



## Update from the Superintendent

To: BDS Employees

From: Bill Husfelt, Superintendent

Date: November 4, 2022

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*This is a copy of the Superintendent's weekly message that is sent to parents/guardians. We want to make sure you have the same information as well so you're in the loop :)*

It's hard to believe that it's already November but here it is ... by the time you read this, there will be 20 days until Thanksgiving and only 51 days until Christmas!

During November, I think we all take some time to be a little more grateful than usual, and so I thought it would be appropriate to thank SOME of the amazing community organizations who contribute so much to our students, our staff and our schools. While it's impossible to list all of them, there are a few who consistently go above and beyond the "norm" for support and we'd like to recognize them.

Any thankful note from BDS would have to begin with some recognition for the St. Joe Community Foundation. Thanks to their generosity, and the amazing leadership of Director April Wilkes, the foundation has given more than \$3.3 MILLION to BDS in recent years. The St. Joe Community Foundation has funded everything from books for students to field trips to professional development for our teachers, and we're so grateful for the endless ways in which they support us.

We'd also like to recognize the Nelson Family Foundation for their most recent donation of \$100,000 for our graduation assistance and homeless outreach teams. These funds will be used to help students overcome barriers that are preventing regular school attendance and we're very excited to expand our efforts as a result of this amazing donation. The Nelson Family Foundation has long since been a HUGE supporter of BDS. The foundation donated more than \$6 MILLION to help us build the Gretchen Nelson Scott Fine Arts Auditorium at A. Crawford Mosley High School and the brand-new Barbara W. Nelson Fine Arts Center at Bay High School.

I also have to give a giant shout-out to ALL of the faith-based organizations, non-profit groups and individuals who collaborate each week to send more than 1,500 bags of food home with students who would otherwise be hungry. This massive operation, dubbed Blessings in a Backpack and coordinated by Emerald Coast Fellowship Church under the direction of Pastor Dr. Steve Taylor, is a critical support for children facing food instability, and we couldn't do any of it without their ongoing and generous support.

We can't change the lives of all of the children in our community who need help, although we wish we could, but we can improve their circumstances one at a time when we have amazing partners like these organizations and individuals.

Other groups changing lives in our community include Habitat for Humanity, the Salvation Army, Gulf Coast Children's Advocacy Center, Life Management Center, Skip Bondur's Stuff the Bus campaign and the Bay County Sheriff's Office initiative for Christmas gifts called Project 25.

Covering everything from building homes to providing mental health support to ensuring children have toys and food at Christmas, these groups put words into action and never hesitate to step up when we have extra needs in

specific circumstances. We appreciate not only those who lead and contribute to these organizations but also the donors and supporters behind-the-scenes who ensure that funds and supplies are flowing as needed.

If you need help from any of these organizations, or if you'd like to get involved as a donor or volunteer, you can find contact information for many of them on our website at <https://www.bay.k12.fl.us/bay-county-resources>.

Thank you, Bay County, for continuing to step up for our children and for supporting the organizations and churches that are making sure we take care of our littlest citizens and community members. We certainly couldn't do what we do without the support of these groups and we know they need your support as well. So, in this season of giving and being thankful, we hope you'll take a few minutes to be grateful for those doing the work that our families need, and we hope you'll give some thought to how you can contribute as a donor or volunteer.

God Bless, and stay safe!