Wando High School

ANNUAL SCHOOL REPORT

June 2019

Annual Message from Sherry Eppelsheimer, Principal and Rebecca Imholz, School Improvement Council Chair

As one of the highest performing high schools in South Carolina, Wando consistently proves that a large, public, non-magnet high school serving a diverse population can produce outstanding results. We are committed to continuous improvement and use research-based best practices as our guide.

Educators from across the United States and from foreign countries come to Wando to learn more about how a large school maintains a sense of community and helps students remain “connected” to school through the smaller learning communities concept.

Wando High School is a comprehensive school for grades nine through twelve with a diverse student body of approximately 4,000 students. More than 25% of our students excel in the visual and performing arts. Ninety-three percent of the Class of 2019 plan to enroll in either a two or four year college or university. Wando offers over 250 course selections including Advanced Placement, Dual Credit, Honors, College Preparatory, Applied Technology, and Exceptional Education. The Wando High School Advanced Placement and Dual Credit passage rates continue to be among the highest in the state of South Carolina.

We consider high school graduation an important step for students but not the final goal. Each graduate is expected to leave Wando with a viable plan for his or her future education and career goals. Our students are strongly encouraged to continue their education at the next level.

Our career-related Schools of Study and Ninth Grade Academy provide opportunities for personal connections and help our students see the purpose and relevance of their work here. Through our Schools of Study, students are provided incredible opportunities to explore their skills and talents and refine their college and career goals. Members of the class of 2019 completed 972 majors, four or more elective courses in an area of concentration, and received special recognition at graduation.

Our Ninth Grade Academy provides students an effective transition to high school which begins with a first day experience prior to the start of school for the rest of the student body. Throughout the ninth grade year, our students are supported as they learn responsibility and make decisions about future plans. Students at all grade levels are assigned faculty advisors who meet with them bi-weekly.

We constantly seek ways to improve instruction and to increase learning opportunities for our students. Our focus areas have been active student engagement, differentiated instruction, personalized learning, technology implementation, and standards-based instruction and assessment. Raising the academic bar for all students and providing academic support for those who struggle are crucial to the success of our school.

Our dedicated faculty and staff have spent many hours participating in professional development. Teachers share instructional best practices and work in curriculum teams ensuring quality instruction and assessment in all courses. Faculty collaboration and teamwork are the norm.

We are blessed with a high level of parental and community involvement. Our School Improvement Council and our PTO provide outstanding leadership and support as well as helping provide the future direction of our school. Improving communication with parents and the community is a common goal. Our various booster clubs and the School of Study Advisory Boards are also vital to our school’s success. We appreciate their support and continued involvement.

Wando High School Mission Statement

The mission of Wando High School, in partnership with parents and community, is to educate all students by providing a challenging program of study, to encourage lifelong academic and applied learning, and to graduate students prepared to meet the challenge of a rapidly changing and diverse global society.
For the second year in a row, Wando High School was among a select group of high schools honored as a PLTW Distinguished High School. Schools and Districts around the nation were honored who have committed to increasing student access, engagement, and achievement in their PLTW programs. Wando was the only high school in South Carolina to receive this award for the 2018-2019 school year.

School Highlights: Academics

- The Class of 2019 earned over $29.6 million in scholarships.
- Wando High School had six finalists in the 2019 Competition for National Merit Scholarships. In addition, eight students were recognized as Commended Students in the competition.
- We now have more than 520 members in grades 10-12 in the AP Academy. 124 seniors in the Class of 2019 received special Advanced Studies recognition at graduation due to earning at least six AP credits.
- Five seniors graduated with 16 AP courses completed.
- The average GPA of the Class of 2019 was 3.70.
- The State of South Carolina requires students to earn 24 credits in order to graduate from high school. Wando seniors earned on average 31 credits.
- There were 109 Early Awards recipients for the South Carolina Palmetto Fellows Scholarship.
- Wando seniors earned on average 2.50 SAT and 29.6 ACT.
- Seniors took 940 dual credit courses while earning 2,700 college credits.
- Two hundred eighty-two senior students in the Class of 2019 were named Charleston County School District Board Scholars.
- Seniors took 940 dual credit courses with a passage rate of 95 percent while earning 2,700 college credits.
- Of the 6,583 courses taken by students, 1,129 of them were Advanced Placement courses.

School Highlights: Communications and Fine Arts

- A Wando senior was named the 2019 S. C. Scholastic Journalist of the Year by the S. C. Scholastic Press Association. This is the highest honor given to a high school newspaper, student, or literary magazine student in our state.
- Fifteen students were selected for the SCMEA Region Orchestra. Seven students were selected for the All State Orchestra. Additionally, all three orchestras received Superior ratings at the inaugural Lowcountry Orchestra Festival. Orchestra students traveled to Washington, D. C. to perform at the World War II Memorial in April.
- Six band students were named to the Honor Band of America. One orchestra student was named to the Honor Orchestra of America.
- The Wando Marching Band placed sixth in the 2018 Bands of America competition. Additionally, they received two Advocacy in Action awards from Music for All.
- At the annual National Scholastic Press Association Convention, Tribe Talk students placed second in Best of Show for broadcast and Tribal Tribune received a Pacemaker, the high school equivalent to a Pulitzer Prize.
- At the South Carolina Speech and Theatre Association State Festival, Wando received 17 Superior ratings and 10 acts placed in the top three in their category.
- The Wando High School Choir is ranked number one in the state of South Carolina with 66 students selected for the 2019 All- State Choir. The choir traveled to Hawaii in the Spring to dedicate a wreath in honor of World War II at Pearl Harbor.
- The Legend was named the Best Yearbook in South Carolina by the South Carolina Scholastic Press Association.

School Highlights: Athletics

- Our Ninth Grade Academy houses our freshman in a “school within a school” where they take core courses. This smaller environment gives students the opportunity to build relationships and to increase their sense of community.
- Our Small Learning Communities Initiative provides a reorganization of the Upper School, grades 10-12, into four smaller career-related “Schools of Study.” We believe using a career-related school approach to teaching and learning will help students see the relevance of their coursework and its connection to the future.
- Wando works in the High Schools That Work Alliance, a whole-school research-based reform effort. The HSTW model focuses on continuous school improvement through key practices including high expectations, allowing students to graduate with a college-ready diploma, fostering collaboration between teachers, actively engaging students in their learning, providing a guidance and advisement system, utilizing a program for extra help and using assessment and data to foster continuous improvement.
- We provide additional support for students with academic promise who will be first-generation college bound.

Initiatives

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School Highlights: Athletics and Activities

The Wando High School Athletic Program had another outstanding year with student athletes shining on and off the playing field.

- Eighty-eight senior athletes were recognized as Scholar Athletes by the South Carolina High School League.
- Thirty-four student athletes committed to play at the college level.
- Fourteen student athletes were selected for State All Star Games.
- Thirty-six students were named All State players.
- Nine student athletes were named Region Player of the Year in their sport.
- The Wando High School 2017-2018 Volleyball team was named the recipient of the AVCA Team Academic Award. This award honors teams who have matched their dedication to the sport of volleyball with excellence in the classroom.
- The Wando Junior Classical League competed in the 2019 Latin State Forum finishing first overall, with students receiving 74 individual awards, the coveted spirit award, and first place in the upper ctemen quiz bowl contest. Additionally, one Wando student was elected to serve as the first Vice President of the SCJCL organization for the 2019-2020 school year.

- Three teams of four Wando students competed in the Economics Challenge hosted by the University of South Carolina placing first, second, and third in the state.
- The Wando Culinary Program won second place in the State for the ProStart Management Competition and first place in the Regional Southern Fried Chicken Competition.
- Thirty-nine students in Mrs. McCulley’s Image Editing classes received national certification after passing the Adobe Photoshop Certification Exam.
- One Wando student placed second in the Fall South Carolina Stock Market Game. The Stock Market game is an online simulation of the global capital markets that engages students in the world of economics, investing, and personal finance and prepares students for financially independent futures.
- A junior student won the Moultrie News Annual Constitution Essay Contest.
- A Wando student won Best Position Paper for the European Union at MIT’s Model UN Conference.
- A senior Wando student earned the Girl Scout Gold Award. This award is one of the most prestigious awards for girls to earn in the world.

- The Mock Trial Team was named Regional Champion earning two Best Attorney and three Best Witness Awards. The team finished fourth in the State earning two Best Attorney and two Best Witness Awards. The Wando Team was one of 36 teams internationally invited to the Empire Mock Trial World Championship in New York where a freshman team member placed eighth out of 288 attorneys. This is the second time in three years that Wando has had a top ten attorney in international competition.

School Highlights: Faculty and Staff Honors

- Patrick Martin was named Wando’s Teacher of the Year.
- Katelyn Nave was named Rookie Teacher of the Year.
- Robin O’Hara was named the Classified Professional of the Year.
- After leading her team to a sixth consecutive Lower State Championship, Alexis Glover was recognized as one of the nation’s top High School coaches by the American Volleyball Coaches Association. Glover was one of four coaches selected from region three. She is the State’s winningest coach with more than 1,000 career victories.
- Kathryn Johnston was named the Lowcountry STEM Collaborative and WCIV ABC News 4 Educator of the Month.

- Major John Farese, Maj. Nicole Bishop and Maj. David Gardner, Wando AFJROTC Instructors, each received the HQ Holm Center outstanding Instructor Award.
- Ray McGrath placed second in the teacher division in the Fall South Carolina Stock Market Game.
- Kevin Shiver was selected by the American Volleyball Coaches Association as the Boys’ and Girls’ High School Coach of the Year for the State of South Carolina for the 2018 Track & Field season.

- Cheryl Durden was selected to receive the 2017-2018 South Carolina Coach of the Year Award for Boys and Girls Swimming from the National Federation of High School Coaches Association.
- The following coaches were named Region Coach of the Year:
  - Winde Ellenberg - Boys Tennis
  - Jeff Emory - Girls Golf
  - Alexis Glover - Volleyball
  - Jenay Martell - Cheerleading
  - Kevin Shiver - Boys and Girls Track

- The AP Comparative Government class won the 2018-2019 We the People State Championship in December. At the competition they won five out of six best unit awards on their way to victory and earned the opportunity to represent South Carolina at the national competition.

- The South Carolina Seal of Biliteracy was awarded to 33 Wando seniors. Biliteracy is the ability to function at a minimum of an intermediate mid-level of language proficiency in two different languages. This year two students received the Gold Seal of Biliteracy, an Advanced Low proficiency level, 12 students received the Silver Seal of Biliteracy, a proficiency level of Intermediate High, and 19 students received the Bronze Seal of Biliteracy, a proficiency level of Intermediate Mid.

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The Wando School Improvement Council meets monthly to plan, monitor, and evaluate improvements at the school level. Their work includes school planning as well as communication between students, teachers, parents, and the school administration.

Our PTSO serves as our primary fundraising group for school-wide projects and is the group that organizes and assigns volunteers, works on beautification, supports school celebrations and recognitions, and provides activities for faculty and staff appreciation and support. Our PTSO is a 501.c(3) charitable organization.

The Wando Family would like to salute our SIC, PTSO, Booster Clubs, parent volunteers, community supporters, and the Town of Mount Pleasant for their continuing support. We would also like to thank the Charleston County School District Board of Trustees, the Charleston County School District staff, the St. James-Santee District 1 Constituent Board and the Moultrie District 2 Constituent Board for their assistance.