



Community Letter

winter 2011

Promote a challenging environment creating an extraordinary community of learners

Message from the Board of Education

What's an education worth? Here are some points to ponder...

- A high school dropout contributes about \$60,000 less in taxes over a lifetime than someone who receives a diploma. If the male graduation rate was increased by only 5 percent, the nation would see an annual savings of \$4.9 billion in crime-related costs.
- If the students in the nation who dropped out of the class of 2007 had graduated, the nation's economy would have benefited from an additional \$329 billion in income over their lifetime.
- Studies show an increase of about 20 percentage points in the proficiency test "pass rate" increased house values in a district by approximately 7 percent, even after taking into account other factors that impact house values.
- A survey conducted by the National Association of Realtors concluded that Americans rank public school quality as second only to crime rate when deciding where to live.
- Economists report an 18-to-25-percentage-point increase in the value of identical homes when moving from the bottom 5 percent of school districts to the top 5 percent.

The Middle School of Plainville Gazette



Photographed (from left to right): William Tuxbury, Gabriel Yawin and David Mouangvienkham

The Middle School of Plainville started a newspaper, the *Middle School of Plainville Gazette*, supervised by Pamela Pires, seventh grade language arts teacher. As it will be having its first anniversary this spring, we cannot claim to have fallen into much of a routine. However, there are a few generic as well as specific items that have, and hopefully will, remain the same.

First of all, we include articles that have to do with school, such as after school meetings, field trips, and school news in general. However, as all three grades are mixed on the buses, any event worth discussing would quickly set tongues to wagging and worn out quickly. As a result, we try to limit how much school news we circulate. Another category that we like to cover is world issues. These articles always prove to chronicle, as well as, consume. Our club or group has always met after school on Wednesdays to discuss and type, but some articles are written at home. One specific item that remains the same is the riddle that we place in the issue. They are created by us, and as a result, they are not perfect, but they should provide a challenge for the students. The family of the *Middle School of Plainville Gazette* numbers five currently and looks forward to new members in the future, as three of the members will be leaving for high school. The *Middle School of Plainville Gazette* is new, but we hope the tradition will long continue.

Written by: Gabriel Yawin and William Tuxbury

Budget News

The budget season is now fully underway. The budget calendar is listed on the Plainville Community Schools website and all meetings are open to the public. Meetings took place throughout January with a Board of Education budget approved at the February Board of Education meeting. The Board of Education met on January 13 to discuss district goals and on January 20 to discuss new staffing requests, the budget for athletics, special education outplacements and the object code budget. Throughout March and April, the Board of Education will meet with the Town Council to discuss educational needs and there will be public hearings on the budget for community input.

As work continues crafting the 2011-12 budget, there are a number

of areas that are being examined that may cause increases from the 2010-11 budget. First, our special education costs for the current year were well above budget estimates. As such, we will need to adjust our 2011-12 budget to a significantly higher estimate. Second, we are going to begin the budget process with a significant increase in our health insurance costs. As the budget season progresses, we are typically able to lower our health cost estimates. Finally, while the teachers' contract called for no step or general wage increases in the current year, those staff members will be getting raises again in 2011-12. In addition, the Superintendent's 2011-12 budget proposal restores some of the positions lost in previous years. The proposal also includes funding

for professional development, new textbooks, facilities improvements and software that will help improve student achievement by allowing staff to better collect and analyze data.

The budget for 2011-12 is complicated by the fact that Plainville will no longer be receiving federal stimulus funds through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act grant (ARRA), but will see additional revenues through the one-time federal Education Jobs fund. The challenge for Plainville will be to craft a budget that utilizes the Education Jobs funds in a way that will help reduce the tax burden for 2011-12 without creating a funding cliff once the funds are no longer available for 2012-13.

Technology Today: Cloud Computing

"Cloud Computing" is the term used for services that are accessed by a web browser such as Internet Explorer. Plainville students are using a variety of Cloud services, such as IEP Direct (Special Education software), School Dude (maintenance work order system), Blackboard Connect (emergency phone system) and Google Apps--the most widely used of them all. Google Apps allows increased collaboration between students and staff. Using Google Docs, teachers and students can work on projects from home and school without worrying about what word

processor they are using. Students can receive feedback from teachers as they are working on a writing assignment or project. In addition, students can work at the same time on a group project even if they are in their own homes. Cloud Computing helps run schools more efficiently. These types of services are less expensive to run and maintain. They are typically hosted by an outside company which eliminates having to maintain more servers that need cooling and power 24/7 year round.

Alumni News!



Bruce A. Charette '86 was promoted to National Director of Client Advocacy at CIGNA.

Edward J. Rapacky, III '93 recently became President of Benefit Resource Group, specializing in Employee Benefits for companies, municipalities and non-profits. Ed is President of Rapacky & Rapacky, featuring financial service, commercial, and personal lines of insurance. He received a B.S. in Finance from CCSU, after attending The University of Miami and is currently enrolled in the CEBS graduate program at the UPENN Wharton School.

In remembrance of Frank Christiansen '81 who passed away on September 25, 2010. (submitted by the Christiansen family). Please send **YOUR** alumni news to:

Lynn Davis, Communications Specialist, via mail: C/O Plainville Community Schools, 1 Central Square (lower level) Plainville, CT 06062, via email: davisl@plainvilleschools.org, via telephone: (860) 793-3210 x 404.

Did You Know? Plainville Adult Education offers the following evening programs, free of charge, at Plainville High School: Adult Basic Education, Adult High School, Citizenship Preparation, English as a Second Language, and GED Preparation. Please call (860) 793-3209 for further information. All calls are confidential.

Good News!

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

Following are some of these "good news" highlights:

INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY SPECIALISTS ANN CARNEVALE and TOM KENNEDY, together with WHEELER FACULTY MEMBERS JENNIFER MURRIHY and TAWANA GRAHAM-DOUGLAS, recently conducted presentations at the CT Educators Computer Association (CECA)... students in RACHEL VALENTINE'S KINDERGARTEN CLASS AT LINDEN STREET SCHOOL took part in an intergenerational activity visiting residents of the Apple Valley Rehabilitation Center in Plainville...PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS AARON FORINO and ALYSSA ANELLO were named Homecoming King and Queen, attended by Homecoming Court SAM HAUSMAN and ABBY SZACH, DYLAN CHASSE and NICOLE ANGELILLO, CONOR PHANEUF and BLAIRE BOUCHARD, and CHASE TARCA and JAMIE DEREVERE...the PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL TEAM was featured as the NBC 30 Game of the Week...MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE LIBRARY INFORMATION TEACHER JOYCE LYNCH was selected as a member of the 2013 Teen Nutmeg Committee...WHEELER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS RICKY FREITAS, ABIGAIL LEANDER, and PAIGE MADIGAN recently participated in the Children's Honor Choir at Naugatuck Valley Community College...Students in DEAN ESPOSTI'S CONSTRUCTION LAB AT PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL planned and designed a bird house project with STUDENTS FROM THE CREC INTEGRATED PROGRAM CLASSROOM AT THE HIGH SCHOOL...50 current and former PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS were honored for receiving qualifying scores on the May 2010 Advanced Placement tests in mathematics, science and English. The Louis Toffolon Elementary School Student Council recently implemented a school recycling program...THE LINDEN STREET SCHOOL INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC PROGRAM was awarded a Yamaha trumpet through the Horns For Kids Program (H4K), a non-profit organization supported through the Ronald McDonald House Charities...PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS JESSICA TATTERSALL and GARY DOMINIQUE have been named recipients of the "Students Rock Award" recognizing their outstanding contributions to Plainville High School...PLAINVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION CHAIR BECKY TYRRELL has been appointed one of two new area directors for the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education...an article written by PLAINVILLE ADULT HIGH SCHOOL CREDIT DIPLOMA PROGRAM PARTICIPANT ROBERT HUEY III has been selected for publication in *The Change Agent*...THE PLAINVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION recently received the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education's highest leadership recognition - the *CABE Board of Distinction Award - Level 2* for the second consecutive year...PLAINVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS has earned five awards in the *34th Annual Awards of Excellence for Educational Communications Contest* held by the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE)...PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS MIKE WALTON, CHRIS FILIPKOWSKI, SEBBY OLECHOWSKI and KATIE FRASIER, under the direction of TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION INSTRUCTOR DEAN ESPOSTI, restored a placard that hangs on the wall at the local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) facility in Plainville...MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE MUSIC INSTRUCTOR TODD HELMING was recently selected by *The School Band and Orchestra Magazine*, as one of "50 Directors Who Make a Difference"...PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS KENDRA VALLIERE and ALMA PIETRI have been awarded the Farmington Valley Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) Superintendent / Student Recognition Award...PLAINVILLE STUDENTS MADISON PECK, EMANUAL YAWIN, ELONA TANKSI, MARK GNIADEK, TREVOR BLOOM, ABIGAIL LEANDER, MCKENNA RITA, REBECCA CRAWFORD, GABRIEL YAWIN, ANDREW DANIELS and BRITTANY ROGAN received the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents' (CAPSS) Superintendent / Student Recognition Award and Certificate of Excellence.

Let's Chat With... Assistant Principal, Traci Mayette, MSP



What attracted you to the position of assistant principal for the Middle School of Plainville? Plainville is a community that takes a lot of pride in the school system and is using best practices to continually improve. Particularly at the middle school level, I was very attracted to MSP's collaborative work on curriculum and some of the programs to help students who need support (like the Response to Intervention program.)

What are your responsibilities as assistant principal? I have a variety of responsibilities in working with the teachers and students of MSP as well as with the community. For example, I supervise teachers specifically for certain subjects (social studies and language arts instruction.) I work with students on how to make good decisions in a situation and deal with issues when students don't make good decisions. As students struggle, I work with teachers, parents, and community resources to put a plan into place to help them get on track. Then, there are the details of running a school such as scheduling classes and coordinating Connecticut Mastery Tests. There is much variety within the assistant principal role.

What one piece of advice would you give to middle school students? Middle school is a time to really start discovering who you are and where your path will go. This is also a time to start independently practicing organizational and study skills. My advice: make use of the strategies teachers are teaching, give your best effort, and ask for help as you need it.

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Student Spotlight: Frank T. Wheeler Elementary School

By: Krystal Cruz and Alyssa Roy

On January 20, 2011 the fourth graders from Wheeler School went on a field trip to the Connecticut Science Center in Hartford. We visited six different rooms of the museum. The rooms were the Sports Lab, Invention Dimension, River of Life, Exploring Space, Picture of Health, and the Sight and Sound Experience.

One of our favorite places was the Space Room. We liked it because you could sit down and watch a movie clip about space. We also liked it because the room felt like you were in space! Another one of

our favorite rooms was The Sight and Sound Experience. In this room there was a robot that could pick up and throw foam balls through different shaped nets.

The Science Center also had a huge elevator that took us to all of the six floors. The last room we visited was called the River of Life. Meteorologist Mark Dixon was there broadcasting live for Channel 3 news at 12:00 p.m. We got to be in the background for the broadcast.

The Connecticut Science Center was a fun and exciting trip. We learned a lot about science.



*Deja Paradis and Alyssa Roy
 in the River of Life room*

PLAINVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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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 and sciences, with a focus on literacy, mathematics and technology
- effective communication and collaboration builds trust and respect