



# Update from the Superintendent

To: Parents and Guardians  
From: Bill Husfelt, Superintendent  
Date: November 22,, 2020

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In the midst of this pandemic, and given the hurricane recovery that is still weighing heavily on the minds of many of us, it's easy to lose track of what we're thankful for this Thanksgiving. However, the reality is that it's more important now than ever before to focus on what we're grateful for instead of what we've lost in the past couple of years.

To start with, I think I can speak for many of us when I say that I am thankful for good health. While many of us (myself included) could stand to lose a few pounds and I'm sure I could exercise more, I'm grateful that I don't face any serious health challenges in my life right now and I'm determined to do all I can to keep it that way.

I'm sure I can also speak for many of you when I say that I'm grateful for family members nearby and those who live farther away. While I won't see all of the usual relatives during this holiday season, as I mentioned before we're being extra careful due to the 84-year-old in laws currently living with us, we will make phone calls and use FaceTime and other technology to remain connected. I know this holiday season will be very difficult for those who have lost loved ones, or those who cannot connect with family members from afar, so we all need to reach out to those people and check on them during the next few weeks. Sometimes a quick phone call can really brighten someone's day and everyone likes to feel connected and cared for!

I'm extra grateful this year for the thousands of employees and students of Bay District Schools. Maintaining a semblance of school during the pandemic-prompted closure was a HUGE challenge for our students and staff but they rose to the occasion and made it work. Doing what we're doing now, with social distancing and mask wearing etc., is also difficult on everyone but, again, we're all in this together and we're making it work.

This Thanksgiving, I'm also thankful for all of the leaders (local, state and national) who are making incredibly hard decisions every day during this pandemic. There are no "popular" decisions during times like these and I'm grateful that we have leaders who care about us, who care about our safety and are willing to make tough calls and difficult decisions. For every phone call I get from someone who is concerned about a

stakeholder not wearing a mask during a particular situation I get another call from someone who is upset that we are requiring masks and following CDC guidelines for quarantining.

Before Hurricane Michael, I am not sure that I was ever thankful enough for a roof over my head, a roof that didn't leak, power, water, sewer and the ability to travel easily around our community. In our post-storm world, I am eternally grateful for those things and I know that there are thousands of others in the world right now who do not have what we sometimes take for granted.

I'm grateful that we have managed to get this far into hurricane season without a huge named storm making a direct impact here. Like many of you, I've had some anxious days and nights watching the weather experts and listening to predictions but I'm thankful that we were spared this year. I hope, and pray, that those impacted by this year's storms get the relief they need quickly and that they can begin their recovery process as soon as possible.

And, finally, I'm grateful to live in a community which cares so deeply for our children. We have many families still recovering from the storm who have been further impacted by Covid-19 and I'm so thankful for the community agencies, churches and others who keep stepping up to help with food, clothing and other necessities. We have some incredibly generous benefactors in Bay County and I'm deeply grateful to all of them for their continued assistance and support. I'm grateful as well for the legions of volunteers who help our teachers, our students and our schools in so many different ways.

I'm also grateful for every single one of you on the "front lines" in our community ... from healthcare workers to first responders to members of the military; we owe you all a HUGE debt of gratitude for your service.

I'm thankful for each and every one of you and for everything you do to support our students and our employees. I know you've bought wrapping paper you didn't need, cookie dough your waistline didn't need and raffle tickets for prizes you didn't win. I know you did all of those things because you believe in the services we're providing at Bay District Schools and you believe in the potential of all of our students.

I hope this Thanksgiving finds you well, safe and healthy. God bless each of you!