



For Immediate Release
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Media Release

St. James-Santee Elementary Middle School

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Everyone at St. James-Santee is a HERO

McClellanville, SC – The word HERO is well known to the scholars of St. James-Santee. As a Positive Behavior Interventions and Support school, the scholars are expected to be HEROs each day and exemplify positive social and learning behaviors.

The faculty and staff at St. James-Santee work hard to embrace and build a positive school culture; they focus on data and individualized learning plans for all scholars. Principal LaCarma McMillan has cultivated positivity through various initiatives. One, in particular, is customized staff t-shirts. These shirts are not to be mistaken as your everyday spirit t-shirts.

The shirts say, "Help **Every** Scholar Soar" with the word 'HERO' highlighted down the middle. The shirts are only worn on special occasions, which signify and demonstrate unity among all stakeholders.

Most recently, the t-shirts were worn for a school-wide Hornet Writing Workshop organized by Reading Coach Carmen Sheppard, and Instructional Coach, Audra

Pinckney. A lot of teamwork went into planning the workshop which was designed to be an intense focus on writing and text-dependent analysis.

On the state report card, St. James-Santee saw growth with an overall rating of Average and the team was excited about student progress rating of Excellent. However, realizing that there is a lot more work to be done to assist the scholars with raising student achievement scores, the staff needed to implement specific learning strategies that would continue to address the needs of all students.

Hornet Writing Workshop

During the Hornet Writing Workshop, the scholars rotated through various stations and break-out sessions working on vocabulary, transitions, prompts and analyzing text.

"The purpose of the Hornet Writing Workshop, which was an all-day event, was to allow our scholars the opportunity to dissect, examine and engage in the writing process," said McMillan. "After analyzing the data, we took a step forward to ensure that our scholars are provided with the foundation for developing and creating exemplary work."

"The teachers are empowered to teach a specific task as the scholars rotate through the stations," said Sheppard. "The rotations also create an atmosphere of learning and enthusiasm. This model will be applied to other areas as the students continue to learn across the contents."

The teachers will discuss and break down areas where students had trouble and circle back with a follow-up workshop, according to Sheppard.

Fifth-grader Michael Jones said his favorite subject is math, but he took a lot away from the day's lessons.

"I enjoyed working with the transition words like meanwhile and therefore," said Jones. "I learned that reading and writing is about a lot more than just reading and writing. You have to dig deeper."

Alanah Alston, who is also in fifth grade, agreed that the transition words helped make writing more interesting. She learned more about citing evidence as well.

"It's important to find the evidence because you answer the questions and find more details," said Alston.

Nine-year-old Kalaila Garrett wants to be a science teacher one day. She said that all of the lessons taught in the break-out sessions of the writing workshop must be learned to be successful in all subjects.

Garrett's third-grade teacher Joanna Branham described the Hornet Writing Workshop model as one that grows scholars across each grade level and prepares them for the next.

"We're focusing on where they need the extra help to take them to the next level," said Branham. "The model is also a way to make learning fun and hands-on. There was good momentum, and the scholars felt successful and engaged."

For more information about the Hornet Writing Workshop, contact Carmen Sheppard at carmen_sheppard@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 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.