

By Bill Husfelt

Superintendent, Bay District Schools

It's "the most wonderful time of the year," and I know our students are literally counting down the days until Christmas Break! Our staff members are working hard to make memories with our students, and I hope you can enjoy a special holiday event at one of our schools ... they all do an amazing job.

As we approach the end of 2022, I'd like to wish everyone a very merry Christmas. I hope this holiday season is filled with magical memories, time with family and friends, some relaxation and all of the other things we all need to recharge our mental and physical batteries. When I think about things I'm grateful for this holiday season, I want you to know that I'm grateful for all of our students and the opportunity to help them decide who they want to be in this world. I'm grateful for the more than 3,500 employees who help our children every day and for all of the sacrifices they make to ensure our students have every opportunity to succeed. I am also thankful for all of the families who are wonderful partners in education with us ... we could not do what we do without the families and individuals who support our schools and our children. And we're definitely grateful for the faith-based groups, the non-profit organizations and the generous individuals who are business partners with our schools. Now more than ever, their generous and ongoing support is critical.

While the holidays are synonymous in movies with happy times and wonderful memories, I know that's not always the case in "real life." People in our community are still dealing with some very real losses (from the hurricane, pandemic and economic struggles), and day-to-day life is still very difficult for many of those who call Bay County home. With that in mind, I have just one "ask" this Christmas; please check on those around you and make sure they are truly okay. Many people carry silent burdens they don't share, but that doesn't make those burdens any less real. So please, take some time in the hustle and bustle leading up to Christmas to reach out to friends, family members and others. It's important that we all take time, or make time, to help others, to offer support without judgment and to be kind. All too often, it's so easy to get caught up in the "busyness" of the holidays, but we must always remember to take the time to be kind. We are called upon to take care of each other, and one of the easiest ways to do that is to be kind.

It is, as the saying goes, "cool to be kind," and I hope this holiday season is filled with acts of kindness for you and your loved ones.

God Bless, stay safe and Merry Christmas! This will be my last weekly update until after the holidays so Happy New Year as well!

