



Plainville Board of Education's Community Letter

Fall 2015

To provide rigorous and enriching experiences that prepare each student for success in a changing global society.

Message from the Board of Education

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www.plainvilleschools.org

As we begin another great school year, you might be wondering how Plainville schools compare to other school districts in terms of services provided to the students. Recently the Board became aware of another district's 10 year plan for their Board of Education and how it closely resembled programs that we *already* have in place today:

- **Make every school building energy efficient with an emphasis on solar.** PHS, Linden, and Toffolon already have solar panels and the Plainville school district employs an energy conservation program that allows our district to redirect utility cost savings to programs and services that benefit our students.

- **Reduce inefficiency and redundancy between the Town and BOE.**

Plainville has combined the Finance, Human Resources, and Technology Departments.

- **Implement universal Pre-K.**

Plainville is in its second year of Pre-K and the program has been very successful.

- **Work to replace all textbooks with computerized curriculum systems that are accessible on an IPAD or Chromebook.**

Many of Plainville's textbooks have been already converted to electronic books and the district continues to look for more opportunities to expand the use of technology.

- **Increase Advance Placement course offerings.**

Plainville has been providing a large selection of Advancement Placement classes for years and offers a program with UCONN where students can earn college credits in high school.

Plainville Community Schools has so much to be proud of, but we know there is always more to do. We will continue to make meaningful investments in the things that really matter. To quote Dr. Kitching, *"Plainville is getting it right."*

Hydroponics at PHS

Plainville High School faculty member Leanne Nolan's classroom now includes a hydroponic system as a teaching and learning tool. Hydroponics is a method of growing plants using mineral nutrient solutions, in water, without soil. To date, students in Nolan's Environmental Science classes are growing cucumbers, peppers, beefsteak tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, basil and eggplant. Teams of three students at a time are trained by Nolan on how to maintain the system, and rotate maintenance of the system by the student teams every two weeks. In addition, this year there will be an aquaponics system up and running in the classroom, where students will grow vegetables using the nutrients from a fish tank. Students will be weighing the vegetables produced from the systems weekly and tracking how many pounds are produced, with the hope of potentially utilizing the produce in the high school's cafeteria and culinary arts classes in the future. The Environmental Science classes are also part of the University of Connecticut's Early College Experience program, which offers college credits through the high school courses.



(Left to Right) Kassondra Delorme, David Mouangvienkham, and Roxanne Kongkiat maintain the hydroponic system.

Plainville High School Science Department: Physics Modeling



PHS faculty members Ken Chausse and Jeff Roberts

Plainville High School Science Department faculty members Jeff Roberts and Ken Chausse spent two weeks this past summer attending the Maine Chemistry and Physics Modeling Workshop in Kennebunk, Maine, with fellow science teachers from across the country. The physics component of the workshop addressed all aspects of teaching, integrating teaching methods with course content for physics classrooms. Special emphasis was placed on modeling concept development and integrating technology appropriate for

middle and high school levels. Goals of the intensive two week program included training teachers in the use of a model-centered, constructivist method of teaching while simultaneously improving their content knowledge in physics, integrating computer courseware effectively into the physics curriculum, helping participants make better use of national resources for Physics education, and more.

According to Roberts, modeling, a primary focus of the workshop, is an effective approach to instruction in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM). "One of the key components of modeling is to avoid 'teaching by telling.' Instead, the instructor guides the students to a deep understanding of the principles by asking leading questions and encouraging discussion amongst students in class," explained Roberts. "The workshop provided a foundation for Jeff and me to guide students in their investigation of the physical world. We set the stage, but students perform," added Chausse.

What Kind of Mindset Do You Have?



On October 1, faculty members at the Middle School delivered the first of four lessons on developing a growth mindset. Mindset is a simple idea discovered by world-renowned Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck in decades of research on achievement and success. Dweck refers to people having a "fixed" or a "growth" mindset. With a fixed mindset, people believe their basic qualities, like intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. They spend time confirming their intelligence or talent, or lack thereof, instead of developing them. They also believe that talent alone creates success--without effort. With a growth mindset, people believe that their most basic abilities can be developed through dedication and hard work--brains and talent are just the starting point. This view creates a love of learning and a resilience that is essential for great accomplishment. Virtually all great people have had these qualities. Teaching a growth mindset enhances relationships and creates motivation and productivity in education.

Image created by: Reid Wilson@wayfaringpath

Let's Chat With...



*Steven Michaud
Director of Administration
and Personnel*

What are your responsibilities as Director of Administration and Personnel?

Generally, my day-to-day responsibilities include handling most of the business aspects of operating the school district. I work closely with teachers, principals, and other administrators to ensure they have the support they need from Central Office.

What is your top priority?

My top priority is simple: to provide a top quality education for students in Plainville while operating within the limits set by the Board of Education. I want to always keep the students' safety and development as my top priority.

What professional accomplishment are you most proud of?

I am proud to be a part of the administrative team here in Plainville. I really believe that we are "getting it right" and that students are the top priority.

What do you enjoy most about your new position?

I enjoy learning about the behind-the-scenes aspects of education. I am also excited to continue to develop leadership skills.

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

PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

PHS senior **Martha Boltromiejuk** was crowned Miss Polonia CT 2016. She will go on to represent Connecticut during the national finals of Miss Polonia in NYC...A group of PHS students together with PHS faculty member **Trevira Boatright** attended CT DECA's Fall Leadership Camp in Meriden, Connecticut, on October 7. During the day long event, students were challenged physically, mentally, and socially against other DECA chapters from across the state...PHS students **Brandon Mello, Bethany Pelletier, Jessica Gorski** and **Grant Sarra** attended the Rotary Youth Leadership Academy in June on the campus of Springfield College. The Rotary Club of Plainville provided funding for the students to participate, and the students attended a Plainville Rotary Club meeting in October where they thanked the members for their support and made a presentation about their experiences at the Academy...**The PHS 2014 Girls Volleyball Team** received the *American Volleyball Coaches Association Team Academic Award* for outstanding academic achievement and was one of only two teams from Connecticut to receive the award.

MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE

Kim Coyle and **MSP students** participated in the first annual Greater Hartford MiniMaker Faire on October 3 at Tunxis Community College. Coyle and students manned a "hands on" booth entitled "*MSP launches 3D Design with Project Ignite!*" where they shared how they use Autodesk's Project Ignite, Tinkercad and 123D Circuits to invent, innovate, and create new objects through 3D Design and Printing....Former Atlanta Falcons football player, sports commentator and Nutmeg nominated author Tim Green visited MSP on October 14. He is currently sponsoring the NFL's Play60/Read20 program which encourages students to get an hour of exercise and read for 20 minutes daily...**66 MSP faculty and staff members** raised over \$2,500 for the Plainville Community Food Pantry through their *Jeans For Charity* program this year, coordinated by faculty member **Jodi Muldoon**.

LINDEN STREET SCHOOL

Linden held its first Scholar of the Month breakfast where two students from each **Pre-K through fifth grade** class were recognized for meeting a number of criteria relative to being good scholars...**Staff members** are supporting several good causes through their Casual Friday program, where they "pay" to dress casually on Fridays throughout the school

year. This year the Linden group collected \$760 for the Connecticut Children's Medical Center, \$280 for the Petit Family Foundation, \$490 for the Plainville Community Food Pantry, and \$420 for scholarships...**Linden** recently held a "tag sale" where parking spaces and tables were rented for \$5 each. The event included tag sale items and homemade crafts, and raised over \$200 for the Linden Field Day.

LOUIS TOFFOLON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Toffolon music teacher **Greg Wilfrid** will be presenting a workshop entitled "Storytelling and Improvisation in the Elementary General Music Classroom" at the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) conference in Nashville, Tennessee on October 25. He has presented at Connecticut Music Educator Association conferences on this subject, as well as on the first year of teaching and has participated in a panel of new music teachers in a collegiate session at the NAfME Northeast Division Conference in Hartford in 2013... Toffolon **first graders**, working with the **fifth graders**, created a video designed to introduce the new **kindergartners** to the Community Helpers that work at Toffolon. Toffolon faculty members **Deb Pikiell, Rob Silliman, Greg Wilfrid** and **Mike Zaba** led this creative school community project.

FRANK T. WHEELER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

"Johnny Appleseed" (volunteer Reade Clemens) recently visited the **first grade classrooms** to discuss the life cycle of the apple and tales about Johnny Appleseed...**Fifth graders** began the school year learning about the Scientific Method. The students worked in groups to set up an experiment using the steps of the Scientific Method. They hypothesized which surface a ball would best bounce on, determined the steps they were going to follow, and recorded their data before presenting their findings to their peers...The 6th annual Wheeler Walkathon was held on 10/8. Students in **Pre-K through fifth grade** participated and raised \$1,500 for benches near the school's playscape.

DISTRICT

Plainville Community Schools held a groundbreaking ceremony for the Plainville High School Turf Field Project on September 17...Plainville Board of Education members, local and state officials, members of the Turf Field Project Committee, school district administration, coaches, student athletes, and guests gathered for the celebration, marking the start of the turf project at the high school.

PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2015 -- HIGHER EDUCATION DESTINATIONS:

American International College, Arizona State University, Capital Community College, Central Connecticut State University, Coastal Carolina University, College of Southern Nevada, CUNY Brooklyn College, Eastern Connecticut State University, Endicott College, Florida Gulf Coast University, Full Sail University, Johnson & Wales University, Lincoln New England College, Manchester Community College, Middlesex Community College, Nichols College, Palm Beach Atlantic University, Paul Mitchell School of Cosmetology, Post University, Sacred Heart University, Salve Regina University, Southern Connecticut State University, Southern New Hampshire University, Springfield College, Susquehanna University, Tunxis Community College, University at Albany, University of Alabama, University of California - Berkeley, University of Connecticut, University of Hartford, University of Pittsburg, University of Rhode Island, University of Saint Joseph, Western Connecticut State University.



Wheeler fifth grader Javan Benoit recently interviewed Wheeler School's new office staff: Mrs. Rosa Daigle and Mrs. Mary Grouten

J: WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE PART OF THE JOB?

Mrs. D: Seeing all the kids around
Mrs. G: Working with all of the children

J: WHAT PART OF YOUR JOB IS THE MOST CHALLENGING?

Mrs. D: Remembering all the details
Mrs. G: Answering all of the phone calls

J: WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR FREE TIME?

Mrs. D: We have a boat; I love boating with my family
Mrs. G: I like to walk my dogs

J: DO YOU HAVE SIBLINGS OR CHILDREN?

Mrs. D: I have 2 siblings and 3 children
Mrs. G: I have 3 children and no siblings

About the Author: Javan's favorite subjects are writing and math. He enjoys playing baseball in his free time. This is his first published interview.

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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 democracy
- 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 foster knowledge, trust, and respect and are the responsibility of everyone in the community.