

**For Immediate Release**

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# Media Release

## **Charleston County School District receives Accreditation from AdvancED**

**Office of Strategy and  
Communication**

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**Gerrita Postlewait, Ed.D.**  
Superintendent of Schools

**Erica Taylor**  
Chief Officer

**Charleston, SC** – The Charleston County School District (CCSD) Board of Trustees learned Monday afternoon that the district will receive its first-ever system-wide accreditation from AdvancED, the world’s foremost education accrediting agency. AdvancED President and CEO Mark Elgart presented his agency’s findings to the Board with a set of priorities for the district’s initial five-year accreditation period. Elgart also chaired the AdvancED team that conducted a rigorous on-site review in the district in September.

“The district is moving in the right direction. That’s the major message. But it must maintain that effort,” Dr. Elgart said. “Accreditation and achieving it is one aspect of it. Maintaining, and drawing and improving throughout it is even a harder hurdle to cross. But, I am proud to announce that the recommendation to our international commission to be voted on in the next few weeks will be that Charleston County School District should receive initial accreditation.”

While accreditation was recommended today, district officials recognize that it is not a label for a one-time evaluation. Accreditation runs on a five year cycle, with yearly continuous monitoring checks to ensure districts and schools are still committed to making strides in the areas of feedback received from the AdvancED engagement review team.

“This AdvancED Performance Accreditation represents a significant milestone for our system,” said Superintendent Gerrita Postlewait. “This marks the first time in the history of CCSD that the entire school district and all of our schools are internationally accredited. This truly is an accomplishment to cherish and to celebrate.”

Elgart informed the board that the recommendation for accreditation status also includes the following focus areas for the board and district:

- Board governance, with an emphasis on whole board training;
- Equitable alignment of resources to meet the needs of all students
- Assessment and realignment of structures and processes to ensure the curriculum is based on high expectations and aligned to standards and best practice

- Greater community awareness, commitment to improvement, and ownership of the district's strategic plan
- Investment in creating and sustaining a culture in all classrooms that is responsive and supportive of the long-term vision for student engagement

AdvancED is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that conducts rigorous reviews of a variety of educational institutions and systems in 70 countries to ensure that learners realize their full potential. AdvancEd is a global leader in providing continuous improvement, assessment, and accreditation services to over 36,000 institutions serving 25 million students worldwide.

Using a set of rigorous research-based standards and evidence-based criteria, AdvancED examines the whole district – its policies, programs, practices, learning conditions and cultural context – to determine how well the parts work together to carry out the district’s vision and meet the needs of every learner.

Accreditation engages the school community in meeting high-quality standards, implementing a continuous improvement process, and engaging in quality assurance through internal and external review.

Elgart and his team of reviewers spent a three days examining the district. The review encompassed detailed documentation and data analysis, onsite visits, in-depth meetings to chart progress and discuss future goals, and a culminating report detailing strengths, weaknesses, and the district’s final accreditation status.

The review team also shared in its findings that the district's strategic plan was a sound blueprint for the future with a clear vision for success if progress can be made.

“We embrace the continuous improvement model that the AdvancED Performance Accreditation is built on. We know that there are areas where we must continue to work to improve -- and we will,” Postlewait said.

“District leaders and their community must change their commitment, remain focused on every learner, and have the courage and conviction to persevere regardless of the roadblocks or hurdles that must be overcome,” urged Dr. Elgart. “Making and ensuring students are the heart of your work is a future worth pursuing and a journey worth taking.”

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#### **About the Charleston County School District**

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is the second largest school system in South Carolina representing a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools that span 1,000 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves more than 50,000 students in 86 schools and specialized programs. With approximately 6,100 employees district-wide, CCSD is the fourth largest employer in the region.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, charter, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), and Montessori schools, and is divided into three Learning Communities. Options include specialized programs in science, engineering and mathematics; liberal arts; music

and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; and military and other public service enterprises.