



Update from the Superintendent

To: Parents and Guardians
From: Bill Husfelt, Superintendent
Date: June 6, 2021

As we close out the 2021-2022 school year with a flurry of graduation ceremonies, it seems only fitting to spend a few minutes reflecting on the stellar post-secondary options our students have available to them right here in our home town.

While many of our graduates will go right into the military, into the workforce or away to college and university, more and more of them are opting to stay home to complete their post-secondary educational plans because we have so many amazing programs from which they can choose.

Tom P. Haney Technical Center

Haney offers 21 different Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs which can be completed in anywhere from six months to two years. This year, 189 students graduated from Haney and most will find immediate employment in their given career fields.

While the average of a student at Haney is 24 years old, the school is also garnering the attention of our new high school graduates. Haney continues to be an attractive option for our military veterans who are looking to begin second careers and for those in our community who may be returning to the workforce after staying home for a while.

According to Haney's Chief Community Relations Officer Alex Murphy, a CARES Act grant to provide students with the training needed to earn OSHA industry certifications as forklift operators is proving very popular.

"To date, 95 students from five of our career technical programs—Electricity, HVAC 1 & 2, Marine Service Technologies, and Welding Technology, have already earned the forklift credentials," she said. "This training is relevant to their current career paths, and it also provides an opportunity for students to work in their future employment areas while completing their programs," Murphy added.

Nursing is another career field in which Haney excels. In March of this year, Haney was ranked "as the 17th best licensed practical nursing (LPN) program in Florida by [Nursing Schools Almanac](#) based on our outstanding NCLEX-PN pass rate of 91.5% among first-time test-takers over the last decade," Murphy said.

I really enjoy visiting Haney and meeting the students who are literally changing their lives with the help of Haney's incredible staff. Many of Haney's students are the first in their families to secure post-secondary training/education and their commitment to juggling "life" and school work as adults is impressive.

Gulf Coast State College

Let me preface this part by noting that I am a proud graduate of GCSC myself and my wife and three daughters also took advantage of the degree programs offered at Gulf Coast. Our very own GCSC is another area post-secondary institution that is nationally ranked.

With the lowest state college tuition in Florida, Gulf Coast State College is rolling out a new financial aid package this year called the Gulf Coast Guarantee. The Guarantee provides a virtually automatic \$1,400 provided to every member of the Class of 2021 from our community. The only requirements are that students enroll in 12 credit hours each semester and maintain a 2.0 or higher grade point average.

According to GCSC, 98.6 percent of GCSC students recommend GCSC and 95.4 percent of GCSC graduates report working or continuing their education within one year of graduating. I strongly encouraged my own daughters to take advantage of the incredible education provided by GCSC and I always promote their programs to our students and their parents/guardians. Our partnership with GCSC for dual-enrollment classes is such an amazing benefit for our students (and their families who save on tuition dollars) and I am truly grateful for GCSC's commitment to our students. Gulf Coast State College is definitely a gem in our community and their Gulf Coast Guarantee is going to make a college education significantly more attainable for everyone.

Florida State University-Panama City Campus

Many students begin their post-secondary education at GCSC and are able to matriculate right into a program offered by Florida State University-Panama City Campus which is located right across the street.

The new FSU PC Promise scholarship offers FREE tuition and fees to students from Northwest Florida who qualify for a Pell Grant with a combined family income of less than \$50,000.

Additionally, the school offers automatic transfer scholarships for students with eligible grade point averages.

Seminole Landing, the university's new residential living community, is expected to open up this fall and will offer on-site housing to students from throughout our community including freshmen. FSU-PC expects to enroll its largest freshman class ever this fall and applications are still being processed.

FSU-PC's newest programs include pre-professional health courses offered for students interested in pursuing medical school and related careers and an online master's program in organizational management and communication. As a result of an \$11.5 million grant from the Gulf Coast Triumph Board, FSU-PC also plans to offer coursework in cybersecurity and emerging technologies, assorted K-12 education degrees and several new advanced degree programs.

My three daughters and I have a combined SEVEN degrees from Florida State. While I attended FSU in Tallahassee, having the option to attend here in Bay County has made a gigantic difference for so many adults in our community. Many BDS employees (myself included) have completed master's degrees and other advanced coursework at FSU-PC while still working for us and supporting the children of our community. We're blessed to have FSU-PC as a member of our #Community.

Troy University-Panama City

Students in our community also have the option to attend in-person or online classes through Troy University-Panama City. Students can choose from a plethora of programs which begin at the freshman level and continue through graduate school.

The online programs at Troy give adult students in our community so much flexibility which is a distinct advantage for Bay County.

We are so blessed to live in a community which values education so much and where our students have such a diverse array of options after high school. Bay District Schools sincerely appreciates the partnership of these amazing institutions and we are grateful for the myriad of ways in which we work together to ensure our students have the most amazing educational opportunities right here in our own backyard.
Stay safe and God Bless!