

## Quick Facts about the Kershaw County School District



*Nestled in the heart of the Palmetto State, the Kershaw County School District is home to more than 10,300 students and over 1,000 employees. Our district is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and the South Carolina Department of Education. The district's 15-16 general fund budget totals more than \$75 million. Our graduation rate is over 90%, and more than 90 percent of our graduates attend college or some other form of continuing education, join the military or enter the workforce.*

### **Strong leadership**

The Kershaw County Board of School Trustees provides solid leadership in preparing our students to be productive citizens in a global society. Our district has nine instructional goals based on state and federal accountability measures. A strategic plan guides district decision-making.

### **Outstanding workforce**

More than 70 percent of Kershaw County's 750 teachers have advanced degrees, and 17% are National Board certified. Our teachers have an average of 16 years' of experience.

### **Focus on academic achievement**

Student learning is at the center of everything in our schools. Our schools regularly earn recognition for having test scores in the top ten school districts in the state. Our graduating seniors earn over \$9.3 million in college scholarships.

### **Small class sizes**

The Kershaw County Board of School Trustees has established standards for class sizes, paying special attention to smaller student-teacher ratios at the lower levels. Currently, we average 1:22 in kindergarten, 1:20 in 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> grades, 1:25 in 3<sup>rd</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades, and 1:25 in 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grades.

### **Technology as a valuable resource**

The school district offers a full range of academic programs and extracurricular activities. All 20 schools are wireless and connected by a high-speed wide area network. Students and staff have full-time Internet access in classrooms, libraries and computer labs, including distance learning opportunities. Kershaw County was the first school district in South Carolina to provide individual wireless personal computing devices to all high school students through an \$8 million i-CAN initiative. All teachers have personal computing devices, and all classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards. Elementary and middle school students are served through technology on mobile carts.

### **Facilities equalization**

The Board of Trustees has made a commitment to equalizing school buildings across the district so that regardless of where children live in Kershaw County, they have equal opportunities and facilities. A recent \$102.2 million school construction program helped to equalize facilities across the district. The eight projects in this first phase included two new middle schools, new wellness facilities at all three high schools, a new elementary school and two elementary renovation projects. Discussions are now in place for a phase two.

## Recent awards and honors

As a district with outstanding employees, our accomplishments are impressive:

- The District's graduation rate is at an all-time high, over 90%.
- The National School Boards Association ranked KCSO in the top 10 (7th) in the effective use of technology for school districts enrolling between 3,000 and 12,000 students.
- KCSO is the only school district in the Midlands and one of only 10 in the state to be recognized as having a "high return on investment" in a 2014 productivity study by the Center for American Progress.
- Recent ACT scores were outperformed the state average for the third straight year.
- The District received almost \$2 million in competitive grant funding and direct services to students through grants awarded to community partners.
- KCSO's website was again recognized as one of the state's best by the SC chapter of the National School Public Relations Association (SC/NSPRA), receiving approximately 500,000 visits over the school year. Pine Tree Hill Elementary also honored with four SC/NSPRA Rewards in Excellence communications awards.
- Students from Lugoff-Elgin High and Camden High raised over \$67,000 in one week for the United Way of Kershaw County.
- In the first year of competition, three KCSO teams (Camden Middle, Camden High and Lugoff-Elgin High) made the state Quiz Bowl Championships.
- The Blaney Elementary and Stover Middle Archery Teams reached the National Tournament in Louisville, Kentucky.
- The Future Farmers of America (FFA) chapter at ATEC received a "Gold" rating, making it one of the nine best chapters in the state.
- The student newspapers of both Camden and Lugoff-Elgin high schools both received "Superior" ratings from the South Carolina Press Association in addition to numerous individual awards.
- The Kershaw County School Board was recognized by the South Carolina School Boards Association with an Advocacy Program of the Year award for its efforts to help employees register to vote.
- The Lugoff-Elgin High School yearbook was one of only four in South Carolina to receive a "Gallery of Excellence" award from Walsworth Publishing.
- Staff awards included:
  - Camden High's Assistant Principal Lesley Corner was named the South Carolina Association of School Administrators' High School Assistant Principal of the Year.
  - Adult Education employee Bridgett Bailey was named the South Carolina Association of Adult and Continuing Education's State Transition Specialist of the Year.
  - Doby's Mill Elementary Principal Ginger Catoe was named the South Carolina Association of School Librarians (SCASL) Administrator of the Year.
  - Chief Financial Officer Donnie Wilson was named the South Carolina Association of School Business Officers (SCASBO) School Business Officer of the Year.
  - Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources Connie Graham received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the South Carolina Association of School Administrators (SCASA).
  - Assessment Director Lavoy Carter received a District Technology Innovative Program (TIP) Award from the South Carolina Association for Educational Technology for his "PASS Analyzer" program.
- Lugoff-Elgin Middle was the first SC middle school to win a national "School to Watch" award and the first to be re-designated three times.
- Five schools (Camden High, Doby's Mill Elementary, Lugoff-Elgin Middle, Lugoff Elementary and Camden Primary) have been named Palmetto's Finest schools.
- Jackson School was the first LEED Gold K-12 school in South Carolina.
- Doby's Mill Elementary was named a 2013 National School of Character National Finalist.
- Three former District Teachers of the Year have been named State Teachers of the Year.