

DISTRICT 202 COMMUNITY COLUMN

By Dr. John Harper
Superintendent of Schools
November 2007

First and foremost, on behalf of the District 202 Board of Education and administration, I want to wish a happy and safe Thanksgiving to all of our students, staff members and families.

District 202 has much to be thankful for – a great community, a strong, visionary Board of Education, hard-working students, talented educators, staff members and administrators, all working together to give each and all of our students the best possible education, resources and support.

And one of the things for which we are most grateful, is the growing diversity of our community. District 202 is a different place than it was 15, 10, even five years ago. In many important ways, it is a better place, as our community has come to more accurately reflect the broader world in which our children will live and work. It is our obligation and opportunity to prepare all of our students for that new world.

District 202 embraces this change. We celebrate our growing diversity and are committed to doing everything we can to help all of our students achieve their maximum academic and personal potential, no matter where they come from, what they look like or what language they speak. All of our students are gifts to us, and to this community.

To that end, we began a “diversity journey” about two years ago with the help of The Kaleidoscope Group, L.L.C., a diversity consulting organization. We asked Kaleidoscope to help us look at ourselves in terms of our diversity.

We wanted them to assess the diversity and cultural makeup of our actual students and staff. But perhaps more importantly, we also wanted Kaleidoscope to get a sense of the perceptions of our diversity, both historically and currently, and from both inside and outside of our organization.

Last summer, Kaleidoscope shared the results of its “internal diversity audit” of District 202 staff, administration and Board members. The group’s leadership gave us high marks for the work we’ve already done to make District 202 more inclusive, to better reflect our changing community and improve our service to and support of all of our students. We were very proud. But we know that one step does not a journey make.

So, this fall and winter, Kaleidoscope is conducting an “external audit,” to see how our parents, students and community members view District 202. This phase is essential if we are to make meaningful progress on our journey. After all, it is one thing to look at oneself. But it is often quite another to understand how others see you.

Kaleidoscope may ask you to participate in its external audit. Or, if you want to take part, please call Director of Community Relations Tom Hernandez at (815) 577-4008.

Whether you are asked or volunteer, we will greatly appreciate your participation and candor. Every voice and every view is important and will help make District 202 the best possible public school system it can be. And great schools are something for which we can all be thankful.

Dr. John Harper
Superintendent of Schools
Plainfield Community Consolidated School District 202