



HEART4SCHOOLS

NEWSLETTER



"As each of you has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: Whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves as one who serves by the strength that God supplies - in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. 1 Peter 4: 10-11

Angela McNeal

Teachers are special people! They wear many hats, care deeply, and use their gifts to shape the lives of the young people in our communities. Many of you know first-hand the struggles teachers have faced during the last two years. Whether you are married to a teacher, have an adult child who teaches, or have teachers in your congregation, you know the many hours they put in each day. You understand the depth of care, concern, and responsibility they feel for their students' well-being, health, and academic progress. You see their weariness!

CERRA, the South Carolina Center for Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement recently shared this data:

- A rise in teacher departures over the years and an insufficient number of students pursuing teaching as a career has forced South Carolina into a teacher shortage, well before the pandemic hit.
- In any given year, roughly 6,000-7,000 South Carolina public school teachers leave their position and as many as 1,000 positions remain vacant after the start of each school year. Most of the vacant positions are caused by teacher resignations.

We have an incredible opportunity to encourage our teachers! April is a great time to meet with your principal and ask how your church can show appreciation during the last weeks of the school year. You don't have to spend a lot! Notes of appreciation, volunteering at Fun Runs and Field Days, giving a "duty free" lunch, providing a basket of snacks and a note in the workroom, or hosting a coffee cart shows them that you "see them" and you care!

Let's look for ways to connect with our teachers, build relationships, and let them experience the love of God through us. You will find ideas throughout this newsletter.

As we serve our teachers, God is glorified!

Looking Ahead

APRIL

Standardized testing in some schools.
(Consider snacks and proctoring.)

APRIL 12

Screven Baptist Association
Heart4Schools Training

APRIL 21

Beaverdam Baptist Association
Heart4Schools Training

MAY 1

National School Principal Appreciation
Day (Recognize 4/29 or 5/2)

MAY 2

National Teacher Appreciation Day

MAY 2-6

National Teacher Appreciation Week

MAY 10

Edgefield Baptist Association
Heart4Schools Training

SEPTEMBER 15

Heart4Schools Training
190 Stoneridge Drive, Columbia
9:30 - 3:00

Teacher Appreciation Week

May 2-6

Check out these ideas from churches around the state:



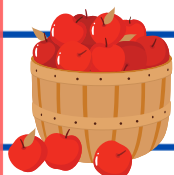
Personal notes of encouragement for the school staff.



COFFEE! Coffee cart with treats to take around to rooms; coffee and treats in the teacher lounge; or a coffee truck if you still can't be in the building.



Greet staff with volunteers and posters of appreciation as they drive in to the school parking lot on Monday morning.



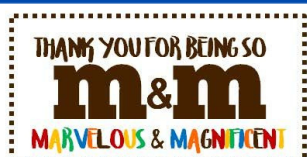
Provide a meal or snacks: Breakfast, lunch, an apple bar, dessert bar, or a basket of goodies for the teacher lounge. Take time to connect with staff while you are there.



Enlist volunteers to provide a "duty free" lunch. You get to connect with the students and teachers have a few minutes to eat in peace and recharge.



Provide a "goody bag" for each teacher. Consider: notes of encouragement, a drink, snacks, specialty pens, expo markers, paper clips, lip balm, and/or note pads.



Fill teacher mailboxes with a special treat. The ideas are endless on Pinterest: A box of M&M for Marvelous and Magnificent Teachers; Kind Bars - "You are One of a Kind. Thank you for all you do!"

Heart4Schools March Celebration



Forty-seven Heart4Schools leaders from 23 churches around the state met on March 17th to worship, celebrate the lives impacted through school partnerships, and to inspire and encourage one another. This group began with a state-wide training last September and has met monthly for informational Zoom trainings.

Consider joining us for the next training session on September 15th. It's a great time to invite your friends to learn more about school partnerships.

To see what this group was up to this year, checkout the Heart4Schools Celebration Slideshow on www.heart4schools.org.



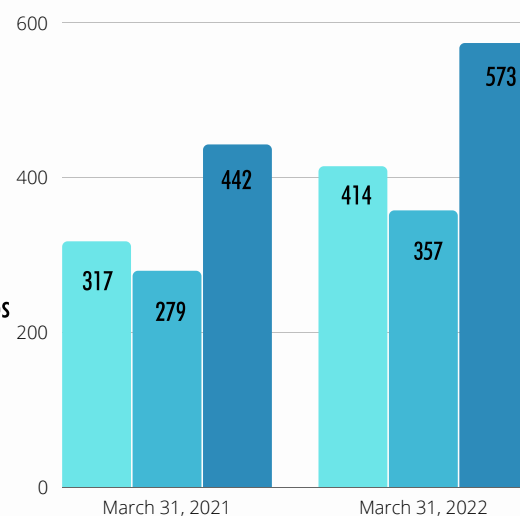
South Carolina School Districts

How many schools in your district have a church partnership?



School partnerships
Churches with partnerships
Total partnerships

Known Church/School Partnerships



With 1275 schools in South Carolina, we have more than 800 schools across the state who need church partnerships. How can you help? Will you pray for opportunities to share with other pastors/leaders about your partnership? Invite these friends to lunch and let them hear about the impact your partnership is making. Invite them to an associational or statewide training. If you would like a Heart4Schools training or an "interest" luncheon in your area, contact Angela McNeal (angelamcneal@scbaptist.org or 803-227-6079).



HEART4SCHOOLS TRAINING

SAVE THE DATE

SEPTEMBER 15, 2022

SPEAKERS:

Melanie Barton, Senior Education Advisor, Office of the Governor

Maria Owens, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Richland Two

Abby Cobb, Lead Social Worker, Richland Two

Katherine Templeton, Teacher & Coordinator of Professional Learning, Richland Two



Where: SCBC building
Columbia, SC

When: September 15, 2022
9:30 am- 3:00 pm

What: Training,
networking, and planning
for the 2022-2023
school year

WHO CAN YOU INVITE??
LET'S WORK TO HAVE
EVERY SCHOOL WITH A
CHURCH PARTNER!

Ministry Spotlight

FBC Norris

Norris, SC

New School Partnership!

Jeremy Merck, Pastor

Cindy Washburn, Heart4Schools leader/volunteer

Cindy shared this story at the Heart4Schools March Celebration:

Gabriel Washburn learned about the Reading Buddies program from his brother-in-law, Dr. Steve Burnette, pastor of FBC Williston. After talking with Steve and Heart4Schools, he spoke with the Superintendent of Pickens County Schools.

Everyone was on board and excited about beginning Reading Buddies at Liberty Primary School.

They had nine volunteers ready last fall, but the expected decrease in Covid restrictions did not happen. Instead of giving up, Gabriel met with the principal and asked if there was another way they might help.

The principal requested that they help with morning carline once a week. This would allow the teachers to spend a little extra time in the classroom preparing for the day. Volunteers have enjoyed opening doors, smiling and greeting children and parents. Gabriel's wife, Cindy Washburn, expressed it this way: "God had opened a doorway for us to help. It may seem like a small thing, but no act of kindness is too small to God. Sometimes the simplest things can make a large impact on someone else. You never know what kind of morning they are having, but you can smile and greet the children and parents.

Whether it's saying, 'Good morning', and 'Have a good day' to a child and parent, complimenting a child on their backpack or shoes, or holding an umbrella in the rain as a child exits the car, the impact we can make on that day's attitude can be great."



A Challenge from Cindy:

Covid has changed our "normal". I challenge you to have a servant's heart and serve those in your community. Ask your local schools what you can do for them. Don't let the setbacks prevent you from continuing on, rather allow the setbacks to carve new paths. If God closes one door, He will open another one. We just have to be in fellowship with Him, listen to Him, and follow after Him. For our church, the Reading Buddies door was closed, but opening car rider doors was opened.



Ministry Spotlight: Origins Church, Greenville, SC

New School Partnership!

Matthew Elrod, Pastor

Zach Larabee, City Missions Pastor

Last fall, Origins Church provided breakfast for Legacy Early College and had a meeting with their principal. As a result, they learned that their recently opened K-4 school did not have a church partner. They met with the principal of 4K Center who shared some needs with them. Initially, they provided monthly breakfast for teachers, and then asked what they could do specifically for students. They were told of a need for khaki pants (school uniforms) and their church collected pants and met this need.

They were asked to help encourage teachers with gifts on their birthday and have been happy to work with the principal in blessing teachers. God has also opened doors for them to have a prayer chain for teachers with the church praying for specific shared needs.

Their ministry to schools includes supporting another non-profit, PMAC, who provides homework help for students and also works

with the entire family. Origins provides food for the monthly family gatherings and recently cleaned and power washed the vans used to transport students to the after-school homework help.

As a result of attending the Heart4Schools March Celebration, Zach decided to ask if students might need weekend food bags.

The principal was very appreciative, and the church is about to get a list out to families in their church who will take ownership of providing one bag per week for a student.

Zach is thankful that they have been able to meet immediate needs of students and teachers, and he realizes this will lead to more opportunities for them to meet relational needs and share the gospel. The immediate needs are as important as sharing the gospel. "You can't have one without the other."



Community Connections: Free Data Base of Community Resources

The South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (SCDHHS), in partnership with Children's Trust of South Carolina, launched Community Connections last fall. Community Connections provides a free 24/7 online database of resources that connects South Carolinians in need to available social and health care services across the state. Individuals can search for free or low-cost services like medical care, employment and job training, food and financial assistance, education and transportation resources, and childcare in their communities.

To access the website: [Community Connections](#)



INVITE ONE

May 12th
Zoom Call
10 - 11 am

A Zoom link will be emailed closer
to the event.

Come hear how you can
(re)connect in your local school.
Invite a pastor/friend who is not
partnering with a school.

zoom

Having Trouble Reconnecting?



- Pray for open doors of communication
- Approach this as you would a new partnership.
- Contact the principal and ask for an appointment.
- Simply ask, "How can we help?" Go with no agenda.
- Remember that administrators are super busy with Covid concerns, teacher shortages and their "normal" work.
- If you don't hear from an administrator after leaving a message, drop off a personal note (asking "How can we help?") with a box of candy, a special treat, or some flowers.
- Another approach: bring donuts for the staff lounge and leave a note for the principal.
- If you had a Reading Buddy program, contact the school and ask when you can return.
- Inquire about background check requirements. Most expired during the pandemic.
- Are there school events you could help with as the year wraps up? Consider: field day, Fun Run, standardized testing, parent nights, or teacher appreciation events.
- Are there ways you could support students in need (homeless, foster care, food insecure)?
- Pray for your administrator, teachers, and staff.
- Intentionally connect every few weeks to let them know you are there for support.