

## **Plainville Citizen Op Ed, May, 2015**

Plainville Community Schools mission is to provide experiences that will prepare “each” student for success. In each of our schools we work hard to implement a program of comprehensive support services that help ALL students become self-sufficient, healthy and productive adults. Many of our students face challenges that place them at risk for educational failure, including identified disabilities, poverty, family issues, emotional trauma, and language differences. By adopting a preventive, whole-child perspective and providing a wide range of interventions, our schools are better equipped to reduce barriers to learning and enhance healthy development. Studies have shown that schools with a continuum of developmental, preventive, remedial and support services enhance the capacity of all students to achieve academic success and personal well-being.

Support services encompass a wide variety of specialists who work with students, parents and school staff to meet the needs of students who are at risk for not meeting grade level expectations. In addition to our teachers and tutors who provide supplementary instruction for students performing below grade level, we offer access to many other supports such as school counseling, school nursing, school psychology, school social work, and speech-language pathology. These services assist students, parents and the entire school community in establishing a full range of prevention and intervention systems that promote healthy development, provide early intervention to address problems as soon after onset as possible, and assist with chronic and severe problems. Student support services specialists: (1) help educators, administrators, other staff members and parents understand and respond effectively to the health and social factors that affect students’ learning; (2) identify risk factors, such as

physical deficiencies, communication disorders or emotional challenges that can impede learning; and (3) provide prevention and intervention strategies.

Plainville Community Schools use a system referred to as Scientific Research-Based Interventions (SRBI) to meet student needs. Through the SRBI process, teams of professionals from our schools create and implement intervention plans along a set of "tiers" that increase in the level of intensity of the supports or services recommended. Interventions may be provided individually or in small flexible groups and can occur in the general classroom and/or in support programs. As a result of SRBI mandates in the State of Connecticut, students should not be identified as in need of a formal special education plan until a number of other individualized interventions have been tried and monitored for a minimum of six to eight weeks. However, parents do have the option of requesting a referral to special education services at any point in this process.

Parents and community members who have any questions or concerns about how to access support services within the Plainville Community Schools are encouraged to contact building administrators or Vicki Trzcinski, Director of Special Education and Pupil Services at 860-793-3214.