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## Media Release

### **Providing Wrap Around Support and Services – CCSD Celebrates National School Counseling Week**

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**Charleston, SC** - Charleston County School District (CCSD) is celebrating National School Counseling Week, sponsored by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), February 4 - 8, 2019, to focus public attention on the unique contribution of professional school counselors within U.S. school systems and how students are different as a result of what school counselors do. CCSD has 148 school counselors.

National School Counseling Week highlights the tremendous impact school counselors can have in helping students achieve school success and plan for a career.

The special week honoring school counselors provides recognition for school counselors who "implement comprehensive school counseling programs, a vital part of the educational process for all students as they meet the challenges of the 21st century," according to Fronde Stille, CCSD's Director of Guidance and Counseling Services.

In CCSD counselors are actively engaged in helping students examine their abilities, strengths, interests, and talents.

Naquita Page-Dawson is a Professional School Counselor at Jerry Zucker Middle School. She has been working in the field of education for over 20 years. Her previous work experiences as a Youth Specialist, Teacher, Student Concern Specialist, and Human Service Specialist fueled her passion for helping students. Subsequently she went back to school to receive her Master of Education Degree in Counselor Education from the The Citadel – College of Graduate and Professional Studies.

"Due to the vast needs of our schools and our communities, it is essential that every school have full-time school counselors," said Page-Dawson. "We are leaders, advocates, collaborators and agents of change. Our mission is to make sure that we promote equity and access for all scholars daily."

At Zucker Middle, the motto is "Every student. Every Day. No Exceptions. No Excuses," said Page-Dawson. "There are no excuses. Students are at the core of our work. We are here for every student – every day."

The role of a school counselor can be a difficult question to answer because our jobs are so complex. School counselors have lots of variety in their days, and they spend a lot of time working with students either one-on-one or in group settings.

"The most important part of our work is providing direct services to our students in the areas of academic, career, and social/emotional development. We provide individual counseling sessions, small group sessions, classroom guidance lessons, responsive services, college and career readiness and school-wide programs for staff, parents, and students," said Page-Dawson. "It is our jobs to advocate and make sure students have wrap-around support and services, which are essential in helping them reach their maximum level of success."

Hunley Park Elementary School guidance counselor Jelani Myers was drawn to the profession while working as a teacher's assistant.

"While working closely with the students I realized the potential of elementary school students," said Myers. "I wanted to help foster their growth and as well as support the teachers, and find ways to help them support the students. Once I found out that a school counselor was my best opportunity and avenue to do that, I wanted to start pursuing it."

This is Myers' second year at Hunley Park.

"We are Title I school and the needs of the students can vary," explained Myers. "My job is to meet the needs of the students whether personal, social, emotional, academic or even career based. I meet them where they are in order to better serve them."

Myers said his service to children is adaptive and customized to the needs of the students.

"Getting to see a student succeed and knowing that they are able to find the coping skills they need to deal with adversity or tough times makes it all worthwhile to me," said Myers. "Even to just greet them in the morning and be a friendly face for them; just knowing I am making some difference in their life is what it is all about."

Parents or community members with specific questions or concerns about school counseling programs should contact school counselors at their local schools. More general information can also be found on ASCA's website, [www.schoolcounselor.org](http://www.schoolcounselor.org).

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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.