



# The Palmetto



**SOUTH  
CAROLINA**

The voice and vision of special education

## From the President's Desk

BY CONSTANCE MAYS, SCCEC PRESIDENT

The 2019 South Carolina Council for Exceptional Children Conference was one that will be remembered for years to come! There were over 500 attendees at this year's conference. WOW!

"Instruct, Invest, Inspire: Your Next Big Adventure"! I hope that each of you were able to walk away with a wealth of information that provided research and evidence-based practices. The SCCEC Executive Committee and Executive Board are so grateful for your attendance in making this one of the best conferences ever! I hope that as each of you returned to your districts, you were able to reminisce on the many

great sessions you attended.

The keynote speaker, C.L. "Shep" Shepherd, is a phenomenal speaker! He is an entrepreneur, keynote speaker, and transformation coach. Listening to Shep's life story, I found it to be inspiring and heart-warming, which I am sure may have given rise to the same effect on you. Shep encouraged and challenged each of us to set a higher standard of work by investing in building a rapport with students and incorporating social emotional learning outcomes that extend beyond the classroom. I believe Shep's story has a great impact on numerous audiences as he presents throughout the country.

I hope that you were able to have that "aha" moment; with take-aways from the many break-out sessions offered. The Executive Committee worked with our Research and Professional Development chairperson, Ms. Heather Edwards-Bohn, and her committee in vetting proposals based on your surveys from the previous years, hot topics discussed from the National Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), South Carolina State Department of Education, and the Office of Special Education Services (OSES).

The Poster Sessions were informative with great creativity as always. College Bowl was a hit! Congratulations to the winning team, "Clemson" on a job well done.

This year's Policy Panel was wonderful with great information

and updates from the Office of General Council and OSES. I have heard nothing but great things from Pre-Conference. Pre-Conference Strands were sponsored by SCCEC Subdivisions, such as SC Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE), Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities (DADD), Teacher Education Division (TED), Division of Early Childhood (DEC), Office of Special Education Services (OSES), Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT), and Division for Communication, Language, and Deaf/Hard of Hearing (DCD). Thanks to all the subdivisions.

The Awards Luncheon is always a huge part of our conference. Every winner should be proud of the accomplishments and special work that is required to be recognized and nominated for the awards, scholarships and mini grants. Please continue your commitment to special education.

This year's Silent Auction was another success with several exceptional items offered for bids. It is always a joy to watch as members submit the highest bid for the various items. The excitement on their faces is priceless. Thanks to all our winners. Your donations will

allow our students an opportunity to receive a scholarship.

Overall this year's conference was one of the best! Let us continue to Instruct, Invest, Inspire: Your Next Big Adventure Awaits You!

Hats off to our Diamond, Gold, Silver, Bronze Level Sponsors, and all exhibitors. Special thanks to our two co-host chapters (Chapter 429 and Chapter 451) for all your diligent work.

Congratulations to everyone who played a role in the success of the 2019 SCCEC Conference. Lights gleamed on our Conference Chairperson, Sam Price, and the SCCEC Executive Committee and Executive Board. The buzz was incredibly positive with excellent sessions. ■



Left to right: Sam Price (Conference Chair), C.L. "Shep" Shepherd, Constance Mays (President)

# What SC teachers are saying: TRUST AND LEADERSHIP MATTER MOST

BY DR. ANN MARIE TAYLOR, DIRECTOR OF LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT, PSTA

Teaching and leading in public education is not for the faint of heart. It takes grit, energy, grace, and a daily desire to change the world. As a former special education teacher and district leader, I am overwhelmed knowing that so many of my colleagues are not satisfied in a profession that has meant so much to me.

Every year South Carolina school districts report information on teacher hires, departures, and vacancies to the Center of Educator Recruitment, Retention, and Advancement (CERRA). According to CERRA, approximately 7,300 teachers left their positions during or at the end of the 2017-2018 school year; this is an increase of nearly 10% compared to the 2016-2017 school year. Nearly 2,000 of these teachers left to teach in another SC district, leaving about 5,300 who are no longer teaching in any SC public school. CERRA also reports that 35% of all teachers who left the profession have five or fewer years of experience in South Carolina, and 13% had been teaching in SC less than one year (CERRA, 2019).

In addition, there were 621 teaching vacancies statewide reported by CERRA at the start of this school year, which is a 13% increase compared to last school year (CERRA, 2019). These vacancies are in addition to the 7,300 vacancies caused primarily by teacher departures that were filled by districts prior to the start of the 2018-19 school year. In South Carolina, the overall cost of teacher turnover is between \$31.8 million and \$65.3 million dollars annually (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2014). Many think that teacher retirement produces the high numbers of teachers exiting the profession. Conversely, research has shown two out of three leave for reasons other than retirement (Podolsky, A., Kini, T., Bishop, J., & Darling-Hammond, L. 2016).

Back in 1987, Dr. Elizabeth Gressette, former Palmetto State Teachers Association Executive Director, surveyed South Carolina

teachers and wrote an article on her findings. Teachers reported several negative aspects of the profession to include: paperwork, emotional factors (like stress and frustration), clerical duties, take home school work, being underappreciated, and being overworked. Inspired by Gressette's efforts over thirty years ago, I decided to conduct a survey so that I could compare her findings with our current climate. I found that little has changed over the past three decades. My findings indicate that teachers share similar complaints regardless of their years of experience or where in South Carolina they teach. I also discovered that the primary reason for teachers remaining in the profession is their dedication to their students, while lack of effective leadership was a primary cause of teacher turnover.

I sent out a short survey through Facebook and email. Within a few days, I had 66 responses from teachers all across South Carolina. Teachers from 29 different South Carolina school districts responded to the survey, representing all areas of our state. The responses were all kept anonymous throughout the process because I wanted honesty. The teachers' experience level ranged from one to 34 years in the profession. Below is a summary of the teachers' responses to three questions:

**QUESTIONS / TOP 2-3 RESPONSES / NUMBER OF MENTIONS**

1. *What makes you keep coming back year after year to your role as a teacher?*.....N=66
  - My love for the students ..... 32
  - My impact on my students' lives and my students' successes ..... 24

2. *If you plan to leave the profession, or*



*you have thought about it, why?*.....N=66

- I am not supported or valued by my administrators ..... 30
- An unrealistic workload and/or exhaustion ..... 21
- The bulkiness of the system and the constant changes of teacher expectations ..... 19

3. *What does great support from your leader look like for you?*.....N=66

- I want my administrators to trust me and I want to be able to trust them ... 33
- I want to be supported and understood by my leaders ..... 23
- I want consistent leadership, I want my leaders to do the same thing for me as they do for my colleagues..... 20

There were several teacher statements that stood out in these survey results. One teacher said, "I keep coming back because I have a desire to see kids go into the world prepared for life and I love teenagers, even the most difficult ones!" Another teacher said, "I have thought about leaving mainly because of the inept bulkiness of our system." One teacher mentioned, "Although it is an extremely rewarding profession at times, I often have days I do not feel appreciated." Another teacher said, "It would be great to have my strengths honored. Much like the way I show vulnerability with my students, I want honesty and vulnerability from my leader." Another teacher said, "I want to be able to speak the truth without repercussions."

What do these survey results mean to

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## WHAT SC TEACHERS ARE SAYING

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South Carolina? National research shows that principal effectiveness makes the biggest difference for teacher retention; building level leaders need to develop a strong mission and vision collaboratively, have clear communication, professional support, and consistent feedback (Fuller, E.J., Pendola, A., & Young, M.D., 2018). It seems clear that we need to take a long hard look at our building level and district leaders to ensure that there are systems of support in place in each and every building. Are we teaching our leaders about soft skills and how much relationships matter? Are we focusing on the culture and climate in our buildings? Are we building trust amongst our teachers and leaders? If not, how can we do better? We need to do better. ■

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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Ann Marie Taylor is the Director of Leadership Development at Palmetto State Teachers Association. She is a former special education teacher and former Director of Special Education. Ann Marie also served as the 2008 South Carolina Teacher of the Year and is a cheerleader for public education in our state.

## 2019 SCCEC Award Winners

BY JULIE MACKER

We were pleased to present the 2019 SCCEC Awards to recipients during the Awards Luncheon at the SCCEC Conference this year. A complete list of winners is below.

We would like to extend a special thank you to the friends and families who attended to support the award winners, all those who nominated deserving individuals, and those who served as award chairs and on award committees this year. Congratulations to the 2019 winners!

- Michelle Howard, Sandra Myers and Bethany Reilly — Mini Grant recipients
- Marissa Fox — Rookie Teacher of the Year

- Adam Mullins — General Educator of the Year
- Edward Davis — Principal of the Year
- Ann Marie Taylor — Advocate of the Year
- Monica Brumagin — ParaEducator of the Year
- Ana Price — Student Member of the Year and the Laura Mohr Scholarship
- Jesse Dean — Betty Brown Training Grant
- Taylor "Reesie" Beckner — Yes I Can!
- Dana Bennett — Exceptional Educator of the Year

*Photos of this year's recipients can be seen at the end of this newsletter.*

## Conference Chapter Hosts

BY SAM PRICE

SCCEC Chapters 429 and 451 co-hosted this year's 2019 SCCEC Annual Conference. The Conference Committee would like to thank all the volunteers who helped run the registration table, served as session hosts, and facilitated College Bowl. We hope everyone enjoyed the opportunity to network with other professional special educators and recharge their teacher batteries. Thank you for all the help to make this year's conference "Instruct, Invest, Inspire: Your Next Big Adventure".



Members of SCCEC Chapter 451 at this year's Conference.

## Silent Auction Results

BY SAM PRICE

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Silent Auction at Conference this year. We had great donations from individuals, chapters, subdivisions, and school groups. These donations included original artwork, baskets, items for home, handmade items, and 2 weekend packages to the beach! With all of the great contributions, over \$1,000 was raised for our Betty Brown Training Grant.

The Betty Brown Training Grant was established to assist students with

disabilities in pursuing post-secondary training. Examples of training programs could include, but not be limited to: college/university, technical education center, adult education course, vocational school, sheltered workshop/work activity center, apprenticeship, or business/industry training course.

Thank you to all who made the silent auction so successful. Your efforts will make a difference for a deserving young adult in the future!



Takin' care of business at this year's Conference Silent Auction.

## Thank You! BY SAM PRICE

Thank you to the countless number of people who worked tirelessly to help make this an awesome conference!

Thank you to Tresa Diggs and the Office of Special Education Services for your partnership and your commitment to professional development.

A huge thank you to C.L. "Shep" Shepherd for speaking and motivating each of us.

Thank you to the volunteers from Chapters 429 and 451 for your hard work as conference hosts.

Thank you Kimberly Cauble, Alan Manfredonia and Gerard Hardy and the amazing staff at Embassy Suites by Hilton.

Thank you to the many college students, friends and family who took time off to come volunteer at the conference.

Thank you to the conference planning teams!

Thank you to the members of the SCCEC Executive Committee and Executive Board for your hard work and commitment to the profession.



C.L. "Shep" Shepherd



Checking out the vendors at this year's conference.

## Poster Session and College Bowl BY CAROL HOYLE

Friday evening at the conference ended with a very successful Poster Session and College Bowl. I hope you were able to come talk with our 13 poster presenters. Their presentations were excellent and covered a wide range of topics.

We had five teams who competed in a very exciting College Bowl this year. Thank you to the students and advisors from Anderson University, Clemson University, Columbia College along with an Erskine College student who rounded out their team, Lander University, and Winthrop University for taking part this year. Congratulations to Clemson University for winning this year!

Thank you also to everyone who helped with the College Bowl. It could not have happened without the wonderful collaboration that happens with our dedicated SCCEC members.



The Clemson team at College Bowl, left to right: Sarah Melton, Courtney Brown, Kelley Hair, Madelaine Ferrell, Kent Parker (faculty advisor), Emma Halley and Rachel Hannan.



Poster Session

## Thanks, TED BY CAROL HOYLE

Thank you to our wonderful presenters for making our Teacher Education Division (TED) High Leverage Practices strand such a success this year. We were so excited to have such a great turnout for each of the sessions. Thank you to Dr. Tracy West for organizing this year's strand. Congratulations to Jessica Paternoster for winning the SC TED Mentoring Award. She is a special educator at Myrtle Beach Middle School and has been an excellent mentor for Coastal Carolina teacher candidates. We appreciate the guidance and support provided to our teacher candidates by all of our cooperating teachers. Collaboration between our university faculty and cooperating teachers is key to the success of our teacher candidates.

## Upcoming Events BY AMANDA WALKUP

Would you like to get more involved in SCCEC? Please join us at our next Executive Board meeting on May 4th, from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM. The location has not been finalized as of this writing, but if you're interested in attending please contact me at [anwalkup@gmail.com](mailto:anwalkup@gmail.com). I'll send the information on to you as soon as I can. We'd love to see you there!



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2019 SCCEC CONFERENCE  
**Award Winners**



Taylor Reesie Beckner, YES! I CAN



Marissa Fox, Rookie Teacher of the Year



Dana Bennet, Exceptional Educator of the Year



Amanda Walkup, Barbara Bradford Scholarship



Sandra Myers, Mini Grant



Jessica Pattermoster, TED Mentoring Award



Beth Reilly, Mini Grant



Adam Mullins, General Educator of the Year



Monica Brumagin, ParaEducator of the Year



Jesse Dean, Betty Brown Training Grant



Ana Price, Student Member of the Year and Laura Mohr Scholarship



Ann Marie Taylor, Advocate of the Year



Michelle Howard, Mini Grant



Edward Davis, Principal of the Year

