



Community Letter

Spring / Summer 2006

Promote a challenging environment creating an extraordinary community of learners

Message from the Board of Education

Communication is an integral component of every organization, including Plainville Community Schools. As such, the Board of Education has remained steadfast in its commitment to ongoing review and improvement of communication processes. In 2005, a communication audit was conducted to gather insight from the community regarding our communicative practices. Through interviews, focus groups, and a survey distributed to all Plainville households, information was gathered and utilized to create a district communication plan. This valuable feedback validated our communication efforts that have been well received by the community, and also identified opportunities for improvement. The communication plan will serve as a framework to guide communication enhancements going forward. One area of focus will be this newsletter. Through your feedback, you have asked us to publish the *Community Letter* more frequently, and to include more information about all of the good and positive things happening in our school district. We will incorporate these thoughtful suggestions, and look forward to providing the Plainville community with an updated *Community Letter* in the fall. We encourage you to continue to share your thoughts, ideas, and feedback as we strive to provide an optimal and effective system of communication.

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Temporary Relocation Plan

The Board of Education offices will be moving from the Plainville High School building, enabling the high school renovation project to move forward in a timely and cost efficient manner. The temporary relocation plan is a cost effective measure that is expected to provide a net savings to the Town of Plainville of between \$300,000 - \$500,000. This projected savings is based on the costs that would have been incurred to lease / purchase portable structures or prepare the lower level of the middle school to accommodate the Board of Education offices for the duration of the building renovation projects.

Department Relocations The Office of the Superintendent, Business Office, Human Resources, and the Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment Office will be temporarily located in the lower level of the Municipal Center of Plainville, 1 Central Square. The Special Education, Adult and Continuing Education, and Volunteer Services departments will be temporarily located in the lower level of the original Linden Street School building.

Target Schedules The Business Office has moved to the municipal center. Remaining departments are slated to move during June, with the Office of the Superintendent scheduled to move over the summer.

Board of Education Telephone/Fax Numbers will remain the same:
Telephone (860) 793-3200. Fax (860) 747-6790.

Mailing Addresses The mailing addresses for all departments moving to the municipal center will remain: **47 Robert Holcomb Way, Plainville, Connecticut, 06062.** The United States Postal Service will forward all mail to the appropriate temporary department locations within the municipal center. The mailing address for departments moving to the lower level of the original Linden Street School building should be addressed as follows: **(Department Name) C/O Linden Street School, 69 Linden Street, Plainville, CT 06062.**

The Long Range Plan

Major Efforts Over the Summer

The High School Auditorium project should be completed this summer, enabling us to reopen the facility for the new school year.

Phase I of the major renovations for the Louis Toffolon Elementary School and the Plainville High School will get underway this summer. The first step is the removal of asbestos containing materials in large areas of both buildings. The Facilities staff is preparing the original Linden Street School building to accommodate Toffolon students for the next school year, while the Toffolon school building undergoes renovation. Toffolon students will share the Linden Street School site and some of the new Linden facilities.

The \$16 million dollar funding for the project at Toffolon School is below estimated project costs put together by the architect and construction manager. The Building Committee is working on plans to either lower costs or seek additional funding through a referendum. Watch the news for more information on this topic in the coming weeks.

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...Alan Schutz, Business Manager

Alan Schutz is presently the business manager for Plainville Community Schools, serving in this capacity since 1988. Prior to this role, he was a staff accountant for Hartford Public Schools. Schutz holds a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Connecticut and a master of science degree from the University of Hartford.

What are your primary responsibilities as business manager?

In my role as business manager, I am responsible for all of the non-instructional functions of the school district. Specifically, I oversee the daily operations of district budgeting and accounting, facilities management, purchasing, food services, and transportation.

What do you enjoy most about your position?

I find the variety inherent to the position most enjoyable - everything from addressing a leaky roof to participating in the selection of the new point of sale computer system for the schools' cafeterias. This breadth and diversity associated with the role of business manager provides an exciting and interesting mix.

What do you find most challenging about being business manager?

The budget process, in its entirety, is the most challenging facet of the position. This includes creating and submitting the budget, breaking it apart for analysis, putting it back together with the final figures, and then ultimately operating each year at the established level of financial allocations. Yet, while the budget process is the most consuming and challenging aspect of my role, I am fortunate to have a great deal of support throughout the entire budget process, both from our district administrators and the business office staff, including my assistant, Cynthia Vibert, who I have worked side by side with for the past 18 years – it's truly a team effort!

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

DR. KATHLEEN BINKOWSKI, SUPERINTENDENT, is the recipient of the 2006 CAPSS Presidential Award from the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents, presented to a leader whose commitment and dedication has greatly enhanced the quality of life and learning for youth...**THE PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ BAND** won first place and the concert band took third place at a band competition held recently in Virginia...**JOYCE GOLDBERG, LIBRARY INFORMATION TEACHER** at Wheeler Elementary School has been named the 2007 Teacher of the Year...**PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL SCIENCE TEACHER KEN FUSCO** has been selected as the National Association of Biology Teachers Outstanding Biology Teacher...**THE PLAINVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS’ DISTRICT WEBSITE** was selected to receive an award of excellence from the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE)...**PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL’S NICK CAVALLARO** won both the CIAC Class S title and Connecticut State Open Tournament in Wrestling, finishing his senior year undefeated...**THE COALITION FOR POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT** received the United Way of West Central Connecticut’s Special Initiative Award, for unselfish efforts and collaborative impact of a special initiative in the community...**TAHLYA FARRINGTON, SECOND GRADE TEACHER AT LINDEN STREET SCHOOL,** has been selected to participate in a study trip to Ghana (Africa) this summer as part of her master of science in educational foundations and policy issues coursework through Central Connecticut State University...**NINE WHEELER SCHOOL FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS** attended the statewide Connecticut Invention Convention held at the University of Connecticut. Ashleigh Dawson and Matt Sauvron received awards for their inventions of a bike bottle safety kit and a game system/cord separator, respectively...**THE PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM** won the Division IV Connecticut State Championship title, its first state championship since 1961...**THE MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE’S TECHNOLOGY STUDENT ASSOCIATION** traveled to the Coast Guard Academy in New London for a day of leadership training...**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS** created a Data Wall at each school depicting progress made over the school year in writing and mathematical problem solving. Each Data Wall is proudly on display in the elementary school buildings...**SARETH BURGESS, MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE, ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE TUTOR,** has been offered a Fulbright-Hays Fellowship, and has been accepted into the Advanced Study of Khmer (ASK) Summer Abroad Program through the University of Hawaii at Manoa. As part of the ASK Program, Sareth will participate in a six-week language study component at the Royal University of Phnom Penh, Cambodia.

Adult Ed: Summer School

Plainville Summer School will offer a variety of courses to secondary school students. Successful completion of the courses will provide students with a grade and credit toward graduation. In addition, the following Adult and Continuing Education mandated summer programs will be available: GED preparation, Credit Diploma Program, English as a Second Language, and Adult Basic Education Reading and Writing. A summer session of Driver’s Education is also available. Registration for summer programs will be held at the Office of Adult and Continuing Education, located within Plainville High School through June, and classes will begin in July. For detailed information, please call: (860)793-3209.

Cafeterias Go Hi-Tech

The Plainville Community Schools’ cafeterias will soon go hi-tech with the installation of a computerized point of sale system. This system will replace traditional cash registers and eliminate the need for lunch tickets, lunch charges, and cash handling. Additional advantages include the ability for parents to monitor their children’s eating habits and spending via usage reports. This new system will also streamline the lunch line process, resulting in shorter wait times for students to get lunch. Installation is slated to begin in June and will be phased in to each school cafeteria. Additional information about the point of sale system may be found on the district website at: www.plainvilleschools.org.

The Board of Education

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.

School Wellness Policy in the Works

In response to a federal requirement that all districts establish a local “school wellness policy” by the first day of school in 2006, a committee met throughout the year to conduct a needs assessment and draft a policy that:

- incorporates goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities designed to promote student wellness;
- includes nutrition guidelines with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity;
- establishes a plan for measuring implementation of the local wellness policy; and
- involves parents, students, representatives of the school food authority, the school board, school

administrators, and the public in development of the local wellness policy. The needs assessment revealed many strengths in the school district including:

- the availability of low-fat food choices in our cafeterias;
 - a strong physical education curriculum and professional development; and
 - a health education program for students in grades 7-9.
- In addition to these findings, the committee uncovered several areas that should be explored further. These include increasing the amount of physical education time for students at all levels, additional professional development in health education, a breakfast program for students, and communicating the importance of healthy eating to

faculty, students, parents and the community. “They serve us healthy foods, but we don’t always make the best choices,” stated one student member of the committee. “The same is true in P.E. Not all of the kids take it seriously, and we need to learn lifelong physical fitness skills,” added another student.

Next steps are to present the policy to the Board of Education for approval, followed by the development of administrative regulations for implementing the policy. The district’s School Nutrition and Physical Activity Committee will also hold a community forum to raise awareness and gain input from the community.