



JUN
2017

CONGRATS GRADS!

Plainfield High School marked its 117th Commencement on May 27, as roughly 350 students processed into the gymnasium as students, and processed out as graduates. PHS Principal Mel Siefert welcomed the standing room only crowd to the ceremony, reminding the Class of '17 that he came to PHS when they did, while adding "we are all better people today because of our experiences here at Plainfield High School."

In a moving ceremony and ovation, Siefert introduced 13 students who will enter the military. Of those, four will serve in the Army, four in the Navy, two in the Marines, one in the National Guard, one in Army ROTC, and one has accepted an appointment to the Naval Academy.

Superintendent Scott Olinger shared some of the outstanding accomplishments earned by the Class of '17 and reported that awards totaling more than \$4 million were presented to students at the Evening of Distinction. Valedictorian Sidra Ahmad encouraged her classmates to remember the words of David Brooks, who said "Success leads to the greatest failure, which is arrogance and pride. Failure can lead to the greatest success, which is humility and learning."

We commend these young men and women on their successes, and wish them all the best as they enter their next chapters.

SETTING THE BAR

ACADEMIC ALL-STAR

PHS Valedictorian Sidra Ahmad receives state honor

page 2

SCHOOL BOARD REPORT

President Mike Allen sheds light on the opioid epidemic and one way our community can fight back

page 4

SEVEN RETIREES HONORED

Educators look back on years of service and forward to retirement

page 6



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PHS VALEDICTORIAN SIDRA AHMAD, an INDIANA ACADEMIC ALL STAR

Sidra Ahmad, Valedictorian of the PHS Class of '17, has earned many academic honors, and it's safe to imagine they will continue when she heads to Indiana University to pursue her dreams of a medical career.

Ahmad was recently honored as an Academic All-Star, representing the state's top 40 students based on SAT/ACT scores, GPA, extracurricular activities, and leadership experiences.

As part of the selection process, students write an essay about the teacher who most influenced their education, and that teacher



Sidra Ahmad (right) and her most influential teacher, Brenda Carter (center) were honored at the Indiana Association of School Principals' Indiana Academic All-Star Lunch at the Indiana Roof Ballroom.

is invited to be their guest at the awards luncheon.

Franklin College presents an Outstanding Educator award to one of the teachers and Sidra's fourth grade teacher, Mrs. Brenda Carter, was the recipient.

In her essay, Sidra reflected on the lessons learned from Mrs. Carter, including the connection

between high expectations and hard work, and in retrospect, the importance education would play in her life.

In addition to her classroom success, Sidra is a faithful volunteer, both in and out of school. She counts a mission trip to Guatemala as one of her most proud endeavors.



The Class of 2017's Top Twenty students

*Row 1: Helen Zoss, Alexis Ridenour, Ella Kenninger, Dominic Restivo, Anvir Purewal, Nathan Baker, Kaitlynn Cragen, Bree Hall
Row 2: Alexandra Edwards, Hailey Kuntz, Eric Horsting, Madeline Richmond, Seth Prater, Sidra Ahmad
Row 3: Andrew Zoss, Peter Zoss, Matthew Spangler, Micah Buckner, Anthony Jacobs, Jacob Brejcha*

From the Superintendent



Scott Olinger
Superintendent

- 94% graduation rate
- More than \$4 million awarded in scholarships
- Femmes Fatales #1 in state
- We The People, 2nd in state, 4th in nation
- DECA students place at International competition
- Seven PHS juniors named to top 50,000 students by National Merit Scholar Corp.
- PCMS wins state Academic Super Bowl in Science
- Brentwood, Central, Clarks Creek, Van Buren and PCMS earn Four-Star ranking

As I write this, many of us are settling in to summer routines, having successfully completed another school year. From preschool to kindergarten, from 5th grade to 8th grade to the Class of '17, we have celebrated graduations that mark transitions.

In addition to the academic awards (left), students earned many athletic awards and championships, including senior Ashton Slone, who broke the state softball record for consecutive games with a hit.

Beyond all of the records and awards, students proved that being kind and serving others is vitally important. At PCMS, students found ways to support local first responders and provide many kindnesses to people throughout Plainfield. Elementary students visited the elderly, saved their pennies and found many creative ways to serve others. At the high school, students danced their way to more than \$10,000 for Riley Hospital. And our faculty and staff raised more than \$30,000 for United Way this year.

As a Community of Values, we celebrate success in many ways. Providing a safe learning environment is our top priority, and we thank our friends and partners at the Plainfield Police Department for their help in

ensuring that our buildings, students and staff remain safe.

Finally, I'd like to thank all of our school families for your support throughout the year. I continue to say that Plainfield is a wonderful community in which to raise a family, and we are glad you're here.

WE THE PEOPLE 4TH AT NATIONALS

The PHS We The People team earned a fourth place award at the national competition in April.

Students in Chris Cavanaugh's AP Government class prepare for simulated congressional hearings that focus on in-depth knowledge of the U.S. Constitution.

Sponsored by the Center for Civic Education, this was the 30th year, with more than 31,000 students having participated.





Michael Allen
School Board
President

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

People sometimes ask me if I enjoy serving on the Plainfield School Board. I do, and my favorite part is honoring our students. We have so many great kids in our schools.

Ben Hetrick was one of those great kids. I watched Ben grow up and whenever I would see him at church, school or anywhere else, he always made me smile. He was blessed. Great friends. Great parents. Great kid.

Ben died of a heroin overdose at age 24.

Ben didn't go looking for drugs. Drugs found him. In the last football game of his senior year, Ben suffered a severe ankle injury and was prescribed oxycodone to manage his pain. Through no fault of his own, Ben became addicted to the opioid painkiller he had been prescribed. Ben's prescription ran out, and he eventually turned to heroin to satisfy his addiction.

Many kids, like Ben, develop an addiction problem that starts with prescription painkillers. Other kids' path to heroin starts with alcohol and marijuana. Alcohol and marijuana use often lead kids into a crowd who introduces them to heroin. No matter how kids get to the point where heroin enters their lives, there are plenty of drug dealers happy to become their supplier. Dealers even give kids heroin for free to get them hooked. An addicted child becomes a return customer.

If you are a parent and think your child could never become addicted to heroin, please think again. Our country is in the midst of an opioid addiction epidemic. And according to a recent study conducted by IUPUI, Indiana is one of the leading states in overdose deaths. We have had nine deaths in Plainfield in the last two years from drug overdoses. In short, all our kids, mine and yours, are at risk.

For that reason, we have formed a team to study the heroin crisis and determine what we as a School Corporation can do to better protect our kids from this killer drug. Pat Cooney, our Middle School Principal, is leading the team, which is made up of school counselors, athletic directors, coaches and others, including Todd Knowles of the Plainfield Police Department and the school's DARE (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) officer.

We invite you to join us in this effort. If we can't figure out how to better engage parents and students in a dialogue about the dangers of alcohol and drug use, all the studying in the world likely won't make much difference. If you have thoughts to share, please contact Mr. Cooney at pcooney@plainfield.k12.in.us.

Ben Hetrick fought hard to beat his addiction. He also was fighting hard to protect others by educating them about the dangers of prescription opioids and heroin. Let's honor Ben by continuing his fight and do all we can to drive heroin out of our community.

RESTIVO OFF TO NAVAL ACADEMY

If you're looking for an outstanding education, have career goals in aviation, love history and believe in serving your country, following the lead of Dominic Restivo would be wise. The 2017 grad accepted Congressman Todd Rokita's appointment to the Naval Academy; he will report to Annapolis in late June.

Citing his experiences as a member of We The People, the extensive time management skills he's learned and his willingness to make both the congressman and his family proud, there is no doubt Restivo will be successful.

The four-year program will place Restivo among the best students in the country.

The traditional school year will be similar in many ways to what his friends are experiencing at Ball State or Purdue, but summers will be spent in Naval Officers' Training.



Upon completion of his four-year degree, he will graduate as a Navy Officer with the added bonus of being able to select his own assignment. Given his aspirations, that may very well find him in the cockpit of a jet.

SUMMER CONSTRUCTION UPDATE

As soon as summer break begins, the contractors move in! At Clarks Creek, the visitors' door will move to the current Door 2, which will be renamed Door 1. In other schools, HVAC and equipment maintenance will make up most of the projects. The Imagination Lab continues to take shape on the inside while the Clarks Creek playground is moved to the inside of the track. At right, the Clarks Creek pool has been filled in.



DID YOU KNOW? The swimming pool at Clarks Creek Elementary has been filled in (see photo above) to make room for The Imagination Lab.

2017 RETIREES

Congratulations to this year's retirees, who represent a combined 250 years of teaching.



Natalie Boyer

Years in education: 37

I have loved to watch my children grow and learn! I feel teaching is one of the most rewarding careers a person can have! I have wanted to be a teacher since I was in first grade, so dreams do come true! In retirement, I am looking forward to traveling with my family!



Gayle Halleck

Years in education: 20

My greatest reward has been helping students, especially when I taught Essential Skills classes (Math and English) for ISTEP remediation.



Kim Lease

Years in education: 39½

My favorite part of teaching has been the chance to work with children every day, and to work with so many talented teachers. I still appreciate that Principal Charles Wisehart took a chance on a young, immature kid. I owe him so much.



Chuck Schwanekamp

Years in education: 39

I always enjoyed the look of satisfaction a student got when they were proud of an accomplishment. Thanks to all of Plainfield for allowing me to raise my family in a community that was supportive and caring for all these years.



Teri Walters

Years in education: 37

I have loved the family-child centered atmosphere, the hugs and "ah-ha" moments of my students. My retirement plans include more traveling, gardening, writing, biking, being with my family and friends, turning off the alarm clock and no ISTEP!



Pat Ward

Years in education: 38

It has been awesome seeing children change and grow from 3rd to 5th grade. I've also appreciated the opportunities to grow and learn in leadership roles. In retirement, I look forward to doing whatever I want and boating longer, including more time with family.



Sharon Warren

Years in education: 37

Being a "special class teacher" I've enjoyed watching students grow from Kindergarten to 5th grade and develop into young adults entering middle school. Family (especially all the grandkids), travel and focusing on a healthy lifestyle are in my future.

DEHOFF NAMED PLAINFIELD TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Following some outstanding teachers, PCMS science and biology teacher Brad DeHoff is the latest to be named the district's Teacher of the Year.

DeHoff began his career as a research scientist at Eli Lilly where he was awarded two patents and was published numerous times.

During that time, a colleague told him that he was so skilled at explaining things that he would make an outstanding teacher. Despite his passion for research, DeHoff took that advice to heart, and attended IUPUI where he received his teaching certificate.

And so the research scientist with a knack for explaining things became a beloved, respected, successful middle school teacher and academic coach.

As an 8th grade science and biology teacher, his days are filled with classes, and outside study and review sessions. Nearly every afternoon and evening you can find him attending a concert, sporting or school event of some sort. And for about five months of the year, he coordinates the Academic Super Bowl teams for PCMS, while coaching the Science team.

With 20 Academic Super Bowl championships,

PCMS has earned more than any school in Indiana. Its science team has won seven of the 15 years they've competed.



When asked what made Mr. DeHoff stand out from the other finalists, two things seemed to be significant.

First, the aforementioned support of his students and school, illustrated by his presence at so many events. Second, his dedication to the Academic Super Bowl process. In fact, he's never taken a spring break vacation in all the years he's been the team coordinator and science coach, because spring break falls right in the heart of their season.

In a world that will depend more and more on science, DeHoff's engaging approach to teaching, his real-world experiences and his funny stories have transformed students. In many letters of support, students wrote that they thought they didn't like, or weren't good at Science, until they had Mr. DeHoff. After being in his class, many are considering science careers.

A transformational teacher. One that all parents hope their children will learn from one day. And Plainfield's 2018 Teacher of the Year. Congratulations, Mr. DeHoff!



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LEGACY GRANTS

The Plainfield Community Schools Legacy Foundation awards grants to teachers twice each year, and this spring those grants totaled \$5000. In addition, the foundation presents every Kindergarten student with a book of their own at the beginning of the school year.

Brentwood: Lynn Jones, *3rd Grade Bird Sanctuary*

Central: Courtney Carmichael, *Making Social Studies Fun*; Anne Johnson, *Rethinking Morning Work*

Clarks Creek/Little Quakers Academy: Kristen Fuson, *Kelly Kits Art Boxes*

Van Buren: Angie Woodson, *Increase Reading by Learning*; Melissa Bennett, *Practicing Creativity and Depth of Knowledge with iPads*

PCMS: Lisa Chandler, *The Amazing Social Studies Race*; Nakia Slone, *Math Curriculum Supplements to help cultivate a growth mindset in the general education classroom*

PHS: Heather Armstrong, *From Darkroom to Digital*

