

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.*

Volume 6 | Edition 4 | April 2023

SUPERINTENDENT HELPS STUDENTS REALIZE THEIR DREAMS



Charleston County School District Superintendent Don Kennedy is poised to build an ecosystem of support around Charleston's children. In his estimation, Charleston County School District can only help all students realize their dreams by knowing what they are and creating support systems to ensure that they become a reality.

Kennedy invited elementary school principals and kindergarten teachers to help him capture the dreams of young learners and to share their dreams with him in an open letter. To-date over 600 letters and drawings have been received and several invitations to visit kindergarten classrooms have been extended.

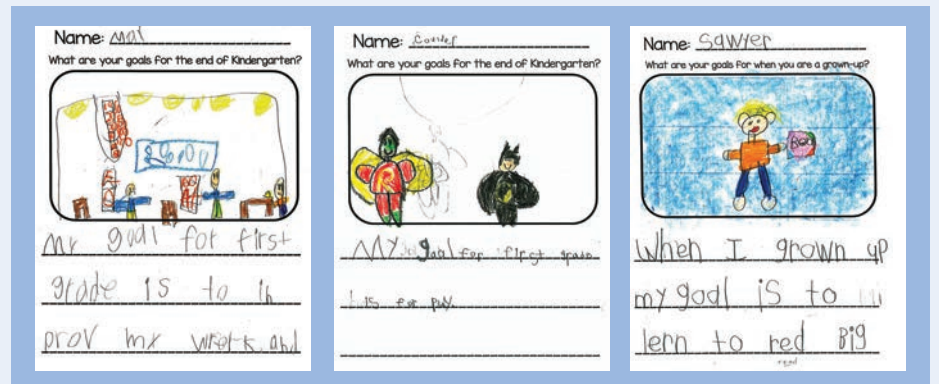
Kennedy visited Ashley Pomposelli's class at James B. Edwards Elementary School last month to listen to her kindergarten students share their dreams. Not only was Pomposelli's class there, but the entire kindergarten grade level was waiting on stage to sing a song about their big, big dreams and share individual stories about their dreams for first grade, as a teenager, and as an adult. The tremendous work of Pomposelli, and others across the district in engaging their students has been outstanding and Kennedy is grateful for the opportunity to visit children in the various schools and to help make their dreams come true.

A key component to unlocking and engaging students in their ability to dream is their ability to read and write. Without sound literacy skills it is harder for students to articulate, illustrate, and convey their hopes and dreams and to absorb information from other places that may help inform their dreams. With strong leaders and teachers and our preK-12 ecosystem in place, Kennedy is confident that CCSD students will not only be able to access their ability to dream, but actualize their dreams in our community.

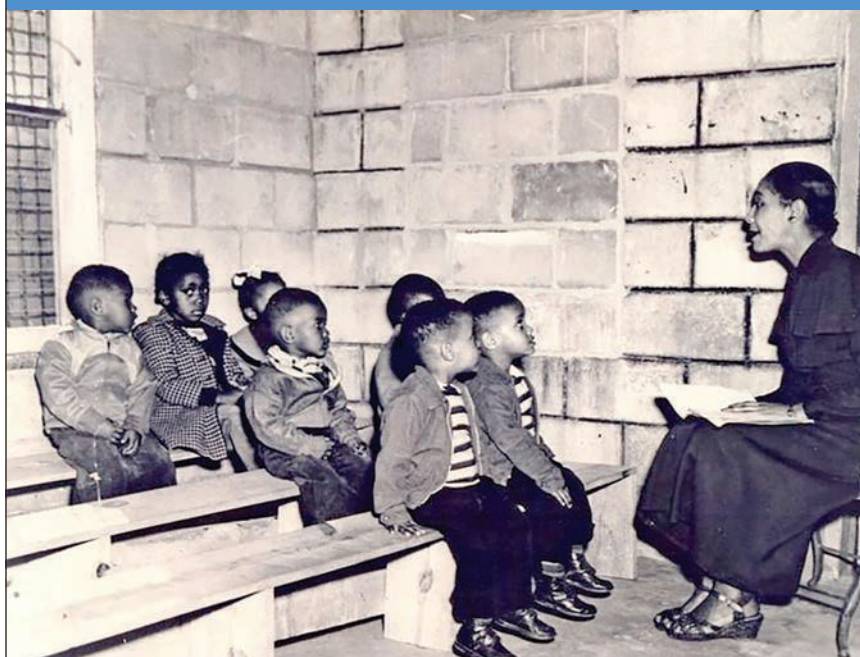
The involvement of the entire Charleston community will be essential to ensure children have the ability to make their dreams come true. Superintendent Kennedy asks community members to share their dreams, too.

What are your dreams for all students of CCSD?

Help build the District's ecosystem by submitting ideas via email at superintendent@charleston.k12.sc.us



James B. Edwards Elementary School kindergarten students share dreams



My Mother's Vision

— By Don Kennedy —

This photo, taken in 1956, shows my mother teaching a kindergarten class in the neighborhood where I grew up in Winnsboro, SC. The two twin boys sitting up front are my brother, Ronald, and me. Mama was attempting to obtain a federal grant to start the kindergarten program. She was not awarded the grant and therefore could not keep the program running. Her dream was to become a teacher. Instead, she went to work as the cafeteria manager in the elementary school that my brothers and sisters attended. Mama never gave up on her dream. After all eight of her children had graduated college (the first generation to do so), she went back to college, obtained her teaching certification, and in her mid-50's, became a teacher in our hometown. My mother, Viola D. Kennedy, had a vision that all children in South Carolina could receive an excellent education. She passed away on January 8, 2022, five days after I became superintendent of the Charleston County School District. Mama died without her vision having been realized. The mission that I am on in education is to make her vision a reality.



Don Kennedy
SUPERINTENDENT, CHARLESTON
COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT



Superintendent creates new interfaith roundtable

Charleston County School District (CCSD) Superintendent Don Kennedy created a new interfaith roundtable. It includes faith leaders from across the Lowcountry and was established to re-engage the community and strengthen collaboration in order to improve outcomes for students. According to Kennedy, faith leaders are a crucial part of the ecosystem. He recognized that it will take an entire village, to help CCCD students succeed and close achievement gaps.



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CHARLESTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
CELEBRATIONS

READ ACROSS AMERICA



Belle Hall Elementary



Harbor View Elementary



Carolina Park Elementary



James Island Elementary Kaleidoscope



Springfield Elementary



Stono Park Elementary



St. Andrew's School of Math and Science



E.B. Ellington Elementary



Jane Edwards Elementary



Mamie P. Whitesides Elementary

CCSD ARTS



2023

SOUTH CAROLINA SENIOR ALL-STATE BAND HIGHLIGHTS

Check out these highlights from the 2023 South Carolina Senior (Grade 11-12) All-State Band.

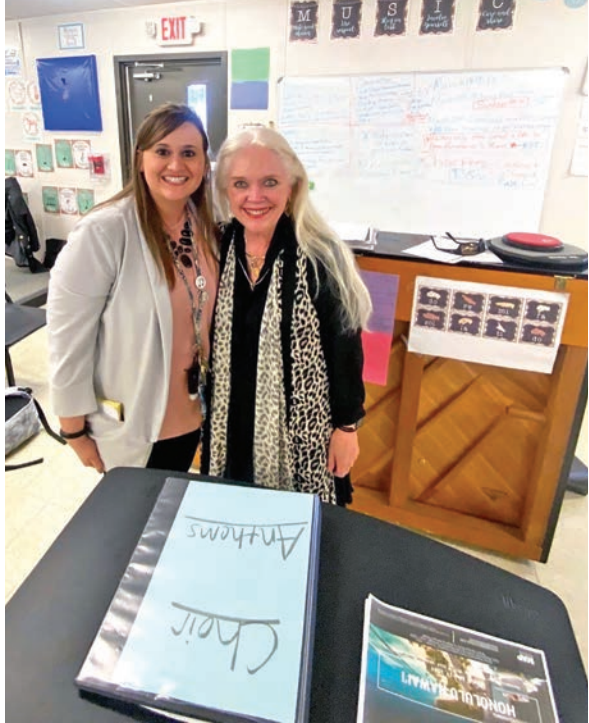
The band was conducted by composer and Michigan State University Composition professor David Biedenbender.

Students from the following Charleston County schools made up a large portion of the ensemble and alternates for this outstanding group of young musicians:

- James Island Charter High School
- Lucy Beckham High School
- School of the Arts High School (Charleston School of the Arts Bands)
- Wando High School (Bands of Wando)
- West Ashley High School (West Ashley High School Band)

Palmetto Voices Spiritual Ensemble director works with Stall chorus students

Thank you to Dr. Sonja Sepulveda, director of the Palmetto Voices Spiritual Ensemble, for working with our R.B. Stall High School Chorus students this week, and for inviting the Warrior Voices Ensemble to perform in Hawaii with MidAmerica Productions next year!



Camp Road Middle School honor band prepares at Coastal Carolina University

The Camp Road Middle School honor band had a clinic with Dr. David Carter, music education professor at Coastal Carolina University. Great progress was made in preparation for the band's future performance.

AROUND CCSD

Carolina Park wins CCSD’s fourth annual Book Battle

Students at Carolina Park Elementary School won the fourth annual Charleston County School District (CCSD) Book Battle. They competed against 16 other teams on Saturday, March 4, 2023 at Burke High School. Teams competed in a literary quiz bowl, answering questions from 20 books on the 2022-2023 South Carolina Children’s Book Awards nominee list.

Coached by Kristen Smith, the Carolina Park team, called the Pink Carrots, competed in the finals against Buist Academy’s Page Turners.

The Charleston County Book Battle is a program offered for fourth and fifth grade students. The purpose is to encourage students to read good books and have fun while competing with peers.

“I am so proud of my students,” said Smith. “They showed such maturity both emotionally and academically as I saw them work in a truly collaborative fashion to divide up the reading, help each other with outlining and noting parts of the text, and support each other in learning the rules and procedures for the event. It was a joy to see them connect with books that they might not have otherwise chosen to read. We also had so much fun quizzing each other and practicing with our buzzers at school prior to the event.”

Christy James, CCSD’s Library & Media Services Specialist, was the emcee for the district championship. The crowd included over 150 family and community members there to support their readers. James explained that the championship is held as a kick off for the district’s Read Across America Week, celebrated this year March 6-10, 2023.

“This is the fourth year that CCSD elementary schools have competed in a district battle that even includes its traveling trophy,” said James. “The energy is electric and it is so exciting to have an auditorium filled with supporters around students’ love of reading.”

District librarians comb through the South Carolina Children’s Book Award list, choosing titles and writing questions that are asked of students and teams to test their knowledge of the books they have read.

Leslie Cooper, the librarian at Stiles Point Elementary School, organizes the event but said it takes an entire team to make it happen.

“Librarians start writing questions in May for the competition,” said Cooper. “Teams were established in October, and the reading begins. There are multiple copies of each book on hand



so that each team member can read the book they are assigned.”

Teams were made up of five members, and they completed a reading list of 20 books by January. Teams competed against each other at the school level, and the top team from each school competed in the district event.

“The Book Battle promotes a variety of diverse books that students might not automatically select but often find they enjoy,” said Cooper. “The competition aspect also encourages students who didn’t necessarily like reading to look at it differently. We see a big difference in our students as readers and in the activity of our libraries when children participate in this.”



Ladson hosts Donuts and Dreams for students and their dads

Ladson Elementary School recently held its annual Donuts and Dreams with Deputies and Dads. Over 80 dads, grandpas, uncles, and other special male adults were in attendance.

Family Advocate Vanessa Smith organized the event.

“Family time means a lot and for quite some time, it has been my goal/vision to have dads and important male figures here at the school,” said Smith. “This is just the beginning, and I will continue this journey by encouraging the fathers to get or become more engaged in their children’s education and school environment.”

This was a meet and greet event, which included listening to and gaining knowledge and encouragement from deputies from the Charleston County Sheriff’s Office (CCSO), Sean Wilson (Executive Director of Father to Father, Inc.), and Ladson Elementary Dads. They all focused on the importance of being involved in their children’s lives and the impacts that it causes. The fathers appreciated the presentations, messages, and most

of all, spending time with their children.

CCSO Lt. Alan Ali spoke about the importance of fathers being dedicated to their children and maintaining a good relationship as they grow up. Ali reminded the audience that the Sheriff’s Office would always be there for them throughout this important journey.

“If there’s anything law enforcement can do to help them along the way, we are all in,” said Ali. “One way we’re achieving this is through community engagement.”

CCSO Detective Barry Goldstein encouraged the fathers to plan for their future and save for retirement. After the program, some of the fathers went to Detective Goldstein for more information about retirement and routes to take for future plans.

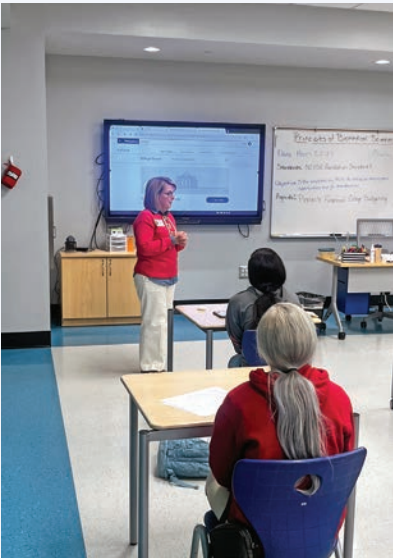
Sean Wilson (Executive Director of Father to Father, Inc.) motivated and inspired the fathers about the importance of building relationships with their children and making a

difference in their lives. He also offered his contact information and resources about child support, fathers’ rights, expungement, employment, and men’s health.

“It’s the parents and children finding out what’s available in the community,” said Sgt. Delmer Powell. “It’s finding a way to get their kids out of the house and doing positive things. It’s better overall for the community and for families.”

“Many fathers elaborated on the testimonies and how they were positively impacted,” said Smith. “They also asked about ways to get involved in the school. One of the fathers expressed that the event was beneficial and inspiring. He said the event made him realize he needs to spend more time with his son and communicate with his teacher. There were some fathers who even said they would be more than willing to volunteer their time and give donations to the school for activities and school supplies. Overall, the fathers were happy and grateful they were invited to the event.”

Pinnacle Bank facilitates two sessions at Cooper River CAS



Mike Phelan, Dr. Vondina Moseley, and students at Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies participated in financial literacy seminars by representatives of Pinnacle Bank to facilitate two sessions – College & Student Loans and Managing Your Finances. Dawn Robinson (SVP. Financial Advisor) and Adrienne Wilder (SVP. Branch Manager/Lender) presented the morning session and Shabar Coefield (Client Service Advisor) and Wilder presented the afternoon budget session.

Team Pinnacle Financial Partners has an ongoing presence at Cooper River. They are committed business partners hoping to equip students with the necessary knowledge of basic banking, budgeting, saving, and more.

“Finance is a part of everyday life for everyone,” said Wilder. “My mindset as a leader in the financial world is to make sure that everyone has representation when it comes to banking. Financial literacy is crucial to a stable financial future.”

AROUND CCSD

CCSD announces graduation of 12th and 13th Aspire cohorts

For the last nine years, 111 employees from Charleston County School District (CCSD), in partnership with The Citadel, have gone through the Aspire cohort which is a two years master's program for those seeking an education leadership degree.

The Citadel offers a 25 percent discount and waives the registration fee and CCSD provides a 25 percent match, allowing candidates to receive their master's degree for half the price.

The 12th cohort will graduate in June and the 13th cohort will graduate in August. Information sessions are being planned for the 15th cohort of students which will begin in the fall.

This opportunity is yet another effort to align with CCSD's Pillar Two (high-quality teachers and leaders) which is one of the three Pillars that uphold the district's mission of educating and supporting every child in achieving college, career, and citizenship readiness.

According to Gayle Morris, the Interim Director of Leadership Pipeline, the district is committed to providing high-quality, rigorous instruction to staff so that they may better serve students.

"The benefit is that they go through the courses with their CCSD colleagues," said Morris. "The networking and the bonds they create with one another is also a benefit. They move through the cohort together and can lean on each other for help and guidance."

The cohort is made up of CCSD employees from all grade levels across the district. Upon graduation they can test to receive certification as a principal.

The application process is extensive and competitive. Candidates must interview and provide recommendations from principals and other district leaders.

Terri H. Nichols, Interim Executive Associate Superintendent, said that it is a very selective process.

"The candidates that get selected are really ambitious, organized, excited educators that want to continue to give to the profession and are willing to take on new challenges

and responsibilities," said Nichols. "They are still doing their full-time job teaching, all while juggling graduate courses, and while others are enjoying summer break, and they're taking two courses because the program is year-round. It is not easy."

The cohort has evolved through the years but the mission is the same, according to Morris.

"It is building the pipeline," said Morris. "This is helping to grow our own and give our own staff opportunities for advancement. The reduced cost is a huge driver but we also have a very great partnership with The Citadel. When they graduate, they are ready to step into the positions they aspire to."

According to Evan Ortlieb, Ph.D., Dean of the Zucker Family School of Education, partnerships permit possibilities.

"From examining districtwide leadership needs to aligning the curriculum to address those facets in CCSD, the Aspire cohorts represent raising the bar on school leadership development," said Ortlieb.

Some cohort members decide to stay in the classroom, and that is beneficial to CCSD as well.

"That puts great leaders in the classroom, where leaders are needed just as much," said Nichols.

Lakevia Mills, CCSD's 2020 Teacher of the Year started the cohort in August 2022 and will graduate next summer. She was an honors science teacher at St. John's High School before becoming a Teacher Effectiveness Specialist at the district level.

Mills is earning her second master's degree and said the cohort model is what attracted her to the idea.

"For me, it was the opportunity to grow in my practices and expand into other avenues of education," said Mills. "I always thought I would be in the classroom and once I was given the opportunity to see various aspects of education administration, it became of great interest to me."

Sheldon Bloomfield is the Assistant Principal at Mamie P. Whitesides Elementary School and said the opportunity



was one of the best things to happen to his professional career.

"I never thought I would be an administrator, but when the opportunity arose I wasn't going to pass it up."

Mills said the cohort model allowed for collaborating, troubleshooting, and brainstorming.

"The cohort is the great aspect of the experience because I am not in a silo," said Mills. "I am in a class with my colleagues that have the same aspirations and goals as me."

We're in it together and all have the same goal of graduating and becoming an administrator in some realm. I am appreciative that CCSD sees the potential in us enough to finance some of the cost. That has been beneficial as well."

Bloomfield said he can't say enough about the opportunity.

"CCSD hit the nail on the head with this partnership, and others, making higher education degrees attainable at an affordable cost," Bloomfield added.

STEAM PROFESSIONALS INSPIRE JAMES ISLAND ELEMENTARY STUDENTS



Close to 400 students and family members from James Island Elementary School met scientists from the Lowcountry at the school's Women in Science Night on March 23, 2023. The event was designed to show how women impact lives through various skills and techniques in their daily occupations.

"The journey our staff took to put on this event allowed us to see that there is no limit to what women can do in the workforce," said Principal Jonetta Gregory.

More than 50 female scientists shared their knowledge and encouraged all students to explore and participate in STEAM (Science, Technology, Education, Arts, and Math) projects and careers. Meteorologists, herbalists, molecular biologists, doctors, nurses, nutritionists, pharmacists, and veterinarians

attended the community event, which gave students multiple hands-on experiences.

James Island Elementary's Women in Science Night aligns with CCSD's Pillar Two (high-quality teachers and leaders) and Pillar Three (wrap-around services), which are two of the three Pillars that uphold the district's mission of educating and supporting every child in achieving college, career, and citizenship readiness.

"The STEAM Committee at James Island Elementary is are paving the way for girls to embrace their present curiosities so they can become innovative leaders in the future," explained Danielle Chisolm, a fifth grade teacher and the school's STEAM team leader.

Women in Science Night gave girls at James Island Elementary an opportunity to work together in teams, exercise their talents, and have fun while learning. The engagement sessions included simulating bird beak adaptations, DNA/RNA gene activity, creating liquid nitrogen flowers, and exploring sensory fidgets.

"Lise Meitner, an Austrian-Swedish physicist said 'science makes people reach selflessly for truth and objectivity,'" added Chisolm. "The woman who is involved with the discovery of the protactinium element and nuclear physician also said science 'teaches people to accept reality, with wonder and admiration, not to mention the deep awe and joy that the natural order of things brings to the true scientist.' We hope this night, and future events like this, inspire our Beacons to pursue those characteristics and emotions."

E.B.Ellington Elementary's Fellowship with Families



Students and their families joined E.B. Ellington Elementary School Principal James Dallas for a Fellowship with Families event on March 17, 2023. The morning consisted of student performances, motivational speeches, a hearty breakfast, and student and school performance updates. Dallas and his staff have created a culture of community within the school where students and their families are welcomed and encouraged to attend regular open door events.

UNSUNG HEROES

Stephen D'Amato CD/2nd Grade *Harbor View Elementary*

Stephen is selfless, hard-working, and deeply cares for his students and coworkers. After the unexpected passing of our coworker, Stephen offered to rejoin the second-grade team and take over the class so her students and team would be greeted with a familiar face and have consistency throughout the rest of the year after experiencing trauma together.

Stephen's willingness to put his feelings aside and do what is best for children is one reason, among many, why Stephen exemplifies the statement, "Students are the Heart of Our Work."

UNSUNG EDUCATOR OF THE WEEK



*Stephen D'Amato, CD/2nd
Harbor View Elementary*

UNSUNG EDUCATOR OF THE WEEK



*Holly Ritter - Reading Intervention
Pepperhill Elementary*

Holly Ritter Reading Intervention *Pepperhill Elementary*

Holly Ritter does an amazing job as a Reading Interventionist and Sunshine Committee Chair. Ms. Ritter came to Pepperhill in 2017 as a second-grade teacher. She keeps staff morale up with her amazing planning of un-official national holidays and incorporating the Staff Outings and Spirit Weeks (the latest one was March Madness) and Mellow Mushroom for National Pizza Day. For National Potato Chip Day we all received a bag of potato chips in our mailbox and for National Chocolate Day we all received chocolate bar in our mailbox. It is those little things that make coming to work special!

Carolyn Grant Day Porter *Buist Academy*

Carolyn puts her heart into building relationships with faculty, parents, and students alike. Ms. Carolyn always has a smile to pass on and a remark to make us laugh. She treats the faculty to lunch, sponsors events for students, and makes note of student needs and quietly ensures they are met. She is gracious yet humble.

UNSUNG EDUCATOR OF THE WEEK



*Carolyn Grant - Day Porter
Buist Academy*

AROUND CCSD

Cario Students benefit from new STEM curriculum

Thomas C. Cario Middle School Interim Principal Bryan Coleman and teacher Torie Hargis (Cario's Teacher of the Year) are grateful for a recent donation by Charleston Steel and Metal (CSM). The company contributed to the purchase of JASON Learning curriculum to use in eighth grade science classes.

CSM has been giving back to the Lowcountry since its inception in 1893 and prides itself on being deeply invested in municipal, business, and charitable organizations.

Barry Wolff, Executive Vice President, and General Manager said that CSM partnered with JASON Learning which is a hands-on K-12 STEM curriculum that connects students with real-world experiences. The curriculum is also designed to create equity and help bridge the gap between students, careers, and the community.

The JASON Project gets its name from the Greek myth of the Argonauts, a group of adventurers who traveled with a hero named Jason to explore the far reaches of the ancient world in a ship called the Argo. Dr. Robert Ballard, JASON's founder and a famous modern-day explorer, gave the organization its name when he dreamed of creating an educational program to spark the imaginations of students with real-life science.

"The Institute of Scrap Recycling Industries (ISRI) partnered with JASON Learning in 2013," said Wolff who is President of the Southeast Region. "This partnership presents a unique curriculum to not only spread the recycling message to youth, but also to inspire America's students to think about careers in the scrap and recycling industry, and give them the scientific and technical background that such jobs require."

Dr. Matt Sioff, Vice President of Implementation and Development of JASON Learning said that JASON Learning and

ISRI have been partners for 10 years.

"The focus has been on teaching the benefits of recycling to our environment and our economy," said Sioff. "Last fall, Mrs. Hargis reached out for access to JASON's library of STEM articles and activities, while Mr. Wolff from Charleston Steel and Metal had reached out in the hopes of sponsoring a teacher or school in their local Charleston City community. It was a perfect match!"

Due to COVID-19 Hargis said she had to change her whole style of teaching science. She researched several online platforms and found that Jason Learning offered free, online simulations that could not be replicated in the classroom.

"It worked perfectly when we were learning and teaching remotely," said Hargis. "When we returned to the classroom, I realized that the online activities were more in-depth and truer to life than anything we could set up at school."

Hargis wanted to expand on what she was offering her students and asked Principal Coleman for permission to purchase additional JASON Learning resources.

"I trust my teachers to know what they need to support their students and I gave her the permission to pursue the purchase," said Coleman. "We then learned that CSM was looking to donate this curriculum to a CCSD school. We are overwhelmed by the generosity of Charleston Steel and Metal. This is an invaluable donation to our students and the students that come after them."

"We are so excited to support Ms. Hargis and CCSD students learning about real-world STEM careers and opportunities to build their future with businesses in their community," added Sioff.

Hargis has received positive feedback from her students. They were especially motivated to complete a recycling project and



activity through the JASON Learning curriculum that resulted in extra credit.

"Recycling is bigger than the blue bin we have at home," added Wolff. "That's part of what they're learning in these activities."

CCSD and Charleston Metro Chamber team up to grow DIVERSITY, EQUITY, & INCLUSION TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Charleston County School District (CCSD) and the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce have teamed up to offer district staff members the opportunity to participate in the Chamber's new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DE&I) Certificate Program. Presented by Wells Fargo, the Chamber's DE&I Certificate Program is an informative program designed to equip leaders with necessary tools and resources to thrive in the diversity, equity, and inclusion space. Through a series of four workshops, participants gain a better understanding of how they can lead as an equity-centered leader and make a larger impact on their business, employees, and community. The Chamber welcomed the program's first graduating class in 2022.

Upon the announcement of this program, CCSD saw the outstanding resources and training this program could offer to its school and district leaders and quickly moved to explore partnership opportunities with the Chamber. The result was a partnership which allows district leaders to participate in cohorts dedicated to CCSD staff throughout the year. The district's first cohort of 34 individuals began on February 3, 2023, and will conclude on March 24, 2023.

"This is yet another fantastic tool to support the District's commitment and mission to create culturally competent learning environments that adapt to and value diversity as well as foster cultural knowledge," said Deputy Superintendent of Schools Anita Huggins. "We are delighted to be working with the Chamber on this valuable learning opportunity for our staff and are excited to work together to promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in our classrooms and our greater community."



Leading this work is Kenya Dunn, consultant and DE&I practitioner. Kenya is an experienced executive, coach, and entrepreneur. She has a 20-year track record of transforming cultures, activating large groups of people to accomplish complex goals and a gifted ability towards leadership development. Kenya serves as the Chamber's Executive Fellow of Diversity, Equity and inclusion.

"We are excited to partner with the Charleston County School District to provide this important training to further our efforts of creating an equitable community," said Richard Waring, Vice President of DE&I for the Chamber. "The Diversity Certificate Program prepares participants to serve as an equity-centered leader and make a greater impact on our community."

With approximately 1,600 member organizations representing 160,000 professionals, the Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce serves as the collective voice of the business community, and a catalyst for regional economic advancement and member success through Talent, Advocacy, Leadership and Business Development. Visit charlestonchamber.org to learn more about the organization.

Riley Diversity Leadership Institute awards laptops



Five North Charleston High School students who completed 40 hours of work-based learning experiences recently received laptops from the Riley Diversity Leadership Institute.



Ms. Cox CD Class



Tim Cox installing pantry box



Wellness Committee

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AT DRAYTON HALL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

At Drayton Hall Elementary School the teachers and staff not only put their students first but also their community members. The Bobcat Community Pantry box, located by the car rider loop and walking path next to the school allows family members to take what they need as well as donate items they can. Tim Cox, husband of Darlinda Cox a teacher at Drayton Hall volunteered to install the pantry box.

Lowe's grocery store has been a business partner and has been donating food for several years. The amount of support the school has received has been tremendous. The school also has a "Backpack Buddies" program for students to take bagged lunches and snacks home over the weekends and breaks. Thanksgiving boxes and winter break boxes were also distributed.

The Student Council at Drayton Hall Elementary School is also involved in community outreach. The students led a drive to donate items to the Lowcountry Orphan Relief in October. In January, the service project for the

Student Council was collecting donations for the MUSC Children's Center. The wellness committee sponsored the Bobcat Buddy Blanket Drive in which 103 blankets were donated to Brookdale Assisted Living, One80 Place Homeless Shelter, Charleston Youth and Development Center, Jenkins Youth and Family and the Lowcountry Orphan Relief.

Drayton Hall encourages neighbors to visit the Bobcat Community Pantry to take what you need and leave what you can. All of the efforts for the service projects and pantry box would not be made possible without the help of Drayton Hall family members, local businesses, community members and the members of the Drayton Hall Wellness Committee. The Drayton Hall Elementary School Wellness Committee members are: Carole Spiller, Katie Little, Tammi Spivey, Deana Mole, Adriana Jarrard, Marilyn Carroll, Karen Moore, Dena Ladson, Alysia Upchurch, Erika McAllister and Principal Brian Agnew.

Charles Pinckney Elementary wins 13th chess state championship



Charles Pinckney Elementary School's chess team



Amelia Wallace



Aaron Wang and EC Setser

Charles Pinckney Elementary School's chess team continues to add to its legacy in chess. The Pirates won another state title at the South Carolina State Scholastic Championship in Greenville, SC, this past weekend in the K-5 (Kindergarten through fifth grade) division. The third-grade team was not far behind, with a second-place trophy in the K-3 division.

This is the third year in a row the Pirates won the K-5 state title, and the school now has 13 championships combined in this state-wide chess tournament.

A total of 250 students in four divisions, K-3, K-5, K-8, and K-12, participated in the event sponsored by the Greenville Chess Club on March 4, 2023.

Aaron Wang led Pinckney with four wins and a draw to earn a three-way tie for first place overall. He finished third in the state after computer tiebreaks. Nico Stamos led the third-grade team with four wins and one loss, tying for second overall in the state and finishing fourth on tiebreaks. In the third-grade division, Theodore Constantino tied for 10th place with three wins, finishing 17th in the state after tiebreaks.

Stuart Chagrin coaches the Pinckney chess team; he serves on the United States Chess Trust Board and is the

former President of the Marshall Chess Club.

"I am so proud of the performance by all of the students," said Chagrin. "For many of them, this was their first chess tournament ever. They exceeded all of my expectations."

The Pinckney team is organized by Gifted and Talented teacher E.C. Setser; she has been involved with this group since 2010.

"It was inspiring to watch kids fiercely compete at the boards, shake hands, and become great friends," added Setser. "They were playing basketball between rounds or hanging out with new friends brought together by this amazing game."

Pinckney now has nine titles in the K-5 Division and four championships at the K-3 level, all since 2010.

Other team members include Liam Blonshine, Ramy Borey, Silas Dewey, Declan Flannery, Katie George, Garrett Hamm, Graeme Kearney, Parker Leong, Finley Martin, Tanner Patterson, Owen Patterson, Carter Piazza, Barrett Thoren, Amelia Wallace, and Claire Wang.

TRI-COUNTY CAREER FAIR AND HIRING EVENT



Focus ON CCSD

Focus on Charleston County School District is published for, by and about CCSD, the state of South Carolina's premier school district where *Students are the Heart of our Work.*

Donald R. Kennedy, Sr., *Superintendent of Schools*
Vanessa L. Denney, *Interim Executive Director of Communications*
Sully Witte, *Communications Officer*

The Charleston Metro Chamber hosted a Tri-County Career Fair and Hiring Event, March 15-16, 2023 at the North Charleston Athletic Center. Charleston County School District students were invited to attend.

Employers had the opportunity to help high school students discover job opportunities available to them upon graduation and students learned how their skills can be put to good use. They also had the opportunity to interact with middle school students so that they could gain awareness about the high-demand jobs in the region.

Charleston County School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, or any other applicable status protected by federal or state law. Questions about non-discrimination policies should be sent to Charleston County School District, 75 Calhoun Street, Charleston, SC 29401 | Phone: (843) 937-6300 | communications@charleston.k12.sc.us