

Platteville Community and Support for Education

I want to start by sincerely thanking the Platteville Community for their overwhelming support for our schools in the recent referendum. We recognize that this is a commitment for many years into the future. Shortly after the information about it passing came out, I was given a copy of an article in the Platteville Journal from 1919. The headline read "New \$150,000 High School: One of the best High Schools in Wisconsin."

I thought the coincidence of \$150,000 to a \$15 million dollar referendum earlier this month was interesting as well. "The voters...wished to construct a building that would answer all requirements for years to come and one that every citizen could point to as one of Platteville's best edifices." Fast forward almost a hundred years..."what emerged out of these sessions was a strategic 20-year facilities "blueprint" for the future that maintains and updates our facilities, addresses the present space deficiencies at the lower grade levels, and can flexibly and financially adjust well to either increases or decreases in student enrollment."

I spent the first day following the referendum walking on air, so excited for our students and proud of the Platteville community. I spent the next day panicked as I realized that now we would actually have to bring the vision to reality. Some of our youngest students thought there would be construction equipment on their playground the next day. Our high school students expressed excitement about new science labs and wondered when they would be able to work within them.

We are just at the beginning stages and I want to make sure that we continue to be good stewards of the district's resources and utilize every dollar to improve the educational experience of our students. I had an opportunity to visit Sauk Prairie Schools on Friday last week. They are engaged in a much larger, but similar project that was supported by their community just a year ago. They are building safe and secure entrances, remodeling science labs, building on to an elementary school, as well as many other projects. I had an opportunity to learn what was going well, what they might have done differently, and what challenges remain. I have also connected with the Fennimore School District to try and learn from their experiences.

By the time you are reading this, the board will have met in the retreat format in order to start learning about and envisioning the process forward for our district. We do have a historian board member, Steve Obershaw, who was on the board during the last facilities referendum. We welcome a new board member and Platteville Schools supporter, Colleen McCabe, who I am certain will represent the community in an outstanding way. Learning from the past and looking to the future will provide the perfect lens from which to view the next steps. The first step of the process will be to engage an architect to put detail to our plans. It will be awhile before our students look out a classroom window and see construction equipment, but I am as excited as they are to see our new educational spaces someday soon.

It is my hope that our referendum web-site becomes our construction progress website so that you can follow along with us on this exciting journey. It is true that Superintendents wear many hats, but a hard hat is a new one for me. Passage of this referendum would not have been possible without the hard work of our administrators, staff, and board members. As they do every day, they have been there consistently supporting our students and schools. Thank you to all that made this exciting opportunity for our students possible.