

For Immediate Release

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Media Release

Whitesides' Haecherl Becomes Newest CCSD Teacher of the Year

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Charleston, SC – Stephanie Haecherl's (HECK-ruhl) 10th year in education is probably going to be the most memorable of her career thus far. That's because she was named the 2018 Charleston County School District (CCSD) Teacher of the Year at tonight's Teacher of the Year Celebration. The second grade teacher at Mamie P. Whitesides Elementary School heard her name called in front of hundreds of her colleagues, the CCSD Board of Trustees, district partners, and sponsors.

"It feels very rewarding," explained Haecherl. "I am just so overwhelmed. I am so excited and so happy to be able to represent my school and my district. It is worth it to be able to stand up and speak for students and teachers, to have a voice in how we can improve education, and keep doing the things that are good and make them even better."

Haecherl is a National Board Certified teacher, and received her Bachelor of Arts in Communications/Public Relations from Mars Hill College (currently Mars Hill University) and Master of Education in Divergent Learning from Columbia College. Haecherl says she is committed to being a lifelong learner and leader, with current focuses on grant writing and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) initiatives.

"I am so very proud of her," added Whitesides Principal Cynthia Perez. "I cannot think of anyone that's more deserving, and we had a room full of teachers who were deserving of that [award]. She gives it her heart and soul every single day. She knows those kids in and out, not only in her classroom, but in her grade level and throughout the school."

Haecherl will help lead the CCSD Teacher of the Year Roundtable during the 2018-2019 school year; she will also receive a one-year lease to drive a MINI Cooper. Haecherl follows 2017 honoree, Mia Pace of Julian Mitchell Math and Science Elementary School, on the acclaimed list of CCSD Teachers of the Year.

Haecherl and the rest of the 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.

Finalists for 2018 CCSD Teacher of the Year included runner-up Margaret Hale (James Island Elementary), Amanda Prohaska (Mount Pleasant Academy), Kevin Short (Charleston County School of the Arts), and Joyce Stewart-Gibbs (E.B. Ellington Elementary).

"I have already developed a respect for things that go on in the district that I had no idea about," Haecherl stated. "Everything behind the scenes, and how hard everybody works to make sure that our students and teachers are representing a district we can be proud of."

Haecherl will be the featured guest at Educators' Night at the RiverDogs on May 4, 2018 at Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Park. Before the game, she will take a ride in her MINI Cooper and toss the ceremonial first pitch.

For more information about the Teacher of the Year Celebration, contact the Office of Strategy and Communication at (843) 937-6303.

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About the Charleston County School District

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

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