

## **Plainville Citizen Op-Ed, February, 2022**

Plainville Community Schools has operated under a guiding vision document that was developed by a comprehensive and inclusive group of over 50 community members more than five years ago. That group included state legislators, board of education members, town leaders, administrators, teachers, parents, and students. The outcome of this multi-step process included the district Vision document, agreement on a set of core beliefs, and a number of focus areas for which goals and objectives were created. During the time since that multiple month development process, that vision was put into action, and many goals and objectives were implemented and achieved. Our shared focus on inspiring, preparing and engaging students within our robust educational system has remained at the forefront of our focus and progress as a district.

Over time, we have made several revisions and minor adjustments to the district's Vision document, and have removed goals that were successfully completed. Additionally, we added the foundational focus areas of equity, social and emotional learning, and mastery. These foundational pillars of our vision have helped inspire systemic change in meeting the needs of all children and supporting not only instructional needs related to mastery, but also mental health needs and supports during what has been a very trying period of time for students, families, and staff.

As we move through the pandemic and adjust to the changing needs of our school district, we look to refine and redevelop our district vision and strategic plan that will lead Plainville Community Schools to the next steps in our growth and development as a comprehensive and robust learning community for all children. In order to make decisions that will align both district and grant resources to strategic and focused areas of development and improvement, we have begun our next strategic planning process for Plainville Community Schools. The initial strategic planning meeting was held virtually on Tuesday, February 15, 2022. During this one-hour kickoff event open to anyone wishing to

attend, I shared information about our current Vision document and highlights of many successes that support our vision, and also introduced the opportunity to focus on continuous improvement and the transformation of our district moving forward.

Transformation can be a loaded and potentially scary word to some because it could be implied that transformation means doing away with everything that is currently being done and creating something entirely new. That is not the intention here in Plainville Community Schools. We believe and have evidence to support that much of what we are focused on is working very well in Plainville, and we are not looking to remove anything that is proven successful, widely accepted, and respected by our community. Instead, we are looking to commence a continuous improvement journey utilizing the expertise and insights from multiple stakeholders from our community who are interested in this important leadership work. As such, as part of the strategic planning initiative, we will be surveying all district stakeholders to provide the opportunity to gain insight and feedback. Through this initial survey, residents will be asked about what they are proud of in Plainville Community Schools at this time, and what we could do better to bring us to the next levels of success as a school community within the wonderful town of Plainville. Based on the initial survey, we will gather and re-share a number of common themes and ideas once again with stakeholders who will then have an opportunity to vote on and rank those ideas based on the perceived level of importance. We utilized a similar process during our last strategic planning effort and it led to a small, yet highly supported set of focus areas that guided our work over the past several years. That will be our intention in this process, with an even more robust and inclusive plan to involve members of our community in ongoing district development work toward a shared vision, mission and goals for the future Plainville Community Schools. We invite anyone who is interested to become involved, and look forward to sharing perspectives and aspirations for our schools. Ultimately, my goal is to work with our community and make Plainville Community Schools THE model of excellence

that other school districts aspire to become. This is already the case in several areas, but we will continue to strive to provide the very best experiences, opportunities and outcomes for all of our Plainville Community Schools students, families and dedicated staff. In one word, we'll make our schools outstanding. I look forward to next steps, and to connecting with anyone who wishes to be a part of this exciting and transformative process that will continue over the months and years ahead.