

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

A Year In Review

2022-23 ANNUAL REPORT



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MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Dear Charlotte–Mecklenburg Community,

I am deeply honored and fortunate to have served on the Charlotte–Mecklenburg Schools Board of Education for the past eight years and as chair for the past four.

Charlotte–Mecklenburg Schools has an unparalleled legacy of excellence. I firmly believe we stand poised to return to our place as a premier school district in the nation.

The past years have brought about unprecedented difficulties and periods of transition, including the COVID crisis, talent pipeline issues, and political headwinds faced by public schools across the country. Through it all, staff and the Board of Education together have exhibited an unwavering commitment to upping our game on behalf of CMS students.

Despite adversity, we are recognized nationwide for being an innovative and student–focused school district. This was affirmed in the recent national superintendent search, which attracted a strong pool of candidates, including 17 sitting superintendents. The Board intentionally designed the search profile, interview questions, and rubric to recruit and identify superintendent candidates with the skills, aptitude, and proven results for significant improvement in student performance.



In this rigorous process, Dr. Crystal Hill was the candidate who rose to the top.

Every student in our district holds the potential for excellence without exception. Team CMS is uniquely capable of bringing out that greatness. The Board’s role is to set clear and high expectations. There is no one better to lead the way to those high expectations than Dr. Crystal Hill, with her history of servant leadership, extensive administrative experience, and track record of student achievement success.

I see Team CMS as crew on a boat, and our students are precious passengers. In this annual report you will see how we are ready to row the boat in sync – as a board, a superintendent, a team of talented employees, parents, and a whole community – on a clearly charted course. This is how progress is made. This is how we deliver our students to the future they deserve.

As you review this report, you will learn about many outstanding accomplishments, programs, and initiatives in CMS. At the same time, there are challenges and bold goals ahead. If we continue to row together, it is in our power to make Charlotte–Mecklenburg Schools greater than ever.

Elyse Dashew

Charlotte–Mecklenburg Board of Education

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

Dear Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Families, Staff, Partners, and Friends,

I am honored beyond words to serve as the new superintendent of Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and share our inaugural annual report, covering the school year 2022 - 2023. As I shared with our staff at our 2023 Summer Leadership Conference, our theme for every area of our work is “Excellence without Exception.” The role we play in helping our students succeed and building a better tomorrow for all of us is an awesome responsibility. Our children, our community, and our world deserve nothing less than Excellence.

As you review this report, you will see we have a lot to be proud of at Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. We have been resilient and dedicated as we navigated the past few years of great transition. Our students have excelled in academics, the arts and athletics, exhibiting leadership and earning scholarships for their next steps in education. Our employees are continuously recognized for making a real difference in our students’ lives.

The value our community and partners bring to our efforts cannot be overstated. Our families, businesses, and nonprofit organizations in



Charlotte-Mecklenburg are invested in the success of our public school system. They demonstrate their commitment with volunteer hours, Parent-Teacher Associations and Organizations, financial support, expertise, and talent. We could not have made such progress without this support.

Even as we celebrate our accomplishments and progress, we know there is more work to do. We want to see higher rates of college and career readiness among our students. We want our staff to know how valued they are, and to be compensated for the great work they do. We want families and the community to experience exemplary customer service every time they interact with us.

We are eager to build on this foundation and get better every single day. We have the team. We have community support. My commitment to all of you is to bring clarity to our mission that will enable us to align our efforts with an unwavering focus on “Excellence without Exception.”

Dr. Crystal L. Hill
Superintendent

ATA GLANCE

OUR VISION

To create an innovative, inclusive, student-centered environment that supports the development of independent learners.

OUR MISSION

To lead the community in educational excellence, inspiring intellectual curiosity, creativity, and achievement so that all students reach their full potential.

OUR STRATEGY

CMS leads the way, charting a pathway of endless possibilities, for students and employees, through a connected ecosystem of families, community and organizations, both public and private.

Our Focus is Built on Four Pillars of Excellence

ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Deliver a student-first environment by creating student and family services and experiences that are unparalleled

PEOPLE EXCELLENCE

Build and strengthen culture and further our commitment of excellence for all CMS employees

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

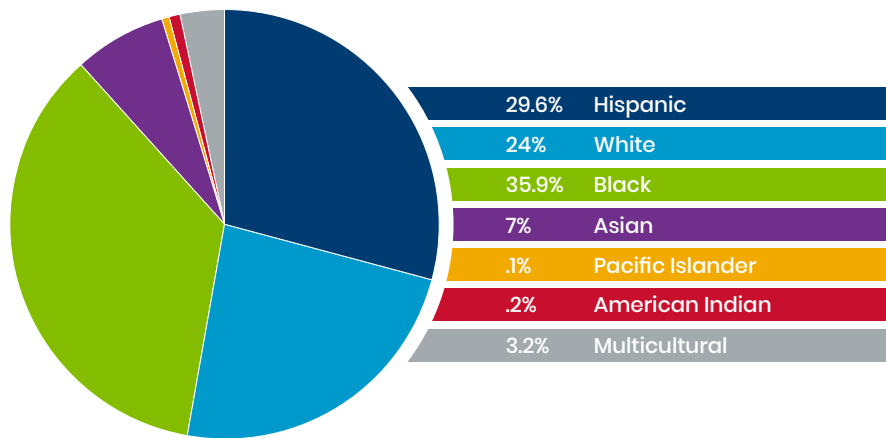
Optimize operational processes through aligned systems and tools that achieve desired results

ENGAGEMENT EXCELLENCE

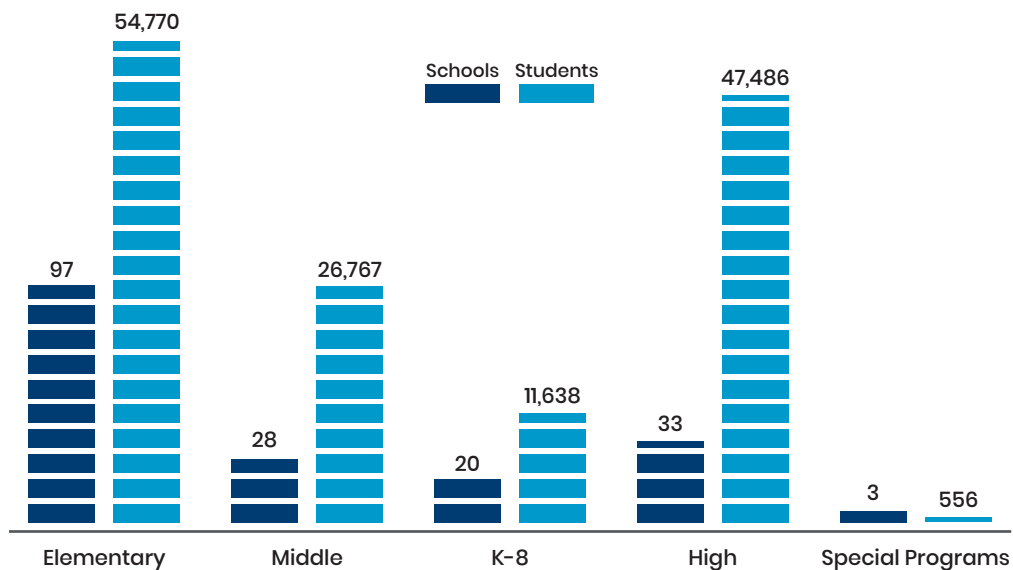
Lead the way through an interconnected ecosystem of families, community, corporations and organizations

More Than 141,000 Students

We proudly serve a richly diverse population of students and families. Our students come from **175 different countries** and speak **209 languages**. Our top five languages spoken by students other than English are Spanish, Vietnamese, French, Russian and Telugu. See chart for the ethnic/racial composition of our student body.



181 Schools and 141,217 Students



We employ more than **19,000 teachers, support staff and administrators**, making CMS one of the largest employers in Mecklenburg County (44.5% of the workforce are teachers and 38.5% of them have advanced degrees).



ATA GLANCE

Food and Nutrition



38,000
Breakfasts/day



70,000
Lunches/day



3,700
After-school Snacks/day



2,000
Suppers/day

Transportation

838 buses transported **104,000 students** to and from school, traveling **105,000 miles per day** and comprising the largest public transportation system in North Carolina.

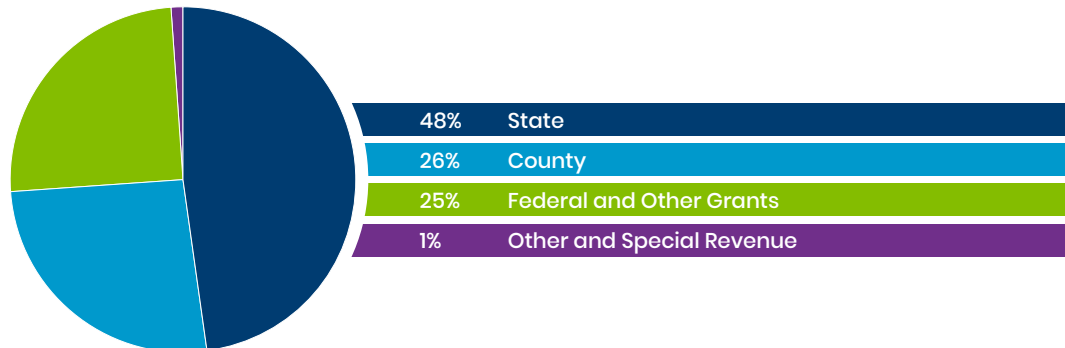


Operating Budget

The Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools 2022-23 operating budget was prepared with the urgent needs of our students in mind. The budget aligns the district's resources with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Board of Education's priorities outlined in the Goals and Guardrails. The Board approved the **\$2.1 billion budget** at its Aug. 23, 2022 meeting.



Sources of Funding



ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

Johnathan Burch Leads David W. Butler High School to Thrive and Create a Culture of Service

From a young age, Johnathan Burch, a senior at Butler High School, said his family instilled in him to speak up and speak out.

It got him in trouble from time to time when he was younger, but as he got older during his time in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, he found ways to use his voice to continue to make positive changes.

“All of what my mom taught me came from my grandmother because she had to fight so hard to make her name known in the school system because she was part of that first group of African Americans to enter the school system,” said Burch. “They taught us to build those connections,



network and leave (a good) impression.”

As Butler’s student body president, Burch said he wanted to create an environment students could feel proud of.

“We started out this year immediately thinking how we can not just get back out into the community, but welcome the community back into our halls,” he said. “We also wanted to boost school morale and get students excited to be here.”

Under Burch’s leadership, Sheree Heisler, Student Government Association advisor, said Butler rose out of the “COVID lull.” “School spirit is alive and thriving,” said Heisler. “He and his fellow seniors have shown underclassmen that Butler is a fun place to learn. He shows that service to others should be in the forefront of what we do, and he has made the culture of Butler into a place where diversity is celebrated. Because of his leadership, Butler students know that all can learn, succeed, work, play, think and collaborate together even though we may look differently and come from different backgrounds.”

The school participated in a lot of fundraisers like selling chocolates, movie night, Powder Puff and T-shirt sales, with the majority of the money going to the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Because of the school’s fundraising efforts this school

year, they were able to raise \$10,000 in five months to send a child to Disney. They also collected close to 700 pounds of food to donate to Loaves and Fishes Food Pantry for Smallwood Presbyterian Church. Burch said the efforts of the school “warmed his heart.”

Heisler said the impact Burch has left on the school is amazing, and that it “takes all to make things happen.”

“Johnathan had the wisdom to see that people follow those who are willing to do the work themselves,” said Heisler. “He had great ideas and he welcomed others. As the SGA advisor, it was refreshing to see how he could meld these ideas together and make things happen. Johnathan’s impact on me has made me a better teacher, a better person, and I count it as a blessing to have worked with him.”

As Burch passes the torch to the next SGA president, he encourages them to keep the traditions going and to keep the legacy strong. Burch is headed to Rhodes College in Memphis, Tenn., on a full-tuition leadership and merit scholarship.



STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Our Schools are Nationally and Internationally Recognized

Twelve schools earned 2023 Magnet Schools of America National Merit Awards, which honor the top magnet schools in the nation.

Magnet School of Excellence:
McClintock Middle School

Merit School of Excellence:
Piedmont and McClintock middle schools

Merit Schools of Distinction:
Dorothy J. Vaughan Academy of Technology
East Mecklenburg High School
Idlewild Elementary School
Irwin Academic Center
North Mecklenburg High School
Oaklawn Language Academy
Paw Creek Elementary School
Rea Farms STEAM Academy
South Academy of International Languages
South Mecklenburg High School



Allenbrook Elementary School was one of 30 schools nationwide named a 2023 Model School by the International Center for Leadership in Education, and is in the top 1% of N.C.'s 2,600 schools in academic growth.

Students Excel in Academics, Arts and Athletics

Scholarship winners included four recipients of corporate-sponsored National Merit Scholarships as part of the first group of winners in the 68th annual National Merit Scholarship program, nine National Merit \$2,500 scholarship recipients, and five Morehead-Cain Scholarship winners. In total, **855 CMS students earned scholarships and awards** valued at more than \$100 million in 2023.

Corporate-sponsored National Merit Scholarship winners:

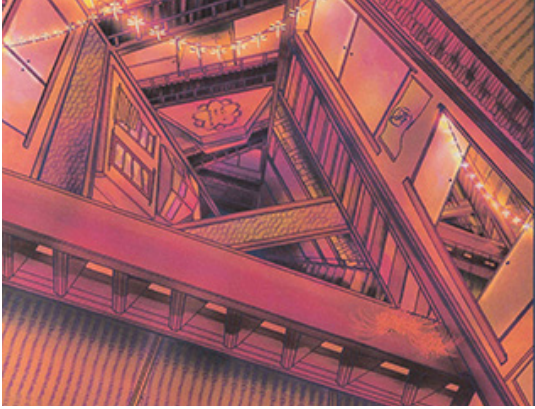


Ty M. Somburanasin
Providence High School |
National Merit TIAA Scholarship

Kim T. Trang
Myers Park High School |
National Merit Walgreen Co.
Scholarship

Shalaka N. Vidwans
Providence High School |
National Merit TTEC Scholarship

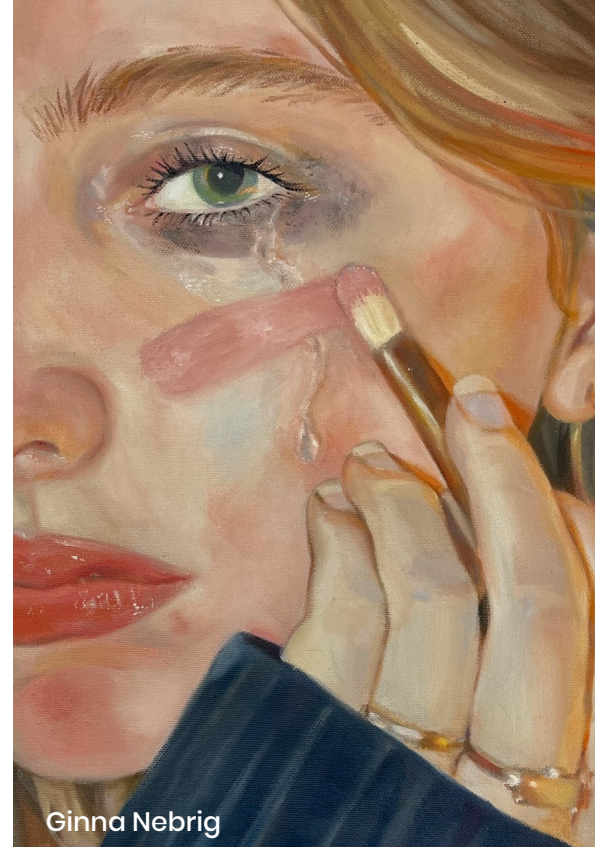
Shruti S. Marx
William Amos Hough High
School | National Merit TIAA
Scholarship



CMS Students Won Honors in Arts

Gianna Nebrig, an 11th grader from **Northwest School of the Arts**, and Al Byrne, a 12th grader from **William Amos Hough High School**, were chosen to represent North Carolina's 12th Congressional District in the 2023 Congressional Art Competition.

Leslie Garcia Rivera, from **Mallard Creek High School** and Lillian Walker of **Myers Park High School** won National Art and Writing Gold Awards and were honored at Carnegie Hall in New York City.



Five Morehead–Cain Scholarship winners:

Anais Delgado
Mallard Creek High School

Catherine Tiddy
Myers Park High School

Virginia Ogburn
Myers Park High School

Letrell Grady
Cato Middle College High School

Kamryn Burton
Northwest School of the Arts

National Merit \$2,500 Scholarship winners:

Katherine Herring
Myers Park High School

Shalaka Vidwans
Providence High School

Rowan Doherty,
South Mecklenburg High School

William DeSena
William Amos Hough High School

Nikolai Kietrys
William Amos Hough High School

Caroline Poe
William Amos Hough High School

Leya Dereje
East Mecklenburg High School

Mira Mullis
Independence High School

Aditya Shivapooja
Ardrey Kell High School

STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Outstanding CMS Athletes Broke Records and Won Competitions

At Myers Park High School:

Sophomore *Elizabeth Rudisill* broke the all-time scoring record for the North Carolina High School Athletic Association (NCHSAA) 4A Women's Golf State Championship.

Myers Park defeated Richmond Senior High 74-60 to win the 4A Men's Basketball State Championship. The win gave Myers Park its first state title in men's basketball in the school's history.

The women's team earned its second straight 4A State Swimming and Diving Championships.

Junior *Mary Bonner Dalton* ran the 3200 Meter in 10:08.64 to beat the old 4A Track and Field meet record by nine seconds.



At Mallard Creek High School:

Cameron Stinson was the 2023 4A Individual State Wrestling Champion (120 Lbs) with a 62-0 record.

Curtis Clark, Benjamin Black, Jayden Lee, Christian Dixon and *Darren Morrison* combined to set new meet records in both the 4x100 and 4x200 Meter Relays to score 20 points for their team.

Christian Wheeler won the Farm Bureau Sportsmanship Award for 4A.



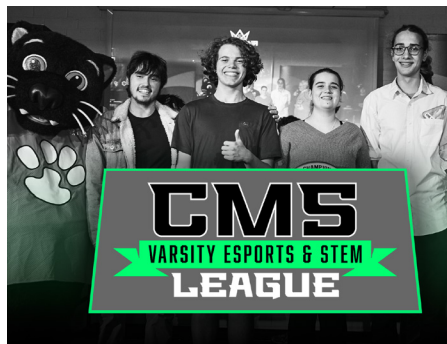
Grace Rainey of **William Amos Hough High School** downed the all-classification State Meet Record in the 100-meter Breaststroke, winning the race in 1:00.27.

Providence High School won the men's team state swimming championship, edging Marvin Ridge by a 203-192 count in the final team scoring.

Ardrey Kell High School claimed its first NCHSAA 4A Women's Soccer Championship in its fifth trip to the title game with a 3-2 win against the Ashley Screaming Eagles at UNCG Soccer Stadium.



The **CMS Esports and STEM League** – the first ever for North Carolina – gave students who may not have the option or passion to participate in traditional sports the opportunity to participate in competitive gaming and STEM and be a part of a team. In fall 2022, 11 high schools and 600 students participated; in spring 2023, 21 high schools and 1,100 students participated.



Our Counseling Services are Top Tier



The NC School Counseling Association presented its Diamond Award to:

Huntingtowne Farms Elementary School

School Counselors: Ayo Adiso and Amanda Buschine

Lake Wylie Elementary School

School Counselor: Andrea LeClair

South Academy of International Languages

School Counselors: Sarah Case, James LaChapelle, Kasaundra Moody and Angeline Walker



South Academy of International Languages was named a **RAMP Designated School** by the American School Counselor Association, which recognizes schools committed to delivering comprehensive, data-informed school counseling programs aligned with the ASCA National Model framework. The RAMP designation is the **highest national honor** a school counseling program can receive.

NAEP Highlights

In **fourth grade reading**, the percent of students demonstrating proficiency in NAEP **outperformed large cities** including Boston, Denver, Tampa, Greensboro, New York City.

In **eighth grade reading**, the percent of students demonstrating proficiency in NAEP **outperformed large cities** including Boston, Denver, District of Columbia, Greensboro and New York City.

In **eight grade math**, the percent of students demonstrating proficiency in NAEP **outperformed the nation as well as large cities** including San Diego, Austin, Boston, and New York City.

The **average score for students was higher than 23 other districts in the U.S.**, including Albuquerque, Atlanta, Austin, Baltimore City, Boston, Chicago, Clark County, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, District of Columbia, Jacksonville (Fla.), Fort Worth, Guilford County, Tampa, Houston, Jefferson County, Los Angeles, Milwaukee, New York City, Philadelphia, and Shelby County.

EMPLOYEE HIGHLIGHTS

Rachelle Gethers, Teacher Assistant of the Year, Committed to Teaching from Childhood

Teaching has been a lifelong journey for Rachelle Gethers. As a child, she brought home classwork and taught her dolls. During summers, she taught children in the neighborhood, rewarding them with treats she kept stashed in her red wagon.

“I knew I was going to be a teacher, and I really saw results,” said Gethers, a teacher assistant at Paw Creek Elementary School. “There were two special needs children I really worked with. I could see the growth, and when they went back to school, the teachers noticed, so it all started that way.”

A native Charlottean, Gethers graduated from West Charlotte High and earned an associate degree in early childhood development from Central Piedmont Community College. She has worked in pre-K for 25

years – 12 of those at Paw Creek – and in May, she was named the 2022-23 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Teacher Assistant of the Year.

“What strikes me the most when I think of Ms. Gethers is the positive attitude she brings every day to school, for the students and staff, as well as our students’ families,” said pre-K teacher Joan Ives, who worked side by side with Gethers all 12 years. “She holds high expectations for all of our students, understands learning styles, and her intuition for what people need is extraordinary.”

Gethers believes education is the great equalizer and feels honored that she can be the first teacher for the youngest students – four- and five-year-olds – as they begin their academic careers.

“My job is to ignite the passion in the children for their learning,” Gethers said. “When you take them on that journey with you, when they begin to put letters and sounds together and know that they make words, the excitement on their faces – there’s no greater joy. You also



get to ignite the passion in parents, to show them that school is important, being on time, reading with your children and setting them up for success to become life learners.”

Terri Hansley’s granddaughter is a rising first grader who was in Gethers’ pre-K class two years ago. Hansley said Gethers is a superstar in their family, and that she gave her granddaughter the foundation she needed to succeed.

“We didn’t really know how she was going to be when she started

school, because sometimes kids aren’t ready for that different level of expectation,” Halsey said, “but she made a clear connection with Ms. Gethers, who told her she was smart and encouraged her to be better. She was also teaching her the do’s and the don’ts and preparing her to be in this society the right way. This teacher had such an impact on her life, and that is everything.”

Gethers still intends to become a certified teacher, a dream she postponed for marriage and family. She is currently working

toward a degree in early childhood development and plans to teach her own pre-K class at Paw Creek after she graduates.

“I feel absolutely blessed and honored to be a teacher – it’s my calling,” Gethers said. “It’s why I get up every morning with the renewed spirit to touch and change lives.”



PEOPLE EXCELLENCE

Danielle Belton, Principal of the Year, Instills Culture of Learning

Paw Creek Elementary School Principal Danielle Belton was on cloud nine in June when she received her school's end-of-year results for the 2022-23 academic year. Paw Creek increased growth in every area, including 16% growth in grade-level proficiency for Black and Hispanic students, which had her and her staff celebrating.

"I'm just excited that we're moving the dial for all subgroups and all students here at Paw Creek," Belton said. "I'm the proudest principal ever because of the work we're able to do for kids."

Belton, the 2022-23 Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Principal of the Year, will begin her 10th year at Paw Creek this fall and her 20th year in education. A

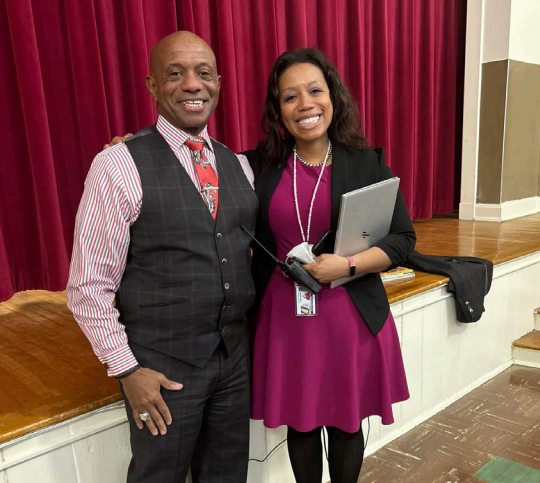


Cleveland native, she has spent her entire career in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, where she leads through core values and sets high expectations for students and staff.

"Everything I do is connected to my core values – learning, family and fun," Belton said. "I'm always looking to grow, and my expectation is that everyone

on this campus is working to get better for students. This is very hard work, and when I hire people, I tell them, 'You're going to work a little bit harder, but we're going to be a family. We're going to support you, and we don't let each other fail. We really rally together as a family to support kids.'"

LaTresha Wilson worked as Belton's assistant principal and was named principal at Tuckaseegee Elementary April 4. She said Belton is a servant leader and a wonderful mentor who builds skill and confidence. "Mrs. Belton is a visionary and knows exactly what to do to build a strong school culture where students learn at high levels," Wilson said. "I have thoroughly enjoyed working under her leadership and, as a principal, I am confident that she has prepared me to take this role head on and do it with excellence."



Paw Creek is a computer science/STEM partial magnet school, where students concentrate on science, technology, engineering and math, and begin coding in kindergarten. Part of the STEM program includes the school's gardens, which were featured in the Duke Energy Recipe Book. "Here at Paw Creek, we know that kids learn best when they're seeing, touching, feeling and doing," Belton said. "They're engaged at high levels, and they learn at high levels. Having been on the other side with high school, I know that we have to get it right when they're here in elementary, so they have that strong instructional foundation for success in middle school, high school and beyond. I'm very proud of our school community because everybody really bought into doing a great job, and it feels

really good when it pays off." LaKeisha Stewart is a Paw Creek parent who has been impressed with Belton's leadership and ability to inspire and motivate teachers, staff and parents. She said Belton is very visible on campus and communicates effectively with parents.

"This really helped ease my anxiety during the first few weeks of school as a first-time parent of a kindergartner," Stewart said. "Her leadership style also assured me that teachers and staff at the school felt supported. My star has scored above grade level on her DIBELS and MAP testing and is excited about going to school every day. I am so grateful for Mrs. Belton's leadership and to know that my child is important and matters."



PEOPLE EXCELLENCE

Ana Cunningham, Teacher of the Year, Believes in Every Student's Right to Education

Ana Cunningham completed her junior year at Northwestern University with the long-held belief she would become a lawyer, but that notion quickly faded when she took a summer teaching job at a juvenile detention facility.

“It completely changed my perspective – my educational perspective, my role perspective,” said Cunningham, the 2022–23 Charlotte–Mecklenburg Schools Teacher of the Year. “I realized that I didn’t want to be reactive in society. Once you have students who are in the system, there are choices that have been made. I wanted to be proactive, to ensure they never land themselves in that position in the first place.”

The experience motivated Cunningham to apply for Teach for America and work in under-

resourced schools, unlike the public schools she attended in her hometown of Potomac, Md. She realized a lack of opportunity creates stark barriers for students and wanted to find solutions for the challenges in their lives. Her first, and only, placement was at Phillip O. Berry Academy of Technology, where she has taught English for 11 years.

“I was the first person in my family to go to college,” Cunningham said. “My mother had immigrated from Nicaragua. My dad was from Albemarle, N.C., so they didn’t have the same access to education that I had. I was so fortunate to be in a vibrant educational environment with phenomenal teachers and support systems.”

Even with that support, Cunningham found that





navigating the college application process as a first-generation college student was difficult and taxing, and it remains so today. She

said it takes a team effort to help students with daunting applications and to find scholarships.

Former student Jessica Hernandez said Cunningham's faith in her potential led her to apply to Dartmouth College, where she was accepted with a 95% merit scholarship. She ultimately opted to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill but called Cunningham "a beacon of light" who helped her transition through post-secondary education.

"My college experience helped me grow as a person, but it was Ms. Cunningham's guidance in the little things that truly shaped me into the person I am today,"

Hernandez said. "She has always believed that every student has the right to an education and has worked tirelessly to break down as many barriers as possible for all the students she encounters. I am happy knowing that as long as Ms. Cunningham remains in education, every student will have at least one person firmly rooted in their corner."

For Cunningham, being at Phillip O. Berry has been "the opportunity and honor of a lifetime." She said the education field makes investments in real people, and she is inspired by her students, who let her know that the world can change.

"I believe education alters trajectories," she said. "It is still the greatest mobilizer in our country where it will catapult you to different realms of society. Equipping them with education, with knowledge, with competent skills, with the ability to navigate the future as they see fit – that is the greatest gift we can provide to our young folks. That is what I can do to really help the next generation."

PEOPLE HIGHLIGHTS

A total of **60 CMS educators** achieved National Board Certification. Across CMS, 196 NBCTs successfully renewed their National Board Certification in December.

The **CMS Pre-K team** was recognized by the N.C. Department of Public Instruction in 2023 for having the highest completion rate for Early Childhood LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) training in the state of North Carolina.



In 2023, **Nancy Bullard**, a science teacher at Huntingtowne Farms Elementary School, was

named Charlottean of the Year by Charlotte Magazine due to her TikTok success. With millions of followers, she shares captivating at-home science experiments and informative facts.



Greg Ascitutto, an English teacher at Garinger High School, was honored as the City of Charlotte's

2023 Educator Mentor of the Year, recognizing his outstanding contributions to youth mentorship in East Charlotte and Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools for over a decade.

Crystal Briley from University Park Creative Arts School won the 2023 Music Teachers of Excellence award from the Country Music Association's Foundation, recognizing the outstanding work she and her school deliver in music education.

Melissa Leftwich, an art teacher at Jay M. Robinson Middle School, received the 2023 National Art Education Association Southeastern Region Middle Level Art Educator award for launching and expanding the middle school digital arts program.



J. M. Alexander Middle School teacher **Alicia Moss** was one of five educators in North Carolina

to receive the 2023 Governor's Educator Discovery Award from Gov. Roy Cooper. Known for her fundraising hike up Mount Kilimanjaro in July 2021, Moss teaches STEM courses and serves as a robotics coach.



Rob Leichner was announced as the 2023 NC Virtual Teacher of the Year. For the past decade, he

has served as a Math 1 and Math 2 co-teacher with NC Virtual and has actively contributed at the state level on projects related to implementing new standards and promoting conceptual understanding in math.



Stacey Boone, theater arts teacher at Jay M. Robinson Middle School, was honored

with the North Carolina Theatre Conference Herman Middleton Distinguished Service Award in 2022, and has been acknowledged by Charlotte’s Arts and Sciences Council with the Cato Lifetime Achievement and Excellence in Teaching Awards.



William “Sloan” Snyder, art teacher from Metro School, received the prestigious

2023 Page and Ed Kizer Beginning Teacher Award at UNC Charlotte’s achievement ceremony. This award recognized Snyder’s outstanding work and dedication as a new teacher, showcasing his potential and promising contributions to the field of education.

Margaret Maurice, a dedicated member of the North Carolina Music Educators Association, was honored as the 2023 Fine Arts Educator of the Year at the

North Carolina Showcase. Her outstanding contributions as an educator at CMS showcased educational excellence and leadership, inspiring students and advancing the field of fine arts education.



Glenn Starnes, principal of Harding University High School, was recognized as the 2023 Charlotte

Post Foundation’s Educator of the Year, as Harding improved attendance and significantly increased its graduation rate under his leadership.

Stephanie Wilkerson, a trailblazing advocate for Olympic High School, was recognized as Athletic Director of the Year by the N.C. Athletic Directors Association and by *The Charlotte Observer*, as she elevates Olympic High to a powerhouse across multiple sports and breaks barriers as a black female athletic director.



Internal communications specialist **Jasmine Hager** was recognized as a member of the National School Public Relations Association’s 2022–23 “35 Under 35” class for her exceptional dedication, willingness to help others, commitment to effective communication, and her passion for education.

The **Communications Division** won three National School Public Relations Association Publications and Digital Media Excellence Awards.

- Award of Excellence, E-Newsletter (Internal Audience) | CMS Insider
- Award of Merit, Social Media | #BehindTheName
- Honorable Mention, Excellence in Writing | Summer graduation speech for Interim Superintendent Hugh Hattabaugh

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools is leading the way in making schools safer

CMS has invested more than \$19 million in creating safe and secure learning environments for students and staff over the past 18 months. The proliferation of firearms in our country, community, and schools and the protection of the lives and wellbeing of students and staff led the district to install Evolv security scanners in schools beginning in May 2022.

During the 2021-22 return to full-time face-to-face instruction following the COVID-19 pandemic, the district – and schools nationwide – experienced an alarming increase in the number of firearms being brought to and reported on campuses.

Evolv scanners were the solution selected to directly address and solve for the problem. Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools Police Chief Lisa Mangum says “As gun

violence rose nationwide and in our schools, CMS needed to establish a school environment that discouraged and prevented anyone from bringing weapons into our schools. The implementation of the Evolv detection systems has given our district a proactive, impactful layer of safety and security.”

The scanners use digital sensors and artificial intelligence to detect concealed weapons. Placed at entryways, they allow visitors to walk between columns connected to AI that can distinguish most everyday objects on a person from weapons.

The installation of approximately 180 scanners in 73 high schools, middle schools and K-8 schools reduced the number of firearms found on CMS campuses by 77%.





The use of Evolv scanners has also had a direct impact on the recovery of lost instructional time in classrooms, as teachers no longer need to spend as much time checking students' belongings or interrupting class to address issues.

Since the installation of scanners, schools have recaptured almost 40,000 hours of teacher instruction... leading to 6,000 days of suspension also being recovered. The scanners have proven to be a very effective deterrent, resulting in fewer students attempting to introduce weapons and be penalized with detention.

The scanners have allowed school administrators to focus on the district's core priorities. Schultz says, "The detection systems have proven to be successful tools in keeping our focus on teaching and learning."

While one firearm is not acceptable, CMS now has a more accurate threat detection system to keep students and staff safe, allowing the focus to remain on education.

Scanners have also resulted in a nearly 60% reduction in the number of non-firearm weapons on CMS campuses.

"The investment that we are making in student and staff safety has proven to be successful based on the significant decrease in the number of weapons on campus," says Brian Schultz, chief operations officer for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools. "Of course, there is no foolproof system to ensure the safety of staff and students in every single possible situation. However, CMS has stepped up in becoming a public school leader in proactive measures to reduce the frequency of incidents."



OPERATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

CMS buildings and physical sites include nearly **500 buildings** plus over 1,200 mobile classroom units, comprising more than **22 million square feet** on 5,000-plus acres. Building Services complete more than **90,000 work orders annually** to keep learning and workplace environments safe and welcoming.



180 Evolv scanners in 73 schools performed 14.6 million individual scans in the 2022–2023 school year, **reducing firearms on campus** from 31 to 7.

The Operations team assisted in design and construction support for **15-plus school projects** in the 2017 Capital Construction Bond since 2022. They've completed over **70 separate site test fits** for CMS schools and properties as part of the Capital Needs Assessment, leading to the current proposed 2023 Capital Construction Bond.

Operations completed one of the largest **redistricting efforts** in recent years, involving a South Mecklenburg County area with 50 schools.



Love The Bus Week: A week is dedicated to recognizing, honoring and celebrating our hardworking CMS bus drivers. During this week, “Gus the Bus” visits schools. Children hop on the bus to hear Gus talk about bus safety, the importance of reading and other topics.



Largest Fleet: CMS maintains North Carolina's biggest fleet of alternative fuel vehicles, specifically those powered by propane, and is finalizing contracts to acquire three electric buses.

- CMS Transportation operates a fleet of **nearly 1,300 vehicles**, including regularly running school buses, spares, activity buses and other department

maintenance and administrative cars/trucks.

- 104,000 CMS students were assigned to **838 buses** in the 2022-2023 year.
- CMS buses travel nearly **105,000 miles daily**.
- CMS Transportation employs approximately **1,250 staff**.
- 108 of our regular CMS school buses are propane-powered,

the largest number in the state.

- CMS Transportation operates the second-largest fleet in the United States, according to *Bus Fleet Magazine*.

ENGAGEMENT EXCELLENCE



Read Charlotte/Read Together Initiative

Picture this — a family sits together on a quiet evening reading a small book, pointing at different pictures and asking each other questions. Or, while a parent prepares a meal, their child reads aloud one of their favorite books.

A simple routine that Munro Richardson, executive director of Read Charlotte, says can make a tremendous impact on test scores for children in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools.

“It’s a proven practice that’s helped kids get to college and career ready,” said Richardson. “How about we make it more common for more children?”

Read Charlotte — a longtime partner of the district — is a community literacy initiative that unites educators, community partners and families to improve

children’s reading from birth to third grade.

In 2017, Read Charlotte found that 70% of CMS students were on level for reading at the end of first grade on a formative reading assessment. However, in 2019, only 46% of those students scored college and career ready on their third grade state reading assessment. Research shows that the development of oral language, listening comprehension and world knowledge begins early in life, before children start school. To reach their community goal of 80% of third graders scoring at college and career ready, building early literacy skills is crucial.

In fall 2022, Read Charlotte met with CMS leadership and other partner organizations to talk about its latest initiative, Read

Together, that encourages families to read together with their children from ages birth through elementary school.

“We talked about potential barriers and ideas of how we might be able to support families around this work,” said Kate Bradsheet, deputy director of Read Charlotte. “But we also spoke about the strengths families are bringing into this space and the wonderful routines that people already have, and how we can share those with people who might be looking for a routine or an idea.”

The initiative aligns with CMS’s goal to increase the percentage of third grade students who are college and career ready in language arts.

“Through collaboration, strategic marketing and communication regarding shared reading, this initiative will reinforce the importance of reading,” said Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning Tara Lynn Sullivan. “The additional opportunity to read outside of the instructional day will further help students in developing language comprehension.”

“Multiple readings support the development of language comprehension, such as background knowledge, vocabulary, language structure, verbal reasoning and literacy knowledge,” Sullivan added. “These components of language comprehension work interdependently with other word recognition components to build skilled readers.”

The Read Together initiative launched in July 2023 and spotlights several families in Mecklenburg County reading together in different environments, like at home

or at a park. Bradsheet feels that Read Together is something the community can get behind.

“We know that shared reading is one of the most powerful things we can do to help build oral language and listening comprehension skills,” said Bradsheet. “It just made a lot of strategic sense to really focus on helping in this critical area that we see as a real companion to other efforts that might explicitly focus on tutoring and helping kids get words off the page. If we don’t do both, we’re only doing half measures.”



ENGAGEMENT EXCELLENCE

Communities In Schools of Charlotte- Mecklenburg

Deianira Perez is site coordinator for Communities In Schools of Charlotte-Mecklenburg at Rama Road Elementary School. Each year, her caseload average is 75 students with whom she develops relationships and shepherds through the school year. In the 2022-23 school year, 77% of those students improved their attendance and, in turn, their academic performance.

“They are tremendous partners for us, and she is a key connector to our community,” said Principal Patricia Denny, who has worked with CIS-Charlotte at Rama Road for 12 years. “She meets with every one of those students and builds phenomenal relationships with them, their families and community partners. With that, we’re able to ensure our families are having their basic needs met.”



CIS-Charlotte is part of the national Communities In Schools network, which provides support and resources to ensure all students succeed in school and in life. CIS places professional staff inside schools to provide students with a wide range of services – from individual case management and basic needs, to tutoring, parent engagement and life skills development – to help them and their families thrive.

In Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, CIS-Charlotte operated in 55 schools – mainly high-poverty schools that receive federal Title I funding – in 2022-23. More than 5,000 students received individual case management services, while another 32,000-plus received broad, schoolwide services. The organization has added Oakdale Elementary School and Renaissance West STEAM Academy for 2023-24 and aims to eventually serve all schools in



specific feeder patterns to help students from elementary school to graduation, if needed.

“Our goal is to be in every Title I school and to be seen as a strategic partner,” said Men Tchaas Ari, president and CEO of CIS-Charlotte. “It will enable us to make progress on strategic goals and objectives as opposed to just being focused at the school level.”

CIS-Charlotte has a variety of initiatives to address student concerns both in school and in their communities. In February, CIS-Charlotte joined partners Bank of America and the Charlotte Hornets to kick off

Attendance+, a program to combat chronic absenteeism and raise community awareness around attendance. Other initiatives include partnerships with the Lakeview Neighborhood Alliance and the Grier Heights neighborhood to help alleviate outside pressures, such as housing insecurity, that can affect students inside the classroom.

In addition, CIS-Charlotte and the Charlotte Community Think Tank will spend the next year exploring the feasibility of creating a community school, which would serve as a central learning and services hub for

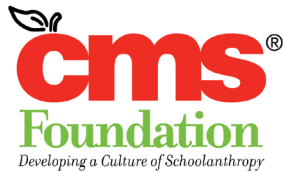
its neighborhood. They will be surveying parents, school staff and community members in selected neighborhoods to determine needs, which differ with every area.

“We always want to make sure that every student has the ability to excel, to let their talent take them there and not depend upon which school they got in,” Ari said. “It doesn’t matter which neighborhood they live in, their race or ethnicity. We want to make sure they have all the support and remove all the barriers to learning.”

ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

By the numbers in the 2022–2023 school year

- More than 12,000 active volunteers
- **Nearly 300,000 volunteer hours, representing value of approximately \$9,500,000**
- Over 150 partners
- More than 30 community town hall meetings to gather input on the superintendent search and redistricting efforts



The **CMS Foundation**, the official nonprofit partner for Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, raises money to create and expand opportunities for CMS students and educators. In 2022–23, the foundation managed **\$2.5 million in assets to support students and educators**. Through nearly **\$1.5 million** in

investments in the **CMS Teaching Residency** the foundation supports recruiting, development and retention of teachers. The program has brought nearly **600 new teachers** to CMS since its launch in 2018.

Eleven Executives in Residence have worked full or part time with CMS to enhance process management, partnerships, tutoring and medical access. The executives are loaned by companies on the Charlotte Executive Leadership Council at no cost to CMS.

Partnerships enhance ways for schools to educate and contribute to the community.

- **Garinger High School's Sustainable Agriculture** program partners with 100 Gardens, a Charlotte-based nonprofit organization that brings aquaponic farming to K-12 schools in order to address food insecurity, nutrition and enhance education for students in our region.



- **Campbell's Full Futures**, a new partnership aimed at promoting food accessibility and education in public schools, is currently at three CMS schools: Garinger High, Eastway Middle and Merry Oaks International Academy.
- The **Charlotte Engineering Early College**, a joint project between CMS and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, serves high school students with a focus on the engineering disciplines.
- The **Charlotte Teacher Early College** on the campus of University of North Carolina at Charlotte serves students interested in a career in education and provides opportunities for high school students to earn college credit, free of charge, during the five years in the program.
- The **Career and Technical Education (CTE) Culinary Arts and Hospitality** pathway partners with the National Restaurant Association to offer students industry-level skills to promote career and college readiness.



ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

The **International Center** within CMS addresses the needs of culturally or linguistically diverse students, serving as the resource and enrollment center for all students whose first or primary language is not English. The goal of the International Center is to ensure that all students are given equal access to any educational services necessary to meet their individual needs. As of November 2022, the Center's enrollment included 47,872 language minority students, speaking 209 Native languages and representing 175 countries.



To help students obtain medical care and improve attendance, CMS partnered with **Atrium Health's Levine Children's Hospital** to launch the "**Meaningful Medicine**" program, made possible by Bank of America. Virtual care was provided in 20 elementary schools and 13 middle and high schools received behavioral health teletherapy in the 2022-2023 school year.

1,288 unique patients were seen and the program achieved a **45% return to class rate** for school-based virtual care.

9,556 vision screenings were completed in the 2022-2023 school year by **Vision To Learn**, a non-profit charity that helps Title I students with free vision screenings, eye exams and glasses. An estimated 14,000 children in Charlotte go to school every day without the glasses they need to see the board, read a book, or participate in the classroom.

iPromising Pages provides books to afterschool and summer programs, individual and classroom libraries, preschools in underserved communities, tutoring programs, and Title I schools. Through spring 2022, Promising Pages has held a total of 90 book fairs through which it distributed 266,426 books to 44,516 CMS students.



110 PTAs (Parent-Teacher Associations, 35 PTOs (Parent-Teacher Organizations) and other parent groups facilitate parent involvement and provide support to our schools.

- The **Huntingtowne Farms Elementary PTA** was recognized as the North Carolina PTA **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion PTA of the Year** for their efforts to engage Spanish-speaking families and make their PTA and school community inclusive of all families.



The **Out of School Time Tutoring** program focuses on providing expanded learning opportunities for students through high-dosage tutoring. Students from 62 of the highest need CMS schools were identified during the 2022-2023 school year, and **5,191 students** received 106,745 tutoring sessions - **4.8 million minutes of tutoring**. The program resulted in significant improvements in reading, math, and levels of college and career ready.

One thousand forty one volunteer HEART Math tutors contributed nearly **19,000 hours of one-to-one tutoring sessions**. Donors and funding partners provided resources for **982 students at 26 schools** to receive high quality, individualized tutoring at no cost to their families.

- 96% of students demonstrated growth in two or more concepts between pre- and post-assessments, meeting goals set by math specialists at University of North Carolina at Charlotte and CMS.
- 92% of teachers reported that HEART Math tutors' students showed increased confidence and enthusiasm for learning as a result of the program.





cms

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

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