

Hi, I'm Mark McQueen.

As we approach the Christmas holidays, I want to take a moment to wish each of you a joyful and restful season.

Christmas reminds us to slow down and focus on what matters most: family, relationships, and the simple moments that bring us joy. In a busy and often challenging world, this season gives us the opportunity to pause, reflect, and reconnect.

At its heart, Christmas is a season of giving. In our schools, that spirit is alive every day. Our teachers and support employees give our students something truly meaningful: knowledge, encouragement, and belief in their potential. And our families and community partners play an essential role in that journey, supporting and uplifting our students both in and out of the classroom.

Over the past couple of weeks, I've enjoyed visiting our elementary schools as the Conductor from *The Polar Express*. While it's been fun to celebrate the magic of the holidays, the message behind it is simple and powerful: believe. Believe in our students, believe in ourselves, and know that our community believes in you. As we rang the silver bells together, we were reminded that hope is one of the greatest gifts we can give.

The most lasting gift in education is the relationships we build—between students and teachers, families and schools, support staff, administrators, and community partners. These connections are what make our BDS Team of Teams strong and what make our district truly special.

I am sincerely thankful for our students, families, staff, and community partners. Your support, trust, and commitment continue to give our students hope and opportunity.

As we celebrate Christmas and look ahead to the New Year, I wish you peace, rest, and happiness. And as we head into the holidays, I want you to know this—I believe in each of you.

Thank you for all you do, for our students and for one another. May you carry that belief with you into the new year, knowing how valued you are and how much you matter.

Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year.