

## Message from the Board of Education

Spring is now upon us, our students, faculty, and staff returned from Spring Recess on April 17th, and we begin the “home stretch” of the very busy remainder of the school year, filled with many activities, spring sports, performances, and events, including the annual Superintendent’s Update and Informational Showcase that was held at Plainville High School on April 20th.

The program began in the high school’s auditorium with a short presentation from Superintendent LePage who welcomed attendees, highlighted a number of district programs and initiatives in place, and reviewed the proposed 2023-24 Board of Education budget. Board of Education member Foster White was also celebrated that evening, as he was recently named recipient of the Connecticut Association of School Administrators (CAS) “Distinguished Friend of Education” award—an honor that he is truly most worthy of! The audience in the auditorium also enjoyed a musical tribute to Foster from Plainville High School student, Jaylen Thigpen. Showcase attendees were then able to move into the “open house” portion of the evening, which featured a wide variety of activities, performances, informational tables, student lead demonstrations, and much more. In addition, this year the Plainville Coalition for Positive Youth Development coordinated a “Mental Health Resources Boulevard” hallway that included several community resource organizations for parents and families to visit.

The Superintendent’s Update and Informational Showcase is a wonderful opportunity to highlight all of the incredible programs and initiatives in our school district, and we thank all of the students, faculty, and staff for their hard work and dedication in putting this together once again.

### PHS Art Club Spreads Cheer



Plainville Community Schools staff member  
Laurice Doucette with “Aruba Seascape”

The Plainville High School Art Club, lead by Advisor Mario Pires, is spreading cheer and enhancing the workspaces of high school staff members, thanks to their “art based beautification initiative.” The project stemmed from Pires’ vision of enhancing the school’s climate and environment through the addition of custom works of art created by members of the Art Club, while also providing the opportunity for the club members to earn volunteer hours. The student group voted on the idea, which was enthusiastically endorsed, and launched earlier this year. The high school’s Art Club, which is open to Plainville High School students in all grades, meets once per week throughout the school year.

“I really wanted to introduce some school community based art projects for our Art Club members,” explained Pires. “The beautification projects are a win-win, allowing students to collaborate with peers, hone their artistic skills, plan and manage projects, and give back to the high school community, all while spreading cheer through their artwork.”

## Student Spotlight: Cheyanne Matthews, Plainville High School

My name is Cheyanne Matthews and I am a junior at Plainville High School. A theme and focus at PHS is college and career readiness. There is a school wide goal for every student to have a post graduation plan. My areas of interest are in fashion and herpetology. I started making dresses a few years ago when Mr.

Pires assigned us an independent project in Studio Art. I had just learned how to sew with a kiddie sewing machine I received for Christmas. When I was done with the dress, Mrs. Pietri wanted to put it on display at school. I was receiving so many compliments and when the art show came up, I wore it to the event. I ended up in the newspaper featuring my dress. Then, Mrs. DeLorenzo came

to me with an idea—to have my own Independent Study for Fashion Design. At this point, I had only made three dresses so I said that I would think about it. One night, during summer vacation, I couldn't sleep. It was three in the morning so I got up and started sketching some dresses. Later that day I looked at them and realized that they were actually really good. I emailed Mrs. DeLorenzo and told her that I would like to do the Independent Study. I came up with an idea

to do a fashion show for my school then I made a list of materials that I needed to make the dresses.

When I returned to school in September I had my Independent Study class with Mrs. Pietri ready for me. Over the next few months, the school ordered the materials I needed as I finished each dress. I met with my



models as often as I could and worked with them to size the dresses, practice walking, etc. Months went by and I was able to finish all of my dresses. It was very stressful at times when my sewing machine would get stuck or I didn't like the design but I worked through it. My Independent Study helps me through school because I enjoy sewing and it gives me a chance to work

with something else hands on.

I want to thank the school for funding my projects and for this opportunity that they have given me. Also, thank you to Mrs. Tawana Graham-Douglas, the Curriculum Director for Plainville Community Schools for your support in approving this Independent Study Project. Cheyanne will hold her fashion show as part of the art auction at Plainville High School on May 18th in the Learning Commons.

### Let's Chat With...Mark Fritz



Mark Fritz  
Athletic Director  
Plainville Community Schools

#### What are your primary responsibilities in your role as Athletic Director?

Being a resource for our student athletes, coaches, and community members who participate in education based athletics. My number one priority is the education of our students with a secondary focus on them being able to look back fondly on their time spent here as a student athlete at PHS.

#### What is a "typical" work day like for you?

Making sure that our coaches and student athletes have everything they need in order to be successful. From scheduling games, officials, and buses to coordinating with the CCC and CIAC; there is a lot that goes into hosting a sporting event and sometimes we have 2-3 per day.

#### What do you enjoy most about your role in Plainville Community Schools?

Being able to work with all of the athletic programs and student athletes in a more in depth capacity.

**What is your top priority?** Ensuring that all of our student athletes have a positive and safe experience while participating in athletics here in Plainville.

**What is your biggest challenge?** Knowing that not everyone is going to agree with every decision that is made but understanding that you can't go wrong if the decision was made with the best interest of our student athletes in mind.

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

### LINDEN STREET ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The Linden community celebrated World Read Aloud Day on February 1st. Throughout the day, Linden students had the opportunity to virtually meet with authors and illustrators and many guest readers visited Linden classrooms to share a book or two...Linden fifth graders Mateo Ruiz and Giovanni Evangelista created and organized a chess club and chess tournament. The winner of the tournament will play against Principal Wallowitz...The Linden PTO collaborated with staff to create an "Eggcellent Start to Spring" event, complete with basket raffles, a bounce house, an egg hunt, and a visit from Lindy the Dolphin...The PTO also hosted Linden's annual Lucky Leprechaun Bingo event. Families were asked to bring in non-perishable food items, which supported both Linden families and the Plainville Community Food Pantry.

### LOUIS TOFFOLON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Toffolon Garden Club members are gearing up for another growing season. Fourth and fifth grade students researched seeds to create a planting schedule then planted the seeds indoors to get a head start. They also built two greenhouses to extend the growing season which were purchased thanks to a grant from the Plainville Community Fund...Toffolon fifth graders completed their third community service project for Plainville's Daybreak Adult Services. They created approximately 40 "stained glass" candy filled flower pots and in return they received a thank you note with pens and notepads for their act of kindness.

### FRANK T. WHEELER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Wheeler fifth graders Mico Albert and Will Chase were recognized for their achievements in art and music at the Connecticut Association of Schools annual Elementary Celebration of the Arts banquet held at the Aqua Turf on February 7th...Second graders enjoyed a non-fiction reading celebration culminating their hard work in completing a research project and presentation. The students researched information about inspiring people such as Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Helen Keller, Abraham Lincoln, and many more...Wheeler fifth graders grew "mold" in their classrooms as part of their Mystery Science Webs of Life unit. The students collected data and graphed what they saw growing over a 2 1/2 week time period.

### MIDDLE SCHOOL OF PLAINVILLE

The MSP VEX Robotics Program, led by Advisor Camille Westfall, hosted the 10th annual VEX IQ state championship on March 18th. Fifteen teams competed in the elementary school division held in the cafeteria, and 55 teams competed in the middle school division in the gym. Seven Middle School of Plainville teams were entered, and three advanced to the finals...Students, families and faculty at the Middle School came together in March for a night of fun and creativity at MSP's "Paint Night." Art teacher Laura Meehan created step-by-step painting demonstrations for the group of painters to follow along, and the participants created beautiful spring paintings...Students in the MSPN student news broadcast

program enjoyed a visit to the WTNH NEWS 8 news station in New Haven, hosted by news anchor Laura Hutchinson. The student group toured the station, met with the morning anchor team and had a chance to test the "Green Screen" and weather desk as part of their visit...Eight Middle School Technology Student Association members, together with Advisor Camille Westfall, attended a leadership training event on February 15th. They participated in student led workshops and honed their teamwork, problem solving, communication, and creativity skills.

### PLAINVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

Members of the PHS Science National Honor Society, led by Advisor John Girard, hosted a "Night of Science" on March 29th for elementary school students and their families. More than 200 students and their families participated in a variety of science experiments and engaging activities including balloon races, making "oobleck", rainbow skittles, elephant toothpaste, aka seltzer rockets and more...PHS students Paige Stillwill (visual arts) and Anneli St. Lawrence (performing arts) are the recipients of the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) 2023 High School Outstanding Arts Award. The students were honored at an awards program held at the Aqua Turf in Southington on April 4th...Faculty members Dave Gaignard and Mark Chase hosted representatives from Goodwin University and the Goodwin University Advanced Manufacturing Lab. Students had the opportunity to experience the many aspects of manufacturing and were able to ask questions about various manufacturing related careers and career pathways...On March 18th Plainville High School Cheerleading competed at the Council of New England Secondary School Principals' Association Spirit Championships and placed first in the Co-Ed Division! This is the first time in school history that the Cheer program was crowned New England Champions.

### DISTRICT

The March Plainville Community Schools "All-Star" award winner, Plainville High School Counselor Stefany Barbagallo, was recognized at the March 13th Plainville Board of Education meeting. The "All-Star" award recognizes students, faculty, staff and community members who go above and beyond in modeling the school district's Portrait of the Graduate characteristics and demonstrating excellence in alignment with the school district's team goals...Plainville Board of Education Member and longtime school district volunteer, Foster White, has been named recipient of the Connecticut Association of Schools Distinguished Friend of Education award. Mr. White was recognized at the March 13th Plainville Board of Education meeting, and was honored at the Superintendent's Showcase event on April 20th...Volunteer mentors and student mentees in the Plainville Community Schools Mentor Program came together on March 1st for "Mentor Fun Night" held at Linden Street School. The group participated in an artist lead paint project, creating individual paintings, and enjoyed refreshments and time together...the school district celebrated volunteer mentors on "Thank Your Mentor Day" with a breakfast held at the high school.

### ART CLUB, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Once the club members decided to move forward with the initiative, a survey was sent to high school staff members to gauge interest in having a work of art created for their workspace. The response was very strong, and the students got to work on their first piece of art, for district staff member Laurice Doucette, who requested a painting of one of her favorite vacation places—the island of Aruba. She provided a photograph from a past visit to the island, and a team of students began planning for the creation and installation of the painting, including determining appropriate dimensions and developing framing for the piece. The "Aruba Seascape" was recently completed and met with much delight and gratitude from Doucette. "The painting is absolutely gorgeous! I am so grateful and appreciative of this kind gesture from the extremely talented student artists in the Art Club at the high school, who brought my picture to life! It is absolutely beautiful, including the "window" framing that they created and now I have a window to my "Happy Place" to enjoy every day!" said Doucette. Pires and the Art Club members are continuing to work on the initial requests for art work this year, and hope to continue with the project each year going forward. "It would be wonderful if we were able to add a little artwork to every room in our school community some day," added Pires.

## Accordion Lessons Prove to Be a Hit with Plainville Elementary School Students

Local musician Peter Peluso and Plainville Board of Education member Foster White are once again hosting an “accordion lesson” after school program for elementary school students in Plainville. The duo launched the accordion lesson program in February 2020, with a group of third grade students at Louis Toffolon Elementary School. The lessons were met with much enthusiasm, but due to the pandemic, the program was “paused” over the past couple of years, until this year when Peter and Foster were able to restart the lessons. The duo once again led lessons with a group of Toffolon third graders this past winter, and also added an after school lesson program for a group of third graders at Frank T. Wheeler Elementary School in March. Participating students are assigned a child sized accordion, provided by Peluso, and are instructed in the correct placement of their hands, beginning to play the instrument during the very first lesson, and advance to playing both notes and chords. The primary focus of the program is to introduce a new musical instrument as well as exposing students to the cultural aspects of accordion music.



Plainville Board of Education  
Plainville Community Schools  
1 Central Square  
Plainville, CT 06062  
Phone: 860.793.3200  
Fax: 860.747.6790  
[www.plainvilleschools.org](http://www.plainvilleschools.org)

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### PLAINVILLE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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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