



# Plainville Board of Education's Community Letter

FALL 2020

Plainville Community Schools inspire and prepare lifelong learners to follow their passion, engage in their communities, and positively impact our global society.

## Message from the Board of Education

### In this issue...

- BOE Message, 1
- Student Spotlight, 1-2
- Let's Chat With, 2
- Good News, 3
- Adult Education, 3
- Social Justice Club, 4

The past eight months have been unprecedented in the changes we have endured in every aspect of our lives. Education is certainly not exempt from these changes. The planning, preparation, and disruption have been overwhelming. It is human nature to focus on what used to be and what we may have lost due to these extraordinary times.

Looking beyond what used to be can require effort, we can choose to focus on what might come from these challenges. We can focus on the kindness and care we show others, or our appreciation for those healthcare workers and front-line essential staff and our ability to use technology to improve teaching and communication. Certainly, we can appreciate the school staff who have dealt with so much change. Perhaps we will no longer have to extend school calendars for snowstorms as students may learn from home. These small but important positive outcomes will help us move forward and get through this together.

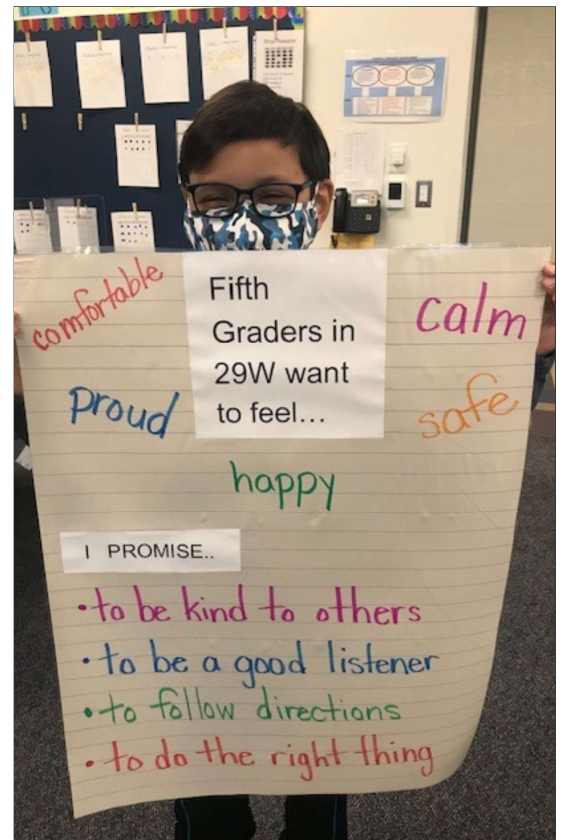
### Student Spotlight: Wheeler School

I love our class charter and I'm so glad we have one! I really think that the words we chose were perfect for us! Our class charter has 5 feelings we want to feel in class and 4 things that we promise to do. It all started when Mrs. Calabro asked us how we would like to feel in class. Everyone gave an example and we met up with Group A on a google meet to choose 5 words that meant a lot to us. We took our time and eventually agreed on something. We chose comfortable, proud, happy, safe, and calm.

I feel every single one of these when I'm at school. I see happy people in our class almost all the time. Most of the reason why I feel all of these words at school is because of my classmates. They invite me to play games and talk to me a lot. I'm constantly laughing and smiling because of them. They make school, well, school. I know I don't have to worry about a thing when I'm with them.

We read a few books about kindness and it really inspired us. We read a book called *Each Kindness*, a book about a girl who just arrived at a school and some of the girls in her class aren't the nicest. Their teacher demonstrates how kindness works using a rock and a bucket of water. When the rock fell in the water, it made a ripple and it spread, just like kindness. This changes the girl's perspective and by the time she is ready to be better, the new girl moves again and she loses the chance.

Please see *Student Spotlight*, page 2



Charter Essay  
Written by: Zayden McGraw

## Let's Chat With...Food Services Director, Ashley Onion



### What is your background in the Food Services industry?

I have worked in Food Service for 15 years and in School Nutrition for 5 years. Prior to Plainville I was a Registered Dietitian for Meriden Public Schools and a Food Service Director for Watertown Public Schools.

### What attracted you to this position in Plainville?

The strong sense of community within Plainville! It is very evident how much the school nutrition staff, administrators, teachers, staff, and board members really care about the students and families in Plainville.

### What is your top priority?

My top priority is to make sure all students have access to nutritious meals daily. As a Registered Dietitian my goal is to ensure students can enjoy meals that are nutritious and also taste delicious.

### What professional accomplishment are you most proud of?

Professionally, I enjoyed collaborating with the Boys and Girls Club to provide suppers to children in need. The program served suppers five nights a week and I began volunteering every Wednesday as a "supper mentor" where I ate dinner and spoke with the children about their day.

### How do you plan to enhance the current menu offerings in the schools?

Food Services plans on working with the students and staff for feedback and input on new menu items they would like to see.

### How do nutrition standards & guidelines impact menu offerings?

School meals are extremely regulated by the USDA to ensure all students are receiving whole grains, fruit, vegetables and milk. Food Services provides these components in all of our menu offerings daily.

### What do you see as your most difficult challenge?

Since the pandemic, every day has brought new surprises. I think it's challenging to plan long term at this moment because anything can change in a day.

### Attention Plainville Families:

**Your school needs help!** Through June 2021, all Plainville Community Schools will be providing all students breakfast and lunch free of charge. This is federally funded through the USDA. However, your child's school only receives the additional income when your child participates. In order to make ends meet, we need to double each school's participation. Otherwise, we won't be able to cover our costs. Will you help? Here are some reasons why we encourage your child(ren) to participate: you will be spending less on your food budget, reducing meal prep time, school meals are familiar and comforting to kids, helps the Food Services Department stay financially afloat, keeps the cafeteria staff employed, and meals are prepared following Health Department and CDC guidelines. The best part--each meal provides whole grains, fruit, vegetables, protein, and milk and is packed with nutrients.

### ***Student Spotlight, continued from page 1***

This affected everyone in our class. We also watched a short video about how kindness spreads and that kindness colors the world, which really it does! We all promised something we would do. I promised to include and invite my classmates to play or work with me, so they don't feel left out.

We have 4 on our class charter. They are: *I promise to be kind to others, to be a good listener, to follow directions and to do the right thing.* And everyone knows that you can't take a promise back, which is why we live up to them! I can't remember a single bad thing that happened in this class.

Each morning we have a class meeting, whether you are at home or school you can be a part of it! We just get to share out and talk and it really makes me feel comfortable and calm seeing all my classmates. One of the funniest things we did was make a friend advertisement! We wrote about what we wanted in a friend and what we had to offer. I made a lot of new friends! Oh, I almost forgot something! We made kindness boards, showing ways that we could be kind to each other! We all had different things which showed how unique and different we all are.

## Good News! Great things are happening in our school district.

### LINDEN STREET SCHOOL

Linden has a new Cultural Ambassador Program introduced to the school community by **Principal Jeff Walowitz**. The program provides an opportunity for all students at Linden to learn more about a variety of cultures around the world. Students are selected and research a specific culture, then share their new learning as part of the school's morning announcements.

### WHEELER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**Students** at Wheeler, under the direction of **Art Teacher Laura Reed**, created a "Stronger Together" mural comprised of the students' mini self-portraits created as their first art lesson this year...**Wheeler staff members** recently donated \$1,400 raised from "Dress Down Fridays" to the Plainville Community Food Pantry.

### LOUIS TOFFOLON SCHOOL

**Students in Sue Fabrizio's fifth grade class** at Tofflon are participating in a national postcard writing exchange, founded by an educator in Sand Point, Alaska. The **Toffolon fifth graders** research information about Connecticut and share it via postcard with fellow students across the country.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE

**MSP eighth grader Greyson Borra** was honored as one of four youth recipients of the United Way of West Central Connecticut's "Youth Live United" awards. **Greyson** was chosen to receive the award for his community volunteer efforts as part of the Middle School of Plainville's Kids in the Middle (K.I.M.) Program. He was nominated by **K.I.M. Coordinator Amy Kievit**, and recognized virtually during the United Way Community Builders Reception event held on September 22nd...the Southington Home Depot donated 66 plastic buckets to the **MSP Music Program**. The buckets will be used for safe and socially distant drumming practice this year.

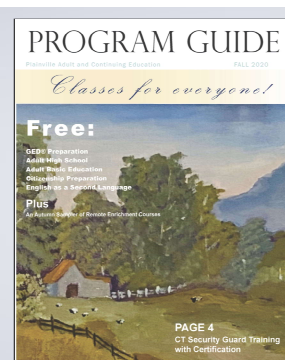
### PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

**The PHS Theater Unlimited Club** has started production of A. R. Gurney's "The Dining Room." The play is a collection of scenes revolving around a dining room and the change of cultural values in American history. The production will be a hybrid of virtual rehearsals and in person blocking culminating in either a socially distanced in person show or a recorded YouTube production slated for November.

### DISTRICT

**Plainville elementary students** recently enjoyed a virtual live performance from electric violinist, Caryn Lin, who offered two live-streamed performances for students in school and those participating in remote learning. The virtual performances were made possible through a generous grant from the Elizabeth Norton Trust...Thanks to generous donations from the Plainville Community Fund and the Petit Family Foundation through the school district's **School Business Community (SBC) Partnership Program**, the **Plainville High School Math Department** will purchase iPad and Apple Pencil sets in order to provide timely, meaningful feedback to students using proper mathematical notation and syntax...**The three elementary schools** scheduled their Annual Fall Fun Run virtually this year during the weekend of November 6th. Students ran on their own at any point over the weekend and submitted their results...**Plainville Adult Education** has a new YouTube channel called *Plainville AE*, featuring study tips from **Midge Bresnahan, Adult Education College and Career Readiness Tutor**.

[www.plainvilleschools.org](http://www.plainvilleschools.org)



### ROLLING ENROLLMENT MEANS IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO JOIN.

Plainville Adult and Continuing Education offers evening programming, free of cost, in the following areas: Adult Basic Education (Math and Reading/Writing), Adult High School Credit Diploma Program, Citizenship Preparation, English as a Second Language, GED Preparation, and PARC Adult Basic Education. Most programs are offered mornings too, with cost-free child care provided by professionals from the Plainville Family Resource Network, at Linden Street School. Returning this December, is the **Connecticut Security Officer License Training with Certification Course**. Complete the training remotely in just one day to be issued a training certificate, required to accompany the licensure application to the Connecticut Department of Emergency Services and Public Safety. For further information, please call Plainville Adult and Continuing Education: **(860) 793-3209** or visit: [www.plainvilleschools.org/departments/adult\\_ed](http://www.plainvilleschools.org/departments/adult_ed)

# Plainville High School's Social Justice Club

The Plainville High School Social Justice Club promotes social equity among students, educators, and community members through education and activism. The club is composed of a diverse group of students and educators who understand that inequity is woven into the fabric of everyday life and that it must be viewed through an intersectional lens in order to truly make change. The club advisors are Plainville High School faculty members Emily Wasley and Gabriella Strain.

The purpose of this group is to provide members of the Plainville High School community with the tools and knowledge to battle everyday racism, discrimination, and injustice. The groups's goal is to create a more empathetic and supportive community. They strive for solidarity with minoritized groups by becoming educated allies and proactive participants. This may sometimes look like speaking up for those who may not have a voice or by amplifying the messages of those who feel unheard.

By making space for honest reflection and examining the historical and contemporary issues that perpetuate social injustice, club members will become better equipped to take on the work of advocacy, empowerment, and self-growth. The group works with scholars and activists in order to develop the skills needed to uncover and address injustice. The hope is for members to share what they learn with others while also furthering their own understanding of what social justice is in order to create a better world.

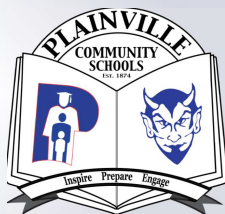
Plainville Board of Education  
Plainville Community Schools  
1 Central Square  
Plainville, CT 06062  
Phone: 860.793.3200  
Fax: 860.747.6790  
www.plainvilleschools.org

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## Belief Statements... *We believe:*

- Our public school system is the core of the community and has a fundamental responsibility to develop productive, educated citizens in a democratic society
- Optimal achievement for each learner is a responsibility shared by students, home, school, and community
- We must provide each student with a comprehensive curriculum and effective instruction to ensure meaningful engagement in the learning process
- A safe, caring learning environment promotes the academic growth, health, and emotional well-being of each student
- Communication and collaboration serve to increase knowledge, trust, and respect, and are the responsibility of everyone in the community
- Professional Learning Communities foster teamwork that results in the continuous improvement of teaching and learning outcomes