

## **Inspiring News School Board Column – Spring 2021 – First Draft**

As we approach the end of this school year, the School Board is reflecting on the past year. We would like to express our profound gratitude, to the staff, students and families in our district for their tremendous creativity, resilience, and persistence, and for the care they have shown for each other.

The School Board wants to recognize and celebrate the courageous and extraordinary efforts undertaken by teachers, staff, and leadership to maximize learning opportunities for every student in Eden Prairie during a very challenging time. The ability of our school teams to develop new learning pathways and delivery channels, pivot between learning models, and to show compassion and flexibility has been world-class. In addition, they also continued moving forward to make the plans for the future growth and success of the district a reality. Designing Pathways initiatives such as personalized learning programs, the Central Middle School construction, and new grade configurations are on track for implementation for the next school year.

The efforts on the part of staff, parents, and caregivers have been enormous, but most importantly, our schools have delivered results. Although learning conditions have not been ideal and challenges impeded some of our efforts, Eden Prairie schools have continued to deliver a high-quality education. This is confirmed by steady academic achievement results and continued narrowing of the achievement gap as shown by ongoing assessment data. In a year that was anything but normal, these are extraordinary results! During these final weeks of this school year, please take a moment to recognize a teacher, staff member, or school leader for their dedication and commitment to our children.

We would also like to acknowledge the loss and pain experienced by so many and extend our condolences and support. We are committed to ensuring that staff, students, and families have access to the resources they need to recover, rebound, and move forward.

Last but certainly not least, we would like to thank the entire community for supporting our schools. Because of you, the district had the resources to make the adjustments necessary to continue the important work of educating our kids and supporting our families during these unprecedented times. As a community, we can all be proud of the planning, solutions, and execution by our education teams as they continued to deliver academic excellence.

In the coming months, the School Board will return to meeting with the community in person, as we re-start our listen and learn series. We will use outdoor venues as weather permits and look forward to hosting the community in the new Central Middle School Performing Arts Center in the late fall/winter. As we move forward into the next school year, we look forward to engaging with the community, using what we have learned to emerge stronger, and to being held accountable for delivering results for students. We are truly grateful to be a part of the extraordinary Eden Prairie school district and community.