



## Byron Center Public Schools

"Opening the Doors of Tomorrow for Students Today"

March 13, 2009

Dear Byron Center Public Schools Stakeholders:

I wanted to write and thank those of you who were able to attend the 2009-10 Budget Planning Meeting for parents on Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup>. I also want to take this time to update all of our stakeholders on this 2009-10 budgeting issue and the process to resolution.

I am attaching directions to the March 10 Power Point and the timeline of our actions this past eight weeks since we came to understand the depth of our declining financial status. As first semester was coming to a close and we were preparing for the February State Aid count, the number of exiting students became more apparent. As I reported at our meeting Tuesday night, between September and February, 74 new students entered our district while 135 students moved out of the district for a net loss of 61 students. This loss combined with reports of declining to flat 2009-10 state aid projections, and our annual first draft budget projections for the upcoming school year joined to create a scenario not experienced by our district in the last decade, a \$2.1 million budget deficit. It has been nearly 20 years since Byron Center Public Schools has issued layoff notices to staff members.

We have made every attempt to move quickly, informing and seeking input from the Board of Education, our leadership team, our Byron Center Education Association, our staff members, and you our stakeholders. All the while we have continued to analyze and project the short term/long term dollars attached to each strategy, while weighing the potential impact on the children of our community. Our goal is to maintain programs for our students, and to the best of our ability, to keep potential cuts as far away from our students as possible.

For this reason, the two largest financial proposals, an Early Retirement Incentive and Schools of Choice, will be brought to the Board of Education for a vote on Monday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 6:30p.m. at Brown Elementary. In addition, at the March 23<sup>rd</sup> Board meeting, I will be recommending that the Board grant me approval to reduce the budget by \$2.1 million. Obviously, if the Board approves the ERI and School Choice, the amount of reductions needed will be less.

I have asked each Principal and Program Director to develop a three tier plan demonstrating their program outline and adjusted costs within the three levels of program and staff reduction, from best to worse case, i.e. BCHS 8-block, 7-block, 6-block school day.

It is my sincere hope and anticipation that Byron Center Public Schools will rise to the challenge before us and look forward to the opportunities that await us.

After collecting all the response sheets and feedback that we received during and after the evening, and throughout the last six to eight weeks, I read through each of them and forwarded

them to the Board of Education for review. These, along with all the thoughts and suggestions I have received over the past 6-8 weeks have been shared. Please be assured that the Board members, those you elected to represent you, and I value your input and give great consideration to your comments. We understand that you have entrusted us with the future of your children and nothing is more important. I will update you again after the Board meeting on March 23, sending a Board Summary through the E-Connection. This will inform you how the Board voted on School Choice, the ERI, and the overall \$2.1 million budget reduction.

Additional updates will follow as we identify the remaining dollars needed to meet the \$2.1 million reduction and the various options/costs available. Many of these options will include or address suggestions turned in at our March 10<sup>th</sup> parent meeting. My intent at the March 10 Parent meeting was to share our 2009-10 Budgeting Issues with our parents, and provide an opportunity for as many stakeholders as possible to share their thoughts within a respectful timeframe. For this reason, I had five of seven Board members, our Chief Financial Officer, every BCPS Principal, and several program directors in attendance to talk with stakeholders one on one.

I began the parent meeting, and will end this stakeholder letter with the same, our District Mission Statement: *Byron Center Public Schools, in partnership with the community, will educate and prepare each student to be a responsible citizen capable of pursuing life goals, now and in the future.*

If there is hope in the future  
There is power in the present,

Daniel L. Takens  
Superintendent

- To view the 2009-2010 Budget Planning Powerpoint visit the district website [www.bcpsk12.net](http://www.bcpsk12.net) and you will find it along the top of the front page.
- To view the 2009-2010 Budget Planning Timeline visit the district website [www.bcpsk12.net](http://www.bcpsk12.net) and you will find it along the top of the front page.
- To subscribe to the “EConnection” for communications emailed directly to your computer, simply visit the district’s website [www.bcpsk12.net](http://www.bcpsk12.net) and click on “EConnection” in the lower left corner.