

Plainville Citizen Op-Ed, June 2013

Over the last few years there have been more than a typical number of weather events requiring schools to close in Plainville. Connecticut State law requires all school districts to hold no fewer than 180 days of school, finish by June 30th, and adhere to a number of mandatory holidays. During the 2011-12 school year, mid-year adjustments were made, but we still found ourselves holding school during the last week of June. This year, the district once again had days off due to inclement weather in October and numerous snow days during the winter, now facing a June 27th last day of school. In addition, there are a number of other issues impacting students relative to the extended school year - - there is no air conditioning at Wheeler Elementary School, many summer job opportunities are lost by our high school students, and a number of area camp options are affected due to the late closing of school.

In December, the Board of Education gave their approval, through consensus, for the school district administration to begin the exploration of solutions to these school calendar issues. The administrators then gathered information from students, parents and staff for presentation to the Board. The solutions explored and the data gathered from parents include: restructuring the teacher professional development days in August and looking into other options later in the year, changing the Board of Education policy to allow a start of school date before Labor Day in years when it would be beneficial, holding school on Veteran's Day, and reducing the February break from one week to a long five-day weekend. All of these solutions were strongly supported by parents who were polled. The administration also invited staff and students to provide feedback through informal reporting. That feedback was included in recommendations provided to the Board of Education by the administration. As a result, the Board subsequently approved a revised set of school

calendars for school years 2013-14, 2014-15, and 2015-16.

As a result of the approved calendar changes, next school year is scheduled to end on June 12th, if we have no weather cancellations. We believe these calendar adjustments positively support our school district climate and community of learning. The full school calendar for 2013-14 is available on our website: [www. Plainvilleschools.org](http://www.Plainvilleschools.org).