

Plainville Citizen Op-Ed, September, 2017

On June 15th, I had the privilege of addressing the Class of 2017 at their graduation ceremony at Plainville High School where parents, family members, local officials, community members, staff and fellow students gathered to honor this remarkable group of students, and witness this important milestone. As I noted that evening, the one word that comes to mind in reflecting on our 2017 senior class is “inspirational” as they consistently demonstrated incredible potential, significant growth and outstanding achievement as they moved through elementary, middle and high school.

This fall, more than 91% of the Class of 2017 headed to college, a trade school, or the military, and 72% were accepted into their first choice of college or university. Another indicator of their success in becoming well rounded young adults, was the completion of more than 4,600 hours of community service, in a variety of capacities.

Members of the Class of 2017 were also extremely fortunate to have been awarded over \$190,000 in scholarships, reflecting the generosity of donors and the caliber of students in Plainville. Collectively the student group earned over 1,100 college credits through the high school’s Early College Experience courses (ECE) - - nearly double the amount of college credits earned from the previous year. This exemplary accomplishment translates into \$550,000 of tuition costs that these students and their families were able to avoid. It is important to also recognize and thank the parents, guardians, teachers, counselors, administrators, community members, and mentors to the Class of 2017, each of whom supported the evolution and development of these students through the years and through their educational journey.

As Superintendent of Plainville Community Schools, one of the best parts of my job is the opportunity to attend concerts, plays, sporting events, and programs that highlight student success. For the Class of 2017, I especially enjoyed celebrating their many accomplishments at events such as the Super Senior Banquet and the Night of Excellence. This past year as I was reading scholarship applications, I was extremely impressed with the rigorous course load our students carry, the extraordinary amount of community service hours they have completed, and the numerous clubs, sports teams, and service organizations that they belong to. However, even more impressive was the resiliency of our students. During their high school years, many of our graduates faced significant life challenges such as family illness, financial hardship, natural disasters, family members with disabilities, and many more. I was struck by the ability of so many of our students to handle these issues and still accomplish so much during their high school careers. Their resiliency remains an inspiration to me, and I look forward to their continued growth and future success as they move into the next chapter of their lives.

While we said farewell to the Class of 2017 last June, we welcomed nearly 2,400 students into Plainville Community Schools on August 31st for the start of the 2017-18 school year, including a record breaking number of pre-school students who make up the "Class of 2031!" We are looking forward to a successful year with a continued focus on students, teaching and learning, as our Strategic Plan guides our collective efforts to ***Inspire, Prepare and Engage*** each and every Plainville Community Schools' student!