



## Lee Kyler becomes BVCS Lake View Campus Principal

*Dear Parents, Students and Community Members,*

As I become your students' principal, I want to share some things about me with you.

I was born and raised in a suburb of Rochester, New York, and moved to the Adirondacks in 2009. While I miss Wegmans (if you know, you know), I am glad to have found a home in the mountains.

I joke that my high school administrators would be shocked that I too entered administration. I struggled through middle and high school because I did not prioritize academics. I was constantly in trouble, removed from class and often skipped school. It was not until late into 10th grade that a strong mentor teacher motivated me to change. If it were not for her, I likely would have dropped out of high school. I went to college on an athletic scholarship and dropped out after four semesters because I still did not understand the value of education.

It was not until I worked in a school setting with only my associate degree that I saw the true value of education. I worked hard to finish my bachelor's degree and master's degree. In 2021, I also finished my educational leadership program

at the very college I left in 2004, which was very important to me to finish that full circle. I was recently accepted into a doctoral program for educational leadership.

My background of work experience is quiet diverse. Like most teenagers, I worked a series of odd retail jobs. In college, I took an EMT-basic elective course, and after dropping out, I worked as an EMT in the city of Rochester. I then finished my paramedic program and worked as a paramedic for many years. I finished my critical care paramedic program, which allowed me to work on specialty transports and as a flight paramedic. Locally, I volunteered with North Country Life Flight performing backcountry rescues in the high peaks and responding to other medical emergencies.

In education, I got my start as a teaching assistant working as a one-on-one with a student with autism. When I accepted the position, I had no idea what a teaching assistant's duties were, or what autism entailed, but quickly fell in love with the world of special education, and it reinvigorated my passion for education. I finished my master's degree in special education with a focus on emotional disturbances.



I worked as a special education teacher for eight years at the secondary level before working as an elementary administrator.

My paramedic background trained me well for wanting to be a leader and handling stressful situations. Until recently, I never wanted to be a principal because I have not felt up to the challenge or truly capable, but working in an elementary school really cemented my desire to work as a school leader. I have worked at district level and building level leadership and being a principal in a small school is a dream come true. One of the benefits of starting my principalship in a small school is that it will force collaboration and a team approach.

I am absolutely humbled to have been selected.

# Q&A with Lee

## 1. What do you like to do in your free time?

As a parent of three kindergarten-aged children, my free time is almost entirely with my family. My children are 100% Adirondack kids who eat up the outdoors. They have successfully hiked the Tupper Lake triad and Lake Placid 9'ers. They have also participated with the ATIS and CATS programs locally and are always willing to try new outdoor adventures. If you're ever behind us on a trail, you will often hear repeated chants of, "it might be hard, but I can do it." In the winter, we can be found skiing downhill at Whiteface or Nordic in the backcountry. As a family, we love to travel and explore the local scenes.

Personally, I love challenging myself athletically. I originally moved to the Adirondacks for the outdoors and to train for Ironman. Each year I compete in marathons or ultra marathons; I use running as my therapy — it's a time to clear my head and focus on pushing my limits. I like to set challenging, but attainable goals and work tirelessly to improve. Of course, I have failed



along the way — I have dropped out two Ironman triathlons and a couple marathons, but I look at those as learning experiences and start the training process again.

My wife and I worked as youth leaders at a local church and have led mission trips in the United States (Utah, Pennsylvania and Maine) and internationally (Cambodia and Thailand). We were also lucky enough to volunteer in Nepal in 2012, living with a family and teaching English in local government-run schools. We later hiked to Mount Everest raising awareness about the dangers of child trafficking. I am lucky to have a spouse who shares my values and prioritizes education and volunteering.



## 2. What drew you to Boquet Valley?

How could I not be drawn to Boquet Valley? I have to be transparent that I went into the interview process with no expectations and with an open mind, not yet knowing too much about the community or the school. However, after meeting with the parent group, I was immediately aware of their desire to be involved and invested in their school. Later in the teacher group, I could tell quickly that I wanted to be on their team — I could tell they cared about their building and their students. Everyone I have met has been warm and welcoming, and I want to do my part to help Boquet Valley be the best rural school in the state.

## 3. Is there anything you want to do when you come to the region?

I will absolutely be at the summer concert series in Ballard Park, going to the Essex County Fair, and golfing in Westport and Elizabethtown this summer. Short of those, I will depend on local advice. I am confident I could live off coffee and ice cream for the remainder of my life, so recommendations are welcome. I'm happy to share a cone or cup with anyone. I am most excited for September to welcome students and staff back.

#### **4. Why are you excited to serve the Lake View Campus community as principal, and what impresses you the most?**

The beauty of working at the Lake View Campus each day is that, once I learn names and faces, each and every student and staff will be familiar, and building connections with each is a priority. In such a small school, I can be so in tune with the daily rhythm of the school, which gets lost in larger districts. I am most excited to be an instrument for growth and change, working as a team to accomplish shared goals. Being the principal in such a small district is as much about being an instructional leader as it is a community organizer — I sort of have to be a wearer of all hats. I am impressed with the goals of the district, that despite being a small district with unique challenges, the expectations are not altered. I am lucky to have an administrative team with years of varied experience and who have been welcoming and supportive.

#### **6. What do you like most about being an educator?**

This is cliché, but I very much like building relationships with students, being with them in the classroom and hallways. As much as I am an instructional leader, I like being in classrooms and learning from the professionals: watching, teaching and learning. During the school day when students are present, I try to avoid being bogged down with paperwork or sitting in front of a computer. I want to be with students and staff supporting learning.

As someone who was at risk of not graduating high school and who put off college for years, I also hope to serve as an influence on the importance of lifelong learning. Regardless of influences or outside factors, we have pathways and are capable of continuously growing. Whatever I can do as an educator to facilitate that growth keeps me motivated. I also believe that



every school employee is a teacher and we have shared responsibilities: coaches, bus drivers, paraprofessionals, cafeteria staff — we are all educators responsible for the core values of the district.

#### **5. What are your goals as LVC principal?**

My immediate goals are to make myself present for the community, parents and families, and students. I intend to spend most of my summer diving into the data, learning systems and procedures, and soaking up as much information as possible. I absolutely do not intend to make drastic changes for day one. However, I am a firm believer in the statement, “tiny changes can yield remarkable results.” I hope to lead teams at Lake View, emphasize instructional strategies and grade-level collaboration. I recently read a quote that I find compelling, “leaders must convey two things: the importance of the outcome, and the belief that it’s attainable.” I very much look forward to the opening days of school and working as a school to understand what our shared focus will be, then going for it.



#### **7. What do you want the community to know about you?**

I want everyone to know that I am really excited to start as the Lake View Principal and that I will work tirelessly to support and advocate for our students and staff. I also know that I will not be successful, we will not be successful, if we do not work as a team. I need support from staff, the community, parents, everyone. Especially in our rural communities, we all need to work together to accomplish our goals, hold each other accountable, and share in our setbacks as equally as our successes.

I consider myself a risk taker, personally and professionally. It’s why I run ultramarathons and challenge myself athletically. Professionally, I have pushed my students as a teacher, and my staff as an administrator. I encourage (responsible) risk taking and agree with Mellody Hobson’s assertion that, “the biggest risk of all is not taking one.”

Again, I am just really eager to get to know everyone and hit the ground running!