

At the Dec. 10 school board meeting, the Lakota Local Schools Board of Education voted unanimously to adopt a new three-year strategic plan, which will go into effect in January.

To build a comprehensive strategic plan, it couldn't just be school and district administrators sitting in a room. We needed to hear from our stakeholders: staff, parents, community members and, of course, students. More than 2,300 people completed online surveys and focus groups for our stakeholders were held. Once the information was gathered and analyzed, a draft was built and shared out for feedback, including an in-depth community conversation.

Last February, we began the process of developing the district's new plan. At many organizations, this is an exercise they complete every three-to-five years, with the end result sitting on a shelf in a binder, collecting dust. From the beginning, our intent was to be different; to create a document that would become a part of our culture, embraced by our staff and applied to our students every single day. I believe we have achieved this.

The new mission of Lakota Local Schools states: Everything **WE** do is designed to provide a future ready, student-centered learning experience for every single child.

Every staff member at Lakota is able to apply this mission to their job. It will be the question we ask before making big decisions: is this providing a future ready, student-centered learning experience for every single child?

To support the mission, we have designed four pillars as our vision:

- WE are Personalized;
- WE are Future Ready;
- WE are Fiscally Responsible; and
- WE are In This Together.

Personalized learning is tailoring the instructional environment to address the individual needs, skills and interests of the whole child. We must continue to provide a safe and secure environment where our students are able to grow academically, socially, emotionally and culturally. An environment where we encourage our students to develop their unique strengths as a foundation for their future success.

Being future ready means providing innovative and engaging learning, while continuing to enhance educational opportunities with leading edge technology. We must prepare

our students for the four Es after graduation: employment, enrollment, enlistment and entrepreneurship.

We will continue to be good financial stewards of our community's resources. We are committed to aligning our resources to Lakota's educational priorities while ensuring financial stability.

At Lakota, being in this together means that we embrace a strong partnership with our stakeholders - students, staff, parents and community members. This enables us to meet high expectations and encourage teamwork for student success.

It is essential that we provide a high-quality, personalized and student-centered education to every child at Lakota Local Schools. This new strategic plan has been designed to be a blueprint for Lakota's future. It reflects where we are now and where we want to go.

*Matthew Miller is the superintendent of Lakota Local Schools. Follow him on Twitter (@LakotaSuper), Facebook (Matt Miller – Lakota Local Schools Superintendent) and Instagram (lakotasuper).*