



News Release

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Bridges Prep among state’s Top Three as high-achieving ‘School of Distinction’

Bridges Prep’s strong academics and academic growth earned it the “School of Distinction” award from the S.C. Charter School District and is one of only three in South Carolina recognized for excellence in both student achievement and academic growth.

The state report card for Bridges Prep showed exceptional results in 2015-2016 and among the best in the Lowcountry. The State Charter School District cites Bridges for its “exemplary work” improving student academic growth and its strong performance ranking.

“We are extremely proud of this honor and we are equally proud of the hard work that went into earning it, hard work by our teachers, our staff, our students and our families,” said Dee Matthews, chair of the Bridges Prep Board of Directors.

Bridges Prep is one of only eight schools in South Carolina to be named a “School of Distinction.” More impressive, it is one of only three in the state to be recognized for both high student achievement and strong rates of academic improvement. The other two state charter schools recognized are in Greenville and Rock Hill.

“I think our families and our staff all know that we are focused on the students at Bridges Prep. We encourage them, we motivate them, we teach them and we nurture them – but a lot of the credit goes to the students and parents who care so much to do their very best,” Matthews said.

“To be such a young school and to be recognized as one of the top three state charter schools in the whole state, well, that’s just a big ‘Wow!’” she said.

Bridges Preparatory School was chartered by South Carolina in mid-2012 and opened at near capacity in August 2013. Since then, enrollment has grown steadily with almost 600 students enrolled in K-9 this year and 650-plus anticipated for 2017-2018 when Bridges Prep expands to tenth grade. In two years, Bridges will be a full-service K-12 state charter school.

“In these schools, we see strong leadership, a commitment to joyful and rigorous education, and an unwavering belief in all kids,” said Elliot Smalley, superintendent of the S.C. Charter School District. “I look forward to more schools earning this recognition as we work with urgency to ensure a high quality education for each and every student.”

Bridges Prep elementary and middle school students exceeded state standards in English during the 2015-2016 school year and middle school students also exceeded state standards in math, according to the school’s first “report card” issued by the South Carolina Public Charter School District.

More than 62 percent of Bridges middle schoolers met or exceeded state standards in English/Language Arts and 53 percent of Bridges elementary students met or exceeded standards for ELA.

In math, more than 56 percent of Bridges elementary students met or exceeded standards with 49 percent of its middle school students reaching that level.

Those numbers easily outpaced other public schools in the Beaufort County School District. For comparisons, visit www.sccharter.org/who-we-are/district-performance/.

“We put a lot of work into creating an environment where rigorous academic standards are the foundation, but we also work hard to make learning fun and applicable to the real world,” said Dr. Nick Ithomitis, head of school at Bridges Prep since mid-2016. “This is a very strong school community.”

As a state charter school, Bridges Prep is open to all students in the Lowcountry without tuition. Bridges Prep follows the Paideia principles of education: All children can learn and therefore they all deserve the same quality of schooling, not just the same quantity; and the quality of schooling to which they are entitled is what the wisest parents would wish for their own children, the best education for the best being the best education for all.

To learn more about Bridges Preparatory School, visit www.bridgesprep.org or call 843-982-7737.

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