"I always wondered why somebody doesn't do something about that. Then I realized I was somebody."
~ Actress Lily Tomlin

It has long since been said that a child’s first, and best, teachers are his/her parents/guardians and I could not agree more with that statement. BDS is proud to have a cadre of amazing teachers but their work must be supported, encouraged and celebrated by the parents in our community if we are to succeed in our mission of graduating students who are ready to accomplish all of their personal and academic goals.

The number one indicator of success for a child is the amount of parental involvement in his/her life. The number one indicator of the success of a class is the efficacy of the teacher and the number one indicator of the success of a school is the leadership of the principal. Together, child, parent, teacher and principal make a dynamic team that cannot fail. Working without one of those components, however, makes the job more challenging for all of the others.

Did you know that more than three million grandparents are currently raising their grandchildren in this country? That staggering statistic is second only to the new number of great grandparents who are raising their great grandchildren – that number hasn’t been yet compiled by national researchers but we know from our own experience here in Bay County that it is happening.

Supporting grandparents and great grandparents raising their children is just one of the many ways in which our educators are adjusting to our “new normal.” Since Hurricane Michael, and now the pandemic, our schools have stepped up in unimaginable ways to complete inconceivable goals and always with a smile. Our educators, however, need your help!

So, in this Covid-19 era when campus visitors are being limited for the safety of our students and staff, how can a parent be as involved as possible?

I’m glad you asked … here’s a list of suggestions:

1. Make sure you are active on Parent Portal. Using this app on your desktop or smart phone, you can monitor your child’s attendance, grades and assignments. You can easily communicate with his/her teachers, follow schedule updates and stay up-to-date about upcoming assignments.
2. Ensure you have an active email address and correct phone number on file in Parent Portal. If there’s an emergency on campus, we will use that information to send you a LINK notification via phone/text/email. In the era of Covid, we also use that tool to communicate with you if there’s a confirmed case of Covid-19 on your child’s campus and if your child has been identified as having minimal exposure or being a close contact who needs to quarantine.
3. Follow your child’s school and the district on social media. Almost every school has an active Facebook account and many are also on Twitter and Instagram. The District is active on all three and we post regularly. Twitter is the very first place we go to report power outages, lock down situations and any other important information we know parents need immediately.
4. Reach out to your school to become involved in PTO/PTA or the School Advisory Council (SAC). These groups meet regularly to coordinate fundraisers and fun
activities for the students and, typically, it ends up being a very small group of very dedicated parents who would LOVE some help!

5. Connect with your child’s teacher and find out what he/she needs. Sometimes our teachers have VERY simple requests that can make a world of difference for them. Small, but exceptionally helpful, offers of assistance can be game changers for our teachers. It doesn’t always cost a lot of money to help solve their challenges, sometimes it’s just the gift of your time.

6. Appreciate the amazing teachers in your lives. If you do nothing else, please take a minute this week to thank and support the teachers who have had an impact on your student’s life and on your own. As a society, we are quick to complain when things are not going well but we’re sadly not as quick to compliment, appreciate, congratulate and thank those who are doing their very best to keep everything on track.

However you choose to get involved in your child’s education … thank you. Thank you for being our partner, for trusting us with your child’s education and for continuing to support those who are working so hard to ensure your child succeeds.