



Community Letter

Spring 2005

Promote a challenging environment creating an extraordinary community of learners

Q&A:

Does the Board of Education use cost-control measures to reduce spending?

The BOE constantly looks for additional ways to maintain quality schools while controlling expenses. Some examples of cost-containment measures are:

Health Insurance Co-pay

The school district negotiated higher co-pays for employee contributions for health care and prescriptions. This will help keep cost increases more manageable in the years to come.

E-Rate Telecommunications

The district participates in the federal Universal Service Fund and reduces expenses by thousands of dollars each year.

Wage Settlements

The BOE negotiated general wage increases that were below the state averages while maintaining competitive wages and benefits.

Proposals for Transportation

The district has asked for competitive proposals for the transportation of students. After reviewing the proposals in May the BOE will negotiate a five year contract with the selected vendor. We expect to hold cost increases to a minimum through this effort.

Message from the Board of Education

The Board of Education holds as one of its primary beliefs that effective communication and collaboration build trust and respect. Yet, it is a great challenge in this information age to communicate succinctly and clearly the needs and the achievements of the school district. We realize that citizens receive an enormous amount of data and sifting through it to find meaningful information can be difficult.

The Board expects the community to receive accurate and timely information and periodically sends surveys to assess needs. Communication with citizens is also a requirement of the No Child Left Behind Act. Therefore, our efforts to improve communication include this newsletter, the district website, and the occasional use of specialists to help deliver key information effectively.

The Board of Education believes that everyone shares the responsibility for the education of our children. We also rely on residents to respond about how we can provide you with information. In order to provide us with information on how we communicate, please complete the survey enclosed in this issue. The survey can also be completed online at www.plainvilleschools.org.

Your comments will be analyzed and used to create a more meaningful and effective system of communication.

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The Board of Education

Kathleen Binkowski, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

Board Members:

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- William Crowley, Vice Chairman**
- Lorri Goldsmith**
- Susan McCarthy**
- Marliss Pavano**
- William Petit**
- Becky Tyrrell**
- Thomas Wazorko**
- Barbara Willard**



We Believe:

Effective communication and collaboration build trust and respect

A safe, caring, learning environment embraces diversity and upholds individual accountability

A high quality curriculum gives serious consideration to the arts, literacy and technology

In a shared responsibility in establishing high learning expectations

Linden Street School Project Update

The Linden Street School Building Committee reports that the project is proceeding as planned. Presently the cafeteria and gymnasium are being renovated, and the students are eating lunch in their classrooms and having gym classes outside when possible. Lessons are being redesigned when the weather is inclement. The demolition of the serving area in the kitchen has begun and renovation in the gymnasium is on schedule. The bus turn around area is almost completed. Staging for the primary wing has been removed and windows are being installed. The brick in the second story addition will be completed shortly. All of the windows for this part of the project have been delivered.

There have been several instances of vandalism reported at the school construction site and in the new addition. Parents are asked to remind children to stay away from the construction area, as it remains unsafe for children, and police will be monitoring the site regularly. The Town of Plainville will prosecute anyone found trespassing or vandalizing.

L i n d e n i s t h e *Key* t o t h e L o n g R a n g e P l a n

Toffolon Principal Chosen for the Japan Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher Program Award

Mrs. Lynn Logoyke, Principal of Louis Toffolon School, was chosen to attend a three week program in Japan during the fall of 2005. The trip was awarded by the Japan Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher Program (FMF). This program is fully funded by the Japanese government and was created to provide American teachers and administrators with opportunities to take part in short term study trips to Japan. Its goal is to increase understanding of Japan among educators with the hope that, through this experience, they will help to foster an increased level of understanding between Japan

and the United States. The Japan Fulbright Memorial Fund Teacher Program is in its ninth year of bringing American educators to Japan. Mrs. Logoyke will join educators from across the U.S. who will all travel to Japan together. The program will begin in late November with an orientation in San Francisco, followed by travel to Japan. While in Japan the group will visit primary and secondary schools, teacher training colleges, cultural sites, and industrial facilities. Meetings with Japanese teachers and students, and home stays with a

Japanese family are also important parts of the program. Mrs. Logoyke is especially interested in learning about how Japanese teachers develop and deliver mathematics instruction. She is also hoping to learn how schools support beginning and veteran teachers with professional development.

Upon her return, the Toffolon principal will develop a plan to share curriculum development techniques with the Plainville Community Schools staff and to share cultural experiences with her students.

District Happenings



Kathy Varkal, RN, leads CNA students in class discussion

TRAINING PROGRAM

A Certified Nurse's Assistant Training Program is available at the Plainville Adult and Continuing Education Center, located within Plainville High School. The state approved CNA program provides individual training necessary to give total care to residents in long-term care facilities. Daytime sessions are offered continually throughout the year. Through classroom theory and clinical training, students are well-prepared with a marketable trade in about eight weeks. The minimum age for participation is sixteen. A 7th grade reading ability is necessary for proper understanding of the information provided as well as the ability to speak, read, and write English with proficiency. However, a high school diploma is not required. The next session will begin *May 24th*. **For further information, please call the Office of Adult and Continuing Education at (860)793-3209.**

THE PROJECT ADVENTURE / CHARACTER EDUCATION PROGRAM

The Project Adventure / Character Education Group program expanded this year at the Middle School of Plainville with the support of Carole Alvaro, Principal. Under the direction of Amy Tennant and Adam Murphy, Physical Education instructors at the Middle School of Plainville, along with Denise Pulaski, School Counselor, 30 students continue to meet weekly for one hour every Wednesday after school to participate in cooperative and problem solving activities. The emphasis of the program centers on interpersonal relationships and individual growth. Participation in the club encourages students to develop greater self-confidence, trust, and peer commitment outcomes. The goal of the club is to develop a cohesive team as the group works together during the year.

As an offshoot of this program, through a mini-grant provided by the school district, a number of Toffolon fifth graders are linked with their Middle School of Plainville counterparts to form a Junior Adventure Club. Under the direction of Tennant, the elementary school students and their middle school role models participate in cooperative activities. Jeri Lynn Turkowitz, Toffolon Elementary School Psychologist, and Ann Bucchi, Toffolon Elementary School Student Support Center Facilitator, help support the program. The objective in forming this group is to ease the transition from elementary school to the middle school. Having the opportunity to forge bonds with both the middle school students and school staff reduces the level of apprehension that is sometimes associated with changing schools.

This year, a mini-grant provided by the school district enabled staff members to expand the program to students in the lower elementary school grades, as third and fourth graders also had the opportunity to participate in similar programming.



Plainville students and Amy Tennant, Physical Education Instructor, participate in a problem solving activity

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The No Child Left Behind federal legislation requires strong parent and community knowledge about our schools and Federal programs. As part of our district communication efforts, we have created the Plainville Board of Education's Community Letter, which is funded through a number of grants, including Title V federal funds and a Strategic Planning Grant from General Electric.

Plainville High School Update

SCHEDULE CHANGE

In September 2005, the PHS class scheduling system will change from the current 45 minute / seven period per day configuration, to a rotating 55 minute / 6 period per day schedule. According to Principal Greg Ziogas, the change is a positive educational move for a number of reasons. First, the new schedule expands the number of minutes per class period, allowing more time for concept based instruction. In addition, this change provides the opportunity for students to take a Scholastic Aptitude Test, (SAT) course during the school day, which is not feasible with the current schedule configuration. Presently, science classes and science labs are scheduled separately and may be taught by different instructors. In the new schedule system, science classes and labs can be held consecutively, and will be taught by the same instructor for the entire 110-minute timeframe.

Also, the schedule adjustment creates the opportunity for special education students, honors students, and advanced placement students, to take more elective courses than they are able to in the present scheduling configuration. The new schedule format will include six 55-minute periods per day, on an eight-day rotation. Classes will meet six times in every eight-day timeframe. The schedule change was developed by a committee of high school teachers and instructional leaders to address the current scheduling shortfalls, and to develop a class period scheduling system that would most effectively accommodate and maximize opportunity for student learning.

INTERNET RADIO STATION

PHS Communications II students, with Communication Technology Instructor David Gagnard, now have the chance to hone their

communication skills via a student Internet radio station. The concept was developed by Gagnard, to provide students with experience in Internet radio station operations. Students assisted in the transformation of a closet area to a fully functional Internet radio station, enabling them to operate the equipment and create their own radio shows. Programming content is developed by students, and evaluated and approved by a review committee, ensuring quality and appropriate subject matter. Future plans include expanding the current broadcasting beyond the Internet to traditional radio programming, and the creation of a student run television station. "I am proud of this exciting opportunity for our students in the area of communication made possible by the outstanding efforts of Mr. Gagnard," commented Greg Ziogas, Principal.