

## **Plainville Citizen Op-Ed, December, 2017**

Last fall, Plainville Community Schools conducted a strategic planning process. This involved setting a vision, belief statements and goals for the school district for the next five years. The committee was comprised of an extensive group of over 50 stakeholders including school administrators, teachers, school staff, parents, students, town employees, community members, government officials, local business leaders, and Board of Education members.

One of the key outcomes of the process was the creation of a new vision statement for the district, which reads:

***Plainville Community Schools inspire and prepare lifelong learners to follow their passion, engage in their communities, and positively impact our global society.***

The committee also revised the district's belief statements, which reflect the ideas that drive the work of the schools:

- 1. Our public school system is the core of the community and has a fundamental responsibility to develop productive, educated citizens in a democratic society***
- 2. Optimal achievement for each learner is a responsibility shared by students, home, school, and community***
- 3. We must provide each student with a comprehensive curriculum and effective instruction to ensure meaningful engagement in the learning process***
- 4. A safe, caring learning environment promotes the academic growth, health, and emotional well-being of each student***
- 5. Communication and collaboration serve to increase knowledge, trust, and respect, and are the responsibility of everyone in the community***

**6. *Professional Learning Communities foster teamwork that results in the continuous improvement of teaching and learning outcomes***

The Strategic Plan also includes goal statements that directly align to the day-to-day work of the district and also help guide our budgetary decisions. At the start of the 2017-18 school year, the updated vision document was posted in every classroom and school office. This will allow all of our stakeholders to see what drives our work with the students. Each goal has desired outcome statements as well as actions that the Strategic Planning Committee believes will lead to their attainment. All outcome statements describe which school staff or stakeholders will be responsible for their achievement as well as a timeline for their completion.

This year, we have been working to address many important areas of the Strategic Plan. Our teachers have been learning about the importance of cultural competence in our schools. This is defined as the process by which individuals respond respectfully and effectively to the diversity of people in their system. We will continue to learn more about this important practice over the next several years.

As part of our ongoing efforts to improve communication, we have recently redesigned our district wide and school based websites. We have heard from our staff and many families that this new website is user friendly and provides very helpful information.

Finally, we continue to work on improving our classroom practices by meeting in our Professional Learning Communities throughout the year. This would not be possible without the shortened school days that are dedicated to allowing our teachers from

across the district to meet with each other and discuss our students' progress in mastering the learning targets.

We continue to make excellent progress in year one of our five year Strategic Plan. You can find the entire document on our website and as always, we are most appreciative of the support we receive from the Town, the Board of Education and our families that allows us to ***inspire and prepare lifelong learners to follow their passion, engage in their communities, and positively impact our global society.***