

# 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 5 | Edition 1 | January 2022

## CCSD Chief Financial and Administrative Officer to serve as interim Superintendent

Charleston County School District (CCSD) announces and welcomes Donald R. Kennedy, Sr. as its interim Superintendent of Schools effective January 3, 2022. Kennedy has served as the district's Chief Financial and Administrative Officer on two separate occasions, first from July 2004 to September 2007, and second from January 2018 to December 2021.

Throughout his career in public service, Kennedy has supported urban education throughout the country as the chief financial officer (CFO) for Baltimore City Public Schools, CFO for Boston Public Schools, Chief Operations Officer (COO) for Bridgeport Public Schools in Connecticut, and Chief Financial and Operations Officer for Seattle Public Schools. He also serves as a volunteer peer review consultant for the Council of the Great City Schools.

Kennedy holds a Bachelor of Science in Accounting from Newberry College and a Master of Arts in Organizational Systems Renewal from Seattle University. He is also a certified public accountant. Prior to public service, he held corporate financial positions with Boeing and Science Applications International Corporation, and served as a commissioned officer in the U.S. Air Force.



Donald R. Kennedy, Sr.

## PRE-K/CHILD DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS OPEN JANUARY 25, 2022



**JANUARY 25, 2022**  
**Application Opens**

(no deadline to apply)

Children must be 4 years old  
by September 1, 2022



**For more information call**

**843-937-7914 or visit**

**[ccsdschools.com/prek](https://ccsdschools.com/prek)**

Charleston  
County SCHOOL DISTRICT

Charleston County School District (CCSD) Pre-K application process opens Wednesday, January 25, 2022, for the 2022-2023 school year. The full-day Pre-Kindergarten/Child Development programs are for children who will be four years old by September 1, 2022, and allow CCSD to provide full-day instruction for eligible students at no cost to the family.

CCSD's Pre-K/CD programs are designed to develop skills necessary for success in Kindergarten. The curriculum is comprehensive with a primary focus on language and literacy, numeracy and social-emotional development.

Parents have one of two ways to apply:

1. Online at [ccsdschools.com/prek](https://ccsdschools.com/prek)
2. Fill out a paper application. You can request a paper application by emailing [CCSDprek@charleston.k12.sc.us](mailto:CCSDprek@charleston.k12.sc.us)

Completing a Pre-K application does not guarantee enrollment.

When a family applies for Pre-K, it is for their neighborhood zoned school. Space is limited; parents and guardians are encouraged to apply early.

New this year, income records are requested for the following schools:

A.C. Corcoran Elementary, Angel Oak Elementary, Charleston Progressive Academy, E.B. Ellington Elementary, Hunley Park Elementary, Jane Edwards Elementary, Julian Mitchell Elementary, Ladson Elementary, Lambs Elementary, Matilda F. Dunston Elementary, Midland Park Primary, Minnie Hughes, Mount Zion Elementary, North Charleston Creative Arts Elementary, North Charleston Elementary, Pepperhill Elementary, St. James-Santee Elementary-Middle, Sanders-Clyde Elementary, Stono Park Elementary, and W.B. Goodwin Elementary.

For additional information on Early Learning programs offered in CCSD, please contact your neighborhood school or the Early Learning Department at (843) 937-7914

## CCSD Head Start And Early Head Start Applications Open January 25, 2022

Charleston County School District (CCSD) will accept applications for Head Start and Early Head Start programs for the 2022-2023 school year beginning Tuesday, January 25, 2022. Children who enroll in these programs attend at no cost to the family.

In CCSD, Head Start and Early Head Start students receive services from birth to three years old, and pregnant women receive center-based and home-based services. To participate in Head Start and Early Head Start programs, families must meet certain income guidelines, and children must meet specific age requirements. Families with children who have disabilities are encouraged to apply as well.

Both programs are funded through the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

To apply for Head Start or Early Head Start, families are asked to provide the following:

- Proof of gross income for the past 12 months
- Proof of the child's age
- Proof of residency
- Documentation of child's IEP/IFSP (if applicable)
- Up to date South Carolina Immunization Certificate
- Medicaid card or private insurance
- Current Physical Exam (must include the blood lead level and hemoglobin)
- Current Dental Exam (according to age)
- Proof of pregnancy (for pregnant woman applying for Early Head Start)

If a family applies to one of the following Child Development (Pre-K)/Head Start collaboration sites, they are also required to provide income documentation:

- E.B. Ellington Elementary
- Midland Park Primary
- Mount Zion Elementary
- W.B. Goodwin Elementary



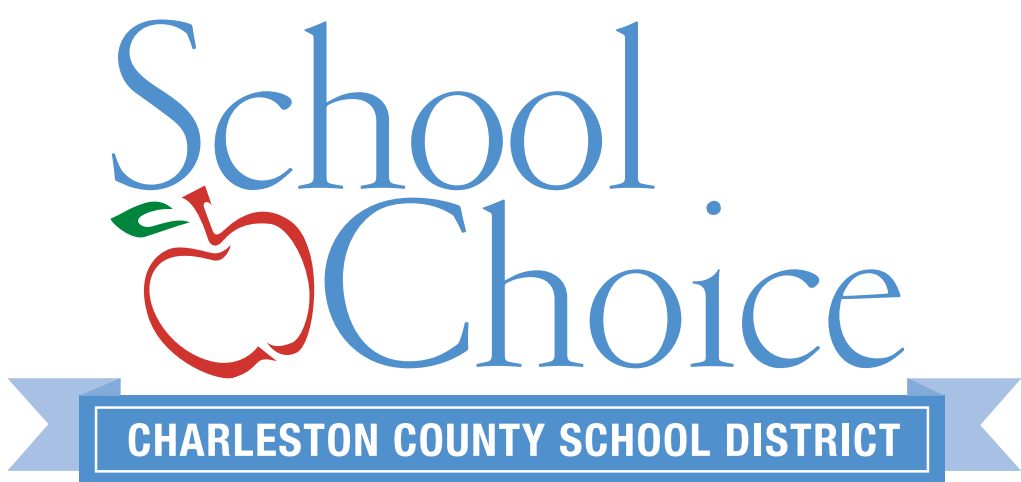
Space is limited; applications for all Head Start programs are now available on the CCSD website [www.ccsdschools.com/headstart](https://www.ccsdschools.com/headstart). You can also click on the "Early Learning" icon on the main page of the district website.

For additional information on Early Learning programs offered in CCSD, including Head Start and Early Head Start, please contact the District's Early Learning Department at (843) 937-7914.

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# APPLICATION WINDOW OPENS JANUARY 25, 2022

Charleston > excellence is our standard  
County SCHOOL DISTRICT

## What is School Choice?

Each school-aged child in Charleston County is assigned to a neighborhood school based on grade level and home address. In addition, CCSD offers specialized programs, magnets, and charter schools to which students can apply.

## VIRTUAL CHOICE FAIR

*Join in for this year's virtual Choice Fair and learn more about what School Choice means for you and your child. Please check our website for details beginning January 2022.*

**JANUARY 25, 2022**  
**Application opens**

**FEBRUARY 25, 2022**  
**Application closes**

**JANUARY 29, 2022**  
**Virtual Choice Fair**

**APRIL 1, 2022**  
**Acceptance notification to families**

**FEBRUARY 3 - 17, 2022**  
**Application assistance events**

**APRIL 20, 2022**  
**Deadline to accept**

For more information about School Choice  
Visit <https://www.ccsdschools.com/schoolchoice>  
or Call 843-937-6582



# GLOBAL LOGISTICS PROGRAM AT COOPER RIVER CAS OPENS DOORS TO A MULTITUDE OF CAREERS



The Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies (CRCAS) is unique because it offers programs that traditionally were not available in high schools. The CRCAS is a college and career training center that offers programs that set students on a promising path.

One example is the Global Logistics and Supply Chain Management course taught by Mike Phelan.

Senior Asia Williams didn't have a full comprehension of what logistics was when she first signed up for the class. She wasn't sure if it would benefit her future, but she quickly learned otherwise.

Williams and her classmates learned about retail distribution from the actual purchase to the actual delivery.

"I was interested in learning about supply chain management, which affects all industries," said Williams.

CR CAS uses a Project Based Learning (PBL) instructional curriculum designed by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB). Through PBL, students engage in design, problem solving, decision making, or investigative activities that give them the opportunity to direct their own learning and result in a product or presentation.

The program is taught in partnership with local industry leaders such as Navy Yard Charleston, Main Ocean, Preferred Home Services, Southeastern Freight Lines, the Maritime Association of South Carolina, South Carolina State Ports Authority, Hapag Lloyd, and SC Competes. These business partners also make up the Business Advisory Committee, which meets formally twice a year to review curriculum, instructor pacing guides, training equipment, provide internship opportunities for students, and to provide guidance to the instructor and administration on current changes in industry.

These partners give lectures, offer in person and virtual tours of their facilities and operations, and help grade and provide feedback on presentations from the students.

"They can also see the impact they are having on the students," said Phelan.

Trekewan Mitchell, said he took the class because he knows the world revolves around logistics.

"My family is in the trucking industry so I have some knowledge of logistics," said Mitchell. "There are everyday things that we take for granted that involve in-depth logistics, such as Amazon."

Joseph Campbell, Warehouse and Logistics Manager for Preferred Home Services explained that Charleston is one of the biggest cities that operate highly on supply chain and logistics procedures.

"The more students know how much Logistics and Supply Chain affect the flow of business, the more I think they may become more interested in that field," explained Campbell.

"There is a growing demand to learn more about logistics and the exciting jobs and careers that are out there," said Phelan.

Phelan added that the business partners provide interested students in internships, which can will open doors to potential careers for them

"These companies are not wasting manpower training new employees," said Phelan. "They are training interns who will eventually return as a full time employee."

"This will help our company have another outlet to choose from for future candidates," Campbell explained. "I am a warehouse and logistics manager at Preferred Home Services and my company handles HVAC, plumbing, and electrical for residential and commercial businesses.

Students in the class were recently required to research and present a sales pitch to potential companies seeking a distribution center.

"By doing this research, I learned that logistics is not just warehousing items, but getting those items into the system, directing them to their destination and the actual delivery," said Williams. "There is so much to it."

Williams is excelling at Cooper River. She is a program completer in Health Science, and is already employable in the health field. Through the Global Logistics and Supply Chain Management Program, she is also certified in OSHA's 10-hour requirement and certified to operate a forklift.

Principal Vanessa Brown has set high expectations and standards for students completing not only the Global Logistics Program at the Cooper River CAS, but all programs. First, students are required to complete the class with an OSHA 10-Hour certificate within the first nine weeks of the program. Secondly, students are required to acquire an industry level certification during their second nine weeks so they become certified to operate a forklift using a classroom simulator. As students' progress through the program, they are encouraged to continue to earn industry certifications at each level to prepare them for an external internship or apprenticeship experience.

"It's eye-opening for these students because they can learn about what is out there as far as there career is concerned," said Phelan. "Career exploration is like a test run to see if they may like it, or if they are even cut out for it."

"People don't realize that logistics are in every industry," said Phelan. "It does take a mathematical, analytical mind, but there is something for almost anyone. It's recession proof and important in any career field."

Mitchell said he learned a lot more than he thought he would in the course and enjoyed the hands-on aspect of it.

"From 3D printing, to wood carving to virtual field trips, it was all very interesting," said Mitchell. "It's very important to know about logistics. It runs the world."

For more information, contact Principal Brown at (843) 856-6790.



# Lucy Beckham High School now a partner in the Daffodil Project



## Beckham students plant 500 daffodils to honor those who died during the Holocaust

Lucy Garrett Beckham High School students participated in the Daffodil Project on Wednesday, December 15, 2021. This project was spearheaded by junior Emma Bluestein, with the help of fellow classmates Lucy Scott and Lila Avendano.

The Daffodil Project’s goal is to plant 1.5 million daffodils in memory of the 1.5 million children who perished during the Holocaust in Nazi-occupied Europe.

Bluestein was introduced to the project through the Charleston Remember Project.

“I have friends who did it at Charleston County School of the Arts and Ashley Hall, and they encouraged me to bring it to Lucy Beckham,” said Bluestein.

The Charleston Remember Project brings together a select group of high school students from all over the county to become trained to be ambassadors in their community. As ambassadors, the students stand up to all forms of hate and spread Holocaust awareness. Participants also have the honor of meeting Holocaust survivors and children of survivors. Bluestein was also inspired to bring this project to Beckham as her grandfather is the child of two Holocaust survivors.

Bluestein’s grandfather, Dr. Murray Treiser, came to Beckham and spent the morning sharing his

story with students. Dr. Treiser recalled the journey and survival of his parents in Nazi-occupied Europe, detailing their time in work camps to their liberation. He also shared with the students the process his parents had to go through for freedom in Canada. Sharing his personal story of growing up and living with parents who went through the horrors of the Holocaust.

Beckham students planted 500 daffodils, which represent the yellow stars Jews were forced to wear during the Holocaust. Yellow is also the color of remembrance, and the flowers represent the new hope for the future where children live long and happy lives.

Daffodils are resilient and return with a burst of color each spring, signifying hope, renewal, and beauty. These specific flowers also honor those who survived the Holocaust and went on to build new lives after this dark and difficult period. This effort also brings awareness to all the children around the world today going through humanitarian crises.

“I thought it went very well,” said Bluestein. “My grandfather was very happy to be a part of it. He was very impressed with the student participation and that we were able to get 500 daffodils planted.”

# JUNIOR COUNSELOR PROGRAM AT JIES KALEIDOSCOPE ONE OF MANY PROVING SUCCESSFUL



Learning doesn’t stop when the final bell of the school day rings. Every day in Charleston County School District (CCSD), several thousand students make their way to the district’s after-school program called Kaleidoscope.

The program is designed to be an extension of the school day, where soft skills and leadership methods are taught through various activities.

Dr. Pamela Pepper is the site coordinator for Kaleidoscope at James Island Elementary School (JIES). Dr. Pepper is a psychologist by training and joined JIE Kaleidoscope last spring. Her goal is to utilize her clinical skills and training that will help children/youth learn skills that will take them through life.

Based on similar models used in Kaleidoscope programs across the district, Pepper created a junior counselor program for fourth and fifth grade students.

“One of the pillars of James Island Elementary School’s vision is that our students will be Beacons to the future,” said Pepper. “Upon visiting another Kaleidoscope program, I learned about having junior counselors provides an additional opportunity to teach soft skills such as leadership and responsibility that they can use in their future.”

Pepper explained that interested students submitted an application that included basic demographic information, hobbies, interest, and previous experience with children. Students had to answer questions explaining their interest in working as a junior counselor and what skills and qualities they possessed that would make them a good fit for the position.

Students had a deadline for the application, and Pepper and her assistant coordinator Kailah Binnom interviewed each applicant.

“We talked about examples of leadership at Kaleidoscope,” said Pepper. “Some squirmed in their seats and some had real answers to hypothetical situations. They really had to problem solve throughout the process. It was tough to narrow down. They were all really good.”

There were nine applicants and the top four were selected (two

boys, and two girls). Their duties include leading groups and clubs, helping peers with homework, and reading. This year’s ambassadors are fourth graders Henry Wyman, Isla Lawson, Nola Schullepp, and Ollie Jackson.

Additionally, junior counselors are required to abide by and demonstrate the rules of Kaleidoscope which are Safety, Order, Achievement, and Respect (SOAR). These rules are aligned with the JIES school-wide behavior expectations.

Wyman said he applied because he knew the position would teach him responsibility.

Jackson agreed and added that he is learning public speaking skills.

“I have the junior counselors attend weekly meetings about upcoming events, they make daily announcements, help take attendance, and help with other tasks or duties,” said Pepper. “In doing so, they learn to be a role model to all students in the program.”

Shelia Grier, West Region Expanded Learning Program Officer, added that the junior counselor program teaches not just leadership, but problem-solving, independence, public speaking, building positive relationships, self-confidence, and overall self-esteem to be a leader among their peers.

“Pam and others using similar junior counselor programs are teaching the kids 21st-century skills, where they are learning critical thinking and problem solving,” said Grier. “Pam is intentional about teaching these skills to all students. The hope is that the younger students will look up to the junior counselors and be motivated to apply when they are in fourth grade.”

Lawson, who has a younger brother, said she applied because she felt experienced in dealing with younger children.

“I like to help out the little kids with their homework and activities,” said Lawson. “I think I do well with kids of all ages.”

Schullepp is also an older sibling.

“I applied because I like having a job to do and getting to work with kids is really fun,” said Schullepp.

Pepper modeled her program after the long-running junior counselor program at Sullivan’s Island Elementary School (SIES).

Jackie Meade is the site coordinator at SIES and she accepts 10 students as junior counselors. They must apply for the position and those who get accepted are identifiable by a name badge hung around their neck with a lanyard.

The junior counselors at SIES work closely with the Kaleidoscope Kid Council which is an elected group of board members who serve as a guiding group for planning projects and activities.

Projects are STEM-centered and include cooking activities, arts and crafts, and more.

“The students help run the projects and help with homework,” said Meade. “We have a positive behavior system with good behavior tickets that they pass out. Every other Friday students can use those tickets in the Scope Shop and make purchases.”

While the junior counselor program is designed differently at JIES, the one common denominator is student input and implementation.

“They have to put forth the effort every day,” said Meade. “They can’t just come in and play and join their groups of friends. There is time for that, but they are responsible for helping out and being a leader. Our counselors are set apart from the rest of the group, and can step into the leadership roles set for the day.”

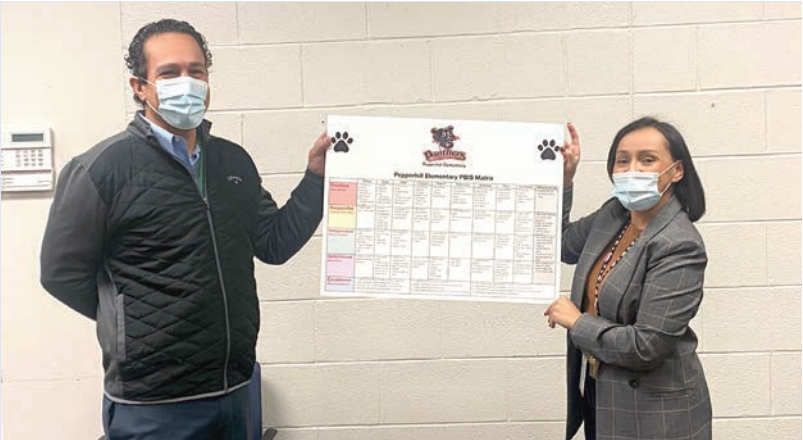
The positive behavior system at SIES is also tied into the school’s expectations, called R.A.Y.S. which stands for Respectful, Always Responsible, Your Best, and Safe. Similar to other Kaleidoscope programs, it is an extension of the school’s environment.

Greer said that similar programs across the district are designed to fit the culture of that school, which is why each model is different.

“It’s a win, win for everyone,” said Meade who has been at SIES for 33 years. “It gives the older students leadership roles, and the younger students look up to them and aspire to be in their shoes one day.”

## FastSigns makes donation to Pepperhill Elementary

Milton Guerrero, owner of FastSigns off Ashley Phosphate Road, donated over \$1,000 worth of posters to Pepperhill Elementary School for their PBIS initiative. Each teacher received a poster for their classrooms and extra for around the school.





# Native American Heritage Month at Stiles Point

Jennifer Smith is a first-year Charleston County School District (CCSD) teacher at Stiles Point Elementary School. Like any good educator, she tries to give her students exposure to new and exciting experiences.

During the month of November her students celebrated Native American Heritage Month. The class got an authentic experience, as Smith is a Hopi-Navajo Native American from the Southwestern Sandia Pueblo Tribe near Clovis, New Mexico, where the Clovis Point originated.

Smith’s maternal grandfather was born there and eventually moved South. In 2010, Smith visited the area and shared the experience with her husband, Frank Smith, (also a CCSD) and their son, Will, (a CCSD Kaleidoscope Mentor and College of Charleston student).

“On our trip, we witnessed the Tribal Council, a Tribal ceremonial dance, saw many original petroglyphs of our ancestors, visited the Pueblo dwellings, and visited the ancient tribal kiva used for religious ceremonies,” Said Smith. “It was a wonderful experience and opened my eyes to the continued needs of Indigenous people today. I learned the importance of our tribal symbols, the impact of peaceful, kind acts, and why our respect for all nature is important in our culture.”

As a second grade teacher, Smith brings those values to her classroom daily.

“My students have participated in a Fall Potlatch Celebration of Kindness where each student made or brought small gifts to share with others, added Smith. “We made a Classroom Totem Pole to show appreciation for nature and animals. We read *The Rough-Faced Girl* by Rafe Martin which is a Native American version of Cinderella, and wrote reflection papers about the Invisible Being in the story. We also completed a Helping Hand Challenge of 100 Acts of Kindness.”

Native American History Heritage Month is a time to celebrate the rich histories, diverse cultures, and important contributions of the nation’s first people.

“I chose to focus on the fact that not all Native Americans were savages and there to attack and harm others,” said Smith. “Many were helpers and there for good. The past cannot be changed, but the future can. Being respectful of all Native American traditions, and understanding cultural awareness, can advance many generations to come.”



# NOW HIRING EXCEPTIONAL PEOPLE at CCSD ACCELERATION SCHOOLS



## Acceleration Schools Mission

The Acceleration Schools initiative will focus on serving the academic, social, and cultural needs of our students, and work alongside staff, families, and our community to develop and support the whole child. We will equip students with the skills needed to thrive and impact the world while prioritizing equity and building systems that will sustain success and ensure endless possibilities for all scholars. We will empower teachers and school leaders to close the opportunity gap among our communities’ most vulnerable and chronically underperforming schools and ensure all students have access to a world-class educational experience.

Join Us! Email [tonya\\_mcintyre@charleston.k12.sc.us](mailto:tonya_mcintyre@charleston.k12.sc.us) or call 843-937-6310





### LADSON STUDENTS ENJOY HIGH FIVE RALLY

Ladson Elementary School students were treated to a High Five Rally by the Charleston County Sheriff's Department. Deputies welcomed students as they arrived at school with high fives, handshakes and fist bumps.



## Lowcountry Live surprises Springfield's Megan Williams







Charleston >excellence is our standard  
County SCHOOL DISTRICT

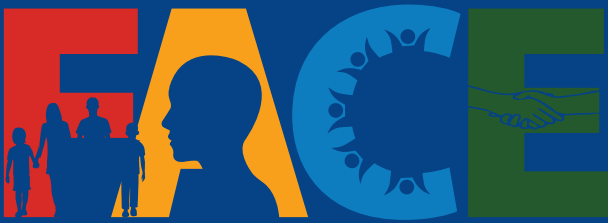
2022 COACHES FOR CHARACTER

CHAMP AWARDS

## WHO WILL YOU NOMINATE?

Let's welcome The CHAMP Awards to Charleston County Schools! Nominate based on character, community service, and academic effort. Your "Unsung Hero" should be an 8th or 12th grade student who has overcome odds to achieve wonderful things in his/her home, school, church, or community. The winners will be honored at a CHAMP Awards Program this spring. US Senator Tim Scott will be the guest speaker.

Nominations are now being accepted. To nominate, visit your school counselor or [www.coachesforcharacter.com/champ-awards](http://www.coachesforcharacter.com/champ-awards).



Office of Family and Community Engagement  
Charleston County School District

Registration



<https://bit.ly/FACEEXPO>

# EXPO

## Family and Community Engagement (FACE)

Saturday, February 5, 2022

9:00 am - 2:30 pm

\*Check-in from 8:00 am - 9:00 pm

### Cooper River Center for Advanced Studies

1088 E. Montague Ave  
North Charleston, SC 29405

\*Check-in location



### North Charleston High School

1087 E. Montague Ave  
North Charleston, SC 29405

- FREE Conference style Expo for parents featuring keynote speaker Ako Kambon
- Information booths with family resources by district and community partners
- Light breakfast, boxed lunch, and childcare provided

Join CCSD at our "Engaging Every FACE" Expo

Hosted by

Department of Alternative Programs, Early Childhood Exceptional Children, ESOL, Family and Community Engagement, Interpretation and Translation, Strategy and Communications, and Title I



# U.S. Senator part of celebration to highlight Vision To Learn Charleston

*School-based vision health initiative will provide K-12 students throughout CCSD with free vision screenings, eye exams, and prescription glasses*



Charleston County School District (CCSD) Board of Trustees and staff members joined U.S. Senator Tim Scott, City Charleston Mayor John Tecklenburg, and Vision To Learn Founder Austin Beutner at a celebration where 57 students at Stono Park Elementary School received new eyeglasses this morning. Stono Park is one of many schools in the district that are receiving or will receive school-based vision services through a collaboration between Vision To Learn, CCSD, and MUSC Health.

An estimated 10,000 children in Charleston County schools go to school every day without the glasses they need to see the board, read a book, or participate in class. Through this program, every student in CCSD will be provided a vision screening, eye exam, and – if needed – a pair of prescription glasses, free of charge, by Vision To Learn.

“At a time when our country is struggling to figure out what a just and equitable future should look like, this effort provides a good start,” said Austin Beutner, Founder and Chairman of Vision To Learn said. “Our mission is to make sure every child has the glasses they need to succeed in school and in life.”

Vision To Learn is a nonprofit organization with a mission to help kids in underserved communities get the glasses they need to see clearly at school. The program provides access to care to students on school campuses using a mobile vision clinic – an optometric office on wheels – staffed with licensed eye health professionals.

About one in four children, whether from a family with means or a family struggling to get by, will naturally need glasses. Children who need glasses and don't have them are more likely to be misdiagnosed with behavioral issues in kindergarten, be considered “slow” learners by 5th grade, and to drop out of high school. Unfortunately, in low-income urban and rural communities, most children who need glasses don't have them due to financial constraints, language barriers, unresponsive health bureaucracies or the simple fact there are no eye care professionals in their neighborhood. This program solves the problem by bringing the glasses to the kids where they are almost every day—their local neighborhood school.

Here's how it works. Vision To Learn visits schools, where their staff teams up with classroom educators, school nurses and public health departments to make sure every child receives a vision screening. For children who don't pass the screening, Vision To Learn vans, staffed with trained eye care professionals, visit schools to provide eye exams and glasses. All free of charge to the child and their family. Since launching in Charleston County School District this fall, Vision To Learn has provided over 800 eye exams and 670 glasses to students in nine schools.

Since launching in CCSD this fall, Vision To Learn has provided 810 eye exams and 670 glasses to students in nine schools.

Founded in 2012, Vision To Learn has screened over 1.2 million children, and provided over 320,000 eye exams and 257,000

glasses nationwide to students in 14 states and the District of Columbia.

Senator Scott helped students try on their glasses for the first time, to the applause of other students and school staff.

“I’ve often said education is the closest thing to magic,” said Senator Scott. “I can’t think of anything simpler than ensuring that kids are able to see what they are learning so the magic can happen. This remarkable program provides students with this critical tool for success and I’m proud to support it.”

“This is such an exciting day for these kids who, thanks to Vision To Learn, will be able to better understand their lessons and fully engage in the classroom,” added Mayor Tecklenburg. “Every student deserves the opportunity to succeed, and that begins with seeing clearly at school.”

This program is supported by Charleston County School District, which will ensure the service is communicated well and understood by families, offered first to schools with the greatest need, and closely integrated with the wealth of health and wellness services provided to students by CCSD.

“We are thrilled that Vision To Learn has partnered with our district at this time when school-based vision services are so desperately needed,” said Don Kennedy, Interim Superintendent of Schools. “The COVID pandemic has made it even tougher for students to access the regular eye check-ups they need, leaving many of our students with uncorrected vision issues. This program is a perfect fit to fill the gap.”

Vision To Learn’s program will help students in affiliation with MUSC Health, which provided capital funding for the mobile vision clinic, and offers additional choices to families for continuity of care, including specialized optometric and ophthalmologic care for students in need of more complex care following the initial “glasses” exam. As many as 20% of students who receive eye exams by Vision To Learn are likely to be referred for follow-up care to local community providers.

“The idea is to reach out to children who otherwise most likely would not receive any eye care to provide them with a screening examination and a pair of glasses free of charge to enhance their ability to learn,” said Dr. Andrew Eiseman, Professor and Chair of the Storm Eye Institute. “MUSC, including our senior leadership, our children’s hospital, and the Storm Eye Institute all 100% agree with that philosophy.”

School-based vision care has never been more important. The pandemic widened preexisting opportunity and achievement gaps, hitting historically disadvantaged students hardest. Providing school-based vision services can help students to recover lost learning time and succeed as they return to in-person instruction. A groundbreaking study recently published in The Journal for the American Medical Association Ophthalmology by researchers from the Center for Research and Reform in Education and the Wilmer Eye Institute at Johns Hopkins

University shows the impact of providing glasses to children at schools. The researchers conducted the largest and most rigorous study in the U.S. to measure the impact of providing eyeglasses to students directly in their schools. Thousands of children from more than 100 schools in Baltimore participated in the study. The children who received glasses did better in school and the impacts were greater than more costly measures such as lengthening the school day, providing computers, or creating charter schools. The children who showed the biggest gains, the equivalent of an additional four to six months of learning, are those who are often the hardest to help—students in the bottom quarter of their class academically and students with learning differences and disabilities.

JHU study senior author Dr. Megan Collins, pediatric ophthalmologist from the Wilmer Eye Institute said, “The Hopkins research study demonstrates how school-based vision care improves vision and learning for students in need. School-based vision care is a simple, yet effective way to help children see more clearly and achieve more academically.”

Stono Park Elementary School is among the schools visited by this program in fall 2021. 304 students received vision screenings at the school, 74 were provided with eye exams, and 57 students were provided with glasses.

“Stono Park is honored to partner with the Vision To Learn program,” said Stono Park Principal Kimberly Richards. “Eye care is a crucial part of taking care of the whole child, so in turn, they can be successful academically. This gift of vision screenings and eye exams helps our scholars to understand the importance of checking on your eye health regularly. The mobile vision unit, providing access while at school, and no cost of prescription glasses is a joy and gift to families!”

Vision To Learn’s program in Charleston is a one-year pilot authorized by the South Carolina legislature. To continue service, the program is seeking a legal change allowing nonprofit mobile vision clinics to visit Title I school sites and help underserved children in the Charleston region. By acting in this year’s session, the legislature would make possible an effort which will help children in schools in CCSD and nearby communities for years to come.

This program is made possible thanks to the support of a long list of generous funders, led by local philanthropist Henry Blackford, including Medical University of SC (MUSC Health), MUSC Children’s Health, MUSC Health Storm Eye Institute, The Duke Endowment, Essilor Vision Foundation, Motley Rice, LLC, Roper Saint Francis Physicians Endowment, Ingevity, First Citizens Bank, SC Physicians Care Charity, Walmart, Charleston County, Amanda’s Fund, Volvo US Car Operations Community Fund, TRUIST, The Ceres Foundation, Carolina Panthers, Henry & Sylvia Yashchik Foundation, Elizabeth Anderson Endowment for Children, and a number of family funds and individuals.

## District students place in Governor’s School Junior Artist Piano Competition

The South Carolina Governor’s School for the Arts and Humanities held the 8th Annual Junior Artist Piano Competition (JAPC), sponsored by the Bichel Foundation, on October 30, 2021 with 23 students from across the state competing for cash prizes.

Vanessa Nguyen, a student at Charleston County School of the Arts, was award second prize of \$1,000. She is a student of Irina Pevzner. Honorable mention awards were also given to Harry Ding, an Academic Magnet High School student.

“Charleston County School of the Arts is thrilled to celebrate Vanessa’s achievement and honor,” said Principal Dr. Shannon Cook. “She is an outstanding pianist and student, and we applaud her accomplishment!”

“As the official timekeeper for the competition, I had the distinct pleasure of hearing each of the outstanding performances throughout the day and the talent level was extraordinarily high,” said Dr. Stephen Taylor, Governor’s School faculty member and coordinator of JAPC. “Piano artistry is certainly alive and flourishing in South Carolina.”



Vanessa Nguyen

### 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., *Interim Superintendent of Schools*  
Erica Taylor, *Chief of Staff*  
Sully Witte, *Communications Officer*

The Junior Artist Piano Competition began in 2012 as a way for the Governor’s School and the Bichel Foundation to feature and support aspiring professional pianists throughout South Carolina. Participants in grades 8-10 perform a memorized program of works for up to twenty minutes, and then receive written comments and feedback from an esteemed panel of judges. This year’s panel included world-renowned professional pianists and educators Dr. Rosalyn Floyd, Dr. Liza Stepanova and Dr. Gregory Thompson. The 9th Annual SCGSAH Junior Artist Piano Competition will be held on October 29, 2022. Students can apply to participate at [SCGSAH.org/JAPC](https://scgсах.org/japc)

The Governor’s School offers pre-professional piano training through summer programs and the tuition-free, residential high school. Students receive individual lessons, attend master classes with guest artists and work in teams to learn and perform master works from piano ensemble literature. They also gain experience performing solo and in ensembles for multiple recitals and special events throughout the year.

The Governor’s School is currently accepting applications for the 2022-2023 residential high school and summer programs. Any student who is a resident of South Carolina and in 6th-11th grade is eligible to apply to the various programs. For more information, visit [SCGSAH.org](https://scgсах.org).

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