

Plainville Citizen Op-Ed, February, 2019

True to our district's vision, to *"inspire and prepare lifelong learners to follow their passion, engage in their communities, and positively impact our global society,"* Plainville Community Schools is dedicated to continuous improvement and preparing all students for lifelong success. Equipping students with the skills and knowledge necessary to compete in a global, technology driven world is the basis for our district-wide focus on innovation, collaboration, communication and creativity. As such, Plainville Community Schools places a high priority on ensuring that all students have access to technologies that support learning and build skill sets relevant to success now and in the future. Innovation is a theme that comes to life at all grade levels in Plainville Community Schools.

At the elementary level, students participate in Makerspace sessions, where they are able to tinker, build, test, and create. The Makerspace model, which incorporates STEAM initiatives and builds a culture of discovery and creativity, features a variety of stations for students to explore. These include computer coding, building circuits, knitting, crocheting, building with Legos, exploring engineering principles with structure blocks and K'NEX, creating stop motion animation videos, producing videos with the use of a green screen, folding origami, taking apart old electronics, and more. Thanks to funding from the Florence Fitzgibbon Endowment, students at the Middle School of Plainville now have access to a state of the art STEAM Wing that features stellar facilities to support students, teaching and learning. The award winning Middle School robotics program comes alive in the STEAM wing, and is currently gearing up to host this year's VEX IQ STATE Competition on March 9th. Middle School students also gain insight and real world experience in the Manufacturing Lab, which includes a Shopbot CNC machine and a 3D printer. The school's Communication Lab features 3D and resin printers, as well as video equipment used daily for student broadcasts. Students expand upon the STEAM related skills learned at the elementary and middle schools when they enter Plainville High School, where they are able to extend learning through the high school's STEM Lab and embedded curricular experiences. In an effort to create career