



Plainville Board of Education's

# Community Letter

Spring 2016

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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[www.plainvilleschools.org](http://www.plainvilleschools.org)

Plainville Community Schools has so many wonderful events and programs that are presented throughout the school year. One of these events that should not be missed is the annual Superintendent's Information Showcase. It will be held in the Plainville High School Cafeteria from 6:30-8pm on Wednesday, April 20, 2016. The program will feature information and updates for parents and community members on a variety of school related topics including Discovery Education Tech Books, Elementary Wellness, Music Programs, Strategic Planning and the Building Projects (MSP, Wheeler and PHS paving). There will also be a special presentation by two of the district's teachers who will demonstrate how Chromebooks are being integrated into teaching and learning. The program will begin with a presentation by the new Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Maureen Brummett briefly explaining the night's agenda. Those that are attending will be able to move from table to table gathering information on topics that are of interest to them. District staff members will be on-hand to answer questions. This event is open to the public.

### Spotlight on... Plainville High School

*Written by: Mackenzie Litke, PHS student*

Each year for the last three years, two PHS students are chosen to participate in the Junior Achievement Academy. Students are selected by Principal LePage based on insights from teachers to determine who would be well suited for this business and enterprise challenge. The goal of the Junior Achievement Academy is to provide students with a real-world experience in development of all aspects of a business through the formation of an actual startup company. This program requires a weekly commitment and meeting at the Stanley Black & Decker headquarters in New Britain.

Some key elements of this challenge include choosing a Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer, President of Marketing, Director of Finance, and a Supply Chain Manager. PHS junior Angela Zheng is a member of the finance team and Lian-Wei Yuan (also a junior) is a member of the supply chain team. "This program is a really great program for students who want to pursue a career in the business field," said Zheng who was very excited to take part in the program. The company that Zheng and Yuan helped create is called braceLIT. The product they are marketing is a bracelet that is also a USB charging cable, able to charge both An-

droid and Apple products. Chargeable products include the iPhone (5th generation and up), iPad, Samsung Galaxy, HTC One and more." This bracelet, when detached, has two different ends. One end goes into the cellular device and the other end goes into a power source, such as a portable charger, any kind of computer/laptop, or a charging cube. Once connected, the cellular device is charging," Yuan explains. Both Yuan and Zheng hope that this product succeeds. Members of the Junior Achievement Academy companies actually have a chance to make and share profits as a result of their business ventures. "This is a terrific opportunity for our students to get involved in real-world practices, applying the global competencies and skills learned at PHS in authentic and meaningful experiences," commented PHS Principal LePage.

*Angela Zheng & Lian-Wei Yuan,  
Plainville High School juniors*



## Elementary Families Enjoy STEM Nights!

Over 550 students and family members from the Linden, Toffolon and Wheeler elementary schools recently attended Family STEM Nights. These nights were funded by a grant written by Elementary Math/Science Instructional Leader, Phil Sanders through the Plainville Community Fund at the Main Street Community Foundation. STEM focuses on science, technology, engineering and math instruction. The goal of the family STEM Nights was to spark interest within these areas and help launch the next generation of scientists. The activities for these nights were designed for students to experience science, technology, engineering and math through inquiry, exploration and problem solving. Sanders, together with fellow district faculty members Alicia Atterrato and Reggie McConachie planned, organized and facilitated the programs. Also, a number of Plainville High School students volunteered to support this event. Students and their families enjoyed working together, which led to rich conversations and understanding.



Let's Chat With... Dr. Jeffrey C. Kitching



*Following a five year tenure as Superintendent of Plainville Community Schools, Dr. Kitching has accepted the position of Executive Director of Education Connection, one of Connecticut's Regional Education Service Centers, which serves over 30 school districts in western and northwestern Connecticut.*

### **What has been the most significant accomplishment in your educational career in Plainville?**

Unquestionably it is the changes to the culture and climate in our schools and throughout this community. Our administrative team, in partnership with the Board of Education, has been able to set a professional culture in Plainville, and as a result, create a positive school climate for our students, faculty, staff and parents. That culture has spread to the community, and shows up in the support we see for the many new initiatives we have established. Without the changes in culture and climate, things like full-day kindergarten, Chromebooks, curriculum renewal, and professional learning advances (to name a few), would have never happened.

### **What did you find most challenging about serving as Superintendent?** That's easy...snow days.

It's the one thing superintendents are known for, and one that always leaves half the people involved upset with you. You are wide awake at 4:00 AM trying to predict the New England weather, and student safety hangs in the balance. You make the best possible decision given the information you have, knowing full well that many will be upset with your decision. I will not miss snow days.

**What do you feel was your greatest contribution to Plainville Community Schools?** I hope it was getting everyone to see how amazing our school system really is. We have highlighted many positive changes in Plainville over the last five years, but the foundation for that work had been established before I arrived. This school system has talented and hardworking professionals, committed to this community. I've worked very hard over the last five years to show everyone that *"Plainville is getting it right!"*

**What will you miss most about serving as Superintendent in Plainville?** The incredible people I have had the pleasure of working with, and working in a school district with such a strong sense of community. There are very few communities like Plainville, where a superintendent gets to lead such dedicated staff, and has a community that supports the work you do. Plainville is a special place where the motto, *"Once a Blue Devil, always a Blue Devil"* really means something.



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

### PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

On March 10, Plainville High School hosted the SEAPERCH competition in the pool area. The event was coordinated by faculty member **Mark Chase**. PHS **engineering students** participated in the day-long event which also featured over 140 student guests competing from school districts across Connecticut along with teachers, members of the Navy, and divers and faculty from Central Connecticut State University's Technology and Engineering Department...The "**Digital Devils**" **FIRST robotics team** recently participated in a competition at Wilby High School in Waterbury, Connecticut. The team members in both the high school's Robotics class and Robotics Club spent many hours completing the build and preparing for the competition...Plainville High School students **Kaylee Roux, Lauren Yorski, Katie Schmidt, Amanda Michaud, and Isabella Fil** were selected to receive honors in the 2016 Annual Connecticut Scholastic Art Awards program, in the areas of Drawing, Ceramics and Painting.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE

Plainville resident and dog sled runner, Joan Kaczmarczyk, visited the Middle School of Plainville to speak with **sixth graders** about the care and training of sled dogs and the sport of racing...Author William Gannon spoke with **seventh and eighth grade students** at the Middle School of Plainville on January 19. In his book *To Lose But Not Fail*, he discusses the many adversities he has faced, and highlights how he has overcome a number of difficult situations. During his visit to the Middle School, he shared the many lessons he has learned including persevering and promoting kindness...**Students in the high school's Science National Honor Society** spent the month of March volunteering their time to assist their **seventh grade peers** at the Middle School, as they prepared for a science fair held at the Middle School on April 7.

### LINDEN STREET SCHOOL

On February 26, the second annual "Kidathlon" was held at Linden. The hallways were transformed into a fun-filled obstacle course with climbing, jumping, running and more! More than **25 faculty and staff members** assisted with the event, attended by many **Linden students** and their families. In addition, over 260 pounds of paper goods and toiletries were collected for the Plainville Community Food Pantry. **The Student Council and Safety Patrol** met with PHS student leaders to discuss the positives and challenges of being a leader.

### LOUIS TOFFOLON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The **eighth grade Art Club** at the Middle School of Plainville collaborated on an art project with **Mrs. Carnick's kindergarten class at Toffolon**. Each **kindergarten student** paired up with an **eighth grade buddy** to draw imaginary creatures. The students swapped these drawings and added color to each other's art. The finished pieces are currently on display at Toffolon...A group of **Toffolon fourth and fifth graders** will participate in an after school hiking field trip to Sessions Woods in April as part of the school's Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS) program...As part of their Earth, Moon, and Sun Unit, Toffolon **fifth graders** participated in *Science into the Night*--an evening filled with astronomy, featuring local astronomers from the Astronomical Society of Greater Hartford, who shared their expertise of the night sky with the use of several large, high powered telescopes.

### FRANK T. WHEELER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The annual **Wheeler Invention Convention** was held on March 9. **Students** presented their inventions (or improvements on items that already exist) in a science fair format. Several students were selected to represent the school at the state-wide invention convention with other students in grades K-8 from over 100 schools in Connecticut at UCONN on April 30...**First graders** at Wheeler enjoyed a visit from scientist "Mr. Chris" from Hi Touch Hi Tech. The students investigated light and shadow, learning how light travels and shadows are formed as well as how light is reflected. The Hi Touch Hi Tech programs and science activities align with the curriculum for elementary education and offer elementary science in a hands-on, participatory manner.

### DISTRICT

The **Wheeler, Linden and Toffolon** school communities have embarked upon a collective reading initiative entitled "One Book, One Community." **Students in kindergarten through fifth grade** at each of the schools will read *Friendship According to Humphrey* by Betty G. Birney. The book will be read aloud by teachers in classrooms, along with discussions and a variety of book related activities...**36 fifth grade student leaders** were selected to participate in the 23rd annual Elementary Level Leadership Training Conference at Naugatuck Community College, sponsored by the Connecticut Association of Schools.

Happy 25th!

The district's Mentor Program, coordinated by Sue Bradley, celebrated its 25th anniversary on March 8, with a "Mentor Program Fun Night."



# Unified Basketball

The Middle School / High School Unified Basketball Team, coached by staff members Cindy Birdsall, Jeri Lynn Turkowitz, Amy Tennant, and Matt Gingras participated in a CIAC Tournament on March 9 at New Britain High School. The team enjoyed a great season leading up to the final tournament and had tremendous support from the PHS peer athletes who assisted with practices and games throughout the season!



## Read Across America

The Plainville school district celebrated a national reading and motivational awareness program that commemorates Dr. Seuss' birthday on March 2! Pictured below, Wheeler Elementary School Principal Andrew Batchelder celebrates Read Across America with elementary students.



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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.