



Community Letter

FALL 2009

Promote a challenging environment creating an extraordinary community of learners

Message from the Board of Education

In this issue...

Message from the BOE	Page 1
Student Spotlight: Toffolon School	Page 1
The Long Range Plan	Page 2
Budget News	Page 2
Communication Program Evaluation	Page 2
Good News	Page 3
Technology Today	Page 3
Let's Chat With	Page 3
Graduate Update	Page 4

On September 8, President Obama spoke to our nation's students about the need to do their best in school. In his speech, the President connected the dots that link the importance of school performance and hard work to the success of our country. He spoke of the accomplishments of the past and challenged students to solve the problems of the future.

The success of public education is dependent on three variables. Teachers must use every tool they possess to engage students. Students must understand the relevance of what they learn, and understand why education is so important. Parents and families must support students and encourage them every step of the way.

It is said that education is the great equalizer. When all three variables are present, education can help us overcome intolerance, ignorance, and poverty. These great benefits do not come easily or without the hard work of everyone involved. No matter what our politics, the simple message here cannot be overlooked. The stakes for students, public education, and our future, are too high.

Student Spotlight: Toffolon School

Toffolon's New Prized Possession



Due to the donations and hard work of the PTO, Plainville school district, Plainville community members, and other organizations, Toffolon School currently has a new playscape under construction. The construction staff is working hard on our new playground! It is red, blue, and silver, very patriotic! On the ground already, are the swing set, a tire swing, and lots of slides. The jungle gym dome is finished. The actual playscape is finished as well, and there are three

blue slides. One is steep. The others are big, wavy, or small. We also have a smaller playscape for the younger children at our school. Finally, there is a lot of space. The workers have almost finished the playground. Now they have to put up the swings and install the final ground surface. "It's going to be a blast!" exclaimed Jordan Brunelle, a Toffolon fifth grader. "The playscape looks amazing," remarked Tommy Vongsamany. "I can't wait to play on it!" The students of Toffolon School had to wait at Linden for their new school to be created. Now the Toffolonians are back in their school with a new playscape soon to be ready for play.

Written by: fifth graders
Lauren Tanner &
Jonathan Tattersall



The Long Range Plan

~Please Note~

With the completion of this work, this will be the final Long Range Plan Update in the Community Letter.

Plainville High School

As the close of the high school project is almost official, there were a few additional issues that were addressed including reconditioning the track, adding interior cameras, upgrading the auditorium stage rigging and lighting, re-mulching the front beds, and installing additional card readers to improve security and access for the high school. Staff is continuing to meet with Turner Construction, commissioning agent CES, building committee members, and contractors to get some of the final punch list items addressed--particularly in the areas of plumbing, heating, and air conditioning.

Toffolon School

Turner Construction has been working with staff and the remaining contractors on finishing up all punch list items. This includes the bus canopy, louvers on the rooftop unit, painting, door adjustments, and working out some balancing issues in the HVAC system. The playground has been erected and the area is expected to be completed shortly.

Wheeler School

The roofing project at Wheeler School was completed just as the school year began. While the actual roof work was completed months ago, there were some additional items that were delayed due to the lead time on the new windows that were added to the cafeteria. Just before school began, these new windows were added, the exhaust fan in the cafeteria was connected, and masonry work was completed on the window sills inside the cafeteria.

Budget News

On September 1, the Connecticut House and Senate passed a state budget package. It is believed that the Governor intends to allow this budget to become law without her signature. According to an analysis done by the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities, the adopted budget includes a reduction (\$13.4 million statewide) to the Special Education Excess Cost Special Education grant, but level funds for Adult Education, Education Cost Sharing (ECS), Transportation of School Children, and Non-Public School Transportation grants at FY 2008-09 levels. Approximately 14.3% of the Education Cost Sharing grant (approximately \$271 million statewide) is expected to be funded by federal ARRA State Fiscal Stabilization Funds and go directly to Boards of Education, reducing the state-funded contribution to ECS. Also, the state budget includes funding for family resource centers (FRC) across the state--including Plainville's FRC that was originally feared to be on the block for elimination.

Through the stimulus package, Plainville will also be receiving ARRA special education (IDEA) funds and

ARRA Title I funds. The district has already begun to receive these funds, which are being distributed by federal formula.

Now that the FY 2009-10 budget is in place, work will soon begin on crafting a budget for 2010-11. Late next month, the call will go out to administrators to put together their operating needs for the next school year. Concurrently, a capital plan will be developed and approved by the Board of Education, likely at the November meeting. In December, the Superintendent and Director of Finance and Operations will meet with administrators to discuss their needs for the next school year. In January, the Board of Education will hold a series of workshops to examine the budget before bringing it to a vote at the February meeting of the Board.

The Board of Education, Superintendent, and Business Office will continue to welcome and solicit any public comment on the budget process either through phone calls, emails or through any number of public forums that will be scheduled later in the year.

Communication Program Evaluation

In 2005, a communication audit was conducted to examine communication practices district-wide. As a result, a comprehensive district communication plan was created to guide communication improvements over the past several years. During the 2009-10 school year, Plainville Community

Schools will conduct a communication program evaluation. The evaluation will focus on the assessment of communication between the school district and its stakeholders. The results from the communication program evaluation will be used to update the district communication

plan. If you are interested in participating in the communication program evaluation during the 2009-10 school year, please contact:

**Lynn Davis, 793-3210 ext. 404 or
davisl@plainvilleschools.org**

Good News!

Great things are happening in our school district all the time.

Following are some of these "good news" highlights:

More than 100 **Plainville elementary school students** participated in the S.T.A.R.S / Math Summer Program during the month of July honing their reading, math and artistic skills...**Plainville High School junior Bruno Muraca** won second prize in the national *Young Voices Foundation 2009* premiere short story contest...the **Plainville Community Schools Project Helping Our Peers Excel (HOPE) Program** received a \$2,000 grant from the FSB Foundation, a charitable foundation operated by Farmington Savings Bank...**Plainville High School Principal Greg Ziogas** has been selected for induction into the Plainville Sports Hall of Fame...**School district para-professionals and tutors** donated funds toward camperships for two Plainville children to attend recreation camps over the summer...**Plainville High School junior Sam Hausman** (trombone) and **eighth grader Josh Hausman** (french horn), together with their father **Mark Hausman** (euphonium), also known as *The Trio Fleitmana*, recently performed several musical arrangements spanning 700 years of western music, at the Plainville Public Library.

Technology Today

The Technology Department has been very busy over the summer and into the school year with a number of projects. First, upgrades to computers and software were completed district-wide. This effort is critical to ensure that the software works correctly. In addition, these upgrades are an important security measure. Most security problems arise from old versions of computer software such as Adobe Flash and Acrobat. Upgrading these applications to the newest version makes the computers more secure. The school district's email system was also upgraded, moving to Google Gmail. Google is hosting email free of charge to all educational institutions. With this move, the school district does not have to pay yearly license fees or support servers to host email. By doing so, savings

is incurred on equipment as well as the electricity needed to run the server. Google also has one of the largest infrastructures in the world, so the risk of the email system being unavailable will be minimal. The school district will also be using Google's calendar service to host school calendars. This will allow parents to view events that are happening at their child's school. Lastly, over the summer, PowerSchool, a new school district student information system was installed. Powerschool is a web-based student information system used for attendance, grading, scheduling, and reporting. This system will provide parents and teachers with timely data about students, eventually serving as the "front door" for student educational information.

Let's Chat With...Teacher of the Year, Todd Helming



How do you feel about being selected as Plainville's Teacher of the Year?

It is an honor and privilege to represent Plainville's teachers and schools as the 2009-2010 teacher of the year. I feel most of the credit should be given to my students who work hard every day. I am being recognized for many of their accomplishments. Without their hard work I would not be where I am today.

What professional accomplishment are you most proud of?

I take pride in the growth of the music program at the Middle School of Plainville. My fellow music teachers and I have worked very hard to build a successful program. While our standards and expectations have continued to increase, participation in option groups like chorus and band has also continued to increase. Increasing standards and participation has resulted in amazing accomplishments from our ensembles and from individual students.

If you had one wish for your students, what would it be? Success.

Graduate Update: Plainville High School's Class of 2009

Best wishes for continued success to the graduates enrolled at...

- Boston University
- Branford Hall Career Institute
- Briarwood College
- Central CT State University
- Clark University
- Curry College
- Elon University
- Endicott College
- Goodwin College
- Keene State College
- Liberty University
- Lincoln Technical Institute
- Manchester Community College
- Middlebury College
- Misericordia University

- Mount Holyoke College
- Naugatuck Valley Community College
- New York Institute of Technology
- New York University
- Northeastern University
- Northwestern CT Community College
- Norwich University
- Oberlin College
- Pace University
- Quinnipiac University
- Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
- Rhode Island College
- Roger Williams University
- Rutgers University
- Southern CT State University
- Springfield College
- SUNY - Plattsburgh
- Tunxis Community College
- UCONN
- UMASS - Dartmouth

- University of North Carolina
- University of Hartford
- University of Michigan -Ann Arbor
- University of New England
- University of New Haven
- University of Vermont
- Wellesley College
- Wentworth Institute of Technology
- Western CT State University
- Western New England College

DID YOU KNOW ?

*The
 Plainville High School
 Class of 2009
 received more than
 \$150,000 in scholarships!*

PLAINVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Kathleen Binkowski, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Board Members:

Jesse Gnazzo
Anthony Goldberg
Lorri Goldsmith
Keith A. LaCombe
Tabitha Manafort
Cheryl Provost
Patrick Ringrose
Becky Tyrrell
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 safe, caring learning environment that respects individual difference and rejects discrimination of any form
- that optimal achievement for all learners is a responsibility shared by home, school and community
- that all students, faculty, staff, and parents are accountable to participate and maintain a positive learning environment throughout the district
- a high quality curriculum emphasizes the arts, literacy, and technology
- effective communication and collaboration builds trust and respect