

## Plainville Citizen Op-Ed, May 2013

On April 30<sup>th</sup>, Plainville citizens approved both the town and Board of Education budgets, which were voted on separately for the first time as a result of changes to the Town's Charter. Much preparation and planning went into developing the Board of Education's budget for the 2013-14 school year. Through the process of updating the district's Strategic Plan, Mission and Belief Statements, all of the school district's priorities were reexamined through the lens of moving Plainville schools forward. An outcome of this effort was reprioritizing our collective focus on nine primary tenets - *-the school system is the core of the community, a safe and caring learning environment, rigorous and enriching experiences, optimal achievement for all, critical skills for success in a global society, comprehensive curriculum, effective instruction, systems to assess learning, and data to drive practices.* As a result of this reprioritization, many resources were reallocated to ensure that initiatives and services most beneficial to students and the community are supported, while the primary focus remains on students, teaching and learning.

The school district's budget increase for the 2013-14 school year is .98 percent. Savings from eliminating midday buses, increased funding from Open Choice, and renegotiating costs for health insurance were reinvested to support the district's goals. As such, a number of significant improvements will be made to the school system going forward. The 2013-14 Technology Replacement plan will be fully implemented, including a Chromebook laptop computer provided for each student in grades 8-12. At the elementary level, two Literacy teachers will be added to support reading and writing instruction, and instrumental music instruction will be returned to the fourth grade level. At the Middle School, a new Health Teacher will be added, and a new math program for grades seven and eight will be implemented. At the high school level, an additional security / residency

monitor will be added and a College and Career Readiness Center will open. Further, a number of clubs, activities, and athletics will be added including a Girl's Golf Team and a Boy's Tennis Team. A number of additional initiatives across the school district will also be implemented. Curriculum upgrades will be made to align with Common Core State Standards and the need to focus on developing 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. An additional technology support staff position has been added, and partially funded by the Town's budget, to provide assistance at the Municipal Center as well as in our schools. Support will also continue across the district for school climate and anti-bullying initiatives. Finally, the Facilities Department will gain additional custodial support and an additional Maintainer.

The Board of Education and administration are excited about these initiatives and the opportunities for advancement that they will provide our students. Plainville Community Schools is an investment in the community and therefore we extend our thanks to the Plainville community for continued support of our efforts and our mission, *"to provide rigorous and enriching experiences that prepare each student for success in a changing global society."*