

**For Immediate Release**

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## Media Release

### **50 Certifications Earned by 25 Garrett Students in Digital Art Program**

**Charleston, SC** – Fifty Garrett Academy of Technology digital art students finished out the school year with certifications in Digital Art.

Office of Strategy and  
Communications

Gerrita Postlewait, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

Erica Taylor  
Chief of Staff

The students, taught by Career and Technology (CTE) instructor Anita Hepburn, are now certified in two or three areas (Adobe Illustrator, Adobe Photoshop, and Microburst).

Also, 12 juniors received Adobe Illustrator and 13 seniors finished the school year as completers with industry-recognized certifications and are college and career ready. In addition, 25 Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certifications were also received by the automotive collision and automotive service students.

“My students’ hard work paid off,” said Hepburn. “When I started teaching students, I didn’t think they would go this far. Failing was not an option. Students encouraged each other to push harder and not to give up. When someone passed the certification exam, the whole room cheered, and everybody could hear their joy.”

Adobe Illustrator is a vector drawing program, and Adobe Photoshop is a platform for image manipulations. Hepburn explained that the Adobe Certified Associate certification would prove to employers that students have the digital skills in multiple programs, and the confidence to further develop their skills.

The Microburst certification concentrates on students’ soft skills and prepares them for employability basics, communication, interpersonal skills, teamwork, planning, and productivity.

“At Garrett Academy, we were disappointed with our 2018 State School Report Card,” said Principal Dale Metzger. “We scored a 49 (Below Average) only 2 from being Average. The area we felt we had the most room for growth was College and Career Readiness, where we scored an Unsatisfactory rating with only 42 percent of our graduates being considered College and Career Ready.”

Metzger challenged the faculty to improve this metric through a focused effort in three specific areas:

- Rededicate to preparing students for the WIN Career Readiness assessment.
- Work with Chad Vail (CCSD's Work-based Learning Partnerships Coordinator) to find opportunities for students to participate in Qualifying Work-Based Learning and Internships.
- Work within our CTE Department to ensure as many of our students as possible could become CTE completers with an industry-recognized certification.

"Through these efforts, we were able to recognize over 80 percent of our 2019 graduates as College and/or Career Ready," said Metzger. "With a little luck, we will move our state report card rating to 'Average' for 2019!"

Hepburn said it was truly an amazing experience to teach these students.

"They proved that everybody can succeed," said Hepburn. "Earning hard skill and soft skill certifications will help these students to stand out from the crowd and demonstrate the ability to combine technical skills with employability skills."

For more information about CTE instruction at Garrett, please contact Anita Hepburn at [anita\\_hepburn@charleston.k12.sc.us](mailto:anita_hepburn@charleston.k12.sc.us).

### **Photo caption**

Senior Students pictured with certifications from top left: Serena Wright, Kalynn Hamlet, NyAsia Green, Travazia King, Carlos Pringle, Dashawn Green McFadden, Sakinah Green, Shakur Gadsden, Jacquez Lewis, Earl Bostic.  
(Not pictured but also certified: Luis Morales-Montiel, DalMont Gourdine, DeSean Smalls).

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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 spanning 1,300 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.