



Community Letter

December 2006

Promote a challenging environment creating an extraordinary community of learners

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Message from the Board of Education

Recently the Plainville Board of Education was one of 19 recipients of the Connecticut Association of Board of Education (CABE) Leadership Awards. Leadership takes place in so many ways at the Board level. It means preparing for the future--the future in curriculum to prepare our students for the 21st century and the future need for proper facilities. How does the Board plan for the future? We watch trends in education; areas such as foreign language instruction and information technology are critical to our students' ability to function in the 21st century. We follow population projections to determine space needs and consider programs such as universal preschool, and all day kindergarten to plan for their potential impact on space needs.

We also provide leadership by example. Our students are watching when we make decisions. From "Green" bus technology, to the elimination of pesticides on our school grounds, these efforts show our future leaders that we value our environment. As leaders we must provide the appropriate curriculum in facilities that are hazard free, handicap accessible, with space for acceptable class sizes, and to develop programs that serve students who have special needs. The Board appreciates the CABE Leadership Award and we know that our efforts make Plainville a better community.

Science Comes Alive !



Wheeler students Kelsey Clemens, Lisa Araujo, and Taylor Romano participate in an interactive High Touch High Tech in-school science presentation.

In our newly developed elementary science program, students are learning to reason, think creatively, work collaboratively, make decisions and solve problems. In kindergarten through second grade, students learn about life cycles by observing and recording changes in plants, butterflies and frogs. Second and third graders explore properties of matter, learning about solids, liquids and gases. Third graders also conduct experiments in force and motion as they begin to understand the physics behind everyday activities. They also explore habitats to understand how disruption of habitat impacts the plants and animals that live there. Fourth graders study biomes and the impact of water and erosion on our landscape, as well exploring magnetism and electricity. Fifth graders are challenged by units on light, sound and astronomy. Making science come alive for our students is a new challenge that all teachers have embraced. Our students are excited about science, where they can use their reading, writing and mathematics skills to demonstrate a deepening understanding of the world in which they live. "Science is fun!" exclaimed one first grade student. "We always have to figure out what is happening. I just like the wonder of it," said a smiling third grader. Teachers and administrators in the district feel exactly the same way!

THE ADULT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION SPRING BROCHURE will be mailed to all Plainville residents in January! Plan ahead for spring and consider participating in a new enrichment class such as: Needlepoint and Crocheting, Spring Vase Arrangement, Beginning Canoeing, Journalism or Management 101, College Financial Aid: The Truths and Myths, Egg Sculpting and more!
CALL 793-3209 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

The Long Range Plan

The Long Range Plan for the school district intends to improve the school buildings.

There are a number of projects in progress.

HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM
The high school auditorium has hosted its first event since being closed in 2004; the middle school band concert was held on November 30th and a good time was had by all. Visitors, students and staff were impressed with the beauty of the renovated space. In December, the district will hold a special event to officially recognize the reopening of the auditorium facility.

HIGH SCHOOL RENOVATION
The first round of bids on the high school renovation project will be opened in December. This 44 million dollar renovation of the entire building will be under way while school is still in session on the site. It will take several years to complete this project, but the end result will be worth the wait for decades to come.

LINDEN ADDITION
The project building committee is still working on a couple of finishing touches at Linden. They

recently approved a purchase order to connect the school into the district's computer network with a high speed fiber optic connection that will replace the radio connection used in the past. The existing connection was disrupted by electrical storms and was much slower than the new fiber optic connection will be. In addition to this effort, the committee has submitted plans and specifications to the State of Connecticut for a new playground playscape. They are close to completion of this project.

TOFFOLON SCHOOL RENOVATION

Since the defeat of the Toffolon referendum in September the Capital Projects Building Committee has been continuing with plans to put that building back in service. There is no question that the building needs extensive renovation work and the committee has taken some of the more expensive elements out of

the project where they felt that the changes would not conflict with the educational specifications. A new referendum with these changes may come before the Plainville voters in March--the exact date will be set by the Town Council sometime in the coming weeks. With each passing month the estimated costs for the project continue to rise as construction costs and inflation continue to drift upward. In late November, the Board of Education met to discuss the project and future referendum with the Town Council and many members of the building committee. There was much discussion about enrollment projections and the number of classrooms that will be needed at the school. A decision regarding the number of classrooms and the amount of potential state reimbursement will be made soon, and the referendum date will be scheduled.

Budget News

Each school and department in the district has begun to assemble its budget request for the 2007-2008 school year. A budget calendar was approved by the Board of Education at the December board meeting and will be placed on the district web site. Important dates on the calendar will also be referenced in school newsletters. Here is a quick outline of the budget preparation process: 1. schools and departments prepare budget requests, and meetings take place to discuss these plans with the superintendent and business manager. 2. In January, the Board meets on several occasions with school administrators to review and discuss the needs of the district. 3. In February, the Board votes on a budget that goes to the town manager as the request for the education budget. 4. In March, the town manager and superintendent will present their budgets to the town council and citizens of Plainville. 5. On April 24th, there will be an all day vote on the budget for the 2007-2008 fiscal year. Watch the news for these upcoming budget events and participate in the process.

Student Spotlight: Military Mailroom Mission

Military Mailroom students from left to right: James Mason, Deanna Hebert, Christina Corvello (Advisor), Samantha Taylor, Deanna Beaudoin, Jessica Tattersall, Devon Tyrrell and Anna Huey.

Article by: Jessica Tattersall, Grade 7, Middle School of Plainville



The Military Mailroom at the Middle School of Plainville is on a mission to help support our troops overseas. We help boost the troop's spirits by sending letters and packages. It means so much to the soldiers to get presents and letters and just to know that people appreciate what they are doing. The letters we send are basically the only news they get besides the news of war and fellow soldiers dying. In our letters we include stuff we have in common with the soldiers--sports, good news in our life, and what's going on in the world. The packages the Military Mailroom sends have newspapers, candy the

soldiers enjoy eating, a miniature Christmas tree and ornaments, and lots of little things the soldiers like. Since the day the Military Mailroom started, we have had multiple soldiers start writing. All of these soldiers are isolated from their families and people they love. "We all have a job to do and knew what it would be like when we got here, but it certainly helps to know that family and friends support us," says Peter Phelan in one of his letters. As you can tell the soldiers really appreciate what we do. We can help others out by writing letters and sending gifts, and now that Christmas is coming up it

would be very thoughtful to give back to the soldiers who have given up their lives for us. So when you are at home on Christmas Eve, think of all the soldiers overseas away from their families and the ones they love. The Military Mailroom needs money to send the packages, so we are going to have fundraisers. The fundraiser that the M.S.P. students will like the most is the dance in January. We are currently thinking of other ways to earn money for the troops. We are planning to send the packages so they will get there in time for Christmas. We are trying our best to lift the soldiers' spirits.

Let's Chat With...Gina Broadbent, Volunteer Coordinator



Describe your role as Volunteer Coordinator. As Volunteer Coordinator, I am responsible for growing and maintaining an effective volunteer program that enhances the educational experience of our students, and provides an opportunity for members of the local community to participate in the school system. Specifically, I work with the teachers and administrators to determine what students and staff need in terms of volunteer assistance and then work to identify and match volunteers to the need. I recruit, interview, train, supervise, and recognize volunteers.

What opportunities are there for members of the community to volunteer in the school district?

We invite individuals to volunteer in whatever capacity best corresponds to their interest, availability, and talent and, at the same time, meets the needs of our students. The main components of our volunteer program are mentors (consistent adult role models), tutors (academic coaches), reading partners (lunchtime reading buddies), and classroom and office helpers. We are introducing a new option, the "SOS" (Special Occasion Service) volunteer, which welcomes volunteers into the schools on an as needed basis to assist with special projects and events. I encourage interested members of the community to contact me at 793-3209 or broadbentg@plainvilleschools.org to find out more about our program.

Good News!

Great things are happening in our school district all the time.

Following are some of these “good news” highlights:

THE PLAINVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION received the *2006 CABE Leadership Award* from the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education in recognition of leadership excellence...**PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS CRISSI MANN AND AMANDA PIERLIONI** have been awarded the *Farmington Valley Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents’ Student Recognition Award* for excellence in community service, academic prowess, and school leadership...**LINDEN, TOFFOLON, AND WHEELER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS AND STAFF** participated in the Plainville Food Pantry’s annual “Feed a Friend” food drive to assist local families in need...**THE MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE’S MSPN COMMUNICATION CLUB** is partnering with UCONN faculty and students to create a video documentary about the Main Street Singers in New Britain, Connecticut...**THE BOARD OF EDUCATION’S COMMUNITY LETTER NEWSLETTER** received an Honorable Mention in the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) *Award of Excellence for Educational Communications* contest...**THE PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL COUNSELING DEPARTMENT** has been awarded the *2006 Connecticut School Counseling Association Professional Recognition Award* for their comprehensive school counseling program...**THE TOFFOLON SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL** participated in two holiday “drives” to support the Ronald McDonald House and local youth...**THE MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE’S COUNSELING DEPARTMENT** sponsored their annual Halloween breakfast and “Costumes for Charity” events. Proceeds were donated to the Plainville Food Pantry to provide baskets to Plainville families during the holidays...**PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS SCOTT MIDDLETON, KAYLYN SANTHOUSE, AND MITCHELL UNDERWOOD** have earned the designation of AP Scholar by the College Board in recognition of their exceptional achievement on the college level Advanced Placement Program (APP) exams...**THE MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE** celebrated National Red Ribbon Week in October to raise awareness of the danger of drugs and ask students to pledge to be drug free. Activities in support of National Red Ribbon week were held and proceeds were donated to drug prevention programs.

Kathleen Binkowski, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Board Members:

William J. Crowley
Lorri Goldsmith
Art Hoerle
Keith A. LaCombe
Susan McCarthy
Patrick Ringrose
Becky Tyrrell
Thomas L. Wazorko
Barbara A. Willard



Belief Statements

We believe:

- that a quality school system is the core of our community and increases the quality of our lives;
- in a shared responsibility among home, school and community that promotes achievement for all learners;
- in a safe, caring, learning environment that respects individual difference and rejects discrimination of any form;
- in holding all students, faculty, staff, and parents accountable to participate in and maintain a positive learning environment throughout the district;
- a high quality curriculum emphasizes the arts, literacy, and technology; and
- effective communication and collaboration builds trust and respect.