

# PLAINVILLE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS BUSINESS BRIEF

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To provide rigorous and enriching experiences that prepare each student for success in a changing global society

## FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

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DR. JEFFREY C. KITCHING, Superintendent of Schools

# FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

To provide rigorous and enriching experiences that prepare each student for success in a changing global society



**Dr. Jeffrey C. Kitching**

**G**uided by our school district's strategic plan and vision that focuses on *Students, Teaching and Learning*, Plainville's students continue to "Get It Right" as evidenced in numerous measures of success. From exceptional performance in the academic arena, to award winning results on the playing field, and giving back to the community at all levels, there are countless examples of student success in Plainville. A recent review of Plainville High School graduate statistics underscores the many accomplishments of our students, and highlights the opportunities available to our students after leaving the school system. For example, over the last four years (2012-2015) 89% of PHS students have gone on to some form of secondary education, while 81% of those students were accepted at their first choice college or university. Conversely, the number of students retained during that same period is less than one-half of one percent. Throughout their time in our schools, students are reminded of the critical role the "community" plays in their success. Our students understand these lessons, and as a result, the importance of giving back to the community has been a top priority of our graduates. Over the past four years our students have averaged 30+ hours each of community service in and around Plainville. Recently, the Class of 2015 underscored these significant accomplishments as they move on to further education, the military and the workforce. Highlights of the Class of 2015 include:

- **91% will go on to post-secondary education**
- **51% are attending a four year college or university**
- **33% are attending a two year college or university**
- **82% were accepted at their first choice college / university**
- **4% will go into the military**
- **4% will go directly into the workforce**
- **4,157 community service hours were completed by the Class of 2015**

A dedicated and caring faculty and staff, together with program improvements at the elementary, middle and high school levels have created a positive climate and culture throughout our schools. At Plainville High School, the expanded Advanced Placement classes, STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) opportunities, technology enhancements, and the College and Career Readiness Center, all help provide outstanding support, resources and opportunities that allow our students to achieve excellence and obtain the skills, knowledge, and expertise to be successful in school, the community and beyond. We are proud of the significant accomplishments of our graduates, both past and present, and remain committed to providing the highest quality educational experience for all of our students in Plainville.

## **TECH IT OUT 2015!** *MSP Students Participate in Summer Technical Programs at CCSU*

**F**ive Middle School of Plainville students participated in Central Connecticut State University's summer camp programs run by the CCSU Technical Education, Computer Science and Engineering departments. The students chose to participate in the robotics program from a wide variety of options, in which they built and tested SeaPerch underwater robots, or R.O.V.s (remotely operated vehicles) and learned basic concepts of marine engineering. Students also had the opportunity to design, construct and program VEX robots which introduced them to terrestrial robotics that could be operated remotely or autonomously. Both programs aimed to bolster basic concepts in science and engineering, as well as tool safety and technical procedures. MSP student Ella Schwartz, also participated in the CCSU Leadership Academy for Girls. The program curriculum focused on building leadership skills through robotics activities, while working and learning from program peers in a supportive environment.





**Pictured:**  
PHS student Kyle Marquez poses with the prototype of the gear he designed for a heating valve mechanism at the Middle School

When Plainville High School students returned to school last fall, they found an additional opportunity to extend learning and real world application through the new STEM Lab (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math). Thanks to a grant from the Open Choice program, the high school now boasts a state of the art STEM Lab where two new honors level robotics courses are being offered. The Lab was created in the former high school CAD Lab and includes specialized flooring and a large window facing the hallway so students and visitors can observe the classroom in action. The STEM Lab also supports the high school's robotics team (Digital Devils) which was formed during the 2013-14 school year, and has since competed successfully in multiple FIRST Robotics competitions.

The STEM Lab features cutting edge technology and allows for collaboration amongst faculty, students, and district staff in various courses and multiple capacities. One recent example of extended learning, real world application, and collaboration exemplifies the limitless potential and positive outcomes from the district's focus on preparing students for success in a changing global society. Earlier this year, the district's Facilities Department was working on an

equipment issue that involved the need to replace a small gear in a heating valve mechanism at the Middle School. To correct the issue, the part itself would need to be ordered and would have to be purchased as a kit, rather than solely the specific part needed. In addition, the lead time for the part to be ordered and received was 3-4 weeks. Through subsequent conversations between STEM and Engineering teacher Mark Chase and Facilities Department Maintainer Mike Dixon, it was proposed that the gear in question could possibly be produced in the high school's new STEM Lab using the lab's 3D printer. The project was turned over to high school

student Kyle Marquez who got to work researching, planning and designing as part of the reverse engineering for the gear. The first draft of the prototype gear was close to workable, and after some additional research, refinement, trial and error, he was able to produce a fully functioning gear for the Facilities Department to use in the HVAC equipment as needed. This exciting result was a "win-win" – through collaboration, focused instruction and hands on learning, a cost efficient, timely solution to a real world "problem" was identified, paving the way for future collaboration and infinite opportunities for our students in Plainville.

The addition of the STEM Lab at the high school brings the Technology and Engineering Education tract to new and exciting levels in our school district. From the growing success of the new robotics program at the Middle School, to the wide variety of course offerings in Technology and Engineering Education at the high school, learning is boundless and provides a comprehensive foundation for success after graduation, arming our students with the knowledge, skills, expertise and experience needed to succeed in careers that have not even been invented yet.

## GE

### Shadowing for Success

Twenty-one PHS students visited General Electric's Industrial Solutions business for a firsthand look at the site's New Product Introduction (NPI) Accelerator Lab and the advanced technologies engineers are using to accelerate product development. Coordinated with the high school's program, "Shadowing for Success," the GE tour was designed to complement the program's mission to bring 11th and 12th grade students together with business professionals to explore occupations. The students toured the 17,000-square-foot NPI Accelerator Lab and learned how engineers develop solutions for customers. The lab includes a team room, high-tech machine shop with 3D printing capabilities, product teardown area and pilot-run production area. During the panel discussion with six engineers, students had the opportunity to gain valuable information about what a day in the life of an engineer is like at General Electric. GE will also host individual job shadowing opportunities for Plainville students interested in technology and engineering.



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## The Elementary Wellness Initiative

Scientific research and warnings from the medical community regarding the level of inactivity among children in the United States has become undeniable and alarming. The organization "Every Body Walk" has produced a short documentary film (<http://everybodywalk.org/documentary/>) that very clearly outlines these issues. In addition, research in learning and brain functioning has clearly demonstrated

that children are more attentive, engaged and ready to learn when they have opportunities to move around. As such, Plainville Community Schools launched a new "Elementary Wellness Initiative" pilot at all three elementary schools this past spring. In an effort to address the overall wellness of students, the

school district developed a plan to create additional periods of time throughout the day when all students in kindergarten through fifth grade will be engaged in physical activities planned by each school's Physical Education teachers. Further, each school will have additional trained staff on hand during lunch periods to address nutrition and making healthy choices.



Each Plainville elementary school formed a committee to create, launch and support the Elementary Wellness Initiative pilot, which provided an opportunity to test and adjust the program as needed before it is fully implemented during the 2015-16 school year. The goal of the program is to provide 60 minutes of physical activity each day, broken into short 10 - 20 minute durations including two wellness

blocks, a recess-lunch block, and activities as students arrive to school each day. A portion of the physical activity will be incorporated into Art, Music, Physical Education and Library.

"This is an extremely important initiative for our students. We are committed to developing an understanding among

Plainville's elementary age children of the need to be active and make healthy choices," said Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Jeffrey Kitching. "Healthy and physically active children are more prepared to learn and the habits we hope to develop in our students will benefit them long after their time in our classrooms."

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