



Community Letter

Summer 2009

Promote a challenging environment creating an extraordinary community of learners

Message from the Board of Education

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Another school year draws to a close and we reflect on the accomplishments of our students and staff. We congratulate the graduating seniors who are just beginning their lives and we bid farewell to many staff that are leaving to start a new chapter. No matter what our stage of life, we never stop learning and growing. Education affects our lives in so many ways; it is so much more than having the ability to earn a decent living. It is about learning tolerance, understanding where we came from and contemplating where we are going. It is about understanding concepts and understanding people. It is about respect for ourselves and our world.

It is said, "An educational system isn't worth a great deal if it teaches young people how to make a living but doesn't teach them how to make a life." The Board of Education knows there is much

more to our schools and students than test scores and statistics. We understand that children come to school to grow into citizens and not just students. We strive to continue to provide every opportunity to help each child be successful members of our society. We thank the community for their support in these challenging times and we continue to focus on doing what is best for all Plainville students.

Student Spotlight: Linden Street School

Save Our Earth



By: Emma Heslin

Do you know a lot about pollution? Well, I sure do. Let me explain. Our atmosphere is being threatened, now more than ever. That is why we need to do something. Our earth has done nothing but good things for people. Now it is getting destroyed because of our carelessness. The ozone is deteriorating because factories and cars release chemicals that destroy the ozone. The harmful list of what has been done includes CFCs, ODCs, greenhouse gases, burning fossil fuels, waste in the water, and chemicals in the soil. As the ozone hole enlarges this affects our earth by creating bad ozone.

We need to take action. We can call or contact factories we know or have heard of and ask what they are doing to find a substitute for CFCs and ODCs. The solution is simple. Just care for our planet. If we do this our earth will become cleaner for the future and our well being. Whether you as an individual do something to help global warming or pollution or act as a whole family, community, or state, everyone and anyone can participate. As you can see, young or old, anyone can make a difference! So get out there and HELP!!!

The Long Range Plan

The Long Range Plan for the school district intends to improve the school buildings.

The three building projects are almost 100% complete at this point. There are still some punch list items at both the high school and at Toffolon and the Wheeler roof work is complete with the exception of the window that needs to be replaced on the west side of the cafeteria.

At the high school, punch list items include replacing some cracked urinals, door hardware and some other smaller items. There are also some smaller roof related items at the high school that are currently being addressed.

At Toffolon, there is minimal painting and installation work that needs to be completed on the canopies in front of the school and there are some railings and ladders that need to be installed on the roof. The playground will be going out to bid very shortly and work should begin on that phase of the project soon after bids are returned and final contracts signed.

Also, Consulting Engineering Services (CES) is working hard at both the high school and Toffolon to address any remaining issues with the heating and air conditioning systems to insure that they are balanced and working properly.

Budget News

On April 28, the town budget was passed at referendum. This budget included a Board of Education budget of \$32,446,447 - or a 0.54% increase compared to the current year. This final budget reduces the Board of Education's 2009-10 approved budget of \$33,482,988 by \$1,036,541. On June 1, the Board of Education met to discuss reductions aimed at trimming their approved budget by the \$1,036,541 needed to meet the referendum approved spending level.

A number of employee groups agreed to wage and benefit concessions in an attempt to reduce the impact on educational resources. The administrators agreed to a five day furlough, elimination of their tax-sheltered annuity payments for one year and a health-savings account benefit option. The custodial union and other non-bargaining employees agreed to a wage freeze. As a result of these concessions, the district saved \$135,000. However, even after these concessions, reductions from the current level of services were made in many areas. Under the plan, 11 full-time equivalent teaching positions will be eliminated (three through retirement), one maintenance position will

be eliminated through retirement, one-half of two full-time equivalent office professional positions will be eliminated as well as an in-school suspension paraprofessional and one monitor at the high school.

Programmatically, Reading Recovery training and the Bushnell Program have been cut, both fall cheerleading and indoor track at the high school have been eliminated, as well as intramurals at both the middle school and high school. Also, the district will no longer continue offering late bus service. Finally, a number of school supply accounts, facilities items, and professional development and travel funding have been cut from the budget.

In all, Plainville's budget increase of 0.54% is below the statewide average of 1.04% and the statewide mean of 0.97% when compared to the 60 other towns that have reported their final budget figures in a recent survey. Towns around Plainville that have reported final budget increases include Plymouth (a 0.88% increase), Southington (a 1.30% increase) and Berlin (a 2.00% increase).

The budget was approved and finalized at the regularly scheduled BOE meeting on June 8.

Technology Today

Plainville Community Schools is committed to conserving resources, from solar panels to recycling. The Plainville Community Schools Technology Department is also doing its part as well. Computers are used for as long as possible, most for five to six years from purchase. When a computer is retired, it doesn't just get thrown into a landfill. It is picked up by a recycling company that dismantles the computer for reuse, in accordance with their zero landfill commitment. This service would be great at any price, but it is even better-- it is FREE for school systems. The Technology Department not only recycles, but also does its best to conserve power. Computers in the district are set to shut down at night and restart in the morning, Monday through Friday. The computers are also set to "sleep" when not in use. In the Plainville school district, every department, including technology, is doing their best to lower costs and reduce the carbon footprint.

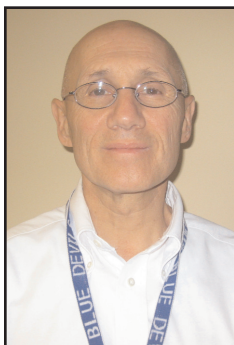
*Great things are happening in our school district all the time.
Following are some of these "good news" highlights:*

Middle School of Plainville Music Teacher Todd Helming has been named the 2009-10 Plainville Community Schools *Teacher of the Year*...**Wheeler students** celebrated Earth Day with a week's worth of activities coordinated by **fifth grade teacher Jen Murrphy**...**the Plainville High School Biomedical Club** volunteered to assist the Red Cross in hosting a blood drive at the high school where more than 70 students donated 48 pints of blood...**the Middle School of Plainville** recently held a Student - Teacher Basketball Game raising \$431 for the Wheeler Regional YMCA's "Strong Kids Campaign"...The United Way of West Central Connecticut's Youth Board, including **Plainville High School students Taylor Perun, John Egan, Kasey Olsen, Kristen Carroccia, and Ivana Schulman** recently sponsored a "Health and Wellness Forum" at Plainville High School for local middle school students...**Mark Bieber** has been named the 2008-09 *Plainville Community Schools Mentor of the Year* and **Sue Bradley** has been named the 2008-09 *Plainville Community Schools Volunteer of the Year* for their exceptional volunteer service...**The Plainville Adult and Continuing Education Program** received a grant from the Plainville Community Fund of the Main Street Foundation to offer summer classes in the area of Adult Basic Education and General Education Development...**Wheeler students Annie Clement, Gina D'Amico, Savannah Freitas, Michelle Grenier, Jenna Martino, and Kaylee Roux** participated in the All State Children's Choir Festival with students from 26 schools throughout Connecticut...**Plainville High School Science Teacher John Girard** collaborated with a Bristol Central High School Advanced Placement Biology Teacher to create and pilot an academic bowl review for students to prepare for the Advanced Placement Exam...**Toffolon students Steven Lewko, Alex Cal, Taylor Rogers, and Samantha Plourde** were chosen to present their "Claymation" productions at the Connecticut Education Computer Association's (CECA) Tech Expo...**Linden and Wheeler students** celebrated National Sport and Physical Education Week by participating in ACES, All Children Exercise Simultaneously on May 6...**Middle School of Plainville Technology Education Teacher Camille Westfall** received the *Harrison Baker Award* from the Connecticut Technology Education Association (CTEA) for her accomplishments and involvement in the field of Technology Education...**PHS DECA Chapter members Sebby Bordonaro and John Egan** achieved national finalist status at the International Career Development Conference held in Anaheim, California, competing against some of the best marketing students in the nation...**Middle School of Plainville eighth graders Michael Costantini and Allison Fangiullo** were honored for their scholarship and leadership in the school community at the Connecticut Association of Schools annual statewide Scholar-Leaders Banquet ...**Plainville Community Schools Business Manager Richard E. Carmelich III** received the Connecticut Association of School Building Officials (CASBO) 2009 *Rising Star Award* for outstanding contributions to the Business Management profession.... the Positive Behavior Support Program at the **Middle School of Plainville** was cited in a recent State Education Resource Center (SERC) report entitled "Positive Behavior Support, Data Report and Summary: A Look at Connecticut"...**Plainville High School senior Brandy Guarda** was selected as recipient of the YWCA New Britain *Women In Leadership Award*.

Adult Education - Grant Recipient

The Plainville Community Fund of the Main Street Community Foundation has issued a grant to Plainville Adult and Continuing Education. The funds will be used to offer summer classes at the Plainville Community Food Pantry, in the area of Adult Basic Education (ABE), and General Educational Development (GED). Classes will be open to Plainville residents only, over a six week period, July through August. Pre-registration is required. For further information, please call the Office of Adult and Continuing Education at (860) 793-3209.

Let's Chat With...Richard Keithan, Guidance Department



Richard Keithan
 retired on June 30

What lead you to this career?
 I decided to become a school counselor when I was a science teacher. I enjoyed helping students and talking to them about their problems.

What does a Guidance Counselor do? A school counselor's responsibilities are quite varied. Counselors do academic, career, college and personal counseling. They are also part of the special education and 504 planning teams.

Course scheduling is also a large task that is done behind the scenes.

What is your biggest accomplishment? I am most proud of being part of our school counseling team that was recognized by the Connecticut School Counselor Association for developing a Comprehensive School Counseling Program.

Where are Plainville's seniors continuing their education after graduation? Traditionally more students in Plainville have chosen college over trade school. Last year 52% went to four year colleges, 32% went to two year colleges and 10 % went to trade schools.

Have community colleges become more popular?
 We have seen an increase in the students choosing community college in the last few years. Quite often students have been accepted to four year universities, but have chosen the community college as a way to ease the financial burden that comes with many four year universities. Many community college students transfer to four year universities after two years.

Do you have any advice for incoming Freshmen?
 The best advice I can give to freshmen is to always give your best effort, do homework every night, and ask teachers for help. They should take advantage of the nightly online homework website and check the electronic progress reports every week. They should not wait until they get the official progress report or report card to find out their grade, by then they may be too far behind.

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 safe, caring learning environment that respects individual difference and rejects discrimination of any form
- that optimal achievement for all learners is a responsibility shared by home, school and community
- that all students, faculty, staff, and parents are accountable to participate and maintain a positive learning environment throughout the district
- a high quality curriculum emphasizes the arts, literacy, and technology
- effective communication and collaboration builds trust and respect