

Contact:
Lindsay Whitley, Ed.D.
Associate Superintendent
Communications & Community Engagement
Cumberland County Schools
Email: lindsaywhitley@ccs.k12.nc.us

For Immediate Release:
June 1, 2022

Deployed Soldier Surprises Son at Gray's Creek Graduation

Father receives special leave to attend son's graduation ceremony, surprises him just before the processional begins

Fayetteville, N.C. – One of the sacrifices military service members and their families make is missing important milestones and celebrations. Sgt. 1st Class William Dubnansky has been deployed to Poland for the last 4 months. Although his tour wouldn't be complete before June 1 when his son, Alexander Anderson, was scheduled to graduate from Gray's Creek High School (GCHS), Dubnansky knew he couldn't miss this experience.

Once Dubnansky received approval for leave, he and his wife, Ariana Dubnansky, a second-grade teacher at Gray's Creek Elementary School, worked to make sure Alexander's graduation day was a truly memorable one. He arrived back in Fayetteville on Tuesday, May 31, just in time for Alexander's graduation the next day.

"This is more than I could wish for," said Dubnansky about being able to surprise Alexander for graduation.

"I've been in the military for over 16 years and have had multiple deployments. Wanting to be a father—see my kids graduate, be healthy and happy—this opportunity is more than anything I could have hoped for."

In coordination with GCHS staff, Cumberland County Schools' (CCS) Military-Connected Student Support, Student Support Services, and Communications and Community Engagement departments, and Crown Complex staff, Dubnansky and his family met at the Crown just 45 minutes before the graduation officially began.

After preparations and announcements, GCHS Principal Lisa Stewart called Alexander to the front of the staging area. Once in place, Dubnansky snuck up behind him. Alexander embraced his father as his fellow graduates, school staff and district representatives erupted into applause.

"I had absolutely no clue," said Alexander. "I thought he would be stuck over there ... It's a really big surprise to see him." Alexander has been awarded a Presidential Scholarship from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in



Dubnansky (r) poses with his son, Alexander Anderson (l), before Gray's Creek High School's Commencement Ceremony.

Daytona, FL, where he will attend and pursue a degree in Aerospace Engineering in the fall.

Dubnansky serves in the 82nd Airborne, attached to 18th Airborne Corps as Chief of Munitions. He will be returning overseas before the end of the week to finish his deployment.

CCS Superintendent Dr. Marvin Connelly, Jr., presented the CCS Challenge Coin to Dubnansky and thanked him for his service. Dr. Connelly said to Dubnansky, "Your children represent the over 15,000 military-connected students in our district ... and you represent the parents serving our country. We are honored to serve you and your family."



Alexander hugs his father after surprise reveal.



Dubnansky walks with son, Alexander, after initial surprise.



Dubnansky hugs his son during an interview.



Dubnansky and Alexander pose with family members before the Commencement processional begins.



Dr. Connelly presents the CCS Challenge Coin to Dubnansky.

###

