



Plainville Board of Education's Community Letter

Winter 2021

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

*“For there is always light,
if only we're brave enough to see it.
If only we're brave enough to be it.”*

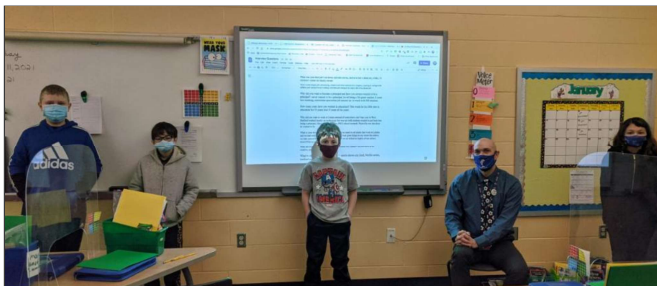
-Amanda Gorman, Youth Poet Laureate

The words of this young poet give us hope and allow us to understand the importance of our future generations and their impact on our world. We strive to educate them to communicate this hopefulness, to collaborate with each other, to innovate solutions to the problems of the day, and to be mindful and resilient in the face of challenge.

Plainville Community Schools Portrait of the Graduate identifies five traits that we strive to instill in all students, to not only make them successful personally, but to improve their ability to positively impact our world. We seek to have students be Collaborative, Communicative, Innovative, Mindful, and Resilient.

At this moment in time, as we face so many daunting challenges, the importance of education cannot be overstated. Plainville Community Schools, through the support of our community, embodies the belief that we can be contributors to the solutions we seek. That belief will be instilled in our students and our future.

Student Spotlight: Linden St. School



Linden Street School Principal, Mr. Jeff Wallowitz, recently sat down with Kerry Craft's fifth grade class. Each student asked Mr. Wallowitz a question--a great way to get to know Linden's new principal.

What college did you attend?

Mr. Wallowitz went to CCSU for his undergraduate and masters degrees and Sacred Heart University for administrative certification.

Were you a principal somewhere else before here?

Mr. Wallowitz was a principal in Middletown for two years, and then West Hartford for 12 years. Before that, he was a fifth grade teacher.

What was your first job?

He cut lawns, raked leaves, and shoveled snow, all to buy a drum set and a bike. When he was 16 he worked in the preschool and children's center that his family owned.

What is your dream job?

When Mr. Wallowitz was in college, he wanted to go into advertising and create and write commercials, slogans, jingles, and logos. He continued coaching through college and working with children, realized how much he loved working with kids, and changed his major. Being a principal is his dream job.

Why did you want to become a principal and have you always wanted to be a principal?

At first, Mr. Wallowitz did not want to be a principal, he loved being a fifth grade teacher. But eight years into teaching, a curriculum specialist job opened up and a chance to work with 300 students, and the rest is history.

How many years have you worked in education?

This will be his 28th year in education, but 35 years total if you count when he worked at his parents' children's center.

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Student Spotlight...Middle School of Plainville

Hello Plainville Families,

We are the MSP News Team. Everyone plays an important role in our every day morning broadcast. Here at MSPN we are like a big family. We all support and cheer for one another. This pandemic has impacted what we do, but we keep on persevering every day.

In the spring when everyone was learning from home, under the guidance of Mr. Helming, we used Screencastify to pre-record our segments along with Mr. Guarino. Mr. Helming edited them and uploaded the broadcast each day. This allowed for us to continue providing the school news each day. We did this when we were distance learning this school year as well.

As the new school year began, Mr. Helming moved to Plainville High School and Mrs. Coyle took over as our advisor. Mrs. Coyle guided us, and dedicated so much of her time to make the transition happen seamlessly. Over the summer, a small group of eighth graders from MSPN would come in, every other day, for around five hours, and had to work hard to make sure everything was prepared for our following school year. That meant lighting, cameras, streaming software, and microphones all had to be checked and procedures written. Also in the summer, we would practice and run through a typical broadcast, so we would be prepared. We helped train the new seventh grade recruits, so that they would be prepared for the school year in MSPN and able to run broadcasts from day one with hybrid groups.

Tamia C. an eighth grader from MSPN, would like to share how she felt about this time and how it influenced our broadcasting, "I think it was a very creative way to keep the MSPN team connected and active while going through the hard transition of being in a pandemic." When we came back to school full time, we were able to collaborate more on projects, and we were able to work well with one another to produce daily broadcasts. This includes writing our scripts, creating our segments, announcing and presenting our completed slides.

As the school year has progressed, our experience has improved and we have many new segments including holidays celebrated within our community, facts on history, segments on Social Emotional Learning, and Mr. Guarino's daily update and words of encouragement. We try to create segments that are not just educational, but also fun and interesting. We are using MSPN to keep our community connected and informed. All of this and more is what we do every day to provide our school with the morning broadcasts we stream.

Thank you,

Juliana R. and Sofia B., eighth graders from the MSPN Team



Let's Chat With...



Lily Cornielle

EL, Equity and Student Support Specialist

What is your top priority?

To support our teachers, who in turn support our students. To build rapport and trust so we can work collaboratively to identify barriers that are impeding student progress and troubleshoot how to best support teachers in supporting our students. To look at our processes, celebrate our successes and continue to make improvements that will pave the way for others to follow.

What are your primary responsibilities in your current role as EL, Equity and Student Support Specialist?

I am responsible for: the development and successful implementation of all English Language Learning and Bilingual Programming services in Plainville Community Schools; bridging the communication gap between our district and bilingual families to foster partnerships between home and school; and lastly, supporting the individual schools with the district's vision of SEL, equity and mastery. We are working on identifying and removing barriers, as well as creating systems that ensure that every child has an equal opportunity for success.

What is your long term vision for EL, Equity and Student Support in Plainville Community Schools?

That all schools have individual teams and those teams meet automatically and systematically to review student information to identify areas of need for their buildings and create a plan to find solutions to barriers encountered as it relates to student achievement. Our department will work collaboratively with those teams to support them with strategies, time to meet in Professional Learning Communities, training, additional resources and practical ways to bridge gaps in student learning.

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

LINDEN STREET SCHOOL

First graders in **Karen Dinsmore** and **Madison Toppi's** classes read the book I like Myself by Karen Beaumont and then created their own avatar choosing their "self-identity"...The Plainville Fire Department in conjunction with generous donations from PetSmart and their customers, picked up and delivered brand new stuffed animals to the **Plainville Family Resource Network, based at Linden Street School.**

WHEELER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Wheeler Library Information Teacher Cynthia Gi-antonio led a lesson on equity and gender stereotypes with all **Wheeler fifth grade students.** As part of the lesson, students discussed how stereotypes impact their daily lives and online experiences...**Wheeler** raised \$822.66 for the Easter Seals Veterans Rally Point organization as part of their Veterans Day initiatives. **Wheeler** has held many fundraisers in honor of veterans over the past six years; this year's resulted in the most collected to date!

LOUIS TOFFOLON SCHOOL

Students in Daria Sargent's first grade class participated in a read aloud event and "mystery word" activity with the book, Words To Love By...The **Toffolon school community** created "Charters" as part of the implementation of the RULER program. A charter is a promise of how each person wants to be treated and agrees to treat others. Students are recognized for acting in a way that supports their class charter.

MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE

In November and December, students in the **Kids in the Middle program at MSP**, led by **Advisor Amy Kievit**, made 127 dog and cat toys out of fleece to donate to the Humane Society...Members of the **First Responders Fan Club** sent pen pal letters and decorative artwork to officers and staff members of the Plainville Police Department and hosted a canned food drive called "Operation Food For Thanksgiving" on behalf of the Plainville Community Food Pantry. **MSP students and families** donated more than 100 non-perishable food items...On November 13th, **MSP** celebrated World Kindness Day by wearing t-shirts that represent kindness. In addition, **teachers** lead activities about meaningful acts of kindness.

PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

The PHS Science National Honor Society, lead by **faculty member and group advisor John Girard**, collected \$370 and donated food items, Gnazzo Food Center gift cards, and funds to the Plainville Community Food Pantry before the school's winter break, to support local residents in need over the winter months...Students in the **PHS Culinary Arts classes**, under the direction of **faculty member Jonathan Dunlap**, participated in a Pumpkin Carving Competition. The **PHS** community voted for their favorite pumpkins, and the top three winners received a gift card to Gnazzo's Food Center, who sponsored the event and donated the pumpkins. Proceeds from the event were donated to the high school's PJ Day for Kids fundraiser...**The PHS Social Justice Club**, led by advisors **Emily Wasley and Gabriella Strain**, held a Social Justice Club gear fundraiser to support Native American Heritage Month raising more than \$300 for the First Nations Development Institute in honor of November's Native American Heritage Month.

DISTRICT

The inaugural group of Plainville Community Schools' **"Portrait Pioneers"** award winners were recognized at the January 11th Plainville Board of Education meeting. School district staff members **Lily Cornielle, John Czerwinski, and Morgan Campbell** were the first recipients of this award established to recognize school district staff members who exemplify and model the characteristics of the district's Portrait of the Graduate framework...On December 11th, **students, faculty and staff** across Plainville Community Schools donned their PJs in support of the Connecticut Children's Medical Center's "PJ Day for Kids" fundraiser. All proceeds benefit the Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders at Connecticut Children's Medical Center, to support children battling pediatric cancer and to support cancer research...The Elizabeth H. Norton Trust Fund donated to Plainville Community Schools' new "Adopt A Pet" **Reading Partners** program as they transitioned to a pen pal-style model for this year...**District staff members** supported the Plainville Community Food Pantry through a recent donation drive organized by the Education Association of Plainville (EAP) and coordinated by **Linden faculty member Kerry Craft**. A total of \$749 was raised across the district.

DID YOU KNOW? The Plainville Adult and Continuing Education Spring 2021 Program Guide was mailed to Plainville residents, and may be accessed from: www.plainvilleschools.org/departments/adult_ed

Free programming includes: Adult Basic Education, High School Diploma Programs, Citizenship Preparation, and English as a Second Language. Most programs are offered mornings too, with cost-free child care. **Please call (860) 793-3209.**

QUESTIONS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Why did you want to work at Linden instead of somewhere else? Before Linden, he worked in West Hartford, and was working mostly with technology, not with students. He wanted to be an elementary principal again. He liked our vision and direction as a school and district. He spoke to Mrs. Graham-Douglas, Mr. Levenduski, and Mr. LePage, did his research, and discovered Plainville was the place he wanted to be.

What is your favorite aspect of Linden? When he first took over at Linden, he sent an email to all adults that work at Linden to meet with him over the summer. The staff all had great things to say about the school, the children and the families. Mr. Wallowitz was especially impressed by how the staff takes care of the kids and listened to how we all talked so highly of our school. He is so thankful that the staff treated him as part of the Linden family.

What are some future activities you have planned for Linden? He is working on some creative new ideas.

What tv shows do you like to watch? He enjoys all sports shows, Netflix series, and medical and police dramas.

What was your favorite subject in school when you were growing up? Math (but when he was a teacher he loved to teach writing).

Why are you such a big Red Sox fan? He used to live in Massachusetts and the first professional baseball game he went to was a Red Sox game.

Why have you decided to shave your head? In his 30s he started to lose his hair and now he saves a lot of money not having to buy shampoo and hair products. He also loves to have the windows down in his car when driving.

Do you have any pets and what are they? Many pets, one dog- Fluffy, gecko-Gibs, two guinea pigs- Clover & Peanut, fish and frogs, and a rabbit that his daughter was able to set back into the wild.

Are you married with children? Yes, Mr. Wallowitz has been married for 25 years and he has three children Jenny-24, Connor-19 and Taylor-17.

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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