



# Plainville Board of Education's Community Letter

Fall 2017

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

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[www.plainvilleschools.org](http://www.plainvilleschools.org)

**Another great school year is well underway and Plainville Community Schools is very excited for our students, teachers and parents. Below are a few district initiatives that the Board would like to make you aware of:**

- The very successful Preschool program has expanded this year to a five-day, full day model.
- The Middle School of Plainville has a new STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math) Lab which will require our students to have creativity as well as critical thinking and problem solving skills.
- Our teachers will focus on advancing Culturally Responsive Education which includes the formation of an Equity Task Force.
- We are working on creating a School Business Community Partnership model to leverage additional resources and support from local business and community partnerships to support students, teaching and learning.
- We now have a new and improved website that will enhance communication. The district site is live and school sites will be going live very soon.
- The Plainville Coalition for Positive Youth Development sponsored an internet safety program entitled, "Chromebooks, The Internet and your Child's Digital World" for parents

that was facilitated by Technology Director, Kevin Ross and Plainville Police Detective, David Posadas.

It was well attended and well received by Plainville parents. In addition, we are working on daytime digital citizenship assemblies for students in each school, and a districtwide campaign focusing on digital citizenship and the appropriate use of technology. This will include a video contest, poster contest, signage, PSAs created by students and lessons delivered at all grade levels.

• We now have a School Based Behavioral Services Program in partnership with Wheeler Clinic beginning at Linden, then expanding to the Middle School and Plainville High School later this year. This school-based health center was created to assist students with anxiety, depression, academic and peer challenges, trauma-related issues and more.

• The newly revised Teacher Evaluation Plan has been refined and renamed Educator Development, Support and Evaluation Plan (EDSEP), thanks to the work of the Development Team.

**The Board is proud of the district's efforts to equip Plainville students with the 21st century skills and technological tools that they need for success in college and their careers.**

## Veterans Day

On November 10th, Plainville Community Schools held a variety of programs and events in observation of Veterans Day. The day began with flag raising ceremonies and breakfast for local veterans in several schools. Individual school programs featured musical selections, military guest speakers, poems, readings, visual art displays and whole school assemblies. In addition, there were several presentations made to veterans, and charitable drives were conducted to gather items to help local veterans in need. School programs reverently and respectfully honored and recognized veterans both near and far.



## Student Spotlight: Wheeler School

Hailey Levesque & Tyler McGraw



We are Hailey and Tyler and we are in fifth grade. We go to Frank T. Wheeler Elementary School. In October, we learned all about sound. We learned that sound is a type of energy and it is caused by vibrations. We also learned that sound can have different pitches and volume. Tension can change the pitch of a sound, so can the length of an object. We applied this to our end-of-unit project about sound by creating an instrument at home. Our homemade instrument had to have a high pitch and a low pitch. We changed the pitch by changing the tension or how long or short an object is. We liked hearing all the different pitches from the homemade instruments. Our class liked this project so much that we decided to make a class band with all of our instruments!

Wheeler fifth graders with their homemade instruments



### STEAM @ MSP

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held in October to mark the official opening of the Middle School's new STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) Lab. The Lab was made possible by funding from the Florence Fitzgibbon endowment. Funding for the Lab has allowed the Music, Technology and Engineering Departments to re-purpose and revise both space and curriculum by supporting infrastructure renovations. These include room changes, updated wiring, flooring, switches, access points to support new computer technology in multiple spaces, and more. This upgrade creates opportunities for middle school students to explore via hands on learning, preparing them for 21st century careers. This includes access to an advanced communications lab that functions as a multi-use space for classroom instruction and schoolwide morning video broadcasts. The space includes a full room length green screen wall and upgraded technology to facilitate both live broadcast video production and recorded video design and production. To support the STEAM curriculum, equipment was secured to expand 3D Design, Video Production, Music Technology, Technical Theater, Aerodynamics, and Computer Science units. New student experiences will include Communications, Production, Design, Robotics, CNC, and Physical Computing.

## Let's Chat With...Melissa Patterson, Teacher of the Year



**Melissa Patterson is the physical education teacher at Linden Street School and has been an educator for 15 years.**

**What led you to the teaching profession?**

I have always enjoyed working with children in a fitness-related

atmosphere. I had many positive experiences that led me to becoming a teacher such as being a student dance teacher, camp counselor, swim instructor and a YMCA before/after school child care employee.

**What makes teaching effective?**

Providing a welcoming environment that embraces a culture of compassion is essential. Students do their best learning when they feel safe and respected.

**What are the most important qualities of a teacher?**

Patience, empathy and the ability to honestly reflect after each lesson.

**What is your number one priority?**

To show students that balance is a key to success. A well-rounded individual has the best chance of reaching his or her potential.

**What advice would you give to a high school student considering the teaching profession?**

Set high, yet realistic goals for yourself. Perseverance is an attribute that will help you in your journey. Remember that each situation you face is a learning experience. The road to becoming a teacher is challenging. Having the potential to make a difference in a child's life is the reward. It is definitely worth the journey!

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

### LINDEN STREET SCHOOL

Linden's PBIS Committee is leading an Acts of Kindness initiative to promote a positive climate throughout the school. The group created the "Pay It Forward Challenge" campaign which will be held in all Linden classrooms, with a fifth grade class kicking off the campaign in the coming weeks...Linden scholars and staff are working to raise funds for an author visit from Patricia Polacco in the spring. They are hosting a variety of fundraising events such as Penny Wars, Popsicles for Patricia, Popcorn for Patricia, and more. This effort is led by Linden's Library Information Teacher Alyssa Lombardo and the Reading Incentive Committee...Linden's After School Program is focusing Session #1 classes on Inquiry Learning & STEM, by offering classes including STEM LEGOS, Science Club, and Blue Robotics.

### LOUIS TOFFOLON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Inspired by the book "There's Only One You" by Linda Kranz, students at Toffolon created their own unique and creative rocks that have messages of kindness. The rocks were later used to create a Kindness Rock Garden located near the entrance of the school. Students, staff, families, and community members helped create a beautiful space with positive and kind messages to be shared with everyone...Toffolon held its first Curl Up and Read event on November 17th where students, family members and friends came together to read.

### FRANK T. WHEELER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Ilae Lunea, an expert in performing basketball tricks, recently visited students at Wheeler. Lunea performed a variety of tricks and shared her talents while sending a message to students that setting goals, working hard to achieve those goals, self monitoring where they are toward achievement, and constant practice will result in success...Students in all grades at Wheeler celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15-October 15) by learning about Hispanic artists and art traditions from Hispanic countries...Wheeler School fourth grade teacher Cheryl Michaud won a variety of school supplies through a drawing sponsored by the Jeff Brown Insurance Agency located in Plainville.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE

MSP Faculty members Cindy Birdsall and Melanie Olmstead coordinated a donation drive to aid hurricane victims, and partnered with the Plainville Community Food Pantry. Students and staff donations included hygiene products, school supplies, pet supplies, baby products and non-perishable food items. The items will assist those in need from Puerto Rico...MSP Dean of Students Tom Laudadio has been accepted into the 2017 Yale-Ashoka Changemaker Fellowship inaugural cohort as part of the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and Ashoka's Youth Venture. He was selected from a pool of CT school-based professionals to participate in the 10 month program.

### PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

Plainville Blue Devils senior baseball players Dylan Morrell and Nathan Michalek have been selected to participate on the Goodwill Series American baseball team to compete in the 12 game Goodwill Series to be held in Adelaide, Australia and Auckland, New Zealand...Trooper and State Arson Investigator David Makuc and arson dog Cora from the Connecticut State Police Fire & Explosion Investigation Unit visited Jill Miller's Forensics Science class to share information on Forensic investigations with students...Plainville High School DECA members and faculty member / DECA Advisor Trevira Boatright, attended the CT DECA Fall Leadership Conference held at the University of New Haven. The student group participated in multiple workshops including Entrepreneurship, Careers, Sports Marketing, How To Influence People, Dress for Success, and a Shark Tank competition. PHS senior Cheyenne Emmendorfer was among four students from other schools who won third place in the Shark Tank competition...The PHS Science Department hosted world renowned speaker Dr. Sam Rhine at the high school's annual Genetics Conference. PHS Honors Biology and UConn Early College Experience (ECE) Biology students attended the event, together with students and faculty from schools throughout Connecticut...More than 100 colleges, universities, technical schools, branches of the military, and foundations were in attendance at the Plainville High School College Fair held on October 20th.

### DISTRICT

Twelve Plainville students received the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents' (CAPSS) Superintendent / Student Recognition Award and Certificate of Excellence at the 30th annual Superintendent's Award Presentation held on November 3rd, during a luncheon at J.Timothy's Restaurant. The students are: Sophia Leonetti and Phillippe Brochu, Linden; Marissa Miller and Matthew Corriveau, Toffolon; Melak Al Rubaye and Charles Hills, Wheeler; Keira Guarco and Michael Haddad, the Middle School of Plainville; and Dominika Mis, Spencer Steeves, Hannah Zelasko and Luke San Juan, Plainville High School...Everyday Heroes honorees recognized at the monthly Board of Education meetings include: September-Tim Dalena, Security Monitor at Plainville High School, District Facilities Department Maintainers, summer helpers, and custodians from the Middle School of Plainville, October-District Data Integration Specialist Karel Zettergren, and Plainville High School Music Teacher & Band Director Dominic Talotta, and November-Technology District Data Integration Specialist Mark Alfano...On October 28th students, family, & community members from the three elementary schools participated in the Plainville "Monster Dash" race held on the grounds of the Middle School.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Since the inception of the district's energy conservation program in 2012, Plainville Community Schools has saved more than **\$1.6 million** in utility costs through district-wide conservation efforts. Consumption of electricity has decreased by approximately **30%** and gas consumption has been reduced by nearly **27%**.

# Plainville High School...Class of 2017 Update



*Collectively, the members of the class of 2017 received more than \$195,000 in scholarships.*

## UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES ATTENDED

Bay Path College, North Carolina State University, Baylor University, Northampton Community College, Bentley University, New York University-Shanghai, Boston University, Quinnipiac University, Bryant University, Sacred Heart University, Capital Community College, Simmons College, Central CT State University, Springfield College, Eastern CT State University, State College of Florida, Florida Southern College, Suffolk University, Full Sail University, Tunxis Community College, Hofstra University, University of Connecticut, Howard University, University of Hartford, Johnson & Wales University, University of New England, Kings College, University of New Hampshire, Kutztown University of Pennsylvania, University of New Haven, Lincoln Technical Institute, University of Rhode Island, Massachusetts College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences, University of St. Joseph, Manchester Community College, Virginia Military Institute, Middlesex Community College, Western CT State University, Mitchell College, Westfield State College, and Naugatuck Valley Community College.

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## 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