



Update from the Superintendent

To: Parents and Guardians
From: Mark McQueen, Superintendent
Date: January 31, 2025

CTE Month in February

As we celebrate CTE Month in February, we're thrilled to highlight the continued expansion of Bay District Schools' Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs. This year, our district received a transformative \$1,520,177 Workforce Development CAP Grant, part of a statewide \$62 million investment to enhance CTE across Florida. This grant allows us to expand programs in high-demand fields that provide students with real-world skills, certifications, and a direct pathway to high-wage careers.

Bay District Schools has long been committed to equipping students with hands-on learning from kindergarten through 12th grade and beyond, including programs at Tom P. Haney Technical College. With this new funding, we're thrilled to introduce new programs and strengthen existing ones:

- **Deane Bozeman School** will see the addition of an **Unmanned Aircraft Systems (Drones)** program focused on agriculture, and a **Criminal Justice Operations** program, complete with a 911 call center simulation lab.
- **Rosenwald High School** will gain a **Building Trades and Construction** program.
- **Rutherford High School** will expand its **Agriculture** program, while **J.R. Arnold and Bay High Schools** will enhance their **Health Science** programs with new, state-of-the-art simulation equipment.

Our CTE program growth is only possible with our valuable partnerships with local organizations like the Bay County Chamber of Commerce and the Panama City Beach Chamber of Commerce. Together, we shape our CTE pathways to meet the evolving needs of the workforce as identified by their members. This collaboration ensures that BDS students graduate with the skills that local industries seek, giving them a competitive edge as they enter the workforce.

In addition, we are proud to partner with Tyndall Air Force Base and the Naval Support Activity in Panama City. As these bases evolve to meet the demands of the future, they rely on a skilled, technically

trained workforce. Our CTE programs are built with their needs in mind, ensuring that students receive training that directly reflects the skills essential to support our military and the community.

Our heartfelt thanks go out to our dedicated CTE educators, many of whom bring years of real-world experience into our classrooms. These exceptional instructors, recruited from industry and business, empower our students with insights into practical applications in fields like health sciences, criminal justice, construction, and agrotechnology. We are grateful they have chosen to join our BDS Team of Teams, helping students build bright futures and creating a lasting impact on Bay County.

As Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Through CTE, we're arming our students with the knowledge and skills to succeed and contribute meaningfully to Bay County's future.

We encourage all students, parents and guardians to explore the wealth of available CTE courses and certification pathways. Our school counselors are eager to provide more information about these programs and how they can positively impact your child's educational journey and future career. Let's celebrate our CTE students, teachers, and the possibilities ahead as we work together to put the "A" back in Bay!