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Charter Academy honored for outperforming local school district

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Cherokee Charter Academy was presented with a School of Distinction award Thursday from the Charter Institute at Erskine. Cherokee Charter Academy school board members and school leaders are shown with Charter Institute at Erskine staff following the award presentation.

Cherokee Charter Academy elementary program was honored Thursday by its charter school authorizer for outperforming the local school district on state tests.

Charter Institute at Erskine presented its Silver School of Distinction award to Cherokee Charter Academy. The award was created to recognize its charter schools for strong student achievement and growth on state tests. Schools could receive a Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum award.

There are 14 schools statewide receiving the School of Distinction award based on their academic performance during the 2021-22 school year.

points, according to data released by the Charter Institute at Erskine. The school performed on par with the state in English and math. It outperformed the district on growth measures in Overall Student Progress by 9.3 percentage points.

Cherokee Charter Academy students Grayson Blackwell and Brody Church had perfect scores in math on the SC READY test. Blackwell and Church were among just 25 of the 24,000 Charter Institute at Erskine students to achieve a perfect score in math.

“We are absolutely humbled and proud to receive this award for our school,” Cherokee Charter Academy Director Jason Byrd said. “We have excellent teachers and a great support staff who work with our students every day in our WIN (What I Need) instructional time to help our students continue to make academic progress.”

Cherokee Charter Academy is in third school year after it opened in August 2020 with full-time in-person classroom instruction during the COVID-19 pandemic. Charter Institute at Erskine Superintendent Cameron Runyan said this year’s School of Distinction award is a tribute to the hard work by the school’s teachers under the direction of elementary principal Dr. Lindsay Walker and Byrd.

“We believe it’s important for South Carolina families to have quality educational options in their communities.

We created this School of Distinction award as a way to celebrate these successes and recognize the academic achievements of our top performing charter schools,” Runyan said. “There were a lot of challenges at (Cherokee Charter Academy) last school year. This award is a credit to the excellent work by the teachers and students in the classroom along with the strong leadership that’s in place. We feel this school is moving in the right direction.”