

For Immediate Release

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Media Release

Pulse of CCSD – Vince Fredericks

Lucy Beckham High School

Donald R. Kennedy, Sr.
Superintendent of Schools

Anita Huggins
Interim Deputy Superintendent

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Associate Superintendent of the
High School Learning Community

Anna Dassing
Principal

Mount Pleasant, SC – Vincent Fredericks spent most of his adult life serving in law enforcement in the state of New York. It was a career choice that he hoped would carry him through to retirement. That dream was cut short due to health concerns, but Fredericks wasn't deterred. He knew there would be another chapter in his professional life, he just never imagined it would be at Lucy Beckham High School in Mount Pleasant, SC.

Today, Fredericks is in his second year as a paraprofessional in Beckham's exceptional education class and is a mentor and leader for all students. In addition, he is an assistant coach for the boys' lacrosse team.

Born and raised on Long Island, NY, Fredericks is the youngest of five brothers. He attended Long Island University on a lacrosse scholarship and initially majored in physical education. The call to serve led Fredericks to switch majors to criminal justice. He began a fulfilling career committed to protecting and serving the citizens of New York.

"I absolutely loved it," said Fredericks. "I did everything from anti-crime, to school outreach. Everything was about proactive policing. Our approach was focused on creating relationships with the families in our areas, particularly the kids. We were trained to seek kids out who were showing signs of distress, mentor them, and provide resources for their families."

In 2011, after Fredericks' unplanned retirement, he and his wife followed her brother to Charleston. The couple had visited before and fell in love with the area. He took a temporary position in the produce department of a local grocery store while he pondered his next career move. At that time, lacrosse was growing in popularity in the East Cooper area. Fredericks promoted the game as a volunteer coach to neighborhood kids and hosted pick-up games for anyone interested.

Frederick's wife Heidi taught special education for 13 years in New York and joined Charleston County School District (CCSD) as a Special Education teacher at Sullivan's Island Elementary School where she taught for five years.

"My wife was an amazing special education teacher," said Fredericks. "Now I get to see firsthand what she was talking about all those years and the difference she made in the lives of her students."

Coaching the Beckham Bengals

When Beckham opened, Fredericks volunteered to coach lacrosse. Through that, he met Principal Anna Dassing and much of the staff. One of those staff members, a guidance counselor at the school, told Fredericks about a teacher's assistant (TA) position that was open and encouraged him to apply.

"I have been a coach my whole adult life," said Fredericks. "I've coached lacrosse, football, and basketball. I am a very people-oriented person, likely because of the way I was raised. I love people and making other people feel good. Our time is short here and I believe in making the best of it."

Fredericks was encouraged by the possible opportunity to mentor kids on and off the field.

"I applied for the job in the parking lot of the school," said Fredericks. "I reached out to my wife first and she said I would be perfect for the position, and she was right. I absolutely love it. I am amazed that I am able to make a difference like I am. I am honored to have the opportunity."

Principal Dassing is thrilled to have him on her team.

"Coach Fredericks always has a huge smile, a high five, and is willing to jump in and help in any situation," said Dassing. "He is a true Bengal and a pillar in our community."

The Beckham community

Fredericks is grateful to the Beckham community and the energy the school boasts.

"The kids are happy to be here," said Fredericks. "The teachers are happy to be here. The respect that is shown to my class is unmatched. It is just an amazing atmosphere all around."

Fredericks explained that his students are mainstreamed with the rest of the school as much as possible.

"The class interact with the main population and are involved in everything the rest of our students do," said Fredericks. "One of my students is on my lacrosse team. Others play sports with their 'Bengal Buddies'. They are all included and able to socialize like the other kids. My kids get all the love."

Fredericks considers this his next longtime career. Although he misses law enforcement, he believes he is meant to be in this position.

"Law enforcement was my identity," said Fredericks. "It took me two years to get over being forced to retire. Now it brings me so much joy because I want to be here at Beckham. I am still able to serve and I am using my law enforcement skills to teach students conflict resolution which has allowed me to create a bond with these students and earn their trust."

Fredericks recognizes that the job of being a teacher can be difficult and overwhelming. In his role as a teacher assistant, he is able to ease some of that burden.

Fredericks is assigned to one individual student, but actually, serves every student in the class, and when called upon, any student in the school.

"The team I work with has been instrumental in helping me to get my footing and find my way in this new role," said Fredericks. "Valerie Turner retired after 25 years, came back and she has given me the knowledge I need to be successful for my students. We have become work partners and I follow her lead on everything."

Nicole Forrester is the head teacher in Fredericks' class and Michelle Burge and Cindy Percy round out the team.

"Each and every one of them is unbelievable," said Fredericks. "The whole team is so good."

Fredericks said the East Cooper community is fortunate to have this type of educational opportunity.

"Beckham is a special place and offers opportunities for all students," said Fredericks. "I, along with my colleagues, will continue to advocate for opportunities like this for students across the district. To be able to offer this type of service in a public school is amazing."

Even more exciting for Fredericks is that his two sons, Luke (14), and Jake (12) plan on attending Beckham in the coming years.

"They often visit and love to interact with my students," said Fredericks. "It will be a joy to have them on campus with me."

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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 of 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 49,000 students in 88 schools and specialized programs.

CCSD offers a diverse, expanding portfolio of options and specialized programs, delivered through neighborhood, magnet, IB (international baccalaureate), Montessori, and charter schools. Options include programs in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), music and other creative and performing arts, career and technical preparation programs, and military.