together closely every day.”

Conklin added they are starting to plan for on-going celebrations this school year to highlight this prestigious accomplishment.

The coveted National Blue Ribbon School award affirms the hard work of students, educators, families, and communities in creating safe and welcoming schools where students master challenging and engaging content. The National Blue Ribbon School flag gracing an entry or flying overhead is a widely recognized symbol of exemplary teaching and learning.

“It takes a lot to make a school exceptional,” added Instructional Coach Patricia Caddell. “It is no easy task. Belle Hall is an excellent school due to its inviting school climate, cohesive staff, community involvement, strong leadership, and rigorous curriculum. This is seen on a daily basis year end and year out.”

Belle Hall Elementary started serving students in Mount Pleasant in 1990; the school’s current enrollment is approximately 650.

WANDO SWIMS PAST COMPETITION TO COLLECT FIFTH STRAIGHT SCHSL STATE TITLE

The Wando High School girls’ swim team dominated the South Carolina High School League (SCHSL) AAAAA state championship swim meet on Saturday, October 9, 2021, in North Charleston and rolled to the program’s fifth straight state championship. The Warriors won the team title with 412 points; Fort Mill was the runner-up at 297.50 points.

Veteran leadership was a factor for Wando, as 10 seniors helped lead the way to victory, and the program’s seventh state title overall.

The Warriors also captured four individual/relay events: Sophie Frece won the 100-meter backstroke (56.11); Gil Shaw finished first in the 100-meter breaststroke (1:04.07); Frece, Shaw, Illy Lightfoot, and Eliza Baxter combined to take the 200-meter medley relay (1:45.80); and Frece, Shaw, Baxter, and Halle Schart won the 400-meter freestyle relay (3:36.58).

The following swimmers participated in the state meet for Wando:

Sophie Frece	Regan Leach	Mara Goodrich
Gil Shaw	Halle Schart	Kate Green
Eliza Baxter	Illy Lightfoot	Amadea Friedl
Kendall Bensen	Caitlin Mason	Caroline Bierman

Cheryl Durden serves as the program’s head coach, and Elissa Manchester is the assistant coach.



Hispanic Heritage Month



Baptist Hill High

Hispanic Heritage Month was celebrated in true form at Baptist Hill High School.



Cooper River CAS

Students at Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies will be submersed in the Hispanic culture this month as part of the Hispanic Month celebration. From flags to food to history, students will learn about the Hispanic Heritage.



Burke High

World Language teachers at Burke High School, Olga Leon and Laura Zaffore, led the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month. Students recited the Pledge of Allegiance in Spanish, participated in festivities including a piñata smashing on the school courtyard.



North Charleston Creative Arts

North Charleston Creative Arts had a busy week celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month. Karen Brown and the cafeteria staff for provided learners with a large selection of lunch choices on to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month!

Bonnie Colcord designed a beautiful wall of Flags made by students in art class, representing 21 Spanish speaking countries.

Many teachers participated in the Hispanic Heritage Month Door/Bulletin Board decorating contest and congratulations to Marissa Downing for winning 1st place and taking home a \$50 Target gift card!

Many families joined in for virtual storytime, and Carol Smith, Denise Glover, and Delia Negron read an award winning book to students in honor of Hispanic Heritage Month!

Additionally, the students were showcased in a parade to represent the 24 Hispanic nations. Each second grade class was given the task of researching the culture of the different nations and bringing it to life.



Northwoods Middle

At Northwoods Middle School one of the cultural highlights during Hispanic Heritage Month is the friendship bracelet. Unbeknownst to many, friendship bracelets date back to ancient Central America. Students purchased bracelets for their friends and it was a great success. Social studies students also designed a postage stamp that could be part of a Hispanic heritage stamp series. The best one will receive a gift card from the library. The school also hosted a week of trivia questions on Hispanic culture in which the student with the most correct answers received a gift card.

Mitchell students study human rights through literature and music



Grace Ferguson, Julian Mitchell Elementary School's fifth grade English Language teacher partnered with music teacher Darvin Harvey, and librarian Edie Crook to host a Shark Book Cafe.

Scholars explored books and music related to human and civil rights and made connections to books at the cafe and the Scholastic Gold book, *Esperanza Rising*, a realistic fiction book for children. In addition, students studied the

abridged version of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Reading coach Courtney Blue said seeing teachers take initiative to collaborate together is inspiring.

"Scholars will instantly see the importance of the learning they are doing in the ELA classroom when they also see Media and Music joining in on the work," said Blue. "I'm

proud of our teachers' abilities to take the new curriculum and enrich it with opportunities outside the classroom."

While listening to songs related to human rights, the scholars reflected on the imagery, emotions, and tempo, as well as the instruments and voices heard. In each book they read, students explored how the text related to human rights and noted similarities to the *Esperanza Rising* story.

C.E. WILLIAMS PET PARADE



C.E. Williams Middle School North (6th grade) campus welcomed scholars back to in-person learning with a fun Pet Parade in the parent loop after being out for virtual learning for two weeks.



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 Erica Taylor, *Chief of Staff*
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Popsicle stick counting at Springfield

Ms. Dickson's 1st grade class at Springfield Elementary School did hands-on learning using popsicle sticks to make and count tally marks.

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