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Media Release

CCSD Literacy Coaches Complete Certification with Lastinger Center

Office of Strategy and
Communications

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Charleston, SC — Sixty-seven Charleston County School District (CCSD) literacy coaches participated in a rigorous certification process led by the University of Florida's Lastinger Center during this school year. On Tuesday, May 23, 2017, the literacy coaches celebrated the completion of this process with CCSD staff, school administrators, and representatives from the Lastinger Center at the College of Charleston's Education Alumni Center.

The purpose of the day-long gathering was to honor the District's coaches and hand out the certificates, but also for everyone who was part of the process, to reflect on the year and share what they learned with the entire group.

"The professional development that I have received through the University of Florida has been extremely valuable in my work as a literacy coach," said Alicia Tackitt, literacy coach for Stono Park Elementary. "The Lastinger coaching model is teacher-driven, which results in improved instructional practices and student learning. This training has given me the tools and strategies to fulfill my role as a literacy coach."

"The Lastinger Coaching certification process emphasizes a continuous investment in our schools, our teachers, and our students," added Katelyn Leveque, literacy coach at Morningside Middle School. "The coaching cycles utilized within the program are data-driven, student-centered supports that promote teacher reflection and growth. The process emphasizes moving forward; coaches and teachers are mutually invested in the goals they've set and use data, collaboration, trust, and best practices to work toward reaching those goals and providing the most effective instruction possible."

Several CCSD principals attended to support their school's literacy coaches, and Associate Superintendent of Schools Terri Nichols offered her personal thanks for the work and dedication of these literacy coaches.

The work began back in September, when 73 literacy coaches and transformation specialists from across the district participated in a four-day

institute with leaders from the Lastinger Center at Trident Tech's Mount Pleasant Campus. Coaches engaged in hands-on, interactive learning experiences focused on the best practices in literacy; the coaches are now set to share these practices with and provide support to teachers throughout CCSD.

"[This past] September marked a time in my educational tenure that changed my outlook and practices in respect to my coaching experiences," explained Gwendolyn Benton, literacy coach for Military Magnet Academy and Garrett Academy. "As a veteran teacher and a sixth year coach, I was so sure that this experience would be a 'cake walk' filled with a yearlong ordeal of boring educational principles that I already knew. Much to my surprise, the Lastinger Coaching Institute has dispelled my first impressions, and achieved its acclaimed outcome of giving me lasting principles and advance knowledge of highly effective coaching strategies that I can use in working with my colleagues for the improvement of teaching practices and student learning. It was worth the journey."

For more about the certification process, or District literacy initiatives in general, please contact CCSD's ELA and Literacy Coordinator, Jessica Richards, at (843) 937-6564 or Jessica_Richards@charleston.k12.sc.us.

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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 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.