

## **Plainville Citizen Op-Ed, December, 2018**

During the fall of 2018, Plainville Community Schools launched another Thoughtexchange survey process to all stakeholders of the Plainville community school district. Nearly 600 parents/guardians, staff, students and community members responded to the question: *What do you think our schools are doing well and what can we focus on in order to improve?* I am pleased to report the results were overwhelmingly positive.

Our stakeholders responded that they are very impressed with the high quality staff and educational services we provide. Specifically, numerous comments were made about our caring and compassionate staff. Respondents also expressed high levels of satisfaction with our STEAM/STEM labs, extensive technology access and integration, and the ability of our teachers to use a variety of instructional strategies to meet the needs of all students. Students in particular believe our schools are preparing them for future success in college or careers, and that their teachers truly care about their success.

The Thoughtexchange results will also be used to update the school district's Five Year Strategic Plan that started in 2017 and continues through 2022. This comprehensive document sets goals for the school district around students, teaching, and learning. As a result of the Thoughtexchange feedback received, we will be strengthening our focus on social and emotional learning strategies, sharing more information about our PreK-12 curriculum, and providing additional updates about our new Standards Based Grading practices at the Middle School of Plainville. We will also continue our work with culturally responsive teaching practices and enhancing district wide safety and security measures.

An extension of the update to our Strategic Plan process will be our development of a district wide "Vision of the Graduate" over the next school year. Plainville High School is undergoing New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) reaccreditation and part of this process includes establishing a clear set of outcomes for all graduates of Plainville High School. The Vision or Portrait of the Graduate emphasizes a holistic view of expectations for students, including the transferable skills, content, understandings, and disposition that students should have by the time they graduate and a method of assessing a student's progress toward that vision. Areas such as critical thinking, creativity, and communication are part of the skills included in the Vision or Portrait of the Graduate. High School Principal, Carl Johnson, NEASC Chairs, Deb Pikiell and Kaylyn Guardarrama, Assistant Superintendent, Steve LePage and I will be leading this district and community-wide effort to identify what our students need to learn at every grade level in order to attain our Vision of the Graduate outcomes.

Additional information about the Thoughtexchange outcomes, an Executive Summary report, and interactive dashboard are available at [www.plainvilleschools.org](http://www.plainvilleschools.org).