

DISTRICT 202 COMMUNITY COLUMN

By Dr. Lane Abrell
Superintendent of Schools
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Dear District 202 Families, Staff and Community,

We are a few days away from starting the 2020-21 school year in Remote Learning, and my head and heart are torn.

My head knows that this is the right decision for our students, staff, and families.

Since District 202 decided on July 27th to start the year remotely, we watched the number grow every day of districts statewide either decide to do the same thing, or reverse plans to start with some kind of in-person learning.

Whether big or small, rich, or poor, suburban, urban, or rural, more than 150 districts came to the same conclusion: there is no safe way to gather hundreds or thousands of students and adults in schools right now.

And more recently, we have read stories about both adults and students getting sick from COVID-19 in the handful of districts that did start with in-person learning.

Yet my heart knows how much we all – parents, staff, and students alike – want our students back in school. That's where we are used to seeing them this time of year, and that's where they should be, for all the academic, social, emotional, and relational reasons we are all aware of.

This struggle, caused by a microscopic virus, has made this by far the most challenging year of my 34-year education career.

Someone said the process of trying to do what we have done since the spring -- build and improve our Remote Learning plan, buy millions of dollars of resources, facilitate thousands of hours of professional development, and plan for days or weeks or possibly even months of e-learning, is like trying to fix a plane while flying it.

I'd say fixing the plane would be easier.

At least the mechanics didn't have to follow directions from five or six different groups of experts that changed minute to minute as school districts have had to do.

Still, I know, both in my head and heart, that our District 202 families, students, staff, and community will do more than just survive this time. We will thrive in a climate of challenge like no other because we are a community like no other.

Our teachers and educators are among the best in the world. They are talented, dedicated professionals willing to sacrifice to support their students.

Our families are committed to excellence and passionate advocates who want the best for their children.

And our students are hard-working, bright, thoughtful, inquisitive learners who can, do and will go the extra mile to succeed, achieve and grow.

No, this is certainly not an ideal situation.

Yet, together we will make it the best possible solution.

Our unity of purpose, clear vision and perseverance will see us through until that wonderful day when we can – and will – welcome all our students and staff back into our classrooms again.

On behalf of our Board of Education and Administration, I sincerely wish all our students, families and staff all the best next week as we start this most unusual school year.

Together, we will prepare all our students for the future, both this fall and beyond.

Dr. Lane Abrell
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Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202