



Update from the Superintendent

To: Parents and Guardians
From: Mark McQueen, Superintendent
Date: March 29, 2024

As we step into April, a month marked by various significant celebrations, I find my heart particularly drawn to the observance of the Month of the Military Child. This nationwide tribute holds a unique place in my life because it resonates deeply with me as the Superintendent of Bay District Schools, a military child myself, and a proud husband and father of a military family.

Our Month of the Military Child pride is amplified by the incredible honor bestowed upon our district earlier this year. I am absolutely thrilled that Bay District Schools received 17 Purple Star Schools of Distinction Awards from Governor DeSantis. This recognition is a testament to our schools' unwavering commitment to military families. It is a remarkable achievement, considering that only 79 Purple Star Schools of Distinction Awards were awarded this year, and only 200 exist statewide. Furthermore, the fact that our other 18 schools are applying for this prestigious recognition highlights the widespread dedication within our district to go above and beyond for our military families.

The Purple Star Schools of Distinction Award signifies that our schools meet and exceed the standards for supporting military-connected students and their families. It speaks volumes about the exceptional efforts our educators and staff put forth to create an environment that eases the unique challenges military families face.

As we celebrate the Month of the Military Child, the significance of this award becomes even more profound. April 15th, designated as #PurpleUpDay, offers our entire community an opportunity to support our military children visibly. I urge each of you to join me in donning purple on this day, symbolizing our collective gratitude and acknowledgment of the unique challenges faced by these young heroes. Share your photos on social media using the hashtags #PurpleUp and #BDSPurple, allowing our community to witness the depth of our appreciation.

Our schools will host special events throughout April to honor and celebrate our military students. These occasions serve as a powerful platform for our school communities to unite, express appreciation, and foster a supportive environment for our military children. I eagerly anticipate attending as many celebrations as possible throughout the month to recognize these exceptional students and their parents or guardians personally.

In addition to these celebrations, we are privileged to host a very special board meeting next month, featuring command staff from Tyndall Air Force Base, Naval Support Activity Panama City, and the U.S. Coast Guard. Together, we will present a resolution supporting our military children, further solidifying the bond between our school district and the military installations in our community.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to our sponsors, Tyndall Federal Credit Union and Gulf Coast State College, for their unwavering support of our Month of the Military Child activities. Their commitment to recognizing and honoring the contributions of military children enhances our ability to make this month truly special.

Bay District Schools takes great pride in being military-friendly, and the 17 Purple Star Schools of Distinction Awards are a testament to that commitment. Again, I encourage each community member to go the extra mile by wearing purple on April 15th, showcasing our unified support for our military children. These young individuals exemplify strength, adaptability, and courage as they navigate a lifestyle marked by frequent relocations, adjustments to new schools, and periods of separation from their parents. I am confident our community will demonstrate its unwavering support for our military families collectively, and this month presents a myriad of opportunities to do so.

Thank you for joining us in celebrating the Month of the Military Child and for recognizing the indispensable role these young individuals play in our community.