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Media Release

Tiger Teams Tackle School Work Orders

Charleston, SC – In a school district as large as Charleston County there are numerous and very diverse maintenance needs.

To be proactive, the Charleston County School District's Facilities Management Department has created Tiger Teams to handle maintenance and cosmetic issues that arise at each school. ([Watch the YouTube video](#)).

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The Tiger Teams were created three years ago to address the constant overflow of maintenance work orders. Four mechanics were taken from four different shops and combined to form a multi-trade team. It's similar to a military team where an agile group is formed to go in and "attack."

In this case, the teams "attack" a list of maintenance needs at ten schools per week.

These teams of four include a carpenter, plumber, an electrician, and HVAC mechanic. Their job is to go to a school from 1:30 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. – for three days in a row and fix as much of the issues as possible. And if time allows, the team tackles cosmetic issues and leaves the school "better than they found it," according to Ron Kramps, Executive Director of Facilities Management.

The benefit is not only getting the needed work done but having a team that can help one another if needed. The team also works the afternoon shift so do not interrupt classes and instructional time.

"The State of New Mexico did a study and found that preventative work orders are 40 percent cheaper than emergency work orders," said CCSD Maintenance Director Mike Stone. "Something that has already gone wrong is considered damaged and a lost opportunity."

These teams also save what is referred to as "windshield time."

"Mechanics are driving from school to school running up miles," Stone said. "Across the district, department heads have been tasked with operating with the most efficient use of resources and aligning resources to meet needs. We're doing that according to the strategic plan and our charter and mission."

Eric Smith, Tiger Team Master Foreman, makes contact with the principal of a scheduled school a week in advance of the visit to document concerns and needs.

A questionnaire is also sent to each teacher to see what needs to be taken care of in their classrooms. Once the work is complete, a feedback form is sent to evaluate how the Tiger Team performed.

"There's a synergy there with four guys, with multi-trades that can handle whatever needs to be done," said Smith. "Additionally, if a project is identified in advance, that needs to be contracted out, that work is performed in tandem with the Tiger Team being on campus."

The district receives over 47,000 work orders annually. Seventy-five percent of those work orders are put in by the school administration. The Tiger Teams are driving that number down by proactively doing the anticipated work.

Smith said that the district receives a work-order every two to three minutes.

"It's a distraction for a school administrator to have to put in work orders," said Smith. "Sometimes work orders have to wait until a Tiger Team can get there because of the backlog of work orders and understaffing. We'd have more staffing if we could. We could easily justify it. We try to make most of it by this most efficient use of the resources."

The Tiger Teams handle everything from hanging white boards and cork strips to fixing roof leaks, plumbing, door handles and air conditioning units. Cosmetic items include dusting, cleaning light covers, and painting.

"The key thing is we try to involve the school in this visit to discuss any concerns and capture that," said Kramps. "Eric creates an entire work package before the team of four sets foot on the campus. Letting the school be involved in that process goes over a lot better because the administration and the faculty can see the accomplishment along with the guys doing work."

"Think about what could get done if you could call in a handyman to your house to work for three days straight," said Kramps. "The service we offer is comparable and whatever they can't get done goes back to the shop and put in rotation with traditional work orders."

A school that participates in the program can expect a team to visit about three to four times a year.

Eric Hansen is principal of North Charleston Creative Arts Elementary School. He utilizes the Tiger Teams consistently and recognizes the value of the service.

"We've seen an evolution of the facilities upkeep in the last several years," said Hansen. "The Tiger Team has just taken it to an even increased level of efficiency."

These guys are coming in and hitting specific things that I see as a great need. They follow up quickly.”

Since the start of the school year the teams have completed over 2600 work orders.

“Once all five teams are staffed up we will be a force to reckon with,” said Stone. The program is a huge benefit to the district.”

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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.