



# Community Letter

FALL 2006

Promote a challenging environment creating an extraordinary community of learners

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## Message from the Board of Education

In the past few editions of the *Community Letter*, the Board of Education message has focused on issues such as the importance of communication and the value of standardized tests and assessments. In this issue, we would like to provide the community with information about the role and functions of the Board of Education.

The Board is comprised of nine community members who are elected for a term of four years. Board members are volunteers who serve without compensation. The Board of Education has three primary functions. We are responsible for: 1. setting the policy for the school district, 2. evaluating the performance of the superintendent, and 3. developing a budget to meet the needs of the students and the school system. Developing policies that lead the school system are important as they provide guidance and direction for students, staff and the community. Policies serve as the overall framework for operation of the school district. The superintendent is the leader of the school system; the Board evaluates the performance of the superintendent on a regular basis, and provides feedback from the community. Creating an annual budget is challenging work that requires compromise; the budget is designed to meet the goals of the Board and the community.

As taxpayers and members of the Plainville community we want our schools to offer the best education possible with the resources available. As board members, we have a responsibility to students, parents, staff members, and the community, to maintain this focus and commitment to education. We urge residents to stay informed about our community school district. We invite you to attend our monthly board meetings held in room 400 at Plainville High School on the second Monday of each month, or to watch them on Nutmeg Television, Channel 19, on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month.

## Teacher of the Year – Joyce Goldberg

Joyce Goldberg, library information teacher at Wheeler Elementary School, is the 2006-2007 Plainville Community Schools' *Teacher of the Year*. Joyce holds both bachelor of science and master of science degrees from Southern Connecticut State University, and an elementary education certification from Central Connecticut State University. She has served as an elementary school teacher and library information teacher in the Plainville school system. According to Goldberg, her greatest contribution to students is instilling in them her enthusiasm and love of reading. She commented, "No matter what their reading ability, every child can find success. They can go on to further their knowledge on a specific topic or just find that private retreat, away from the rest of the world in a good book." When asked what qualities a teacher needs to be effective, she said, "First and foremost, I think teachers need to be understanding, compassionate and caring toward their students. Anyone can learn the curriculum, but teachers who touch the human feelings in the child are the teachers who make a difference."



**Joyce Goldberg,**  
*Teacher of the Year*

# The Long Range Plan

*The Long Range Plan for the school district intends to improve the school buildings.  
There are a number of projects in progress.*

## HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM:

The auditorium project is almost complete with the installation of a lift for persons with disabilities as the last significant unfinished item. Complete replacement of the roof over the auditorium and the installation of an air conditioning system for the auditorium will be part of the high school renovation project. Building Committee members are especially pleased with the “cloud” ceiling, improved lighting, new seats and flooring, a fully operational sprinkler system, stage curtains, and the addition of a control platform and entry enclosure. They believe that the results are excellent in light of the limited funds allotted to the project.

## LINDEN SCHOOL ADDITION:

Linden Street School is operating in the new addition. We send our heartfelt thanks to members of the

Linden Building Committee for their outstanding work to make this project a beautiful neighborhood elementary school. This year, Linden is hosting special guests from across town. Toffolon students have moved into the original 1930's building and they are sharing many core spaces such as the gym, cafeteria, field and library. The Toffolon students moved out of their school on Northwest Drive so that renovations could take place at that building.

## TOFFOLON SCHOOL RENOVATION:

Cost estimates for the renovation and small addition at the Toffolon School came in much higher than originally anticipated. The increased estimated construction costs were the result of a number of factors including the impact of hurricane Katrina, escalation of world energy and steel prices, and

the extensive site work needed to create a safer bus drop-off area. On September 19th, Plainville voters narrowly voted down the authorization to increase the budget for the Toffolon project. On September 25th, the Building Committee, Town Council and Board of Education held a joint meeting at the town library to discuss the future of the Toffolon renovation. Everyone involved recognizes the utmost importance in proceeding with this building renovation. The educational spaces for the school library, music room, art room and the other small rooms necessary for a modern school must be improved to provide the appropriate facility for our children. In the coming weeks community members will decide on the next steps to be taken for the Toffolon renovation.

## Student Spotlight: Yearbook Committee



*By: Sarah Durkin and Megan Liquindoli of Toffolon Elementary School*

On Friday, September 22nd, we had our first meeting of the Yearbook Committee. Every fifth grader who joined was recommended by their fourth grade teacher. To start off we picked out the cover. The cover of the 2006-2007 year book will be a surprise! This year our yearbook will have a theme. Here is a hint about the theme of this year's yearbook: it goes with our reading program. We are not sure if we still want to put Zoom (mini magazine for kids) in the middle of the yearbook. This year we are doing fundraisers to raise money for a color

yearbook! We are going to have to work really hard because color ink is very expensive, but our leader Mrs. Bernier believes in us! We are thinking about changing the fifth grade interview questions or adding more. We will make sure to add one picture of everybody in our school. We might also include a doodle page in the back. We are looking forward to our next Yearbook Committee meeting and are happy to help and thinking of more ideas!



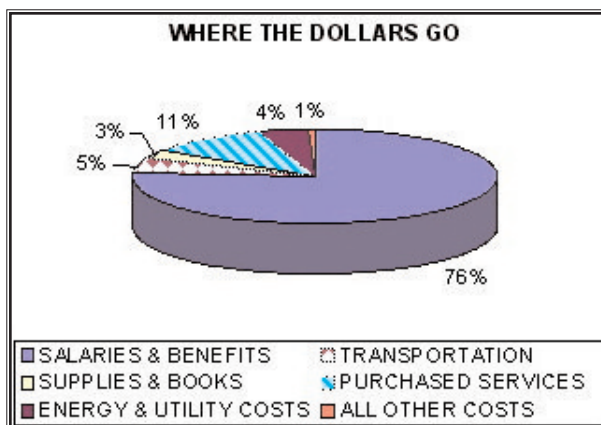
## Budget News

The Plainville school district has struggled with energy costs over the past year. As world energy prices ease a bit, we hope this trend will continue in the coming months and throughout the heating

season. If prices continue to drift lower, we will be able to heat the school buildings and stay within our fiscal year 2007 budget for fuel oil and natural gas. The Board of Education and Town of Plainville have entered into a five year agreement to jointly purchase electricity for fixed prices. If Northeast Utilities continues to have rate

increases over the next five years, this contract will save Plainville taxpayers a significant amount of money. During the coming winter months, school district staff will be

formulating a budget request for next year. As part of the process to look toward our future spending, we estimate what the change will be in our district operating budget for



the next year. Linden Street School Principal Suzanne Greenbacker submitted the most accurate estimate of our operating budget change for this year and in

September she received the annual “Prognosticator” award given by the superintendent and business manager. The contest for this award is designed to encourage school district administrators to think about trends in inflation and tax revenues as they prepare to submit budget requests for their areas of responsibility. In future community newsletters we will have additional information about other aspects of the schools’ budgets.

*The pie chart displays school spending by category for the fiscal year 2006 and it clearly shows that the primary cost of education is for staff and purchased services.*

## Let's Chat With...John Zadnik, Athletic Director



### Describe your role as athletic director.

I oversee all of the interscholastic athletic programs at the high school and the middle school. I try to create a pleasant, safe environment in which all of our athletes can play to the best of their abilities, with the emphasis on the competition, not the result. An important part of my job is to be there for the athletes; I take pride in the fact that I have attended thousands of athletic events, both at home and away, in my eight plus years as athletic director.

### What do you enjoy most about serving as athletic director?

My favorite part of this job is working with and developing lasting friendships with the athletes. I am here to help them in any way that I can.

### Are there any professional athletes who are Plainville High School alumni?

There are two who immediately come to mind. Niko Koutivides, who graduated in 1999, plays football for the Seattle Seahawks, and he actually participated in the 2006 Super Bowl. Earl Snyder, a P.H.S. standout in baseball, has played for the Cleveland Indians and the Boston Red Sox.

**DID YOU KNOW?** It's never too late to return to school! Plainville Adult and Continuing Education offers “rolling” enrollment for Adult Basic Education, English as a Second Language, and GED Preparation. Join today, tuition free. Call the office of Adult and Continuing Education for more information: **793-3209**.

## Good News!

*Great things are happening in our school district all the time.  
Following are some of these “good news” highlights:*

PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR KAYLA WIECHE has been named a *Commended Student* in the 2007 National Merit Scholarship Program...LINDA HELMING, ART INSTRUCTOR at Wheeler Elementary School has been selected as the recipient of the Connecticut Art Education Association's (CAEA) *Outstanding Art Educator* award, for significant contributions to the field of art education...PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL COACHES LISA MANDEVILLE AND BOB FREIMUTH have been inducted to the *Plainville Sports Hall of Fame*...THE PLAINVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND TOWN COUNCIL have formed a strategic task force to facilitate improved communication and planning...THE PLAINVILLE COALITION FOR POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT held a Community Conversation on “Keeping Kids Safe by Exploring the Dress Code.” Approximately 60 community members, parents, students, staff and representatives from the Coalition participated in the event, which was funded by a grant from the League of Women Voters...THE PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ATHLETE LEADERSHIP TEAM (SALT) sponsored a “Plainville Kids Play Day” including a variety of large and small group games for Plainville students. Proceeds from the event were donated to St. Philip House...PLAINVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS AND THE TOWN'S RECYCLING AND SOLID WASTE COMMISSION held a Furniture Fair in an effort to recycle furniture and other items deemed unusable from the original Linden Street School building...EDUCATIONAL LEADERS participated in a professional development program funded by the GE Foundation, and modeled after GE's own executive leadership and management training program.

## The Board of Education

**Kathleen Binkowski, Ph.D.**  
*Superintendent of Schools*

**Board Members:**

**William J. Crowley**  
**Lorri Goldsmith**  
**Art Hoerle**  
**Keith A. LaCombe**  
**Susan McCarthy**  
**Patrick Ringrose**  
**Becky Tyrrell**  
**Thomas L. Wazorko**  
**Barbara A. Willard**



## Belief Statements

We believe:

- that a quality school system is the core of our community and increases the quality of our lives;
- in a shared responsibility among home, school and community that promotes achievement for all learners;
- in a safe, caring, learning environment that respects individual difference and rejects discrimination of any form;
- in holding all students, faculty, staff, and parents accountable to participate in and maintain a positive learning environment throughout the district;
- a high quality curriculum emphasizes the arts, literacy, and technology; and
- effective communication and collaboration builds trust and respect.