



Community Letter

Winter 2003-2004

Promote a challenging environment creating an extraordinary community of learners

Message from the Board of Education

The message from the Board of Education emphasizes the first of our primary goals* (see Q & A column). The development of these goals evolves from the strategic planning process funded through a grant from GE Industrial Systems and the GE Fund. Through the process, citizens told us that they wanted higher academic standards for student achievement in language arts, mathematics and science. Over the last two years, we have been working toward attaining this primary goal while developing a monitoring system with benchmarks and indicators of student achievement. We are working together with staff to develop a highly educated graduate, then using communication to keep people focused on successful implementation.

What you told us as a community is consistent with the expectations for students nationally. Our students must graduate prepared to compete, even in their hometowns, with job applicants from throughout the nation and around the world. Further, higher expectations and better student performance provide proof to the community that your tax dollars are being spent wisely. They demonstrate to businesses, colleges and universities that our high school graduates have the knowledge and skills to be successful in college or the workplace.

Finally, the high school graduate is required to develop communication skills, an ability to work in teams, and knowledge of subjects such as algebra and statistics--the kind of knowledge called for in today's global economy. Whether a child grows up to be a surgeon, computer technician, teacher or airplane mechanic, he or she will be expected to apply high levels of skills and knowledge on the job.

Be assured that this Board of Education is committed to preparing Plainville students to compete in a global society.

Best wishes for a healthy and peaceful new year,

Patrick Ringrose,
Chairman of the Board of Education

In this issue...

Message from the Board of Education	Page 1
Q & A	Page 1
Linden Street School Project	Page 2
Let's Chat With	Page 2
Connections: In Partnership with our Community	Page 2
Student Performance	Page 3
Student Accolades	Page 3
Technology Corner	Page 4
Notes and Other Information	Page 4

Q&A:

What are the primary goals of the Plainville Board of Education?

The primary goals of the Plainville Board of Education include:

- *1. Increasing student achievement in English, language arts, mathematics, and science;
- 2. Promoting high levels of community and parental involvement in the schools;
- 3. Developing strong co-curricular programs for students;
- 4. Providing a safe, secure, and positive learning environment.

What is the role of parents in the educational process?

The most important component of a child's education is the attitude of, and atmosphere provided by, parents. By creating a homework friendly environment (supplies, quiet area, good lighting), being available to guide and assist as needed, and advocating completion of assignments as your top priority, parents can prepare students for a successful educational experience.


Communication is also essential to the educational process. We encourage parents to express concerns, provide feedback, and ask questions. Additionally, parents are encouraged to attend Board of Education and PTO meetings, and support extra-curricular activities. Your presence speaks volumes to our young community members. Parents should have high expectations for their children and their school performance.

**Working together,
we can achieve success.**

Linden Street School Project Update

The Linden Street School Building Committee has been very active since the June referendum, approving the construction of an addition along with the renovation of some existing space. The Committee decided to continue with the architectural services of Jeter, Cook & Jepson on the project and they also interviewed companies to manage the actual construction. After hearing in-depth presentations from four companies, Downes Construction Company was selected to be the on-site construction manager. Downes will also work with the architect during the preconstruction phases of schematic design, project budget preparation, and design development in order to ensure a high quality project.

During the past summer, representatives from the district, Committee, and the architectural firm also met with State School Facilities staff in order to discuss the latest building and fire code requirements along with the State process for architectural and bid document approval. Actual construction is expected to begin during the Spring of 2004 and project completion should occur between September 2005 and January 2006. Once the new addition and renovations are completed, additional upgrades to other school facilities are expected to follow as outlined in the district's long range plan.

L i n d e n i s t h e  t o t h e L o n g R a n g e P l a n

Let's Chat With...

James Brown,
Director of Facilities



What projects were completed over the summer?

"The summer upgrades were extensive in all schools. Highlights include the replacement of the Toffolon heating coil, with added return ducts to increase air circulation and improve control of the heating in the music room and cafeteria. We also replaced carpeting at Plainville High School with Powerbond carpet product which is manufactured to stop moisture from penetrating back through the fibers. Additionally, we tiled a number of rooms at the middle school. All of these changes help us to maintain the indoor air quality of the schools."

What are you working on now?

"We have recently started installing new lighting products throughout the district to help reduce the consumption of electricity in the schools. These upgrades are being paid for by the local utility company at no cost to the schools or taxpayers. It will also improve the quality of lighting in our schools."

What is of the utmost importance to you and the Facilities staff?

"Safety. All outside contractors are instructed to complete work during off hours. This helps to prevent any students and faculty from coming in contact with a potentially dangerous situation. We also make sure all vendors follow OSHA safety guidelines when performing work at any of the schools in Plainville."

Connections: In Partnership with Our Community

It is a pleasure to discuss our partnership with GE Industrial Systems in this first issue of the Board of Education's Community Letter. Our partnership with GE goes back to 1983 when our first grant was awarded to the Plainville Junior High School for Lego Logo robotics and calculators for use in science and mathematics problem solving. This very successful first effort established the foundation for a strong partnership, with the volunteer program functioning as the cornerstone. The highlight of our relationship was last year when GE Industrial Systems was awarded the Chamber of Commerce Business of the Year Award for their contributions to the school district and the greater community. When members of the school district get together with our friends at GE, there is an incredible enthusiasm and a "can-do" attitude that is infectious.

We are thankful for their work with the district and look forward to sharing details of our partnership in future newsletters. Some areas of common interest include strategic planning, the Bushnell Partnership, literacy and information literacy, technology and the use of a data warehouse for analysis of student achievement trends. Stay tuned in for future highlights because GE really is *imagination at work!*

Student Performance: Evidence of Sustained Improvement Connecticut Academic Performance Test

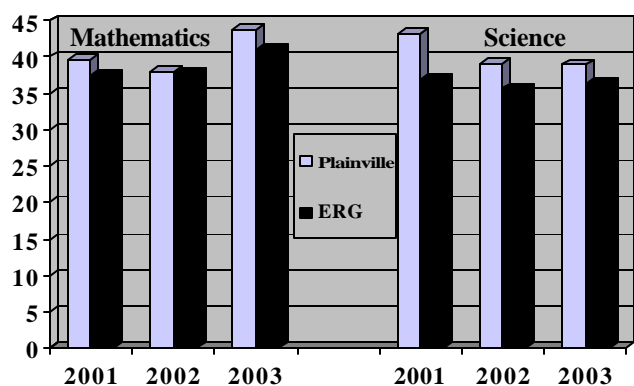
Plainville students continue to make good progress in reading, writing, mathematics and science based on the results of the Connecticut Academic Performance Test. The CAPT is administered to all tenth grade students in Connecticut each spring. Currently in its second generation, the test is designed to measure what students know and are able to do in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics and science. Scores are reported on five levels (Advanced - Goal - Proficient - Basic - Below Basic). The percentage of Plainville's tenth grade students

achieving at the goal level or higher exceeded that of our Education Reference Group (ERG*) in all four areas in 2003. The percentage of students meeting or exceeding the state goal in reading and writing has shown significant improvement over the three year period. In reading, the percentage of students scoring in the goal range rose from 33.2% in 2001 to 45% in 2003. The percentage of students meeting the state goal in writing increased from 31.5% in 2001 to 49.5% in 2003. In the areas of mathematics and science, Plainville student performance

exceeded that of the ERG. As a district we will continue to focus on mathematics and science in order to achieve gains similar to those in reading and writing. Finally, we are pleased that Plainville students achieving at the below basic level remains consistently lower than either the state or ERG average, and we will continue our efforts toward improving performance of all students.

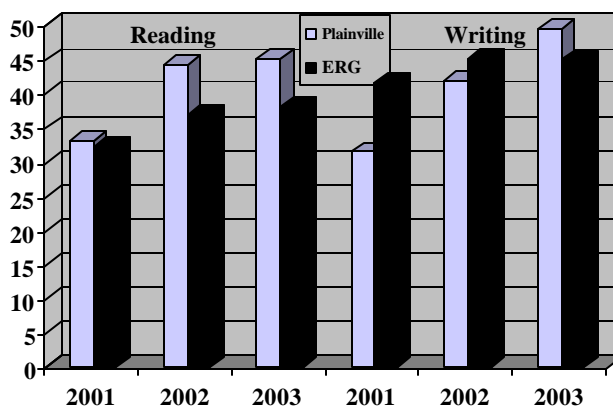
**ERG (Education Reference Group) is the State of Connecticut's classification of towns by socio-economic similarity.*

CAPT Performance in Mathematics and Science 2001-2003



In mathematics and science, a higher percentage of Plainville students met or exceeded the state goal than their ERG peers.

CAPT Performance in Reading and Writing 2001-2003



PHS students have made consistent progress in both reading and writing over the past three years.



STUDENT ACCOLADES Plainville High School, Class of 2003 *Moving on to these Institutions of Higher Education*

Alfred University, Assumption College, Bentley College, Briarcliffe College, Briarwood College, Bryant College, Bucknell University, Capital Community College, Central Connecticut State University, Concordia College, Connecticut Culinary Institute, Eastern Connecticut State University, Hartt School of Music, Johnson & Wales University, Lindonwood University, Marymount College, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Mount St. Mary College, New England Technical College, Naugatuck Valley Community College, New England Institute of Technology, New England School of Hairdressing, Northeastern University, Nyack College, Ohio State University, Pace University, Porter & Chester Institute, Quinnipiac University, Rhode Island College, Rider University, Salve Regina University, Southern Connecticut State University, Springfield College, St. Joseph College, St. Joseph's University, State University of New York, Teikyo Post University, Trinity College, Tunxis Community College, University of Connecticut, University of Hartford, University of New Haven, University of Oklahoma, University of Rhode Island, Wentworth Institute of Technology, Western Connecticut State University, Western New England College.

TECHNOLOGY CORNER

8th Grade Team Websites



*What a great way
for parents to be
informed
and have ready
made dinner
conversation starters!*

In an effort to extend learning beyond the school day, 8th grade staff members support students and parents by providing homework assignments and short snippets of the current units of study on-line. As a result of the fall professional development, teachers honed their newly acquired technology skills in several follow up sessions and have succeeded in communicating the happenings of their classrooms to the world. Students have come to rely on the webpages to refresh their memories on class assignments and to explore some of the links provided to support current units of study.

Parents can access weekly classroom events by visiting www.plainvilleschools.org (click on Student Links)

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Tune in to Nutmeg TV!

Board of Education
meetings are taped
then aired the
2nd & 4th Tuesday of
each month at 5:00 P.M.
on Channel 21

The No Child Left Behind Federal legislation requires strong parent and community knowledge about our schools and Federal programs.

As part of our district communication efforts, we have created the Plainville Board of Education's Community Letter, which is funded through a number of grants. The grants include Title 5 Federal Funds and a Strategic Planning Grant from General Electric.

Board of Education *Don't miss the next Board of Education meeting: Monday, February 9, 2004 - PHS: Room 400 at 7:00 P.M.*

You are always invited to attend...

The Plainville Board of Education holds its regular meetings on the second Monday of each month. The meeting begins at 7:00 P.M. in Plainville High School, Room 400. Meetings of the Board of Education do not continue beyond 9:30 P.M. The dates of special meetings are posted and published in local papers. Your presence gives Board members the advantage of community interest and feedback. They benefit from your comments and questions. At each meeting an opportunity is provided for Plainville residents who would like to address the Board. If you have a detailed question, or one which requires extensive research, you may send it to the Superintendent of Schools in advance.

- Approach the podium, then introduce yourself by standing and stating your name and place of residence in Plainville.
- Present your ideas, concerns, suggestions, and /or commendations to the Board in a clear, concise manner. Comments are limited to 5 minutes.
- Remember the Board welcomes your ideas and will carefully consider them when deliberating an issue.

Kathleen Binkowski, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Board Members:

Patrick Ringrose, Chairperson
William Crowley, Secretary
Lorri Goldsmith
Susan McCarthy
Marliss Pavano
William Petit
Becky Tyrrell
Thomas Wazorko
Barbara Willard



We believe...

Effective communication and collaboration build trust and respect

A safe, caring, learning environment embraces diversity and upholds individual accountability

A high quality curriculum gives serious consideration to the arts, literacy and technology

In a shared responsibility in establishing high learning expectations

DID YOU KNOW?

Senior Citizens receive 30% off all Plainville Adult Education enrichment classes. Brochures will be mailed mid-February!

DO YOU WONDER ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S

DEVELOPMENT?

Plainville parents can have free access to the services of trained parent educators – including personal visits, developmental milestones or concerns, and access to a lending library. Call the Family Resource Network at

793-6304.

This program is funded through a grant from the State of Connecticut Department of Education.