



Plainville Board of Education's Community Letter

Summer 2015

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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This past spring, Plainville Community Schools launched a new "Elementary Wellness Initiative" pilot program at all three elementary schools. To address the overall wellness of Plainville's students, the school district developed a plan to create additional periods of time throughout the day when all students in kindergarten through fifth grade are engaged in physical activities planned by each school's Physical Education teachers; each school will have additional trained staff on hand during lunch periods to address nutrition and making healthy choices. Each of the three elementary schools formed a committee to design and support the Elementary Wellness Initiative pilot, which served as a "test run" before the program is fully implemented during the 2015-16 school year. The goal of the program is to provide 60 minutes of physical activity each day, broken into short 10-20 minute blocks including two wellness segments, a recess-lunch block, and planned activities as students arrive to school each

day. A portion of the physical activity will be incorporated into Art, Music, Physical Education and Library. Stay tuned for additional information about the Elementary Wellness Initiative over the next school year. Have a great summer!

"I am a fire starter, sparking everything around to see what catches in the hearts of my students."

Tahlya Granja: Teacher of the Year

Plainville Community Schools has named Linden Street School second grade teacher Tahlya Granja as the 2015-2016 Teacher of the Year. Granja has been an educator at Linden for 11 years, teaching second grade. She is a member of the district's Technology Implementation Committee, the Language Arts Committee, the District Teacher Evaluation / Professional Development Committee, and helped run the After School Science Club at Linden. Granja also volunteers in a variety of capacities including serving as a volunteer at the Silver Lake Conference Center, during the Hole in the Wall Gang Traveler's Championship, and through her study abroad in Ghana, Africa. When asked how she inspires a life-long love of learning, Granja noted, "I am a fire starter, sparking everything around to see what catches in the hearts of my students. Somewhere, something will catch. It always does; that burning inner flame which is the unquenchable desire to learn more." Granja was honored at the June 8 Plainville Board of Education meeting.



Plainville's Teacher of the Year Tahlya Granja with her second grade class, Linden Street School Principal Paula Eshoo, and Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Jeffrey Kitching.

Let's Chat With... Vicki Trzcinski



Vicki Trzcinski, Director of Special Education and Pupil Services

What are your responsibilities? My biggest responsibility is to be sure that all school staff are meeting the legal requirements for special education, including evaluating students for suspected disabilities and creating and implementing student Individualized Education Plans (IEP's).

What are the primary goals of the Special Education Department? The Special Education Department continues to work closely with administrators and general education teachers to ensure every student can access the general education curriculum in the least restrictive environment. In most cases, we hope that environment is the general education classroom with peers.

What services are provided for Special Education students in Plainville? Plainville provides a continuum of services to meet the academic, communication, social, emotional, and independent living needs of all students with disabilities. We look at each student's individual strengths and needs and develop a plan (the IEP) that specifically describes any specially designed instruction the student needs to be successful in school. Examples of specially designed instruction might be specialized reading or math instruction, organizational skill instruction, social skills instruction, speech/language therapy, occupational or physical therapy, and even job coaching for older students.

What is your top priority? My first priority is to identify any student that is struggling to learn in school because of a disability. My second priority is to support classroom teachers to increase their "teacher tool box" of strategies and supports to meet all student needs in the classroom as much as possible.

District Volunteers Honored at Annual Recognition Program

Plainville Community School's annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner and Awards Program was held on May 6, at Plainville High School. This year's theme was "Mardi Gras: Let the Good Times Roll with Volunteers." More than 100 school volunteers, Board of Education members, administrators and staff attended the event, which provided an opportunity to thank Plainville's school volunteers for their time and commitment that they make to students across the district. Volunteer award winners were also recognized during the program.

The 2014-2015 Mentor of the Year recipient is Assistant Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Maureen Brummett, who mentors two students in the school system. Christine Kuzia, a volunteer in Plainville schools for 13 years, is the recipient of the 2014-2015 Volunteer of the Year Award. At the close of the program Volunteer Coordinator Sue Bradley presented volunteers with pins for years of service. Multiple volunteers were recognized for their 5, 10, and 15 years of service. Four volunteers were recognized for over 20 years of service in the Plainville school district.

(Pictured left are Christine Kuzia and Dr. Maureen Brummett)



Adult and Continuing Education to Offer Summer ESL Classes at the Food Pantry

Plainville Adult and Continuing Education will offer English as a Second Language Classes at the Plainville Community Food Pantry. The multi-level classes are cost-free, and will meet Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays, from 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. from July 15 through August 7, 2015. Classes are designed to assist students in a multi-level group atmosphere. With students who have little or no fluency in English, attention is given to learning the basic English skills that permit increased self-reliance in speaking the language. Students with this base knowledge will increase fluency in speaking, reading and writing. In addition, language structure, grammar, and punctuation are stressed. For further information and to register, please call **(860) 793-3209**.

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

PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

Seventeen **PHS students**, together with College and Career Readiness Center staff members **Sue Bradley** and **Rich Keithan**, attended the UConn Clinical Career Day at the UConn Medical Center...PHS athletes **Emily Duda** (volleyball and tennis) and **Nicholas Rodriguez** (football) were honored at the CAS-CIAC 32nd Annual Scholar Athlete Banquet...The **PHS Jazz Band**, under the direction of PHS Band Director **Dominic Talotta**, performed with several other local bands in the Cheshire High School Jazz Invitational...State Representative Elizabeth Boukus organized a visit to "Husky Day" at the State Capitol for a group of **Plainville High School Girls Varsity Basketball Team members**. The University of Connecticut men's and women's basketball, football and field hockey teams were honored as part of the event...**36 Plainville High School students**, together with faculty members **Brian Edge**, **Trevira Boatright** and Assistant Principal **Rosa Perez**, attended the Financial Reality Fair at Central Connecticut State University...**Plainville High School's Interact Club** hosted the third annual "Senior Prom." The prom, for local senior citizens, featured dinner, a DJ and dancing, a photo booth and "Paris, France" theme.

MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE

In recognition of Autism Awareness Month, **students at MSP created** an art installation. Under the guidance of art teachers **Lori Vigue** and **Laura Meehan**, the **Art Club** collaborated with students from **Stephanie Gagne's class**. Together, the students created small, blue ceramic stones, that once assembled, form the shape of a puzzle piece, the most universally recognized symbol for autism awareness...Nutmeg nominated author of *One For the Murphys* and *Fish in a Tree*, Lynda Mullaly Hunt, visited MSP, where she spoke with **sixth grade Reading and Language Art classes** and provided an interactive "writer's workshop" for 40 students. **Sixth graders** enjoyed a performance of the "Chariot of the Sun" presented by Mr. Jeffrey Benoit. Benoit, using a combination of poetry, masks, mime and audience participation, explored the heroes, gods, and monsters of Greek mythology and brought classic Greek tales to life for the students.

LINDEN STREET SCHOOL

Fifth graders at Linden extended their learning about energy conservation with a "hands-on" lesson led by students in **Leanne Nolan's Advanced Placement Environmental Science Class** from **Plainville High School** and several volunteers who shared their expertise from General Electric...**Linden preschool students in Kate Wizeman's class** enjoyed a collection of wooden toys built and donated by **Plainville High School student Will Holiman**...**Linden second grade teacher Tahlya Granja** was named the *2015-16 Plainville Community Schools Teacher of the Year*. As such, she will also participate as a candidate for Connecticut's 2016 Teacher of the Year Program, and will be individually recognized at an awards ceremony later this year hosted by the Connecticut Department of Education.

LOUIS TOFFOLON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Toffolon Music Teacher Greg Wilfrid presented a workshop at the Connecticut Music Educator's Association Conference held in Hartford. The workshop focused on "Storytelling and Improvisation in the Elementary General Music Classroom"...In the Summer 2015 edition of *Scholastic Instructor* magazine, **Toffolon faculty member Susan Fabrizio's** blog and related learning activity regarding how to use character traits to make connections to feelings, was referenced as a resource source for the chapter book *The Watson's Go to Birmingham-1963*...Toffolon **fifth grade teachers, Sue Fabrizio, Brie Morrone, and Jill Limberger** organized a "stellar" experience for their students focused on exploring the different lunar phases of the moon, exploring the nebula through a high powered telescope, and experiencing a real planetarium adventure in the school gym.

FRANK T. WHEELER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Wheeler fourth grader Jaylen Thigpen, competed in the Connecticut State Invention Convention at The University of Connecticut Gampel Pavilion. His invention (Sound Blaster) was recognized out of 950 inventors and 219 schools that were participating in the event this year...**Wheeler fourth graders** participated in a hands-on exploration of immigration while on a field trip to the Connecticut Historical Society in Hartford...Wheeler Principal **Andrew Batchelder** supported the Relay For Life event by being "all taped up." **Students raised \$343** by purchasing 343 pieces of tape and taped Principal Batchelder for the fundraiser...23 students participated in 14 acts in Wheeler's Talent Show on May 29. The acts included singing, playing instruments, and more. Many of the songs centered around the common theme of encouragement and perseverance.

DISTRICT

The town-wide art show featuring **student artwork from across the district** was held at the Plainville Public Library during the month of May...Twelve **5th grade students from Linden, Toffolon, and Wheeler** participated in the CMEA (Connecticut Music Educators Association) Honors Choir. The choir included singers in fourth through sixth grade from across the state. Elementary music teachers **Diane Roncaoli, Greg Wilfrid, and Marilyn Brendel** prepared students to sing the concert repertoire...**Students from Plainville High School, the Middle School of Plainville** and Central Connecticut State University recently came together for a "Go Baby Go" workshop. The student groups worked for two days to adapt toy cars for local special needs children...*The Change Agent*, a national Adult Education magazine, has selected **Plainville Adult Education student Alexis Klesitz's** submission for publication in its fall 2015 edition.

For additional school district news
and information, please visit
www.plainvilleschools.org

There were many fun and exciting activities going on in Louis Toffolon Elementary school this year. The PTO and Student Council worked to be more eco-friendly. Student Council put boxes to recycle paper in all the rooms of our school. When the boxes are full, they are collected and sent to be recycled. Speaking of recycling, it's SMART to recycle and speaking of SMART...let's talk about The Brain Show! The Brain Show visits schools and gives them the idea that they are playing an actual game show. This event encouraged academic, social and movement skills. The Brain Show was educational and was lots of fun. Speaking of fun, Humphrey the hamster took the school by storm. Humphrey from the *World According to Humphrey* book series by Betty G. Birney visited our school. We wrote about Humphrey's adventures in each of our classrooms.



Back Row (Left to Right) Jacob Benvenuto, Matthew Morneault, Joseph Rossi. Front Row (Left to Right) David Shin, Owen Davidson.

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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.