



For Immediate Release
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Media Release

Academic Magnet Awarded \$100,000 Grant from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation

Academic Magnet High
School

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Superintendent of Schools

Cynthia Ambrose
Deputy Superintendent of Learning
Services

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Interim Executive Director of
Secondary Learning Community

Catherine Spencer
Principal

North Charleston, SC – Academic Magnet High School (AMHS) and Charleston County School District are proud to accept a \$100,000 grant from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. The funding was awarded to AMHS to use for the school's new program, Advancing Charleston Excellence (ACE). ACE aims to increase the number of students from low-to-moderate income families who attend Academic Magnet through inquiry-based seminars, exposure to near-peer mentors at the school, parental engagement, a summer institute, and a range of both academic and socio-emotional supports.

"Academic Magnet High School is honored to partner with the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation in recognizing highly able students in our underrepresented local communities," stated AMHS Principal Catherine Spencer. "We believe these scholars can benefit exponentially from the rigorous program of academic achievement that has been the hallmark of AMHS. Initiating families and students into the accessibility of exceptional university admissions and scholarships afforded to graduates of AMHS gives us an unparalleled opportunity to open more doors for our very best students throughout CCSD."

Last week, the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation announced four grants are being awarded to selective public high schools throughout the country. These grants will allow the high schools to launch or expand programs for high-achieving students with financial need, in order to provide access to information and adequate preparation for success at these rigorous institutions. First awarded in 2015, the Selective High School Grant Program has benefitted nearly 1,200 students in grades 6-12.

"With the support of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation grant, Academic Magnet and CCSD will be able to implement a two-year program of access and academic success for highly-capable students whose socio-economic position may have hindered their advancement towards a college education," added Judith Peterson, who works with CCSD's School Choice Department (and will serve as a co-leader on the ACE program for AMHS). "This grant award affirms the Foundation's belief in these students and in our commitment to prepare them for academic success at the highest level."

Selective public high schools provide a unique learning environment through increased exposure to rigorous content, deep engagement, and academically-oriented peer support that leads to strong preparation for top colleges and universities. But high-achieving youth with financial need are historically underrepresented in the nation's most elite public schools and programs, resulting in an excellence gap.

"Our selected grantees are pioneering strategies and practices that can serve as a model to schools nationwide working to expand opportunities to succeed at selective public high schools to more high-achieving students," said Seppy Basili, Executive Director of the Cooke Foundation. "We are committed to supporting the critical work they are leading in, ensuring that financial need does not preclude exceptional students from fulfilling their full potential."

A detailed listing of this year's Selective High School Grant Program recipients can be found [here](#).

For more information about how this grant will be used at AMHS, contact Principal Catherine Spencer at (843) 746-1300.

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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.