

Plainville Board of Education's



Community Letter

February 2008

Promote a challenging environment creating an extraordinary community of learners

Message from the Board of Education

All across the state of Connecticut cities and towns are in the process of preparing budgets for the next fiscal year. Like many of those towns, Plainville has a system that allows residents to vote on the municipal budget put forward by the Town Council. In many ways the municipal budget that is adopted each year has a greater impact on our quality of life than who we elect as President.

Over the past several years we have had continual budget defeats and mediocre participation in budget votes. Our system allows for the Board of Education, as volunteer taxpayers, to determine an appropriate budget for our students and the needs of our district. The Town Council then combines the school system budget and the municipal budget. The Council, also tax-paying volunteers, determine the total budget that is put before the voters of Plainville. The Board of Education urges residents to stay informed about budget proposals and what they mean to our community.

Municipal Meetings 2008 - 2009 Budget for Plainville

Thursday 3-6-08 7:00 PM

Public Hearing on Town Manager's Budget,
Town Council Chambers, Municipal Center

Monday 4-28-08 7:00 PM

Public Hearing on the Budget,
Town Council Chambers, Municipal Center*

Tuesday 4-29-08

All Day Budget Vote,
Fire House

*location subject to change

Let's Chat With...Newly Elected BOE Members



Jesse Gnazzo
(JG)



Anthony Goldberg
(AG)

What interested you in becoming a Board of Education member?

JG: Over the past few years I have been involved in a variety of organizations, in Plainville (i.e., Chamber of Commerce, Little League, and Plainville Colts). Through these organizations I have met many people who have concerns about our children and about making Plainville the best place it can be. I felt that I could serve the community by helping provide the best education possible and in turn make Plainville an even better place to live and raise a family.

AG: I believed that I could best serve my local community by getting involved in a most important task of the community, to provide the best education possible to our children. With my professional experience in accounting and budgeting, I believe I can provide some insight and input into tackling the challenge of balancing educational needs while limiting the financial burden to our taxpayers.

What is the biggest challenge facing public education today?

JG: The cost increases of the past few years are the biggest challenge facing public education. Energy costs alone are a major problem, but the state is adding unfunded mandates that will divert even more money from the classroom, where it belongs.

AG: Costs have been rising sharply over the past few years. Education officials now have the task of looking even closer at all expense categories to ensure that all dollars are being used optimally. The programs and curriculum still need to offer a challenging, well rounded education for all students, in order to properly prepare them for the 21st century workforce.

What is your top priority as a Board member?

JG: The budget is my top priority. I am confident we will find a way to offer the best education possible while holding down spending.

AG: My first priority is to work on a school budget that offers the best education possible, for an amount the taxpayers can afford. I look forward to working with the Town Council on a strategy to find areas where consolidation of services can be attained to improve efficiency.

What have you enjoyed most about being a Board member?

JG: Recently, I was able to spend some time at the elementary schools. I was impressed with the work I saw the students doing and the enthusiasm they have for their work.

AG: In these first few months, I have enjoyed getting to know the members of the Board of Education, the Town Council, and the various school administrators. I have learned a great deal in a short time by my involvement in the discussions on the issues facing Plainville.

What is your vision for Plainville Community Schools?

JG: My vision is for a district that consistently surpasses the goals it has set upon it by the State of Connecticut, and the Town of Plainville. I hope to see more students achieving an education that not only prepares them mentally but also emotionally for what life has to offer, after graduation.

AG: My vision is of a school system that is student achievement driven, focused on developing skills required to succeed in life that has the full support and involvement of the community.

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 RENOVATION

Renovation at the Plainville High School has moved into Phase 7 of the project. All of the rooms in the 320s and 420s corridors are under construction. During Phase 6, the World Language rooms and four science "clabs" were completed. Clabs are classroom and lab combination rooms used for teaching subjects that involve a significant amount of laboratory work. As of this writing the high school renovation project is running about three weeks behind schedule, but Turner Construction, the on-site project construction manager, hopes to make up some of that time during the current phase. Staff and students are very pleased with each area that has been completed.

TOFFOLON SCHOOL RENOVATION

The first series of construction bids were awarded in January and the complete renovation of the building is now underway. Phase 3 (of 4 phases) plans and specifications have been approved by the State and those bids will be awarded soon. The submission of Phase 4 is underway. The renovation will be completed in 2009 and students and staff will celebrate their return to the building! Right now the bulk of the work in progress involves the removal of asbestos containing materials throughout the building. Outside of the building, work on the grounds is in progress including the excavation for catch basins.

Budget News

The school district has assembled the 2008-2009 fiscal year budget request and the Board of Education approved a budget on February 11 at their regular Board meeting. On March 4th a special meeting will be held in the Municipal Center for the presentation of the Town and Board budgets to the Town Council. Two nights later on March 6th there will be a public hearing on the budget also held in the Municipal Center. The Council listens to public comment on the budget during the March 6th meeting and by March 20th the Council will finalize a budget to present to the voters. After a public hearing to be held on April 28th, the all day budget vote will take place on April 29th. These meetings, hearings and the public vote are critical components in the creation of the annual budget for the town and schools.

Our fiscal year ends on June 30 and each year the town hires auditors to create federal and state grant audit reports. Blum, Shapiro & Company has completed the audit process and we are pleased to report that they did not identify any material weaknesses in the Board's financial reporting for last year, nor did they find any significant deficiencies or noncompliance items. In addition, there were no findings or questioned costs related to any of our state and federally funded programs. Any citizen may review the Town's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report or the Federal and State Audit Reports by contacting the school district's business office in the lower level of the Municipal Center.

Toffolon's Volunteer Club for Community Service

At Louis Toffolon Elementary School, students have the opportunity to take an active role in giving back to the community as caring and concerned citizens, by participating in the Volunteer Club for Community Service. According to Ann Bucchi, Club Advisor, on Mondays and Wednesdays, approximately 54 third, fourth and fifth graders have chosen to use their recess time to work on a number of projects for various community organizations.

The Volunteer Club for Community Service has undertaken a number of service projects. During the holiday season, students created placemats and cards for the Plainville Senior Center. Student volunteers also designed posters explaining the "Pennies for Our Playscape Fundraiser" that Toffolon families supported to raise money for the new playscape for the renovated Toffolon School. Service club participants supported the troops overseas by creating and delivering a Valentine's message in collaboration with the Naval Reserve Center in Plainville. Another project in the works, is creating table decorations

for a Plainville adult daycare facility. Recently students made more than 400 flashcards to help English Language Learners in the Hartford area. "Through their thoughtful actions and their enthusiasm to use their recess to make a difference, these students are having fun and at the same time, demonstrating social responsibility and community involvement," noted Bucchi.



The Volunteer Club for Community Service busy at work!

***GREAT THINGS ARE HAPPENING IN OUR SCHOOL DISTRICT ALL THE TIME.
FOLLOWING ARE SOME OF THESE GOOD NEWS HIGHLIGHTS:***

THE PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND, JAZZ BAND, SWING UNLIMITED AND WOMEN'S CHOIR recently performed at Disney World in Orlando, Florida...**THE PLAINVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS STRATEGIES TO ACCELERATE READING SUCCESS (STARS) PROGRAM** was recently honored by the Connecticut Association of Schools at their 14th annual elementary school program recognition event "*Celebration of Connecticut Elementary Schools' Success*"...**THE PLAINVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAMS** have received a two-year, \$300,000 State Department of Education grant. The grant will provide \$150,000 a year, for the next two years, to the Middle School of Plainville and Frank T. Wheeler Elementary School after school programs...**PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS JEFFREY CIARCIA, RICHARD REOLA, KENDRA VALLIERE, PATRICK HAGGERTY, MARC LEVANDOWSKI, AND JACLYN NEVEU** were selected to perform in the Connecticut Music Educator's Northern Regional Music Festival held in January...**THE GIRLS ONLY PROGRAM AT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE** received a \$2,000 grant from The Women and Girls Fund to support the club for girls in grades 6-8...**PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL** has been awarded a Computer Assisted Writing grant of \$51,000. The grant proposal was written by **LINDA VAN WAGENEN, DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM, INSTRUCTION AND ASSESSMENT** in collaboration with **DIANE RICH, PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL LEADER FOR LANGUAGE ARTS** with a goal of improving student achievement and confidence in writing...**WHEELER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL** has been awarded a State of Connecticut security grant of \$12,466 through the Security Assistance for Education School Program. The grant proposal was written by **DAVID TELESKA, ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT**, and will be used to enhance security at Wheeler...**PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS KAYLA VERBITSKY, SARAH CLOUTIER AND KRISTEN CARROCCIA** have received *Connecticut Scholastic Art Awards* for the 07-08 school year...**WHEELER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FACULTY MEMBERS TAWANA GRAHAM-DOUGLAS AND REGGIE MCCONACHIE** recently served as presenters at the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) Regional Conference. Their presentation, entitled, *Number Sense-What is it? What Does it Look Like?* focused on developing number sense for students in grades k-3...**THE PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS' BASKETBALL TEAM** was recently selected as the *Connecticut Sun High School Girls' Basketball Team of the Week*, after defeating Northwest Catholic; Senior team member **DESIREE PINA** has been nominated for the 2008 McDonald's All-American Boys' and Girls' Teams...**THE MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE SWIM TEAM** members celebrated victories at the Connecticut Middle School Open Championships against 15 middle school teams from across the state including **PETER DALENA - 1ST PLACE - DIVING, CHLOE LAMARRE - 3RD PLACE-DIVING, SPENCER ROY, PETER DALENA, BRYAN SALAZAR AND ANDREW ROTTIER - 4TH PLACE - 4 X 100 RELAY, AND EMILY ZUCKERMAN - 5TH PLACE - 50 BREASTSTROKE**...**THE PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF '74** held the first annual Plainville High School Community Service Fair at the high school on December 12th. The annual event was established to honor PHS Class of '74 President Dr. William Petit, Jr., and the memories of his family...**LINDEN THIRD GRADERS** recently performed a concert entitled "*My Planet, Your Planet*" to raise awareness about taking ownership in preserving the environment...**MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE STUDENTS KATIE MCLELLAN, BRIANA ZINK, ALYSSA NELSON, MARISSA SCHILLING, JANELLE THERIAULT, JOSH HAUSMAN, FORREST ZIRPOLO, EDDIE LEE, PAUL MARTIN, BRETT COTE, DEQUAN HUREY, TOM DINDA, MARCQUILLE JOHNSON, KENNY PRIGODICH, PIOTR MASLAK, AND JEREMY MERCIER** have qualified to participate in the Northern Region Music Festival Chorus sponsored by the Connecticut Music Educator's Association...**LINDEN, WHEELER AND TOFFOLON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM LIBRARIES** will be supplemented with additional books connected to mathematics and **THE MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE** will launch a Boys' Reading Club, thanks to the generous financial support of the Rotary Club of Plainville.

Adult Education

Plainville Adult Education is proud to offer the following services to the community:
TRAVELING TEACHER A limited number of Plainville Adult Education faculty are available to provide mandated classes to your group at your location--at your convenience: English as a Second Language, Adult Basic Education, Citizenship and GED Preparation. Please call for more information and fees: (860) 793-3209.
COUNSELING SERVICE As part of its program, Plainville Adult Education offers educational, vocational, and personal counseling to all adult education students enrolled in basic skills and high school completion courses. Support staff includes a guidance counselor, a vocational tutor, and a school psychologist who assist students to achieve academic, career and personal success.

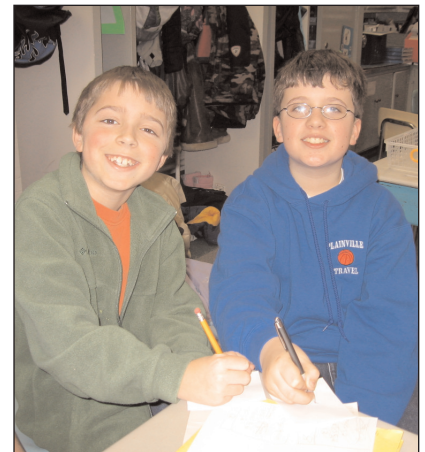
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Student Spotlight: Wheeler School Math Clubs

5TH GRADE STUDENTS AT WHEELER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

A decision was made during the summer to extend the school day by an additional 20 minutes each day this year. One of the ways that the elementary schools decided to use this extra time is to start Math Clubs. About once a week at the end of the day, all students in the school participate in Math Clubs. Students do different activities that focus on developing and building skills in math. Math Clubs provide the students with the opportunity to work with partners and teams, complete projects or special games, and on top of that, it is really fun. Fourth grade teacher, Mrs. Michaud says, "We have been playing multiplication games and hundred chart games. This extra help with their math skills has helped and the students have shown a great deal of progress." Many of the students interviewed said that Math Clubs are great. One in particular, 4th grader, Savannah Freitas said, "I love it. I really enjoy being with other people that are not in our class and playing math games with them." In 5th grade, the students recently worked on a project where they needed to create attribute summary cards and then identify all of the characteristics within the attribute set. Students had to use logical thinking and probability skills and it was fun!!! So, whether you like math or not, the Math Clubs are creating a lot of excitement!!



By: *Nicholas Zaleski
and Jacob Masco*

PLAINVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Kathleen Binkowski, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Board Members:

Jesse Gnazzo
Anthony Goldberg
Lorri Goldsmith
Art Hoerle
Keith A. LaCombe
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 safe, caring learning environment that respects individual difference and rejects discrimination of any form
- that optimal achievement for all learners is a responsibility shared by home, school and community
- that all students, faculty, staff, and parents are accountable to participate and maintain a positive learning environment throughout the district
- a high quality curriculum emphasizes the arts, literacy, and technology
- effective communication and collaboration builds trust and respect