



Update from the Superintendent

To: All BDS Employees
From: Bill Husfelt, Superintendent
Date: January 13, 2023

This is a copy of the Superintendent's weekly message that is sent to parents/guardians. We want to make sure you have the same information as well, so you're in the loop :)

If your New Year's resolution or goal relates to giving back to your community in meaningful ways, then I have a few ideas for you! Surprise, I am NOT asking for your money but for something much more precious - your time!

January is National Mentoring Month, and we're looking for more than a few good men and women to give back to our children by becoming mentors.

We have several different mentoring programs (see information below) tailored to meet the needs of all of our students and community members, but they all have one thing in common - the only skills required are the ability to invest in the life of a child and patience. We have mentors who are tutoring students who need academic help and mentors who are working on enrichment projects with students who are gifted and talented. We've got mentors who help behaviorally-challenged students and mentors who develop relationships with students who just need one more listening ear in their support systems. We have mentors who are helping students destined to be the first in their families to attend college and mentors helping students network in the community to find employment or connect with the military after graduation.

Above all, we have mentors who are making a difference in the lives of countless students, and we need more. We estimate that we have about 300 children on waiting lists among all of our programs and, no doubt, there will be more in need of services once those students are matched. Many of our students live in unimaginable circumstances at home, and while we can't fix that, we can ensure they all have the relationships they need with trusted adults who can encourage them and support them as they find their way.

YOU CAN DO THIS.

We all want to know that our volunteer time matters, and I can promise you, BDS mentors know their worth, and they know their time matters. From the hand-written cards to the expressions of appreciation and the HUGE smiles when they see their mentors, our students are genuinely grateful for the community's investment in them and it shows. Students benefit in so many ways from having mentors but it's easy to see immediate returns on investment in increased academic achievement, more regular attendance, decreases in behavioral issues and improvement in self-confidence.

Those are valuable "returns" we can all get behind.

So, please consider reaching out to one or all of the programs listed below to find out how you can become involved. The time commitment can be as little as 30 minutes twice a month (almost most mentors prefer to visit weekly because they enjoy it so much) and you can really and truly change the life of a child.

Elevate Bay (mainly elementary students)

For more information about this program, please reach out to Stacey Legg at (850) 767-4128 or by email at leggs1@bay.k12.fl.us

Take Stock in Children – Bay Education Foundation (secondary students headed to college)

For more information about this program, please reach out to Kelly Langenberg at (850) 767-4110 or by email at langekr@bay.k12.fl.us

New Horizons (students in grades 6-12)

For more information about this program, please reach out to Laura Dever at (850) 767-1130 or by email at deverlh@bay.k12.fl.us

Thank you, in advance, for continuing to invest in the lives of our precious children who truly are our future.