

For Immediate Release

November 15, 2016

Contact:

Erica Taylor 843-937-6303

Media Release

Wando High School Marching Band Places 8th at BOA Grand Nationals

**Office of Strategy and
Communications**

Gerrita Postlewait, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Erica S. Taylor
Executive Director

Charleston, SC — The Wando High School Marching Band placed 8th in finals in the Bands of America Grand National Championships Saturday night in the Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, Indiana with a score of 91.5 – it's highest score to date as a finalist at Grand Nationals. Wando was one of 13 marching bands in a prestigious group of finalists that included four previous national championship winners. The six chartered buses carrying the 300 students, staff, and chaperones arrived home Sunday evening to Wando High School with cheering parents and fans led by a Town of Mount Pleasant police escort and Charleston County Council Chairman Elliott Summey.

Wando's journey to making finals began Thursday evening when they performed in the preliminary competition with 100 high school marching bands, including at least 20 marching bands who had made finals previously and from all over the United States. Wando's Thursday evening performance placed them in the top 36 bands and semi-finals competition at 9:45 a.m. Saturday morning. During breaks between the semi-finals performances, Grammy Award winning artist and country singer Darius Rucker appeared on the Lucas Oil stadium monitors with a taped video of encouragement to all the performing bands, especially to his hometown Bands of Wando. At 5:30 p.m., during the semi-finals awards presentation, Wando learned that they placed in the top 13 bands and moved quickly to get ready for their 8:00 p.m. performance time as they moved on to the finals portion of the Grand National Championships.

Following the finals competition and retreat ceremony celebrating their 8th place finish, Wando Marching Band made their way back to the staging area, receiving high fives and congratulations from hundreds of supporters and fans. Mr. Eric Martin, the President and CEO of Music For All, a nationally recognized organization serving scholastic music performance, greeted Wando Band congratulating them on their finalist placement.

"Wando Marching Band is the poster child for what it means to have vision; creating confidence and joy for people who believe in the opportunity of

music," said Martin. "Keep doing what you're doing and as you enter adult hood, in any school that you are involved in, support the arts to help ensure remarkable and life changing experiences."

Bands of Wando Associate Director Lanie Radacke, said of Mr. Martin's appearance with the Wando Band students, "Eric Martin's personal visit to the Wando Band showed his sincere care and interest in our students, band program, and music education. What an honor to have him share his time and thoughts with our band family!"

Regarding the Grand Nationals experience and impressive results, Bands of Wando Director Bobby Lambert said, "We are so proud of our students. They did an amazing job in one of the most difficult Grand National finals in history. They have come farther than we could've imagined and we cannot wait to see what the future holds. Thank you so much to the community for showing us such amazing support throughout this process."

Mr. Jeff Handel, the other Associate Band Director with Wando, who leads their percussion ensemble said, "It's been a wonderful experience seeing this group of kids grow as musicians and performers over the past several months. The journey from writing the music to seeing these kids perform it at such a high level has been extremely rewarding."

Wando's performance, *Therefore*, centered on philosophical ideas like René Descartes' *I think, therefore I am*. It featured an original composition by Furman University Athletic Bands Director Jay Bocook, and visual elements including a 200-pound foam sculpture of a head from artist and longtime Wando band design collaborator, Michael Gray.

Three other bands from South Carolina also participated in Grand Nationals – Fort Mill, James F. Byrnes, and Nation Ford – but Wando was the only South Carolina school to make finals.

The next Bands of Wando events are their Holiday Concert Thursday, December 8, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at Wando HS Performing Arts Center, and their marching performance in the Town of Mount Pleasant's Holiday Parade on Sunday, December 11, 2016.

To learn more about the Bands of Wando and how you can support their program, visit www.WandoBands.org.

###

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 several 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 led by associate superintendents. 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.