



Jeff Elstad

SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENT, COMMUNITY LEADER

FSHS CLASS OF 1988

Jeff Elstad's passion for young people and their futures shine through all he does. He has devoted his 30-year career to the field of education, both as a teacher and administrator. He currently is the Superintendent of Schools in Owatonna. He credits his parents, Gordy and Edith Elstad, as his first best teachers by instilling in him qualities of perseverance and empathy. These characteristics are evident in his work and personal life.

In addition to academics, music and sports were important parts of Jeff's time at FSHS. Becoming a Bruce Smith Memorial Award winner remains a highlight for him, and his involvement in music continues to this day.

Jeff's professional career began as an early childhood special education teacher in Benson, MN. Teaching and administrative jobs followed in Owatonna, New Prague, Rochester, and Byron. As superintendent, he spearheaded successful building projects in both Byron and Owatonna.

Jeff builds relationships with all types and ages of people. A colleague remarked that he is a strong leader, equally comfortable on the floor with preschoolers as meeting with legislators or CEOs. He was instrumental in inspiring the passage of a significant bond vote that resulted in the new Owatonna High School that opened in 2023. Another colleague remarked that many positive changes in the church, community, and school district are the result of Jeff's empathy, ethics, and passion for developing and encouraging people.

Jeff has been recognized with awards and recognition for excellence in various educational organizations. He has also been lauded for his involvement and leadership in community organizations such as Rotary and Lions Clubs, United Way, Big Brothers/Big Sisters, and Trinity Lutheran Church.

Jeff states, "We serve the mission of inspiration: **Excellence. Every Learner. Every Day.** This promise drives us to be our best every day and strive to provide excellence in our schools and around the district." It's clear that this mission statement also guides Jeff's everyday life.