

Plainville Citizen Op-Ed, November, 2017

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 an emphasis on the importance of honoring our nation's veterans. That commitment has continued each year and is evidenced in the exceptional programming that takes place annually in each of our five schools. This year, Veterans Day programming was held in Plainville Community Schools on Friday, November 10th. Students and staff across the school district came together to honor veterans near and far with activities and programs that were educational, thoughtful, poignant 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 thoughtful acts featured patriotic musical selections and the recognition of veterans in many ways. At Wheeler School, 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 that featured 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 and artwork 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, a comprehensive, school-wide assembly was held that featured patriotic musical selections, guest speakers from the military, recognition of veterans and more. Military vehicles and equipment were 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 breakfast for local veterans, and those in attendance received photographs with their families. At 11:11 AM, student musicians played “Taps” in designated areas throughout the building. Plainville High School also conducted 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.

While each school’s Veterans Day program was unique, all five schools shared a similar vision of providing meaningful and respectful events and activities in honor of our veterans. The entire Plainville school community was filled with pride and admiration 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 moving observances in each school in honor of our veterans, November 10th in Plainville Community Schools was an extraordinary day of reflection, recognition and honor. I am truly proud of the faculty, staff and students who contributed to this exceptional tribute in each of our five schools.

(To view photos from the Veterans Day programs in Plainville Community Schools please visit www.plainvilleschools.org)