

Hello, Bay District Schools family and community.

Here in my hands, I'm holding something that means so much to all of us. This cap and tassel represent the reason so many have chosen this profession—to help students reach the moment when they get to walk across that stage and open the door to what comes next.

Today's message is an extra special one, because earlier this week, the State of Florida released graduation rates for the 2024–2025 school year, and I am incredibly proud to share our results. Last year, Bay District Schools made history with a graduation rate of 91.4 percent. That was a milestone our community celebrated, and we could not have been more proud. This year, however, we built on that success in a powerful way. Our graduation rate rose to an outstanding **93.8 percent**, exceeding even the state average.

That means more students than ever earned this cap and tassel...and indeed their diplomas. More families celebrated milestones that will have a lasting impact on their lives. And that is something our entire community can take pride in.

This achievement belongs to our students, first and foremost. They demonstrated perseverance, resilience, and determination. They stayed the course, even when the path wasn't always easy. This moment belongs to them, and our pride could not be greater.

It also belongs to our families, who supported, encouraged, and believed in their children every step of the way. That partnership is essential, and this success reflects a shared commitment to student success.

And this achievement belongs to *all* Bay District Schools employees. Teachers, support staff, administrators, bus drivers, cafeteria teams, counselors, paraprofessionals, maintenance, safety personnel, and district staff—every role matters. Graduation does not happen in isolation. It happens because a Team of Teams works together every day with a shared purpose.

This is one meaningful way we are putting the **“A” back in Bay**—not with words alone, but with results. With students walking across stages and a community that believes in its schools and the people who serve them.

When we see this cap and tassel, we see the collective impact of our work and what is possible when a community comes together around its students. Thank you to everyone who makes Bay District Schools what it is. Together, we are changing lives and strengthening our community. Congratulations to our students, our families, our employees, and our entire community.

Together, we are truly putting the ‘A’ back in Bay.