



Community Letter

October 2007

Promote a challenging environment creating an extraordinary community of learners

Message from the Board of Education

"For the most important thing I have learned is that schools reflect the attitudes, beliefs and health of the communities they serve, and therefore, to improve public education means more than changing our schools, it means changing America."

The statement above was made by Jamie Vollmer, a successful businessman who explored the issues of education and quality improvement. He found that public education was a unique operation, one that could not be run like a business. Schools, he discovered, are unable to control the quality of their raw material and are dependent upon unpredictable funding sources. Educators, he deduced, cannot solve these complicated issues alone; changes can occur only with the understanding, trust, permission and active support of the surrounding community. Mr. Vollmer is accurate in his assessment--schools are a reflection of the community.

As the Board of Education, we strive to ensure our students are safe in our schools, safe from hazards, violence, drugs and alcohol. We focus on student achievement in academics and the arts. Another area of focus is assisting our students to become good citizens. These students are our future leaders; instilling in them a sense of respect and responsibility benefits the students and the community. But as Mr. Vollmer discovered, we cannot do this alone.

To be successful in our mission, we need the continued support of the Plainville community, and we need to increase the involvement of our families, businesses and residents. We invite you to become involved. Together we can make Plainville schools a true reflection of our community.

Student Spotlight: Constitution Day



**By: Olivia Burns & Adam Hushin
5th Grade, Toffolon School**

What is the Constitution? The Constitution is a really old paper. It was written 220 years ago by a group of delegates from all of the original 13 states except Rhode Island.

It contains the laws, rights and amendments of our country. It is signed by many important people.

We celebrate Constitution Day because the Constitution helped make our country free and fair. The Constitution is important to us today because it includes the laws of our country and explains the rights of each individual. It leads our country in safety and rights.

September 17th is Constitution Day. To celebrate, some classes read parts of the Constitution. Other classes wrote their own Constitution. Our classmates in Mrs. Clarke's class looked at the amendments, and we wrote some

amendments that we think should be added to the Constitution. On September 17th, the 220th anniversary of the signing of the Constitution, two 5th graders from Mrs. Susi's class, Mekaela Fithian-Giantonio and Quentin Lux, read a short tale on the school intercom so younger students would understand the meaning of this important day.

The Constitution of the United States and Constitution Day are important because when we became a country we needed rules and the Constitution was made! It is important for all of us to remember this important document.

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.

PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

Over the summer most of the construction was completed on Phases 2, 3, and 4. All of the windows were replaced in the older sections of the high school, a new 20,000 gallon oil tank was installed, and most of the site work at the front of the school was completed. The pool renovation process uncovered more problem areas than expected this summer and returning students were a little disappointed to learn that the pool was not ready for swimming in early September. The pool should be fully operational in October and swimmers will find the outstanding results were worth the wait. New electrical distribution and circuit breaker panels were installed just prior to the beginning of school in addition to new hook ups for natural gas. Phase 5 is now under way and this is primarily work in the Kegel Gym and locker rooms along with classrooms numbered in the 200's at the western end of the building. Some of the new hallway flooring has also been installed. Site work in the rear of the building is scheduled to be completed at a later date.

LINDEN STREET SCHOOL

The last major outstanding piece of the Linden renovation was recently completed. Over the summer the fiber optic

computer network connection linking Linden to the High School network was installed, tested and accepted as complete by our network administrator and the Town Manager. This fiber optic link provides high speed data transmission capacity for improved computing speed so that students and staff will not experience delays during high computer use periods.

TOFFOLON SCHOOL

In June, Plainville voters passed the referendum for the additional funding of the Toffolon School renovation. The architect has finalized most of the project plans and specifications, and they have been forwarded to the State for approval. Bids will be sent out and approved in the coming weeks with construction expected to get under way shortly after the bids are received, tabulated and awarded. The renovated school will be completely handicapped accessible, improved for energy efficiency, equipped with upgraded plumbing, mechanical and electrical systems and brought up to fire and building code requirements. In addition, there will be new library, art and music rooms. The Toffolon students, staff and parents are looking forward to the day when the renovated school is ready for their return.

Budget News

The new 2007-2008 budget year began on July 1st and the final school expenditure reports for the 2006-2007 year have been filed with the State Department of Education. It is now time to begin the process of analyzing current costs, identifying areas in the district that need improvement, and planning to include those improvements in the budget for the 2008-2009 school year. During the next couple months, school staff will start putting together the new budget which will be reviewed with the Board of Education in January. School administrators will seek input from parents and staff to gather information about what is needed in the schools. This information will be used to help the Board and administrators decide what to include in the next district budget request.

Adult Education

Plainville's Office of Adult and Continuing Education is an approved GED test registration center. Eligible individuals must be at least 17 years of age and no longer enrolled in school. Applicants 17 and 18 years of age must submit official documentation that they have withdrawn from day school for at least 6 months OR that their 9th grade class has graduated. An application must be completed, in person, at the Adult Education Office by appointment. All individuals registering to take the GED test are required to show a current, valid, governmental photo ID to the registrar as proof of identity. A \$13.00 registration fee applies to non-veterans, 21 years of age or older. Preparation classes are offered evenings, free of charge, covering the five sections of the test: Writing, Social Studies, Science, Reading and Math. For further information, call the Office of Adult and Continuing Education: 860.793.3209. All inquiries are confidential.

Let's Chat With...Dr. Binkowski



What are your primary responsibilities as Superintendent of Schools?

As Superintendent, I am responsible for all facets of school district operations. I work closely with the Board of Education and administrators on **Kathleen Binkowski, Ph.D.** our two top priorities - increased *Superintendent of Schools* levels of academic achievement, and safety and security. It is essential that we provide a 21st century education that nurtures the skills necessary for all students to grow as lifelong learners and succeed in a global world. It is also imperative that we provide a safe and secure instructional and learning environment where every student can thrive.

What attracted you to this position?

I am proud to have attended elementary, junior high, and high school in Plainville and serve my entire career as a Plainville educator. As far back as being an elementary school student at Linden Street School, I remember wanting to be an educator. As a teacher, I developed a sense and vision that I wanted to be a leader in the educational system in Plainville, and strive to create an even more exciting and challenging place for all students to learn. That vision remains today, and as Superintendent it is a privilege to lead this outstanding educational community, impact the quality of life of our local youth, and make a difference for future generations.

What do you enjoy most about being Superintendent?

I enjoy working with the members of the Board of Education, faculty and staff members, parents, students, businesses and the community to nurture our vision that promotes a challenging environment creating extraordinary learning. The rewards for me are ongoing, as I observe the many accomplishments of those who make up our exceptional school district community.

Safety Remains Top Priority

Safety continues to be a top priority for school districts across the nation, and Plainville Community Schools is no exception. The safety and security of students and staff is essential within our educational community. As such, a comprehensive network of measures is in place to support a safe and secure instructional and learning environment in the Plainville school system.

The Plainville Board of Education maintains a policy on Emergencies and Disaster Preparedness, which requires that all employees of the school system are responsible for the promotion of the safety of all students at all times. The policy requires that procedures are maintained for fire, civil defense, and other emergencies, as well as maintenance of the fire alarm system and both regular and emergency exits for all buildings. In addition, the policy maintains that at least one person at each school site hold current first aid and / or CPR certification. To support the policy, faculty and staff members district-wide are provided with information, procedures and resources relative to all aspects of school safety. In addition, under the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), a division of the United States Department of Homeland Security, school district administrators recently participated in a National Incident Management Training introduction course on police and fire emergency services. Plainville administrators, faculty and staff collaborate regularly with the local fire and police departments in the area of safety, including the practice of fire and safety drills and building evacuations.

As communication is a key component of safety and security, Plainville Community Schools will soon launch an automated communication system that will enable school officials to deliver critical information to parents, staff, and the community instantly through a bundled set of communication tools including telephone and internet. The school district will continue to work with local safety officials to maintain this important focus and commitment to providing a safe and secure community of learning.

Teacher of the Year, David Gaignard

Plainville Community Schools has named Plainville High School Technology Education Instructor David Gaignard the 2007-2008 *Teacher of the Year*. Gaignard has served as a Technology Education teacher in Plainville for six years. Under his direction, the communications program has grown to include a video production studio, a video control room, graphics and audio rooms, and an Internet radio station. Gaignard, a Plainville resident, holds both a bachelor of science degree and a master of science degree from Central Connecticut State University (CCSU). He serves as an adjunct professor at Briarwood College and CCSU. In addition, he is a member of the National Honor Roll's Outstanding American Teachers, and serves on the State of Connecticut Technology Education Board.



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Good News!

*Great things are happening in our school district all the time.
Following are some of these good news highlights:*

THE KIDS IN THE MIDDLE (KIM) PROGRAM at the middle school completed 12 service projects in and around the Plainville community over the summer. More than 20 students participated in a number of events that focused on collaboration with senior citizen service providers...**THE MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE AUDITORIUM DEDICATION COMMITTEE** recently held a ceremony honoring the memory of former Plainville Community Schools Music Instructor and Band Director George Ventrelli...**THE PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL DECA CHAPTER** participated in the annual Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF) walkathon at Rentschler Field in East Hartford, to help "Find a Cure" for Juvenile Diabetes...**PLAINVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS FOOD SERVICES DIRECTOR JAMES BONDI** has earned the School Nutrition Specialist (SNS) Credential from the School Nutrition Association, which required him to meet rigorous academic and work experience criteria and pass a nationally standardized test for school food service and nutrition management...**PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ATHLETE LEADERSHIP TEAM (SALT) MEMBERS WHITLEY DOZIER, TAYLOR PERUN, QUINTIN WELLS, AND DESIREE PINA** attended the first annual CIAC Sportsmanship Conference. More than 100 school teams participated in the event which centered on the theme "*Sportsmanship is Everyone's Responsibility*", kicking off CIAC's initiative to promote and enhance sportsmanship in Connecticut high schools...**THE MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE** was selected to be part of the Connecticut State Teacher of the Year Chris Poulos' *Tour of Connecticut Schools*, on October 1st, which included a tour of classrooms followed by a town meeting with faculty, students, parents, state and town leaders, and administrators...**PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL LANGUAGE ARTS INSTRUCTOR DEANA SANDERS** returned to Kenya this past summer where she volunteered as an instructor for grades four through eight, and taught English, Social Studies, and Arts & Crafts.

PLAINVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Kathleen Binkowski, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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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.