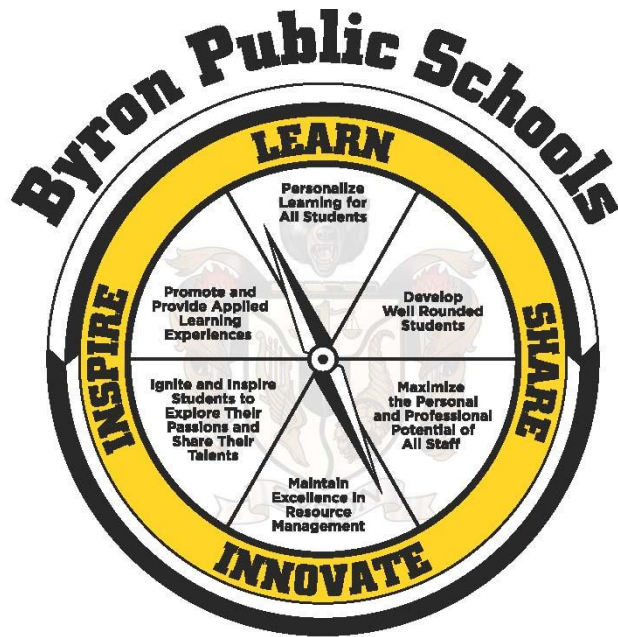


# Byron Public Schools



# Entry Plan

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Superintendent of Schools

*Connect to Learn – 90 Byron Days*

*#90ByronDays*

## Purpose of Connect to Learn – 90 Byron Days

The purpose of my listening, learning, and orientating activities is to learn as much about the Byron Public Schools as possible. Additionally, a primary goal is to meet as many of the constituents as possible during my time of onboarding and beyond. Connections will be made with the constituents to learn their perspectives and to try to answer the following questions for them:

- Who am I?
- What's my background?
- Why did I join the team?
- What do I hope to accomplish?
- How do I hope to work together?

And, have others tell about themselves in a similar way.

## Introduction

Byron is located in southeastern Minnesota a few miles west of Rochester, Minnesota. It is a community with a family orientated small town feeling, with access to the amenities that the Rochester area includes. It is a progressive community with a high respect for education and business connections.

Byron has a long tradition of high achievement and success. As the new school superintendent, it is critical that I establish this entry plan in which I call **Connect to Learn – 90 Byron Days** to expedite my organizational understanding of the successes and challenges we face. This listening-learning-orientating phase will quickly turn to leading, but, not without establishing a solid appreciation and understanding of the great work Byron Public Schools (BPS) has achieved.

The following are examples of a few key questions that need to be answered before we begin thinking about a critical path forward:

- How does the Board and community measure success?
- What is the community really proud of as it relates to the school?
  - How can this be leveraged into the future?
- What are emerging influences in the community, or outside of the community, that people are most excited/concerned about that need to be understood?
- How close is the District to realizing its priorities?
- What are the challenges that must be addressed to realize the vision – both short-term – and long-term?
- Do all stakeholders share in the District's path forward?

As the new superintendent, I plan to address these and many other questions to ensure that BPS is on a path forward toward being "...recognized as a leading, renowned school system in the world by challenging the status quo..." At the end of the 90 days, I plan to provide a written report to the School Board outlining my findings and ideas about establishing a path forward that will help to keep work aligned.

## **Vision**

By 2018, the Byron Public Schools will be recognized as a leading, renowned school system in the world by challenging the status quo and developing new norms for education utilizing real-world tools and purposeful technology to develop a passion for learning. We will continue to develop students who demonstrate outstanding character by modeling and creating a learning environment that is safe, happy, healthy and caring.

## **Priorities**

1. Personalize learning for all students in pursuit of their academic excellence
2. Promote and provide applied learning experiences within the school and community
3. Develop well-rounded students in the areas of character, community, and academics
4. Ignite and inspire students to explore their passions and share their talents
5. Maximize the personal and professional potential of all staff
6. Maintain excellence in resource management

## **Mission**

Learn | Share | Innovate | Inspire

## **Byron Highlights**

- An excellent staff committed to student learning and well-being
- Strong professional development programs
- A strong technology plan and vision that is being implemented in all schools
- iPad 1:1 initiative available to students
- Strong financial position with healthy fund balance
- Resident enrollment is increasing; total enrollment is increasing
- Non-resident enrollment makes up approximately 20% of enrollment
- Strong retention of resident students
- 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning is a goal of the district with many programs to support this vision
- Byron is strongly committed to personalized learning for all students
- Students are exposed to learning experiences within the school and community
- Character development, community involvement, and strong academics are goals of the district
- Excellent Community Education program that meets the needs of families and community members
- New primary school and elementary grade configuration
- Strong community support passing bonding referendum
- Strong athletics and fine arts programs with strong student participation
- Athletic Boosters and Hall of Fame
- Strong strategic plan and vision for the district

- Support programs at all buildings to assist student learning
- High achievement at all levels on statewide tests
- A strong sense of pride in the community and the schools makes Byron a great place to live and work

### **District Schools**

- Byron Primary School (Pre-K-2) .....491
- Byron Intermediate (3-5) .....483
- Byron Middle School (6-8) .....497
- Byron High School (9-12) .....553

### **Demographics**

- Enrollment – 2024
- White – 92.2%
- Black – 1%
- Asian – 1.3%
- Hispanic – 2.8%
- Free/Reduced Lunch – 13.1%
- SPED – 10.8%
- EL – .5%
- Graduation Rate – 95%

### **Goals**

The Connect to Learn – 90 Byron Days entry plan is designed to address the following goals:

1. To ensure an effective, efficient and orderly transition of leadership from Superintendent Elstad, keeping the focus on increased learning for all children
2. Get to know members individual and collective interests, hopes, and dreams to develop a trusting, productive, collaborative relationship with the School Board
3. To create opportunities for me to listen to stakeholders and gain a comprehensive understanding of all key aspects of the BPS including the District culture and teacher morale
4. To proactively ensure that all voices, not just those who traditionally avail themselves to collaboration with the school system, are heard and engaged in the process of continuous improvement
5. To identify and execute activities that must happen immediately to ensure an outstanding beginning to the school year
6. To sustain excitement and keep the momentum for BPS’s vision, mission, priorities, and future strategic plan, while also establishing the commitment to engage in needed change to ensure a system of continuous improvement

## **Outcomes**

Expected results of this entry plan include:

- The focus and direction of BPS
- A comprehensive summary of the findings, observations, and key findings from my listening-learning-orientation activities
- Establish a personal foundation of strategic plan and potential short-term improvement plans for urgent matters

## **Structure**

Connect to Learn – 90 Byron Days engages stakeholders who will represent a wide range of constituents that include, but are not limited to: students, parents, teachers, principals, senior staff, School Board members, business community, advocacy groups, civic leaders and organizations, and governmental agencies (and most likely will expand). My entry plan also relies on a series of “pre-entry” activities which include studying the following: School Board Policies, budget, organizational chart, student achievement data, personnel trends, and other key functions.

Finally, deep organizational learning about Byron Public Schools and valued relationship building will unquestionably fall outside a 90-day entry plan. My learning will be ongoing throughout this year and beyond. For any errors or inadequacies in following pages, of course, the responsibility is entirely my own.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dr. Joey M-H Page

**I. Governance Team: School Board of Byron Public Schools**

In order to ensure that the District has an intense focus on meeting the needs of all children, the Board and I must develop a trusting, positive, collaborative, team-oriented relationship. During the entry plan phase, I will work with the Board to discuss issues and matters of governance, management, core values and beliefs, structures of their relationship, and consider issues reform and our approach to the work.

**Pre-Entry**

Share entry plan with School Board and senior staff for feedback, suggestions, and guidance.

1. Engage in one-on-one meetings with Board members to deepen relationships and broaden perspectives.
2. Ask key District employees to provide important information about the District and their work.
3. Present Connect to Learn – 90 Byron Days plan to the School Board to gain their input.

**Entry**

1. Conduct one-on-one meetings with all Board members to continue to build positive, productive relationships. **Date Completed:\_\_\_\_\_**
2. Meet with all union leaders. **Date Completed:\_\_\_\_\_**
3. Hold a Board retreat (*potential August*) to discuss communication protocols, roles, responsibilities, norms of behavior and interaction, expectations for the first year, and agenda setting. **Date Completed:\_\_\_\_\_**
4. Meet with the Board Chairman and members to determine how they work in partnership with staff and me. **Date Completed:\_\_\_\_\_**
5. Determine the schedule and proposed agendas for Board meetings. **Date Completed:\_\_\_\_\_**
6. Collaborate on the Board retreat to focus on shared values, initiate reflections on organizational structure, and areas of improvement. **Date Completed:\_\_\_\_\_**

## II. Organizational Capacity and Alignment: Principals/Directors

It is critical that I understand how the organization is currently operating – what’s working well and where there are opportunities for improvement. The executive team’s primary role is to support the key functions of the District. It is my responsibility that we operate as a highly effective cross-functional team, dedicated to a positive, professional culture focused on serving our students and families. The focus remains on meeting the needs of all students.

### Pre-Entry

1. Review the current District office structure to determine its alignment on student achievement and maximizing operational efficiency.
2. Conduct one-on-one interviews and review resumes and briefing papers with all direct reports and senior staff.

### Entry

1. Conduct a retreat with principals/directors to review department strategic plans, improvement plans, most recent achievement data, Vision ScoreCards, review current or anticipated vacancies, and discuss leadership team structures, protocols, norms, and practices.  
**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_
2. Determine how communication and decision making occur with the team and how it might need to improve. Reestablish meeting norms and protocols designed to focus on increased efficiency and alignment.  
**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_
3. Meet with other superintendents to assess current data and performance of all schools under their supervision and review their plans for making improvements.  
**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_
4. Understand the role of District Office vs. School Offices regarding supporting students and their performance, and what strategies are in place for those students who are not meeting expectations – are they receiving appropriate and targeted interventions?  
**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_
5. What specific strategies are in place to increase access and equity in our most advanced course work?  
**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_
6. What methods or initiatives are in place for increasing ACT, National Merit Scholars, etc...?  
**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_
7. How are student identified as GT, SPED ELL and what strategies have been identified to improve outcomes for these students?  
**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_
8. Determine how much autonomy and authority principals have in the current organizational structure and establish how much access and opportunity they have in decision making at the District office level.  
**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

9. Plan a second retreat with staff to review accountability plans for all functional units, clarify process and progress towards improvement with the strategic plan and District improvement plan, review current and future budget issues, and current organizational structure.

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

10. Ensure all necessary plans and preparations are in place for an exceptional opening of school; establishing protocols for assessing the effectiveness of the opening of schools (scheduling, transportation, facility preparedness, etc.).

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

11. Review all signed agreements with agencies.

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

12. Review and/or develop succession planning and leadership development plans.

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_



### III. Student Achievement

It is the responsibility of every employee to ensure all students graduate from Byron Public Schools ready for college and/or a career. To ensure instruction is occurring at high levels, teachers must have a rigorous K-12 instructional curriculum, pacing guides, unit plans, and systems designed to facilitate optimal learning opportunities. They need tools to monitor student progress, as well as research-based interventions to deploy when the students are not successful. Ensuring all decisions are made using the following: “1. Is it good for children; 2. Is it researched-based; 3. Is it fiscally sound?” will be emphasized in all discussions.

#### Pre-Entry

1. Analyze patterns in student achievement data and achievement gaps in order to begin assessing the current state of teaching and learning.
2. Assess District’s expectations for all students’ academic success and commitment to meeting the needs of all its diverse learners.

#### Entry

1. Review and/or evaluate the current assessment regiment with the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment. Additionally, review the status of infrastructure with the Director of Information and Learning Technology that handles the demands of online assessments.

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

2. Evaluate what processes are in place to provide the following services: Guidance Counseling, Mental Health, Psychological and Social Services.

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

3. Meet with District’s instructional leadership team to review disaggregated achievement data, instructional program alignment and current goals, and priority action areas of the District.

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

4. Identify lower areas of achievement and initiate root-cause analysis; determine a course of corrective action.

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

5. Determine how comprehensive and research-based the current curriculum is and assess the fidelity with which the curriculum is used throughout BPS.

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

6. Review Teacher Development and Evaluation system.

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

7. Review all other employee evaluation systems.

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

8. Conduct review of curriculum and programs, especially with the student populations currently not meeting with success.

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

9. Assess current professional development efforts and capacity for meeting the training needs of principals, teachers, and District staff; determine the degree to which it is job-embedded, differentiated, and student-achievement directed; do a “deep dive” in determining how much of the budget is devoted to professional development and how and if it is being assessed.

**Date Completed:**\_\_\_\_\_

10. Study graduation rate trends.

**Date Completed:**\_\_\_\_\_

11. Work with building administrators and the Director of Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment on Grading for Learning.

**Date Completed:**\_\_\_\_\_

12. Review leadership development plans.

**Date Completed:**\_\_\_\_\_

#### **IV. Engagement and Communications**

BPS requires a deep commitment from the entire community to be successful. It is critical that I understand the culture, history, and expectations of the entire Byron school community. Working with staff, I will be proactive and deliberate in reaching out to all stakeholders, particularly those who are traditionally underrepresented in public engagement to ensure their voices are included and valued. There will be a focus on establishing openness and transparency in all communication systems and protocols used to communicate both internally and externally. Key questions for all stakeholders may include:

- What are the strengths of BPS?
- What opportunities exist to improve BPS?
- As the budget remains a challenge for so many districts across Minnesota, what are the priorities of the District?
- What would you like BPS to look like in five years – what does the “...renowned school system in the world” mean as a standard in BPS?

#### **Pre-Entry**

1. Call key leaders and introduce myself and begin to build relationships.
2. Survey the employees in April.
3. Send letters to teachers, staff, and other key constituents.
4. Meet with key leaders in consultation with the School Board members.

#### **Entry**

1. Reach out to critical stakeholders and establish routine meetings, communication protocols, and reciprocal dialogues, focusing on increasing student achievement and continuous improvement; initiate open, honest, and transparent dialogues with the goal of strengthening and improving strategic partnerships. This would include, but not be limited to:
  - a. Philanthropy and local funders
  - b. Elected officials
  - c. Area legislators and/or representatives – state and national
  - d. MDE Commissioner and Governor’s point person on education
  - e. Chamber of Commerce officials
  - f. Organized district groups
  - g. Parent organization
  - h. University officials
  - i. Key business leaders and partners
  - j. Educational or Community Advocacy groups
  - k. Civic leaders
  - l. Non-profit groups
  - m. Faith-based leaders
  - n. Superintendents
  - o. Media
2. Review and/or develop succession planning and leadership development plans

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **School Visits**

3. I will consistently visit schools, meeting with principals, teachers, support staff, and parent volunteers about where we are as a District and where we need to be in order to meet the needs of all children.

**Date Completed:**\_\_\_\_\_

### **Community Forums**

4. I will host “town hall” meetings using the Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats (SWOT) analysis model (or other protocols) to gather community input and initiate continuous dialogues about student achievement and improvement. These meetings will occur through all areas of the District. There will be proactive efforts to meet with stakeholders who have traditionally not attended such forums.

**Date Completed:**\_\_\_\_\_

### **Media Relationship**

5. I will meet with leaders of local media outlets and reporters. These meetings will set the expectations for collaboration that is open, honest, transparent, and accurate. Media will be invited to attend community sessions and the first day of school events. I will work proactively and transparently with the media. We will tell the Byron story.

**Date Completed:**\_\_\_\_\_

## V. Operation and Finance

In order to meet the needs of all students in the BPS, it is critical that Operations and Finance maintain its excellence in resource management. Understanding the current strengths, strategies, and opportunities for improvement, current state budget forecasts, will be a critical focus. This department will be reviewed by the Director to determine how support is maximized for schools.

### Pre-Entry

1. Review key District financial materials, budget, most recent audit, and grants.

### Entry

1. Request briefing papers from the Director of Operations and Finance, providing an overview of their current area of responsibility, major initiatives under way with projected timelines, and a review of significant or potential problems in each area of responsibility.

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

2. Review employee contracts.

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

3. Review District's financial projections, resource allocation, and budgeting processes; assess how the District's budget and budgeting process is aligned to support student achievement.

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

4. Determine what is centralized and what is decentralized within the current organizational structure to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and support to schools.

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

5. Reach out and meet with District Attorney.

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

6. Review District's safety, inclement weather, and crisis communication plans.

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

7. Assess the degree to which all District offices are cross-functional and begin to establish key metrics and customer service goals to ensure peak efficiency and support for student achievement.

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

8. Examine the effectiveness of the BPS information data management system, especially around student achievement, budget, and human resources.

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

9. Evaluate what type of technological tools and digital resources are available to teachers and students.

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

10. Review and/or develop leadership development plans.

**Date Completed:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **My First Day and First Day of School**

I am currently working through early June on a weekly basis with Superintendent Elstad. My first official day in the office will be after a pre-planned family reunion, the first week of July. That first week, I will be meeting with staff, School Board Members, and other key community members. The rest of the summer will be spent preparing for the school year and connecting with a variety of stakeholders.

On the first day of school, I will be at all the schools throughout the District. This will be an important day to meet with faculty, staff, volunteers, students, and families. I will meet with the administrative team to evaluate the quality of opening day/week activities, making any needed adjustments and improvements.

## **90-180 Days**

Once the listening-learning-orientating period has concluded, the findings will be presented to the School Board to garner further feedback and or validation. These findings will be shared in a work session. Once the areas of focus have been identified, staff and I will begin creating the strategies and initiatives designed to improve the identified areas to work over the next 90 days.

Working together throughout this entire process as a governance team, the School Board and I will ensure shared ownership of the work and results. This is a strategic process that includes all stakeholders and ensures BPS keeps a strong commitment to Learn – Share – Innovate – Inspire for great results.

## **Acknowledgements**

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- Byron Public Schools
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- Dr. Chace Anderson, Superintendent, Wayzata Public Schools, Minnesota
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- Dr. Robert Avossa, Superintendent, Palm Beach County Schools, Florida
- Dr. Jim Bauck, Superintendent, Eastern Carver County Schools, Minnesota
- Mr. Tim Collins, Superintendent, Hastings Public Schools, Minnesota
- Dr. Barbara Devlin, Superintendent, Richfield Public Schools – *retired*, Minnesota
- Dr. Ric Dressen, Superintendent, Edina Public Schools, Minnesota
- Mr. Jeff Elstad, Superintendent, Byron Public Schools, Minnesota
- Mr. Les Fujitake, Superintendent, Bloomington Public Schools, Minnesota
- Dr. Peter Gorman, Peter Gorman Leadership Associates LLC, North Carolina
- Dr. Joseph Gothard, Superintendent, Burnsville-Eagan-Savage Schools, Minnesota
- Mr. Jay Haugen, Superintendent, Farmington Public Schools, Minnesota
- Dr. Matthew Hillmann, Superintendent, Northfield Public Schools, Minnesota
- Dr. Jill Johnson, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, Wayzata Public Schools, Minnesota
- Dr. Corey Lunn, Superintendent, Johnston Community Schools, Iowa
- Dr. Bruce Miles, Big River Group, LLC, Minnesota
- Mr. Jon Millerhagen, Executive Director of MESPA, Minnesota
- Dr. Gary Prest, Superintendent, Bloomington Public Schools – *retired*, Minnesota
- Red House Education
- Dr. Jeff Ronneberg, Superintendent, Spring Lake Park Schools, Minnesota
- Saint Mary's University, Minneapolis, Minnesota
- School Exec Connect: Dr. Kenneth Dragseth, Dr. Antoinette Johns, & Mr. Robert Ostlund
- Dr. Robert Slotterback, Superintendent, Richfield Public Schools – *retired*, Minnesota
- Mr. Dwayne Strand, Superintendent, Yellow Medicine East Schools – *retired*, Minnesota
- Mrs. Kate Trewick, Chief of Staff, Richfield Public Schools – *retired*, Minnesota
- Mr. Steve Unowsky, Superintendent, Richfield Public Schools, Minnesota

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## **Very Special Thank You**

Finally, a very special thank you to Superintendent Jeff Elstad, Byron Public Schools. Mr. Elstad, I cannot thank you enough for your mentorship and assistance. You have been such an integral part of my transition. I hope to inspire others as you have inspired me. My best to you and your family as you become the next leader of children's educational future in Owatonna, Minnesota.

## ***Go Bears!***

\* This entry plan is subject to change as information is gathered and processed.

*Last Updated 5/19/17*