

For Immediate Release

May 11, 2018

Contact:

Erica Taylor 843-937-6303

Media Release

Parents and Students Anticipating CCSD Summer Camps

Office of Strategy and
Communications

Gerrita Postlewait, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Erica S. Taylor
Chief Officer

Charleston, SC – When one thinks of summer camps, they tend to think of cabins, lakes, hot dogs, and mosquitoes. And while those experiences are memorable and beneficial (except for the mosquitoes), there is more than one way to “camp” in the Lowcountry.

Charleston County School District’s (CCSD) Department of Expanded Learning offers multiple camps at multiple sites throughout the county during June and July, which allow students to continue their educational and social growth in a safe, fun, and air-conditioned environment. In fact, the camp opportunities are expanding this year.

CCSD’s Director of Expanded Learning, Jason Sakran says the District will have a new experience called Kaleidoscope Camp STEMspiration. This is on top of their established and popular [EPIC](#) and Kaleidoscope camps.

“The STEMspiration opportunity is designed to connect students to three core areas: engineering, coding, and robotics,” explained Sakran.

The first and only STEMspiration camp (this summer) will be August 6-10, 2018 at North Charleston Elementary School.

“Our EPIC and STEMspiration camps are designed to advance 21st Century thinking and learning while developing interpersonal skills,” explained Sakran. “Our EPIC content is grade band structured and is delivered complete with pre-packaged activity kits containing all necessary components for small group work. All of our camps provide a fun and memorable experience, with a dosage of reading, writing, and STEM for students.”

While CCSD staff members and camp counselors are looking forward to STEMspiration and seeing students embrace the new opportunity, plenty of schools (and their parents) are ready to return to their summer tradition of EPIC and Kaleidoscope camps.

From School Year to Summer Break

Many of the students who attend summer camps at District schools participate in Kaleidoscope programs during the school year. In fact, many of the parents learn about these summer camp experiences because of their child's participation in Kaleidoscope during the school year. Case in point, Lori Bates. She has two daughters that attend Ashley River Creative Arts Elementary School, Cali (4th grade) and Ashlyn (2nd grade).

"We originally registered Cali for Wildcat Camp at Ashley River because we were so impressed with Mrs. Platt and her Kaleidoscope after-care program offered during the school year," explained Bates. "The Kaleidoscope program was structured, all the counselors knew all the students by name, and no matter what time, I arrived to pick up Cali, the children were engaged in fun activities, or were well supervised during free play time. So, when I heard about the Wildcat Camp at Ashley River, I jumped at the opportunity to register Cali."

Cali can't wait for her fourth year at Wildcat Camp, even if it means more time at the school she goes to 9-10 months out of the year already.

"It doesn't feel weird to be at school during the summer, because I have so much fun," said Cali. "I'm learning new things, and they put up summer decorations, so half the time it doesn't feel or look like I am at school."

The camps also allow parents to maintain their family routine. Charmaine Simmons will be sending her daughter, Deziyah (3rd grade), back to Charleston Progressive Academy (CPA) this summer.

"I wanted Deziyah to be a part of the EPIC summer camp for two reasons: convenience and adaptability," stated Simmons. "We live two blocks away from the school, which is convenient for me with my daily work commute. And, she has attended camp at CPA since CD (Child Development), so her transition from school year to summer break is simple. She knows the majority of the staff and campers."

Continuing Education and Fun

The structure and opportunities in place at the EPIC and Kaleidoscope camps, along with the STEMspiration camps, build upon the education the students receive during the school year, and prepare them for the upcoming school year.

"As a former educator, I am extremely impressed with the academic focus of the camp," Bates said. "Studies show that most children experience some level of learning loss (the loss of academic skills and knowledge) over the course of a break from school. At Wildcat Camp, each week is planned around a central theme with time dedicated daily to math, reading, science, and arts."

"They are still learning life skills, such as teamwork, and applying the lessons they learned during the school year in many enjoyable activities," added Simmons.

Speaking of enjoyable, the parents and students all agree having fun is what stands out the most at CCSD summer camps.

"Socially, camp is the place where kids make their very best friends," continued Simmons. "Free from the social expectations pressuring them at school, camp encourages kids to relax and make friends easily. All the fun at camp draws everyone together, whether it's through singing, laughing, talking, or playing."

Kelly Phillips, who has a 4th grader at Charles Pinckney Elementary School (Taylor Moore), agrees with Simmons' opinion.

"The activities are always alternating so the kids are not doing the same thing over and over each day," said Phillips. "I also love how involved the counselors are with the kids. Taylor has her hair braided in a different style at least once a week."

All three mothers agree: the social aspect is the most important theme.

"Wildcat Camp is open to students who attend other schools, as well as Ashley River Creative Arts," Bates stated. "There is unstructured play time scheduled into each day during which children can interact and get to know each other better."

"CCSD summer camps are nothing but fun," added Simmons. "Deziah would come home every day with a huge smile, excited, and ready to tell me about all the things she did or the new people she met."

"Taylor has the opportunity to make new friends and also be surrounded with the ones that she already knows," Phillips said. "She is building wonderful memories with them!"

"Accepted in Fun"

Finally, the students were asked what they would say to other students who might be a little apprehensive about attending a CCSD summer camp for the first time. Their answers were heart-warming.

"Don't worry so much," said Deziah. "Be yourself and kids will like you!"

"I would tell them that it would be okay and they could hang with me," added Taylor. "We would have fun together."

"Don't be afraid, because everyone is nice and friendly, and you will learn new things while having fun," Cali exclaimed. "You will have so much fun that you will forget that you were afraid because you won't feel 'new' or 'different.' You'll feel accepted in fun!"

For more information about the CCSD summer camp offerings, contact Jason Sakran in the Department of Expanded Learning at (843) 402-7807 or Jason_sakran@charleston.k12.sc.us. You can also visit the department's [Summer Camp Offerings](#) page to learn how to register and check availability.

###

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.