



Update from the Superintendent

To: Parents/Guardians
From: Mark McQueen, Superintendent
Date: October 19, 2023

The big yellow school bus is an iconic symbol of school districts throughout our community, and this week, in case you didn't already know, is National School Bus Safety Week. While we celebrate and appreciate our amazing BDS Transportation Team of Teams year round, I want to take a few minutes this week to highlight them for the amazing services they provide to our community.

Unfortunately, as many of you already know, two of our buses were involved in an accident last week that resulted in more than a dozen students being transported to area hospitals. We could not be more grateful for the amazing response by Bay County medical teams, Bay County Sheriff's deputies, Florida Highway Patrol troopers, our own transportation team and BDS administrators and the countless parents and guardians who quickly responded when called upon. Our thoughts and prayers are with those students who are recuperating from their injuries, and our BDS Team of Teams is doing all we can to support them.

Safety is, and always will be, our number one priority. Our school bus drivers and transportation support team members play a critical role in the implementation of that priority and the overall success of our school district. They are the first faces our children see in the morning and the last they see before returning home. So, it's only fitting that we celebrate their unwavering commitment to safety and the well-being of our students.

Did you know that our transportation team safely transports more than 8,000 students each day to and from school? This incredible feat is accomplished through 99 bus routes and 99 dedicated drivers who cover a total of 6,593 miles each day, amounting to a staggering 1.2 million miles a year. These numbers are not just statistics; they represent the extraordinary effort and responsibility our team takes on to ensure our students arrive safely at school and back home. In case you're curious, we're always hiring drivers and anyone who would like to explore transportation as a career is encouraged to call us at 850-767-4100. We provide the training and testing needed for this career field, and we are able to provide full-time and part-time employment options.

While we're celebrating our bus drivers, and the countless mechanics and others who support them, we know it truly takes a village to operate a safe transportation system for students. In fact, this week, we're celebrating our entire community as members of our Team of Teams. We're so grateful to the parents, guardians, and community members who pay attention to school buses and diligently stop when children are getting on and off the bus. Your cooperation is vital in ensuring the safety of our students as they enter and exit their buses.

I would also like to extend my sincere appreciation to Bay County Sheriff Tommy Ford and his team for their unwavering commitment to school bus safety in our community. The BCSO team has been instrumental in supporting and enforcing the safety guidelines and rules of the road that keep our students safe. In addition, I want to express our gratitude to all area law enforcement agencies for their continued diligence and support in ensuring the safety of our students during their daily commute to and from school. It is through our collective effort and commitment to safety that we can proudly say that our children are in good hands.

Please join me in celebrating and appreciating our BDS Transportation Team during School Bus Safety Week and every day. Their dedication, professionalism, and commitment to the safety and well-being of our students are truly commendable.

Thank you for your ongoing support of Bay District Schools and for working together to keep our students safe.