District Honored for Energy-Saving Initiatives, Facility Projects

Richland One received the 2021 Energy Project of the Year award from the Association of South Carolina Energy Managers (ASCEM), and Miles Hanley from the district’s Office of Facility Services was named Energy Manager of the Year. Under the South Carolina Energy Office, ASCEM awards the honors annually to recognize outstanding achievements of energy managers and energy projects across the state.

Richland One’s project with energy and sustainability expert Schneider Electric will help advance the district’s energy goals by saving more than $57 million over the next 20 years. This district-wide modernization project includes a telecommunication system overhaul, significant facility upgrades, as well as the addition of solar arrays to multiple school roofs to advance the district’s net zero energy consumption goals.

The Energy Manager of the Year award is given to an energy professional that has “saved energy dollars through innovative energy saving projects and/or has gone above and beyond their job duties to assist in the implementation of energy efficiency measures in the past year.”

Two of the district’s facility projects received recognition at the national and state levels, including Excellence in School Building and Design Awards from the Association for Learning Environments for the new media center at Rosewood Elementary School and the new culinary arts facility at Heyward Career and Technology Center. Quackenbush Architects & Planners and Penn Contracting worked on both projects. The architectural firm also received the Honor Award from the South Carolina chapter of the American Institute of Architects for its design of the culinary arts facility at Heyward – the only project to receive the prestigious award this year.

We kicked off the 2021-2022 school year with “Going for the Goal” as our theme, with the goal of helping our students regain any learning loss due to the pandemic. The entire Richland One team remains focused and continues to work strategically to achieve that goal, and we are seeing progress being made throughout the district.

We believe it’s important to keep our stakeholders informed about our accomplishments and points of pride. This publication is one of the many ways we do that. As we look back on the first half of the school year, we can be proud of major achievements and everyday victories in our schools and departments.

During the fall semester, we celebrated the news that our graduation rate climbed to 85.8 percent, which is the district’s highest-ever graduation rate and higher than the state average for the third consecutive year. Our schools, students and staff also won numerous prestigious honors and awards at the local, state and national levels. We marked several milestones, too, including the five-year anniversary of our language immersion program.

As we begin the second semester, our priority continues to be protecting the safety of our students and staff as it relates to COVID-19 as well as the security of our campuses. We will continue to keep our parents and the community informed about our efforts in both areas.

Thank you for your support of Richland One as we work together to transform the lives of our students through education.

We are Richland One Strong!

Sincerely,
Craig Witherspoon, Ed.D.
Superintendent

Richland One School Board Receives National Award

The Richland One Board of School Commissioners received the Award for Urban School Board Excellence from the Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE), which is part of the National School Boards Association.

The award recognizes urban school board excellence in four core areas: school board performance, academic improvement, educational equity and community engagement. The award presentation was made September 17 during CUBE’s 2021 Annual Conference in Atlanta. Richland One’s Board is featured in the December 2021 edition of the American School Board Journal.
District’s Graduation Rate Tops State Average Again

Richland One crushed its own record-high graduation rate and surpassed the state average again, with 85.8 percent of its students graduating on time. The on-time graduation rate is the percentage of students who earn a high school diploma in four years. Richland One’s 2021 graduation rate is just under three full percentage points higher than the 2020 graduation rate of 82.9 percent, which previously was the district’s highest-ever graduation rate. Not only is this the third consecutive year that Richland One’s graduation rate increased, it is also the third consecutive year that the district’s graduation rate has exceeded the state average. The state average for 2021 was 83.3 percent.

National Merit Scholarship Semifinalists

Three Richland One students are semifinalists in the 2022 National Merit Scholarship Program. Dreher High School seniors Zoe K. Maltarich, Shane A. Keup and Cassandra M. Escorcia (pictured below) are among 16,000 academically talented students nationwide selected to compete for 7,500 scholarships valued at nearly $30 million. Less than 1 percent of all U.S. high school seniors are named semifinalists, qualifying for the prestigious honor based on their scores on the PSAT. Finalists will be announced in February.

STAFF HONORS & AWARDS

Sally McCants, Rosewood Elementary School
Richland One Teacher of the Year

Lisa Flores, Hand Middle School
Richland One Classified Employee of the Year

Mark Davis, Hopkins Middle School
Richland One Middle School Coach of the Year

Caleb Clark, Dreher High School
Richland One High School Coach of the Year

Anelle Anderson, Lower Richland High School
Penny Caughman, Hyatt Park Elementary School
Jennifer Helmy, Brennen Elementary School
Mildred Huff, W.S. Sandel Elementary School
Melita Tillman, Heyward Gibbs Middle School
Richland One Bookkeepers of the Year

Inger Ferguson, Southeast Middle School
Administrator of the Year, South Carolina Association of Educational Office Professionals

Brian Weston, Office of the Executive Directors of Schools
Office Professional of the Year, Richland County Association of Educational Office Professionals

Reginald China, Heyward Career and Technology Center
SkillsUSA South Carolina Advisor of the Year

Cathleen Lacey, Crayton Middle School
Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert
State Cheerleading Champions

For the second year in a row and the second time in the school’s history, the A.C. Flora Falcons won the Class 4A state championship in competitive cheerleading. The team earned its highest-ever point total (297) to bring home the 2021-2022 state title.

Columbia High’s Ground School

Before the Air Force JROTC cadets in the Ground School class at Columbia High School can fly a plane on their own and earn their wings, they have to start with the basics. They study aerodynamics, learn how to repair an aircraft engine and rudder, and fly drones and model planes. In its second year, the program started as a response to a worldwide pilot shortage and an appeal from Boeing to partner with the school to train pilots. Teaching the Ground School class is Jack Fastnaught, a certified flight instructor who worked as an air traffic controller for 35 years.

Points of Pride

- Six Richland One schools received 2022 Distinguished Arts Program Grant Awards totaling more than $100,000. The grants are funded through the General Appropriations Act and administered by the South Carolina Department of Education. Grants were awarded to A.C. Moore Elementary, Alcorn Middle, Hand Middle, Heyward Gibbes Middle, Logan Elementary and Satchel Ford Elementary schools.

- Twenty-three Richland One art students and one teacher were among more than 250 who received honors and awards in the 2021 South Carolina State Fair’s Art Competition. Richland One students competed in 2-D, 3-D and photography divisions with more than 900 other K-12 students from across the state. First-place winners of the 2-D divisions for elementary and high school were Ace Seawright, a fifth-grader at A.C. Moore Elementary School, and Katie Bauer, a ninth-grader at Dreher High School. Christopher Nostrant, a visual art teacher at A.C. Flora High School, earned a merit award in the professional category for his painting.

- Twenty-eight Richland One orchestra students earned a chair in the South Carolina Music Educators Association’s (SCMEA) Midlands Region Orchestra, qualifying them to audition for the South Carolina All-State Orchestra. The students had to perform a scale, play a prepared piece and sight-read new music.

Arts Honors & Awards

- Gabby Brown, a 2021 graduate of Dreher High School, won the 2021 National Congressional Art Competition for South Carolina’s Second Congressional District. The artwork had to represent this year’s theme, The Palmetto State: Capturing the Spirit of South Carolina. Brown’s winning photograph of her sister outstretched on grass with flowers adorning her hair (below) will hang in the Cannon Tunnel of the U.S. Capitol for one year. The tunnel is the most highly traveled access point between the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Capitol.
An innovative “pipeline” program created through a partnership between Dominion Energy and the University of South Carolina’s Darla Moore School of Business will help groom the next generation of business leaders.

The Dominion Energy Power Forward Program, which launched in September 2021, will provide unique opportunities for high school students in Richland One and Richland Two to enhance their knowledge of and interest in business degrees and professions. Students will engage in lunch-and-learns, mentorships from Moore School faculty and staff, site visits to the building and other locations, and academic competitions.

“The Moore School understands the crucial need to provide opportunities for high school students, particularly in South Carolina, so they can see themselves succeeding at the Moore School and other schools and universities,” said Dr. Deborah Hazzard, the Moore School’s associate dean of diversity and inclusion and a management clinical associate professor.

“I truly believe education is a great equalizer,” said Hazzard, a graduate of Richland One’s Lower Richland High School. “We really have to provide opportunities for people around education and help them achieve economic mobility and change their lives. I see myself in the faces of these students that are going to be part of this pipeline program. This for me became a labor of love.”

Students in the Power Forward Program also will have job shadowing and college shadowing opportunities, and participate in service-learning and project-based learning projects.

Students and staff celebrated the grand opening of the Victory Café at Heyward Career and Technology Center on October 21. The café is a school-based enterprise operated by students in the Victory Program, which is based at Heyward. The program provides education and training for special needs students ages 18-21. Students sell coffee and pastries to Heyward students and staff, with plans to open the café to the public later. Proceeds from the Victory Café will be used for activities and incentives for the students.
Eau Claire High School senior Javarion Canzater is the second student from the Richland One Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) Program to earn a Commercial Learner’s Permit (CLP). Richland One’s CDL program, which was established in partnership with the South Carolina Trucking Association, was the first high school CDL training program in the state and it is one of only six nationwide. Enrollment in the district’s program has grown from 31 students in 2019 to 45 students this year.

Canzater joins Justin Johnson, who graduated in 2020, as the first Richland One CDL Program students to receive their permits. Johnson has since received a diesel mechanic certification, obtained his CDL and gained employment as a mechanic. Canzater has plans to earn his CDL and take it on the road upon graduating.

“We have been successful in educating students from Eau Claire and our desire is to see the program continue to evolve and grow,” said CDL instructor/coach Augustin Wigfall. “Because of the high demand for quality truck drivers, I believe the program is heading for more students to have an opportunity at trucking.”

Five years ago, the inaugural class of students enrolled in Richland One’s Language Immersion Program at Carver-Lyon Elementary School. The program began in August 2016, offering Spanish and Chinese to pre-K and kindergarteners. Those initial 31 students have progressed in the program each year and are fifth-graders now.

This year, there are 317 pre-kindergarten through fifth-grade students in the program, which added French during the 2020-2021 school year. Students are taught in English for half of the instructional day and in one of the other languages for the other half of the day.

Erika Barboza-Ayala, Richland One’s language immersion lead teacher, said in an ever-increasingly interconnected and interdependent world, students who experience language immersion are better prepared to compete and succeed in the global economy.

“It also opens the door to understanding other cultures, and it has the potential to make communication more meaningful and rich and improve academic performance,” she said.

The district is exploring expanding the language immersion program to the middle school level.
**Master Classes with Legendary Artists**

Richland One students engage in many unique learning experiences, including participating in Master Classes with legendary artists and having opportunities to perform for and with them and learn from them. In September, singer-actress and former Miss America Vanessa Williams conducted a Master Class for students as part of the district’s partnership with the Auntie Karen Foundation. Internationally acclaimed musician Wynton Marsalis and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra performed for Richland One band students in December.

**Navy Day and Military Appreciation Celebration**

Richland One held a Navy Day and Military Appreciation Celebration on October 20 at Dreher High School as part of Columbia Navy Week, which brought sailors from different Navy units across the U.S. to conduct focused outreach with members of the community. During the celebration, JROTC cadets and other students learned about educational and career opportunities available in the Navy and other military branches.

**Hall of Fame Induction Gala**

The 2022 Richland One Hall of Fame Induction Gala will be held Saturday, February 12 at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center. The red carpet reception will begin at 5 p.m. and the program will begin at 6 p.m. The featured vocalist will be national and international recording artist CammWess®. Additional details about the gala, including ticket information, are posted on the district’s website.

This year’s honorees are: Kay Spann Byrd (C.A. Johnson High School class of 1971); Dr. Tanya C. Dillihay (Lower Richland High School class of 1975); Alex English (Dreher High School class of 1972); Dr. Deborah D. Hazzard (Lower Richland High School class of 1986); and Henry C. Young (retired Richland One principal).

Induction into the Hall of Fame is the highest honor awarded to individuals by the Richland One Board of School Commissioners. Eighty-seven men and women have been inducted since the Hall of Fame was established in 2004.
## Stay Connected!

- [Our Website](www.richlandone.org)
- [RJTV](https://richlandone.org/about/rjtv)
- [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/richlandone)
- [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/richlandone)
- [Twitter](https://twitter.com/richlandone)
- [InfoPhone](803-235-1712)

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### Notice of Non-Discrimination

Richland County School District One does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, disability, age or other protected characteristics in its programs and activities.

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### Key Dates

| January 1-31 | National Mentoring Month |
| January 14 | Teacher workday (no school for students) |
| February 1-28 | National Career and Technical Education Month |
| February 12 | Richland One Hall of Fame Induction Gala, Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center; red carpet reception at 5 p.m., program at 6 p.m. |
| February 14-18 | School Bus Driver Appreciation Week (in SC) |
| February 21 | Professional development day (no school for students) |
| March 6-12 | National School Social Work Week |
| March 25 | Teacher workday (no school for students) |
| March 7-11 | National School Breakfast Week |
| April 1 | Parent-teacher conferences (early release for students) |
| April 2-8 | Week of the Young Child |
| April 11-15 | Spring Break |
| April 18-22 | National School Volunteer Week |
| April 24-30 | Administrative Professionals Week (Administrative Professionals Day – April 27) |

| May 1 | National Principals Day |
| May 2-8 | National Teacher Appreciation Week (National Teacher Day – May 3) |
| May 6 | National School Lunch Hero Day |
| May 11 | National School Nurse Day |
| May 31 | High school graduation ceremonies at C.F. Bolden Stadium: C.A. Johnson High School (8 a.m.), Columbia High School (11 a.m.) |
| June 1 | High school graduation ceremonies at The Stadium at W.J. Keenan: W.J. Keenan High School (8 a.m.), Eau Claire High School (11 a.m.) |
| June 2 | High school graduation ceremonies at The Stadium at Lower Richland: Lower Richland High School (8 a.m.), Richland One Middle College (11 a.m.) |
| June 3 | High school graduation ceremonies at Memorial Stadium: Dreher High School (8 a.m.), A.C. Flora High School (11 a.m.) |
| June 3 | Last day for district child care programs and athletics tutorial programs |
| June 3 | Last day of school for students (early release) |

To view the 2021-2022 academic calendar, go to [www.richlandone.org/calendars](https://www.richlandone.org/calendars).