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The start of the school year is always an exciting time for every educator in South Carolina. Even in the middle of a pandemic as operations and instructional delivery are exponentially more difficult, hope and optimism abound. As students, parents, and teachers return to school buildings and virtual classrooms, school leaders are responsible for guiding educators and community members through an ever-changing landscape to ensure that our students receive quality instruction and services.

During these unprecedented times, SCASA continues to provide additional avenues of communication for our members to stay connected and to share best practices with their colleagues across the state. Our new Virtual School Coordinators’ Roundtable provides the perfect example of how our members can leverage the knowledge gained from their counterparts in other districts. Fortunately, our new building grants us the flexibility to restructure our meeting schedule and safety protocols to allow for safe, socially distanced, in-person roundtable meetings and seminars. Whether it is an in-person meeting or a virtual one, I hope you will take advantage of the multitude of opportunities for collaboration and sharing best practices.

Our 2021 Innovative Ideas Institute keynote speaker, John Maxwell, says it best, “Everything rises and falls on leadership.” We firmly believe that leadership is the foundation for excellence, and our mission is to support you in your own leadership development. Our CEEL program helps shape leadership skills and styles at all levels of school leadership. From assistant principals to superintendents, CEEL is designed to foster leadership capacity at every level of experience. Each session is uniquely designed to build upon previous knowledge and guide participants through exercises to expand their leadership ability. We are so proud of the development that we have seen in our participants, and we look forward to including more of you in our programs in the upcoming year.

I know the challenges of the past eight months have been great and the hours have been long, but your continued dedication to the students and parents of South Carolina has not wavered. You have persevered through an amazingly tough time, and I applaud your resilience, courage, and determination. As we continue down this path together, we must take the time to celebrate our successes and encourage each other daily.

I close with an excerpt from one of President Theodore Roosevelt’s most widely quoted speeches and thank you for being in the arena daily.

It is not the critic who counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

Beth Phibbs
Executive Director
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and recognizes these 2020 Honorable Mentions SICs for their significant efforts on behalf of their school communities:

Flowertown Elementary SIC (Dorchester School District Two)
Millwood Elementary SIC (Sumter School District)
Pontiac Elementary SIC (Richland School District Two)
Round Top Elementary SIC (Richland School District Two)

SC School Improvement Council
“Civic Engagement at Work for Public Education” sic.sc.gov
For those of us who are old enough to have been required to go through PET training, “Monitor and adjust” is probably the most quoted phrase from that teaching model. Never would we have believed how important that phrase would be beginning in March of 2020. This has been a year like no other and we, as an association and as a state, have risen to the challenge. While COVID-19 has forced us apart, we have worked harder than ever to collaborate and ensure that our students’ needs are met.

Last year, as president of the SCASA Superintendents’ Affiliate, I saw first-hand how our district leaders came together to share information and solve problems for our students. We held weekly statewide calls to address each other’s questions and hear updates on the constantly changing status of state and national education policies adjusting to the pandemic. At the same time, principals and assistant principals were mounting massive meal delivery programs, teachers and instructional staff members were creating remote learning content for the first time, and our students were pulled from their classrooms. All at once we had to adjust to a new reality without warning.

It is in the crucible of shared adversity that leaders learn if they are prepared for the challenges they face. There is no better time to discuss the value of preparation for school leaders. We spend a great deal of time preparing to provide students with an excellent education, but we also must spend time honing our skills as a leader. Strong leadership development is foundational in being able to not only meet the challenges we have experienced this year but also to be prepared for the next difficulty that will be thrown at us.

Through SCASA’s Center for Executive Education Leadership (CEEL), we have the opportunity to learn with our peers how to thrive in situations exactly like these. There is no graduate program for educators navigating a pandemic, and none of us ever took a college class on how to support teachers through a video call. The only skill that can adequately prepare us for the unknown is our ability to lead and work with others. This is why we need to focus on building our capacity in this regard. While we don’t know what is next, we can do our best to be prepared and work together.

It is my hope that you will take advantage of the opportunities that our association offers you and that you use your leadership skills to support and grow the students and educators you lead.

Dr. Harrison Goodwin
SCASA President
Executive Board
2020-21

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2020-21

Assistant Principals’ Roundtable
Chastity Evans
Ridge View High School

Benefits Coordinators’ Roundtable
Rebecca Duncan
Greenwood District 50

Communications Roundtable
Mary Anne Byrd
Kershaw County Schools

Early Childhood Roundtable
Jaime Dawson
Spartanburg District 3

Federal Programs/Grants Coordinators’ Roundtable
Beth Brooks
Newberry County Schools

Finance Roundtable
Missy Campbell
Spartanburg District 7

Fine Arts Coordinators’ Roundtable
Erin Fitzgerald
Lexington District 1

Gifted & Talented Coordinators’ Roundtable
Rick Blanchard
Berkeley County Schools

Instructional Technology Leaders’ Roundtable
Stewart Lee
Anderson District 3

Operations Roundtable
Bob Grant
Orangeburg County Schools

Operations Roundtable
Greg Wood
Spartanburg District 5

Retiree Roundtable
Judy Holmes
Clarendon District 2 (Retired)
Retiree Roundtable

Chuck Welch
Greenville County Schools (Retired)

Sandra Welch
Greenville County Schools (Retired)

Security Specialists' Roundtable
Ryan Cothran
Spartanburg District 5

Special Education Directors' Roundtable
Angie Slatton
Lexington-Richland District 5

Student Services' Roundtable
Dr. Robert Smalls
Richland District 1

Technology Leaders' Roundtable
Josh Shepard
Oconee County Schools

Technology Leaders' Roundtable
Tina Leitzsey
Newberry County Schools

Testing & Accountability Roundtable
Dr. Jennifer Coleman
Richland District 1

Virtual School Coordinators' Roundtable
Christy Junkins
Charter Institute at Erskine
2020 SCASA Lifetime Achievement Award Winners
Dr. Connie Dennis

Connie J. Dennis, Superintendent of Clarendon School District 3, holds a Doctor of Philosophy in Educational Administration from the University of South Carolina and a bachelor’s and master’s degree from Francis Marion University. She entered her educational career 43 years ago and has taught at the primary, elementary, and middle school levels and served as a principal in Clarendon School District Three and assistant superintendent in Clarendon School District Two. In every role, she has lead with vision, love, grace, and a mindset of continuous improvement. Her passion for children and their well-being has always been her focus.

She is active in her community, church, and numerous educational organizations. Dr. Dennis has served as the President of the SC Chapter of the Supervision of Curriculum and Instruction and the Pee Dee Superintendents group. As a leader, Dr. Dennis has served on AdvancED accreditation and SCASA Palmetto’s Finest review teams. Dr. Dennis is an active SCASA member. She attends Instructional Leaders’ and Superintendents’ Roundtable meetings regularly and has served on the i3 committee. She is a former member of the Clarendon Memorial Board of Trustees and a current member of the Puddin Swamp Festival committee and Turbeville Children’s Home Board, where she serves as Secretary.

Dr. Dennis has devoted her adult life to providing a nurturing and enriching educational experience. She is a model for servant leadership.
Dr. William B. James, Jr.

Dr. William B. James is not shy about sharing the story that he would have dropped out of school if not for the efforts of a dedicated teacher. As a result, Dr. James himself has dedicated his entire career in education to helping students in South Carolina succeed. His first job in the classroom was teaching high school biology after receiving his Bachelor of Science from Wofford College. He later received an M.Ed. in Natural Science from the University of South Carolina, an Ed.S. in Administration from Clemson University, and a Ph.D. in Educational Administration from the University of South Carolina. Since his first teaching job, he has spent more than four decades in education, as an assistant principal, principal, educational consultant, and superintendent in two districts.

In his current position as Lexington Two superintendent, Dr. James is nearing the end of a $225 million construction program that has added 3 new schools and upgraded all others. He also has helped create a long-term finance and construction plan, looking decades out, that highlights the path toward replacing older school facilities without the need for another bond referendum, and a maintenance schedule that will keep district facilities in excellent condition for the life of each location. Under Dr. James’ leadership, the district opened an Innovation Center for college and career readiness and became the first in the area to launch the Early College and career pathways programs, in partnership with Midlands Technical College, allowing students to earn an associate degree, college credit, and professional certifications while still in high school. In support of his teachers and administrators, Dr. James established a plan to reduce classroom sizes to meet or exceed state guidelines; partnered with the University of South Carolina for professional development schools for our educators; and extended assistant principal contracts to a full year, to strengthen school-level leadership and mentorship.

Dr. James’ commitment to SCASA has been steadfast through the years, and he serves with a number of other groups including the SC Commission of Minority Affairs, Midlands Superintendent Consortium, Midlands Technical College Advisory Board, American Association of School Administrators, Habitat for Humanity, Rotary Club, and the local Chamber of Commerce.
Jeaneen M. Tucker

Jeaneen Tucker began her career in public education in 1981 as a special education teacher in Dekalb County, Georgia. Jeaneen’s professional journey led her to become an elementary school counselor, an assistant administrator, an assistant principal, and ultimately the principal of Round Top Elementary, a Palmetto’s Finest Award–winning school.

Jeaneen’s career is best characterized by a deeply held commitment to do what’s right for each and every child. At Round Top, Jeaneen has established and nurtured a vibrant, inclusive school culture where students are immersed in world-class instruction, arts-integrated experiences, authentic leadership opportunities, and meaningful service learning activities that allow students to give back to their community, state, nation, and world.

Innovation and risk-taking are two other hallmarks of Jeaneen’s career. She has proven herself to be a leader who blazes a trail where none existed before—creating pathways for students to realize their unique gifts and talents as they achieve success in school and life. Jeaneen has been honored with countless local, state, and national awards, all of which speak to her tireless dedication to public education and all stakeholders, as well as her commitment to teach children how to be good citizens who make our world a better, brighter place.
Dr. Betty Jo Hall (Posthumous Award)

While working as the superintendent of Abbeville County School District (ACSD), Dr. Betty Jo Hall was tragically killed in an automobile accident two days before the start of the 2019–20 school year. The District, community, state, and education profession lost a powerful influencer.

In ACSD, Dr. Hall coined the motto “Putting Students First.” Ironically, she was always the first to congratulate students and staff; the first to push innovation; the first to motivate others; and the first to find a way to make the unthinkable, thinkable. Dr. Hall was known for her effervescent and contagious spirit, and she brought out the best in others.

Dr. Betty Jo Hall was revered across the state by educators, in her community by stakeholders, and in ACSD by all employees. Dr. Hall was a doer and one who didn’t seek praise and acknowledgment for seeking to Put Students First. Although Dr. Hall received countless awards and recognitions throughout her career of which she was proud, the one she coveted was being awarded the South Carolina Personnel Administrator of the Year by SCASA in 2017. Dr. Hall believed in leading by example and she had a personality bigger than life; once someone knew Dr. Hall, they knew her for life!
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Walker Gamble Elementary School
Clarendon District 3
Principal: Allen Kirby

Walker Gamble Elementary School serves 549 students in pre-kindergarten to fifth grade. Walker Gamble Elementary School is an innovative learning community that is meeting the needs of its diverse population. In order to adapt to the changing demands of their community, the school realized a need to better involve all stakeholders in their decision-making process. They discovered that the goals for their students could be met by simply asking for student input and the input of those closest to them. This led to the implementation of collective leadership within the school, which has developed unity and growth by allowing all members of the Walker Gamble Elementary School learning community to have an opportunity to lead. Despite their small size, they use the unique talents and abilities of their staff, students, and community to offer many varied programs and clubs such as art club, kindness club, backpack buddies club, and Mini Cheer.
Woodland Elementary School
Greenville County Schools
Principal: Katrina Miller

Woodland Elementary School serves 1,100 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. They are the largest elementary school in Greenville County, serving children from over 25 countries. Woodland is a “Leader in Me” Lighthouse Academic Honor Roll School. “Woodland, Where Every Leader Succeeds in Learning and Life” is the vision that permeates throughout the school. The staff is committed to inspiring children to excel academically and as leaders. They believe that the needs of the whole child must be met for each child to reach his or her full potential. This is accomplished through school-wide and classroom leadership positions; rigorous academic instruction; and opportunities for students to use their voices in school-wide decision-making. Woodland is proud to have received a South Carolina Report Card rating of Excellent and the Palmetto Gold Award for the past two years.

Dutch Fork High School
Lexington-Richland District 5
Principal: Dr. Gerald Gary

Dutch Fork High School serves 1,679 students in grades 9 through 12. Dutch Fork High School’s 100-acre campus was originally built in 1992. Since the school’s inception, it has grown into a comprehensive 5A high school, serving a diverse student body. Together, parents, teachers, business partners, and students embody the school’s motto: “Enter to Learn. Go Forth to Serve.” With 58 clubs, 56 sports teams, and a full fine arts program, there is a place for everyone, whether the student prefers academic enrichment, community service, or athletics. Their nationally ranked STEM program includes over 200 students and was recently ranked #25 in the nation by Newsweek magazine. As students “enter to learn,” they are taught 21st century skills that prepare them for a world beyond Dutch Fork. Moreover, community service and extracurricular activities complement their academic learning, teaching students the importance of going “forth to serve.”
SCASA
Annual Award
Winners
2019–20
Elementary Principal of the Year

Jessica Patterson

Jessica Patterson has 16 years of success as an educator with the past six years as an elementary school principal. Under her leadership, Chastain Road Elementary (CRE) has transformed into a school that is a trailblazer for early childhood education, recognized by the state as a leader in personalized learning, earned an Excellent rating on the state report card, and most recently named a 2020 National Model School.

Driven by the mantra “We Excel. No Exceptions. No Excuses,” Patterson has led CRE in responding to the complex challenges facing its rural Title I population, putting the social and emotional needs of every child first. CRE had the highest percentage in the district of chronic absenteeism and students with discipline incidents. Patterson recognized a need for improved instructional and behavioral practices that fostered student excellence and engagement. One of Patterson’s first initiatives was to create a model to establish shared language and strategies to encourage students’ independence and support their social-emotional learning. As a result, the school has seen a dramatic decrease in student discipline and a significant reduction in chronic absenteeism. With extremely limited early childhood opportunities, Patterson also collaborated with district leaders to implement preschool expansion for her community, allowing CRE to open eight new preschool classes (traditional and Montessori) serving 200 three and four year olds.

As a true servant leader, she focuses on building relationships with her teachers, students, and community by fostering a culture of love and support. Her vision and guidance have led teachers to embrace a student-centered, engaging style of teaching, making CRE a truly unique and special place.

Patterson is highly regarded by her staff and colleagues for her devotion to the field, which is evident in her mentorship and coaching of teachers and fellow administrators. Prior to her principalship at CRE, Patterson served as a teacher, assistant principal, state regional master teacher, and a director of instructional technology. She holds a M.Ed. from Furman University and a B.A. from Clemson University.
Middle Level Principal of the Year

Dr. Robin Coletrain

Dr. Robin Coletrain has 21 years of successful service in the field of education. She began her tenure as principal at W.A. Perry Middle School in Richland County School District One in August 2016. Dr. Coletrain’s mantra is “Students are more than a score.”

Under her leadership, the faculty and staff at W.A. Perry continue to build a culture of excellence and continue to be passionate about finding pioneering solutions to the challenges students face to be competitive in the 21st century. The context in which Dr. Coletrain leads is to have high expectations for all staff and students and for students to believe in their ability to learn and achieve success. Dr. Coletrain and her team focus on positive mindsets and affirmations so students can see their potential and worth.

Alongside the entire staff, Dr. Coletrain developed shared norms for expectations on how to treat their school family. This has been critical for developing what has become known as “Perry Pride.” This pride permeates throughout the school and the community and has manifested students’ desire to perform better academically. Dr. Coletrain understands the value of the community and works tirelessly to engage community partners to support the school’s mission of improving student outcomes.

As a result of Dr. Coletrain’s leadership, W.A. Perry received a rating of “Good” on the 2019 South Carolina School Report Card. While W.A. Perry has achieved many successes, Dr. Coletrain continues to encourage her students and staff to “Excel, Exceed and Elevate … Higher.”
Secondary Principal of the Year

Sonya Bryant

Sonya Bryant has been a dedicated educator for twenty-six years and has successfully served as a principal for eight years. She served as principal of Laurens District High School for five years and is currently in her third year serving as principal of Batesburg-Leesville High School (BLHS).

Under her leadership at Laurens District High School, the Advanced Placement Program received recognition from The College Board for expanding access to all students. She founded a Robotics team that competed on a world-stage, implemented a $7 million federal grant, and implemented AVID school-wide, all while increasing the graduation rate almost 20 percentage points.

At BLHS, Mrs. Bryant has implemented personalized learning and AVID school-wide. In addition, the school has been named a Palmetto’s Finest finalist. BLHS has also become a state-wide model for the implementation of MTSS and RTI at the high school level with its development of Half-time where her approximately 550 students have logged over 10,000 minutes of individual intervention time over the last two school years.

Mrs. Bryant is active in her community and the state. She currently serves on the Midlands Tech Advisory Board for the Batesburg-Leesville Campus; serves as Vice-President of South Carolina High School League AA Classification; is a member of SCASA, ASCD, and NASSP; attends Rotary meetings; and is active in Leesville United Methodist Church.

Mrs. Bryant is a self-proclaimed “people person” who values relationships with her colleagues, parents, and, most especially, her students. She describes her work as principal as “the best job in the world.” Her passion and enthusiasm has impacted hundreds of teachers and thousands of students and that is her greatest legacy.

Sonya Murrah Bryant earned a Bachelor of Arts in Education with a specialization in English from the University of South Carolina at Aiken and a Master of Education in Administration and Supervision from Clemson University. She is set to begin work on an Education Specialist Degree with the University of South Carolina in the spring.

She is happily married to Brad Bryant, and they have one son, Walt, who is a junior at BLHS. In their spare time, the Bryants enjoy cheering on the Batesburg-Leesville Panthers and the Clemson Tigers.
Elementary Assistant Principal of the Year

Dr. Twanisha Garner

Dr. Twanisha Garner has had over 20 years of success as a school educator at the elementary and middle school levels. Her teaching career began at William J. Clark Middle School in the Orangeburg County School District and ended at the Center for Knowledge in Richland School District Two. In 2013, Dr. Garner joined Langford Elementary as assistant principal. As an instructional leader, she provides cognitive coaching for teachers in the areas of intervention and acceleration to ensure educational equity for all children. In the most current ratings by the South Carolina Department of Education, Langford Elementary earned an overall rating of “excellent” in 2018 and 2019. Langford was also the 2018 recipient of the Palmetto Silver Award.

Dr. Garner empowers students and staff to maximize their gifts and talents by connecting with each member on a personal level. One of her greatest strengths is her belief in educating the whole child. With a background in gifted education, Dr. Garner motivates and works with teachers to recognize and foster the individual gifts in each student, regardless of their gifted education identification. Furthermore, she has generously given of her time and expertise for many years by serving as a mentor to first-year assistant principals in Richland School District Two, as well as providing professional learning to school leaders on a state and national level. Dr. Garner is an active member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated. She is deeply invested in her community and participates in service projects for school-age children and senior adults.

As a member of SCASA, she continuously builds her leadership by participating and leading professional development with teachers and school leaders. Her dedication and passion for the education profession have led the work of hundreds of teachers to impact the learning of thousands of students.
Middle Level Assistant Principal of the Year

Leah Sarantopoulos

Leah Sarantopoulos has enjoyed 17 successful years as an educator and instructional leader. Since 2015 she has served in the role of Assistant Principal at Carolina Springs Middle School (CSMS) in Lexington. Leah entered the educational field through an alternative certification route when she realized her true passion would be centered in a classroom, not in a corporation. A lifelong learner, she has since earned master’s degrees in education from Columbia College and the University of South Carolina.

Leah is passionate about harnessing the power of intentional relationships to positively impact student achievement outcomes. Under Leah’s leadership at CSMS, the school became one of the first middle schools in South Carolina to be distinguished as a Capturing Kids’ Hearts National Showcase School. This underscores her commitment to fostering a strong school culture that gives a voice to all students. Leah prides herself on building the capacity of teacher leaders by working alongside her faculty to positively impact student achievement outcomes through targeted data analysis and the implementation of intentional instructional strategies and programs. During her time at CSMS, Leah has created a master schedule that has increased equity and access for all students, including a content recovery program, push-in classroom support for students who receive special services and interventions, a STEM cohort, and the implementation of AVID.

Described by her colleagues as an educator who stays true to her core value of authenticity, Leah is committed to providing culturally relevant experiences for students at CSMS.
Secondary Assistant Principal of the Year

Julie Painter

Julie Painter spent her first 16 years in education as a National Board-certified English teacher and a theatre teacher. She moved into administration as the English Language Arts Coordinator for Lexington-Richland District 5 before becoming the Academic Dean for Innovation at River Bluff High School, serving in that role for seven years. In 2018, Mrs. Painter joined White Knoll High School as an assistant principal.

Julie is a strong instructional leader with a focus on student learning and has been tremendously successful in developing a culture of collaborative leadership for teachers at her school. During Julie’s time at White Knoll High School, the school moved into a higher State Report Card rating than the previous year. While she was Academic Dean for Innovation at River Bluff High School, the school maintained a report card rating of Excellent and was named a Palmetto’s Finest school in 2019, in part due to Julie’s contributions during the previous four years.

She is an instructional innovator and a true advocate for the students and teachers at White Knoll High School. She expertly analyzes and uses student data, finds creative solutions to very complex problems, and masterfully designs and facilitates professional learning for staff.

Through her willingness to strive for personal excellence, her ability to effectively collaborate with staff members, her extensive knowledge of curriculum and instruction, and her ability to personalize learning for her staff, she ignites a focus on sound instruction that will benefit her students for years to come.
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Adult Education Director of the Year

Dr. Allen Fain

Dr. Allen Fain has dedicated 22 years to students as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, and now as an adult education director. In his four years as director of the Adult Learning Center, he established a vision for the adult education program in Pickens County that enables students to build a better future for themselves, their families, and the entire Pickens community. Through creative partnerships and initiatives, Dr. Fain expanded the reach of the Adult Learning Center, including the implementation of countywide satellite programs and the development of a career pathways program through Tri-County Technical College. Dr. Fain also works with local employers to provide critical work-based experiences and training for his district’s adult learners.

Allen’s purpose is to help those around him achieve and to gain recognition for their successes. He fulfills this purpose by providing honest and open feedback to staff members and students, supporting their growth as learners and developing an open line of communication that helps learners reach their goals. His time as director has brought new connections with the high schools that have created opportunities for at-risk students. His innovative thinking allows the district to provide needed opportunities for students to be successful in gaining their education.

Dr. Fain has not just made a difference for the Adult Learning Program in Pickens County, he has truly had an impact on the whole district. Every high school in the district benefits from his efforts to help students graduate on time, and he helps transform the lives of adult students who never would have earned their degree without his influence.
Career and Technology Director of the Year

Rodney Miller

Rodney Miller has spent 24 years in education as a teacher, coach, assistant principal, principal, education associate at State Department of Education, assistant Career and Technology Education (CTE) director, and CTE director. As the CTE director in the Lancaster County School District, Mr. Miller has led his district’s program through a period of tremendous growth.

This past year was the first time in 16 years his school district has had a full-time CTE director dedicated solely to Career and Technology Education. Without a full-time CTE director, students were not always put in CTE pathways toward being a Completer, and very few CTE certifications were earned by students.

Under his leadership, his staff worked hard to educate their CTE teachers, administrators, and guidance personnel throughout the district on what CTE pathways are available to students, how they can become a CTE Completer, and how to earn CTE certifications so they can be considered career-ready.

Lancaster now has students at all four high schools and the Lancaster County School District Career Center becoming CTE Completers, obtaining CTE certifications, participating in internships, joining career and technical student organizations, and attending CTE competitions. Because of this joint effort led by Mr. Miller, students pursue their chosen career with the hard skills and the soft skills needed to be successful.

He is a long-time member of SCASA and has served the Career and Technology Education Administrators Affiliate executive committee for the past four years, serving most recently as president of the affiliate.
District Level Administrator of the Year

Angie Rye

Angie Rye’s career in education began in 1993. She served as a teacher, assistant principal, principal, and Director of Pupil Services. In 2008, she joined Lexington Three as the principal of Batesburg-Leesville Middle School and in 2013 was named Chief Academic Officer for the district.

Upon becoming the Chief Academic Officer, Mrs. Rye laid out a vision for the elevation of the district’s instructional program. She has provided steady, consistent leadership by implementing a variety of programs and strategies such as Personalized Learning, AVID, Montessori, 1:1 Computing, eLearning, dual credit, early college, and partnerships with neighboring districts for shared course offerings and professional development.

Under Mrs. Rye’s leadership, her district made sustained, incremental progress by implementing a variety of carefully selected instructional programs and strategies with fidelity. Unquestionably, the greatest consequence of Mrs. Rye’s vision and labor is the increased level of confidence educators exhibit and the increased level of pride her students, teachers, and staff have in themselves.

Mrs. Angie Rye is one of the “go to” people for instructional issues in South Carolina. If there is any group or committee established by SCASA, the SC Department of Education, or the Western Piedmont Education Consortium (WePEC), she is a part of it, and more often than not, is selected for a leadership role within the group. What distinguishes Mrs. Rye is her ability to translate lofty ideals and goals into practicable reality. She is able to make “stretch” goals achievable through incremental steps and celebrating the success of students and teachers at each step of implementation. She readily shares what she learns from and with others and, thus, is afforded many opportunities to be involved with state and regional educational issues.
Personnel Administrator of the Year

Doug Jenkins

Doug Jenkins has twenty-six years of public education experience with Georgetown County Schools. During this time, he has been a classroom teacher, school administrator, ADEPT Coordinator, Director and Executive Director for Human Resources. With his team, the district teacher retention rate has been one of the highest in the state; all schools have consistently started the year with a 100% teacher fill rate. Additionally, he has implemented a near paperless Human Resources experience, and the Georgetown County School District has received an “All Clear” accreditation status from the State Department of Education for many years.

Doug Jenkins has helped to change the face of Human Resources. He has demonstrated many ways Human Resources is able to assist employees. Just to name a few, he has advanced employee assistance for counseling and financial needs, implemented a tuition reimbursement program, introduced salary advances, developed new administrator academies and certification classes, and has built strong relations with surrounding colleges and universities.

Doug Jenkins is very involved in his community. He has served on several boards of directors, including the Black River United Way and Saint Frances Animal Center. He assists with the Bunnell Foundation Allocations, CERRA Student Loan Advisory Committee, and assists local job seekers with interview techniques through Friendship Place. He has been very active with SCASA, serving on various committees and giving multiple Human Resources presentations. He has been a member of the Personnel Division since 2006, was elected President of the Personnel Division for 2017–18, and served on the SCASA Executive Board for a three-year term beginning in 2017.
Superintendent of the Year

Dr. J.R. Green

Dr. J.R. Green has served the students of South Carolina for the past quarter century in the capacity of teacher, assistant principal, principal, assistant superintendent, and superintendent. For the past eight years he has served as the superintendent of schools for the Fairfield County School District. His presence has brought stability to a school district which observed approximately 12 different superintendents over a 20 year span.

The district adopted the motto “Excellence through Teamwork” and the slogan “moving from ordinary to extraordinary.” Stakeholders throughout the county embraced their collective responsibility for maximizing the academic and personal potential of every young person in the community. As a way to communicate this vision, Dr. Green began visiting and speaking at places of worship and community events whenever invitations were extended. He has also held quarterly town hall meetings, faith leaders and business partner breakfasts, and focus group meetings with faculty and staff. His community outreach has been a vital component of the district’s success.

New milestones were reached relatively soon after Dr. Green’s arrival. In 2013 the district began the construction of a state-of-the-art career and technology center that included programs such as engineering, barbering, nursing, auto collision, and more. For the first time in the history of the district, a school was recognized as a Palmetto’s Finest winner. Fairfield Magnet School for Math and Science was awarded this distinction in 2014.

Upon his arrival, Dr. Green launched the STEM Early College Academy initiative. This was a partnership with Midlands Technical College which provided Fairfield County students the opportunity to graduate high school with an Associate’s Degree in Science. Twenty-one of the 180 graduates from this class have earned Associate Degrees, and eight earned General Studies Certificates. Additionally, 35% of the graduating class has earned at least one college credit prior to graduating.

One of the proudest moments of Dr. Green’s tenure is the recognition of Fairfield Central High teacher, Ms. Chanda Jefferson, as the 2020 South Carolina State Teacher of the Year. Ms. Jefferson’s recognition represents the first time the district has had a State Teacher of the Year.

Dr. Green feels that he is living out God’s purpose for his life, which is to inspire the young people of his community. He stresses to his students that education is the foundation to the future.
# SCASA Business Affiliates

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