



## Update from the Superintendent

To: Parents and Guardians  
From: Mark McQueen, Superintendent  
Date: February 28, 2025

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March is Music in Our Schools Month, and it's the perfect time to celebrate the incredible impact that music has on our students' educational journey. At Bay District Schools, "Arts" is one of the A's in our mission to put the "A" back in Bay. From sparking creativity to building confidence and enriching culture, music plays a powerful role in shaping our students' success.

### **The Power of Music in Education**

Research shows that music enhances critical executive functions such as planning, memory, and attention. We've seen this in action with our Bay District Schools marching band students, who have maintained a combined average GPA of 3.71 this year, with 174 students earning a 4.0 or higher.

### **Supporting Our Music Programs**

At Bay District Schools, we take immense pride in our exceptional music programs. From an early age, students are offered numerous opportunities to explore and develop their musical talents.

One such opportunity is the 44th Annual Bay District Schools Elementary Music Festival, taking place on Tuesday, March 11, at 7 PM at First Baptist Church in downtown Panama City. This year's event will feature a mass choir of over 300 singers from local elementary schools, and we invite the entire community to come out and cheer on our young musicians!

Looking ahead, we are excited to continue the celebration of student talent with our Spring Showcase Concerts, set to kick off the second week of April. Be on the lookout for announcements from our schools about these events, where you can support our budding vocalists and experience their incredible performances.

Other events where our students demonstrate their talent are through competitions such as Solo and Ensemble and theater productions that nurture creativity and enrich the cultural fabric of Bay County.

We are proud of our students' musical talents showcased at various events like these. Together, these programs create a dynamic environment where students grow not just as musicians but as individuals, gaining confidence and forging lasting friendships.

### **Music and the Community**

In the community, music education fosters collaboration with organizations such as the Panama City Symphony, which brings enriching music education programs to local students. Their programs offer interactive musical experiences, introduce students to various instruments, and help them build a deeper connection to music.

As we celebrate Music in Our Schools Month, I encourage students, parents, and community members to attend student performances, explore local events, and foster a love for arts at home. Thank you for your continued support of Bay District Schools' music programs. By providing our students with every opportunity to succeed artistically, we are putting the “A” back in Bay!