



# Plainville Board of Education's Community Letter

Summer 2019

Plainville Community Schools inspire and prepare lifelong learners to follow their passion, engage in their communities, and positively impact our global society.

## Message from the Board of Education

As the school year came to a close in June, the Board of Education was extra busy attending a variety of year-end events for students, meetings and workshops! We have also appointed Assistant Superintendent Steven LePage to serve as our next Superintendent of Schools in Plainville. Steve will replace Superintendent Dr. Maureen Brummett, who will be returning to her hometown of Newington, Connecticut to serve as Superintendent for Newington's school system. She will certainly be missed, and we thank her for her many years of service to Plainville Community Schools, as well as her dedication and hard work throughout the years!



*"I want to thank everyone who has contributed to all of our successes over the last 20 years. I will miss you all very much and will always be extraordinarily grateful for this wonderful opportunity."*

-Dr. Maureen Brummett

Let's Chat with... Dr. Maureen Brummett

### **What is the biggest challenge facing public education today, and what advice do you have for future educators?**

There are many challenges. If I had to prioritize, funding is number one. Educating children well is costly and complex. It is incumbent upon the Superintendent and Board to explain to taxpayers all the numerous issues involving educational funding. I would also have to include school security. Keeping our students and staff safe is something that I take very seriously.

### **What has been the most significant accomplishment in your career in education?**

I am incredibly proud of the establishment of full day/full week universal Pre-K. It has been so exciting to see this come to fruition and benefit our students.

### **What did you find most challenging about serving as Superintendent?**

It is a very busy job and you never know how long your day will be. In the winter when snow is flying, you don't get much sleep. However, if you like challenges, which I do, it is a job in which you are never bored.

### **What did you find to be most rewarding about serving as Superintendent?**

I absolutely love the ability to have an impact on all aspects of the school system. There are some days where I might start my day in a Pre-K or Kindergarten classroom and then head over to observe in a high school class. Then I might have a meeting with the Police Chief about school security. I have been an educator for almost 30 years and being a school superintendent is my favorite job.

### **What do you feel was your greatest contribution to Plainville Community Schools?**

I have heard from many colleagues and parents since my departure was announced. They have remarked that I was a fair, compassionate, caring, and collaborative leader that has made a lasting impact on Plainville Community Schools. I am very pleased and proud that I will be remembered that way.

### **What will you miss most about serving as Superintendent in Plainville?**

I have been with Plainville Community Schools since 1997 and have gotten to know so many wonderful people across all departments and schools. I will miss everyone that I have had the pleasure of working with for over 20 years. Plainville Community Schools is an amazing school district that offers our students an outstanding education.

## Toffolon Garden Club By Addison Schneider and Lindsey Schultz (5th Grade Toffolon)



We first decided to do gardening in Makerspace as a club. We signed people up if they wanted to do the club. It was so exciting to be in a gardening club. In the beginning, we started with two groups, one did building and researching, another did planting. The building group decided the design for the planters and the measurements for the boxes. The planter group decided what to plant, got the seeds, and planted them in small, plastic, connected planters.

We planted okra, large onions, small onions, tomatoes, peppers, rutabaga, and cherry peppers. We used materials from around the school to build a light to go over the plants. It consisted of some building blocks, and a LED light that stood on the blocks. The plants went under the light until it was warm enough for us to build the planters and plant the vegetables. They stayed there for a while and we had a rotation plan for who waters them and when.

We used a spray bottle to water the plants because we knew we had to make sure that we did not over water the plants before we took them outside. The plants stayed inside for about a month. The funny thing was that when we all went to check on the plants every

week the small onions did not even grow, we are still trying to figure out why.

It took a long time to figure out what to plant at first. Then we decided on large onions, small onions, tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, peppers, rutabaga, and okra. We also planted flowers in the memorial garden in the back of our school. We love the garden so much. We look forward to seeing it grow!

The plant boxes are about 500-600 pounds each with the soil in the boxes. We made two boxes in total. We plan on making others in the future. We used Douglas Fir wood for the plant boxes.

To learn more about gardening, we made a call to a school in New Mexico because they have a school garden at their school. It was a fun experience because we tried to Facetime them but they did not know how to connect to us so we could not see them but they could see us. We asked them a lot of questions about the garden and how the climate was different there than in Connecticut.

Our plans for the summer are that the people who live close to the school will take turns walking or driving over to the school to water the plants. Our hope is that next year the fifth graders will facilitate and care for our wonderful school garden. We love our garden and we hope you love our Toffolon garden too!



## Teacher of the Year

*BOE Chairperson Deborah Hardy,  
Marilyn Speranza, and Dr. Maureen Brummett*



Plainville Community Schools has named Linden Street School Music Teacher Marilyn Speranza the 2019-2020 Teacher of the Year. Speranza was nominated by Linden colleague Michael Boncimino. Speranza has been an educator for nine years, serving as a music teacher at Linden for the past seven years. As Teacher of the Year in Plainville, Speranza will also participate as a candidate for Connecticut's 2019 Teacher of the Year Program. Each district Teacher of the Year will be individually recognized at an awards ceremony later this year hosted by the Connecticut Department of Education. Speranza holds a bachelor of music degree in Music Education, a bachelor of music degree in Bassoon Performance and a master of music degree in Music Education Pedagogy from The University of Hartford-Hart School. She was honored at the June 10th Plainville Board of Education meeting.



## Good News! Great things are happening in our school district.

### LINDEN STREET SCHOOL

**Linden** held their annual "iHEART Guest Readers" event during National Children's Book Week (April 29-May 3). Parents, community members, local legislators, Board of Education members, district administration and staff visited on May 3rd as guest readers in classrooms throughout Linden...**students in the Reading Partners program** at Linden celebrated the end of the school year with a therapy dog visit. In honor of National Therapy Animal Day on April 30th, Teresa Pelham, author of *Roxy's Forever Home*, *Roxy and Her Annoying Little Brother*, *Stuey*, and *Stuey & Veronica*, together with her rescue dog Roxy who is a featured story character, visited Linden and shared some of her books.

### LOUIS TOFFOLON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**The Toffolon school community** held their fourth annual Pet Parade where Toffolon students and families gathered their pets for a walk around the school grounds showcasing the various visiting animals...**Toffolon faculty members Rob Siliman and Mike Zaba** are the recipients of the first "Innovation in Education" grant from Plainville Community Schools to fund an expansion of the school's community garden...**Toffolon Custodian Greg Masse** won the national CloroxPro Champions of Clean contest, including an all expense paid vacation.

### FRANK T. WHEELER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**Wheeler fifth graders** held their annual Eco-Fair where they presented information about environmental topics affecting our Earth. Students worked together to research a threat to earth such as overflowing landfills, air pollution, deforestation, water pollution, and energy depletion to try to convince others to take action to help the environment...Thanks to a generous sponsorship by Ed Roy, President of Walker Crane & Rigging, students at Wheeler enjoyed an in-house "field trip." The Children's Museum's Animal Adaptations & Habitats traveling classroom program visited **Wheeler students in kindergarten through second grade** on May 3rd featuring several live animals...**Wheeler School "Entrepreneurs" Nicholas Ruffini and Zayden McGraw** designed and organized a "Snoopy" credit card system for student PBIS and class tickets.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE

**Middle School sixth graders** enjoyed "Chariot of the Sun" with guest performer Jeffrey Benoit, who used a combination of poetry, masks, mime, and skillful audience participation to bring classic Greek tales to life...**The MSP Student Council, with advisor / faculty**

**member Melinda Buthe**, hosted a Blood Drive at the Middle School in conjunction with the American Red Cross. 44 donors signed up for the blood drive event, and 34 units of blood were collected, surpassing the planned goal for the event...**The MSP Robotics Teams, together with faculty members/advisers Camille Westfall and Laurel Schwartz**, attended the Student Manufacturers Connection Fair held at the Connecticut State Capitol on April 24th...**School Counselor Denise Grodzicki and MSP Nurse Sandi Capodice** were recognized as the district's Everyday Heroes for the month of April. Both were honored at the April 15th Plainville Board of Education meeting.

### PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

**Plainville High School junior Christopher St. Lawrence** was selected as one of 22 of Connecticut's top juniors designated as Governor's Scholars...**Plainville High School students JoAnna Salmon and Michael Torres** were named recipients of the second semester "Students Rock Award" recognizing their outstanding contributions to Plainville High School...**Plainville High School seniors Andrea Ybanez and Brady Callahan** were honored at the May 13th Board of Education meeting for receiving the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) Student Leadership Award...**the PHS Interact Club** (the youth branch of the local Rotary Club in Plainville) hosted the 7th annual Senior Citizen Prom in the school's cafeteria. This year's theme was "Western" and featured dinner, dancing, socializing, raffles, superlative awards and music provided by the "Senior Eighth Notes" a local "senior" band.

### DISTRICT

**Plainville Community School's +K.I.K. (Positive Kids Influencing Kids) Peer Mentor Group** enjoyed a session with motivational speaker Kristin O'Connor Vece. The event was made possible by a generous grant from the Elizabeth Norton Trust Fund...On May 19th, **35 students from all three Plainville elementary schools** performed the National Anthem at the NCAA Lacrosse Quarterfinal Tournament held at Rentschler Field in East Hartford. The event was televised nationally on ESPN U...**Steven LePage**, assistant superintendent of Plainville Community Schools, has been named superintendent, effective July 1st.

### Follow Us On Twitter!

Plainville Community Schools invites you to follow district happenings through our Twitter account via our handle: [@PlvComSchools](https://twitter.com/PlvComSchools)

# Volunteer Recognition Event

Plainville Community Schools' annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner and Awards Program was held on May 22nd, at Plainville High School. This year's theme was "Fiesta!" More than 100 school volunteers, Board of Education members, administrators and staff were present to enjoy an evening of food, friends, and recognition. The event provided an opportunity to thank Plainville's school volunteers for their time and commitment that they make to students across the district. Volunteers share their time and talent in many capacities including mentoring, tutoring, serving as classroom helpers and reading partners, in parent-teacher organizations, as athletic backers, and more. Volunteer award winners were also recognized during the program.

***The 2018-2019 Mentor of the Year Award recipient was Webster Bank employee, Dean Barucci, who mentors a student at Linden Street School. Nancy Gennett was the recipient of the 2018-2019 Volunteer of the Year Award.***



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## PLAINVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Steven LePage  
Superintendent of Schools

Lori Consalvo  
Michael Giuliano  
Deborah Hardy  
Nicole Palmieri  
Laurie Peterson  
Crystal St. Lawrence  
Becky Tyrrell  
Kathleen Wells  
Foster White



## Belief Statements... We believe:

- Our public school system is the core of the community and has a fundamental responsibility to develop productive, educated citizens in a democratic society
- Optimal achievement for each learner is a responsibility shared by students, home, school, and community
- We must provide each student with a comprehensive curriculum and effective instruction to ensure meaningful engagement in the learning process
- A safe, caring learning environment promotes the academic growth, health, and emotional well-being of each student
- Communication and collaboration serve to increase knowledge, trust, and respect, and are the responsibility of everyone in the community
- Professional Learning Communities foster teamwork that results in the continuous improvement of teaching and learning outcomes