



Community Letter

Fall 2005

Promote a challenging environment creating an extraordinary community of learners

Message from the Board of Education

One of the priority goals of the Plainville Board of Education is to provide a safe and positive learning environment, therefore, we believe that the buildings that house our students need to be secure, meet fire and safety codes, and be free from hazardous materials. As the school buildings in our district have aged, it has been a struggle to maintain them given the volume of use they receive from students and the community.

With this in mind, the Long Range Plan for our schools was developed in 2002. This plan provided a framework for renovating our schools in a cost effective manner and resulted in citizen approval of renovations and additions to upgrade Linden Street School, Louis Toffolon School, and Plainville High School. These projects will provide our students and the community with safe and engaging school buildings well into the future.

Concurrently, in an effort to maximize the dollars spent on building maintenance, the Board chose to manage maintenance and custodial service in-house for the school system. This decision has improved our preventative maintenance program that will in turn extend the life and usefulness of our schools.

The Board appreciates the support of the Plainville community in our efforts to create a safe and healthy environment for students. We continue to seek new ways to maintain all of our facilities in an efficient manner.

Q&A:

What types of safety measures are in place in the school district?

Safety remains a top priority for the Plainville Community Schools. A broad range of measures are in place district-wide to provide a safe and secure environment for students, staff, and visitors. These precautions range in scope from district to building level measures. Fire and building lockdown procedures and drills conducted with local police and fire personnel, occur regularly. A state of the art building access system was donated and installed by General Electric at the Middle School of Plainville to monitor visitors entering the building.

One example is the Toffolon Elementary School Safety Patrol Program which is sponsored by AAA. Fifth graders are nominated by their teachers based on academic achievement, leadership skills and good citizenship. Toffolon's Safety Patrol officers can be seen busy at work on the playground and in the hallways before school reminding students to be safe.



Safety Patrol

*Lukasz Brodowski,
Amber Chadbourne, and
Nick Spinelli,
Safety Patrol
members from
Louis Toffolon
Elementary School*

Long Range Plan

Downes Construction Company, the construction management company for the Linden Street Elementary School addition project, reported that 85% of the work has been completed and the project remains on schedule with the addition completion expected to be open to students in January 2006.

The final bid packages, which were for technology for Linden's addition, were opened October 2005. Through the bidding process, vendors have been selected to provide classroom projectors, digital interactive whiteboards and wireless Internet access in the building. These tools are the latest in classroom technology designed to support the curriculum.

Linden Street School has a renovated and fully functioning cafeteria as of late September 2005. Suzanne Greenbacker, Principal, reports, "It is quite beautiful and the students are excited about having round tables for seating. It is a definite plus for lowering the noise level and promoting good conversations in the cafeteria." In November the renovated gymnasium will be open for use.

L i n d e n i s t h e **K e y** t o t h e L o n g R a n g e P l a n

The Plainville Community Schools' Family Resource Network



PFRN families enjoying story time at Playgroup

The Plainville Community Schools' Family Resource Network (PFRN) is a school, family, and community partnership working together to help children grow and acquire literacy skills. This program is funded through a Connecticut State Department of Education grant, school district in-kind support, and other state, local, and private-sector grants. "One of the most rewarding

aspects of the program is being able to make connections early on with families," says Donna Cavallaro, Site Coordinator of the Plainville Family Resource Network. These connections help foster positive relationships between families and the school system who share the common goal of student success. "Comfortable families develop the confidence needed to take an active part in their child's education." PFRN programs span the generations by providing support for all Plainville families, from parents of newborns to grandparents. A very special part of our program includes multiple playgroups offered weekly throughout the school year to families with children from birth to age five. Playgroups provide families with a socially enriched environment, fun age appropriate activities, songs and a story time. Parents and grandparents can also benefit from resources such as a

lending library with children's books and parenting/child development literature, family field trip opportunities, and parenting workshops. Other key elements include school age before and after school enrichment programs, support for child care providers, and referral services to help families connect with specific resources available for their needs and interests. Also, the PFRN collaborates with the Adult Education Department to offer English as a Second Language (ESL) classes for adults and learning through play opportunities for their toddlers and pre-school children. "My staff and I love the work we do," said Cavallaro. "We are always striving to develop new programs while enhancing our existing ones." Please call 793-6304 if you would like to learn more or become involved with any of the PFRN programs.

Connections: Achieving our Goals

Two of the The Board of Education's primary goals focus on connecting parents, students, and the community with our schools. These include ***"Promoting high levels of community and parental involvement in the schools"*** and ***"Developing strong co-curricular programs for students."*** In an effort to expand this idea of fostering connections, a number of opportunities have been created to unite the district with the community to meet these goals.

A strong partnership among the school district, parents, and the community is key. Great strides have been made in expanding both community and parental involvement in all five schools. School-parent groups, as well as the district-wide volunteer program, provide a framework for this type of collaboration. During the 2004-2005 school year, more than 300 volunteers shared their time and talent with students in our school district, contributing more than 12,000 hours of service.

The Board of Education believes school activities which foster physical and intellectual growth will provide our students with life-long benefits. At the elementary level, students are given opportunities to partake in programs like Student Council and Safety Patrol. Middle School of Plainville students may participate in intramurals, the Kids in the Middle program, and a variety of clubs. Finally, Plainville High School students have a number of opportunities to explore and discover their talents and interests through clubs and activities in the areas of the performing arts, sports, class leadership, and volunteerism.

The Board of Education endorses equal opportunities for all students to participate in these programs which foster the development and enhancement of good citizenship, while emphasizing high academic standards.

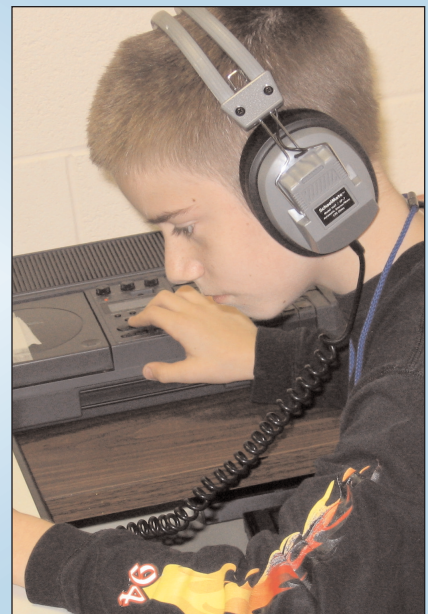
Connections: In Partnership with our Community

A group of students from the Middle School of Plainville (MSP) met at Nutmeg TV studios for a training session before the school year started. Their goal was to learn how to film and produce a news story. This student group, known as the MSP Communications Club, is responsible for daily morning announcements at MSP. They produce a live broadcast every morning for the entire student body. These broadcasts include pictures and movies, advertising, and documenting special events around the school. According to Todd Helming, MSP Communication Club Advisor and Music Teacher, the Club's goal is "to provide opportunities for students to share MSP life with the student body and the community while providing an incredible academic based leadership opportunity for students in our building." Throughout the year, a

number of these smaller broadcasts will be combined into larger programs which will be aired on the Nutmeg Television local cable access station. These broadcasts will give community viewers a snapshot of life at MSP and keep them informed about what is happening in the school. In addition to the news broadcasts, the MSP students will be using Nutmeg's studio equipment to record and broadcast larger school events such as upcoming concerts, special assemblies, and other activities that involve the entire student body. Some of the news stories this year include:

- ***Egg Babies: What are they and why?***
- ***Diversity and Immigration***
- ***Teachers' Secret Lives: What do they do when they're not teaching?***

The first segment to be broadcast on Nutmeg TV will air in January or February 2006. Watch your local newspapers for announcements.

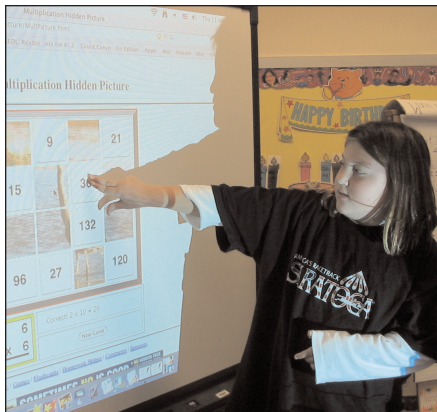


Nate Ives, of the Communications Club, is shown working the controls on an audio mixing board.

In this issue...

Message from the BOE	Page 1
Q & A	Page 1
The Long Range Plan	Page 2
PFRN	Page 2
Connections : Achieving our Goals	Page 3
Connections : In Partnerships with our Community	Page 3
SMART Boards	Page 4

SMART Boards



Madeline St. Pierre of Wheeler School demonstrates her skills utilizing a SMART Board interactive whiteboard.

On a professional day prior to the start of the school year, Wheeler fourth-grade teachers were trained to use SMART Boards as instructional tools. These interactive whiteboards have a touch-sensitive display which connects to a computer and a projector to show images on the board. Teachers find that using the SMART Boards engages and energizes presentations and activities. Over the past two months, Wheeler fourth-graders have used the SMART Board to organize notes into Venn Diagrams, explored specific math websites, and learned about deciduous forests by viewing it on the SMART Board. As stated by one student, "Every classroom should have one." Another student said, "I like it better than a computer because I can touch the screen." Wheeler fourth grade teachers will continue to utilize this teaching and learning tool to make concepts come alive for their students.

Board of Education

Kathleen Binkowski, Ph.D.

Superintendent of Schools

Board Members:

Patrick Ringrose, Chairman

William Crowley, Vice Chairman

Lorri Goldsmith

Susan McCarthy

Marliss Pavano

William Petit

Becky Tyrrell

Thomas Wazorko

Barbara Willard



We believe...

Effective communication and collaboration build trust and respect.

A safe, caring, learning environment embraces diversity and upholds individual accountability.

A high quality curriculum gives serious consideration to the arts, literacy and technology.

In a shared responsibility in establishing high learning expectations.