



Update from the Superintendent

To: Parents and Guardians
From: Bill Husfelt, Superintendent
Date: April 25, 2021

Hands-on learning is at the core of what we do at Bay District Schools and I am SO excited about a new partnership between BDS, the St. Joe Community Foundation and the Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation (GHOF).

The Gulf of Mexico is literally our backyard ... our breathtakingly beautiful emerald green backyard and it's an asset we must treasure and protect. That's why we're absolutely thrilled to be able to fund this new water-based learning experience with a \$100,000 grant from our generous, and continuous, partners at the St. Joe Community Foundation. It's also important to celebrate that the GHOF is MATCHING the funding we've received from the St. Joe Community Foundation which enables us to do even more with this grant.

Dr. Guy Harvey, the founder of the foundation that bears his name, is a strong believer in preservation, conservation and education. "It is our collective responsibility to preserve our marine environment and maintain the biodiversity of this planet," he said in a statement on the foundation's website.

We couldn't agree more and that's why this partnership is so exciting.

Thanks to the funding we've received, we will be able to implement all of the following activities beginning next school year:

1. Introduce all BDS schools to the Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation STEAM education program and hands-on, marine-based learning.
2. Provide students with engaging and exciting marine science curricula through teacher professional development.
3. Ensure science teachers at local elementary, middle and high schools receive hands-on professional development maximizing our access to local marine resources. Each teacher will also receive a "dive bag" full of Guy Harvey resources and classroom materials.
4. Empower students to learn more about their local community through field research to better protect their environment.

Additionally, the grant will enable a few BDS teachers to attend the Department of Education's Steamposium in Ft. Lauderdale and the MarineLab Educator Professional

Development Program in Key Largo, FL. Two BDS students will also be awarded an all-expense paid experience with Dr. Guy Harvey or Jessica Harvey and the GHOF.

Erin Brack, an elementary staff training specialist with BDS who focuses entirely on science, is particularly excited. "There is such a great value in developing resources like this that connect our students authentically to their learning, local environment and community. I am beyond excited about having the opportunity to use the GHOF resources and professional development opportunities already in place, to create and personalize it for Bay District School teachers and programs," she said recently.

Brack, who is also working on an extensive ocean-themed Environmental Interdependence (adaptations, life cycles, food chains etc.) unit with a team of teachers at Breakfast Point Academy knows that hands-on learning is key for our students.

"This definitely goes beyond teaching and memorizing facts," she said. "We're talking about touching the hearts of the kids and providing them with a personal connection to the lesson which they will take with them forever." I couldn't say it any better myself!

We are so grateful to our amazing community partners like the St. Joe Community Foundation who continually step up for our students and ensure we're able to provide them with all of the "extras" that state funding doesn't cover.

Learning is not just classroom based and ultimately we want to create graduates who are lifelong learners. This grant, and partnership with the Guy Harvey Ocean Foundation, ensures our students will have the opportunity to become astute stewards of the amazing community in which we live and that they will be able to do their part to ensure marine conservation and preservation.

Stay safe and God Bless!