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**NASA MARSHALL SPACE FLIGHT CENTER DIRECTOR AND ASTRONAUT VISIT PIKE ROAD MIDDLE SCHOOL**  
*MSFC Director Jody Singer and Astronaut Joe Acaba Inspire and Encourage Next Generation of Explorers*

PIKE ROAD, Ala – On Thursday, April 18, officials from NASA’s Marshall Space Flight Center (MSPFC) visited Pike Road Middle School to inspire and encourage local students to work hard, explore opportunities, and pursue their dreams. This visit was part of NASA Day in Montgomery, an annual event to raise awareness about the state of Alabama’s role in aerospace advances and inspire the next generation of leaders.

The afternoon began with a welcome and remarks from Pike Road Schools (PRS) Superintendent Dr. Chuck Ledbetter and Town of Pike Road Mayor Gordon Stone. State Superintendent Dr. Eric Mackey spoke of the possibilities in each student’s future.

NASA Marshall Space Flight Center Directory Jody Singer, the first female Director of MSFC, told students that, while Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) may be what most people associate with NASA, there are also opportunities in the arts. Later, Astronaut Joe Acaba shared stories of his three spaceflights, telling students that it is important to work hard, but it is also important to find moments for fun.

“It takes persistent pursuit and knowing that the limits placed on us are often limits we place on ourselves,” Director Singer said to students. “[Goals] are achievable for every one of you – you just have to put your heart and soul into it.”

“It is incredible to have Director Singer, Astronaut Acaba, and the rest of the visiting NASA team visit Pike Road Middle School to encourage and inspire our community’s young people,” said Gordon Stone, Mayor of the Town of Pike Road. “Our goal was always for our students to dream big and know they can reach their goals. Today was an exciting illustration of that.”

For more information or to schedule an interview, contact Turner Waddell by calling (864) 958-6577 or (334) 495-4109 or by emailing [turner@pikeroad.us](mailto:turner@pikeroad.us).

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