



Update from the Superintendent

To: Parents and Guardians
From: Mark McQueen, Superintendent
Date: September 26, 2024

“Children are great imitators. So give them something great to imitate.”

— Anonymous

Every day, we see individuals going above and beyond to make a difference in the lives of our students. As we approach National Custodian Appreciation Day on October 2nd, we want to highlight and celebrate our custodians' powerful impact on our schools.

Our custodians, integral members of our BDS Team of Teams, demonstrate unwavering dedication in maintaining our campuses' cleanliness, safety, and welcoming atmosphere for all students and staff. Their commitment, often unnoticed, is truly inspiring. Beyond their daily duties, many custodians form unique relationships with students, volunteer to read to them, help supervise playground activities, and share their life experiences to provide guidance and mentorship. Their unique contributions inspire us all.

One shining example is Thomas Aycok, a custodian at West Bay Elementary. Despite living in Blountstown and driving more than an hour to work daily, Thomas consistently goes above and beyond for our school community. A few years ago, he was honored as West Bay Elementary's Support Employee of the Year, and his impact has only grown since then. A couple of years ago, Thomas volunteered to mentor an adult graduate from Chautauqua Learn and Serve Charter School, a school that serves adults with differing abilities. With patience and dedication, Thomas taught the graduate, affectionately known as Mikey to students and staff, the skills needed to become a custodian. Thanks to Thomas's guidance and support, Mikey is now proudly employed as a custodian's helper by Bay District Schools, a testament to the power of mentorship and Thomas's achievements.

Thomas's generosity doesn't stop there. An avid musician, he also volunteers to teach guitar lessons to students during lunchtime, sharing his passion for music and enriching the school environment meaningfully. Thomas's story is just one of many that illustrate how every member of our BDS Team of Teams is making a difference. Still, it's a powerful example, especially as we celebrate National Custodian Appreciation Day.

As we look forward to October 2nd, I encourage our entire community to find ways to thank and celebrate our custodians. Whether it's a heartfelt thank you, a card, or a small gesture of appreciation, let's ensure our custodians know how much we value their hard work and dedication. They are our schools' unsung heroes, contributing to cleanliness, safety, and the positive, nurturing environment that makes Bay District Schools a special place to learn and grow.

Let's not wait until October 2nd to show our appreciation—let's celebrate our custodians every day for their unwavering commitment to our schools and community. By showing our appreciation more often, we can empower ourselves to make a difference and contribute to the positive, nurturing environment that makes Bay District Schools a special place to learn and grow. Together, we are stronger, and together, we are working to put the "A" back in Bay.