

## **Plainville Citizen Op-Ed, November, 2016**

Several years ago, a calendar change was made for Plainville Community Schools, making Veterans Day a full school day. When this change was initially presented to the board of education for consideration, it was done with a commitment to using the time to further educate our students on the significance of Veterans Day, with a focus on the importance of honoring our nation's veterans. That commitment continues each year and is evident in the outstanding programming that takes place annually in each of our five schools. This November 11<sup>th</sup>, students and staff across the school district came together to honor veterans near and far with activities and programs that were educational, thoughtful, creative and respectful.

At the elementary level, students, staff and veteran guests participated in flag raising and wreath laying ceremonies, followed by programs honoring local veterans and those across the globe. These respectful acts featured patriotic musical selections and the recognition of veterans in many ways. At Wheeler School, where students and staff collected supplies and wrote letters of support for the United Service Organization (USO), Plainville Board of Education member and veteran Foster White shared his experiences as a veteran with those in attendance, and girl scouts presented poppies, the flower often associated with Armistice Day and the poem *In Flanders Fields*, to those veterans in attendance. Throughout the day in all three elementary schools, assemblies were held with patriotic songs, poetry, essays, and tributes to each branch of the Armed Forces. Students and staff members donned red, white and blue, and students created thank you signs, notes and small gifts of gratitude for veterans who visited. Patriotic Walls of Honor were on display in the school buildings, depicting the names and photographs of local veterans, and individual classrooms held a variety of

learning activities focused on the meaning of Veterans Day. At the Middle School of Plainville while a large flag flew over the school grounds (thanks to the Plainville Volunteer Fire Department), each grade level participated in an assembly that featured patriotic musical selections, and several speakers, including veterans and family members of local veterans. Military vehicles and equipment from the 102<sup>nd</sup> Infantry was also on display for students to view outside of the school building, and guests were invited to a patriotic themed brunch in their honor. Plainville High School began the day with a breakfast for local veterans and their families which featured the presentation of an honorary Plainville High School diploma to George David Musshorn who accepted the diploma on behalf of his uncle, Mr. Elmer Musshorn, who attended Plainville High School but enlisted in the U.S. Navy prior to receiving his diploma with his PHS Class of 1953, and subsequently served in the Korean War. During the Veterans Day breakfast, students presented cards to those in attendance and photographic mementos were given to veterans to commemorate the day. Plainville High School also conducted a “toiletries drive” as well as a “sweater and glove drive” to aid local veterans in need. Additionally, the high school held a patriotic door decorating contest throughout the building, which was also adorned with visual displays of artwork relative to the Veterans Day program.

This year, while each school’s Veterans Day program was unique, all five schools shared a similar vision of providing meaningful, reverent, and respectful events and activities in honor of our veterans. Pride shone on the faces of students, teachers, veterans and guests in all of our schools throughout the day as we celebrated those who served our country and fought for the freedom we enjoy today in Plainville and across the world. From the extended learning for students to the eloquent observance in honor of our veterans, November 11th in Plainville Community Schools was an

extraordinary day of reflection, recognition and respect. I am truly proud of the faculty, staff and students who contributed to this tribute in each of our five schools on Veterans Day, 2016.

***(To view photos from the Veterans Day programs in Plainville Community Schools please visit [www.plainvilleschools.org](http://www.plainvilleschools.org))***