



Plainville Board of Education's Community Letter

Spring 2014

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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In early March, two Plainville High School students (McKenna Rita and Jacob Masco), Superintendent Kitching, and several board members attended the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education's (CABE) annual "Day on the Hill." This event provides board members, administrators and students the opportunity to speak to their legislators on topics regarding education in Connecticut.

The day began at the Bushnell's Autorino Great Hall with Governor Malloy's remarks concerning this year's proposed budget and other education initiatives. We also heard from Senator Toni Boucher, Senator Beth Bye and Representative Andrew Fleischmann (Education Committee Chairman). Representatives from CABE briefed attendees on issues they will be focusing on during the current legislative session. Everyone then moved to the State Legislative Office Building for either a face-to-face meeting with their legislators or to attend an education break-out session. Our students got to experience, first hand, what it is like to actually

voice their questions and concerns about their school district to the state leaders directly involved in making education decisions. It was a wonderful opportunity for our students to get a glimpse into our state government at work.

Spotlight on...Plainville High School



AN INTERVIEW BY STUDENT AUTHORS:
ARIELLE LOZEFSKI, STEPHEN GALLO AND JOHN CROWE

WHAT IS FIRST ROBOTICS?

FIRST is a worldwide organization, which is an acronym: For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology. FIRST provides an opportunity to explore Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) which are all important to success in FIRST Robotics challenges. FIRST puts together competitions where teams bring their robots to compete in certain challenges, which vary from year to year.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO PREPARE A TEAM FOR A FIRST ROBOTICS COMPETITION?

"Blood, sweat, and tears" - John Crowe

The team has six weeks to build and program a robot which needs to be specifically designed to accomplish the task set forth by FIRST.

WHAT QUALITIES MUST A MEMBER OF THE DIGITAL DEVILS TEAM #5129 HAVE AND HOW WILL THOSE SKILLS BE HELPFUL LATER IN LIFE?

The people on a robotics team have to be able to work cooperatively with each other in a team environment. They need to be devoted, willing to give up free time to complete the "bot." Members also have to be good problem solvers, who are able to learn from their mistakes (like when your robot drives in circles when it is supposed to go straight).

WHO CAN JOIN A FIRST ROBOTICS TEAM?

Anyone interested in any of the STEM fields should join.

Informational Showcase Highlights District Programs / Initiatives



chromebook demonstration, the truth about Common Core State Standards, 21st Century Skills, what to expect from the Smarter Balanced Assessment, changes to the school calendar this year, survey results on school climate, student success and achievement in Plainville, the 2014-15 budget, the energy conservation program, and school renovation projects. Refreshments were provided by PHS Culinary Arts faculty member Chef Al Lesage and a number of high school students in the Culinary Arts classes.

Plainville Community Schools hosted a Superintendent's Update and Informational Showcase on April 1 for parents and the community. The event featured an overview by Superintendent Dr. Jeffrey Kitching and Assistant Superintendent Dr. Maureen Brummett, on a variety of district programs, initiatives, and the 2014-15 budget. Attendees visited a number of informational tables represented by district administrators and staff who provided additional updates on district programs and initiatives including: full day kindergarten, expansion of pre-k opportunities in 2014-15, a "hands-on "



Let's Chat with...Laurie Peterson, BOE Member



What is your top priority as a Board member?

To keep the momentum of the past two years moving in the same positive direction for the students, schools and the taxpayer

Why did you want to become a Board member?

I was asked and felt it was time to do more than just talk about my concerns for the students and taxpayers of Plainville

What is the biggest challenge facing public education today?

Keeping our students moving forward using current technology and an engaging curriculum in a time when BOEs are finding they have to do more with less

What have you enjoyed most about being a Board member so far?

Working with dedicated BOE members and a trusting community

What is your vision for Plainville Community Schools?

To be the standard that all other schools would want to aspire to

What do you feel will be your greatest contribution to the Board of Education?

To be part of the team that keeps looking for ways to improve in all areas of our responsibility as BOE members

Read Across America

Students and staff across the Plainville school district recently celebrated Read Across America, a national reading and motivational awareness program that commemorates Dr. Seuss' (Theodor Seuss Geisel) birthday, and is sponsored locally by the Education Association of Plainville.



Dr. Kitching reads to students at Frank T. Wheeler Elementary School as part of the school's RAA celebration.

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

PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

The **PHS Interact Club** hosted their annual "senior prom" for local senior citizens who enjoyed dinner, music, dancing, and more...The **PHS Cheerleaders** recently won the CCC South Championship for the second consecutive year...students in the **DECA program** attended the 62nd Career Development Conference where they competed against other DECA chapters from across the state, and placed in a number of events. **Kristen Couture** placed second, **Joey Esposito** and **Leslie Mrozcek** placed third, **Jennifer Juarez**, **Storm Caswell**, **Timothy Sullivan**, and **Paige Pratt** were all finalists in their events. **Kasey Mahan** and **Alex Kane** also placed in the national contest provided by National DECA. Six of the DECA students are eligible to attend the national competition in May.

MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE

A group of female **MSP students**, together with **Assistant Principal Aimee Roberts**, recently attended TechSavvy, a day long, hands-on program focused on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) held at Central Connecticut State University, sponsored by the American Association of University Women, (AAUW)... As part of the sixth grade study of the Iditarod and sled dogs, **MSP sixth graders** enjoyed a visit from Plainville resident Joan Kaczmarczyk of the Moondance Huskies Sled Dog Team, and her sled dog, Lilly...**MSP students**, under the direction of art teachers **Laura Meehan** and **Lori Vigue**, designed and created posters for Scholastic Art's Poster Contest celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the 50th Anniversary of the March on Washington. **Jade Humphrey**, **Hannah Lennon**, **Zoe Leider**, **Nathan Michalek**, and **Morgan Rogers** won the school wide contest and their entries were sent to represent Plainville in the national contest...**The Friends of Rachel Club** raised over \$900 to donate to the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society through their "Pennies for Patients" initiative.

LINDEN STREET SCHOOL

Students and staff at Linden recently enjoyed a "Recess Rocks and Dental Assembly" with representatives from Community Healthcare. The program included dental health trivia with prizes, recess rocks songs, and dance freeze with Mr. Tooth...**Linden scholars** have read 9,000+ books to date and Petco will donate that number of bones to animal shelters...**The Reading Partners Program** recently received a generous donation from the Plainville VFW Madeley Roberts Post 574's Community Outreach Program. Madeley Roberts Post 574, which proudly supports veterans, the military and our community, donated 30 books to the **Reading Partner program's students**.

FRANK T. WHEELER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The annual **Wheeler Invention Convention** was held on March 13th featuring fourth grader inventors. Several students will represent the school at the state-wide Connecticut Invention Convention (CIC) at the University of Connecticut in May...**Wheeler fourth-graders** visited the Connecticut Science Center where students viewed the "In The Lost Egypt" exhibit featuring mummies and ancient artifacts, dug for clues, built a pyramid, and read ancient hieroglyphics. The group also ventured into the "Invention Dimension" - a hands-on gallery featuring inventions and inventors from Connecticut...The New Britain Youth Theater recently held a "share-day" performance at Wheeler. **Members of the Wheeler student drama group** performed scenes from William Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream." This group of first through fifth graders worked with the New Britain Youth Theater for eight weeks at Wheeler as part of the Wheeler After School Program.

LOUIS TOFFOLON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Toffolon recently hosted two family math nights coordinated by district Elementary Instructional Leader, **Phil Sanders**... **Students in several classes at Toffolon** enjoyed a visit from Tunxis Community College dental hygienist student Luisa Gonzalez, who shared a lesson on cavities and dental hygiene...Ten **Toffolon faculty members** were selected to win school supply bags as part of the Cellular Connection / Verizon Wireless national Teachers Rock Supply Giveaway. As part of the program, residents in the community of each participating store supported the program by rounding their purchases up to the nearest dollar and donating the difference to the Teachers Rock Program.

DISTRICT

At the March 10 Plainville Board of Education meeting, **Plainville's Board members** were honored as part of "Board Appreciation Month" including a mini "concert" by Linden and Toffolon musicians, and a number of student made gifts of appreciation from each Plainville school...Read Across America was celebrated across the district with a number of guest readers and reading related activities...Elementary Literacy Instructional Leader **Tawana Graham-Douglas** was recently honored as part of the Queen Ann Nzinga Center's fifth annual Exceptional Women celebration, which coincides with Women's History Month. The Center's PRIDE program connects young girls to hometown heroes...**Eugene Millerick** in memoriam will be inducted into the Memorial Wall of Honor on April 21, for his dedication and volunteer service to the educational community.



**ENROLLMENT
REMAINS
OPEN!**

Plainville Adult and Continuing Education offers the following free programs: Adult Basic Education, Citizenship Preparation, English as a Second Language, and High School Completion. Enrichment courses, held evenings and moderately priced, are available in May: Succulent Plant Floral Arrangement, The Beatles: Band of the 60's, Budgeting & Planning for Emergencies, Tackling Debt, and Worddifference Workshop. **Pre-registration is required for all classes, please call (860)793-3209**



Volunteer Program Award Winners Announced

Mr. Rob Cayer, a mentor at the Middle School of Plainville, is the recipient of the *Dick Ronalter Mentor of the Year Award*. Rob mentors at the Middle School of Plainville. He has mentored for two years and brings a positive outlook and enthusiasm to his mentee each week. A staff member shares, "This winter was very challenging due to all of our snow days, but Rob did not miss a beat. He's dependable and polite and it was great to see the excitement in [his mentee's] face with each visit!"

Mr. Tom Arcari, a tutor at Plainville High School, is the recipient of the 2013-14 *Plainville Community Schools' Volunteer of the Year Award*. A staff member shares, "25 years ago, Tom began volunteering as the PHS football statistician. Tom's "love of the game" and his desire to give back goes beyond "crunching numbers." Tom selfishly gives back both on and off the field. For the past nine years, and still today, he serves as a math tutor to students at Plainville High School."

Awards will be presented at the annual volunteer recognition program on April 22.

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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.