

# 2015 Legislative Oversight Committee Report



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*Working Together to Provide Statewide Leadership  
in Education and Accessibility*



# ***We Embrace Possibilities***

## **Our Mission**

To ensure that individuals we serve realize maximum success through high quality educational programs, outreach services, and partnerships

## **Our Vision**

To be the statewide leader in education and accessibility for individuals who are deaf, blind, or sensory multi-disabled



## *Our Values*

- Education
- Diversity
- Accessibility
- Teamwork
- Partnerships
- Relationships
- Leadership
- Character
- Accountability
- Independence



# *Accreditations*

- SC Department of Education
- AdvancED/Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement
- Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf
- A Palmetto Gold School

# Educational Programs: 2013-2014



• School for the Blind	89
• School for the Deaf	101
• Cedar Springs Academy	91
• Deaf-Blind Project	130
• Early Intervention	507
• Kelly's Kids	21
• Vision Services	284
• Hearing Services	72
• Summer Camps	44
• Braille Production Center	163
<b>Total Students Served:</b>	<b>1502</b>

Data from Summary of Services for July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2014 fiscal year.

# *Good News: Read to Succeed Implementation*



- Employed two reading coaches
- Established leadership team
- Participating in State Department of Education training
- Developing literacy plan
- Working toward goal of training teachers to provide reading intervention in the classroom

# ***Good News: Read to Succeed Activities***



- Trained key staff members in the effects of poverty on student performance
- Obtained additional reading resources and materials for classrooms and residential areas
- Provided books to students to take home
- Sponsored fun reading activities through the school library
- Renewed reading incentive program

# ***Good News:***

## ***Technology Infrastructure***



- Network efficiency, speed, and coverage area (including residence halls) improved
- Wireless access points increased from 52 to 162
- Network back up and security upgraded
- Diagrams developed to identify high use areas and to prevent potential problems

# ***Good News:***

## ***Educational Technology***



- One-to-One Initiative implemented
- Increased technology training for students and staff through new technology integration coordinator
- Virtual Schools Spanish class begun
- Introduction to Audio Technology class offered

# ***Good News:***

## ***Educational Technology***



“This is accessibility! It will tell you what’s on the screen. It will make notes as I talk.

“It was fun learning a new system, and I was named a technology assistant. I’m able to help others learn how to use the new computers!”

*Alexis Faulkenberry  
Future Elementary Teacher*

# ***Good News: More Educational Technology***



- New assistive technology purchased
- New, safer student accounts set up for internet and email
- Virtual field trips increased

# Good News: Safety Technology



- Additional access control equipment installed
- New staff ID badge system implemented
- Additional emergency signage installed

# Good News: Partnerships



- Braille Book production at Leath Correctional Center
- Statewide Instructional Resource Center through SC Department of Education
- Server space for smaller school districts on Spartanburg Campus

# Good News: Sports



“I was just excited, surprised and happy. I was saying ‘Wow. What?’ I really didn’t know what to say except that I felt pride . . . To think that Cam Newton or some of the others players, like the running backs, played in these uniforms, it’s just an honor.”

*Drequan Cheeks  
Football Team Co-Captain*

# *Good News: Fine Arts*



“I started chorus and student council in third grade. I try to participate in school activities like going to concerts, youth choirs, and field trips.

“It sure feels like a great school to me. I’m pretty thankful that I go to this school because it really feels like home.”

*Brianna Shirley  
Future Performer*

## *Good News: Outreach*



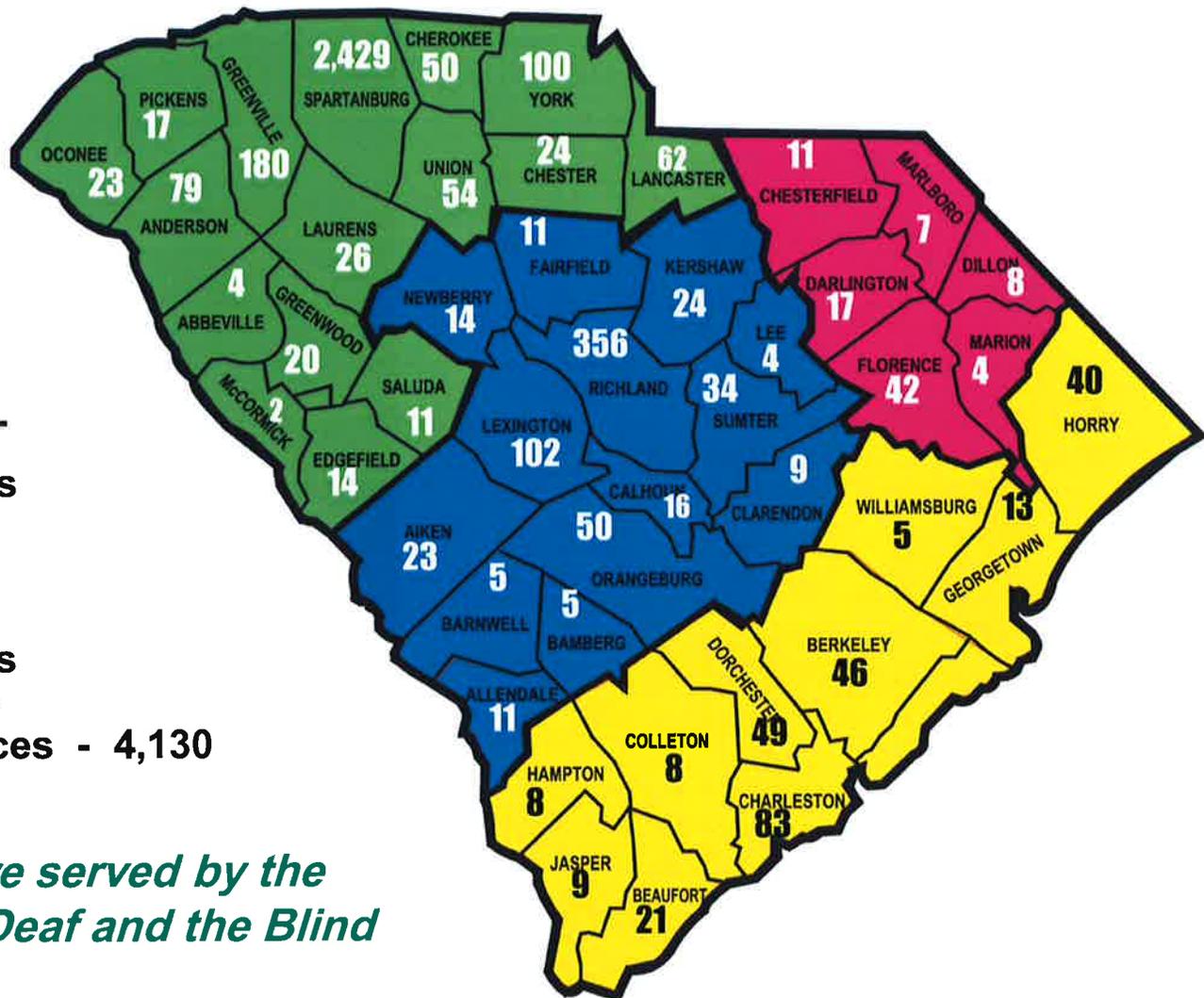
*Outreach services were provided in all 46 counties during the 2013-2014 year.*

# Outreach Service Distribution

- Pee Dee Region -  
89 Services
- Coastal Region -  
282 Services
- Midlands Region -  
664 Services
- Upstate Region -  
3,095 Services

**Total Outreach Services - 4,130**

*All 46 counties were served by the SC School for the Deaf and the Blind in 2013-2014.*



# ***Strategic Goals 2014 – 2015***



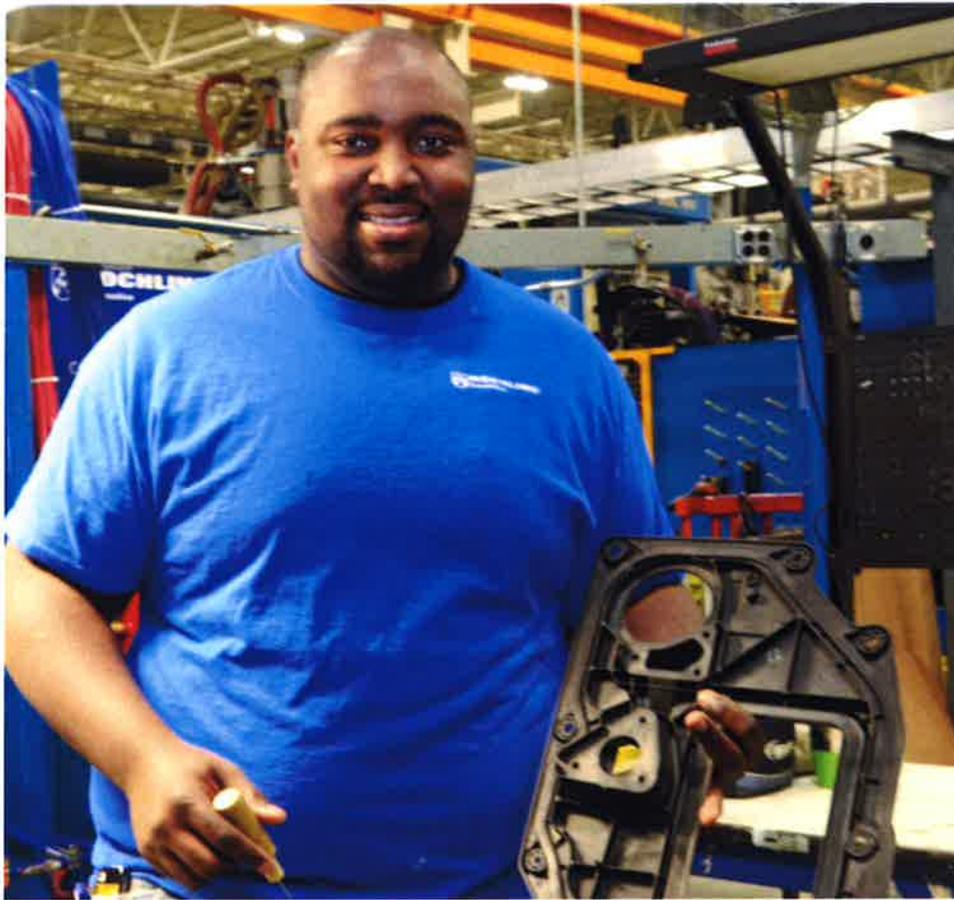
- Improve the availability of professional growth experiences for staff members
- Improve student achievement through developing and maintaining environments conducive to learning
- Develop a comprehensive student recruitment and retention plan
- Improve the effective use of technology
- Improve home/school relations



## **Embracing the Possibilities at SCSDB**

# ***Good News:***

## ***Successful Graduates***



“Take responsibility for yourself. Be on time. Stay on the good path. Don’t depend on the government. Support yourself and your family.”

*Dearon Harrington  
Machine Operator  
Röchling Automotive*

***Thank You!***



# SCSDB students make Christmas cards to benefit their school

*Spartanburg Herald Journal, December 16, 2014*

Some students at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind have created Christmas cards for a good cause.

The cards will be sold by the Mary Black Foundation as part of an effort to benefit the Walker Foundation, which is the fund-raising arm of the school. Mary Black also purchased some of the cards to send to friends and partners.

On Tuesday, those students were recognized for their work by the Mary Black Foundation. The cards contain messages in both print and in Braille.

“I say thank you on behalf of The Walker Foundation, and The Mary Black Foundation says thank you on behalf of its partners,” Jennifer Bauer, grants coordinator with The Walker Foundation, said as the message was translated into sign language by a teacher.

The six students who made the holiday cards are Kayla Wiegand, Ford Scarborough, Andrew Bibbs, Faith Glover, Sam White and Ella Ko. They were all given certificates and gift cards courtesy of the Mary Black Auxiliary Volunteers, a group of volunteers who work closely with the Mary Black Foundation.

The students were recognized near the art classroom in Walker Hall in front of large Styrofoam snowmen, set pieces for the school's Christmas play on Wednesday night.

After receiving the gift cards, the students thanked officials for recognizing their efforts.

Wiegand signed “thank you” to the Mary Black volunteers before leading a line of hugs from the students.



Students at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind were recognized with gift cards and certificates for creating artwork for Christmas cards. The students recognized are Sam White, seated, Kayla Wiegand, kneeling at left, Faith Glover, kneeling at right, and from left standing holding certificates are Andrew Bibbs, Ford Scarborough, and Ella Ko. At back from left are Mary Black Auxiliary Volunteers, Carolyn McKee, Phyllis Alexander with her son Scott Alexander, a former SCSDB student, and Linda Cich.

*Continued*

## ***SCSDB students make Christmas cards to benefit their school (continued)***

SCSDB art teacher Christopher Turner worked closely with the students during the creation of the holiday cards. He said the students loved putting together the cards, and loved their rewards even more.

“They loved the gift cards,” he said. “They’ll talk about this for weeks. It will probably be the best part of their day.”

This is the fourth year students at the school have made the holiday cards, and the second year Mary Black has purchased and sold the cards.

Ann Ackerman, CEO of The Walker Foundation, said she makes it a goal to show off work from students at the school. This year, she’ll be giving candles and bars of soap made by students in the school’s multihandicapped program.

She said it’s good to have the students working in partnership with community groups. Ackerman said some of the students have issues with confidence and self-esteem, and this experience can help to boost their self-esteem.

“I wanted to send out their cards to celebrate them and their artwork,” she said. “It needs to be seen how talented these kids are. This is an opportunity for them to be recognized like everyone else.”

**Article by Zach Fox, Photo by Michael Justus**

# Former teacher's dog helps students at SC School for the Deaf and the Blind

*Spartanburg Herald Journal, November 7, 2014*

Harold Randolph walked into the classroom where his wife, Terrie, had taught Braille. At his side was Stoney. The golden retriever walked around Room 224 in Robertson Hall for the first time in almost two years.

Stoney was Terrie's Seeing Eye dog. Terrie taught more than 27 years at the S.C. School for the Deaf and the Blind before she lost her battle with cancer in January 2013. Her four-legged companion and guide dog lay beneath her desk for several of those years.

Former colleagues and students still miss Terrie.

Randolph and Stoney, who's been retrained as a therapy dog, began volunteering in the School for the Blind's reading program. Friday was their first visit.

"Some children are more comfortable reading to a dog especially children who are self-conscious reading in front of their classmates. Randolph and Stoney will be able to help the children relax and enjoy their reading time," Robert Ward, lead teacher in the School for the Blind, said in a written statement.

Nancy Morgan, another teacher at the School For the Blind, only worked with Terrie a couple of months. That was enough time for Terrie's joyful spirit to make an impression.

"(Terrie) was wonderful. She had the best attitude about her visual impairment,"Morgan said.

She remembered when Terrie journeyed across campus to Walker Hall.

"She thought she could handle it on her own, but she got lost," Morgan said. "Somebody had to help her come back, and she was laughing the whole time."

"She was a role model for the visually impaired kids and people here," Morgan said.

Stoney sat beneath her desk. Students were not allowed to pet Stoney because he was working, Morgan said.



Terrie Randolph was a Braille reading teacher for more than 27 years at the S.C. School for the Deaf and the Blind before her death almost two years ago. Terrie's husband, Harold Randolph, honors her memory by volunteering at the school. Harold Randolph brought his wife's former guide dog, Stoney, to the school on Friday to help students practice reading.

*Continued*

## ***Former teacher's dog helps students at SC School for the Deaf and the Blind***

“The kids loved him. That really helped them to pay attention in Braille because they knew Stoney was listening, so he's really used to hearing children read,” Morgan said.

Excited children surrounded Stoney on Friday.

Some students felt his wagging tail as he made his way into their semicircle before they read a story aloud. Afterward, they clustered around Stoney.

“He feels like a teddy bear,” one said.

Zacchaeus Reaves, 6, was especially excited. He said Stoney's visit was “great.”

Heilyin Sanchez, 6, thanked Randolph for bringing Stoney.

“Hey, Mr. Randolph, I love Stoney,” Sanchez said.

Randolph said Stoney is 11 or 12 years old. He was Terrie's guide dog for about seven years.

“He's still working, and that's great. I hate to see him sitting on the sidelines. He loves people so much, and I think he's still got a lot to give,” Randolph said.

Randolph started taking Stoney to visit residents at nursing homes. Then Randolph heard of a therapy program that he thought could benefit children.

“They basically read a story to him, which kind of takes the pressure off (them). It's not like the teacher looking over their shoulder. Plus, if kids like dogs, it's an incentive to get them to want to read,” Randolph said.

He thinks Terrie would be “very pleased” that Stoney is still able to contribute and help children.

“She spent her whole professional life helping kids and she loved kids...I'd think she would be happy about that,” Randolph said.

Randolph and Terrie were married almost 25 years. Life without Terrie has been “quite an adjustment.” He said they did everything together. Friday's visit brought back emotions.

“You can't let the negative emotions and thoughts pull you down and hold you back. You have to go on,” Randolph said.

Randolph and Stoney's Friday visits, he thinks, will be a bright spot in his life. It also honors Terrie's memory — a woman who impacted many lives.

**Article by Kim Kimzey, Photo by Alex C. Hicks**

# Executives run with students to celebrate refurbished track

*Spartanburg Herald-Journal, September 22, 2014*

Executives from Michelin and the Mary Black Foundation traded their usual business attire for a chance to run with students on the newly resurfaced track at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind Monday morning.

The Fun Run was held in appreciation of over \$54,000 in donations made by the two organizations to offset the cost of resurfacing the school's track, which is used by athletes at the school and other groups like the Special Olympics, Spartanburg Methodist College, USC Upstate, Spartanburg Christian Academy and Carolina Home school.



## **SCSDB Fun Run**

The South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind held a Fun Run to celebrate the newly resurfaced track at the school. Mary Black hospital and Michelin helped with funds to make the resurface project possible. Employees from both were on hand at the event. Perrin Wheelchel (9) a student at SCSDB runs with Mark Colby of Michelin as they are first to reach the finish line.

“The Fun Run is an opportunity to celebrate our wonderful donors,” said Ann Akerman, CEO of the Walker Foundation, the fund-raising arm for the school.

A group of students gathered in the bleachers for a special track dedication ceremony during P.E. classes. Staff from the school and the Walker Foundation were in the crowd with the representatives from the two companies being honored.

Michael Sims, the school's athletic director, addressed the crowd with the help of a sign language interpreter, and said the new track would benefit students and other community members.

“It's a great day for the SCSDB. This is a track that the community as well as the SCSDB can use every day,” he said.

*Continued*

## *Executives run with students to celebrate refurbished track*

Next to address the small but enthusiastic crowd was 19-year-old student, Devin Carter, known affectionately as “Doodle.” Carter, originally from North Augusta, read from a piece of Braille paper, thanking both companies for the newest upgrade to the school's athletic facilities.

“On behalf of students of the SCSDB, I'd like to thank you for your donation,” he said, adding he hoped everyone who used the track, and the field it surrounds, enjoyed their time on the school's campus.

The Michelin and Mary Black Foundation representatives on-hand made their way to the end of the track, while their student-athlete partners received special introductions and applause from the crowd. After a short meet and greet between tandems, each pair took their spot and prepared to run the nearly 50-yard distance to the finish line.

Behind the finish line was a device that made beeping sounds so the deaf students participating in the run knew where the finish was. After each group finished, high-fives were shared all around as athletes and volunteers from both companies were given special medals by “Doodle” Carter.

Santora Bowling, community relations manager with Michelin, said seeing the track and sharing the experience with the students was a big deal for her and her coworkers.

“It definitely meant a lot,” she said. “The kids were just wonderful.”

Matt Manley, healthy eating and active living program specialist with the Mary Black Foundation, said the foundation was proud to contribute to a facility that encourages healthy living.

“It hit home to be out here and to hear all of the community partners that use this track,” he said.

Manley added that he wasn't quite prepared for how fast his partner was going to run, and that he felt like he may have been shown up, but enjoyed getting to meet the students who will use the track daily.

“I had to dig deep to keep up,” he said. “I should have stretched beforehand.”

**Article by Zach Fox, Photo by John Byrum**

# SCSDB players receive Panthers practice gear

## *NFL franchise gives Green Hornets jerseys, practice pants*

*Spartanburg Herald-Journal, August 18, 2014*

Football players take the field each day striving to be number one.

On Monday, each member of the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind's roster received extra incentive to do just that.

Carolina Panthers quarterback Cam Newton's No. 1 practice jersey was one of 75 donated by the NFL franchise to the Green Hornets during a ceremony held before their first workout of the year at the football stadium. Each jersey donated had the name of the Panthers player across the back. The team also received practice pants with the Panthers logo attached.

Panthers mascot Sir Purr and Riley Fields, the team's director of community relations, attended the ceremony. SCSDB faculty, staff, coaches and players also joined in on the festivities.

“The Carolina Panthers are pleased to provide the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind with an equipment grant of authentic Carolina Panthers practice uniforms,” Fields said. “The athletic opportunities the school provides for its students are exceptional. It means a great deal to the Panthers to provide an assist for the students, as well as the families, staff and volunteers that support their efforts.”

Several Green Hornets expressed interest in fashioning Newton's jersey after completion of the ceremony. But SCSDB coach Tony Lee said the coveted garment must be earned.

“That No. 1 will be held,” he said. “Until a leader pops up, it's going to stay. When the leader shows up, the jersey is going to be given.”

Senior utility player Drequan Cheeks, a Spartanburg native, said getting Newton's jersey or not, he's proud to wear something used by a professional player.

“I was just excited, surprised and happy,” he said about learning of the donation. “I was saying, 'Wow.



**The SCSDB football team received some Carolina Panthers practice jerseys on Monday. Riley Fields, the Carolina Panthers Director of Community Relations, hands KaVargio Smith his jersey.**

*Continued*

## ***SCSDB players receive Panthers practice gear***

What?' I really didn't know what to say except that I felt pride. It was free. We finally got something. To think that Cam or some of the other players, like the running backs, played in, it's just an honor."

Lee said the team reaction was like none he's ever witnessed once the uniforms were unveiled. He added that practice gear had been hard to come by before receiving the donation.

"Since we haven't had any practice uniforms in going on 10 years, it was a big, big step for us," Lee said. "We were scrapping by with what we could to practice in. Game-wise with uniforms we're pretty good. But this practice stuff that we got today is going to last us for a while."

The Panthers' community outreach program serves both North Carolina and South Carolina. It assists more than 2,700 nonprofit agencies each year through grant funding, programming and donations.

The fundraising arm for SCSDB is the Walker Foundation, which has been in existence for 36 years. It helps secure resources for the school to reach its goals.

Ann Akerman, the Walker Foundation's chief executive officer, said helping the school get elected to receive the uniforms was a giant lift for the players.

"Our students are definitely worthy of wearing a Panther uniform," she said. "We're making a difference in the lives of these students that certainly would not play football in their own home school districts. We're giving them opportunities they would not have otherwise."

SCSDB athletic director Michael Sims said the school appreciates the Panthers' kindness.

"Even the coaches, the staff here, the faculty, the cheerleaders, the students that sit in the bleachers, the players, the president, myself were so excited for this gift and this opportunity and to see the smiles that came across our players' faces," he said.

Senior lineman Hermani Mesilien, a Union native, said knowing the uniforms will be waiting for the players each day will make them want to go to practice.

"It's just great and awesome to have that," he said. "It makes me feel like a real player."

Lee said there's not a doubt that his players will take the practice field each day feeling thankful, as well as, motivated. "It feels good having this lifted off of us with the practice uniforms and also having some clothes that the kids can be proud of and that we're proud to have them in," he said. "Also just knowing that this came off a pro athlete is good initiative because it's what some of them are striving and trying to do."

**Article by Kevin Melton, Photo by John Byrum**

# Teenager's gift helps young singer pursue her passion

*Spartanburg Herald-Journal, December 7, 2014*

The love of music brought together two girls at Converse College's Lawson Academy of the Arts last week.

Emma McDaniel, 16, has taken piano lessons at the academy for eight years. Some in Spartanburg may recognize her from her philanthropic efforts. At age 11, Emma, who is home schooled, began cutting coupons and donating the items she bought to charity. A few years ago, she founded a fashion show that has so far collected \$47,000 for local charities.



Emma McDaniel looks on as instructor Aimee Gans plays the piano for Brianna Shirley while she sings "Oh Shenandoah." Brianna is able to take voice lessons at Lawson Academy of the Arts thanks to scholarship money donated by Emma.

Brianna Shirley, 13, is legally blind and a student at the S.C. School for the Deaf and the Blind. She may also seem familiar, from her YouTube videos that feature her singing and for making the news after singing several times with one of her favorite musicians, Zac Brown.

Brianna started taking voice lessons at Lawson Academy in September. On Thursday, she learned that Emma had made it possible by donating a \$1,000 scholarship to the academy.

"Really?" Brianna said, her face lighting up with genuine surprise as she met Emma in the lobby of Converse's Blackman Music Hall.

"I love music," Emma said. "Music is such a big part of my life, and for someone else to have the opportunity I've had at Lawson Academy, it's just a great feeling."

*Continued*

***Teenager's gift helps young singer pursue her passion, page two***

Emma sat in on a lesson with Brianna and her teacher, Aimee Gans, who received a master's degree from Converse last semester and recently directed the Spartanburg Repertory Company's "Amahl and the Night Visitors."

Gans accompanied her young student on piano. Brianna said she had to "practice, practice and practice" for an upcoming recital, and began rehearsing one of her songs, "Oh, Shenandoah." She will also be performing "Where Is Love?" and "Tomorrow."

"I can really feel that song," Brianna said, when she finished "Shenandoah." "It's really soft and calm."

Brianna said she was nervous at first when she began her private lessons with Gans.

"I feel at home now, though," she said.

Gans was also a little nervous, having never taught a blind student before. She said Brianna has a good ear for music.

"Brianna is comfortable when she sings," Gans said. "It's very natural."

Next semester, the two will work on sight reading. Gans said she's figuring out a way for Brianna, who can see things close up, to better see notes on the page.

"She's spunky," Gans said. "She tells me like it is, when she doesn't understand something."

Brianna says she's been singing since she was 3 years old. She sings mostly solo in church, although occasionally the choir pulls her up on stage to join them.

"Choir teaches me how to behave when I'm performing," Brianna said.

She's also been in school plays and enjoys making people laugh with her impressions.

Through her YouTube videos, Brianna caught the eye of Zac Brown, lead vocalist and guitarist for the Zac Brown Band. Brianna most recently saw Brown Oct. 25 at a concert in Charlotte, and got to sing "Colder Weather" with him.

"I've always been a fan of his," Brianna said. "Oh yeah, he's my bud and I'm glad."

*Continued*

### ***Teenager's gift helps young singer pursue her passion, page three***

In addition to Emma, Lawson Academy director Paula Morgan also observed Brianna's lesson Thursday. The meeting of the two girls was emotional for Morgan.

"It is just amazing," Morgan said. "Economic situations for many families are changing, and it's getting harder for some of them to afford arts activities. I've never had a student say, 'What can I do to give?'"

For Brianna, Emma's gift was sweet, and Brianna feels that her singing has improved with one-on-one instruction.

"I've always wanted to learn more," Brianna said. "Ms. Aimee has taught me a lot of techniques."

By the end of the meeting, Emma invited Brianna to be in her fashion show, coming up March 21 at Summit Pointe Conference and Events Center. Emma's fundraising efforts benefit the Hope Center for Children and 4-H, an organization with which she is heavily involved. She was impressed with Brianna's lesson.

"She did great," Emma said. "She has a beautiful voice."

After the lesson, Brianna hugged everyone in the room.

"I feel like I accomplished something," Brianna said. "It makes me feel good when I sing for other people."

Lawson Academy, which offers music and dance lessons for all ages, will hold spring semester registration Jan. 5-16, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. For details, call 596-9022 or visit [www.converse.edu/academics/school-arts/lawson-academy-arts](http://www.converse.edu/academics/school-arts/lawson-academy-arts).

**Article by Jenny Arnold, Photo by John Byrum**

# Gaffney native named interim president of SC School for the Deaf and the Blind

*The Gaffney Ledger, Summer 2014*

Gaffney native Dr. Page McCraw has been appointed interim president of the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind effective August 2014.

McCraw currently serves as the school's director of curriculum and instruction. She has spent nearly two years at the state's only specialized school for students who are deaf or blind.

Although the main campus is in Spartanburg, the SC School for the Deaf and the Blind serves students statewide through its campus and outreach programs.

"We are very pleased that Dr. McCraw has accepted the interim presidency," said Bobby Dobson, chairman of the school's board of commissioners. "She has executive level knowledge of the school as well as experience with the State Department of Education and local school districts. She will be able to move our academic goals forward and continue the school's many facility and technology improvement projects."

McCraw replaces Maggie Park, who recently announced her appointment as director of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Program at Converse College. McCraw will serve in an interim capacity while the board's search committee looks for a long-term replacement.

"I am honored to have been selected for the interim position," McCraw said in a news release. "I'm looking forward to working with the board of commissioners and the staff to continue the great work of the school."

McCraw spent 24 years as a teacher and administrator in the Cherokee County School District. She served as a Cherokee Technology Center director, high school math teacher, director of educational programs and personnel director in the district office. In November of 2011, she joined the state department of education as director of career and technology education.

McCraw holds Ph.D., Ed.S., and M.Ed. degrees in educational administration from the University of South Carolina as well as a B.S. degrees in science teaching mathematics from Clemson University.

McCraw and her husband, Michael, have two children.

Their son Madison graduated from Clemson and is currently attending Charlotte School of Law. Daughter Delaney is a senior at Clemson.



Page McCraw, at right, is shown working with students at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind. McCraw was recently appointed interim president while the board's search committee looks for a full-time president.

**Article from Staff Reports, Photo from SC School for the Deaf and the Blind**

# Bill Dengler

## Beyond Sight

*Bill Dengler was born blind. But one should never confuse sight with vision.*

*Hilton Head Monthly, January, 2015*

“Blijfldjpfiojowonln.” issues forth the chirpy electronic tone from Bill Dengler’s laptop, a MacBook he’s rigged to boot both with Windows and Mac. The laptop is hooked up to an in-home network he designed and implemented by himself. The network also controls all of the home phones. It resides in a server closet he built in an upstairs study. Typical 15-year-old stuff.

Dengler clicks the mouse.

“REljwlnfaiopjoa,” the laptop responds.

“That’s normal. Can you understand that?” he asks me.

I cannot.

“I’ll slow it down.”

With a few button presses, the voice slowly crystalizes into a crisp British-accented robotic voice outlining notes from Dengler’s history class. Even slowed down, I just barely catch the phrases “John Locke” and “political thought” bubbling up in the torrent of digital audio.

“Is this a better rate for you?” he asks.

It’s slow enough to illustrate that while Dengler clearly has better ears than most, the real powerhouse is the gray matter working between them. That he could comprehend, to say nothing of hear, this clipped electronic maelstrom of information, shows that this 15-year-old mastermind lives in a very different world from the rest of us.

Diagnosed with Norrie Disease shortly after birth, Dengler was born without sight. And while he may not have sight, there’s no shortage of vision.



*Continued*

***Beyond Sight (continued), page two***

With the voice now at full speed, Dengler shows how he uses these vocal cues to navigate his laptop, fingers flying across the keyboard, windows appearing and disappearing at a strobe light rate across the screen, the rapid electronic babble squawking and stuttering to keep up. It's the electronic world he partially lives in, and it's a world that Dengler is hoping to master as he makes the highly visual digital realm more accessible for the blind.

"I'm hoping to put some Swift Apps up on the store; I do have the necessary approvals to do that and I have been accepted into the Apple developer program and Android developer program," he said.

With a few more CS classes he's planning on taking, Dengler is hoping to bring his considerable knowledge to bear on apps to allow the blind to use computers the way he does: more efficiently than the rest of us. Google has already solicited his help in testing out accessibility for its Google Glass. This despite the fact that he pointed out a pretty major design flaw in the Google Chromebook at a developer's convention in Orlando.

"One of the first things I do when I get a device is crank the speech rate up," he said. "I got it to go up to about 45-50 percent. You continued to crank the rate up, and it would say 'Rate 55 percent.' But 55 would be slower than 50. So rate 100 was actually painfully slow."

"He's surrounded by all these Google techs and he's telling them, 'I found a glitch in your system' and they said 'No, it doesn't do that,' " added his mother, Terri. "All the sudden they're around us taking his picture, because he really did find a glitch."

Despite the egg on their face, Google offered Dengler a place in its legendary internship program.

They had to rescind the offer when they found out he was only 15, but it goes to show. With his remarkable mind, relentless drive and passion for making the world a more accessible place, the only thing keeping this young man from changing the world is time.

And when that time comes, look out world.

**Article by Barry Kaufman, Photo by W Photography**