

Welcome back, Bay District Schools family! I'm Mark McQueen...

As we begin a new year and the spring semester, there is a renewed sense of energy and opportunity across our schools. January is a time for fresh starts, goal setting, and recommitting ourselves to the work that matters most—supporting our students and helping them reach their full potential.

January is also National Mentoring Month, making it the perfect time to recognize and celebrate the powerful role mentors play in the lives of students across Bay District Schools. From kindergarten classrooms to high school hallways, mentors provide guidance, encouragement, and a trusted presence for students who may need a little extra support along the way. These relationships can be life-changing, offering students reassurance, motivation, and someone who truly believes in them.

Elevate Bay is our district's mentoring initiative that connects caring community members—including parents, retirees, business leaders, and other volunteers—with students during the school day. Mentors build meaningful relationships, help students develop confidence, set goals, and stay engaged in learning. Often, the greatest impact comes simply from showing up consistently and letting a student know they matter.

The Bay Education Foundation also plays a vital role in mentoring through its Take Stock in Children program. This initiative pairs high school students with dedicated mentors who support them through their final years of school and help prepare them for life after graduation. From navigating college applications and scholarships to building life skills and confidence, Take Stock mentors help students take important steps toward a successful future.

We are deeply grateful to every mentor who gives their time, heart, and energy to support our students. If you're looking for a meaningful way to give back in the new year, mentoring is a powerful way to make a lasting difference, not just in one student's life, but across our entire community.

That spirit of service and connection is what makes Bay District Schools so special. When we invest in our students and in one another, the impact reaches far beyond the classroom. Together, we're putting the "A" back in Bay by lifting each other up through mentoring. Thank you for a wonderful start to the spring semester and for your continued support of our students.