

■ SCHOOL BOARD

Thunderbolt gains national accreditation

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Several schools in the Colleton County School District received recognition during Tuesday's board of education meeting.

Superintendent Leila Williams said was a very special evening for Thunderbolt Career and Technology Center.

Dandi Daniels, director, announced that TCTC now has certification from the National Center for Construction Education and Research. She said that instructors, David Brantner, carpentry; Evon Robinson, welding; Deidre Bartley, drafting; Michael Herndon, mechanics; and Mark Finocchiaro, masonry are certified in their fields. Several other instructors are working to obtain certification.

Daniels, who is new to the directorship, credited Brantner with seeing the three-year drive for accreditation to completion.

Brantner explained that TCTC is the only accredited facility within 100 miles. The certification, he said, "Makes us recognized by industry and business, they'll come to us."

"It's good to see another feather in the cap of Colleton County," said William Bowman, vice chairman of the board, serving as chairman in the absence of Wayne Shider.

Daniels and the five instructors displayed the sign that indicates TCTC is a NC-CER accredited training and education facility.

Williams displayed the first-place trophy received

from the Colleton County Rice Festival for the float it entered in the April parade. It was the first time the district entered a float, constructed by the buildings and grounds crew and designed by an art teacher. Williams and fifth-graders rode the float.

Melissa Buckner, director of Eat Smart Move More Colleton County, presented a customized ESMM logo to Hendersonville Elementary School, named the first school of the month.

"Our goal is to become the healthiest community in South Carolina," Buckner said and programs and activities in the schools are a part of the plan.

Trophies for the Clean School of the Month awards hadn't arrived yet, but there would not have been enough to go around anyway.

Kenny Blakeney, director of buildings and grounds, said "Our schools are in such great shape there are a couple of ties."

TCTC earned third place, and Bells Elementary School and Forest Hills Elementary School tied for second place. With one more point, Black Street Early Childhood Center and Colleton County High School tied for first place.

Blakeney suggested the top two schools flip a coin to see which one would have the traveling trophy first. Cliff Warren, high school principal, shouted from the audience, "No flipping, we're getting it." (The former high school didn't make the top three in past months)

While schools received

awards from outside the district, the district also heard questions from the public.

Cathy Bell told the board she has had a number of concerns about Supplemental Education Services providers and has had several conversations with administrators. All of her concerns, she said have been resolved except the May 1 deadline. That ending date, she said, "has no opportunity to finish sessions and no opportunity for make-up sessions."

Queenie Jones asked the board to act immediately to prevent her grandson from being moved to another class, which was set to occur Wednesday. Bowman explained there are procedures in place that she needed to follow and board member Paul Haase said a written request to the superintendent would be required in order for the board to hear the plea in executive session.

In other action, the board:

■ Hired, following the administration's recommendation, Marcus Fields as health teacher at Colleton County High School and Lauren Alford to fill a new teaching position at Forest Hills Elementary School. The board also accepted the resignation of Laura Burdette as agriculture teacher at Thunderbolt Career and Technology Center.

■ Approved an out-of-state field trip for the 4-H seventh-graders to Jekyll Island 4-H Center in Georgia April 18-20. The trip will involve about 60 students and six staff members.

■ Approved a renewal in-

district transfer request for one student and a renewal release request for one student to attend school in Orangeburg County.

■ Placed 11 new or amended policies on the table for 30 days. The policies consider community use of school facilities, board and staff conflict of interest, health, harassment and administrative personnel evaluations.

■ Tentatively named John Barnes voting delegate and Shider as alternate to the South Carolina School Boards Association Delegate Assembly in Hilton Head Dec. 3.