

DISTRICT 202 COMMUNITY COLUMN

By Dr. Lane Abrell
Superintendent of Schools
May 2020

Dear District 202 Families, Staff and Community,

Even under normal circumstances, this time of year is usually bittersweet as we review this year's achievements, map next year's vision and goals, and say goodbye to friends, coworkers, and families for the summer.

However, nothing is normal right now.

The stress of trying to wrap up one of the strangest school years ever, and plan for whatever the future holds has magnified every aspect of public education a thousand percent.

Most importantly, we are tremendously grateful to our parents, students, teachers, and staff for the incredible, heroic work they have all done this spring to continue learning, teaching, and working.

We know the process of this transition from schools filled with busy students to empty halls and "zooming" computer screens wasn't always pretty.

We asked parents to be teachers. Some parents shared concerns about being thrown into a job for which they are ill-prepared.

We asked teachers used to standing in front of classrooms full of energetic children and adolescents to dive into a distant "virtual world." Some teachers shared concerns about having to find new ways to engage children across a computer, rather than a classroom desk.

We asked students used to the structure and support that public education provides to help them grow, to continue to focus and achieve from a distance that made it all too easy to do neither.

We asked support staff, secretaries, nurses, principals, and administrators to help maintain the world as we know it, while also helping define a mysterious and vague "new norm." At times it has felt like playing a high stakes game blindfolded, one hand tied behind your back, with no idea even what the rules are.

We respect and admire the superb dedication and courage required to do all these things for the sake of our children, schools, families, and community. I can truly say I have never been prouder of District 202, our staff and students and my profession.

Still, it is not all candy and roses.

We know we must improve our remote learning plan, resources, and capabilities very quickly.

At this time, we are not 100 percent sure what school will look like to start the 2020-21 school year. But we know it will definitely be different.

We must create multiple solutions to address how school will operate next fall. Will we return to remote learning? Open schools with limited capacities, masks, and social distancing? Implement some combination of the two? We are planning for every contingency we know of.

And longer term, we must become nimbler and more flexible despite the incredibly challenging logistics resulting from our size, so we can shift smoothly and efficiently into a new gear if (or when) this happens again.

I assure every parent, staff member and taxpayer that we are working on all these challenges and everyone involved will give their all to these critical tasks.

With that I will end where I started – perplexed by the state of the world, but immensely thankful for everything we are doing together to continue to prepare our students for the future.

Congratulations to all our students, and most especially to our 8th graders being promoted to high school, and our graduating seniors. We wish you the very best next year, whatever it brings.

Finally, thank you to everyone for your amazing patience, kindness, understanding, generosity, and support.

Please visit the [“COVID-19”](#) page on our district website and all 30 of our school websites for the most current information.

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Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202