



HEART4SCHOOLS

NEWSLETTER



"The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you: the LORD lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace." Numbers 6: 24-26

Angela McNeal

As I think about the new year and my hopes and dreams for Heart4Schools, I naturally think of you! I am so thankful for each of our pastors, leaders, and church members who serve students and teachers across South Carolina. When you provide support and encouragement to teachers and administrators and provide for the physical needs of students and families, you are such a blessing and a reflection of our Father's love.

I recently read the book of Numbers, and during the Christmas holidays, saw a beautiful print of Numbers 6: 24-26 in my son's home. The words given to Aaron and the priests to bless the Israelites have been echoing in my mind! As we begin a new year, I am asking the Lord "to bless and keep you", and praying God's blessings over you, personally, and as you lead your congregations, minister to your community, and care for your own families. I pray for His protection over you, a special awareness of His favor and love, and a lasting joy and peace even as you face the inevitable challenges of life and ministry.

I trust that God will make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. When Moses spent time in God's presence, his face shone so that there was no mistaking he had been in the presence of a mighty, pure, and powerful God. As I think of you, I see your face shining and radiating God's love to those around you. In a hurting world, your kind eyes and warm smile minister to the souls of our educators.

While 2021 was a difficult year because of the pandemic, we have seen God's blessings as Heart4Schools partnerships have grown. We now have 392 schools with a church partnership. This is an increase of 93 schools since January 2021.

It is my prayer that God will continue to open doors for conversations about the opportunities we have to serve and make a lasting difference in the lives of students, teachers, and administrators and that we will find churches willing to partner with the remaining 883 schools! Will you commit to pray this with me? I believe God will hear and answer our prayers. If you would like to hear the story of a minister who has prayed this prayer and seen incredible answers, check out page 3!

May the Lord bless you and keep you!

Looking Ahead

JANUARY 18

REAYCH Conference
Moriah Association
Heart4Schools Breakout Session

JANUARY 25

REAYCH Conference
Aiken Association
Heart4Schools Breakout Session

FEBRUARY 17

IMPACT
Shandon Baptist Church

MARCH 2

Dr. Seuss' birthday
(Schools often make special plans for
Read Across America week)
How can you help?

MARCH 17

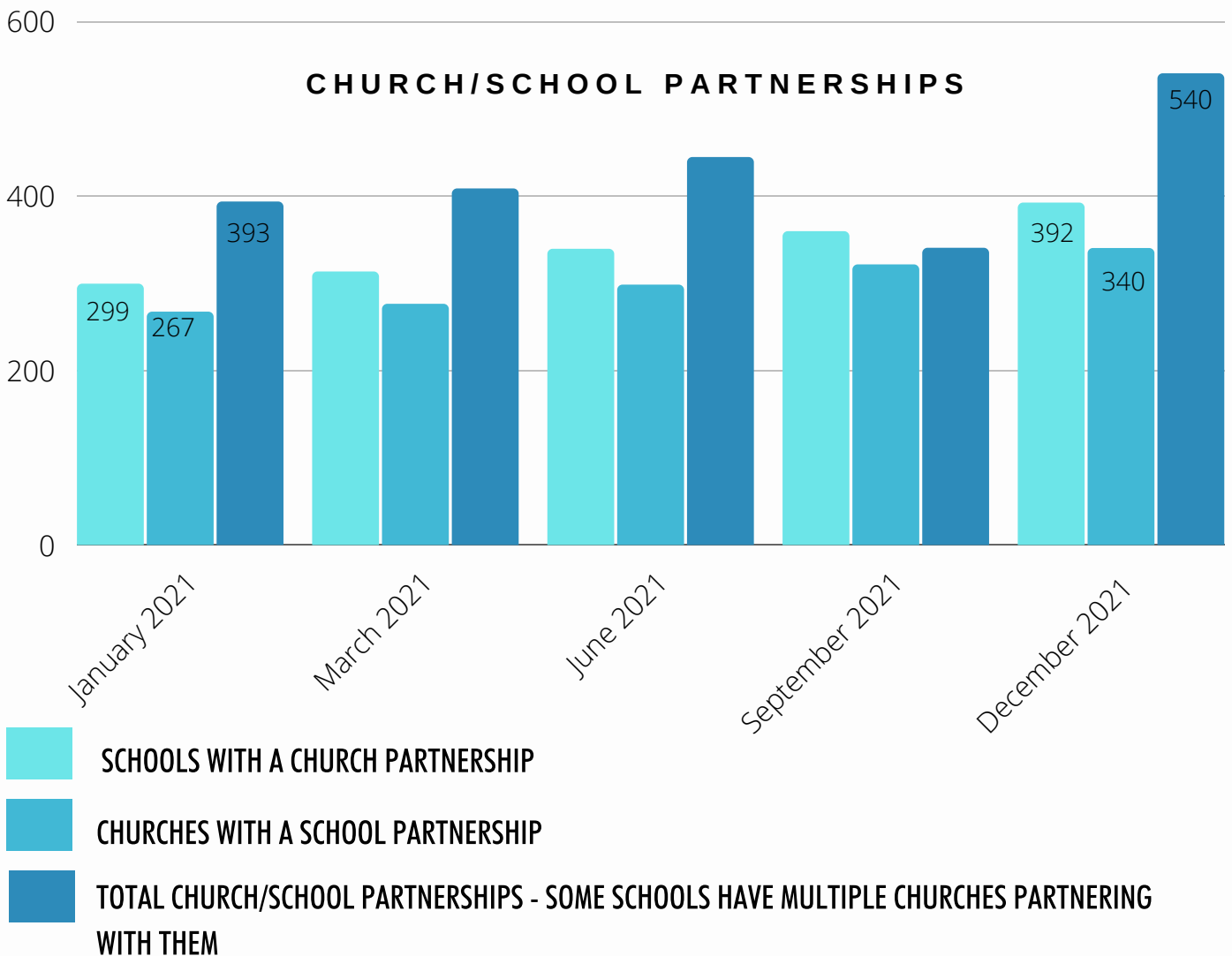
Heart4Schools Celebration
(Second Session for those who attended
in the fall)

MARCH/APRIL

Standardized Testing is often the end of
March or early April.
Can you provide special snacks or
incentives, or serve as a volunteer
proctor?



Celebrating Heart4Schools Growth in 2021



We have 1275 schools in South Carolina. There are more than 800 schools across the state who need still church partnerships. Will you pray for opportunities to share with other pastors/leaders about your partnership? Let them hear your stories of impact.

Celebrating Answered Prayers!

Dena Riley, Pastoral Care Minister at FBC North Augusta has been intentional in asking God to open doors for her and the Hope4Schools team at their church to help other churches start school partnerships. God has answered in incredible ways!

1) As the team provided a meal for teachers, a substitute teacher came to them and asked for help in beginning a school partnership at her church. The team invited her to their church and talked with her about their journey and shared ideas for start-up.

2) At a prayer meeting a few weeks ago, a church member, who works at Fort Gordon, learned more about their school partnership. The next day, she went to her battalion commander and told him about the work being done at an elementary school across the river in South Carolina. He was so excited about this work that he asked for their entire battalion to help in this partnership. As a result, FBC North Augusta planned a day to meet and work with the Medical Operations Readiness Unit of Fort Gordon! The unit helped pack 420 food bags, covered 217 books, made 480 teacher encouragement cards/goodies, cut out 23 blankets and completed 46 blankets, and sealed 500 toothbrushes! There were 36 men and women who worked hard to help serve their community. The church volunteers made some new friends and had a lot of laughs. They love their new partners and can't wait to work with them again in February!!

3) As a result of the collaboration with Fort Gordon, someone from the unit is interested in starting a church partnership with a church in Augusta, GA.

4) Because of the work this church is doing in Clearwater, SC, a principal in Augusta, GA (right across the river) asked if they could be on a "waiting list" to have them partner with their school. Dena was able to connect this principal with another church in the school's community to serve them.

In Dena's words, "Just pray and have faith, and it comes right to you!!"



Ministry Spotlight: New Prospect Baptist Church, Anderson, SC

Rev. Drew Gunter, Associate Pastor

Heart4Schools has been such a tremendous blessing to our congregation at New Prospect Baptist Church. Over the course of the last several months, God has opened up doors for us at Robert Anderson Middle School. We began by taking the administrators out for lunch and had a simple conversation focused upon one key question: what can we do to serve you? We had no agenda but to love the faculty and students well. They identified some key needs, and we got to work! From that time, God has allowed us to distribute birthday cupcakes to students and faculty members every month. We have fed the teachers and distributed goodie bags on two occasions. Our congregation wrote notes of encouragement and prayer to every faculty member. In October, we provided a duty-free lunch to give the teachers a much needed break.

What we are amazed most by is how God has opened door after door for service and ministry. What began at RAMS has spread to Westside High School where we have fed and shared the Gospel with the JV and Varsity football teams and the band. Our Student Pastor, Jay, was able to pray with the principal and faculty and has been given an open door to come and minister on that campus. The biggest blessing has been watching members of our church rise up to exercise their gifts and serve our community so well! Our partnership through Heart4Schools has been such an amazing experience, and we cannot wait to see what God will do in 2022 and beyond!



New School Partnership

Ministry Spotlights: Stony Fork Community Church, Rock Hill

Scott Carroll, Pastor

One of our main efforts in our partnership with Mount Holly Elementary School is teacher/staff encouragement. (We also include the custodial and cafeteria staff in our encouragement.) As a part of this initiative, we arranged to have the Coffee Bus from Knowledge Perk in the parking lot when the teachers and staff arrived for school. They were offered the coffee and pastry of their choice. Several from our church family were on hand to greet, build relationships with and encourage these amazing educators and staff. We were able to make new friends as well as connect one-on-one with others. During our visit, we were asked by many teachers and staff to pray for their personal needs and we also added their requests, when appropriate, to our prayer team calendar. We have continued to follow up with these requests and offer assistance when needed. It was exciting to be back with our Mount Holly family.



Indian Land Community Church, Fort Mill

Shannon Brown, Pastor

Our church recently sponsored a coffee truck for a local middle school. Our goal was to serve the faculty and staff during a teacher work-day in hopes of building a relationship with the teachers and the school as a whole. During our time on campus, we hung out in the parking lot and spoke to teachers as they waited for their drinks. We asked them questions about their year so far, the biggest challenges they were facing, and if there were any specific things that we could do to help them finish the year strong. We learned a lot about the teachers, and we learned about some very specific needs they have. By providing this coffee truck, we learned so much and we have now been invited back to serve in other capacities, including stepping in to help support a couple of Christian clubs they have on campus for students. The door is now open for us to build on this relationship and share the love of Jesus with the faculty and students of this school.



Cornerstone Baptist Church, Hartsville

Brett Gandy, Heart4Schools Leader

On November 19, 2021, our church arranged for a donut truck and coffee station for the faculty and staff at Thornwell Elementary School in Hartsville. For the event, we partnered with Little Orbits Mini Donuts (Lancaster), and Crema Coffee Shop (Hartsville). We served all teachers, office staff, cafeteria workers, and custodians. This was a special experience. We were able to build onto the relationships we have already made. Several church members were able to attend, and we were able to tape up a Hearts 4 Schools poster created by the organization's committee/team. We handed out needs and prayer concerns cards to teachers, and they were filled out. Our church was able to have one-on-one conversations with the staff, sparking new relationships. The teachers were more than appreciative and so very thankful for this service. Overall, it was a fun event. We were able to touch base with the teachers and let them know of our constant prayers for them all, and our intent to help them in whatever way we possibly can.



Working with School Improvement Councils

Many of our South Carolina pastors volunteer on the School Improvement Council at their local school. This gives them an opportunity to develop relationships with the administration, parents, and other community members. They are also able to hear first-hand about the needs of students and teachers and learn innovative ways to help and have a long-term impact on the health of the school. See below for an invitation from Tom Hudson, South Carolina School Improvement Director.



**Want to support children and families in your community?
Join your local School Improvement Council as a Community Representative!**

If you want to support learning and developmental success for children in your community but don't know how to get involved, your local School Improvement Council (SIC) is a great place to start.

SICs are a place where representatives of parents, community members, teachers, students (in high schools), and administrators come together to provide schools with input and feedback on school and student needs. Community representatives also help to connect schools with community resources that can help address those needs.

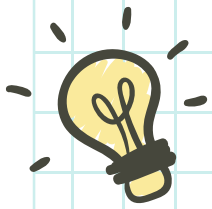
Every K-12 public school should have an SIC that is meeting regularly and includes representatives of the surrounding community. Principals are required to appoint at least two community members to their SIC. Even if those slots are filled, SIC meetings are open to the public and everyone is welcome to attend meetings and serve as volunteers.

It takes strong family-school-community partnerships to ensure that every child has an opportunity to get a good education. To find out more about how you can help, contact the principal at the school where you would like to serve to express your interest or contact SC School Improvement Council director, Tom F. Hudson at hudsonf@mailbox.sc.edu, 803-777-7658, or 1-800-868-2232.



Personal Notes for Teachers

Rebecca Looper from Nine Forks Church in Easley, SC recently shared a great way that her church is blessing teachers in two of their local schools. Each month they put the names of all teachers from one grade level, and a few other staff (custodians, cafeteria, etc.) on an apple tree. Church members choose an apple and send a personal note to the staff member. Their Women on Mission's group also sends a note from the church and a \$5 gift card from a local Dollar General to each of the staff. By the end of the year, every staff member in both schools has received two personal notes of encouragement!



Ring in the New Year with our Schools

Replenish school supplies for teachers and/or students.

Ask first year teachers what their needs are and give them extra support.

Write personal notes of appreciation.



Provide Duty Free Lunch - Sit with students while teachers eat. (Some schools are already allowing volunteers back in.)



Provide special treats for students during Read Across America Week - or Dr. Seuss' Birthday.



Bless teachers with an apple bar with fresh apples and toppings at their next faculty meeting or In-Service Day.



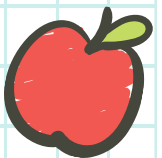
Ask your principal how you could help with a literacy night/event for parents and students.



Consider hosting a Family Fun Night at school. Talk with your principal to learn how you could help the school with parent engagement.



Would your school consider a Reading Bowl? Students keep a reading log and enjoy a friendly competition among classes. You provide the prizes: 3rd - book and ice cream party; 2nd - book and pizza party; 1st - pizza, ice cream party, and book.



Talk with your principal about ways to help during testing; serve as a proctor and/or provide special treats for students (see Pinterest for many ideas).



A special treat, snack, or meal for staff is always appreciated!

