



PUTTING
THE 'A'
BACK IN

BAY

Update from the Superintendent

To: Parents and Guardians
From: Mark McQueen, Superintendent
Date: January 10, 2025

Celebrating National Mentoring Month in Bay District Schools

January is National Mentoring Month, and we are thrilled to recognize and celebrate the essential role mentors play in supporting and inspiring students across Bay District Schools. From kindergarten classrooms to high school hallways, mentors have a lasting impact, providing students with guidance, encouragement, and an extra layer of support as they grow, learn, and reach for their dreams.

Elevate Bay is our district's unique mentoring initiative, dedicated to connecting volunteers with students who could benefit from additional guidance. These volunteers meet with students during the school day, working closely with them to build self-confidence, set goals, and offer encouragement. Whether they're helping with academics or simply being a consistent, caring presence, our Elevate Bay mentors make a difference that ripples out into the entire school community.

The **Bay Education Foundation** also champions mentorship through its **Take Stock in Children program**. This initiative pairs high school students with caring mentors who guide them through their final years of high school and help prepare them for college. Mentors in the Take Stock program offer guidance on college applications, scholarships, and navigating new experiences, ensuring that our students feel ready and confident as they take the next steps into higher education.

At **New Horizons**, our mentoring program is exceptionally robust and impactful, thanks to dedicated community members who serve as role models and motivators. New Horizons mentors work with students who may have faced academic challenges in the past, helping them build a positive outlook on education and set goals for their future. Through this program, students gain insight into various pathways after high school, including college, career, and military options.

- **ELEVATE BAY: Stacey Legg, Mentor Initiative Specialist**
 - 850-767-4128 or leggs1@bay.k12.fl.us
- **BAY EDUCATION FOUNDATION: Patti Suggs, Acting Director**
 - (850) 767-4110 or BayEdFoundation@Bay.K12.FL.us
- **NEW HORIZONS: Gordy Pongratz, Principal**
 - 850-767-1110 or pongrr@bay.k12.fl.us

We are grateful for the mentors who dedicate their time, compassion, and expertise to make a lasting difference in our students' lives. If you've been searching for a meaningful way to give back, or want to align your New Year's resolution with helping the children in our community, mentoring is a fantastic way to do that.

Together, we're putting the "A" back in Bay by lifting each other up through mentoring!