Another year over and another one already in the making!

We closed out another successful school year in Charleston County School District with each and every one of you showing continued dedication to our children, resulting in great student success. This year’s accolades are numerous!

The district received its first-ever district wide accreditation by AdvancED. Academic Magnet High School was named the top high school in the country by U.S. News & World Report. West Ashley Advanced Studies Magnet teacher Jayuntay Williams was named our 2019 Teacher of the Year. Stephanie Herchreal, our 2018 Teacher of the Year, was nominated for state Teacher of the Year. Major individual accomplishments include standout performances by students and schools in events like TTC Quest and the Lowcountry Regional Science Fair, numerous student academic and leadership awards, along with 20 South Carolina High School League state titles won by teams and individual student-athletes. We expanded partnerships and work-based learning opportunities with community and businesses organizations, improved school wellness, culture, and sustainability, and took pause to celebrate our students, staff, and families for all that they do and all that makes them unique and integral to our community. CCSD’s future is surely abundant.

Looking ahead, we know that Charleston Shared Future will change education in Charleston County for the better. As part of our district-wide accreditation, we’ve developed Mission Critical Actions that community stakeholders crafted based on data and feedback that will serve as a guide for the bold changes we must make to ensure equity, access, and opportunity for all our students in all areas of the county.

I am reminded often of how fortunate I am to spend my days working and advocating for our children. Students are truly the heart of our work, and we thank you for striving to ensure every single child looking to be nurtured, find happiness, and secure a bright future through college, career, and citizenship readiness is able to reach their full potential through your hands, hearts, and minds at work each and every day.

Sincerely,

Gerrita Postlewait
Superintendent of Schools
Charleston County School District
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CCSD welcomes students back for the 2018-2019 school year
First Day Festival
Charleston County School District (CCSD) officials joined local dignitaries Friday, December 7, 2018 to break ground for the new Camp Road Middle School building. Construction is scheduled to be complete for the start of the 2020-2021 school year.

School administrators from Camp Road Middle, CCSD Board of Trustees members, leaders from the District, City of Charleston Mayor John Tecklenburg, Town of James Island Mayor Pro Tem Leonard Blank, and Town of Folly Beach Mayor Tim Goodwin participated in the event. They were treated to a choral performance by Camp Road students, including 6th graders who will be the first 8th graders at the new building.

In November 2014, the citizens of Charleston County voted to continue the penny sales tax to help fund building projects for the 2017-2022 building phase. A community task force was created in January 2015 to create the vision for this project. Part of that vision was merging the two former middle schools, Fort Johnson Middle School and James Island Middle School, into one middle school and building one middle school for all students on James Island.

“We are building on what I consider a ‘historical site’; this is where the first high school was built on James Island in 1953,” said Camp Road Middle School Principal David Parler. “As part of this vision, we hope to continue to honor this piece of community history with a strong alumni group that has stayed in close contact with CCSD throughout this process. The community now has one middle school to support and we look forward to a bright future with a state-of-the-art facility in the spring of 2020, when the 6th graders who recited the Pledge of Allegiance today will be 8th graders in the new building.”

The school’s mascot is the Cougars, and the colors are silver and royal blue. “I am so excited about this opportunity for the James Island community,” said Dr. Joe Williams, Executive Director of the Middle School Learning Community. “We are building one amazing middle school for scholars that will give all access to a state-of-the-art facility supporting the high-quality education they will receive.” The new Camp Road Middle School will be approximately 137,000 square feet and have an initial capacity to serve 900 students, with a core and expansion space for a future capacity of 1,200 students.

The middle school serves all of James Island students. The school is currently housed on the campus of the former James Island Middle while the state-of-the-art new school is being constructed on the former Fort Johnson Middle property. The school offers Project Lead the Way engineering classes, chorus, French and Spanish.

FAST FACTS
Construction Management: Cumming
Architect: Rosenblum Coe
General Contractor: TQ Constructors
Project Budget: $43 million
Square Footage: 137,000 SF
Opening Date: August 2020
District hosts topping off ceremony for new C.E. Williams Middle School

A “topping off” ceremony was held Thursday, May 30, 2019, to celebrate the construction of the new C.E. Williams Middle School in West Ashley. Students and officials from the school and Charleston County School District signed a beam that was raised and put in position. This commemorative gesture represents the last beam being placed atop a structure during its construction.

C.E. Williams was established in 1968 and named after Chalmers Elliott Williams, who served as the Superintendent of St. Andrew’s Parish School District District 10 from 1943 to 1975.

Principal Kevin Smith, a native of Charleston, attended the middle school when he was a child.

“It was at CEW that I developed confidence in my artistic talent which led me to obtain a degree in visual arts and I returned to CCSD to teach,” said Smith. “As life does, the twists and turns have led me back to CEW. Having the opportunity to be a part of building a school that helped build me is an honor.”

Smith said he hopes that the new building becomes an integral part of the community as it prepares learners for high school, college, and careers.

“May this building provide them with a physical environment that will shelter, nurture and prepare them for great things to come and to be a place of which we can all be proud,” said Smith.

FAST FACTS
Construction Management: Cumming
Architect: LS3P Construction
General Contractor: Contract Construction
Project Budget: $53.3 million
Square Footage: 137,227 SF
Opening Date: August 2020

James B. Edwards cuts ribbon on school greenhouse

The staff, parents, and community partners of James B. Edwards Elementary School (JBE) held a dedication ceremony Saturday, September 22, 2018 for their new greenhouse on the school’s campus.

The greenhouse was constructed with private funds raised by the PTO, corporate grants, and community partner donations. The greenhouse provides the students of JBE an outdoor venue to learn about local horticulture while working in a collaborative environment, culminating in bi-annual plant sales where students will learn if their business model has been financially successful. Other elements of the student’s weekly experience in the greenhouse involve all facets of STEM-related activities and experiments.

The greenhouse was named in honor of local landscape architect Kenny Seamon, who passed away in 2016. Many of the people involved in the greenhouse, especially community partner Johnson Development, were inspired by Kenny’s vision and work through his company, Seamon Whiteside and Associates, and believed this greenhouse was a perfect match in which to honor his life.

Seamon was known as a tireless mentor of young people and that same mentoring trait is shared by the staff and volunteers of the greenhouse. The greenhouse is one of the key pieces of JBE’s Lowcountry Sustainability Program. The program encourages recycling, horticulture, and other sustainable practices presented in an educational and hands-on based format where students are encouraged to be leaders in the community. The goal of the program is to cultivate global leaders for a sustainable future.

Organizer and James B. Edwards teacher Nancy Platt is the school’s Green Team Sponsor. She helped to lead the $35,000 fundraising campaign. She described Seamon as a transformational land planner and landscape architect who enhanced the natural environment of the Lowcountry.

"His designs embraced the places they developed, consciously protecting the existing environment, and creating community when they were complete. He was a leader, an entrepreneur, and a guardian of the environment,” she said.

Platt explained that over three years ago, what started out as a mixed group of hopefuls resulted in a one of a kind work space for students to explore not only horticulture but also math, social studies, literature, art, and science.

It features raised beds that grow crops for healthy tastings for JBE students and that supplements the Backpack Buddies Weekend Meal Program for food challenged families. There are grade level projects throughout the greenhouse including growing landscaping flowers for the school’s semi-annual fall plant sale fundraiser, a true economics project for the fifth graders. JBE also participates in the From Seeds to Shoreline Program where students cultivate, germinate, grow, and transplant spartina grass in locations where negative human impact have caused recessions in our salt marsh estuaries.
Jackson National Life Insurance Company (Jackson®) based in Tennessee, convened its leadership team on Kiawah Island for a strategy and planning session. The company also wanted to use this time to serve the local community. Lucky for Charleston County School District, the company chose a local elementary school. Working with The Leader’s Institute®, Jackson conducted a teambuilding exercise one afternoon during their retreat, assembling bikes for students at E.B. Ellington Elementary School.

The Build-A-Bike® Team Building Workshop and charity event is a brainy, challenging program where participants are divided into smaller groups to solve specific challenges in order to build bicycles for young children, which are then donated.

When the Ellington students arrived to receive their new bikes, the team from Jackson was impressed. The students were polite, gracious, and excited.

The experience was meaningful for the Jackson executives. Upon returning home, many wanted to do more for E.B. Ellington. Through DonorsChoose.org, the company and its associates donated more than $13,000 to purchase requested resources for E.B. Ellington classrooms.

Ellington Principal Wanda Hughes said it was an awesome opportunity to be chosen as part of the bike giveaway.

“We are delighted by the commitment of the E.B. Ellington educators and staff to create a learning environment where students thrive,” said Assistant Vice President of Corporate Philanthropy, Danielle Robinson. “I’m certain our investment will impact these young people for years to come.”

“We are delighted by the commitment of the E.B. Ellington educators and staff to create a learning environment where students thrive. I’m certain our investment will impact these young people for years to come.” – Danielle Robinson, Assistant Vice President of Corporate Philanthropy
Riding for Focus: St. James-Santee awarded mountain bikes

St. James-Santee Elementary-Middle School received a fleet of 26 mountain bikes from The Specialized Foundation’s Riding for Focus cycling program. The school was chosen as a recipient of the foundation’s grant for Fall 2019.

St. James-Santee is one of 41 new middle school grant recipients for the 2019-2020 Riding for Focus school program. With the addition of these new schools, the program integrates cycling into the physical education curriculum as a means to help students achieve academic, health, and social success.

The awarded recipients gained access to the Riding for Focus program curriculum, a fleet of bikes, a starter maintenance kit, and helmets to start the program. Additionally, school staff will be attending an in-person training session hosted by The Specialized Foundation staff to ensure success as new schools integrate the program into their classrooms.

The number of bikes awarded to each school were decided upon by various factors. There will be the opportunity to purchase additional bikes at a discounted price should the school need to supplement their fleet or if the program grows in size.

“We want to sincerely thank all schools that applied this year and we are very fortunate to welcome 41 new schools and their respective communities into The Specialized Foundation family. The continued support from our partner schools and donors are what keep this program alive. With your support, students can ride and thrive.”

– Ted Theocheung, CEO, The Specialized Foundation

VISIT SPECIALIZEDFOUNDATION.ORG FOR OUR PRESS RELEASE AND TO LEARN MORE ABOUT RIDING FOR FOCUS
Colleen Knauer found South Carolina after she and a sorority sister picked a random place on the map. They were planning their big move after graduating from the University of Rhode Island.

Colleen came down to North Charleston High School for an interview, and then Principal David Caldwell catapulted her career with Charleston County School District. He offered her a job on the spot and she canceled other interviews she had lined up across the state.

That summer, as she was setting up her classroom, a male coworker poked his head in her classroom and asked her if she was going to use her podium. She barely gave him a second glance and told him she was not. Ray Knauer took the podium, and that’s the last they saw of each other for the next few months.

Little did the pair know that the students were playing matchmaker behind the scenes. The students solicited the help of an English teacher to make a connection.

“The teacher emailed me to see if I was single, and I’m thinking, ‘she shouldn’t be asking me these questions’,” said Ray. “She eventually invited me to go out with a group of other teachers to the Homecoming game, and she reintroduced me to Colleen. We’ve been together since that night. We went on a date the next night, and that was it.”

In honor of this year’s National Family Week, November 18–24, 2018, we celebrated their story and other CCSD families like them.

Their story
Colleen was just 22, and with no family in the area, her North Charleston High School co-workers and students were her family. That family not only set Colleen and her husband Ray up, but they have been there through their engagement, wedding, and the birth of their three children.

Colleen was teaching English and went on to receive her Masters in Mathematical Education. Her goal in life was to receive her doctorate by the age of 30 to teach at the college level. While studying for her doctorate, her supervisor pulled her out of the classroom to serve as an instructional coach.

At the end of the year, he came to her and asked her to serve as Interim Assistant Principal. In the meantime, Ray had been named Athletic Director.

Life was trudging along as normal when the principal left to pursue other opportunities. Colleen could not be named principal at North Charleston High School but did become the principal at Northwoods Middle School in February 2017.

“It was bittersweet because I felt like I grew up at North Charleston High School,” explained Colleen. “I never wanted to be a principal, but I think everything happens for a reason.”

Ray and Colleen always knew they would teach in public schools. Both wanted to make an impact that would be felt. In the Title I urban setting, they found their calling. Their children Brayden attends North Charleston Creative Arts; Landon attends Malcolm C. Hursey Elementary School, and Brooklyn will attend North Charleston schools as well.

“I hope we’re making a difference. I know as a team we made an impact at North Charleston High School,” said Ray. “Most people don’t get to influence others. As an educator I get to influence hundreds each year. I take that very seriously.”

Ray said he and his wife understand each other’s struggles because of working in the same school.

“You can’t be there for the job,” said Ray. You have to be there because you want to be there. Some of these kids come from tough lives, but when they love - they love hard. If you prove your loyalty to them and show them you are there for their education and bettering their lives, they will go to the end of the world for you. They have an amazing ability to figure out who’s there for the right reason.”

Ray said as an educator one must be all in or all out. He said his parents were strict about his schooling.

“I decided I wanted to give that to other people and help people the way education helped me get out of a tough area,” said Ray. “We lived in a rough neighborhood very much like where I teach. I wanted to change their lives the way education changed mine.

“My favorite thing about North Charleston High School is the kids; that’s who I am there for,” Ray said. “I have much love for my boss (Principal Henry Darby). But I am not there for him. I am a servant of the children. If I just teach them social studies, I fail. I am there to teach them about life and mentor them.”
If you’re visiting the fourth-grade hall at Charles Pinckney Elementary School and see two different name plates above two different classroom doors that say “Douty,” rest assured your eyes are not playing tricks on you. Those are the classrooms of the husband and wife team, Scott and Ronda Douty. They both teach fourth-grade math and science.

It is rare for married couples to be assigned to the same school, but the Doutys are not alone. Many couples teach within the district, and like the Doutys, send their children to Charleston County schools. Scott taught in North Charleston for five years. But when their first child, Andrew, was on the way, the couple decided that Scott would be a stay-at-home dad until the children began attending school.

Ronda taught in Summerville and then Pinckney Elementary School and Laurel Hill Primary School. This is her 20th year in teaching.

Their story
Scott’s parents were both educators. He had great respect for their chosen profession and appreciated the benefits that came with it, such as extended holidays with the entire family.

By the time he got to college, Scott had begun to settle into the notion that he too would go the education route as a Physical Education teacher like his father.

His future wife Ronda always knew she would become a teacher. Her love of children drove her towards the profession.

It was in classes at the College of Charleston that the couple fell in love. They were married just two weeks after graduation, and both went to work in local schools.

When their twin girls, Ansley and Ashton, turned five-years-old Scott eased back into education as a substitute teacher.

Not long after, Pinckney Elementary School Principal Leanne Sheppard was in need of a long-term substitute teacher and asked Scott if he was interested.

He was eager to take the job, and after being observed and evaluated that semester, Sheppard offered him a full-time position.

“That says a lot for Principal Sheppard to bring him in after having not taught for eight years,” said Ronda. “He was a little rusty, but she trusted him, and she trusted us to not only teach in the same school but across the hall from one another.”

The couple loves being able to teach in the very community that they call home because it allows them to build relationships with the students and their families. They also enjoy spending holidays and summers together as a family.

“Principal Sheppard put a lot of trust in my ability to do the job, and she had faith in me to do the right thing,” Scott said. “The students think it is so cool that we are husband and wife and often comment on it.”

Although they’re across the hall from each other, the couple rarely sees each other due to just being busy from the start of school until the final bell.

“We are not having candlelight lunches or anything,” said Scott.

He did note that since his spouse is in the same profession, she can relate to the job, and the career so they’re able to share stories.

“Ronda gets it,” he said. “It’s tough,” she added. “You’re ‘on’ all day long, and only another person in education could truly understand.”

Their 15-year-old son Andrew is in 10th grade at Wando and participating in the award-winning marching band takes up much of his time. Their twin daughters are just across the campus as 7th-graders at Thomas C. Cario Middle School.

Being a stay-at-home dad was some of the hardest work Scott said he has ever done. However, they’re both glad one of them got to do it.

“It was a lot of work and sacrifice, but it was a team effort,” Scott said. “It took us both to make it happen. We wanted it for our kids because they grow up so quickly. Now here we are in the midst of our careers doing what we love to do – together.”
This year, CCSD celebrated National School Counseling Week, sponsored by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), February 4 - 8, 2019, to focus public attention on the unique contribution of professional school counselors within U.S. school systems and how students are different as a result of what school counselors do. CCSD has 148 school counselors in total.

In CCSD counselors are actively engaged in helping students examine their abilities, strengths, interests, and talents.

Naquita Page-Dawson is a Professional School Counselor at Jerry Zucker Middle School. She has been working in the field of education for over 20 years. Her previous work experiences as a youth specialist, teacher, student concern specialist, and human service specialist fueled her passion for helping students. Subsequently she went back to school to receive her Master of Education in Counselor Education from the The Citadel’s College of Graduate and Professional Studies.

“Due to the vast needs of our schools and our communities, it is essential that every school have full-time school counselors,” said Page-Dawson. “We are leaders, advocates, collaborators and agents of change. Our mission is to make sure that we promote equity and access for all scholars daily.”

At Zucker Middle, the motto is “Every student. Every Day. No Exceptions. No Excuses,” said Page-Dawson. “There are no excuses. Students are at the core of our work. We are here for every student – every day.”

“The most important part of our work is providing direct services to our students in the areas of academic, career, and social/emotional development. We provide individual counseling sessions, small group sessions, classroom guidance lessons, responsive services, college and career readiness and school-wide programs for staff, parents, and students,” said Page-Dawson. “It is our job to advocate and make sure students have wrap-around support and services, which are essential in helping them reach their maximum level of success.”

Hunley Park Elementary School guidance counselor, Jelani Myers, was drawn to the profession while working as a teacher’s assistant.

“While working closely with the students I realized the potential of elementary school students,” said Myers. “I wanted to help foster their growth and as well as support the teachers, and find ways to help them support the students. Once I found out that a school counselor was my best opportunity and avenue to do that, I wanted to start pursuing it.”

This is Myers’ second year at Hunley Park.

“We are a Title I school and the needs of the students can vary,” explained Myers. “My job is to meet the needs of the students whether personal, social, emotional, academic or even career based. I meet them where they are in order to better serve them.”

Myers said his service to children is adaptive and customized to the needs of the students.

“Getting to see a student succeed and knowing that they are able to find the coping skills they need to deal with adversity or tough times makes it all worthwhile to me,” said Myers. “Even to just greet them in the morning and be a friendly face for them; just knowing I am making some difference in their life is what it is all about.”

Parents or community members with specific questions or concerns about school counseling programs should contact school counselors at their local schools. More general information can also be found on ASCA’s website, www.schoolcounselor.org.
CCSD celebrates Navy Week 2019

CCSD celebrated Charleston Navy Week March 11-17, 2019 this year. This program from the Navy Office of Community Outreach educates Americans about the United States Navy through a variety of engagements and activities.

Navy Week started in 2005, and this year’s program in Charleston was the 226th Navy Week.

During the celebration, Navy military and civilian personnel visited nearly 50 school sites in the district, with representatives from the USS Constitution, Navy Fleet Forces Band, SPAWAR, Navy Meteorology and Oceanography Command, and the Naval Academy. Highlights included a Seahawk helicopter which landed at six schools and band performances/clinics at five schools.

CCSD students score above state/nation on 2018 SAT

CCSD seniors scored above the state and nation on the overall composite and on both subtests of the 2018 SAT.

Nearly two-thirds of seniors took the SAT, with the district’s overall composite score of 1096 coming in seven points higher than its 2017 score.

CCSD’s SAT composite ranks #8 among districts in South Carolina and is the highest ranking district in the lower part of the state (east of Columbia).

The district’s Academic Magnet High School had the highest SAT Combined score (reading and writing + math) among all high schools in South Carolina. Also, ten CCSD high schools increased their overall composite, with only three high schools showing decreases in the overall score.

This year, CCSD increased its percentage of seniors taking the test by 9.1 points. The district’s percentage of seniors taking the SAT ranks third among districts in South Carolina.

2018 SAT SCORES (SENIOR CLASS)

<table>
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<th></th>
<th>% Seniors Tested</th>
<th>Reading and Writing (ERW)</th>
<th>Math</th>
<th>Composite Score</th>
<th>Change from Last Year</th>
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</table>

Hunley Park celebrates Spanish Heritage Month

Spanish Heritage Month
September 15 - October 15
Rarely do surprise birthday celebrations come as a surprise to the honoree. More often than not, someone accidentally lets the cat out of the bag.

On one Sunday in February, John Henry Smalls Jr. had no clue that his family was having a celebration for him in the fellowship hall at Friendship AME Church in Mount Pleasant’s Old Village. His three children John III, Carlton and Keymeil, invited friends and family to gather after worship to celebrate his 80th birthday.

Age isn’t slowing the 44 year-educator down; he can be found every weekday at Charleston Progressive Academy (CPA) where he serves as a substitute teacher and school volunteer. He taught at Porcher Elementary School, McClellanville Elementary School, Wilmot J. Fraser Elementary, and Lincoln High School as a physical education teacher; and he has regularly served as a substitute teacher around Charleston County.

So why does he do it so many years after he initially retired?

“It was tough where economics was concerned,” said Smalls. “We hardly had enough money for food, but the Lord provided and we were never starving or hungry.”

As a child, he found himself on the basketball court every day after school but at the same time, his eyes were on the prize - education!

Coaches and the principal at Laing High School saw his potential and helped him secure a scholarship to attend Kittrell Junior College in North Carolina. He later transferred to Claflin College in Orangeburg where he earned a degree in Physical and Health Education.

“I was always athletic and liked most sports,” said Smalls. “I knew that sports would be my ticket to college. Athletics helped me get out of town to better my situation. When I left for college, I didn't have hardly enough money for the bus fare, but I managed.”

Smalls, for more than three decades, wrote the weekly column “Across The Cooper With John Smalls” for The Charleston Chronicle, and has worked at local Walmart stores for nearly two decades.

He drives to the Peninsula every day from his home in Ladson because he wants to give back.

“My coaches saw the potential in me, and I see the potential in these students at Charleston Progressive,” said Smalls. “I want to show them that with persistence they can be successful and rise above the poverty.”

Principal Wanda Sheats is grateful for his service.

“Mr. Smalls is #14 pictured in this 1959 high school picture
VETERAN’S DAY AND LEADERSHIP DAY

Chicora and Oakland students work with Citadel cadets on Leadership Day 2018

Oakland Elementary hosted 72 Citadel cadets for The Citadel’s Leadership Day. Cadets participated in a service learning activity where they taught a lesson about what it means to be a hero. Afterwards, students made cards for the hero in their life.

Charleston Progressive Academy hosts a special Veterans Day Ceremony
This year marked the end of one season and the beginning of another for employees retiring from Charleston County School District (CCSD).

During the annual Retiree Banquet, held June 11, 2019, CCSD honored 38 retirees who dedicated a combined total of 942 years of service to CCSD.

In their roles as teachers, academic coaches, administrative support, food service operators, instructional assistants, athletic coaches, counselors, media specialists and administrators, they supported students and their fellow educators.

With care and expertise, this group of retirees helped students and staff grow by planting seeds of knowledge and watering those seeds with ideas, encouragement and infinite possibilities. As a result, those in their care — whether in the classroom, guidance office, cafeteria or on the athletic field — flourished.
Whitesides holds Clap Out for alumni from Class of 2019

Whitesides ES welcomed graduating seniors June 3, 2019 for a “clap out.” Those seniors, dressed in their cap and gowns, were all Mamie P. Whitesides alumni.
State Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman surprised Mamie P. Whitesides Elementary School teacher, Stephanie Haecherl, at her school on March 14 with news that she was selected as one of five finalists for the South Carolina Teacher of the Year award.

Stephanie Haecherl teaches second grade at Whitesides in Mount Pleasant. As a National Board Certified educator, she served as an author contributor to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. Haecherl received national recognition when she became one of twenty-two teachers on the Scholastic Book Clubs Teacher Advisory Board.

Reaching out locally and nationally, she has directly impacted student-learning school-wide by securing over thirty grants. Stephanie possessed the desire to teach at a very young age. She is a lifelong learner who after attending her first Engineering in Elementary workshop was hooked on STEAM. She refers to her teaching style as “eclectic”; a small window into her classroom reveals a variety of activities such as oil pastels used to illustrate how students visualized a story. Her classroom inspires creativity, nurtures critical thinking skills and allows students to “think outside of the box.” Stephanie is a community-minded educator who is passionate about her profession and illustrates these commitments by finding ways for parents to participate by serving as weekly readers. She seeks mentoring opportunities wherever possible, mentoring student teachers from local colleges and universities and educators new to the profession.

As one of five finalists, Stephanie received $10,000 and advanced to the next stage of competition which involved an in-person interview with a team of expert judges.

Jill Burgin, the school nurse at Stiles Point Elementary School, was named the 2019 South Carolina School Nurse of the Year by the South Carolina State Department of Education and the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) in January. This is the second straight year a nurse from CCSD has earned this honor; Mary Ford Elementary School’s Charlene Barbot won this award in 2018.

Burgin has been a nurse for 25 years, including the past 14 at Stiles Point Elementary. She graduated from the Medical University of South Carolina’s College of Nursing in 1992, earning a Bachelor of Science in Nursing. She is a member of the National Association of School Nurses, the South Carolina Association of School Nurses (SCASN), and the Association of Camp Nurses.

Burgin is responsible for the health and wellness of over 700 students and staff members at Stiles Point where she administers medications, manages diabetics, completes screenings, and trains staff for emergencies.

“Jill Burgin is undoubtedly the best ‘hands-on’ health professional that I have ever had in any of my schools,” explained Stiles Point Principal Michael Ard. “I have been a school administrator for more than 20 years. She has made many ‘calls’ during my tenure at Stiles Point, and she has yet to miss the mark on any of them. I trust her; that is a big statement.”

Burgin received her award at the 38th Annual SCASN Conference on February 2, 2019, in Columbia, SC.
Jennifer Thrift named 2019 Library Journal Movers & Shakers Educator

Charles Pinckney Elementary School’s teacher librarian, Jennifer Thrift, was named a 2019 Library Journal Movers & Shakers Educator on March 6, 2019.

Low college grades and a rocky first year teaching didn’t stop Thrift from becoming a school librarian - they just pushed her to try harder. She strives to instill that same resilience in her students, so she was thrilled to learn about Breakout EDU, a start-up company that creates escape room kits for classrooms.

Thrift was the first person in Charleston County School District to integrate Breakout EDU into students’ instruction. She attended the Google Summit where she learned about digital breakouts and began researching how to incorporate them at Pinckney.

Thrift trained teachers to create breakouts that integrate with their standards and conducted numerous trainings for educators throughout the school district. She has even written breakouts for the Breakout EDU Company. Those can be found on the company’s website, where Pinckney is also featured. See the “Pinckney Elementary School” video at breakoutedu.com/about/.

Students solve puzzles to unlock a strongbox before time runs out. Thrift has watched kids take a wrong turn, but their excitement never wavers.

“I am a firm believer that ‘FAIL’ stands for ‘First Attempt in Learning,’ ” Thrift said. “If you don’t figure it out right away, keep trying.”

Thanks to Thrift’s passion, all 80 schools in the Charleston County School District have Breakout EDU kits, and she’s trained the district’s librarians and teachers, who serve about 50,000 students, on incorporating this dynamic activity into the classroom.

Thrift is a Nationally Board Certified Media Specialist who, a few years ago, was chosen by her colleagues as Pinckney’s Teacher of the Year.

JBE teacher receives Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators

JBE teacher Nancy Platt and Vice-Chair Kate Darby

The Presidential Innovation Award for Environmental Educators recognizes outstanding K-12 teachers who employ innovative approaches to environmental education and use the environment as a context for learning for their students.

James B. Edwards Elementary School’s very own Nancy Platt received this honor and was recognized in July. The White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), in partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), administers this award to honor, support, and encourage educators who incorporate environmental education in their classrooms and teaching methods.

Platt was awarded $25,000, as was James B. Edwards to fund environmental educational activities and programs.

Platt is the school’s Green Team Sponsor. She oversees the school’s Lowcountry Sustainability Program.

The program encourages recycling, horticulture, and other sustainable practices presented in an educational and hands-on format where students are encouraged to be leaders in the community. The goal of the program is to cultivate global leaders for a sustainable future.

This award further honors Platt’s commitment to environmental studies and her commitment to teaching children to be champions of the environment.
Jayuntay Williams, a math teacher at West Ashley Middle, was beyond shocked when his name was called on May 9 in front of hundreds of his colleagues, the Charleston County School District Board of Trustees, leadership, district partners, and sponsors at the annual Teacher of the Year (TOY) Celebration Dinner.

Selected from over 80 school-based TOY’s, Williams will help lead the CCSD Teacher of the Year Roundtable during the 2019-2020 school year. He will also receive a one-year lease to drive a BMW thanks to Rick Hendrick of Charleston. The seven-year teacher is humbled by the honor of representing his colleagues as the overall winner.

“I want to be a representative to the students and educators,” said Williams. “I hope I make the students as proud as they have made me.”

Williams follows 2018 honoree, Stephanie Haecherl of Mamie P. Whitesides Elementary School, on the acclaimed list of CCSD Teachers of the Year. Williams and the other five finalists were selected through a multi-step process that began with a review of their applications by the outgoing Teacher of the Year Roundtable. Once the finalists were chosen, each of the five teachers gave a tour of their school to a panel of judges, provided a model lesson to be critiqued, and participated in a thorough interview process.

West Ashley ASM Principal Brant E. Glover is excited that Williams will have a bigger platform.

“This will allow him to showcase his style of teaching across the district and the state,” said Glover. “I know he is eager and hopefully he can make some waves and make changes.”

Williams was driven as a young boy to work hard, and that hard work paid off. He was the valedictorian of his high school class in Denmark, SC. He credits that to the support and motivation that came from his parents.

“Greatness is an obligation, not an option,” said Williams. “I live by that every day and spread that to my students. I am teaching more than math. I’m trying to get them to see the connection between hard work and having a passion and a vision that can be followed through.”

Williams’ style of teaching is unique. He finds extra resources for learning and is motivated to keep everything fresh and relevant.

“Every year we go in fresh by starting over and focusing on what’s best for our students,” explained Williams. “I am here for a purpose, and if we can all strive to be better in some way, work as a team, and be respectful, there is nothing we can’t accomplish.”

Williams’ passion is math, and he enjoys the opportunity to be the Math Department Chair where he can model instructional strategies for his fellow teachers and be a support system for staff.

Also, Williams’ participation in the Call Me M.I.S.T.E.R program is what he said was most influential in him finishing his undergraduate work in education. Call Me M.I.S.T.E.R. (Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Models) is an initiative to increase the pool of available teachers from a broader and more diverse background, particularly among the state’s lowest performing elementary schools. Through the program at Claflin University, he participated in teacher education undergraduate programs that lead to teaching licensure and job placement.

As a part of his award, Williams was the featured guest at Educators’ Night at the RiverDogs game on May 17, 2019 at Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Park. Before the game, Williams took a ride in his BMW and threw out the ceremonial first pitch.

Jayuntay Williams finds creative ways to educate children outside of the classroom.
2019 Teacher of the Year Runner-up, Melissa Reese, Murray-LaSaine Elementary School

Melissa Reese

Reese has been teaching for seven years, serving the past three years with CCSD. The Murray-LaSaine Elementary School teacher holds a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood and Elementary Education and a Master of Education Teaching and Curriculum from Penn State University. Reese's family moved from state to state because of her father's occupation and by the time they landed in Hershey, PA, she had fallen behind in her learning. “States teach different standards, and at times I struggled,” said Reese. “I didn’t want others to feel left behind, and that's when I ultimately committed myself to becoming an educator.”

The school culture at Murray-LaSaine is more than just academics. The culture is one of peace through education of the whole child. Murray-LaSaine is a hybrid of a traditional public school and Montessori learning. This was a perfect fit for Reese. “I want everyone to be kind and helpful,” said Reese. “I teach children the importance of growing up to be successful, productive members of society. I hope that they go and change the world.”

Reese loves her profession and lives for the ‘lightbulb moment.’ “Building relationships with the students and planning and tailoring instruction to meet the needs of all of my students is what brings me joy,” said Reese. “I also love working with a team (my principal and staff) who are leaders in education. They know how to creatively balance Montessori with public education, which helps to encourage social and emotional growth with all of our students.”

Erin Bua, James B. Edwards Elementary

Erin Bua

Boasting 27 years with CCSD, Bua taught at Edmund A. Burns Elementary School and then transitioned to Belle Hall Elementary School where she began the school counseling portion of her career. She has been at James B. Edwards for the last 11 years.

Bua went to the University of South Carolina. She is a wife, mother of twelve-year-old twins, and a lifelong pet owner. She has her real estate license, a pet sitting business, and is active in her community. She also earned the prestigious National Jefferson Award in 2016.

Bua wanted to be in a line of work where she felt like she was giving back. “The reason I became a teacher is because I never had a teacher that took me under their wing or a coach that mentored me,” Bua explained. “I never found that special adult person that really noticed me. So I knew in my career, I wanted to be in a field where I could be that person for others.”

As a middle child, Bua had a natural nurturing ability and her career path took a turn towards education. Upon graduation, she was hired to teach at Burns. Those were some of her favorite years.

Bua serves as a counselor, teacher, and helps with administrative duties. “I consider myself as a sparkle spreader,” said Bua. “I tell them it is a class about life. We're learning to be the best we can be each and every day.”

Counselors are often unsung educators of a school, she explained, and for a counselor to be recognized as a TOY is a unique place to be. Bua wants to show young educators that it is possible to stay sparkly, spunky, and happy for many years in the field of education. “The secret is to stay positive and enthusiastic in our jobs as teachers. We should be ‘star polishers’ in that we shine our little stars (students) every year and help every child to be their own shining star. My goal is to touch the lives of every child I meet and shower them with encouragement and praise.”

James Costner, Laing Middle School

James Costner

James Costner has just five years of teaching under his belt, but longevity isn’t necessarily a requirement when applying for consideration as the CCSD Teacher of the Year. The seventh-grade math and honors pre-algebra teacher at Laing Middle School of Science and Technology is a University of South Carolina graduate. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Middle-Level Education with an emphasis on math and science.

Costner was hired to teach in Lexington County and then Richland County before coming to CCSD. He is honored to represent Laing, a learning institution that he credits to the whole student. “What makes Laing special is that you can instantly see the opportunities that every single kid has,” said Costner. “It offers an award-winning STEM program not specific to just one class but the whole school. Every single student gets a STEM education.”

Costner said his favorite thing about teaching is the autonomy he is allowed in the classroom. “While teachers must follow the set curriculum, I can always add my spin on the lesson and make it my own and bring creativity to learning,” said Costner. “I enjoy the impact I can have on even just one student because I know it will carry over and he or she will impact others.”

Costner lives by the saying, “always be hungry for more but enjoy the opportunities that come with the successes.” He said it falls in line with the school culture Laing Principal Jay Whitehair has created. “Our principal is a forward thinker,” said Costner. “He is not good with the status quo and pushes us and challenges us every day to make sure we're giving our best.”
Shantia Wilder, Chicora Elementary

Wilder has spent the last 19 years at Chicora Elementary School, where she serves as a child development teacher. Wilder is a 1997 graduate of the College of Charleston and holds a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Education from Southern Wesleyan University. Most recently she completed her Pre-School Special Education Certification.

In addition to being an educator, Wilder is an active member of the school’s PTA, the school wellness committee, the School Improvement Council, Trident United Way, the Charleston Teacher Alliance, and the National Education Association.

The road to her career began with a desire to be a nurse. “I spent a lot of time with my maternal grandmother, and I wanted to be a nurse,” said Wilder. “I always had a giving spirit and a spirit of service. My grandmother once said to me ‘you would make a great nurse, but you would also make a great educator. One heals the body, and other heals the mind.’ That resonated with me and she pointed me in the direction of wanting to teach.”

Chicora is a community school in the heart of a high poverty neighborhood. According to Wilder, the children here have much higher needs than students in most schools in Charleston County.

“It is my heart’s desire to be here,” said Wilder. “I chose to work here. They are my children, and I feel like I can make a positive impression on them. I treat them as my own children; I am firm but fair.”

Educators are giving and caring people by nature. Wilder is no exception. She earns the respect of the parents by proving that she is not just teaching their children but nurturing the whole child.

“I attend their family events, and try and go above and beyond,” said Wilder. “There are opportunities that I have to do things outside of the scope of my job, and I do them because I care and want those children to grow.”

Ownership and pride are two of the lessons Wilder teaches. She explains to them that their name is attached to their work and it will be like that throughout their lives.

“I try to teach them always to do their best because I want them to be proud and confident in what they do,” said Wilder. “I do for them what I would want someone to do for my children.”
Early Childhood: Alexandra (Lexi) Sirinakis, Carolina Park Elementary

With an undergraduate degree in fine arts from Slippery Rock University and a master’s degree in Early Childhood Education from the College of Charleston, Sirinakis aims to teach first grade by providing a “well-prepared, stimulating environment that allows children the opportunity to work through their own experiences and to encourage social-development.”

In his letter of recommendation for Alex, her principal, Michael Antonelli, said, “I have served as a principal in CCSD for 13 years and Lexi Sirinakis is the most impressive induction teacher with whom I have had the privilege to work. Her knowledge of instructional best practices is that of a veteran educator and the classroom community and culture that exist in room 162 is a model to others in our profession.”

Elementary: Bria Barnhill, Sanders-Clyde Elementary

Barnhill graduated from the College of Charleston with a bachelor’s degree in Elementary Education. Her goal as a fifth grade teacher this year is to have everyone of her students “leave my classroom a better person, a harder worker and [with] a bigger heart.”

Kiyanna Mullins, Bria’s mentor says that Bria, “is an excellent educator that possesses instructional enthusiasm and creativity, a passion for her students, and professionalism. She challenges her students daily and encourages them to have a growth mindset.”

Middle School: Rachel Irwin, Morningside Middle

As a seventh-grade resource teacher, Irwin, says, “by incorporating creative thinking, open-ended questions, and cooperative learning,” she is able to “provide an environment where [her] scholars are more likely to express their ideas, think outside the box, and challenge problems with innovative solutions.” Irwin graduated from Robert Morris University with degrees in Early Childhood and Special Education K-12.

Principal Stephanie Flock writes of Irwin, “I have witnessed major academic changes in the scholars she works with, truly transformational changes. I look forward to being around her as she blossoms into a master teacher.”

High School: Theresa Culbertson, St. John’s High

Culbertson, a science teacher, who earned a B.S. in Biology from Shorter University, entered this year knowing that, “building relationships would be the first and foremost strategy to provide a quality education for all of my students.” “Within minutes of her first class, it was clear that I had hired a master teacher. Her infectious energy and ability to engage her students at their level resulted in a classroom environment unlike any I have ever seen” says her principal, Stephen Larson.
Bill Briggman was named 2018-2019 SC Personnel Administrator of the Year at the South Carolina Association of School Administrators (SCASA) 2019 Personnel Winter Conference in Columbia in January.

This statewide award is presented to a personnel director at the district level. The award recognizes involvement with regional or statewide SCASA educational issues, and the nominee’s impact on improvement in his or her school district. Vanessa P. Brown, Principal of Baptist Hill Middle High School nominated Briggman for this prestigious award.

“Bill and his team are creative and daring,” said Brown. “Through his guidance, the district instituted initiatives such as rural travel stipend. Since most first-year educators are placed in schools with the highest needs, Bill implemented the Top Talent initiative to reduce the achievement gap.”

As an advocate for all employees of the district to earn a livable wage, Briggman has brought in firms to conduct studies on the salary structure for administrators which increased pay for principals and assistant principals.

“It is this type of action that keeps the District competitive and attracts experienced educators to join and to retain them as well,” said Brown.

Erica Taylor, CCSD Chief of Staff, was named the 2019 Educator Nominee by the YWCA of Greater Charleston on March 20.

In the spring of 2018, YWCA of Greater Charleston brought a new, powerful event for professional women to the Charleston area. At the inaugural #WhatWomenBring power lunch at the Charleston Area Convention Center, women who are breaking barriers in 10 different industries were celebrated.

The second annual #WhatWomenBring event was held on May 21, where Taylor was among the featured panelists.

What Taylor loves most about her job is knowing her work impacts the lives of students across Charleston County and prepares them to be successful.

Taylor has been recognized as the 2018 Outstanding Educator of the Year, a South Carolina Education Policy Fellow, a Racial Equity Leadership Network Fellow, and one of the Forty Under 40 by the Charleston Regional Business Journal, 20 Under 20 by Thomas Media Black Expo, and 35 Under 35 by the National School Public Relations Association. She is also a graduate of The Riley Institute's SC Diversity Leaders Initiative at Furman University.

She serves on the board of directors of the Teacher Supply Closet, the Mentoring Program of Charleston, the Trident Urban League, the Charleston Leadership Foundation, and as a member of the Moja Arts Festival Community Advisory Committee. In addition to her impressive educational background, she is currently pursuing a doctorate.

“There have been so many women who have made an impact on our nation’s history,” said Taylor. “Here locally, it is no different. Women all around me are making strides that generations ago were unheard of.”

Taylor's career in the education field has opened doors for more up and coming women.

“I have been fortunate in my career which enabled me to prove to other females of my generation and especially women of color, that anything is possible with faith and hard work,” said Taylor. “My passion is to open doors to education for all children so that they too can blaze trails.”

Erica S. Taylor

Taylor named a #WhatWomenBring nominee

Bill Briggman was named SC Personnel Administrator of the Year

Briggman has been instrumental in ensuring the district is fully staffed at the beginning of every school year. Under his leadership, CCSD has been able to consistently reduce the number of teacher vacancies and develop a well-designed recruiting plan that intentionally seeks to find teachers who represent the diverse population of students in the Charleston County.

“Bill has 27 years of experience in human resources and currently serves as the Chief Human Resources Officer.

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Beth Phibbs, Executive Director of SCASA presents Bill Briggman with the 2018-2019 SC Personnel Administrator of the Year
Superintendent Dr. Gerrita Postlewait was the recipient of the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Patriot Award. She was nominated by Rich Gordon, CCSD’s Executive Director of Career and Technology who serves in the South Carolina Army National Guard. The Patriot Award reflects efforts made by employers to support National Guard and Reserve soldiers, such as flexible schedules, deployments, family care and leaves of absence.

“The nomination was a ‘thank you’ for supporting employer policies and practices that allow me to fully participate in the South Carolina Army National Guard,” said Gordon. “My wife and children truly appreciate the outpouring of support and well-wishes from the Board of Trustees and the entire CCSD family during a very busy 2018. This is undoubtedly a direct result of Dr. Postlewait’s command climate.”

Dr. Postlewait was formally recognized and presented the award at the January 28, 2019 Board of Trustees meeting this year.

Susan Friedrich was named the Coalition on Adult Basic Education’s (COABE) 2019 Outstanding Administrator of the Year. Friedrich, who is CCSD’s Director of Adult Education, was honored in New Orleans at COABE’s national conference in April. COABE advances national and international adult education and literacy opportunities for all persons and represents the system of 55,000 adult educators in the United States. The Outstanding Administrator of the Year Award is awarded to an adult education administrator with five or more years of experience who has made an outstanding contribution toward fostering the concept of education as a continuing life-process.

“I am humbled by this recognition,” said Friedrich. “This award is for the hard-working dedicated staff of the district’s adult education program, who every day for years, have assisted the adult learner with earning their high school diploma, improving their English skills and/or preparing for post-secondary education/employment. Thank you to the numerous partner agencies who have opened their doors so adult education can provide on-site programs in the communities they serve and to the students and their families in making the commitment to overcome barriers to achieve success.”

Friedrich was recently named the South Carolina Adult Education Director of the Year. The state recognition was announced on February 15 at the South Carolina Adult Education Spring Institute and Celebrating Success Recognition Ceremony. She has 37 years of experience – 35 of which have been in adult education with CCSD.

Winners of the COABE National Awards (which also include a Teacher of the Year and Student of the Year) receive $10,000 each and are sponsored by the Dollar General Literacy Foundation.
Sonic recognizes Jennie Church as May Teacher of the Month

Jennie Church, a special education teacher at Ashley River Creative Arts was named the Limeades for Learning May Teacher of the Month by SONIC. She was awarded $500 to use towards a DonorsChoose.org project.

Throughout the year, SONIC showcased passionate teachers who received funding through SONIC’s $1 million donation match with DonorsChoose.org.

Church, who teaches third through fifth graders, dedicates herself to providing her students with essential and innovative learning materials and supplies to foster their growth.

“My students face challenges in multiple areas that others take for granted,” said Church. “This influences how they interpret and interact with the world around them. By viewing the world through their eyes, my students have taught me endless lessons in patience, endurance, and celebrating every accomplishment.”

Limeades for Learning funded flexible seating, an indoor garden, and wireless headphones for Church’s classroom. In the spring of 2019, she wrote a “dream project” that would provide an entire year of weekly music therapy sessions to her students by a certified therapist. SONIC contributed $770 to the music therapy project.

As a multi-grade classroom, Church does the majority of direct instruction in rotating groups or stations. With this, comes the inevitable hum of noise (and distraction).

“Through the incorporation of musical exercises, my students will have the opportunity to engage in a personalized music curriculum tailored to encourage choice, movement, involvement, communication, and motor skills,” said Church.

By utilizing wireless headphones during the group rotations, students can better focus on the lesson while still being able to move/ wiggle freely and gain sensory relief.

“My students were amazed the first time our new headphones went live,” said Church. “As for the indoor garden, my students are hands-on learners who blossom when they have a chance to experience science and nature up close. During the upcoming school year, we will be able to observe the life cycle of a variety of plants grown hydroponically. We will also be able to use herbs and veggies grown in our garden in our weekly cooking activities.”

Church said her students are enthusiastic learners who enjoy the inclusion of music and movement into their daily routine and thematic units.

“We have been blessed to experience a year of weekly music therapy services with Charleston Music Therapy LLC, and I am grateful for the opportunity to continue into the 2019-2020 school year,” said Church.

Eppelsheimer honored with Intellectual Freedom Award

Wando High School Principal Dr. Sherry Eppelsheimer was selected unanimously as the winner of the South Carolina Association of School Librarian’s (SCASL) Intellectual Freedom Award which honors those who stand firm for the freedom to read.

Eppelsheimer was recognized at a ceremony in Columbia at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center Friday, March 8, 2019.

Dr. Sherry Eppelsheimer has worked over 30 years in public education and has provided quality leadership at every level. Eppelsheimer is a graduate of Lander University where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in English. She also earned an M.Ed. degree from Clemson University in Secondary Guidance and Counseling.

After additional graduate work at the University of South Carolina in 2003, she earned her professional certificate in School Administration and Supervision. In 2013, she earned her Ed.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from USC.

Before coming to Wando, Eppelsheimer served in a variety of roles in Greenwood, S.C. as an English teacher and Instructional Specialist. She is a Nationally Board Certified Teacher, former Teacher of the Year and AP English teacher who has worked successfully with diverse student groups. Eppelsheimer has also served as a SAT and ACT Coordinator, SIC and PTSO Liaison, Capturing Kids’ Hearts Coordinator, Professional Development and Textbook Coordinator, and served on several state and regional committees among several other positions.

“Dr. Eppelsheimer is an advocate for teachers and students,” said Lucye Magill, a Wando teacher who nominated Eppelsheimer for the award. “One of her main priorities is to make sure that our teachers feel supported in their choice of curriculum. She trusts and respects the instructional decisions of her teachers.”

In her nomination, Magill described Eppelsheimer as an advocate for all Wando students.

“One of her main priorities is to make sure that our teachers feel supported in their choice of curriculum,” said Magill. “She trusts and respects the instructional decisions of her teachers. Eppelsheimer is also an advocate for all Wando students and wants everyone to have access to the best education possible. Part of having the best education means having access to a variety of materials and perspectives.”
On April 23, 2019, South Carolina Treasurer Curtis Loftis recognized Charleston County School District teacher Maegen Whitten of James Island Elementary School as the Future Scholar Financial Literacy Program Educator of the Month for April.

Whitten said she is incorporating financial literacy into her math curriculum to demonstrate real-world examples of how math relates to personal finance decisions people make every day.

The Future Scholar Financial Literacy Program is web-based and interactive, and uses “Vault,” data management software powered by Everfi, to engage students and make learning financial skills interesting and fun. As a financial management course, Future Scholar focuses on skill-building, budgeting, and decision-making and is offered to elementary and middle schools across the state at no cost to taxpayers.

“Financial literacy is a vital tool for future economic success. We are grateful for teachers like Ms. Whitten who are showing students how to make sound financial decisions at a young age,” Treasurer Loftis said.

Since its launch in 2015, the Future Scholar Financial Literacy Program has grown to reach 267 schools and impact approximately 30,000 South Carolina students. For more information about the Future Scholar Financial Literacy Program, visit scfuturescholar.everfi.com.
Exercise can improve brain function and thinking skills. It increases your heart rate, which boosts the flow of blood and oxygen to your brain. It can also stimulate the production of hormones that can enhance the growth of brain cells.

With that in mind, Physical Education teachers at Northwoods Middle School, Megan Reilly and Alex Matos, established a specialized class, called Advanced PE. There were 21 sixth-grade students who participated. Each student was provided a uniform, a heart rate monitor, a specialized fitness watch, a water bottle, and a gym bag. They have a locker room and laundry facilities to ensure clean uniforms every day and a safe place to store their belongings without having to carry them back and forth. Their watches are set to their height, weight, and gender.

The students exercise their way through boot camp type stations, competing against each other and their own best times in the target heart rate zone and calories burned. Exercises include muscle-building, strength and endurance, and cardiovascular activities.

The results of the Advanced PE Class were astounding. Reilly compared the student’s scores from the fall to the spring, and 15 of the 21 students improved their scores in both English and math. Some students improved their grades exponentially while others improved an average of two to three points. Almost all students were above average in growth.

As if the improved grades were not enough, students improved drastically in their behavior as well. One female student had 19 behavioral incidents in the first two quarters and none in the third quarter.

One student went from 31 behavioral incidents in the first and second quarter to just nine in the third quarter.

Even more remarkable was that student’s improvement academically. This particular student improved 10 points in math.

Wellness is a school-wide initiative, and Principal Dr. Colleen Knauer was a big advocate for the creation of the Advanced PE class.

Two students learned about the class and asked to be enrolled, not because they needed that extra push to improve their behavior or academic scores, but because of personal goals they wanted to accomplish in the areas of weight loss and wellness.

One of those students lost 7 lbs. in two weeks and went on to lose 11 lbs. total. She lifted weights, quickly turning fat into muscle. She can also now run a mile in under 15 minutes.

An additional student has lost 17 lbs. so far.

To further motivate these 21 students, teachers from their other classes often join them to get in their own workout. In addition, a morning PE class has been added for those students who need to start their day off with a little physical activity.

Coach Matos said that exercise works the same way in his own life. The students were held accountable by keeping a behavior tracker on hand for their teachers to fill out so that the coaches know their rate of improvement.

Reilly said none of the students had a negative attitude about being in the class. In fact, they’re pushing themselves to do better.
### WINTER

**Individual winner (A)**
- Name: Antwaun Gantt
- School: Military Magnet Academy
- Year in school: Sophomore
- Sport: Wrestling
- Event: 182 pounds

**Individual winner (AAAAA)**
- School: James Island Charter
- Year in school: Sophomore
- Sport: Boys’ Track and Field
- Events: Pole vault (9:06), 1,600-meter run (4:21.14), and 3,200-meter run (9:15.53)

### FALL

**Individual winner (AAAAA)**
- School: Military Magnet Academy
- Year in school: Senior
- Sport: Boys’ Track and Field
- Event: 4 x 100 meter relay (50.23)

**Team Champions**

**Military Magnet Academy**
- **Boys’ Track and Field (A)**
- **State Championship**
  - Season Record: 19-3
  - Defeated St. Joseph’s 0-0 (4-3 F/PK)

**Wando Boys’ Soccer (AAAAA) State Championship**
- **Season Record:** 27-2-1
- **Ranked 4th in the nation by USA Today**
- **Defeated J.L. Mann 1-0 in 3OT**

**Roster**

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<th>Head Coach</th>
<th>Assistant Coaches</th>
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<td>Dane Southard</td>
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<td>Kevin Wray</td>
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<td>Michael Miller</td>
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**Head Coach**
- Shilo Tisdale

### SPRING

**Individual winner (A)**
- Members: Rosalyn Bryan, Alana Foster, Tyanna Murray, and Takiah Nottage
- School: Baptist Hill
- Sport: Girls’ Track and Field
- Event: 4 x 100 meter relay (50.23)

**Individual winner (AA)**
- Members: RaeQuan Floyd, Shakur Gadsden, Jebriel Jenkins, and Jordon McNeil
- School: Garrett Academy of Technology
- Sport: Boys’ Track and Field
- Event: 4 x 100 meter relay (43.13)

**Individual winner (AAA)**
- Name: Colin Baker
- School: Academic Magnet
- Year in school: Senior
- Sport: Boys’ Track and Field
- Event: 400-meter dash (58.46)

**Wando Boys’ Swimming (AAAAA) State Championship**

**Roster**

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<td>Davis Caldwell</td>
<td>Cameron Mehta</td>
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<td>Head Coach</td>
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<td>C.J. Hills</td>
<td>Allyson Brown</td>
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**Head Coach**
- Mike Coury

**Wando Girls’ Swimming (AAAAA) State Championship**

**Roster**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head Coach</th>
<th>Assistant Coaches</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estelle Bauer</td>
<td>Kelsey Kraft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natalie Burton</td>
<td>Hannah Lawler</td>
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<tr>
<td>Addie Chretien</td>
<td>Kaleigh Lawler</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sophie Frece</td>
<td>Ilyanna Lightfoot</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bailey Gallagher</td>
<td>Anna Mansfield</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karharine Green</td>
<td>Caitlin Mason</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lili Hamilton</td>
<td>Anna Mecignae</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kaitlin Healy</td>
<td>Riley Norris</td>
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<tr>
<td>Callie Johnson</td>
<td>Gracie Orr</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meredith Jones</td>
<td>HK Orr</td>
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</tbody>
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**Head Coach**
- Cheryl Darden

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**ATHLETIC STATE RECOGNITIONS**
Carolina Park Special Olympic games

Exceptional Olympic Athletes at Carolina Park Elementary School competed in the Olympic Games. Even though the local Special Olympics event was cancelled, Carolina Park's team still held games at the school. Students from Miss Fanelli and Mrs. Davies’ classes were first introduced and cheered on by their entire student body. They then participated in running, jumping, and relay races. They were supported by Project ONEE and Miss Shealy’s class. It was a very memorable day for all of Carolina Park’s student coyotes.

Camp Road Middle Special Olympics parade

Camp Road Middle School (CRMS) hosted a parade on Friday, April 26, 2019 in honor of student-athletes competing in the Special Olympics.

The parade included a short band performance, artwork created by the CRMS Art Club, and recognized their Exceptional Students participating in this year’s local Special Olympic Games. Additionally, buddy students who have been working with Exceptional Students in a unified P.E. class this year participated in the parade and games with their peers.

This is the inaugural year of the Unified Special Olympics P.E. class at CRMS. School staff members said the class was a huge success and a positive experience for everyone involved. Some of the greatest experiences involved bridging general education and Exceptional Students together, making friendships, building character, increasing social skills, and building social awareness for others.

Memminger students picking up a new sport

Terms like cradling and clamping aren’t common in this area when it comes to sports. However, those words are growing in popularity at Memminger Elementary School thanks to its new lacrosse team.

Assistant Principal Stephen Thomas learned about lacrosse growing up in Maryland. While lacrosse has an established tradition in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions as well as large suburban schools and private schools, students in urban public schools often do not have access to the sport due to the cost of equipment. Thomas found a way to help overcome that obstacle for students at Memminger through United States Lacrosse’s First Stick Program.

U.S. Lacrosse created the First Stick Program to increase access to the sport in more communities throughout the country. Schools can receive free equipment so that they can provide an affordable experience for their students. The “Starter Kit” grant provides $6,000 worth of equipment, including lacrosse sticks, gloves, arm pads, and helmets. The grant also includes complimentary U.S. Lacrosse memberships for two adult coaches and the players from the school.

Thomas found out Memminger was approved in January. Once the equipment started to arrive, Thomas had no problem recruiting students for the inaugural team; they have 14 players on the roster.

Robert Feeters, a sergeant for the Charleston Police Department, serves as an assistant coach. The team also receives guidance and support from Robert Hagood, who runs the local non-profit Cusabo Nation Lacrosse.

Memminger made its debut against Meeting Street Academy’s team through the City of Charleston's recreation program. The Mariners came up short in their first contest, but their enthusiasm for the sport is growing every day.
On February 6, 2019, 49 student-athletes, in 11 different sports, from five Charleston County School District (CCSD) schools were honored at the 2019 CCSD National Signing Day Ceremony.

Director of Operational Planning Bob Olson and Superintendent Dr. Gerrita Postlewait provided welcoming remarks, congratulated the scholars on their success in sports thus far, and encouraged them to continue their hard work in college.

National Signing Day is one of the biggest moments in a student-athlete's career; they are making one of the most important, and celebrated, decisions of their life. All of the hard work, time, energy, and support from parents and coaches culminates the moment the student-athlete puts the pen to paper to make an official commitment to play a sport at the college level.

Middle school volleyball established in District 20

A brand new athletic team with novice players is sure to have some struggles. However, when your entire school, your coach and your parents are behind you, it motivates you to push harder.

This was the case for the first ever girls’ volleyball team consisting of players from James Simons Elementary School (JSES) and Simmons-Pinckney Middle School (SPMS). The girls did not close out the season with any major victories, but they’re more motivated than ever to make next year’s season one where they get noticed.

Coach Cortnie Jones began as a long-term substitute teacher at JSES in 2015. As she transitioned to a full-time physical education teacher, students and parents continually expressed interest in creating sports teams at the school.

An athlete herself, with an interest and knowledge in track and field, she started a running club that competes annually in the Charleston Youth Marathon, along with meets across the Lowcountry.

The success of that program prompted other students to seek her out to help in creating a basketball team and a volleyball team. Logistics and timing put the basketball team on hold initially, but the creation of the first-ever James Simmons Pinckney Girls Volleyball Team delighted a handful of girls hoping to play.

The school partnership came about to ensure the sister schools provide the most for their students.

SPMS principal Nathan Nelson was working separately from JSES principal Chris Ryan to provide athletic opportunities for the students and parents in District 20. Nelson noticed bonds being created not just between students, but students and faculty as well. The City of Charleston Recreation Department facilitates the athletic program. The girls played against other beginner level teams in the area from Summerville to McClellanville. Home games are played at the nearby Arthur Christopher Community Center.

Eight female students signed up to play – all of them brand new to the sport.

But with the help of a parent volunteer as an assistant coach, and many adoring parents cheering the team on from the stands, Jones considers the season a success.

Jones hopes to incorporate a basketball team for the males next year. In the meantime, she’s already planning conditioning sessions for next year’s interested players. If the interest is there, they could create an A-Team, B-Team and C-Team.
The three-year-old students in Shirley Alston and Marie Bennett’s class at Sanders-Clyde Elementary School have table manners that could rival most adults. That’s because the teachers spend every single day modeling proper mealtime etiquette through Family Style Dining.

Federal guidelines dictate that Early Head Start and Head Start students must be served all meals using the pass/serve model. According to Sanders-Clyde Head Start Site Manager Frances Shaw, it helps students develop fine motor skills.

Charleston County School District (CCSD) Head Start and Early Head Start programs are funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to serve 877 preschool children, 152 infants and toddlers, and pregnant women. Head Start programs are offered at 13 sites throughout CCSD. Early Head Start is available at five CCSD sites as well as in the home-based option.

For many of these students, it is the only time they sit down at a table with family or friends to enjoy a meal. Many come from a culture of eating in front of the television, Shaw explained.

### Family Style Dining

Adult role-modeling, peer to peer interactions and teaching mealtime etiquette are the pillars of Family Style Dining being offered throughout CCSD.

Establishing healthier eating practices in schools demands innovative approaches and purposefulness that reaches beyond the focus of meeting children’s physical food and nutrition requirements and economic hurdles. From that philosophy, the idea of Family Style Dining in the school cafeteria was born.

With this method, food is placed in the center of the table in common dishes and children are allowed to serve themselves. The shift from traditional school cafeteria service to Family Style Dining has resulted in positive outcomes. It allows students to take responsibility for the food selected and eaten.

According to Sarah W. Bates, Nutrition Services Officer, children learn and practice social and motor skills such as taking turns sharing and passing, pouring and scooping foods.

Alston leads her students in a discussion about the daily menu, helping them to differentiate between fruits and vegetables and grains and proteins. Just before lunch arrives, she leads the students in song. Two students are then selected to pass out napkins and plates.

Before the food is placed in the center of each table, Alston leads the students in a hand washing routine to remind them how to properly handle food in the mealtime setting.

Midland Park Primary School is another is one of the many CCSD schools that features Family Style Dining. Jasmine Wright’s students use appropriately sized utensils to not only scoop food onto their plate but to feed themselves as well.

Like all Head Start teachers, Wright sits with her students and instructs them on proper manners and corrects them when needed and is there to offer assistance.

How quickly the students catch on proves the model is a success, according to Bates.
Charleston County School District (CCSD) offers TeachCharleston as an opportunity for bright, talented individuals to pursue a South Carolina teacher certification in middle level or secondary math, science, or English.

The three-year job-embedded teacher development program provides training and professional learning in a cohort setting to prepare and support selected participants for classrooms in CCSD.

As CCSD’s Teach Charleston alternative certification program for math, science, and English teachers continues to expand, The Citadel and CCSD have developed a partnership to provide math majors with a pathway to SC certification. The partnership includes opportunities to explore teaching while completing coursework for a math degree, acceptance into Teach Charleston upon graduation, and a teaching position in CCSD.

This year Citadel cadets, Zachary Parker (Class of 2020) and Skylar Addy (Class of 2021), met with Bill Briggman, Chief Human Resources Officer for CCSD, and Dr. Richard Robinson and Dr. Mei-Qin Chen from The Citadel’s Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, to secure the partnership.

Other incentives CCSD uses to recruit teachers include an increased teacher salary schedule to ensure CCSD teachers are the highest paid in the state.

The increase applies to all first-year classroom teachers (with zero years of experience on their South Carolina Teaching Certificate) to the second year teacher salary schedule (1 year of experience on their South Carolina Teaching Certificate) via the Rural Recruitment Initiative expenditure. A supplement will be used to elevate the first year teacher salary schedule to the salary of a second year.

In addition the Rural Recruitment Initiative is a state-funded recruitment and retention program to address the statewide teacher shortage concerns. Eligibility is based on a five-year average teacher turnover rate as reported on the district report cards and the funds can be used district-wide, not limited to select schools.

The district was awarded $1.67 million for recruitment initiatives.

The total cost, based on an estimate of 250 first year teachers (salary and benefits), is $289,030. This increase is for classroom teachers only; guidance, media and any other paid positions on the teacher salary schedule are not subject to increase.

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### 2019 Salary Schedule

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Administrators of the Boeing South Carolina High School Internship Program accepted ten CCSD seniors to participate in the 2019 spring cohort. The students were paid to work Monday through Friday from 1:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Their first day on the job was Friday, February 15.

It is a competitive application process that involves resumes, reference letters, and real-life interviews. Joshua Sandoval, a Garrett Academy senior, chose to apply for the program because it directly leads to the career he’s been interested in.

“I’m seeking a Mechanical Engineering degree, and this gives me the opportunity to discover future jobs available to me,” said Sandoval. “I want to learn, discover and build my resume and prove who I am to my community. I want to give my community hope that anyone can do anything if they try hard enough.”

The students work on a specific reclamation program that sorts small parts from the manufacturing process for reuse and recycling. They are also afforded many opportunities to see behind the scenes in the Boeing process and forge invaluable relationships with professionals.

“This is a real-world experience for these students,” said Chad Vail, Work Based Learning Partnership Coordinator with Career & Technology Education (CTE). “Their resumes are evaluated, and the students go through the interview process plus several onboarding steps.”

PARTICIPATING STUDENTS INCLUDED:
- Dinh Le, Charleston Charter School for Math & Science
- Faith Polite, Charleston Charter School for Math & Science
- Verenice Avila, Garrett Academy
- Aquil Jenkins, Garrett Academy
- Joshua Sandoval, Garrett Academy
- Shy’Dazja Wright, Garrett Academy
- Branden Foster, R.B. Stall High School
- Mikai Keitt, Wando High School
- Tyler Stryker, Wando High School
- Joshua Harrington, West Ashley High School

This is the fifth year that the CTE department has coordinated the Boeing South Carolina High School Internship Program opportunity, growing the total number of spots with each new cohort.
Ladson Elementary High 5 And Handshake Rally with CCSO

Ladson Elementary School and Charleston County Sheriff’s Office (CCSO) participated in a High 5 and Handshake Rally as a way to strengthen the relationship between the school community and the local law enforcement agency that supports the school.

Police officers from CCSO were on campus for morning arrival on March 21 and had their vehicles parked in the car line and bus drop-off line with lights flashing. Officers greeted and welcomed students as they got off the bus and unloaded from cars, offering them a high five or handshake as well as words of encouragement for a good day at school.

This was the second High 5 and Handshake Rally of the year at Ladson; they held one in December as well!

SULLIVANS ISLAND ELEMENTARY BUILDS PARTNERSHIP WITH CCSO

Law enforcement officers wear many hats — often at the same time. School resource officers are no different.

For SRO Deputy Mike Costanzo, add carpenter and librarian to the list. Costanzo helped Debbie Palmer, librarian at Sullivan’s Island Elementary School, build the shelves for a school book exchange. In this case, small gestures can help build relationships — one book at a time.

For all of his hard work and dedication, Deputy Mike Costanzo was bestowed with the Wonder Woman Award by the school. The honor typically goes to teachers at Sullivan’s Island who go above and beyond their job requirements.

The school believes it is the first time (or one of the first times) a man has received the Wonder Woman Award, so it is quite an accomplishment!

CCSO further strengthened their partnership with the island school by showing off some pretty sweet wheels (and keels) at Sullivan’s Island’s Vehicle Day. This was a chance for students to explore careers through the various vehicles used in the respective field.

CCSO Command Post, Marine Patrol airboat, and K-9-carrying vehicles, as well as some of their pups all joined the fun. Some of the students even wore their police costumes!

Mike Costanzo and Debbie Palmer

Vehicle Day
Clark Academy Students visit the South Carolina Aquarium

Septima P. Clark Corporate Academy Marine Science teacher, Debra Anderson, applied for a free field trip for her students from the South Carolina Aquarium, and won! The school took about 40 students to tour the aquarium this school year. Students engaged in "pre-field trip" activities in order to have a better understanding of what they would be experiencing at the Aquarium. They spent the week leading up to the field trip studying sea turtles in Marine Science. The students engaged in a Turtle Rehabilitation Simulation while at the aquarium with volunteers and were able to see how sea turtles are treated when they enter the Turtle Hospital. The kids had an amazing time, and even noticed a sign that had Septima P. Clark on it when they were leaving!

Early College High School partners with City of Charleston to fill "Gap Time"

The City of Charleston partnered with Early College High School (ECHS) to fill the space of time known as "Gap Time" with meaningful activities for our youth. Gap Time is the time that CCSD schools are in session, but TTC is not. Therefore, the students who are enrolled in dual credit classes have some time to stretch their horizons. Last October’s Gap Time was devoted to learning about how local government works. Early College students spoke with City Councilmembers to learn about city governance structures, boards and commissions, volunteerism, and how to engage in elections.

The City of Charleston of Charleston also agreed to host the October Coffee with Mayor Tecklenburg on the ECHS campus so students could observe and participate.

Partners in Education and Fun: Memminger and CofC

College of Charleston student-athletes are becoming a fixture at Memminger Elementary School. For example, a few of them were recently seen doing something new and fun: GoNoodle with four-year-olds in a Child Development classroom.

This is part of the working partnership Memminger staff has created with the College of Charleston Athletic Department in order to further and sustain community relations. The student-athletes spend time with the students at Memminger reading books, doing small group activities, and letting the students show off their academic achievements.

“Partnering with the student-athletes of the college has provided an insight for Memminger buddy readers to understand the importance of academics when it comes to loving their sport,” explained Principal Dr. Abigail Woods. “Further, having a diverse group of College of Charleston student-athletes visit increases our students’ ability to see themselves successful in a college setting. We are excited about this extension of our College of Charleston partnership.”

Students-athletes from various teams at CofC are also emphasizing how important being successful in school is for their future; no matter what that looks like for them individually.

“Partnering with the student-athletes of the college has provided an insight for Memminger buddy readers to understand the importance of academics when it comes to loving their sport,” explained Principal Dr. Abigail Woods. “Further, having a diverse group of College of Charleston student-athletes visit increases our students’ ability to see themselves successful in a college setting. We are excited about this extension of our College of Charleston partnership.”

— Dr. Abigail Woods, Memminger Elementary School Principal
Daniel Jenkins hosts first official Parent Night and Building Bridges event

On November 12, Daniel Jenkins Academy (DJA) hosted its first official Parent Night with the theme “It’s a Family Affair” during the 2018-2019 school year to promote the great things happening with the program and highlight student achievements. Dinner was provided for everyone in attendance. Following the meal, school administrators and teachers awarded prizes to students.

Building on the success of parent night, DJA and the Murray Hill Community partnered up in May to host Building Bridges, a community event aimed at developing an awareness of the school and building relationships with surrounding neighborhoods. DJA’s students, faculty, and staff along with community members enjoyed a day of fun, entertainment, and engagement featuring free food, performances, prizes, jump castles, gaming, a mobile recording studio, dance contests, and helpful resources for all families!

Early Learning creates community at Goodwin

There is a lot to learn about entering kindergarten. That’s why staff members at W.B. Goodwin Elementary School (WBGES) helped families get an early jump on the 2019-2020 school year through their series of “CD Head Start Parent Meetings.”

Jatonya Frasier, Goodwin’s Head Start Family Advocate, helped organize a meeting just before Spring Break on March 20, to build on an established, positive relationship with the school community. About 20 families attended the event, which served as an opportunity for parents to register their preschool-aged children for kindergarten and to encourage healthy eating in a creative and fun way.

Frasier looks for opportunities to connect with families and that week she did it through nutrition. During the meeting, parents worked with their children to make a butterfly. They started by sorting food into four categories: grain, protein, fruit, and vegetable. Then they followed some simple directions to create a healthy, “edible” butterfly.

As families made their butterflies, Frasier discussed healthy eating habits to prepare students for kindergarten. Parents were provided materials from the United States Department of Agriculture such as colorful handouts, activity books, and other information centered on healthy eating.

“We have to spend time with our children, which is very important to me,” said Kassandra Colon, a WBGES parent. “The activity was fun and we learned about eating the right foods in the right portions. I want to be involved in my child’s school.”

This workshop helped families take their first steps in understanding what it means to be ready, with healthy habits and routines that will prepare their child for kindergarten.

Frasier and the WBGES staff hope to hold more “CD Head Start Parent Meetings” with parents and community members, with the overall goal of increasing engagement at Goodwin.

Technology Night at Drayton Hall

Drayton Hall Elementary School hosted a Technology Night on February 5, where students showcased the work they had completed throughout the school year on iPads, computers, and other devices that facilitate learning.

Technology Night was designed to educate parents and community members about the opportunities that exist at Drayton Hall and give them a glimpse of what scholars are accomplishing through technology.

Angel Ramirez Rodriguez makes an edible butterfly
Open lines of communication between a Constituent Board member and a school principal led to hundreds of flip-flops being delivered to children in Liberia.

Earlier this past winter, Dr. Helen Frazier, who serves on the Constituent District 23 Board of Trustees, spoke with Baptist Hill Middle High School’s principal, Vanessa Brown, about an upcoming trip to the coastal nation in West Africa. Dr. Frazier was actually making a return trip to Liberia; she visited Gbarnga in Bong County last year with her sister to support a non-profit organization that works to change the lives of less-fortunate children through providing necessary physical items (food, clothes, and sanitation products) and education.

The plan for this year’s trip was to bring hundreds of pairs of flip-flops; Dr. Frazier noticed large numbers of kids walking around barefoot. Since part of Baptist Hill’s vision is to serve the community, Principal Brown asked Dr. Frazier if her students could collect flip-flops for villagers. Dr. Frazier gave the go-ahead and the project was on.

Baptist Hill’s Flip-Flop Campaign started when the students returned from winter break. As news spread about the initiative, E.B. Ellington Elementary School students and staff joined the effort. In less than a week, students, families, and staff donated over 350 flip-flops. Dr. Frazier was able to deliver multiple duffle bags full of flip-flops when she arrived in Liberia on January 21.

“The picture of the children receiving flip-flops for the first time was shared with students at Baptist Hill to teach them the importance of kindness and sharing,” said Principal Brown. “Our community is global and we owe it to our students to help them understand how a simple act can change the world.”
CCSD Alumni hosts Rain Gear Drive to benefit Mitchell Elementary School students

Kris Kaylin knows what it’s like to trudge to school in the rain without a raincoat, umbrella, or rain boots. She would have been happy to have only an umbrella on her walk from the Gadsden Green Housing Project to Julian Mitchell Elementary School where the students dodge water filled ruts, oversized mud puddles, and muddy terrain. She and her peers often arrived soaked to the bone.

After she witnessed current students enduring the same, she vowed to help.

The downtown native kicked off the first annual Rain Gear Drive to benefit all of the students at Mitchell.

Sponsored by Z93 Jamz, Mu Alpha Chapter of Omega Psi Phi, Purpose 4 Life, and South Carolina State University’s 1980 Research and Extension Program, the drive encouraged community members to donate new rain gear and drop it off at one of nine locations. Monetary donations were accepted as well.

In just one month, enough umbrellas, raincoats, ponchos, and rain boots were collected to donate to every student. In addition to community donations, 100 umbrellas were donated by SC State’s 1890 Program, Z93 Jamz donated ponchos and umbrellas, and $2,000 was raised.

“Every student received something,” said Mitchell Principal Debbie Smith. “It was awesome. The effort arose from the community seeing a need and in combination with the school and community resources, they were able to supply our entire student body.”

Smith credited school staff members, Allison Hilton and Reggie Terry, who worked diligently to coordinate sizes.

“They didn’t just target a grade level,” added Smith. “They coordinated and made sure every student got what they needed.”

Kaylin lived her entire life on the Peninsula, participated in the Burke High School Band, graduated from Charleston County School of the Arts, and then South Carolina State University. She is well known in the community as a radio personality of Z93 Jamz and is the Assistant Director of Community Relations with the RiverDogs.

Kaylin was able to secure the support of both of her employers and not only donated the needed supplies, but treated students to an afternoon of fun.

The RiverDogs donated hotdogs and chips and Charlie T. Riverdog made a guest appearance. Z93 Jamz played music and broadcast their midday show live from the school.

“I wanted to be the person I needed when I was growing up. I enjoy doing purposeful work. It truly takes a village, and there are still people in need in this community. There are people in this community that can help, including myself, and I will do anything in my power to offer assistance where I can.” – Kris Kaylin

Morningside scholars serving others

Students at Morningside Middle School have a variety of options when it comes to clubs. One of them, the Adopt-a-Grandparent Club, is dedicated to community service. Scholars and sponsors in this group make an effort to brighten the lives of seniors living at Ashley Landing Assisted Living.

Started by Dr. Laura Saunders, who is a reading interventionist at Morningside, the Adopt-a-Grandparent Club visits the residents of Ashley Landing once a month. Before their trips, they create cards and put together goody bags to celebrate an upcoming holiday. Then, when students and staff go to the retirement home, they give the seniors their gifts as well as play Bingo, sing, paint nails, and craft jewelry.

“The residents are so appreciative, and I’m hoping my students are learning to put others first and bring joy and kindness into the world,” explained Saunders. “This project is one of the most rewarding experiences I’ve had in the district.”

“I think the people [at the retirement home] appreciate us coming to visit because they seem very lonely,” added 7th grader Kayla Whaley.

The school paid for the first round of goody bags at the beginning of the school year and Dr. Saunders wrote a Donors Choose project to help collect funding to pay for materials for the rest of the school year.
Edmund A. Burns Elementary School fifth-grade student Patricia Johnson is the first student in the history of the school to be accepted into the Charleston County School District (CCSD) Gifted and Talented Strings Program as a violinist, making her eligible to advance to the CCSD Preparatory District Orchestra. This is her first year at Burns, but she is not new to the district's strings Program.

Johnson fell in love with the violin while at Malcolm C. Hursey Elementary School last year under the instruction of strings teacher Samantha Clark.

“I enjoy strings because I get to learn new things while having fun,” said Johnson. “I really would like to become a professional musician. I want to play in orchestras around the world.”

Sharese Pearson-Bush, M.A, M.Ed., is Johnson's current strings instructor. She transferred to CCSD to rebuild and establish strings instruction in low socio-economic areas. Her transfer to CCSD was an effort to challenge herself. Her mission is to recruit and retain minority students in orchestra. She also teaches 50 orchestra students and numerous music appreciation students at Northwoods Middle.

The Charleston Symphony read the story about Patricia and loved it so much they invited her to spend time with them as their guest! She and her violin teacher, Ms. Bush were their VIP’s on Saturday, April 26, 2019. They were treated to an education session, box seats, and free refreshments. Johnson also received a “shout out” by the conductor during their performance.

Dunston scholars collaborate with North Charleston artist-in-residence

Young scholars at Matilda F. Dunston are taking their art making to the next level with a new mural project at their school.

The students and their art teacher, Amanda Nettles, are collaborating with Quintin Chaplin, painter and muralist, who is City of North Charleston’s artist-in-residence.

To get students’ creative juices flowing, Nettles applied for a grant for art supplies from the non-profit organization, Fresh Artists, based in Philadelphia. Fresh Artists chose Dunston Primary to receive a grant and sent an Art Kit full of good stuff like Cray-Pas and marker class-packs, heavy drawing paper, Model Magic, and tons of other high-quality art supplies.

Thanks to local passion and faraway support, the voices and talent of these young artists is being validated and amplified.
The Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA) Symphony String Orchestra is the first South Carolina orchestra in 36 years to receive an invitation to attend the 73rd Annual Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic. This prestigious event took place December 18-21, 2019, at McCormick Place West in Chicago, IL.

Groups from all over the world apply to perform at the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic. “This is the highest honor a high school band or orchestra can receive, next to winning a Grammy,” stated Dr. Christopher Selby, Director of SOA High School Orchestras. “SOA has only a fraction of the number of students of most Midwest-level high school orchestra programs. But what we lack in numbers, we make up in talent and extremely hard work. As this is the highest achievement a school orchestra can reach, it’s difficult for me to imagine how I could be any more proud of the students than I am.”

There is an extensive application to earn an invitation to the Midwest International Band and Orchestra Clinic. The process requires audio recordings that are judged by a panel of top level educators; this portion is blind which means the panel does not know who is performing. According to Dr. Selby, the performance must be “of professional caliber music,” and it must be performed flawlessly and musically. After a band or orchestra passes this audition round, the panel then reviews video footage of rehearsals of their works, to make sure the director is the master teacher behind the submitted recordings. Band and orchestras are also required to submit three letters of recommendation from nationally recognized music educators.

SOA is only the second school in state history to send their orchestra to this highly esteemed event. Students will begin working in the fall to prepare up to 10 selections to perform.

On Friday, May 24, 2019, scholars from North Charleston Creative Arts Elementary School (NCCAES) performed in the first-ever “Electric Orchestra.” They played selections from multiple genres, including rock, hip-hop, pop, and country music, and performed alongside local musicians.

The orchestra teacher at NCCAES, Andrew Price, came up with the idea for the event as a way to cross genres with classical instruments (i.e. violin, cello, viola) with modern music. The “Electric Orchestra” was created with support from DonorsChoose.org.

For more about the “Electric Orchestra,” search social media using the hashtag, #RockingStrings2019.
CCSD students exhibit works in Anson Street Burial Ground Community Art Expo

When the remains of 36 individuals were unearthed at the Gaillard Center in 2013, so were a mountain of questions: Who were these people? How did they come to be buried here? And most importantly—what are their stories?

Two hundred and fifty years after they were buried, some of those questions have been answered; many revealed in a reinterment ceremony to honor their mark on Charleston's history.

Leading up to that ceremony, nine Charleston County Schools were invited to participate in the recent Anson Street African Burial Ground (ASABG) Community Art Exhibition located in the Charleston Civic Design Center. The self-guided tour of artwork was facilitated by five local artists and La'Sheia Oubre, who is the Education and Community Engagement Coordinator for the Gullah Society. She is also a retired Charleston County School District (CCSD) teacher.

The students were beginning to work on an African mask project when we were asked to do the large mural,” said Oubre. “The students’ artwork hung on the same walls as the professional artists and brought to life these people and their struggles and their impact on Charleston.”

Redux Contemporary Art Center worked alongside the Gullah Society to provide the workshops and engage the community in the ASABG’s efforts. Redux utilized local community artists to engage the community from children to elders.

Workshops were held at local schools and Redux; where students learned about archaeological and genetic research related to the Anson Street African Burials and created artwork using various visual media.

“The students were beginning to work on an African mask project when we were asked to do the large mural,” said Burke High School art teacher Erin Carter. “We decided to combine the masks into a large collage of all the information we were given on the Gullah Society Burial Ground project. We wanted to include the actual bones dug up from the site, so I asked if we could get some copies of the burial remains photos. At that point, things simply started to come together.”

The artwork of these students was inspired by the ancestral spaces uncovered on Anson Street along with the Gullah Geechee Culture. The work was intended to reflect Charleston’s ancestry as much as their own genealogy. The art exhibit will make its way across the Lowcountry, with the next stop at Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission’s McLeod Plantation Historic Site. The exhibit there will run September 2019 to January 2020. All schools are invited to experience the Community Art Installation.

For more information on this traveling Community Art Exhibition, visit www.thegullahsociety.com.

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Wando High School’s Marching Band is known for winning awards for their performances on the field; they recently scored a program-best sixth place finish in the 2018 Bands of America Grand Nationals. However, the students, staff, and community members that make up the Wando Band have also built a reputation for serving the community, and that “performance” off the field has led to more awards.

In January this year, the Warriors learned they received two Advocacy in Action awards from Music for All, a not-for-profit national music education organization. This first-year initiative by Music for All honors programs from around the nation in the areas of fundraising and sponsorship, recruitment and retention, marketing and promotion, parent involvement, community engagement, and decision-maker interaction. Wando won Gold Awards in the categories of community service project (tie for first place) and decision-maker interaction (first place).

The Warriors picked up the Gold Award in the community service category for their project, “School Supply Drive for Lowcountry Orphan Relief.” During the band’s camp in August, the student leadership team decided to create a project that would benefit other students in Charleston County. The students decided that a school supply drive for the Lowcountry Orphan Relief (LOR) would have the biggest impact. For the entire week of band camp, students set up bins around the band field to collect supplies. Students even collected supplies from their neighbors as well as asked for donations on Instagram and Twitter. By the end of the week, the bins were filled with hundreds of notebooks, glue, pencils, pens, backpacks, school clothing, monetary donations, and other supplies for LOR.

Wando’s honor in the decision-maker interaction category came from “March to PE in South Carolina.” Sponsors and parents of the band, including Dr. Don Johnson, started reaching out to state senators and representatives in 2016 to ask that they consider marching band count as a physical education credit for high school diplomas. Through conversations with Senator Vincent Sheheen (D-Kershaw), the Wando band community learned there was a 2016 bill that passed in the State Senate that could award PE credit for band, but did not make it through the State House of Representatives. Over the course of the next two years, advocates worked with lawmakers to revive the bill. With help and support from South Carolina Band Directors’ Association President Leah Corde and Vice President Joe Gulledge, the bill was signed into law on May 18, 2018.

The Bands of Wando are under the direction of Bobby Lambert, Lanie Radecke, and Jeff Handel. Michael Gray is the Program Coordinator for the Wando Marching Band. The Bands of Wando continue to thank the community for their support, along with the Charleston County School District, the Town of Mount Pleasant, its Harmony Sponsors, the Bands of Wando Foundation, parents, and alumni. For more information visit WandoBands.org.
Capturing Kids’ Hearts offers an integrated solution that gives educators tools and techniques to transform their classrooms. Since 1990, campuses across the country have experienced amazing outcomes with Capturing Kids’ Hearts tools and processes by creating socio-emotional safety conducive to learning.

The Flippen Group named Memminger Elementary School, Jerry Zucker Middle School (JZMS) and R.B. Stall High School a Capturing Kids’ Hearts (CKH) Showcase School for the 2018-2019 school year. This honor highlights schools where students and staff are enjoying positive change in their campus culture and academic performance of their students.

These schools are all repeat winners. JZMS is a second-year recipient, while Memminger is a third-year recipient; this is the fourth year Stall has been recognized.

“When you have a kid’s heart, you have their life,” said Laura Veal, teacher assistant at Memminger.

According to the Flippen Group philosophy, when kids and teachers are connected, there is a significant positive transformational effect on the five key indicators of school performance: decreased discipline referrals, increased student achievement, increased attendance rates, increased graduation rates, increased teacher satisfaction.

“We are proud to get this national recognition from CKH for a second year,” said JZMS Principal Jacob Perlmutter. “Our faculty and staff has worked hard to create a great school climate at Zucker Middle School. Like other schools, we focus on connectivity and character traits and kindness but we also stay focused on positivity every day, one student, and one interaction at a time. We’ve learned that by creating a place that we enjoy working, we create a place where our students enjoy working too.”

Memminger IB World School Principal Abigail Woods said the implementation of Capturing Kids’ Hearts at Memminger has helped create a positive, productive learning environment.

Through these National Showcase Schools awards, the Flippen Group celebrates all the campuses that go the extra mile each day to build an environment where students and staff feel safe and connected.
Bilingual students at St. John's High School (SJHS) set the example for what a successful high school student looks like. They took ownership of their education by participating in the new Ambassador Program that pairs non-English speaking students with a Heritage speaking student. It counted as a course credit and is designed to support and foster the inclusion of non-English speaking students.

These bilingual students were transported to nearby Angel Oak Elementary School (AOES) to assist students in the classroom and help staff and administrators where needed. Thirty percent of the school's student population is Hispanic, but nearly 10 percent receive English for Speakers of Other Language (ESOL) instruction.

The Ambassador program is the brainchild of Sam Duncan, a Spanish teacher and Director of Student Activities at SJHS. Last year he noticed bi-lingual students helping their non-English speaking classmates.

"Out of the kindness of their hearts they pitched in to help because they had the ability to do so when their classmates did not," said Duncan. "Since the district is willing to support creative ways to promote career readiness I came up with this initiative to provide a Work/Service Learning Credit."

Ambassadors are chosen based on several requirements. For example, students must be in good academic standing and show proficiency in both English and the native language of their assigned students. Ambassadors must also keep records and create progress reports to provide Ambassador Program Faculty Coordinators with documentation of goals, progress in English comprehension by their student, and overall academic achievement.

Stephanie Becks is the Lead Teacher at AOES. She said the program has fostered a sense of community at the school between the teachers, students, and parents.

"It is amazing to see these high school students take a leadership role in being responsible for helping to support younger students," said Becks. "They're helping these kids and motivating them to be successful."

The success stories are numerous, but one in particular, is of a 5-year-old non-English speaking student who had never been to school before.

"He was scared," she said. "But after working with his Ambassador, he felt understood. It also allowed us to learn that he understood far more about the concepts he was being taught than we thought. Teachers want students to have a voice. In most cases the students 'get it,' they just can't speak the words."

Becks said that Duncan’s idea was already paying dividends and bearing fruit in its first semester.

"The Hispanic community is very influential on Johns Island, and they make up a large part of our school," said Becks. "The Ambassador Program has helped the Hispanic Community feel like their kids are being supported in our school."

Earning a service hour credit, world language credit, and limited ESOL certification/credit is incentive enough according to the participating students, but gaining the leadership experience, cultural exchange opportunities, and becoming invested in the success of their classmates and the generation that will follow them to SJHS is the real prize.

Duncan explained that he’s trying to demonstrate to students that being bilingual can be a game-changer when it comes to securing a lucrative career.

Josue Gonzalez, a 10th grader at SJHS, described the program as a creative way to work with high school students to ready them for the workforce.

"Being bilingual will be beneficial to me when I go to apply for a job and perhaps allow me to earn better wages," Gonzalez said. "Being able to speak both languages gives you confidence, and I want to encourage these young students to speak both because it will offer them better chances in life,"

Gonzalez has done everything from working with the students to answering the phones in the front office. He's put many parents at ease by translating for them. "I am a graduate of Angel Oak Elementary School, so I am appreciative of the opportunity and honored to help," he said.

Britney Gonzalez is an 11th grader at SJHS. She's always wanted to work with children, and as the oldest of five siblings, she's been doing that most of her life. She hopes to be a pediatrician one day and being bi-lingual will be a useful job skill. For now, being able to help these young students is her focus.

"I was working with a first grader who couldn't learn his numbers and after a week of me helping to translate he was beginning to learn them," Gonzalez said. "It makes me feel good because when you're only Spanish speaking, it makes you feel closed in and judged. When I am working with the students, they open up to me and show me what they know. As they begin to learn English, their education gets easier, and they're better able to interact with others and make friends."

According to Duncan, this real-life experience is showing his students that they have value if they are bilingual.

“They feel empowered and are motivated because they’re representatives of not only the school but the community,” said Duncan.

Ambassador Program fosters inclusion and peer-to-peer learning
The word HERO is well known to the scholars of St. James-Santee. As a Positive Behavior Interventions and Support school, the scholars are expected to be HEROs each day and exemplify positive social and learning behaviors.

Principal LaCarma McMillan has cultivated positivity through various initiatives. One, in particular, is customized staff t-shirts. These shirts are not to be mistaken as your everyday spirit t-shirts.

The shirts say, “Help Every Scholar Soar” with the word ‘HERO’ highlighted down the middle. The shirts are only worn on special occasions, which signify and demonstrate unity among all stakeholders.

Most recently, the t-shirts were worn for a school-wide Hornet Writing Workshop.

Everyone at St. James-Santee is a HERO

Fifth-grader Michael Jones, third-grader Kalaila Garrett, and fifth-grader Alanah Austin
Charleston County School District’s (CCSD) Nutrition Services Department teamed up with Chef GioVanni Richardson, founder of “A Taste of Gullah,” to connect curriculum to the cafeteria during Black History Month.

The Gullah culture is important to the Lowcountry, and James Simons Elementary School Principal Chris Ryan wanted a fitting way to recognize and commemorate Black History Month.

On February 28, 2019, students enjoyed a Gullah cuisine menu of okra gumbo, all meat pilau, rutabagas with greens, southern succotash, mandazi, and assorted fruit.

“This vision came about two years ago while researching ways to tie in the local community to our schools,” said Joe Pettit, CCSD’s Nutrition Services Field Officer. “In years past we’ve done similar things like Farm-to-School initiatives where we’ve partnered with local farmers. The Gullah culture is part of the academic curriculum. By connecting the curriculum to the cafeteria, we’re completing that circle for the students and allowing them to taste what they are studying.”

Richardson is not just any chef, but an expert in Gullah cuisine. She and her team worked side-by-side with CCSD Nutrition Services staff, helping to assure they stayed true to her authentic recipes to properly commemorate Black History Month.

“It is very important that we celebrate Black History Month and the Gullah culture,” said Richardson. “I want the students to have self-awareness and know who they are as a person so they can be open to their history, culture, and language.”

She hopes the recipes used at the “Taste of Gullah” luncheon will be infused into the school menu throughout the district, so students experience a variety of authenticity.

“We honestly look at the students as being the heart of our work so it makes complete sense that there should be no distinction between what is taught in the classroom and served in the cafeteria,” said Pettit. “It is our duty to help children by hitting all of their senses to help them grasp information and help educate by bringing awareness to different cultures and food, especially the Gullah culture, which is the heartbeat of Charleston and the Lowcountry.”

Ashley Henderson, cafeteria manager at James Simons, explained that Montessori curriculum is rich with cultural lessons and bringing the lesson to the meal table is a natural part of the learning experience.

This is the first time such a partnership has happened through Nutrition Services. Pettit said that because of its success, the idea could be expanded to other schools.
Nineteen Charleston County School District scholars are receiving prestigious National Merit Scholarships from the National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC). They are part of the group of winners in the 64th annual National Merit Scholarship Program.

The following CCSD students received 2019 corporate-sponsored, college-sponsored, or $2,500 National Merit Scholarships:

**ACADEMIC MAGNET HIGH SCHOOL**

- Colin M. Baker
  National Merit South Carolina Sports Medicine and Orthopaedic Center Scholarship
- Razeen Basunia
  National Merit Boeing Scholarship
- Adriana Carter
  National Merit South Carolina Sports Medicine and Orthopaedic Center Scholarship
- Luke Freudenhelm
  National Merit Wofford College Scholarship
- Anthony Joyce
  National Merit University of Alabama Scholarship
- Abigail Keating
  National Merit University of South Carolina Sports Medicine and Orthopaedic Center Scholarship
- Jared Lipton
  National Merit South Carolina Sports Medicine and Orthopaedic Center Scholarship
- Christopher M. Littlejohn, Jr.
  National Merit University of Georgia Scholarship
- Devinder Narula
  National Merit Clemson University Scholarship
- Paul Puckette, Jr.
  National Merit Clemson University Scholarship
- Steven Schlosser
  National Merit Clemson University Scholarship
- Rachel Smith
  National Merit University of Alabama Scholarship
- James Staubes
  National Merit University of Alabama Scholarship
- Zachariah Wallace-Wright
  National Merit Tufts University Scholarship
- Jonathan Ye
  National Merit Boston University Scholarship
- Yuna Zhao
  National Merit University of Maryland Scholarship
According to the NMSC, over 1.6 million juniors in approximately 22,000 high schools entered the 2019 National Merit Scholarship Program when they took the 2017 Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT), which served as an initial screen of program entrants. Semifinalists first had to advance to the next round by fulfilling additional requirements. Each semifinalist was asked to submit a detailed scholarship application, which included writing an essay and providing information about extracurricular activities, awards, and leadership positions. Semifinalists also had to have an outstanding academic record, be endorsed and recommended by a high school official, and earn SAT® scores that confirmed the qualifying test performance. By the conclusion of the 2019 competition, about 7,600 Finalists will have been selected to receive National Merit Scholarships totaling over $31 million.

NMSC, a not-for-profit organization that operates without government assistance, was established in 1955 to conduct the National Merit Scholarship Program. The majority of National Merit Scholarships offered each year are underwritten by 410 independent corporate and college sponsors that support NMSC’s efforts to honor the nation’s scholastically talented youth and encourage academic excellence at all levels of education.

Duke TIP participants, who were identified and recognized at either the Grand Recognition Ceremony or the State Recognition Ceremony, during their 7th grade year (2017–18), automatically qualify to become 2018–19 SC Junior Scholars. Congratulations to our 90 CCSD SC Junior Scholars!
Congratulations to our 2019 CCSD Valedictorians!

Steven Schlosser  
*Academic Magnet High*

Maggie Deas  
*Baptist Hill High*

Sheniah Everson  
*Burke High*

Dihn Long  
*Charleston Charter School for Math And Science*

Roey Leonardi  
*Charleston County School of the Arts*

Jalen Roberts  
*Garrett Academy of Technology*

Dawan Markee Nelson, Jr.  
*Greg Mathis Charter High*

Elizabeth Payson Richardson  
*James Island Charter High*

Tyrese Middleton  
*Military Magnet Academy*

Rome Breland  
*North Charleston High*

Steven Robinson  
*R.B. Stall High School*

Michael Hazel  
*St John's High*

Allison Fister  
*Wando High School*

Marcus Jackson  
*West Ashley High*
Three students from the district won the 2019 John M. Settle/CresCom Bank Award for outstanding achievement in global issues. The World Affairs Council of Charleston and CresCom honored Spencer Margosian of Wando High School, Byron Murphy from Burke High School, and Military Magnet Academy's Amyah Wright during a ceremony at The Citadel's Holliday Alumni Center April 17.

This award is named after the late John M. Settle, Sr., a graduate of the former Charleston High School and The Citadel, and Chairman Emeritus of Community FirstBank (now CresCom Bank).

The students submitted incisive essays analyzing challenges as diverse as competition with China to global health policy.

The World Affairs Council of Charleston (WACC, formerly the Charleston Foreign Affairs Forum) was founded in the early 1980s as a non-profit, nonpartisan organization. The WACC mission is to educate and engage the wider Charleston community through timely nonpartisan activities on world affairs and international relations.

Each student received a Kindle to help further their studies. The WACC and CresCom honored the teachers that worked with the students as well: Jason Brisini (Wando), Kelsey McGee (Burke), and Jarrett Villa (Military Magnet).

This is the 14th year the Settle Award has been given to CCSD students.

Mallory Posta might not pursue the agricultural field when she gets older, but the fourth-grader at Ashley River Creative Arts Elementary School might have a future in that line of work. She was awarded a $1,000 scholarship for winning “best in state” in the 2018 Bonnie Plants Third Grade Cabbage Program. Mallory grew her cabbage at home during the spring semester of her third-grade year before submitting her prize-winning entry.

More than 28,000 kids from South Carolina participated this past year, and more than one million third graders throughout the nation have participated in this contest since 2002.

Alabama-based Bonnie Plants, the largest producer and distributor of vegetable and herb plants in North America, began this initiative in 1996 to inspire a love of vegetable gardening in young people and continue to “grow” the next generation of gardeners. By 2002, the Cabbage Program became a national endeavor. The program awards a $1,000 scholarship to one student in each participating state. At the end of the season, teachers from each third grade class select the student who has grown the “best” cabbage, based on size and appearance. A digital image of the cabbage and student is submitted online at www.bonnieplants.com. That student’s name is then entered in a statewide drawing. State winners are randomly selected by the office of the Commissioner of Agriculture.

“Ashley River third graders have been participating in this program for several years,” said Principal Michelle Conner. “This year, Mallory and other students in her class posted their progress on their Google Classroom account and gave growing tips to one another. We are so proud of Mallory for all of the hard work she put into growing her cabbage!”

Molly Hunsinger, senior at Charleston County School of the Arts, was awarded the Rufus C. Barkley, Jr. Leadership Scholarship. The scholarship was awarded in the amount of $10,000 a year, renewable throughout four years of college, for a total value of $40,000. This award may be used to help with costs associated with course-related requirements.

Hunsinger will be attending Wesleyan University in Connecticut this fall.

Rufus C. Barkley was a Renaissance man with interests that ranged from opera and ballroom dancing to neighborhood football and bush-whacking on his Colleton County property. His son, Miles, summed it up – “If I can be half the person he was, I’ll be alright.”

When Mr. Barkley assumed control of the Cameron and Barkley Company in 1975, a firm his great grandfather founded, he began selling stock to its employees. By 1983, the company was 100% employee-owned. Because of this selflessness, they benefited tremendously when the company was later sold.

Just before Rufus died of Lou Gehrig’s disease in 2001, his friends, family, and business colleagues at the Cameron and Barkley Company started a scholarship fund to honor him. Since then, The Rufus C. Barkley, Jr. Leadership Scholarship has provided talented student leaders with $10,000 every year for four years to go to college and be inspired to emulate the integrity, compassion, and vitality of this ‘genuine’ man.
Four CCSD students receive high honor from Girl Scouts

Four Charleston County School District students recently earned the Silver Award from Girl Scouts of the USA, the highest honor a Girl Scout can receive at the Cadette level.

Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA) 7th grader Shannon Phelan, her older sister Bailey Phelan, a 9th grader at Academic Magnet High School, Emily Severance, a 9th grader at SOA, and Joy Jaroscak, a 9th grader at Wando High School, completed a project, titled “Teen to Teen,” that educates their peers and the community about psychological issues many adolescents face, and what causes those issues.

The end result was the production of pamphlets that address the topics of substance abuse, eating disorders, child abuse, bipolar disorders, anxiety, depression, and bullying. The forms contain tips on how to help or get help for someone going through those specific problems. The students said they decided on this project because they knew several people, including some of their close friends, who struggled with these issues. More importantly, they wanted to learn how to respond during a situation when one of their peers behaved differently because of their psychological health.

Along with the brochures, the Phelans, Severance, and Jaroscak developed a website to showcase their information; the website is currently available to CCSD students and staff with a district Google account. They are working to expand access to the website to everyone in the near future.

“Teen to Teen” took nearly a year to complete and required a minimum of 50 hours of community service per student. Entries for the Silver Award have to prove sustainability; “Teen to Teen” has the proof.

The pamphlets are being used by SOA, Academic Magnet, and Wando guidance counselors and are available at a few local doctors’ offices, including Mount Pleasant Pediatrics (Dr. Matthew Davis was an important advisor for this project).

The four students of Troop 115 received their Silver Award pin at a Girl Scout East Cooper Service Unit meeting on November 5.
West Ashley Valedictorian honored for 12 years of perfect attendance

A 12-year perfect attendance record is unbelievable testimony to grit and dedication according to West Ashley High School (WAHS) Principal Lee Runyon.

Very few students across South Carolina can boast that accomplishment but two scholars from WAHS can.

The State Department of Education recently recognized Marcus Jackson, West Ashley’s 2019 Valedictorian and fellow student Davonte Capers. The two have known each other since middle school. Jackson admits that there was a time when they were the only kids in the classroom during their junior year on the day after final exams.

He never set out to achieve perfect attendance. However, he had to pass on many field trips because he refused to miss class time. He always insisted that all doctor’s appointments were scheduled after school.

“It is critical to show up so as not to get behind in class,” said Jackson. “It is hard to recover from the missed instructional time. I take pride in showing up to class, and I do it because it is natural for me to want to go to school.”

Impressed by Jackson’s humbleness, Runyon bragged on his top student.

“Very few South Carolina students achieve a 12-year perfect attendance record and earn the title of valedictorian,” said Runyon. “This is only the beginning for Marcus. He will far surpass these accomplishments.”

Jackson, who boasts a weighted 5.283 GPA, was awarded the Teaching Fellows Scholarship and plans to attend the University of South Carolina and major in History. He expects to obtain a Master of Arts in Teaching as well. Aside from his love of history, Jackson enjoys reading, trivia, volunteering at the Lowcountry Food Bank, listening to classical music and K-Pop, and playing historical video games.

As part of earning the distinction of valedictorian, Jackson was awarded The C.E. Williams Cup. The Cup is given annually to the graduate who has earned the highest grade point average over his or her high school career. This award honors Mr. C.E. Williams, former Superintendent of Charleston County District 10 schools.

Jackson hopes to teach social studies and history. He enjoys the subject so much that he took every single social studies class offered at WAHS.

“I want to make history fun and inspire my future students to have a love of learning,” said Jackson. “My teachers have always been my mentors, and they pushed me to do my best. My academic success is because of the great teachers I enjoyed. They helped me to grow as a student and as a person. Those teachers are more the key to my success than anything I have done.”

Jackson’s love of education was evident in his final words at graduation.

“My teachers have always been my favorite part of going to school. I would like to thank all of my teachers for fostering my growth and development as a student and more importantly as a person and for doing the same for all of us. I will work very hard these next few years in order to hopefully join your profession and do the same for future students, and I’m sure I speak for many of my fellow graduates.”

– Marcus Jackson, West Ashley Valedictorian
Burns beats the field at 6th annual CPN Social Studies Bowl

Scholars from Edmund A. Burns Elementary School captured the 2019 Charleston Promise Neighborhood (CPN) Social Studies Bowl title Thursday, March 7, 2019 at the Charleston Museum.

Burns not only took the overall championship but also earned wins in the 3rd- and 5th-grade levels; James Simons Elementary School finished first in 2nd grade and Mary Ford Elementary School won in the 4th grade round. Chicora Elementary School and Sanders-Clyde Elementary School also participated in the event.

Jonathan Dugan, Burns’ math interventionist worked with students for several weeks and said the hard work paid off. One of those students, 5th-grader David Turner, helped lead the Bears to victory.

“This win was for my mom, my teachers, and my school,” said Turner. “I feel so good.”

The CPN Social Studies Bowl gives students an opportunity to showcase what they have learned in school when it comes to history, government, geography, and sociology.

The following students participated in the CPN Social Studies Bowl for Burns:

3rd Grade – Taniyah Blake and Cha’Nique Jackson
4th Grade – Promise Delesline and Shamya Frasier
5th Grade – Keyonna Johnson and David Turner
Alternates – Malashia Riley-Pinckney, Daniel Prioleau, Kyron Jackson, Ayden Wilson, and Myron Myers-Roberts

The competition is sponsored by CPN in partnership with Charleston County School District, Charleston Museum, and Historic Charleston Foundation.

ACADEMIC MAGNET WINS CCSD ACADEMIC BOWL 2019

Academic Magnet High School won the 2019 CCSD Academic Bowl title on March 12, 2019 with a victory in the finals at 75 Calhoun.

The Raptors defeated Wando High School in the championship round after the Warriors got past Charleston County School of the Arts in consolation bracket finals.

Every year, Charleston County School District (CCSD) high schools compete in the annual Academic Bowl, sponsored by the Exchange Club of Charleston. After eight weeks of competition, the season concludes with the 2019 CCSD Academic Bowl Finals.

Academic Magnet High School (AMHS), Charleston County School of the Arts (SOA), and Wando High School (WHS) were the participants.
Kumarasinghe takes top spot in CCSD’s 2019 Spelling Bee

It took 30 rounds to get to the final word of the night in the Charleston County School District (CCSD) 2019 Spelling Bee held January 17, 2019 at Burke High School. Orange Grove Charter School 7th grader Ranitha Kumarasinghe spelled “debacle” with ease, giving him the title.

Forty-two students from 38 schools began the competition. Only four scholars took the top four spots. Eighteen students total advanced to the SpellBound! 2019 competition sponsored by the Post and Courier on March 7, 2019.

Kumarasinghe was the 2018 CCSD Spelling Bee runner-up and the winner of the Post and Courier’s SpellBound! 2018 competition.

“I was much more confident this year because I knew the words from last year,” said Kumarasinghe. “I studied every chance I got.”

Kumarasinghe edged out John Ryan Ottaviano, an 8th grader from Camp Road Middle School.

Kumarasinghe also had to spell “prosciutto” once Ottaviano barely missed it.

The following CCSD students advanced to The Post and Courier SpellBound! Spelling Bee:

1st place: Ranitha Kumarasinghe, Orange Grove Charter School, 7th grade; 2nd place: John Ryan Ottaviano, Camp Rad Middle School, 8th grade; 3rd place: Randolph Villariza, School of the Arts, 6th grade; 4th place: Grace Reed, Laing Middle School, 6th grade

Additional top 18 spellers: Amulanga Adyaeva, Drayton Hall Elementary, 5th grade; Wes Baldwin, Thomas C. Cario Middle School, 8th grade; Aayush Bansod, Oakland Elementary School, 5th grade; Henley Bilbro, Stiles Point Elementary School, 5th grade; Pierce Brewer, Springfield Elementary School, 5th grade; Celeste Gamble, Charleston Charter for Math and Science, 8th grade; Finn Hayes, C.E. Williams Middle School, 6th grade; Destiny Mambo, Deer Park Middle School, 5th grade; Sophia Milner, Orange Grove Elementary School, 5th grade; Harold Mullin, Haut Gap Middle School, 7th grade; Luke Nestleroad, Buist Academy, 5th grade; Zuriel Nyamutsaka, A.C. Corcoran Elementary School, 5th grade; Dinystee Porcher, St. James-Santee Elementary Middle School, 8th grade; Keerthana Samuel, St. Andrew’s School of Math and Science, 5th grade
Teams from Charleston Charter School for Math and Science (CCSMS) and Laing Middle School beat out their peers in the 9th annual Charleston SeaPerch Regional Challenge to claim overall victories.

The following teams finished first in the three separate competitions:
- Obstacle Course HS – CCSMS Team #3
- MS – Laing Team #17
- Engineering Notebook HS - CCSMS Team #4
- MS – Buist Academy Team #9
- Mission: Rescue & Recovery HS – CCSMS Team #4
- MS – Laing Team #16

Thirteen teams from schools throughout Charleston County School District (CCSD) and the Tri-County area competed at the Danny Jones Pool in North Charleston using their underwater remotely operated vehicles (ROV) in two different events: a challenge course and an obstacle course. Teams also received scores on their Engineering Notebook presentations.

SeaPerch is an innovative underwater robotics program that equips teachers and students with the resources they need to build a ROV in an in-school or out-of-school setting. Students build the ROV from a kit comprised of low-cost, easily accessible parts, following a curriculum that teaches basic engineering and science concepts with a marine engineering theme. The SeaPerch Program provides students with the opportunity to learn about robotics, engineering, science, and mathematics while building an underwater ROV as part of a science and engineering technology curriculum. Throughout the project, students will learn engineering concepts, problem-solving, teamwork, and technical applications.

The SeaPerch Program provides students with the opportunity to learn about robotics, engineering, science, and mathematics while building an underwater ROV as part of a science and engineering technology curriculum. Throughout the project, students will learn engineering concepts, problem-solving, teamwork, and technical applications.
Academic Magnet High School’s (AMHS) Robotics Team won first place in the Open Class Engineering Process and Design category in the 2019 SeaPerch Challenge held at the University of Maryland in June.

Team members included Gage Gailbreath, Stephen Hilton, Daniel Killough, Angela Li, John Paradise, and Bohan Wang.

Organized by RoboNation, the international SeaPerch competition presents an opportunity for high school students to learn about STEM-related fields by creating an underwater remotely operated vehicle (ROV).

The competition challenged students to have an ROV that executes rescue operations.

Using SeaPerch kits, a Nanoline controller, Arduino boards and sensors, AMHS Robotics Team members created an autonomous system of underwater rovers complete with infrared sensors and GPS technology. The system allows the small vehicles to detect and avoid debris, while simultaneously identifying and pinpointing possible rescue persons and locations within bodies of water.

The team built two rovers: a smaller scouting bot, which was half the size of a normal SeaPerch kit that was outfitted with sensors to record information; and a Search and Rescue bot, the normal size for a SeaPerch kit, that has a malleable hook to pick up and move objects within the rescue and recovery course.

Over 2,000 middle and high school teams competed over the past year throughout the United States. Two hundred of these groups advanced to face international teams from four countries to compete in three categories of speed and agility, rescue and recovery, and engineering process and design.

AMHS competed in the regional competition held in Charleston against 30 teams in March of this year, then advanced to the international challenge.

Although the AMHS robot performed respectably in the obstacle and mission courses, the judges were most impressed with the engineering process and design the students created.

While the team’s automation system appears to be very sophisticated technologically, the rover itself was physically built using recycled pool noodles, a coat hanger, and a pencil on top of the basic SeaPerch kit. The rover looked so simple that, during the question and answer portion of the presentation, judges remarked, “On one side, we have NASA, and on the other is what you can find on the floor.”

As the typical SeaPerch robot is made using no more than $25 beyond the original SeaPerch kit, the team decided to follow that general low-budget model, with added technology.

The students not only learned about the process and challenges of creating an ROV but how their work can go in solving real-world issues.

The Academic Magnet Robotics Team was sponsored by Academic Magnet’s Partners In Education Foundation, the CCSD Laura Brown Fund, and Phoenix Contact.
CCSD STUDENTS LEAD THE WAY IN LOWCOUNTRY REGIONAL SCIENCE FAIR

Charleston County School District scholars collected plenty of honors at the Lowcountry Regional Science and Engineering Fair (LRSEF) at TD Arena Tuesday, April 9. The LRSEF is the International Science and Engineering Fair and Broadcom MASTERS Competition affiliate for Berkeley, Charleston, Colleton, Dorchester, and Georgetown counties in South Carolina. The College of Charleston is the title sponsor for the LRSEF.

Twenty-six students from a total of seven CCSD schools received awards and/or placed in the top three in their division and category, including Academic Magnet High School’s Ishraq Haque, who was the first place overall winner in the Senior 1 Division for his project called A Novel Arsenic Filtration System for Low-Income Families in Rural Bangladesh. Haque, along with his teachers and parents, earned an expense paid trip to the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair May 16, 2019 in Phoenix, AZ.

Senior 2 Division is for 11th and 12th graders, Senior 1 Division is 9th and 10th graders, Junior 2 Division is comprised of 7th and 8th graders, and Junior 1 Division is for 5th and 6th graders.

Congratulations to our all our students winners this year! Overall winners are listed below:

OVERALL
Senior 2 Division
Second Place – Stephen Hilton and John Paradise, Academic Magnet High School

Senior 1 Division
First Place - Ishraq Haque, Academic Magnet High School
Third Place – Gabrielle Kohler and Sophie Sabados, Wando High School

Junior 2 Division
First Place – Walker Hussey, East Cooper Montessori Charter School
Teacher – Angie Alves

Junior 1 Division
First Place – Landon Burn, St. Andrew’s School of Math and Science
Teacher – Jennifer Wood

Ishraq Haque
Academic Magnet High School

Landon Burn
St. Andrew’s School of Math and Science

Walker Hussey
East Cooper Montessori Charter School
Charles Pinckney Elementary School’s (CPES) chess team has a tradition of success; the Pirates added to that tradition by winning a title at the South Carolina Scholastic Championships. They took home the K-5 Division crown; it is Pinckney’s ninth overall state championship in chess.

A total of 221 students from 31 teams in four divisions, K-3, K-5, K-8, and K-12, participated in the event at Dent Middle School March 9, 2019.

Zachary Teachman led the way for Pinckney; the fourth grader finished in 6th place individually in the K-5 division with a record of 4-1. Teammates Luke Kuehmeier and Stone Pham tied for 10th place in the same division.

The K-3 team from Pinckney had a solid performance as well, finishing in third place in that division. Third-grader Lucas Sullivan led the way with a 13th place finish in the individual standings thanks to a 3-2 mark.

A pair of Charleston County School District (CCSD) middle school teams shined in the state tournament, too. Thomas C. Cario Middle School finished as state runner-up in the K-8 Division, and Laing Middle School finished in fifth place. Cario 6th grader, William Tabakian, placed 6th with a record of 4-1 and was named the top 6th grader in the state, and teammate Brady Setser tied for 14th with a record of 3-2. Laing’s Ava Schoonover was named the top female in K-8 after going 3-2 in the competition.

All three teams are coached by Stuart Chagrin, who serves on the United States Chess Trust Board, and is the former President of the Marshall Chess Club.

The Pinckney team is supported by Gifted and Talented teacher E.C. Setser, Cario’s chess squad is organized by Social Studies teacher Andrea Garver, and Social Studies teacher Paul Graves helps out with the chess team at Laing.

While all of the competitors were on a mission to bring home trophies, they enjoyed the environment and the opportunity.
CHARLESTON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

CCSD SCHOOLS PARTICIPATE IN BUILD A SHED

Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with ABC Carolinas, presented Build A Shed, a building competition for students and career-ready youth in Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester counties on Friday, May 3, 2019.

Seven teams completed the shed using the same blueprint while being mentored by volunteer construction industry professionals in safety, quality, planning, scheduling, and communication. All participants earned the OSHA 10 Certification.

Completed sheds were auctioned off to the community. All proceeds support future Chamber-led talent and workforce development efforts.

R.B Stall High School (team name - Stall Nailed It!) took second place, and Wando High School (Building Warriors) placed third.

The 2019 Build A Shed event included a one-day building competition of an 8’ x 11’ garden-type shed. Teams consisted of regional high school students with interest in construction careers and summer jobs. After the competition, these young adults will be prepared to be matched with employers for summer internships through The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Work Experience program.

Through this building competition, students are provided the opportunity to work directly with construction professionals and learn about the fast-paced and lucrative construction industry. Participants have the opportunity to connect with leaders that are looking for skilled talent. Construction has numerous entry points, both with and without a college degree, and those who want to learn new skills can find a career within this field.
CCSD scholars and schools make mark at TTC Quest

Charleston County School District (CCSD) students and schools performed at a high level once again at the 33rd Annual Quest Academic Competition at Trident Technical College (TTC) on Saturday, March 2, 2019.

Three CCSD schools won team titles. Camp Road Middle won Level I (6th grade) for the second year in a row, Moultrie Middle won Level II (7th and 8th grade), and Academic Magnet won Level III (9th and 10th grade).

Students participated in four levels of competition: Level IV (11th and 12th graders), Level III (9th and 10th graders), Level II (7th and 8th graders), and Level I (6th graders).

Students earned points in team competitions in math, science, and social studies, and in individual competitions in composition, public speaking and visual arts. Schools whose students earned the most total points won overall awards at each level. Special competitions that did not contribute points toward the overall awards were held in automotive, computer-aided design, computer programming, culinary, French, horticulture, Spanish, video/film, and welding.

The following is the list of CCSD winners (students and schools) and those who placed in the Top-3 in the various competitions:

Level I Overall
Camp Road Middle – First Place

Composition Ailynn Hlavac - Camp Road Middle School – First Place
Mathematics Camp Road Middle School (Edward Mack, Boyd Bridges, Quinn Mulholland) – First Place Thomas C. Cario Middle School (Jack Keifer, Maxwell Peters, Annabelle Twomey) – Second Place
Public Speaking Jackson Pearce - Camp Road Middle School - First Place Ava Grace Luckie – Camp Road Middle School – Third Place
Science Thomas C. Cario Middle School (Kyle Schuette, Ethan McCleary, James Benetti) - Second Place Camp Road Middle School (Sydney Simpson, Caleb McCrary, Logan Black) – Third Place
Social Studies Camp Road Middle School (William Herring, Noah Counts, Eliza Ladd) - First Place
Visual Arts Rowan Ruppel – Charleston County School of the Arts – Second Place Kaitlin Barnard – Thomas C. Cario Middle School – Third Place

Level II Overall
Moultrie Middle – First Place

Composition Cambridge Surch - Laing Middle School – Second Place Margie Moore – Camp Road Middle School – Third Place
Mathematics Moultrie Middle School (Sam Henshaw, McRae Wallace) – First Place Thomas C. Cario Middle School (Jeffrey Song, Brady Setser, Jessie Ross) - Third Place
Public Speaking Colin George – Thomas C. Cario Middle School – Second Place
Science Moultrie Middle School (Finaly Palmer, Troy Rauchut, Joseph Garner) – First Place Laing Middle School (Laura Cowart, Isabelle Wilson, Joseph Virgilio) – Third Place
Social Studies Moultrie Middle School (Ben Henderson, Ashley Jackson, Vishwa Veeraswamy) - Second Place Thomas C. Cario Middle School (Wes Baldwin, Grayson Garner, Caroline Tiller) - Third Place
Visual Arts Laura Robertson – Moultrie Middle School – First Place (Tie) Savannah Bowlin – Moultrie Middle School – Third Place

Level III Overall
Academic Magnet High – First Place

Mathematics Academic Magnet High School (Vanish Nappal, Ethan Ouellette) – First Place Wando High School (Sarah Rickborn, Claire Gaddy, Adam Swanson) - Second Place Academic Magnet High School (Jennifer Lee, Shreyas Mytri, Preston Sessoms) - Third Place
Science Academic Magnet High School (Ansel Dietrich, Miles Turk, Timothy Wilson) – Third Place
Social Studies James Island Charter High School (William J. Wells IV, Emma Abrams, Elias Wendt) – First Place Academic Magnet High School (Josh Moore, McKenna Ronchetto, Liam Wood) - Second Place Academic Magnet High School (Sophia Butcher, Amelia Butcher, Amelia Kitchens) - Third Place

Level IV Overall
Wando High School – Second Place

Composition Carly Stoy - Wando High School – Second Place Isabel Netherland - James Island Charter High School – Third Place
Mathematics Academic Magnet High School (James Staubes, Ashley Fister, Shreyon Roy) – First Place Wando High School (Dylan Smith, Giyoung Kim, Jack Mays) – Second Place
Science Wando High School (Eric Won, Spencer Margosian, Anurag Valiveti) – Second Place
Visual Arts Grayson Bair - James Island Charter High School – Second Place

Special Competitions (Grades 9 -12)

Automotive Garrett Haldrup - Wando – Second Place
Computer Aided Design Claire Andersen - Wando High School – Third Place
Computer Programming Academic Magnet High School (Alex Huang, Kyle Smith, Manning Unger) – First Place Wando High School (Gabe Cutter, William Eustis, Caleb Watson) – Second Place Wando High School (Clemente Farias, Allison Fister, Catherine Stewart) - Third Place
Horticulture Rainey Spears - Wando High School– Third Place
Spanish I Sarah Nelson – Academic Magnet High School – First Place Anyjah Sally – Academic Magnet High School – Second Place Heather Harris – Wando High School – Third Place
Spanish II Keiry Mora García – Academic Magnet High School – First Place
Academic Magnet High School has been named the Best High School in the country by *U.S. News & World Report*. The U.S. News Best High Schools rankings include data on more than 17,000 schools that were ranked on six factors based on their performance on state assessments and how well they prepare students for college.

Almost all courses offered at Academic Magnet are either honors or Advanced Placement courses, and every student completes an independent research project during their junior and senior years. Students’ work has been published in multiple academic and professional journals. Students can stay connected with Wi-Fi access in the cafeteria and three computer labs.

“The *U.S. News & World Report* #1 national ranking is a credit and honor to our students, staff, Raptor community, and current and past leadership of this extraordinary school,” said Principal Catherine Spencer. “Having a long history in education spanning both the national and international arenas, I am convinced daily of the outstanding excellence of our school, and this national top ranking edifies what we all experience at Academic Magnet High School every single day. My congratulations go out to our entire community!”

Academic Magnet was also named Best Magnet School in the country.

Charleston County School of the Arts (#2), Wando High School (#4) and Charleston Charter for Math and Science (#25), join Academic Magnet in the top 25 as a Top Ranked State High School, according to *U.S. News & World Report*.

“The Charleston County School District strives for excellence in all things,” said Dr. Gerrita Postlewait, Superintendent of Schools. “With a team of committed educators and students dedicated to learning, schools like Academic Magnet, School of the Arts, Wando, and Charleston Charter for Math and Science continuously excel beyond measure. This national honor is a direct result of what can be accomplished with hard work.”

Charleston County School District (CCSD) has been awarded the 2018 South Carolina Charter School Sponsor of the Year by the Public Charter School Alliance of South Carolina (PCSASC).

The award, given at the 18th Annual South Carolina Charter School Conference today in Charleston, recognizes a charter school sponsor with an exemplary record of service, whose schools have become successful through their active involvement and support within the charter school movement in South Carolina.

Currently the largest local school district sponsor and third largest overall sponsor of charter schools in South Carolina, CCSD has authorized ten charter schools in the Lowcountry with support and assistance that includes professional development and contractual support services.

CCSD honored by PCSASC
Charleston County School District received 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.”
Laurel Hill Primary School recently received their Certificate of Accreditation from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). This honor is held by just a handful of public schools in the state of South Carolina.

Principal Ashley Dorsey explained that the NAEYC accreditation is done every five years, and is important to maintain since primary schools do not participate in standardized state testing. Laurel Hill Primary, one of only two primary schools in Charleston County School District, has been accredited since 2011.

The 2017-2018 school year was Laurel Hill’s renewal year. The process involved a year-long program of creating portfolios for the school as a whole, individual classroom portfolios, and a site visit by NAEYC. The renewal means Laurel Hill Primary is accredited for another five years.

Department of Exceptional Children awarded for Strategic Leadership in Education

TregoED recognized Charleston County School District (CCSD) as a winner of the 2018 Benjamin B. Trego Award for Strategic Leadership in Education for their organizational excellence in collaborative decision making.

The award is presented to school districts, individuals or teams that have achieved significant and enduring results using TregoED tools for collaborative problem solving and decision making. The honor recognizes the district’s ability to demonstrate successful resolution of a critical issue and show evidence of systemic change that has had a lasting impact on their decision-making and problem-solving culture.

TregoED helps school districts achieve problem-solving and decision-making excellence. Using proven processes delivered via high-quality workshops, consulting, and coaching. Since TregoED’s founding in 1993, the processes have reached over 20,000 education leaders in the U.S. and Canada. TregoED processes are adapted from those developed by Kepner-Trego. KT processes have been used by government and Fortune 1000 companies in 44 countries for over 60 years.

Three other districts, nationwide, New Brighton Area School District (PA), York County School Division (VA) and Johnston County School District (NC) will also be honored for their work.

TregoED collaborative problem-solving and decision-making processes were used by the Department of Exceptional Children to improve communication and increase leadership capacity within the schools through the development of cross-collaborative teams. The use of process allowed them to address high-priority issues more effectively, minimize barriers that occur in large districts, maximize opportunities and establish a system of communication.
CCSD honored by state for reducing energy consumption

Charleston Country School District (CCSD) staff, at both the school and district level, constantly research and implement steps to reduce energy costs and consumption. These actions led to a state-level recognition, as CCSD was honored at the Association of South Carolina Energy Managers Conference today at Spirit Communications Park in Columbia for reducing “energy intensity” by 20 percent since the year 2000; it is called the 20% by 2020 Award. Ten entities, including eight school districts, were honored at the conference.

The South Carolina Office of Regulatory Staff - Energy Office has given out this award to public agencies since 2012.

Section 48-52-620 of the South Carolina Code of Laws requires affected state agencies, public school districts, and public colleges and universities to develop energy conservation plans and work to reduce their energy consumption by 20 percent by 2020, as compared to 2000 levels. These public entities are required to submit annual energy conservation reports to the Energy Office. The reports consist of data showing energy cost and use per square foot (energy intensity) and a narrative that outlines actions taken to implement the public entity’s energy conservation plan. It also chronicles progress made in achieving the entity’s energy-use goals. Section 48-52-620(E) requires the Energy Office to compile this information and report it to the General Assembly by December 31 of each year.

To ensure the development of a fair and equitable methodology for implementing this legislative requirement, the Energy Office established an advisory group in 2008, which is still active today. The group consists of representatives from a variety of state agencies, school districts, and public colleges and universities – all of which are affected by this legislative mandate.

Some of the energy-saving decisions by CCSD include moving to highly-efficient LED lighting in schools and district buildings, remote control of HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning) and associated mechanical equipment, and setting back temps in facilities during unoccupied hours.

Charles Pinckney Elementary named National Beta School of Distinction

The staff at Charles Pinckney Elementary School (CPES) was named a National Beta 2018-2019 National School of Distinction. This award is given to Beta Chapters at schools that are striving towards academic achievement, exemplary character, demonstrated leadership, and service to others. With an ongoing quest to instill these qualities in more students, the National Beta School of Distinction Award is designed to award those schools that show an increase in membership for the current school year.

National Beta Club is the largest independent, non-profit education youth organization in the country, and according to their website, has prepared today’s students to be tomorrow’s leaders for more than 80 years.

Pinckney Elementary received a National Beta School of Distinction banner to display as a symbol of the accomplishment. In addition, CPES will be recognized as a National Beta School of Distinction recipient at the upcoming National Beta Convention in Oklahoma City, OK June 15-18, 2019.
R.B. Stal High School has earned the first College Board AP® Computer Science Female Diversity Award for achieving high female representation in AP Computer Science Principles. Schools honored with the AP Computer Science Female Diversity Award have expanded girls’ access in AP Computer Science courses. Out of more than 18,000 secondary schools worldwide that offer AP courses, R. B. Stal High School is one of 490 to receive this award and just one of 11 in South Carolina.

The staff at Stall attributes some of this success to the grant they earned from the National Math and Science Initiative (NSMI) in 2017. It supported the school in certifying teachers to teach AP courses and led to higher passing rates for students in those classes.

Schools receiving this honor have either 50% or higher female representation in one of the two AP computer science courses or a percentage of the female computer science examinees meeting or exceeding that of the school’s female population.

The AP Computer Science Principles course launch in 2016 was the largest in Program history. AP Computer Science Principles has promoted the growth of AP computer science in high schools. AP computer science course participation increased 135% since 2016, broadening STEM career opportunities for more students. The number of female, rural, and underrepresented minority students taking AP computer science exams has more than doubled in that period.

Providing female students with access to computer science courses contributes to gender parity in the industry’s high-paying jobs and drives innovation, creativity, and competition. According to UNESCO’s Institute of Statistics data, less than 30% of the world’s researchers are women; in North America and Western Europe, it’s just 32%. Research shows women are more likely to pursue computer science if they’re given the opportunity to explore it in high school.

Wando High School was the only high school in the state of South Carolina to be honored by Project Lead The Way (PLTW) as a Distinguished School for the 2018-2019 school year. Wando High School is also a repeat winner from Charleston County School District (CCSD).

For the second year in a row, Thomas C. Cario Middle School received Distinguished School Gateway status for the PLTW opportunities offered to its middle school students. In addition, Morningside Middle School was also recognized as a Gateway School. They were two out of only five middle schools in South Carolina to receive this recognition for 2018-2019.

PLTW is a non-profit organization that serves millions of K-12 students and teachers in over 10,500 schools across the United States. The organization’s recognition program honors schools that are committed to increasing student access, engagement, and achievement in their PLTW programs. Schools that are recognized for this honor empower their students to thrive in an evolving world and have achieved exemplary results from their PLTW programs.

Wando offers PLTW programs in Engineering and Biomedical Science. The Engineering Program offers eight courses, while the Biomedical Science Program offers four courses. Students develop in-demand, transportable knowledge and skills through these programs.

To be eligible for this designation, high schools must meet the following criteria:
- Offer a minimum of three PLTW courses from any pathway
- At least 25 percent of students participate in PLTW courses or of those who participate, 33 percent or more take two or more PLTW courses during their high school tenure - Seventy percent of students or more earn a score of “Proficient” (or higher) on end-of-course assessments or 10 percent of students or more earn the Advanced Placement and PLTW Student Achievement.

Cario Middle, is being honored as a Gateway School for providing broad access to transformative learning opportunities for students through PLTW Gateway. Four of the ten PLTW Gateway Units (Automation and Robotics, Computer Science for Innovators and Makers, Design and Modeling, and Medical Detectives) are available to students, and a fifth, Flight and Space, is infused into an 8th grade science class.

Cario Principal Gayle Morris said Cario’s PLTW program has grown to include all 10 of the PLTW Gateway courses.

“The continuous access and exemplary success and achievement of the students throughout these courses have afforded Cario the honor of being recognized for the second year in a row,” said Morris.

Morningside Middle School Principal Stephanie Flock said their PLTW program is a result of the Liberty Hill K-12 Initiative with the support of the CCSD Career and Technology Education department.

Morningside currently offers Automation and Robotics, Flight and Space, and Design and Modeling.
CCSD’s Summer Residency receives a $1,000 award from the WhatWorksSC celebration

Charleston County School District’s (CCSD) Summer Teacher Residency program was named a finalists for the 2018 Dick and Tunky Riley WhatWorksSC™ Award. The annual award, presented by the Riley Institute and South Carolina Future Minds, celebrates promising education initiatives for improving the lives of students across South Carolina.

As a finalist, CCSD’s Summer Residency received a $1,000 cash award at the WhatWorksSC celebration luncheon on Tuesday, October 30, 2018.

The District’s Summer Teacher Residency is a program designed to recruit and retain highly effective teachers in high-needs schools.

A committee of corporate leaders and education experts selected finalists from more than 100 entries in the Riley Institute’s WhatWorksSC Clearinghouse – a repository of resources that includes policy papers written by state leaders, case studies, and initiatives that explore and exemplify key strategies for improving South Carolina’s public schools.

In June 2017, CCSD implemented Summer Residency to provide targeted, enhanced professional learning for novice teachers, to promote teacher leadership for master practitioners, and to continue student learning through the summer. This learning lab paired experienced teachers from schools throughout the district with teachers who were about to start or recently started teaching in high-needs schools.

Each morning, teaching teams co-taught with a focus on culturally responsive instructional practices and innovative learning approaches that include adaptive and personalized digital content. In the afternoon, students participated in enrichment activities through CCSD’s EPIC Program in partnership with Charleston Promise Neighborhood, allowing teacher teams to plan and reflect on the day’s outcomes. These teachers collaboratively developed and implemented a summer learning program for K-5 students at high-poverty schools.

Seventy-five students from Sanders-Clyde Elementary School participated in the first year; this past summer, a combined 120 students from Chicora Elementary School and Mary Ford Elementary School were involved in the program.

Jason A. Sakran, CCSD Director of Expanded Learning (Kaleidoscope) and his team organized the logistical planning and all the things needed to operationally stand up a summer program at both locations. Shelia Grier was heavily involved in planning as well.

CCSD’s Office of Nutrition Services also partnered to provide their Seamless Summer Feeding Program to the students, offering breakfast, lunch and two snacks every day.
Charleston County School District’s joint program with the Charleston RiverDogs, “Reading Around the Bases,” returned for the third year in a row!

“Reading Around the Bases” began during the 2016-2017 school year as a way to encourage literacy. The Lowcountry’s professional baseball team (and South Atlantic League affiliate of the 27-time World Series Champion New York Yankees) was excited to help generate excitement for reading with second graders again in CCSD this year.

On January 14, 2019, 22 elementary schools throughout Charleston County began a 10-week baseball-themed incentive program. Each student received a Reading Challenge packet that included a scorecard, tracking sheet, and their very own personal baseball card.

To move around the bases on the scorecard, a student must read a certain number of pages: 100 pages for a single, 200 pages for a double, 300 pages for a triple, and 500 pages for a home run. Students also earned points for their class depending on how far they advanced and how many times they “rounded the bases” on the scorecard. Special guests from the RiverDogs visited schools in the district throughout the 10 weeks to provide encouragement, fun, and serve as volunteer readers.

“This effort to encourage literacy and reward our students for their accomplishments is one of the highlights of the school year,” said Cindy Ambrose, CCSD’s Deputy Superintendent of Learning Services. “The RiverDogs remain one of our most engaged and enthusiastic community partners. We are grateful for their support.”

The unofficial kickoff event for “Reading Around the Bases” this year was at Stono Park Elementary in West Ashley on January 23, 2019.

The top-25 second graders from each participating school were honored during the Education Day Game at Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Park on May 28, 2019.

As this program continues to grow, so too does the RiverDogs’ eagerness to promote literacy among Lowcountry youth in a fun and interactive manner,” exclaimed RiverDogs President and General Manager Dave Echols.

Deer Park establishes Little Free Library

On June 4, 2019, Deer Park Middle School’s Student Council hosted a grand-opening party to unveil a Little Free Library to the community. The celebration will include family-friendly activities, contests, crafts, and refreshments.

“Our Little Free Library doesn’t just belong to us, it belongs to the whole city,” said SaMiyah Bolger, Deer Park seventh grade Student Council President. “It’s our hope that this Little Free Library will bring a little more joy, a little more connection and a whole lot more books to our community.”

Little Free Libraries are a global phenomenon. The small, front-yard book exchanges number 36,000 around the world in 70 countries — from Iceland to Tasmania to Pakistan. Now, a new Little Free Library at Deer Park will join the movement to share books, bring people together, and create communities of readers.
Jerry Zucker Middle School students produce literary book

The words, artwork, spirit, and energy of students at Jerry Zucker Middle School of Science will forever be memorialized in their bi-annual production of the ZuckerBook. This student publication of literary works is the brainchild of Erik Hilden, an eighth grade ELA and Honors English 1 teacher.

It started with the notion of the undeniable excitement of students seeing their own works in print. He teamed up with a colleague and created an after-school class that produced a magazine of literary contributions and art.

During the 2012-2013 school year, it evolved into an actual book, funded solely by Hilden and his colleague. But the excitement fizzled when a call to join the afterschool project the following year failed to garner interest. Undeterred, Hilden regrouped and with the blessing of Principal Jacob Perlmutter, created an elective class. It was a way to run the ZuckerBook with enough students to staff a small company dedicated to the cause.

It has been a success, and today the class is divided into teams – fundraising, internal production, external production, and public relations. From costs and budgets to raising funds and awareness, each student plays a crucial role in ZuckerBook's output. Students across the entire school are encouraged to submit their work as well.

“We were thrilled to receive our mini-boat,” said Graham. “Third-grade SAIL (Gifted and Talented) students made model boats as part of their Marine Science unit. We were so anxious to put the MPA Sewee Spirit in the water, but we also wanted to track her as a school, so we decided to wait until summer was over before we launched her,” continued Graham. “We waited until the Atlantic hurricane season was over before we put the Sewee Spirit out to sea. We painted the hull and gathered some things to put in the hatch.”

MPA purchased a vessel in Fall of 2017, and it arrived that winter. The MPA Sewee Spirit in the water, but we also wanted to track her as a school, so we decided to wait until summer was over before we launched her,” continued Graham. “We waited until the Atlantic hurricane season was over before we put the Sewee Spirit out to sea. We painted the hull and gathered some things to put in the hatch.”

Ocean and Environmental Literacy are popular curriculums being taught across the country. Educational Passages, an international company, is making this type of hands-on learning experience more accessible to students everywhere, including in Charleston County School District (CCSD).

Mount Pleasant Academy (MPA) is the most recent CCSD school to get onboard with the instruction.

GPS-equipped mini-boats designed by Educational Passages follows ocean currents and winds, allowing students of all ages to explore oceanic phenomena while the company develops transoceanic classrooms.

The goal of Educational Passages is to introduce participants to sailing, engage students in collaborative learning through international cultural experiences, and increase understanding of the value of the hydrosphere as a shared resource through ocean literacy. The program brings the ocean to the classroom, whether you’re on the coast or landlocked.

“After reading about Harbor View Elementary and St. Andrew’s School of Math and Science’s mini-boat and their voyages, we knew that a mini-boat would be a perfect teaching tool,” said teacher Laura Graham.

Parent volunteers whose children attend MPA helped attach the GPS and seal the hatch. The boat was then delivered to the docks on Shem Creek on Wednesday, January 9, 2019.

Local fisherman, Mark Marhefka, owner of Abundant Seafood, took the MPA Sewee Spirit out to sea on his boat, the Amy Marie, on January 10. The following day he dropped MPAs vessel in the ocean.

“We were thrilled that the GPS worked and our boat was on its way to a great adventure,” said Graham. “We are now checking her progress from the GPS tracking. We thought it would go in the Gulf Stream but winds have been pushing it south, so we’re learning about the wind and how that affects things.”

In the case of the Harbor View Elementary School cruiser, the vessel was taken to Drummagligh National School in Ballycroy, Ireland by Ethan and John Conway whose dad found the boat. Inside the waterproof compartment were a painting of the South Carolina flag, a keyring, coins, and some handwritten notes from children from the school. Drummagligh N.S contacted those in America who had launched the boat to report its safe landing by email.
Rachel Etchason’s third-grade students at North Charleston Elementary School (NCES) read on a wide range of levels. Some read above grade-level, while some struggle just a little. One student is from Honduras and doesn’t speak or read English yet. He’s been in Etchason’s class for just three months. However, he’s extremely proficient in his native language.

Extra reading help is bringing everyone up to speed thanks to the AP English students at North Charleston High School (NCHS). They partnered with the elementary students as pen pals to help make reading and writing on and above grade-level more easily obtainable.

NCHS English teacher Mev McIntosh noticed through the years that reading and communication were large issues within the school community and wanted to improve that by reaching the younger students.

In addition to writing letters to each other, the high school students come in and conduct a lesson and then split off for one-on-one time where they read with their pen pal, go over goals, and discuss ways to improve.

“My students discussed ways of giving back to their community while at the same time focusing on instruction and curriculum,” said McIntosh. “After brainstorming, they created this pen pal program complete with goals for the students. They are unofficial mentors encouraging goal setting and achievement.”

“It’s been an amazing opportunity for my students to see older kids from their neighborhood take time out of their busy schedules to come help them,” said Etchason. “My students look up to these kids. They’ve got all eyes on them.”

The student from Honduras was partnered with a Spanish speaking student and is thriving. He’s also slowly learning his English words.

The partnership is in its infancy. Etchason hopes to see it not only continue, but expand to other classes within NCES.

“There’s not enough light shed on these kids in North Charleston,” said Etchason. “The kids have a lot of great things going on and a lot of great things happening in their schools. This pen pal program is just one of many things.”

Third-grader Lamarion Hardaway said he’s learning things he did not know before.

“It’s fun, and my pen pal likes the same things as me,” said Hardaway. “He really helps me.”

McIntosh said the program addresses the need to give back and strengthens community relationships. She hopes the elementary school students will one day pass that on.

“I’ve seen growth in my high school students,” said McIntosh. “I’ve seen their leadership skills improve and I am certain they’re getting the bigger picture.”

Senior Arthur Gibson enjoys helping the younger students meet and exceed their goals.

“I had a tutor when I was younger, and I wanted to do the same for other students,” said Gibson. “My tutor inspired me to do great, and it feels great to be a role model for these kids.”
Thanks to an invitation from NASA and Destination SPACE, an all-female team from R.B. Stall High School worked on a project to construct a ThinSat (a small satellite currently transmitting data from low-earth orbit).

It was launched on NASA’s Antares rocket earlier this month and orbited the earth for five days before burning up.

R.B. Stall was the only school in the state of South Carolina participating in the project. The six members on this all-female crew helped to promote the ‘can-do’ opportunities available in STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math).

The girls are from a variety of cultural backgrounds and support each other in understanding the importance of being in school, and in focusing on STEM-related fields.

The team constructed the payload/satellite sensors and measured the magnetic field, temperature, UVA/UVB, and visible light.

Two of the six female crew involved attended a space camp training in July 2018. There, Stephanie Wilson and Imani Henderson were able to have the opportunity to learn about the process of how the sensors work and how the students can track the sensors on the payloads as they prepared for the launch on the Antares rocket.

The following month, the team went to Clemson University to work, and train, mechanical engineering students on how to attach these payloads to high-altitude weather balloons to continue to test and practice using these sensors.

“This team has had the amazing opportunity to involve themselves into something they never dreamed of being able to do,” said Maria Royle, an ESOL teacher with R.B. Stall High School dual certificate in ESOL and Science. “For them to learn that it is okay to be challenged, to accept the challenge, and to look at the challenge in the face and not walk away is amazing.”

**Team members**

Stephanie Wilson - Lead Person/attended space camp
Imani Henderson - Lead Person/attended space camp
Danielle Higgins - Team member
Kyla Wright - Team member
Sammi Chen - Team member
Karen Alonzo - Team member
Mount Zion hosts STEM Festival

Mount Zion Elementary hosted a STEM Festival for students, parents, and community members Saturday, June 1, 2019. Activities included “Build a Car” and “Build Gumdrop Shapes.” The Citadel's STEM Center of Excellence and the Johns Island Public Library provided interactive opportunities for the students and their families.

MITCHELL SCHOLARS READY TO CODE AS PART OF 4-H NATIONAL YOUTH SCIENCE DAY

Local 4-H volunteers, with support from South Carolina State University, worked with fifth graders at Julian Mitchell Math and Science Elementary School on National Youth Science Day October 8, 2018.

Students received kits that gave them the option to participate in four different exercises: Color Your World, Artificial Intelligence, Code Your Dance, or Animate a Name. These STEAM-related (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics) activities are part of 4-H’s “Code Your World Challenge.”
It might not be Top Gun or “Danger Zone,” but five student-cadets from R.B. Stall High School’s JROTC program had the opportunity of their young lives this summer; they have been selected to participate in the United States Air Force’s Aviation Character – Education (ACE) Flight Program.

The USAF ACE Flight Program is a fast-paced, demanding, three-week character development and flight training program, with the primary objective being to help instill the positive character traits required for a career in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), particularly in aviation and/or the military.

The following student-cadets from R.B. Stall participated:
- Keivon Holmes, Sophomore
- Antonia Kelly-Caswell, Junior
- Hunter Kirby, Sophomore
- Kaycee Koontz, Sophomore
- Andrew Whitney, Junior

Each student-cadet in the ACE Flight Program received intensive training through flight instruction, with the goal of flying solo (without an instructor) by the end of the course.

Lt. Col. Lonnie Ford, the Air Force JROTC Senior Aerospace Instructor at Stall, explained that organizations such as the Tuskegee Airmen, Inc., Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association Young Eagles, Civil Air Patrol, and the Lowcountry Aviation Association opened the student’s eyes and set the foundation for their pursuit of an aviation career.

AMAZON HOUR OF CODE AT JANE EDWARDS

Amazon, one of the top electronic commerce companies in the world, sent representatives to Jane Edwards Elementary School for Computer Science Education Week (December 3-9, 2018). For two days, students participated in an Hour of Code where they created their own apps or games. Using interactive, hands-on activities, students learned computational thinking skills in an approachable way. Each student also earned Hour of Code certificates.

Amazon Future Engineer, a comprehensive kindergarten-to-career program to inspire and educate millions of students across the country, sponsored this year’s Hour of Code. The goal of Amazon Future Engineer and Code.org is to reach more than 1 million female students.
Fifty Garrett Academy of Technology digital art students finished out the school year with certifications in Digital Art.

The students, taught by Career and Technology (CTE) instructor Anita Hepburn, are now certified in two or three areas (Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, and Microburst).

Also, 12 juniors received Adobe Illustrator certification and 13 seniors finished the school year as completers with industry-recognized certifications and are college and career ready. In addition, 25 Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certifications were also received by the automotive collision and automotive service students.

“My students’ hard work paid off,” said Hepburn. “When I started teaching students, I didn’t think they would go this far. Failing was not an option. Students encouraged each other to push harder and not to give up. When someone passed the certification exam, the whole room cheered, and everybody could hear their joy.”

Adobe Illustrator is a vector drawing program, and Adobe Photoshop is a platform for image manipulations. Hepburn explained that the Adobe Certified Associate certification would prove to employers that students have the digital skills in multiple programs, and the confidence to further develop their skills.

The Microburst certification concentrates on students’ soft skills and prepares them for employability basics, communication, interpersonal skills, teamwork, planning, and productivity.

“At Garrett Academy, we were disappointed with our 2018 State School Report Card,” said Principal Dale Metzger. “We scored a 49 (Below Average) only two points from being Average. The area we felt we had the most room for growth was College and Career Readiness, where we scored an Unsatisfactory rating with only 42 percent of our graduates being considered College and Career Ready.”

Metzger challenged the faculty to improve this metric through a focused effort.

“Through these efforts, we were able to recognize over 80 percent of our 2019 graduates as College and/or Career Ready,” said Metzger. “With a little luck, we will move our state report card rating to ‘Average’ for 2019!”

Hepburn said it was truly an amazing experience to teach these students.

“They proved that everybody can succeed,” said Hepburn. “Earning hard skill and soft skill certifications will help these students to stand out from the crowd and demonstrate the ability to combine technical skills with employability skills.”

Goodwin Elementary School partnered with the North Charleston Fire Department to conduct an Egg Drop Challenge. This was just one of many problem solving projects that students participate in over the course of the year to keep them interested and to stimulate their minds.

Eggs are dropped from varying heights and encased in a variety of protective shields designed by the students. The students were able to participate in a fun event, all while learning.

In the future when students think STEM, they will associate that with a positive learning experience such as this one.
Charleston County School District (CCSD) has expanded school-based health offerings thanks to a combined community partnership that allows students to receive diagnosis and treatment through the Medical University of South Carolina's (MUSC) School-Based Health Program.

MUSC Health operates the School-Based Health Program across the district so students can receive healthcare in the school setting. Services include sick visits and chronic disease management. Additional services offered in select schools include diagnosis and management of ADHD, sports physicals, and specialized telemental health services. Importantly, a note is always sent to the student’s primary care provider as the service is meant to serve only as an additional layer of care.

According to Melissa Prendergast, Director of CCSD’s Nursing Services, the district is a longtime partner with MUSC.

“In particular, we have enjoyed a successful collaboration in providing interactive clinical interventions for students and families using telehealth in 23 of our schools,” Prendergast said. “Our school nurses are keenly aware that many of our families struggle with access to health care for a number of reasons. Transportation is one of the major barriers to this access. The School-Based Health Program removes this barrier, and provide easy, timely access to care for our students. The ability to provide an onsite clinical intervention positively impacts our student’s wellbeing, keeps them in school, and results in improved academic performance.”

An MUSC Health nurse practitioner or doctor examines the students with the assistance of the school nurse or telepresenter. Computers and monitors are used so that patients and providers can see each other via a mobile cart, which enables them to talk clearly and share information. At times special equipment is used, like electronic stethoscopes or a camera to look inside a child’s ears. Telehealth has transformed health care in rural provider offices, emergency departments, skilled nursing facilities, and even correctional facilities.

Sanders-Clyde Elementary School Nurse Allison Wukovits said she uses the telehealth equipment quite frequently. She utilizes the delivery prescription service that is provided in select schools as well.

“The doctor can prescribe medicine to the students, such as ADHD medicine,” said Wukovits. It is then delivered to the school and dispensed daily. The delivery aspect of the program helps our parents who don’t have access to immediate transportation.”

Stiles Point teacher joins Earthwatch Institute’s research team

Stiles Point Elementary School fifth-grade teacher Erin Cymrot joined an Earthwatch Institute research team this summer for a 10-day expedition in Manitoba, Canada to help scientists understand climate change. Cymrot received this opportunity through Earthwatch’s Teach Earth USA Fellowship Program.

From June 25 to July 10, 2019, Cymrot was part of a team of other Earthwatch volunteers from the United States for the “Climate Change at the Arctic’s Edge” project. Effects of global warming are visible at the edge of the Arctic, where peatlands (a type of wetland consisting of peat) run in a broad strip around the globe. Scientists say these wetlands contain as much as 20% of the world’s carbon, usually locked in permafrost. But as the permafrost thaws, it may release carbon dioxide and methane, which could increase the rate of global warming.

Cymrot has been at Stiles Point for four years. In addition to teaching fifth-grade science and social studies, Cymrot is also a member of the Stiles Point Public Relations Team, which has helped to improve the school’s communication through various digital platforms. As the former computer lab teacher, Cymrot has also become a valuable resource to the staff by providing technical support through professional development sessions, sharing digital resources, and problem-solving.

The Earthwatch fellows will help collect real climate science data and collaborate with other teachers to integrate what they learn into their classrooms and communities.

Earthwatch is an international environmental nonprofit whose mission is to engage people worldwide in scientific field research and education to promote the understanding and action necessary for a sustainable environment.
Three District Schools named Champions of the Environment

Burke High School, James Island Charter High School, and Jane Edwards Elementary School are three of eight schools named “Champions of the Environment” by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) for the 2018-2019 school year. By earning this honor, staff and students received thousands of dollars in grant money for their schools, and are featured in this year’s Champions of the Environment commercial, which aired on WCIV-TV (ABC News 4) in the Charleston area. You can also view the commercial on YouTube.

DHEC launched this program in 1993 to encourage students to identify ways they can protect the natural world and boost environmental awareness. This is the first time since the 2013-14 school year that a Charleston County School District school was named a “Champion of the Environment” by DHEC; Jane Edwards and West Ashley High School both earned the honor that school year (West Ashley was also a “Champion of the Environment” in the 2011-2012 school year).

Burke High School – Oyster Reef Habitat restoration
Students partnered with the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) to restore local oyster reef habitats by planting cordgrass and installing oyster castles along Charleston's shorelines. Students harvested cordgrass seedlings from the marshes in December and cultivated them in an “ebb-and-flow” hydroponics system over the winter. They also bagged oysters over the winter. This spring, SCDNR will supervise the planting of the cordgrass seedlings and the deployment of the oyster bags into the rivers to create new oyster reefs that will protect the cordgrass. The restoration of this habitat will improve water quality and support local fisheries and the economy.

The completion of this project will earn the school their National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Weather-Ready Nation Ambassador Certification. The school also plans to develop a documentary highlighting their successful project and share it both locally and as part of the New Tech Network of schools.

James Island Charter High School – Hydroponics and Spartina
Earth Science students worked on restoring a salt marsh ecosystem with Spartina alterniflora plants and artificial oyster reefs. Students harvested Spartina seeds (which were germinated hydroponically) and monitored water and air quality in the greenhouse. They also completed an oyster bag dissection. In the spring, the students will participate in a Seeds to Shoreline planting and oyster reef restoration day. The planting location will be noted so that future students can see progress that has been made over time.

SCDNR and Seeds to Shoreline staff helped construct the greenhouse, and Clemson Extension staff installed rain gutters onto the greenhouse and connected them to rain barrels.

Jane Edwards Elementary School – In the Ground or Hydroponics
Students are comparing the environmental benefits of hydroponic gardens to the school’s existing traditional in-ground gardens. Volunteers helped sixth-grade students build three hydroponic towers, and eventually, seeds will be planted inside a plant cart. The seedlings will start in the same climate, then they will be transferred to either in-ground or hydroponic gardens. Students will compare the differences in production between the two gardens.

The community has been very involved in this project. Two Master Gardeners have volunteered at the school, Lowe’s donated $750 worth of plants, and Edisto True Value and Donors Choose donated garden tools and supplies. Edisto Island Youth and Recreation performed heavy-duty garden chores.

Champions of the Environment is sponsored by Dominion Energy, International Paper, and DHEC.
The MUSC Boeing Center for Children’s Wellness (BCCW) in partnership with Charleston County School District celebrated over 80 schools and their wellness efforts Tuesday, in May 21, 2019.

This 11-year-old health initiative was created with the goal of improving nutrition and increasing physical activity for students and staff by motivating districts and schools to make policy, system, and environmental changes.

During the 2018-2019 school year, 48 CCSD schools earned a Wellness Award. The grand prize winner was Mary Ford Elementary School. The second and third place winners were St. Andrew’s School of Math and Science and Harbor View Elementary, respectively.

The Roper St. Francis Physicians’ Endowment has funded the monetary awards for two years, which range from $250 to $2,000. The award money must go into the wellness programs at each school to help grow and sustain their initiatives. In total, almost $27,800 went to CCSD schools for the 2018-2019 school year. These schools were recognized during the awards ceremony.

In addition, CCSD schools received over $150,000 in wellness grants this year to fund initiatives such as school gardens, increased water consumption, kinesthetic classrooms, and movement throughout the school day.

Mary Ford’s school nurse, Charlene Barbot, helped initiate the program to address the high level of behavioral and academic issues among the students.

Along with that, the school hosted Wellness Days and events throughout the year with themes surrounding not only hydration, but sleep, nutrition, and exercise. Students created artwork related to the themes, performed drama skits for the morning news, and participated in other theme-related activities.

Since the school began participating in the School Wellness Checklist, referrals have declined and little by little the school is getting parent buy-in.

The initiative is benefiting the community as a whole as well. A parent resource room has been created at the school that includes a food bank, laundry facilities, clothing, air mattresses, bedding and other things to help meet the basic needs of the student’s families.

The Wellness Checklist has seven categories with various point-weighted actions. For example, the Nutrition category has 22 action items that range from posting nutritional analysis information for each menu item to offering a salad on a daily basis.

Schools who participate select proven strategies from the School Wellness Checklist® and earn points awarded for each wellness item implemented. The team at the MUSC BCCW partners with teachers, administrators, and district personnel to follow a “train the trainer” model by providing training, resources, and connecting the schools with community partners to increase the sustainability of their wellness programs.
CCSD rolls out compostable trays in all cafeterias

Charleston County School District’s (CCSD) Office of Nutrition Services launched a pilot program at the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year to see if implementing compostable meal trays was feasible.

The success of the program at James B. Edwards Elementary School has resulted in a complete roll out to all district schools.

The trays will be used across PK-12 in addition to compostable plates currently being utilized in middle and high schools. Schools with dishwasher accessibility will resume utilizing real trays for meal service.

The pilot program was part of some brainstorming sessions between JBE teacher Nancy Platt, the school’s Green Team Sponsor, and Suzanne Cottingham, the school’s Nutrition Services Officer.

Platt began investigating the accessibility of compostable trays. Challenges for the Nutrition Services Department included vendor availability and pricing to make the move sustainable for the entire district - not just one school.

When Platt created a school wide green team, she started them on a mission to rid the school of styrofoam and plastic baggies. A third grader and green team member even spoke before Mount Pleasant Town Council before their vote to ban single-use plastic last year.

Previously, Platt and her husband hauled the trays to a grocery store for ‘recycling’ until she recently discovered that the store can’t process styrofoam unless it’s washed and dried.

Students were surveyed on three different types of test trays. The best fit was the five-compartment paper lunch tray.

“The strength of the tray, the ease of serving, and compostable vs. recyclable were all factors in choosing this product,” said Cottingham. “This was more similar and comfortable to use for the students.”

The Green Team helped with the survey talking to students during the test weeks to hear for themselves what did and didn’t work. They also take shifts in front of the recycling, composting and trash barrels in the lunchroom to show students how to throw away their lunch garbage properly.

Styrofoam trays are also being phased out and replaced with alternative paper options such as “plaid food boats.”

Cottingham said this eliminates 2.9 million styrofoam trays from going to the landfill.

Nutrition Services Officer Joe Pettit said the product is made in a source facility from left-over pieces and is made from 100 percent recycled pre-consumer (repurposed) paper fiber.

The five-section lunch tray is called Chinet Sav-A-Day, and the plate is called Chinet PaperPro.

Fetter Health Care Network opens clinic at Baptist Hill

Fetter Health Care Network continues serving the community through its partnership with Charleston County School District, offering a variety of healthcare services including primary health care and dental care to students and staff at Baptist Hill Middle High School.

“Our students will greatly benefit from Fetter’s additional services that focus on school-age children,” said Principal Vanessa Brown. “So many of our students have limited access to quality, affordable care, and we are so honored to be able to grant them this service as a part of the school’s vision to serve the community. Our partnership with the Fetter Health Care Network allows us to fulfill our vision.”

The Fetter Clinic at Baptist Hill started seeing patients in April. The partnership allows Fetter’s clinical providers to work alongside the school’s nursing staff and support staff to provide basic primary care, comprehensive dental services, screenings, immunizations, and referrals to students and staff.

“These services help the future of our communities: our children,” said Aretha R. Jones Powers, CEO of Fetter Health Care Network. “We want to help them succeed by providing accessible quality healthcare.”

Fetter Health Care Network has also opened clinics at Jerry Zucker Middle School in North Charleston and Minnie Hughes Elementary School in Hollywood.
Minnie Hughes hosts 2nd annual Community Health and Wellness Day

Minnie Hughes Elementary School held its 2nd Annual Community Health & Wellness Day in October.

Parents, community members, staff, and students participated in health and wellness activities sponsored by the school’s local partners; Lowcountry Food Bank, St. Paul’s Fire Dept., Fetter Health Care, and a local dietitian.

The school community responded well with nearly 250 families participating. While Lowcountry Food Bank distributed nutritious goods; Fetter Health Care provided health screening services for families. The students were very receptive and were engaged in the activities. In its second year, Health & Wellness Day has transitioned from a school-wide event to a community initiative.

STILES POINT STUDENTS CELEBRATE WALK TO SCHOOL DAY

Stiles Point Elementary School celebrated the eighth annual South Carolina Walk To School Day in March.

 Normally, it’s held the first Wednesday in March, but many schools in the area postponed the day because of freezing weather earlier in the week.

But at Stiles Point Elementary School, they’ve found a cool way to get kids walking at school despite too-cool temperatures and other obstacles.

Many kids attending Stiles Point can’t walk to school, but the school has an alternative that allows students to get their steps in. It’s called the Stiles Point Mile and the route surrounds the campus.

Teacher April Davis said she looks forward to the event every year. “It helps get those wiggles out, and it helps get their brain firing. I know me coming to school every morning, and walking around helps me motivated, and excited about the day,” Davis said.

Ten schools here in the Lowcountry chose to participate in Walk To School Day this time around. It’s not to be confused with International Walk to School Day, which is in October.

Students and schools claim top spots in AHA school programs

During the 2017-2018 school year, 20 CCSD schools helped save lives through participation in research and education programs in partnership with the American Heart Association (AHA). CCSD was the #2 fundraising school district in SC raising a total of $170,777 to fund lifesaving cardiovascular and brain health research.

Through participation in these programs, students not only learned about the important role that exercise and nutrition play in heart health, but also about the warning signs for heart attack and stroke, volunteerism, and helping others.

Top schools:
Jennie Moore: #10 in the Nation, #1 in Mid-Atlantic, #1 in SC
Charles Pinckney: #3 in Mid-Atlantic, #2 in SC
St. Andrew’s School of Math & Science: #9 in SC
*Mid-Atlantic Affiliate encompasses SC, NC, VA, MD, & DC

Top students:
Hadley & Brielle Johnson, Montessori Community School of Charleston: #4 in SC
George Hunter, James Simons Elementary: #6 in SC
Riley Hammond, Jennie Moore Elementary: #7 in SC
Zakhi Muncey, Charles Pinckney Elementary: #8 in SC
Frierson Elementary transitions into a Montessori Program

In the fall of 2016, the School Improvement Council (SIC), the Friends of Frierson, and the principal of Frierson Elementary School sat down with parents and residents of District 9 (Wadmalaw and John's Island) to evaluate the future of the school. After a series of town hall meetings, CCSD agreed to fund and support a change from Frierson School of Technology into District 9's first Montessori School.

This fall, Frierson had two primary classes of 3, 4 and 5-year-olds. In the 2019-20 school year, an additional primary class and a lower elementary class of 6,7 and 8-year-olds will be added to Frierson's Montessori program. As students move up in age, new classes will be added until Frierson has a full Montessori program, primary to adolescent.

In preparation for this transition, the school's teachers professional development focused on student growth, personalized learning, and student-centered classrooms. Teachers participated in an Instructional Technology Cohort where they learned strategies to implement balanced literacy and small group instruction in all classrooms.

This year, instructors in 1st grade through 5th grade will participate in their second year as part of the $2.3 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Program. As shared by the project creator, "The goal is to transform elementary schools in Charleston County into Talent Development Academies. Teachers will use rich, interesting, rigorous curriculum proven to be effective in improving student achievement and learning."
Mission, Values & Commitments

**Our Mission**
To educate and support every child in achieving college, career, and citizenship readiness

**Our Vision**
CCSD is a premier school system in which

- every child is supported in and out of school,
- every child succeeds academically,
- every child graduates from high school prepared for employment in the modern workforce or credential completion or postsecondary degree, and
- every student, teacher, principal, and staff member is valued and respected with the opportunity to learn every day.

**Our Values**

- **Service** - We are selfless in support of our students and each other.
- **Integrity** - We honor truthfulness, fairness, consistency, and transparency.
- **Inclusiveness** - We treat each other with dignity and mutual respect.
- **Equity** - We target resources, support, and attention where the need is greatest.
- **Collaboration** - We are stronger when we work together on behalf of every child.
- **Excellence** - We make decisions that are student-centered, data-informed, and evidence-based.
Charleston County School District

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Charleston County School District

DISTRICT PROFILE

- Annual Budget: $507 million
- Number of Teachers: 3,319
- Number of Students: 49,874
- Number of Schools/Programs: 141
- Students Designated English Language Learners: 4,691

- Asian: 1.6%
- Black: 38.0%
- Hispanic: 9.7%
- White: 48.0%
- Other: 2.7%