



Lucy Beckham High School

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Media Release

Lucy Beckham welcomes Vice Admiral Peter W. Gautier, Deputy Commandant for Operations U.S. Coast Guard

Mount Pleasant, SC – Vice Admiral Peter W. Gautier of the U.S. Coast Guard (second in command) visited Lucy Beckham High School (LBHS) today to speak with the LBHS Coast Guard JROTC.

Vice Admiral Peter W. Gautier assumed the duties of Coast Guard Deputy Commandant for Operations (DCO), in June 2022. In this capacity, he is responsible for the development of operational strategy, policy, guidance, and resources that address national priorities.

Lucy Beckham High School became one of the first schools in the nation to start a Coast Guard Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps program this month.

It is the first school in South Carolina and one of only ten schools in the country to have a Coast Guard JROTC unit.

Principal Dassing is proud of the how well the program has been received by the local Coast Guard Community and the students at Beckham.

"We are deeply appreciative of VA G. for his support," said Dassing. "It was an honor to have him visit and share with cadets and assist in awarding ribbons and accolades for our cadets. The Charleston area is one of the fastest growing hubs for Coast Guard operations and knowing we have the support of senior leadership is essential. We are very proud of our growing program and all the hard work that our cadets and instructors are putting in to make our unit a premier in the nation.

Led by Lt. j.g. Ron Blake, JROTC students at Beckham compete in drill, flag corps, cybersecurity, rifle and academic competitions on a national level. They have the opportunity to earn scholarships, and the program is often a cadet's first introduction to military careers.

Blake was honored to have Gautier come and speak with students in his growing program.

"What an immense opportunity for the Lucy Beckham HS Coast Guard JROTC unit and the Coast Guard JROTC program as a whole to be able to sit down with Coast Guard leadership from Washington, DC," said Blake. "We want to thank Vice Admiral Gautier, the Deputy Commandant for Operations for the United States Coast Guard, for taking time from his schedule to sit down and talk with our cadets on Monday. We are excited that the accomplishments and benefits our cadets experience will be brought back to Washington, DC to be shared with the leadership to ensure continued support and expansion of the JROTC program across the country. The program is now in 10 schools across the country with more in the planning stages to open in the coming years."

Dassing added that the leadership skills that Beckham cadets are developing will ensure their success in high school and beyond.

"They are growing to understand that JROTC is not just about the military but about service and leadership in our community," said Dassing. "These young men and women will be our leaders today and in the future and it is an honor to call them Bengals!"

For more information, contact Principal Anna Dassing at (843) 953-2900.

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About the Charleston County School District

Charleston County School District (CCSD) is a nationally accredited school district committed to providing equitable and quality educational opportunities for all its students. CCSD is the second-largest school system in South Carolina and represents a unique blend of urban, suburban, and rural schools spanning 1,300 square miles along the coast. CCSD serves approximately 50,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse portfolio of educational options and specialized programs delivered to the students of CCSD through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools and programs. Rich educational opportunities for students include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); music and other creative and performing arts; career and technical preparation programs; military; dual credit; and many more.