



## Byron Center Public Schools

"Opening the Doors of Tomorrow for Students Today"

April 24, 2009

Dear Byron Center Public Schools Stakeholders,

I am writing to update all of you with my personal thoughts as our district continues to proceed through a difficult period. As many of you know, we are challenged to make up \$2.1 million for our 2009-10 budget. As parents, staff, and students are presented with the areas and impact of proposed cuts, many have become distressed.

On April 13<sup>th</sup>, at the Board Work Session, a PowerPoint presentation provided a visual to proposed changes for grades 5-12. On April 21<sup>st</sup>, district administrators, the BCEA vice president, fine arts teachers, and several board members attended the Byron Center Fine Arts Boosters meeting to provide additional time to listen to concerns and try to provide more clarification to the need for the changes.

While the meeting was tense and emotional at times, it was necessary if we ever hope to move forward. I hope and believe that we all left with the following:

- 1) Each of us, whether we are parents, community volunteers, teachers, or administrators are seeking the same goal, and that is to do what is best for children, and what will best help them succeed in the future.
- 2) Whether we agree or disagree with the solution, we must be careful about questioning each other's intent to do what is best, even though that solution may look differently from one person to another.
- 3) Differences of opinion and some of the reactions that accompany them should not be taken personally. We must all remember that this process is indeed very personal when it involves our children/our students. Emotions run high because we all care so much.
- 4) That regardless of the many nuances being questioned with the plan, I hope every stakeholder trusts that every effort was made and will continue to be made to preserve every class, every job, every staff member that we can. We will remain diligent in this effort!
- 5) A \$2.1 million reduction was, and is, going to hurt. However, I have always believed that together we will cherish all that remains and work to shine even brighter.
- 6) That one day soon we will be able to celebrate the tremendous passion we all have for our children. After all, this is essential to any success.
- 7) I ask each of us to draw deep within ourselves and forgive any actions or persons we felt were not well intended. I believe I can speak for every member of our school family that none of us has ever acted on anything other than the best intentions.
- 8) I pray that we can put this behind, and join in positive energy as role models for our youth during times of challenge.

After much consideration, we will proceed with the schedule proposal and curricular change that has been presented. At our next Board Meeting, this Monday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 6:30p.m. at Countryside Elementary, we will continue the difficult process as the Board will be asked to approve a resolution for staff reductions. In addition, we hope to gain approval for a high school DECA trip to nationals, and monthly expenditures.

Sincerely,

Dan Takens  
Superintendent