

## NEWS RELEASE

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### Pirates Invade MES



**Pictured Above:** A grant from the Dare Education Foundation recently provided the opportunity for MES 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> grade students to learn more about the “Golden Age of Piracy” as told by historian and spell bounding storyteller Ben “Blackbeard” Cherry and his first mate DeeGee.

The Dare Education Foundation recently awarded a 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills Grant to MES teacher Marcia Jenkins to bring Ben “Blackbeard” Cherry to MES to enrich student learning and ignite their enthusiasm for continued exploration.

“The visit from “Blackbeard” was a great way to kick off the second half of the school year. By tracing the history of “The Golden Age of Piracy” students are discovering the significance that pirates had on the people and the economy of the era,” said Marcia Jenkins, MES 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Teacher. “By having historian guest speaker Ben “Blackbeard” Cherry at our school, the students are now fully charged with excitement to begin their own research into the impact that pirates had on our coast,” continued Ms. Jenkins.

Following “Blackbeard’s” visit, students will continue their learning by researching and writing their own stories and reports and presenting them to their peers. Some of this research will undoubtedly help students better understand the relationships between cultures and the impact that trade and travel has on economies.

Although pirates plundered rather than selling or trading goods and services, their high seas adventures led to the very beginnings of the global economy in which we now live. During “Blackbeard’s” tale, he was quick to clarify that it was in fact pirates who first discovered the new world, not Christopher Columbus, as many history books are quick to credit. Born in Jamaica, the real Blackbeard grew up in England and then sailed the Caribbean Seas, eventually building his empire to four ships and over 400 men.

While not well-known for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills of collaboration and social responsibility, pirates of the colonial era did understand that others beyond their own shores had much to offer. Perhaps that’s one of the most important 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skill lessons students can learn from the “Golden Age of Piracy” ...that exploration and appreciation for diversity lead to opportunity. Taken a step further, one of the most important 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills is to, unlike pirates, use these opportunities to make the world a better place.

For more information about the Dare Education Foundation and the 21st Century Skills Grant Program, visit [dareeducationfoundation.org](http://dareeducationfoundation.org) or call 255-5545.

The Dare Education Foundation (DEF) is an IRS-qualified non-profit organization that works in partnership with Dare County Schools to promote excellence in education. DEF believes that the best education possible for every student provides a solid foundation for a strong and vibrant quality of life in Dare County. In order to achieve this, DEF partners with the community and raises funds from private donations large and small, grants, sponsorships, and special events. DEF's collaborative efforts enrich education for all students and encourage community involvement in education.