

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

The safety and well-being of our school district community continues to be our number one priority. As such, we have developed a comprehensive safety program that spans all aspects of our school district. Administrators, faculty, staff and local authorities collaborate to prevent, prepare for and respond to emergency situations.

As part of the district's safety program, numerous measures are taken on a regular basis to ensure that we are well prepared to respond to any emergency that may arise. A safety committee, comprised of representatives from across the school district, is in place to review our procedures, and address safety related issues as appropriate. As a public education system, we have a number of state mandates that we strictly follow for both fire and safety drills. Drills for both are conducted throughout the school year and protocols for safety are executed and subsequently reviewed after the completion of each drill to ensure compliance and adjust measures as needed.

On October 17th, we conducted a district wide safety drill in cooperation with local police and fire officials. Our staff and students in each school building followed our procedures to the letter, and our efforts were deemed successful by all agencies. We are grateful for the strong partnership in place with our local emergency personnel, and will continue to work closely with them in all areas of school district safety.

In addition to our focus on safety from external forces, we remain focused on ensuring a positive and safe school learning environment for our educational community each and every day. The use of technology as a learning tool is embedded in our curriculum at every level, and as such, the appropriate use of technology, digital citizenship, is also practiced throughout the school district. On October 3rd, we

partnered with the Plainville Coalition for Positive Youth Development to provide an informational workshop to Plainville parents relative to internet safety. More than 50 parents attended the event facilitated by Plainville Community Schools Director of Technology Kevin Ross and Plainville Police Detective David Posadas, who shared a variety of information and resources on all aspects of internet safety and protocols for the safe use of technology. We are also planning to host a series of digital citizenship focused assemblies for students at each school that will be delivered in conjunction with our Plainville Police Department personnel.

Our district, in accordance with state law, also has a district-wide Safe School Climate Committee comprised of key personnel from each school and coordinated by Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Steven LePage. This committee meets throughout the year to update and share Safe School Climate Plans, evaluate school and district needs and to consider and plan initiatives to address areas of need based on student, parent and community feedback. The primary focus of this committee is to ensure that school climate remains positive across the district.

It is essential that we maintain a safe and secure environment throughout Plainville Community Schools. As Superintendent of Schools, my most important duty is to insure that our students and staff are both safe and secure, so they can focus on teaching and learning.