

Hi, I'm Mark McQueen...

As we approach Thanksgiving, I'm reminded once again of how truly blessed we are to serve such an extraordinary community here in Bay District Schools. This season gives us a moment to slow down, look around, and recognize the immense generosity that surrounds our students and staff every single day.

I want to begin by expressing my deepest gratitude to our Bay District Schools family. Our employees continue to show unwavering dedication to educating, supporting, and uplifting the 28,000 students entrusted to us. Whether you teach in the classroom, drive a bus, prepare meals, maintain our facilities, or provide leadership and support behind the scenes, your work matters. You are changing lives, and we are profoundly thankful for you.

But our gratitude extends even further, into the heart of this community that consistently steps forward to lift up our children. This week, our partners at Backpack Blessings prepared and packed more than \$7,000 worth of food—over 5,600 meals—for our beach students to ensure they are cared for throughout the Thanksgiving break. Local churches continue to meet needs with compassion, like Bear Creek Assembly of God, which helped Waller Elementary provide food for more than 200 families.

For over three decades, our partners at Manuel & Thompson have sustained their Coats for Kids campaign, ensuring that 600 of our students will stay warm throughout the winter season. And just this week, the Bay County Sheriff's Office delivered more than 400 turkeys and meals through Operation Thankful, blessing hundreds of families across our district. These are only a few examples of how deeply this community pours into our schools, partnerships that are truly instrumental as we continue putting the "A" back in Bay.

As we head into Thanksgiving break, I hope you each find time to rest, recharge, and enjoy meaningful moments with the people you love. Thank you for your continued dedication, support, and partnership as we work together to build a bright future for every child we serve.

Wishing you and your family a wonderful and blessed Thanksgiving.