

Plainville Citizen Op-Ed, November, 2021

Nine years ago, a calendar change was implemented for Plainville Community Schools, making Veterans Day a full school day. When this change was initially presented to the Board of Education for consideration, it was done with a commitment to using the time to further educate our students on the significance of Veterans Day, with an emphasis on the importance of honoring our nation's veterans. That commitment has continued each year. This year our elementary schools held virtual Veterans Day programs while our Middle and High School held in person events. Our creative school-based Veterans Day planning committees curated a variety of creative, thoughtful and educational video, slideshow and presentation segments capturing the comprehensive programming, activities, ceremonies and tributes woven throughout the day on November 11th, together with in person activities at our secondary level.

At the elementary level, students and staff developed programs that creatively and respectfully honored veterans near and far. A variety of video tributes, readings, musical performances, and works of art were created and shared with the school communities and families. Each school also created visual displays of and in honor of veterans. Following Veterans Day, the Wheeler School Student Council also held a "Pajama Day" on November 12th, to raise money for Veterans Rally Point, to support the transition of Veterans from military to civilian life.

At the Middle School of Plainville, students and staff arrived to see the enormous American flag on display outside of the building, thanks to this annual tradition made possible by the Plainville Fire Department. On Veterans Day morning, students and

their Veteran family members participated in an “indoor parade” through the beautifully decorated hallways where students and staff cheered, waved flags, and held posters honoring the visiting Veterans, while patriotic music filled the air. Photographs of the veterans were also collected and displayed on the Middle Schools’ Wall of Honor in the atrium. The parade was held to honor the sacrifices made by Veterans and to reflect on the heroism of those who have served the United States of America. The special visitors were treated to “Grab and Go” goodie bags before leaving, that were prepared by faculty and staff members, and supported by the Middle School’s PTC.

Plainville High School created a video montage of student and staff family member veterans, a tradition that began during the last school year. Assistant Principal Jonathan Coe addressed students via intercom, providing an overview of the history and traditions of Veterans Day, followed by the reading of the poem *In Flanders Field* written by John McCrae. At 11:00 AM, high school student musicians played “Taps” on their trumpets in designated areas throughout the building. Additionally, Plainville High School held a special breakfast event for Veterans. High school students and their Veteran family members gathered in the school’s cafeteria for this event. Plainville High School students also decorated doors throughout the building using patriotic colors and themes.

While each school’s Veterans Day programs were unique, all five schools preserved the common goal of providing meaningful, respectful, educational events, activities, and programming in honor of Veterans both locally and globally. As with each Veterans Day in Plainville Community Schools, the entire school community was filled with pride and admiration as we celebrated both virtually and

in person, those who serve and have served our country and fought for the freedom we enjoy today in Plainville and across the world. From the extended learning for students, to the meaningful and respectful observances in each school in honor of our veterans, November 11th, 2021 in Plainville Community Schools was an exceptional day of reflection, recognition and honor.