

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 1 | January 2023



D20 PCP wasting no time implementing teacher retention initiatives

The five principals from Charleston County School District's (CCSD) Constituent District 20 who organized to form the Principal Collaboration Program (D20PCP) have wasted no time in making good on their promise to meet the needs of their teachers. These administrators are working in tandem with the collective belief that an investment in teachers will result in stronger academic progress for students.

Their efforts were formulated to address the Vision 2027 goal of all students in CCSD reading on grade level by fifth grade. The goals of the D20PCP are to engage students in real-world experiences, broaden horizons, and remove barriers to success. An important focus of the collaboration is attracting and retaining excellent teachers and staff to support D20 schools.

"To do this, one thing is for certain," said Sanders-Clyde Elementary School Principal Janice Malone. "The needs of teachers must be met so that we can retain them year after year. Too often in our D20 schools, we have high teacher turnover."

Starting in December, teachers and staff at Sanders-Clyde and Charleston Progressive Academy (CPA), Julian Mitchell Elementary School, Simons Pinckney Middle School, and Burke High School will be eligible to enroll their children at the D20PCP Learning Center for only \$50 a quarter (made possible through ESSER funding). Housed at CPA, children as young as six weeks old will be cared for throughout the school day while their parent or guardian is instructing students.

"We see it as a way of retaining and compensating our teachers," said CPA Principal Wanda Sheats, who has been instrumental in handling the logistics of the center's opening. "The amount of money our teachers are spending per week on childcare is exorbitant. The children of our teachers deserve quality childcare just as much as our students deserve quality instruction."

According to Malone, D20 schools employ a lot of young teachers who are starting their families. Many have to decide whether to stay home with their children or pay for childcare.

"Teachers need our help and support," said Malone. "The relief and excitement my teachers have expressed

about being able to participate in this low-cost childcare option is beyond measure. It is a godsend to be able to offer my staff this alternative because so much of their salaries were being spent on childcare."

Sheats explained that a variable in improving student achievement is strengthening the teacher workforce through enhanced teacher preparation and decreased turnover. Providing staff childcare opportunities supports not only teacher preparation but leads to a piece of mind that contributes to improved instruction and academic success.

"Teachers enjoy district-run childcare centers because they're only open when school is in session," explained Sheats. "This means that parents don't have to pay for holidays or days when their kids don't need to be there, unlike most traditional care. In addition, because it is operated by the school district, the center may be open on high-need days or during special evening activities. This prevents teachers from scrambling to find childcare when they must attend training or school-related events."

Additionally, because this center is located in the same geographical area where teachers work, they could provide greater convenience than traditional daycare centers.

The D20PCP Learning Center is staffed by certified professionals with extensive experience in the daycare setting. What makes the program unique is that in addition to the children being cared for in a safe environment, they will participate in age-appropriate instruction.

"The hope is that the district looks at this as a model to be replicated," said Sheats. "It could be a component to addressing the teacher shortage."

LaShawna Watkins, the D20PCP Family and Community Engagement Officer said the creation of the D20PCP Learning Center is evidence that CCSD teachers are more than just employees.

"They really are a part of the D20 family and we're here to provide whatever support possible," said Watkins.

Currently, there are three certified instructors operating the learning center; Chelsee Green, Ayana Johnson, and Christaina Whitfield. Fourteen children are currently enrolled with more expected as D20 educators learn of the opportunity.



CHARLESTON EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE FINANCING CORPORATION BOARD MEMBERS RECOGNIZED

The Charleston Educational Excellence Financing Corporation (CEEFC) recognized the following **two long-standing members of its Board of Directors** for many years of dedicated service to Charleston County School District during a reception on November 28, 2022.

- **President, Mr. Perry Leazer (2012-2022)**
- **Attorney, Mr. Don Gibson (2004-2022)**

The CEEFC is a 501(c) (3) corporation

established in July 2004 and operates exclusively for educational and charitable purposes to assist CCSD by monitoring and making recommendations to the district's Board of Trustees regarding the 2005-2009 Capital Building Program funded by alternative financing (a \$500 million debt structure). The primary responsibilities were to acquire, finance, pledge, improve, maintain, operate, manage, lease and dispose of school

buildings and other public education facilities for the use and benefit of the school district. The secondary responsibilities were to encourage public education through cooperative agreements with governmental entities and organizations under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

CCSD appreciates the contributions these gentlemen made to CEEFC and our community, and we wish them well.

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If you do the hard work to meet our simple criteria and attend one of our state's best colleges - we will support you with an annual scholarship of up to \$10,000 for up to four years.

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"Meeting Street Scholarship meant not thinking about money when I needed to be thinking about a reading or a paper. It meant not standing here already owing \$10,000 in student loans. It meant keeping my dreams in focus."
Alexis Pinckney, Early College HS '21

School Choice
CHARLESTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

APPLICATION WINDOW OPENS
JANUARY 24, 2023

JANUARY 24, 2023
Application opens

JANUARY 28, 2023
Virtual Choice Fair

FEBRUARY 9, 16, & 21, 2023
Application assistance events

FEBRUARY 24, 2023
Application closes

APRIL 3, 2023
Acceptance notification to families

APRIL 20, 2023
Deadline to accept

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 2023.

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

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Charleston County SCHOOL DISTRICT

Send your news and celebrations to sully_witte@charleston.k12.sc.us

STUDENTS ARE
THE HEART
OF OUR WORK!

CHARLESTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS

Matilda F. Dunston Elementary School

Students and families at Matilda F. Dunston Elementary School enjoyed a great turnout for their Holiday Performance of The Holly Jolly Pirates of Pinataville.



Mary Ford Early Learning & Family Center

The Mary Ford Parenting Team hosted a Fatherhood Event, Decorating with Dads. The school was able to gather 50 fathers and their families to share in this wonderful experience. Santa was there as well.

Murray-LaSaine Montessori School

Murray-LaSaine Montessori School students in Lower Elementary put on a spectacular holiday concert for their families. Lindsay Linderman, music teacher, organized the event.



St. Andrew's School of Math and Science

First and second grade students in the St. Andrew's School of Math and Science Baton and Dance club performed in the Folly Beach Christmas Parade. The club is taught by teachers Vickie Klatt and Ashley Tiner.

Stiles Point Elementary School

Stiles Point Elementary School students in Mrs. Tarpley's 5th grade class spent several days before the break working on their holiday projects.



Wando High School

Wando High School Orchestras surprised Carolina Park Elementary School students one morning just before the break with some holiday tunes!

HORTICULTURE PROGRAM COMES FULL CIRCLE

Now taught by former student



Donohoe at Trailer



ECCAS students enjoy a field trip to Growing Minds Educational Farm



Paul Millar and Katie Donohoe

Thirteen years ago, a brand new teacher set up shop in a classroom cottage, Trailer 11, on Wando High School’s campus. Katie Donohoe was tasked with starting the school’s first-ever horticulture class.

The course was designed as a feeder program for Trident Technical College and four-year colleges that offer horticulture or agriculture or for students interested in beginning their careers immediately upon graduation.

Through the years, the program grew in popularity. Some students took Donohoe’s courses as an elective, others chose the program as a major. “Sparking an interest in those students about horticulture and agriculture is what it was all about,” said Donohoe.

Many of her students have enjoyed successful careers in the industry. One student’s career path went in an unsuspecting direction. Paul Millar, who took Donohoe’s class in 2015, is now teaching the course.

The course has evolved and is now included in the East Cooper Center for Advanced Studies (ECCAS) Program of Studies as a full pathway. Using Donohoe’s same hand-crafted curriculum, ‘Seed to Seed’ (a seed is planted and rooted and then planted in a garden until it flowers and seeds again), Millar is teaching the next generation about sustainable resources, hydroponics, forestry, turf management, and more.

The spark

In 2015, Millar was just like every other high school student trying to meet their electives requirement. He chose horticulture class not having any idea it would be his future career.

“I thought to myself, ‘how hard can it be,’” said Millar. “I fell in love with it and was inspired to install my own hydroponic tower garden at my house. Horticulture was my favorite class and I began to envision it being a career that I would truly love.”

Millar was a completer of the program that eventually grew to such popularity that a second teacher was hired.

Millar graduated from Clemson University in just three years and earned his Master’s Degree in Plant and Environmental Science. His next stop was at the Clemson Extension office in Charleston as a vegetable breeder.

“I loved it,” said Millar. “I can’t say enough good things.”

As fate would have it, Millar was alerted to a Charleston County School District job posting and within a week of interviewing for the position for the new instructor for the ECCAS horticulture program, he was hired.

Millar is just 23 years old and now calls his former teachers colleagues. It seems a bit surreal, especially when he considers whose shoes he has to fill.

“I try to channel Mrs. Donohoe because she always had such great energy,” said Millar. “She was very engaging so I try to bring that big energy to my class. I am somewhat reserved so I ramp it up to 100 so I can reach those kids like me.”

Donohoe doesn’t necessarily agree that Millar is reserved. She is confident he brought a certain energy to the classroom when he was a student. She recalls many energetic instances when Millar took center stage in class.

“He was such a fun student and I can only imagine his delivery to his students,” said Donohoe. “I am confident he will be successful and get very many students hooked on this path where they too are bitten by the horticulture bug.”

Career opportunities

Outside of teaching horticulture, there are many career opportunities for students interested in the profession.

The major is comprised of four courses: Introduction to Horticulture, Landscape Technology, Nursery Greenhouse and Garden Center, and Turf Lawn Management.

“There are so many paths a person can go down with horticulture,” said Millar. “Even if a student doesn’t pursue it, you’ll know how to keep a plant alive, grow your own food, and have a deeper appreciation for where your food comes from. You’ll be more equipped for life.”

Donohoe, an award-winning teacher, retired after seeing her vision for the horticulture wing at ECCAS come to fruition. She had done everything she set out to “grow” at Wando.

Donohoe went on to develop Growing Minds, which is a STEM-based learning program focused on educating and empowering youth to grow food anywhere and everywhere.

Donohoe works with schools across the district to utilize school gardens

to their maximum potential. She also hosts groups of all ages (year-round) at her non-profit Growing Minds Farm, which opened to the public in 2018. Growing Minds helped to preserve the rich agricultural history of a nearly five-acre farm in the historic Phillips Community. It was transformed from bare land into an educational demonstration farm showcasing sustainable agriculture techniques. Therefore, this educational farm not only teaches the principles of sustainable agriculture but it preserves a piece of history as well. She’s giving students something purposeful to be passionate about, she explained.

Just recently Millar took his students on a field trip there where they got to see the sustainable practices in use at the farm.

“There is something about growing your own food that is empowering,” said Donohoe. “We learned during the pandemic that farmers are important. It’s not just a hobby. Real-life demonstrations, like trips to the farm, are important for the kids to see.”

Full circle

Millar is in the driver’s seat of the ECCAS horticulture program. Donohoe hires her former students to do work around her farm, and students in Millar’s class are starting their own businesses while still in high school. It’s more than either could have asked for.

“Seeing the kids leaning into it and loving the class is amazing to me,” said Millar. “I love it when they want to take on more and begin to take ownership of things they’ve planted.”

Donohoe agreed and explained that what these students are learning is something they can take with them regardless of their career choice.

“Knowing Paul is at the lead means that all the hard work that goes into starting a program from scratch was not for nothing,” said Donohoe. “It’s like leaving you’re your child unattended and hoping someone will come along and take care of it. It is such a relief to me that someone who learned from me is now teaching the next group. It makes my heart feel real good.”

All that remains of Trailer 11 are the two Crape Myrtles trees Donohoe’s students planted, but the Seed to Seed program has flourished, growing into something bigger and better than Donohoe could have ever imagined.

Charleston >excellence is our standard
County SCHOOL DISTRICT

SPRING HIRING FAIR

Teachers and School-Based Support Staff

February 11th 8:30am-12pm
@ RB Stall High School

Elementary/Early Childhood 8:30am-10am
Middle/High School 10:30am-12pm



Register
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RB Stall High School
3625 Ashley Phosphate Road
North Charleston, SC 29418

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Haircuts for Ellington students



Students from Baptist Hill Middle High School visited E.B. Ellington Elementary School and treated them to a lesson in barbering and styling. Some even posed as models and received a haircut.

AROUND CCSD

Hampstead Mall Renewal

At the intersection of America and Columbus streets, on the Eastside of Charleston, a transformation is happening: The historic Fraser Elementary is being reborn as a new home for Early College High School and Hampstead Mall, Charleston's oldest park, is seeing its own remarkable renewal.

This summer the Charleston County School District plans to remake the southeast quadrant of Hampstead Mall. The district hopes to have the park ready this fall. "The park will be used exclusively by Early College High School during school hours but will be open to the public during daylight hours when school is not in session including weekends, holidays, and over the summer, according to an agreement with the city."

The renovation of Mary Conway Park, the northeast quadrant of Hampstead Mall, was completed

in December. The grand oaks were pruned, the buckled sidewalks removed, the pergola repainted and the fountain repaired. Irrigation was added, the park densely planted and a new lawn was laid.

The city's Parks Department led the project, with much assistance from the Charleston Parks Conservancy, Trident Technical College (which owns the parcel), and neighborhood residents.

A year ago Philip Simmons Park, just across the street, was also replanted in a similar grassroots effort. In an unprecedented fundraising drive, Eastside residents and businesses donated more than \$20,000 toward the parks project. The neighborhood also won a \$12,000 AARP grant to support the renewal of Philip Simmons, named for the famed Charleston artisan.

A historic marker telling the story of Hampstead Mall and Hampstead Village, the original neighborhood that was first laid out in 1769 will also be installed.



WANDO HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL NAMED CLAES NOBEL EDUCATOR OF DISTINCTION



Wando High School Principal Kim Wilson was recently selected as a Claes Nobel Educator of Distinction by The National Society of High School Scholars (NSHSS). A role model to pupils, Wilson was nominated by Senior, Marissa Jones for outstanding dedication and commitment to excellence in the profession.

Each year, student members of NSHSS are invited to nominate the educator who has made the most significant contribution to their academic career for the Claes Nobel Educator of Distinction award. This honor recognizes exemplary educators whose passion and devotion inspire their students to grow and develop as scholars, leaders and citizens.

The National Society of High School Scholars seeks to advance the goals and aspirations of high-achieving students through unique learning experiences, scholarships, internships, international study and peer networks. From attending the annual Nobel Week festivities in

Stockholm, to internships with major corporations and government agencies, pre-college summer study programs, and more than \$2,000,000 in exclusive scholarships awarded annually, NSHSS is continually seeking new ways to provide lifetime learning and growth opportunities for academically talented and accomplished student leaders, and the educators who support them.

"Dedicated educators who exhibit a commitment to excellence deserve our highest praise and appreciation," said NSHSS President James W. Lewis. "Through our Educators of Distinction program and the grants we provide to support professional development and enrich classroom instruction, we hope to acknowledge and encourage the vital work of the teachers, counselors and administrators who are shaping the intellect and character of our young scholars."



High Fives and Handshakes at Ladson Elementary School

Charleston County Sheriff's Office deputies visited Ladson Elementary School for their annual High Fives and Handshakes event.

These excited and bright children started on an energetic and positive day for their last week of class before Christmas break as they were greeted by our deputies with a flurry of high fives and warm handshakes. The kids even threw in some hugs.

Deputies also read holiday books for the school's Reading Patrol program.

CCSD SPORTS & ARTS



Mikey Rosa signs to play football at The Citadel

Congratulations to Wando's Mikey Rosa for signing to play Division I football at The Citadel next year! He is the grandson of former Citadel President Lt. Gen. John W. Rosa.



AMHS WELCOMES COACH RAYMOND KNAUER AS ITS NEW RAPTOR ATHLETIC DIRECTOR



Born and raised in Pittsburgh, PA, Raymond Knauer moved south beginning his teaching career in 2004 at North Charleston High School (NCHS). He has served as a coach, teacher, instructional coach and athletic director at NCHS for the past eighteen years. During the past seven years, Coach Knauer has worked to build NCHS athletic programs into a regional force and he leaves a legacy of improved student outcomes on the fields, courts, and in the classrooms.

“In my role, I have done anything to meet a challenge and solve a problem,” said Knauer. “I strive to always serve student-athletes and find creative solutions to unique situations. I am a huge, loyal advocate for my students and my school.”

A former lacrosse athlete, Coach Knauer has some Academic Magnet connections as well. He was instrumental in starting the Raptor lacrosse program serving as assistant coach during the program’s first two years.

Knauer has also coached cross-country and football and has invested energy in creating a more robust athletic program at NCHS. He loves the spirit of competition and believes that every sport is important and meaningful for a successful athletic program. Coach Knauer has embraced the use of social media to publicize and grow athletic programs and has received recognition for his work marketing athletics with Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and school websites.

“You have to get information to the community wherever the community gets its information,” Knauer said. “That has changed over the past decade, so our communication plans have changed too.”

Knauer also brings an outstanding working knowledge of the South Carolina High School League coupled with over a decade of positive relationships with regional athletic directors and coaches. He has formed partnerships with an array of local, regional, and national organizations to serve athletic goals and is known in the local sporting community for his affable trustworthiness and “whatever it takes” work ethic. He knows the systems and processes of the Charleston County School District and is familiar with the local collegiate landscape for athletics.

“Sometimes you have to look far and wide to find something that has been right here all along,” said Sharon Williams, AMHS’s outgoing athletic director. “Raymond is the right hire for Magnet.”

ARTS INTEGRATED INSTRUCTION AT ANGEL OAK

The arts are an integral part of the Angel Oak Elementary School experience; students not only take part in extensive art-related classes that promote collaboration through whole-child learning but they also experience arts-integrated instruction within their core classes. Arts integrated instruction supports the teaching of standards in both the arts genres and core content areas to promote student engagement and booster student achievement. That commitment led to the school recently earning their certification with the state’s Arts in Basic Curriculum (ABC) Institute. The Owls are one of three schools to earn this

distinction this school year, one of just 69 in the state overall. According to the South Carolina Arts Commission, research conducted within ABC Schools have repeatedly provided evidence to the value of arts education in a student’s life. Data collected in 2018 from Gallup Organization research confirmed that South Carolina students who had access to the arts in their curriculum were more hopeful and more engaged than students who didn’t.

“We are very proud to have earned our ABC certification and to continue to support our students in our arts-

integrated school model” said Principal Judith Condon. “This certification allows us to continue to expand arts opportunities for our students and to reinforce the arts as a powerful tool for learning”.

Angel Oak Elementary earned additional distinctions as part of its commitment to the arts in the past few years. Condon was named the 2021 Palmetto State Arts Education Arts Administrator of the Year Award, and in October 2022, the school was recognized as an ArtsNow Leadership School.





Megan Maritich

Lucy Beckham teacher receives honor

In honor of Lucy Beckham Day, celebrated December 14, 2022, administrators at Lucy Beckham High School (LBHS) wanted to highlight an award given annually to a teacher that exemplifies the spirit and heart of Lucy Beckham, former Wando High School principal.

Beckham was a math teacher at Stratford High School before becoming an administrator. She had a trusty wooden podium and upon her departure from the classroom, she gifted the podium to a colleague, Karen Radcliff. In 2018, Anna Dassing was visiting Ashley Ridge High School where Radcliff was the principal.

Radcliff gifted the podium to Dassing and she

used it often as she worked with contractors, district officials, and fellow administrators while the school was being built. Dassing brought the podium to LBHS and in the Spring of 2020, started the Lucy Beckham Leadership Legacy Award. The award was first given to Kristen Manna for her extraordinary commitment to opening Beckham.

In the Spring of 2022, Manna passed it along to Megan Maritich who proudly displays and uses the podium in her classroom.

“Megan is beyond deserving of the Lucy Beckham Leadership Legacy Award,” said Manna. “She not only sees the best in everyone around her, but she brings out the best in everyone around her. She consistently

looks to serve and help others as she leads by example and lifts up her colleagues and students. Megan’s own standard for herself is far above and beyond any and all expectations. She sacrificially gives of her time and her talents. It is truly a joy to work alongside Megan and her passion for teaching students, not only math, but life.”

According to Dassing, Megan truly exemplifies the Leadership Legacy as she leads the math department and has finished her school leadership certification.

“We are honored to have her loving and leading our students and staff,” Dassing honored.

KALEIDOSCOPE NOW ACCEPTING 4-YEAR-OLD CCSD STUDENTS



Charleston County School District’s (CCSD) afterschool program, Kaleidoscope, has expanded its offerings by opening up slots for 4-year-old students at sites that have received required licensing. CCSD will be able to start accepting 4-year-olds in Kaleidoscope’s after school and summer programs beginning January 16, 2023.

CCSD previously served 4-year-olds but a Department of Social Services state policy change required each site to be individually licensed.

Jason Sakran, Director of Expanded Learning/Kaleidoscope said it has been an arduous process but staff is working diligently to abide by state policy to become licensed.

“We are now able to open up seats at 22 schools,” said Sakran. “Capacity at each school varies. There is no guarantee that every child will receive a spot.”

Sakran said that a per hour increase for staff to \$17 an hour has enabled him to hire additional and more qualified staff, thus reducing waitlists. Site coordinators have already begun contacting parents on the waitlist.

The mission of Kaleidoscope is to provide high quality afterschool care in a safe, challenging environment. The programs provide age-appropriate activities which focus on the physical, social, emotional, and educational needs of students.

“The Expanded Learning Department is proud to be able to open up seats to 4-year-old students,” said Sakran. “They will be provided age-appropriate activities in a safe and nurturing environment. In conjunction with Vision 2027, Kaleidoscope is integrating a literary theme in all activities that will be built upon from year to year.”

Sakran is proud of not only the innovative programs offered to Kaleidoscope students but the affordability of the programming.

“If COVID-19 showed us anything, it was the need for affordable childcare,” said Sakran. “Without affordable childcare, it puts a wrench in the local economy because parents can’t work and have to stay home. Affordable childcare, which is offered through Kaleidoscope, is good for the kids and the community.”

Affordability increases access to high-quality programming for our students, Sakran added.

“Our system is unique to the state in that CCSD offers a sliding pay scale,” added Sakran. “We offer 50 programs and roughly 25 of those generate a profit because most parents are paying a higher rate. We use that surplus to offset costs to other sites and this allows kids to participate at the reduced rate. The sliding scale allows CCSD to serve 1,500 more kids than we normally would and this is a win-win for everyone, especially some of our students and parents who need our services the most.”

The Office of Expanded Learning leads CCSD’s afterschool efforts (Kaleidoscope). Kaleidoscope is a fee based program that operates using an income based sliding scale for tuition. The office also manages several 21st Century Afterschool Grants, summer programs as well as after school enrichment classes such as chess, dance, art, coding, engineering, foreign language, music, and lacrosse.



Jason Sakran, Director of Expanded Learning/Kaleidoscope

Office of Expanded Learning receives \$25,000 from Denny and Mark’s Pro-Am Jam

Charleston County School District’s (CCSD) Office of Expanded Learning (Kaleidoscope) was selected as the recipient of funds raised through the Denny and Mark’s Pro-Am Jam’s “Call to Give.” The 10th anniversary of the event started by NASCAR star Denny Hamlin and Hootie & the Blowfish’s lead guitarist Mark Bryan raised \$25,000 for Stono Park Elementary School’s Kaleidoscope program and the Baptist Hill Middle High School band. The funding will be used to provide students with enriching opportunities through music.

Bryan and Hamlin (a three-time NASCAR Daytona 500 champion) started the Pro-Am Jam in 2012 and have donated nearly \$2.4 million.

The Baptist Hill band, led by director Jared Sutphin, was selected by the Office of Expanded Learning to be the opening act for Nelly at this year’s Pro-Am Jam, which is a mash-up of rock and roll, racing, golf, and charity. Students witnessed first-hand the opportunities and exposure that music can provide. These students were able to interact with Bryan, Smokey Robinson, and other well-known celebrities.

Ashley Peters, Program Officer with the Office of Expanded Learning, explained that the funds will allow the department to provide a variety of musical enrichment opportunities to the students.

“Studies have shown students who participate in music perform better academically, and the more they study music, the better they perform academically,” said Peters. “Ultimately, we want to provide as much exposure to the world of music and all the opportunities it can provide, and we’re so grateful for the support of Mark and Denny in providing these opportunities for our students.”

Shelia Grier, also a Program Officer with the Office of Expanded Learning said the funding also allowed the Kaleidoscope program to offer music to students who attend Stono Park Kaleidoscope after-school program and to support resources for Baptist Hill Middle High’s band.

“CCSD’s Office of Expanded Learning has been blessed to have a long-standing partnership with Mark Bryan’s foundation and the Hootie & the Blowfish Homegrown Roundup for over ten years,” said Grier. “We look forward to continuing this partnership and offering more music opportunities to additional Kaleidoscope after-school and summer programs.”

Bryan met with staff members from the Office of Expanded Learning at Stono Park Elementary on December 7, 2022, and presented them with the check.

Jason Sakran, CCSD’s Director of Expanded Learning, stated that he hopes this is just the beginning of a long, fruitful partnership between Mark Bryan and Denny Hamlin.

“We couldn’t thank them enough for their support,” added Sakran. “Our students and families will directly benefit from their generosity.”



Unsung Heroes at CCSD

Julie Garrett, Middle School Science
St. James-Santee Elementary Middle School

“Mrs. Garrett personifies dedication and excellence in her profession. She is always willing to go the extra mile for students and help them succeed. Their well-being and success are always her priority which means she is never idle but always working hard to help every middle school student at St. James Santee. There is no problem she doesn’t try to solve and no child she doesn’t help. She is a real team player, a valuable educator, and a fantastic community member.”

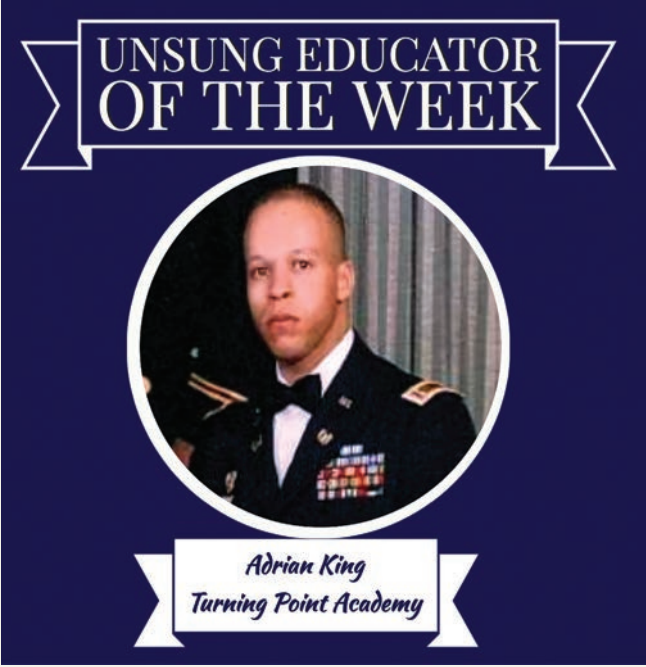


Adrian King
Turning Point Academy

Mr. King is a teacher, educator in every sense of the word. He truly puts students as the “Heart of his Work”. His PBIS ticket program positively changes behavior in so many students. He is also the founder of Project 82 which brings awareness to literacy in South Carolina. Mr. King also serves on charities from giving out turkeys to full Thanksgiving dinners for families. Mr. King is active in CCSD on the Teacher of the Year round table and the Teacher Pay Task Force.

Mr. King as President of the Charleston County Education Association, has impacted the community and students lives in many ways from sponsoring the Baptist Hill Volleyball Team (300\$), Girls with Pearls (1,000\$) and Workmens Cafe (\$300). This year he restarted the Septima Clark Leadership Award, which CCEA awarded to Dr. Binyard and Ms. Robinson of Clark Academy. The award originally given in 1974 for service to students will now be awarded annually.

Mr. King is a retired military officer, who is now continuing his life of service by putting students first.



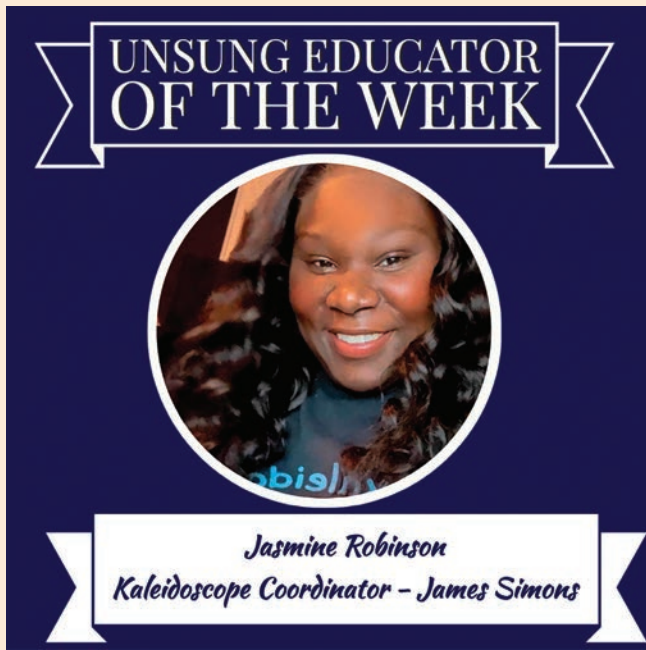
Nathaniel Pearson, Assistant Principal
North Charleston High School

“Mr. Pearson evinces the epitome of teamwork. Whenever a faculty or staff member is in need of assistance and no matter how busy his agenda is, he assists. Often he is called upon to take on extra administrative chores and has yet to make a complaint. Often from co-workers, his advice is sought from discipline to student counseling, from curriculum to extra-curricular activities, and from college and career readiness to sporting events and transportation. He is an assistant principals’ assistant principal. In addition, he is very trustworthy. If he says he is going to accomplish a task, please consider the task accomplished as one never has to worry about his worth ethics. He is objective, judicious, sagacious, creative, and always has a sense of calmness. Mr. Pearson is well-loved by all - particularly students. He never tires of the quotidian tasks that he is described as the “Energizer Bunny” - never has anyone seen him idle. He is indeed always on the go with his instructional and non-instructional responsibilities and assignments. However, no educational administrator is beyond reproach. Sadly, however, the only criticism of him is that he eats too much candy!” -nominated by a colleague



Jasmine Robinson, Kaleidoscope Coordinator
James Simons Montessori School

Jasmine has demonstrated teamwork from the time she started under Darron Teal years ago at James Simons. She was always stepping up to the plate by assisting parents like me who has a million and one questions about different programs the kids can join. Since she has taken on the Site Coordinator position, she treats each child like they are her own by showing love with a dash of sternness. Jasmine exemplifies RESPECT no matter who you are, what age, or what position you hold. If respect is given, respect will be shown. I believe this is why her team supports her and her children EXCELS.





Author/illustrators visit students at Charleston Progressive

Charleston Progressive Academy (CPA) students received a visit last month from children’s author/illustrator duo Matthew Swanson and Robbi Behr during their nationwide “Busload of Books Tour.” CPA was the only school in South Carolina to host the pair on this inaugural tour.

The couple are crisscrossing the United States in a school bus-home with their four children for the 2022-2023 school year. They are visiting Title I elementary schools in all 50 states and Washington, D.C., and by the end of the journey, they will have gifted 25,000 hardcover books to students and teachers.

“The enthusiasm that this book tour instilled in our students was truly amazing,” said teacher-librarian Jennie Richter. “After they got to meet and talk to Matthew and Robbi they made deeper connections to the books. Students were buzzing about the books all week and were so excited to take them home and share them with their families.”

This first-of-its kind tour combines a nationwide book giveaway and the ultimate family road trip with a major research study on the impact of creator/student engagement. The key objectives are raising awareness of the challenges facing America’s public schools and empowering reading, creativity, and collaboration in children ages 5 to 12.

During their visit, the couple demonstrated their work, read with the students and participated in literacy activities.

The couple developed the idea in 2019 when they received a \$30,000 grant to “do something awesome.” This initial support swelled with contributions from over 1,000 individual donors, making a nationwide tour a reality.

“We’ve seen hundreds of times the empowering impact author/illustrator visits can have on school communities,” said Swanson. “When kids realize we are just regular people, they

recognize their own capacity to create. They start reading, writing, drawing, and telling their own stories.”

By visiting a Title I school in each state, Swanson and Behr (the products of Title I schools themselves) hope to bring books and creative learning opportunities to historically underserved communities and highlight the heroic work of public educators.

Swanson and Behr will also work with the departments of education and sociology at Washington College to measure the impact of one-time author visits in Title I elementary schools filling a critical gap in the research on this topic. The data could provide a powerful tool for promoting future literacy programming.

“This sparked an interest in reading that transcended the walls of our classrooms. I am so grateful that CPA was selected for this incredible opportunity,” added Richter.

BURKE STUDENTS’ CAREER EXPLORATION



The SC Be Pro Be Proud truck brought career exploration to the students at Burke High school last month. Be Pro Be Proud is a workforce development initiative introducing America’s students to technical careers through virtual reality experiences. Be Pro Be Proud works to connect interested students to resources, training and employment opportunities in the construction, manufacturing, transportation and utilities sectors.

Wando’s yearbook staff makes history with national award

For the first time in school history, Wando High School’s yearbook, Legend, has been recognized as the top yearbook in the nation by Quill & Scroll. Wando’s 2022 edition, “Something Within Us,” earned the international scholastic journalism organization’s Blue and Gold Award for Staff Excellence in the Class A Division (schools with 1,000 students or more). Only one school in each class nationwide received this honor.

“This honor is a monumental achievement for our program and these students,” said Phillip Caston, Wando’s yearbook adviser (and English teacher). “It’s gratifying to be ranked among some of the top yearbook programs and to be named the recipient of the top honor in the contest. The 2022 yearbook continues to stay on pace to be our most award-winning volume in school history.”

Legend also picked up three more Blue and Gold Awards – first place in Writing, second place for Design, and third place for Photography.

“Our yearbook staff and editors are some of the most talented and gifted students in the school,” said Kim Wilson, Wando’s interim principal. “To be recognized as the best yearbook in the United States among the Class A Division high schools is the pinnacle of success. We are proud of our yearbook staff and congratulate them on a well-deserved honor.”

Members of the Legend staff collected 16 individual awards from Quill & Scroll this year as well, setting a new Wando yearbook record. The following students were honored:

First Place, Academics Spread – Graduate Harper Duffy
First Place, Student Life Photo – Graduate Sarah Cote
First Place, Photo Illustration – Graduate Abigail McLeod
First Place, Clubs or Organizations Writing – Senior Evie Whitesell
First Place, Academics Writing – Senior Ainsley Doyle
First Place, Sports Feature Writing – Junior Grayson Sams
Second Place, Clubs or Organizations Spread – Senior Sam Bumgarner
Second Place, People Spread – Senior Katie Brown
Second Place, Personality Profile – Graduate Lily Higgins
Second Place, Academic Writing – Senior Ainsley Doyle
Second Place, Clubs or Organizations Writing – Senior Evie Whitesell
Second Place, Academic Photo – Graduate Abigail McLeod
Third Place, Clubs or Organizations Spread – Junior Jordan Condie
Third Place, Academics Writing – Senior Sydney Lewis
Third Place, Clubs or Organizations Writing – Caroline Bierman
Honorable Mention, Student Life Spread – Senior Brooke Tribolet



Wando yearbook staff with awards

NCES drama students visit Sottile Theatre

Drama club students in the third, fourth, and fifth grade from North Charleston Elementary School had the opportunity to visit the Sottile Theatre during their production of Miss Benner: Christmas at Pemberley. CoC Department of Theater and Dance chair, Janine McCabe, and Operations Manager, Miles Boines, provided a guided tour of the theatre and facility spaces where students learned about lighting, stage design, hair and makeup, costumes, and more. NCES students had the opportunity to participate in a drama class at the Chapel theater with CoC Theatre majors, followed by a question and answer session



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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.*

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