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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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95% OF OCSD LEADERS ARE VACCINATED: SUPERINTENDENT THANKS LEADERS FOR GIVING THE BATTLE AGAINST COVID THEIR BEST SHOT

Orangeburg County School District's administrators are setting an example of health and safety responsibility with a vaccination rate exceeding 95%. In addition to the high vaccination rate among school principals and assistant principals, 100% of both the District's Senior Leadership Team and Board of Trustees are fully vaccinated.

"With the approaching first day of the new school year, I couldn't be more pleased to share that OCSD's school administration, district administration and school board are nearing a 100% vaccination rate," District Superintendent Dr. Shawn Foster commented. "Their leadership sets an example for our teachers and staff to follow and demonstrates their collective commitment to the health and wellness of our students, employees and community at large."

Teachers and education employees first became eligible for COVID-19 vaccines in March, 2021. Since that time, as part of a comprehensive health and safety effort, Orangeburg County School District has encouraged all who are eligible to get vaccinated. As part of this effort, last spring the district partnered with Family Health Centers to host teacher and employee-only vaccine clinics to allow staff to receive their shots quickly and efficiently.

An optional survey for employees was conducted just after last spring's employee vaccination clinic, yielding a 52% vaccination rate. When all employees return to work over the coming weeks, they'll have the opportunity to participate in the survey again, and Foster says he's confident the percentage of fully-vaccinated teachers and staff will be even higher.

In July, the District hosted its annual Leadership Retreat in person with more than 150 in attendance. The event was a success not just because of the collaboration and development that occurred, but also because there have been zero reported cases resulting from the time leaders spent together and zero known exposures. It's the opportunity to teach and learn and

be together again for events like the Leadership Retreat that excite Foster the most about OCSD's soaring vaccination rate.

Vaccinations are now available, without cost, to all persons age 12 and above and are strongly recommended by DHEC, the CDC, and local medical professionals. While misinformation about the vaccine continues, healthcare experts urgently recommend that anyone with a concern about its safety or efficacy research and get the facts from official sources.

"While we certainly value individual choice and respect each individual's position as it relates to the vaccine, the fact is that those who are vaccinated have a much stronger chance of minimal impact if infected by the virus, which is why we are encouraging everyone who can get the vaccine to get vaccinated," Foster added. "We simply want to do all that we can to keep everyone safe, especially our community's children, including many who are not yet eligible for the vaccine due to age."

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