

By Bill Husfelt
Superintendent, Bay District Schools

By the time you read this, we will have successfully welcomed back more than 26,000 students and 3,000-plus staff members and our 2022-2023 school year will be underway!

Wow!

While members of the public, and parents, will see decorated classrooms and shiny hallways and neat front entrances, A LOT of work went into that and many of our staff members have been working throughout the summer to ensure this school year is amazing.

Thank you to all of those employees and to the many businesses, organizations and faith-based groups who helped in that process ... we couldn't have done it without you!

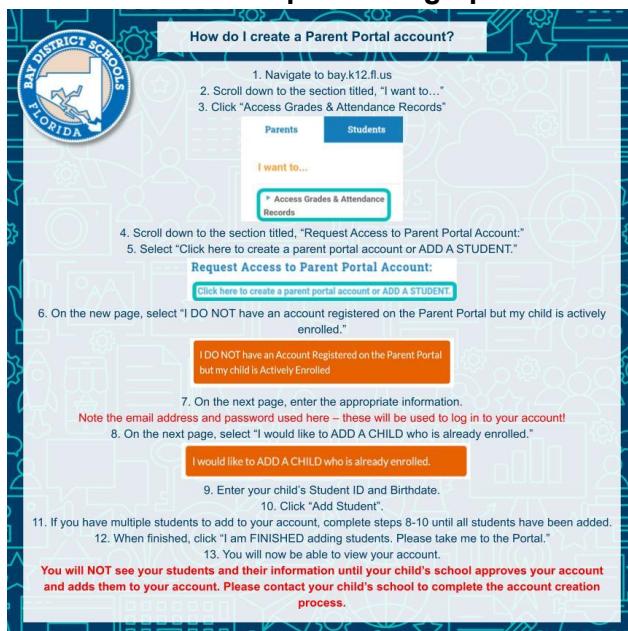
As the new year gets underway, it's always a good time for a few gentle reminders about things we want you to know/remember and the ways that we can support each other and our students.

CONTACT INFORMATION

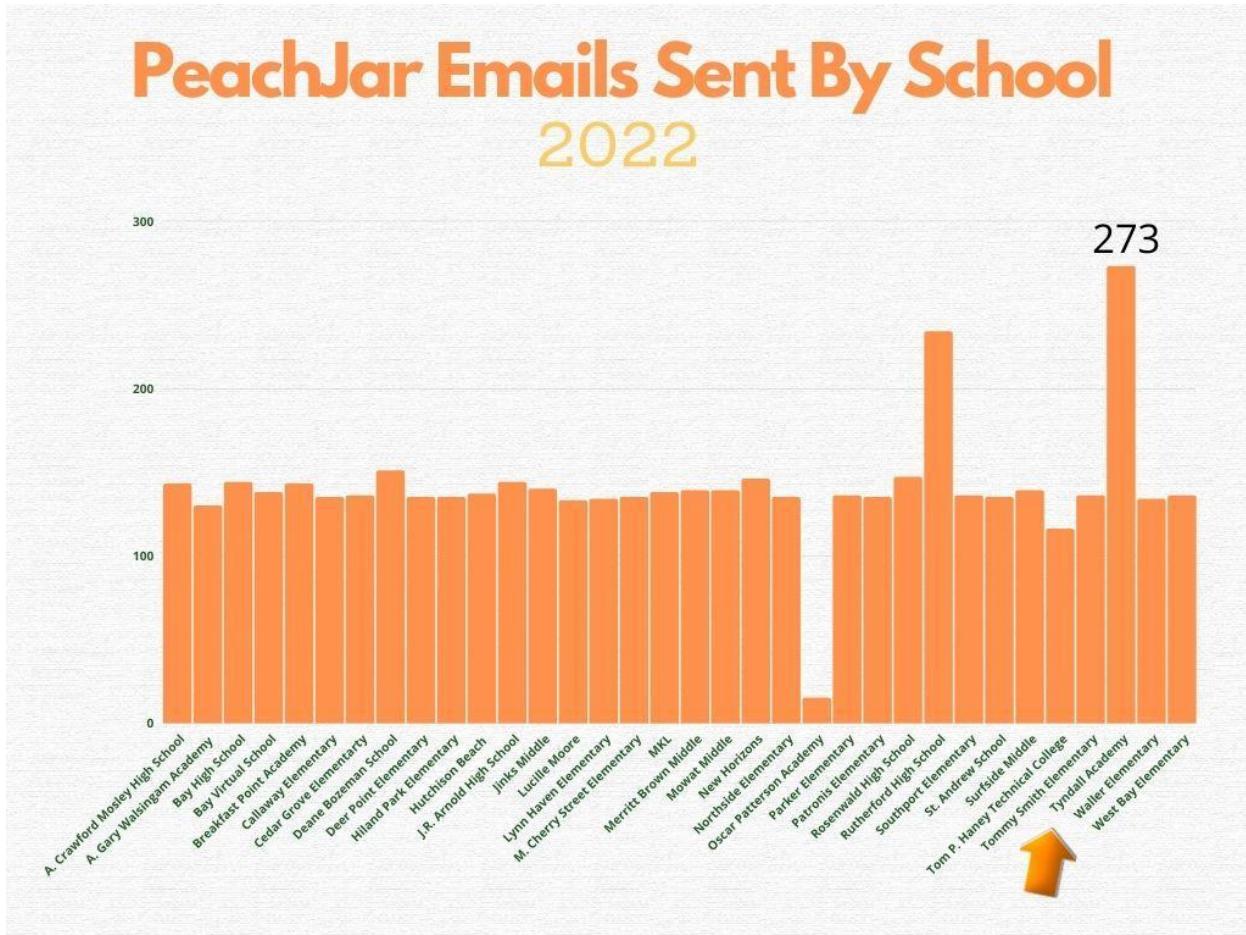
First, it's critical that you can get in touch with us AND that we can get in touch with you. Parent Portal is the program that you can use to email your child's teachers, or administrators, and to keep track of your student's grades, attendance, discipline etc. Your email address and cell phone number in Parent Portal are the ways we use to communicate with you. In an emergency, or just for a routine update, we depend upon that information being accurate so we can get in touch with you.

You have no idea how many times we struggle to reach a parent/guardian when a student has been injured on campus or is feeling ill enough to go home. It's alarming, it's scary and it's really frustrating to call a series of numbers only to find out that NONE of them are accurate.

Please take a moment to make sure your information is accurate. If you need help opening a Parent Portal account, or updating an existing one, please reach out to your child's school. You can also follow the steps in this graphic.



You can see from the graphic below that our schools rely on PeachJar to send home emails about important events and updates regarding your child's education and so, again, you're missing out on those if you don't have an accurate email address on file. Congratulations, by the way, to the team at Tyndall Academy for sending the highest number of PeachJar emails last year ... we know our Tyndall parents are grateful.



BACK-TO-SCHOOL INFORMATION

Most parents still have a few unanswered questions at this point in the year and you're definitely not alone if you're still missing some information. We've created a back-to-school website that contains all of the information you need about dress code, open houses, transportation, meals and the school calendar etc. You can access that here: <https://www.bay.k12.fl.us/back-to-school>

We've also put together a brand-new outreach called Parent University which is a video series tackling more complicated topics like "how do I stay connected to my child's teacher" and "how do I know if my student needs a 504 or IEP" and other related ideas. You can access ALL of our released Parent University videos at <https://www.bay.k12.fl.us/parent-university> and look for additional topics added weekly. If you have suggestions for topics you'd like to see, just email us your ideas at BDScomm@bay.k12.fl.us



Parent University

Teaching. Inspiring. Encouraging.

A LITTLE KINDNESS GOES A LONG WAY

One of the most important things we can all remember at this time of year, and model for our students, is kindness and compassion for each other. I have no doubt that some of our school events did not run as smoothly as we wish they had on the first few days of school. While we strive for perfection, we're in the people business and that means things don't always run according to "plan." If we can ALL remember to treat each other with compassion and kindness, however, we will work through the inevitable roadblocks and we will be teaching our students THE MOST IMPORTANT lesson of all ... you can never underestimate the power of a smile, a simple "thank you" or a comment of appreciation. In today's world, I fear that our children don't see that often enough but if we all model it for them, even when we're frustrated or upset, we can help them learn this life lesson.

Patience really is a virtue, and I hope we can all practice patience during the upcoming days as our whole community readjusts to a new schedule. Please be patient with the staff at your child's school, please be patient with each other, please be patient while driving (or waiting in traffic) and please be patient with your children.

Thank you, in advance, for everything I know you'll do this year to support our hard-working students and employees. We've been through a lot together, as a community and as a school system, and I'm convinced that our successes are the direct result of our community's strong support for education AND our school system's incredible network of compassionate, passionate, dedicated students, employees and families.

Stay safe and God Bless!