

DISTRICT 202 COMMUNITY COLUMN

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

You know, the English language is a funny thing. It's built on the foundations of all the immigrant classes that comprise, define and distinguish our country; it's filled with dozens of different rules that often contradict each other, and it's overflowing with unique pronunciations for words that look almost exactly the same.

Sometimes it's a wonder that anyone – especially children who speak a different language at home – learn English as well as they do.

This thought recently came to mind as I contemplated “cliches.”

Cliches, as we know, are sayings that are so common they often become repeated.

What took my brain to this track, was the thought that “The more things change, the more they stay the same.”

Sayings often become cliches because there is indeed an element, a nugget of unchanging of truth to them. This one is a great example.

On June 30, 2022, I will work my last day as a professional educator and administrator after 36 years in the only field that both challenged me and filled me with excitement nearly every day.

I have had the privilege of performing many roles in public education:

- Taught in a classroom
- Coached on the athletic field
- Lead (or at least managed) the daily functioning of a single school building (including swinging mops and pushing brooms when needed)
- Helped define and direct the vision and future of a very small school district (Leland) and the fifth largest district in Illinois (District 202)

That is where the “cliché” comes in. With every facet of this career, my appreciation, admiration, affection, and passion have never ceased for the people around me who have made this the best job ever: our students, families, teachers, staff, and community partners.

I have said many times that public education is a “people business.”

We don't turn out widgets or gizmos. We literally create the future, one child at a time, and it doesn't matter the child's skin color, language, financial status, home address or any of the million arbitrary things we as human beings create and sometimes use to divide us.

We employ and partner with dedicated, compassionate adults to help teach our children what they need to know to survive in and contribute to the world they will enter when they leave our schools.

That job is essential to a functioning democracy.

And that's the "cliché" – that no matter what else happens, no matter what other challenges we face, this fact of life does not change.

Here is one more:

We in District 202 are committed to preparing our learners for the future.

I am grateful, proud, and blessed to have been a small part of that work on behalf of the tens of thousands of students whose paths have crossed my own.

Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202 has been a wonderful place to spend so much of my professional career. I've been given a lifetime of memories.

Thank you to all who made my job enjoyable and easier, and I wish everyone the best as we head into the 2022-23 school year and whatever comes after District 202.

Dr. Lane Abrell
Superintendent