

For Immediate Release
April 3, 2019

Contact:
Erica Taylor 843-937-6303

Media Release

Office of Strategy and
Communications

Gerrita Postlewait, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Erica Taylor
Chief of Staff



Erin Bua Puts the Sparkle in Learning

Charleston, SC – Boasting 27 years with Charleston County School District (CCSD), James B. Edwards Elementary School counselor Erin Bua was named a finalist for 2019 Teacher of the Year (TOY).

For many years, Bua taught at Edmund A. Burns Elementary School and then transitioned to Belle Hall Elementary School where she began the school counseling portion of her career. She has been at James B. Edwards for the last 11 years.

Bua went to the University of South Carolina. She is a wife, mother of twelve-year-old twins, and a lifelong pet owner. She has her real estate license, a pet sitting business, and is active in her community. She also earned the prestigious National Jefferson Award in 2016.

Bua wanted to be in a line of work where she felt like she was giving back.

“The reason I became a teacher is because I never had a teacher that took me under their wing or a coach that mentored me,” Bua explained. “I never found that special adult person that really noticed me. So I knew in my career, I wanted to be in a field where I could be that person for others.”

As a middle child, Bua had a natural nurturing ability and her career path took a turn towards education. Upon graduation, she was hired to teach at Burns. Those were some of her favorite years.

"I was making a difference, getting to know the families and building a community," said Bua.

But she kept asking herself, 'How else can I help'?

"I wanted to touch a larger amount of students," said Bua. "So I went into the counseling program at The Citadel while teaching at Burns. Eventually I got the position at Belle Hall as the school counselor. It gave me a broader range of population to serve and help."

Bua serves as a counselor, teacher, and helps with administrative duties.

"I consider myself as a sparkle spreader," said Bua. "I tell them it is a class about life. We're learning to be the best we can be each and every day."

Bua's unique style of teaching includes unveiling a Hug-O-Meter. Every time she gets a hug from a student, she uses a clicker to log it. Her goal is to have over 10,000 clicks by the end of the year and have a Hug Celebration.

Bua also stresses the importance of leadership and the identities of a leader.

I want them to learn that leaders work hard and plan for success," said Bua. "Leaders respect others and collaborate to make the world a better place. I am helping them to learn, live and work."

Becoming a Top Five Finalist

The recognition of earning a spot as Top Five TOY could not have come at a better time for Bua. All else is overshadowed by the joy the honor has brought her.

"I accept this recognition on behalf of my school, and I feel like I am the vessel to represent our school," said Bua. "We work in the hardest job there is, and I am now a spokesperson. It's not about me; it is about all of us."

Counselors are often unsung educators of a school, she explained, and for a counselor to be recognized as a TOY is a unique place to be.

Bua wants to show young educators that it is possible to stay sparkly, spunky, and happy for many years in the field of education.

"The secret is to stay positive and enthusiastic in our jobs as teachers. We should be 'star polishers' in that we shine our little stars (students) every year and help

every child to be their own shining star. My goal is to touch the lives of every child I meet and shower them with encouragement and praise.”

Bua said the recognition is a great culmination to 27 years in education.

“Students are the heart of my work,” said Bua. “It’s not just a saying. I really do live that. It is ingrained in me as a person, and that is why I do what I do. My job is to create global leaders and have them ready for the future.”

###

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.