



# Plainville Board of Education's Community Letter

Spring 2015

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

## Message from the Board of Education

On March 25 several of the Plainville Board of Education members, Superintendent Kitching, and high school students Sydney McGough and Jacob Masco attended the "CABE Day on the Hill" event at the Hartford Capitol, where the group heard about education issues that the state legislature will be discussing in the current session. We also had the chance to talk with our state representatives and advocate on behalf of all our students.

Included (right) are some of the bills that CABE (Connecticut Association of Boards of Education) will be tracking in the 2015 legislative session. CABE will follow these and many other issues on behalf of school board members because they directly affect district budgets, employer-employee relations and the governance authority of every board in the state.

**SB944** *Establishing a full-day Kindergarten requirement.*

**SB1059** *High School graduation requirements which would delay implementation of the new high school graduation requirements for one year, permit students to earn credit for college coursework completed during summer break and award a community service recognition award to students who complete fifty or more hours of community service.*

**SB1099** *The establishment of a commission to develop a vision and strategic plan for the CT Education System.*

**HB6835** *English language learners-This would require school districts to provide a program of bilingual education where there are 6 or more eligible students enrolled.*

**HB7018** *Alternative education-To define and establish alternative education. BOE may provide alternative education to students, in accordance with guidelines established by the SBOE.*

AN INTERVIEW BETWEEN PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL'S INTERACT CLUB PRESIDENT SHATSADA LOVAN AND INTERACT CLUB CO-ADVISOR STEVEN LEPAGE, ALSO PRINCIPAL OF PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

### Student Spotlight: Interact Club

**What is the Interact Club?** Interact Club, the high school branch of Rotary International, started four years ago at the request of former student, Emma Carpenter. The club's focus is on community service and humanitarian relief efforts. Over the last four years, the Plainville Interact Club has committed itself to dozens of service projects and raised thousands of dollars for local and international community projects.

**How do you feel that Interact has helped the local community?** Over the winter, the Plainville Rotary and Interact Clubs staffed the New Britain Salvation Army Soup Kitchen by serving about 60 individuals on five different Sundays. During the spring, we also hold an annual Senior Citizen Prom that has helped to build a bridge between high school students and local senior citizens. It's amazing to see how excited both groups are at this event. As principal and advisor I'm proud to see how 35 or more club members pull together to coordinate this fun themed event filled with food, music, decorations, and prizes in addition to superlatives such as Prom King and Queen, Life of the Party, and Best Dressed. (Continued on page 4, see "Interview")



PHS Interact Club members painting a shed built by the club at Trumbull park.

## Budget News

At the Plainville Board of Education's February 2015 meeting, they adopted a budget proposal for the 2015-2016 school year that included a 2.5% increase in funding over the current year's budget. After reviewing the Board proposed increase, the Town Council made an additional reduction of \$100,000, bringing the overall Board budget for next year to \$34,366,736, an overall increase of 2.2%. Once again this year the budget represents a collaborative effort between the school and town administration, the Board of Education, and the Town Council.

Under the direction of Superintendent Jeffrey Kitching, over the past several years, Plainville Community Schools has followed a budget development process referred to as the "Three Rs." Each year this process charges district administrators to review every resource, program, service and initiative across the school district before decisions are made on "Reprioritizing, Reallocating and Reinvesting," ensuring that the district is responsibly investing in items that will produce the greatest return on our educational investment. The "Three R" process also assists in providing

a budget that is connected and tightly aligned to the mission, goals, and objectives outlined in the Board of Education's Strategic Plan and the school district's Vision.

The educational plan supported by the Board's proposed 2.2% increase to the 2015-16 budget includes no new initiatives. Rather, it provides only the funding needed to sustain current successful educational programs and maintain school facilities. A review of budget increases over the last four years provides an important perspective. Since the 2011-12 school year, budget increases year-to-year have been 0%, 1.1%, 0.9% and 0.7%, - a total increase over four years of approximately 2.7%. During that same four-year period, it is estimated by the U.S. Bureau of Statistics that the cost of providing public education in the United States increased over 19%. The Board of Education's budget process has allowed Plainville to avoid over four million dollars in expenses over that time, while providing important new programs, high quality teaching and learning, and increases in student achievement.

### Let's Chat With...Aimee Roberts of MSP

Aimee Roberts,  
Assistant Principal,  
Middle School of Plainville



#### What attracted you to the position of assistant principal at the middle school?

Completing my administrative certification was very exciting. When the position of assistant principal opened up at the middle school, it was an opportunity I could not pass up.

#### What are your responsibilities as assistant principal?

I spend a good part of each day on student support and student discipline. I work closely with the Student Support Team, school counselors and special education teachers to develop and implement behavior and academic success plans. Other responsibilities include state testing, data collection, personnel development committee

work, faculty observation and evaluation, family communications and finally, cafeteria and bus duties.

#### What is your top priority as assistant principal?

My top priorities are student safety, student achievement, student well being, faculty well being and growth. It is a top priority personally to strive daily to be a positive example to the young women in the school.

#### How would you describe your leadership style?

Mutual respect and professionalism. I trust and support the professionals I work with each day and I hope that my work with faculty, students, and parents frees up their time and energy to pour into their work with students.

## Adult Education

Enrollment remains open for no cost mandated programs:

- Adult Basic Education
- Citizenship Preparation
- English as a Second Language
- High School Completion

The following spring enrichment courses are still available at PHS:

#### LUSH DISH GARDEN PLANTER

Create a beautiful accent piece with flowers & plants.  
May 5 / 5:30-7pm / \$50pp

#### EDIBLE LANDSCAPING

Consultation, lecture, and fresh garden samples.  
May 13 / 5-7pm / \$30pp

Please call Plainville Adult and Continuing Education for further program information.  
**(860) 793-3209**

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

### PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

Naturalist Scott Tucker visited **science students** to discuss native organisms. Tucker, who is known for his television program "Expedition New England," has done a number of mini documentaries about various indigenous vertebrates...Faculty member **Mark Chase** recently coordinated the SeaPerch competition in the school's pool area. **Chase's Engineering class**, along with students from several area school districts participated in the event...**Visual Arts students** received honors at the *2015 CT Regional Scholastic Arts Awards Exhibition* in the areas of drawing, ceramics and digital art including: **Suomia Dode**, grade 12, Silver Key- Ceramics, **Olivia Burns**, grade 12, Gold Key-Drawing and Illustration, **Amy Couch**, grade 12, Silver Key-Drawing and Illustration, **Katie Schmidt**, grade 10, Honorable Mention-Drawing and Illustration, **Celine Bangloy**, grade 12, Honorable Mention-Digital Art, and **Zachary White**, grade 10, Honorable Mention-Digital Art...150 students were honored with a "*Breakfast of Champions*" hosted by the high school's **Physical Education Department**, to recognize students for their outstanding efforts in increasing overall State fitness scores...The PHS **Science Department** received a grant from the Petit Family Foundation to support several initiatives in the area of Science, Technology, Engineering and Math.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE

The **MSP Jazz Band** was invited to perform for the Department of Children & Families *Annual Black History Month Celebration* at the Albert J. Solnit Center North Campus in East Windsor, CT...**11 students** earned spots in the *CT Music Education Association's Northern Regional Festival* for Middle School...Local dog sled runner Joan Kaczmarczyk visited with sixth graders to discuss the care and training of sled dogs and racing...**The Friends of Rachel Club** dedicated a month to raise \$1,950 for the Connecticut Chapter of the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society for Pennies for Patients...The **Robotics Program** won several awards at the *CT State VEX IQ Robotics Championship* including the highest "Excellence Award"...MSP music teacher **Laurel Schwartz** was selected by the editor of "Teaching Music" magazine, to be the subject of an article entitled "Classrooms."

### LINDEN STREET SCHOOL

Classrooms participated in the "Lunacy Challenge" during the month of March to engage **students and staff** in positive ways...The **school community** is participating in the "One School-One Book" program this year with the book, *The Lemonade War*. The program is designed to create a shared reading experience within a single elementary school community and will feature a visit with author Jacqueline Davies in May...As part of Linden Street School's "Monday Moves and Hallway Grooves" program, **students** are charting their physical activity and healthy habits on a fitness calendar. Each **student** who participates receives a certificate and a number of special events are held including a dance party, extra outdoor recess, and more.

### FRANK T. WHEELER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Faculty member **Jennifer Murrhy** served as part of the state committee for redrafting the CT Social Studies frameworks. The new frameworks will emphasize historical thinking skills and an inquiry model for learning about the past...Wheeler faculty member **Amy Mahtaney's third grade class members** are serving as "Book Buddies" to **kindergartners** in **Kirsten Penner's** kindergarten class. The third graders are helping the kindergartners work on retelling stories...**Kindergartners** celebrated the "100th day of school" with activities including counting by ones and tens up to 100, making hats with ten strips of ten, and counting 100 steps in the hallway...**Fourth graders** displayed their inventions, created to solve a "real life problem," in a science fair format at the annual *Invention Convention*.

### LOUIS TOFFOLON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Members of **The Toffolon Select Choir** and **The Jazz Band**, under the direction of music teachers **Greg Wilfrid** and **Michael Boncimino**, performed at the Hartford Wolf Pack hockey game at the XL Center in Hartford...**Students** participated in the "Jump Rope for Heart" fundraiser sponsored by the American Heart Association and organized by faculty member **Rob Silliman**. Students collected \$4,650 in donations to support ongoing heart research and treatment...Students **Dakota-Marie Dinielli** (Music) and **Mikayla Thibeault** (Visual Art) were honored for their excellence in Music and Visual Art at the "*16th Annual Connecticut Association of Schools Celebration of the Arts*" held at the Aqua Turf in Southington...**Kindergarten students** and **teachers** visited the Connecticut Resource Recovery Authority Trash Museum in Hartford.

### DISTRICT

**Fifth grade student leaders** representing **Linden, Toffolon, and Wheeler elementary schools** attended the *Connecticut Association of Schools 22nd Annual Student Leadership Training Conference* at Naugatuck Community College in Waterbury...Members of the school district's **mentor program** gathered at PHS for a night of bingo and fun. **Volunteer mentors** and their **student mentees** came together for this mid-year mentor program activity that provides an opportunity for participants to visit with each other outside of the school day, and enjoy a group activity...**Student art work from Plainville Community Schools** was on display at the New Britain Museum of American Art from April 14-19...**Plainville Community Schools** launched the new **+KIK Peer Mentoring program** pairing **Plainville High School juniors** with **eighth graders at the Middle School** to serve as positive role models and help with the transition to high school...The Memorial Wall of Honor ceremony was held on April 13 to honor this year's inductees in memoriam **Frank D. Steffany** and **Walter J. Majsak**...**Plainville Community Schools' volunteers Linel Noble** and **John Legato** were honored on March 4 at the *Connecticut Association of Schools Volunteer Banquet* held at the Aqua Turf in Southington.



Students and staff across the Plainville school district celebrated Read Across America, a national reading and motivational awareness program that commemorates Dr. Seuss' (Theodore Suss Geisel) birthday. Pictured above are Middle School of Plainville students enjoying a book together in honor of Read Across America.

*(Interview ... continued from page 1)*

**What was the club's most recent involvement in the community?** We recently helped to build and paint a shed at Trumbull Park for the Plainville Little League. The Plainville Rotary Club purchased all of the materials for the shed and the PHS construction teacher and classes along with some Interact Club members and advisors helped to build and paint the shed. It was nice to be able to collaborate to help improve a local organization's facility.

**What do you find to be the greatest benefit of Interact Club?** Interact brings out the best qualities in its members. Positive character is exhibited by each of our students for the benefit of others. Despite having extremely busy schedules, many of the members learn the importance of making time to help others and better their community. These are lessons that all students should learn in high school.

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**PLAINVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

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 Superintendent of Schools

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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.