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## Media Release

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### **Shantia Wilder Goes Above and Beyond for Her Students**

**Charleston, SC** – What Shantia Wilder loves most about teaching is watching a child gain confidence from learning. That moment a child “gets it” is why she truly does what she does.

Wilder is one of five Charleston County School District teachers who has been named a finalist in the annual Teacher of the Year competition.

Wilder has spent the last 19 years at Chicora Elementary School, where she serves as a Child Development Teacher.

Wilder is a 1997 graduate of the College of Charleston and holds a Bachelor of Science and a Master of Education from Southern Wesleyan University. Most recently she completed her Pre-School Special Education Certification.

In addition to being an educator, Wilder is an active member of the school’s PTA, the school wellness committee, the School Improvement Council, the Trident United Way, the Charleston Teacher Alliance, and the National Education Association.

The road to her career began with a desire to be a nurse.

"I spent a lot of time with my maternal grandmother, and I wanted to be a nurse," said Wilder. "I always had a giving spirit and a spirit of service. My grandmother once said to me 'you would make a great nurse, but you would also make a great educator. One heals the body, and other heals the mind.' That resonated with me and she pointed me in the direction of wanting to teach."

Wilder initially taught first grade and kindergarten; after 13 years she transitioned into teaching child development.

"I want to make sure our children have a stable foundation built on what I have taught them," said Wilder. "I want them to go on to middle and high school with stable foundations in the basics of math and reading."

Chicora is a community school in the heart of a high poverty neighborhood. According to Wilder, the children here have much higher needs than students in most schools in Charleston County.

"It is my heart's desire to be here," said Wilder. "I chose to work here. They are my children, and I feel like I can make a positive impression on them. I treat them as my own children; I am firm but fair."

Educators are giving and caring people by nature. Wilder is no exception. She earns the respect of the parents by proving that she is not just teaching their children but nurturing the whole child.

"I attend their family events, and try and go above and beyond," said Wilder. "There are opportunities that I have to do things outside of the scope of my job, and I do them because I care and want those children to grow."

Ownership and pride are two of the lessons Wilder teaches. She explains to them that their name is attached to their work and it will be like that throughout their lives.

"I try to teach them always to do their best because I want them to be proud and confident in what they do," said Wilder. "I do for them what I would want someone to do for my children."

### **Becoming a Top Five Finalist**

Wilder said she is still in awe of being nominated because as a child she was always told to do her best in whatever she pursued, but not to look for a pat on the back.

"It is just in my character to do my job, and all this attention on me for doing my job is beyond humbling," said Wilder. "I was taught that you don't look for praises. I know so many other teachers out there that teach every day and deserve the honor. To have this recognition is mind blowing. I am truly blessed to be able to

fulfill the spiritual calling in my life as a teacher. I am able to rest confidently knowing my faith confirms, 'Out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding' – Proverbs 2:6."

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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.