



# Plainville Board of Education's Community Letter

Winter 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

*“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.”*

– Nelson Mandela

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Education impacts our lives in so many ways; it is so much more than giving children the ability to earn a decent living. It is about learning tolerance, understanding where we came from and contemplating where we are going. It is about understanding concepts and understanding people. It is learning to respect ourselves and our world.

The Board of Education understands there is much more to our schools and students than test scores and statistics. We understand that children come to school to grow into citizens and that public education's mission is to create an educated electorate who actively participate in our society. We will continue to provide every opportunity to help each child succeed. We thank the Plainville community for their continued support and ask you to join us in helping to change the world through the power of education.

### Student Spotlight: Linden St. School



Written By: Jason, Sofia, Darren, Jordyn, Tessa, Autumn, Victoria, Jay, Harley, Anna, Tabby, and Lillian

On January 8th, students from throughout Connecticut went to Naugatuck Valley Community College to a leadership conference. Twelve students from our school went to learn how to be better leaders and role models. We can't wait to share what we learned with our classes!

### Here is what we thought about the trip:

*“Our favorite activity was the improv game with actors Tony and Maggie. Something we learned from that day was how to be a good leader by using our words instead of hands.”*

*“Our favorite activity was our third class about decision making. One way we will bring leadership into our school is teamwork and cooperation.”*

*“Our scheduled activity showed us how to use our free time. It helped us understand that the important things should come first. Then you can fit the little things into life! It helps with time management.”*

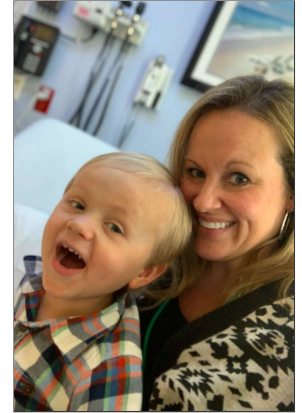
# Pajama Day



By: Maja Grabowski and  
Kali Fangiullo

On December 13, 2019 the Middle School of Plainville, along with all the other schools in town, participated in Pajama Day. The MSP Student Council, under the guidance of Mrs. Buthe and with support from Mrs. Bacinskas, help put this special day together. Pajama Day is a super special, important day throughout our entire Plainville district. Pajama Day for the kids has a special meaning behind it.

Children who have cancer and other serious illnesses and are fighting each and every day can be in the hospital for a long period of time. They usually spend a lot of time in their pajamas. So, students at MSP and across Plainville, and Connecticut wore pajamas to show solidarity and to honor these children. We asked students to wear pajamas and bring in a \$1 donation to send off to Connecticut Children's Medical Center. As a result, Plainville schools as a whole raised \$5,500. At MSP we raised \$3,043 alone! We want to say a huge thank you to all the families, students and staff members that have helped us go through this long journey and help supporting CCMC. It means a lot and we are thankful for everyone's participation.



*"Owen, my 3 year old son, was diagnosed with leukemia at the young age of 14 months old. Ever since then Connecticut Children's has become a place near and dear to my heart. Owen is in the maintenance phase of treatments which includes daily meds and chemo, a monthly visit to the hospital for various chemo and other infusions, as well as spinal tap procedures. It has been a challenging two and half years, with just about a year left of treatments but we remain hopeful. It really means so much to me that our school and district is so supportive of PJ Day and Connecticut Children's. Other than the generous monetary donations, I was able to deliver countless boxes of toys that went directly to the Center of Cancer and Blood Disorders on the 5th and 8th floors thanks to the MSP Toy Drive."*

- Karyn Bacinskas  
MSP Faculty

## Let's Chat With...Rebecca Martinez, Plainville Board of Education



### Why did you want to become a BOE member?

I attended a training program called Parents Supporting Educational Excellence (Parents SEE). It was training offered through the Plainville Family Resource Network that facilitated partnerships with district and school personnel to address school improvement and increase student achievement. It really explained the role of the BOE and I found it very interesting. Over the last few years, I watched as important positions such as the SRO Officer were originally voted down. I saw that our Athletic Director went above and beyond to put together an indoor track program (without increasing the budget) and that too, was voted down initially. After last year's budget cuts resulting in reductions of staff, programs, and sports, I really felt that we needed more parents at the table to advocate for the students.

### What is your top priority as a BOE member?

To advocate for the students and ensure that every student has access to a high-quality education regardless of their ability or background.

### What is the biggest challenge facing public education?

The uncertainty of funding is always a challenge. I am optimistic knowing that our Education Cost Sharing funding has increased.

### What have you enjoyed about being a BOE member thus far?

The BOE jumps right into budget season so I am already learning a lot. I am excited to start serving on the Policy and Curriculum Committees.

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



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

### LINDEN STREET SCHOOL

**Third graders** enjoyed a visit from **Superintendent Steven LePage and Assistant Superintendent David Levenduski**, to kick off the "Superintendent's Reading and Math Challenge" initiative. The students watched a video "starring" their guest visitors who shared several math related games that students can play to practice math skills, then played some games with the guest visitors...**Linden** received a \$500 grant from the Exxon Mobil Educational Alliance Program to support STEAM programming and the science curriculum. The grant was submitted by employees from the XtraMart in Plainville.

### WHEELER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

**Fifth graders** completed a unit of study where they learned about the voting process and voting rights in Connecticut. They then listened to speeches by fellow fifth graders from across Connecticut who were running to be the next "Connecticut Kid Governor," analyzed the issues presented, and cast their votes...Wheeler School renovation project Superintendent Matt Olshefski from O & G Industries, together with Project Manager Mark Sedensky and Project Engineer Robert Vazquez, surprised **Wheeler School Principal Andrew Batchelder** with a United States flag that was flown over the United States Capitol building on September 3, 2019 (the first day of school this year.)

### LOUIS TOFFOLON SCHOOL

**Fifth grade student government** hosted a Hot Cocoa Booth and PTO bake sale at the Toffolon Holiday Fest. Students set up and manned the booth, and collected canned goods for the Plainville Community Food Pantry. **The Plainville Town-Wide Elementary Jazz Band** and **Toffolon Select Choir** performed at the XL Center in Hartford on January 25th, before the Hartford Wolf Pack hockey game. **The Jazz Band** performed a half hour of repertoire in the main atrium of the XL Center and the **Toffolon Choir** performed the National Anthem. Portions of ticket sales from the game went to Toffolon and Plainville Community Schools.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE

**The Art Club** members created a gift basket of hand-made ceramic ornaments that were delivered to the Plainville Senior Center, as gifts for seniors in our community...MSP welcomed Nutmeg nominated local au-

thor Leslie Connor on December 5th. Mrs. Connor gave two large group presentations to all **three grade levels**, followed by a writer's workshop in the library... **MSP faculty members Camille Westfall and Kim Coyle** and **a group of eighth grade students**, attended the Multiply Your Options (MYO) event held on the UCONN Storrs campus. This one-day, two session conference for middle school girls is designed to expose them to female role models in science, mathematics, engineering and technology.

### PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

**Students in Mark Chase's Transportation Technology classes** completed the refurbishment of a second batch of bikes this year to be donated to residents through the Plainville Community Food Pantry...**Students Kaylie Hall and Luis Arango** were named recipients of the *Plainville High School Students Rock Award* for Semester 1...PHS hosted the 8th annual Career Day program for students on November 22nd. More than 50 speakers covering 40 career sectors participated in the event...PHS once again hosted the "Go Baby Go" event December 6th & 7th, during which toy ride-on cars for children with special needs were modified, refurbished, and presented to local families.

### DISTRICT

**MSP faculty member Chris Couture and Plainville High School Library Information Teacher Deb Pikiell** were recognized as the district's *Everyday Heroes* for the month of December...**District paraprofessional Sherry Daddabbo and Middle / High School Band Director Dominic Talotta** were recognized as the district's *Everyday Heroes* for the month of January...**The Plainville Board of Education** received the *Connecticut Association of Board's of Education CAFE Board of Distinction Award - Level 2* for the 11th consecutive year. Plainville Community Schools also received seven *CAFE 2019 CAFE Bonnie B. Carney Awards of Excellence for Educational Communications*...**PHS senior Travis Lavigne and eighth grader Valiantsin Kasabrukhou** were awarded the *Farmington Valley Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents' (CAPSS) Superintendent / Student Recognition Award* for leadership service to the school, academic prowess relative to ability, and service to others in the community.



Barn Wood and Silk Floral Display, Bob Ross Joy of Painting, CT Security Officer License Training with Certification, Trip to Boston, Trip to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, De-escalation Communication Seminar, eCourses - Workforce Education, Computer Skills for Beginners, Foundations of Excel, Financial Planning Strategy, How Money Works, Intro to American Sign Language, Math/Grammar Tutoring Sessions for Diploma Holders, Pediatric First Aid CPR AED Training for Connecticut Child Care Centers, Retirement: The Most Common Mistakes, Surviving Crisis Situations, Tai Chi for Health, The Joys & Benefits of Using Essential Oils, The Memory Exchange-a memoir writing and discussion group, The Probate Process, Zumba Fitness with Sarah Lynn **PLUS** Cost-Free Mandated Programs: Adult High School, GED Preparation, English as a Second Language, Adult Basic Education, Citizenship Preparation. **For further information, please call Plainville Adult and Continuing Education: (860)793-3209 or [www.plainvilleschools.org/departments/adult\\_ed](http://www.plainvilleschools.org/departments/adult_ed)**

# Happy Hands at Toffolon!

In deaf culture you wave your hands in lieu of clapping for applause. This is done because it is visual and easy for all to see, especially those who are deaf and hard of hearing--which leads to Happy Hands. Happy Hands at Louis Toffolon Elementary School is a newly formed group that meets bi-weekly made up of deaf and hard of hearing students, and their guests for the session. The group represents a variety of students ranging from those who utilize cochlear implants and hearing aids as well as those who use American Sign Language (ASL) as their primary mode of communication. Some students come from families who are entirely hearing while others might come from deaf families. The purpose of the "club," lead by PHS American Sign Language Instructor and Toffolon parent Rachel Posner, is to learn about how to rise above challenges. Included in weekly sessions, are lessons in American Sign Language, interactive games incorporating gestures, facial expressions and body language. The students always enjoy themselves--all that matters is being together as a community and introducing their unique culture to the guests. In addition, the club is an opportunity for the high school ASL students to join and complete their community service requirements. PHS students implement lessons, lead activities and develop leadership qualities. The bonus for them is seeing how the elementary school students react to having "cool older students" participate. Overall, there is a plethora of learning, interactions and most importantly, acceptance. It's a safe space, a place to come together and grow-- it's where Happy Hands fly.

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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