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May 1, 2020

Dear BPS Community,

I hope everyone is healthy and safe during this incredibly stressful time in our world. While many of our routines and traditions are experiencing disruption, we must hold on to those that we can celebrate. There are several national, annual school employee appreciation days beginning today. These days present opportunities to celebrate the educators and support staff who serve the children and families of Bridgeport Public Schools:

- May 1 – Principals' Day
- May 1 – School Lunch Hero Day
- May 6 – School Nurses' Day
- May 4-8 – Teacher Appreciation Week

Today, we celebrate national Principals' Day and national School Lunch Hero Day. Our school leaders are deserving of recognition as they lead their staff and school communities during this unprecedented time. Effective leadership is needed now more than ever, and I could not be prouder of our principals and assistant principals who are supporting students, families and staff as they navigate the challenges of distance learning. They are also supporting students and families that are experiencing the emotional hardships that students and families are feeling as a result of physical isolation from others.

I encourage everyone to send a message to their child's principal to express your appreciation for all their hard work and dedication. I wanted to also make you aware of the ways you can celebrate our food services staff. Since March 13, food services staff have reported every weekday (rain or shine, "vacation" and holidays) to prepare and distribute meals to families. To date, our food service staff, has prepared over 800,000 healthy meals. If you are a family that has participated in the grab and go meal pick-up program, perhaps you could consider making a thank you sign to display in your car window this when you pick up your next meals. Another way you can show your appreciation for food services staff is by sending an email, photo or video to boenutritionall@bridgeportedu.net. Families and staff who may not be participating in the meal program, are encouraged to show their appreciation and support to the individuals who have been working so hard during the extended school closure.

Next week, please reach out to your child's teachers and school nurses to share your appreciation for their efforts, during this unprecedented time. A short note, photo or video showing your appreciation will mean so much to our staff. While I know it has been extremely difficult for parents, I have had several of you take time out of your stressful and hectic schedules to let me know about a teacher or support staff member who went above and beyond to support your child. This is truly appreciated.

It is important to mention that our dedicated staff members are committed to their work because of their love of children and their belief in our community. The impact that unexpected praise can have on an individual is extremely powerful. Your kind words will mean a great deal and further inspire our staff to continue to go the above and beyond for the BPS students and families!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael J. Testani". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Michael J. Testani
Superintendent