



WINTER
2023

WORKING TOWARDS TOMORROW

Plainfield Schools' Board of Trustees and administrators are constantly looking towards the future. We work with demographers who predict what our student population will look like in the future. We work with the Town to plan for upcoming needs and growth. We evaluate curriculum and changes that better fit the way students learn today.

More than that, however, we spend time trying to envision the future that we're preparing students for. We talk often about the emphasis we put on STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) education, with 6 schools being recognized as STEM-certified by the Indiana Department of Education.

Students in all grades work on computer skills year-round, which increases their technological acuity and problem-solving skills. We create opportunities for students to find their passions. Our mission remains that we are "**Bringing Joy to Learning**" for each student in Plainfield.

Our prospective plans are multi-faceted and thorough, yet flexible enough to adapt. No matter what, though, the future looks bright for students in Plainfield Schools!

SETTING THE BAR

BRENTWOOD BLUE RIBBON

School honored with achievement

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PCSCQuakers



pcscquakers



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BLUE RIBBON BRENTWOOD

To be named a National Blue Ribbon School is an honor that fewer than 300 schools receive each year.

To be considered, schools must meet certain qualifications laid out by the US Department of Education, where school performance (testing, etc.) combines with other factors, like students for whom English is not their primary language, Title I and socioeconomic status, and percentage of special education students. Additionally, all types and grade levels of schools are may apply, which broadens the pool of potential applicants. With so many criteria to consider, once a school qualifies, a lengthy application is required to be evaluated, and then the waiting begins.

Principal Julie Zmijewski, along with a group of teachers, completed countless hours of data mining and research before completing the

application for consideration. Brentwood had received this award previously in 2010, but being a former recipient is not a guarantee that you will qualify again.

Then, on September 16, it was announced that Brentwood joined only 9 other schools in the state as National Blue Ribbon Award Recipients, an honor that speaks for itself. In October, several staff members were invited to Washington D.C. to the award ceremony. While being invited to a "big, fancy, event" is exciting, each of them would say that the celebration with the entire school was more meaningful.

We are beyond proud of our Brentwood students, staff, and parents for this outstanding accomplishment. To be named to such a distinctive award is impressive, but they show us how deserving they are of praise daily.



This photo represents the entire student body and staff of Brentwood Elementary. As a celebration for their achievement, the Plainfield Police Department partnered with the school to bring their drone over to get an overhead shot of everyone who made the Blue Ribbon Award possible!

B is for Brentwood!

From the Superintendent



Scott Olinger
Superintendent

Want to know more?

Scan the QR code below to check out our newest feature on our website:

Quaker Spotlight!

We'll try to update this video quarterly, as a catch-up of things that our community might have missed.

If you don't follow us on social media, be sure to do so, as most of our daily activities are shown there.



As we close the first semester and begin another, I am continually impressed with the resilience of our staff and students. They work so diligently and their hard work is shown every day in exceptional ways. Since our last newsletter, we have had several big accomplishments in our district.

Brentwood Elementary was named – for the second time – as a 2022 National Blue Ribbon School, as seen on page 2. This prestigious award was given to only 297 schools, and Brentwood is one of ten in Indiana. This is testament to how exceptional our staff and students are, and we are so proud of Brentwood!

All of our athletes have had wonderful successes this year, including our high school football team, who won a sectional championship for the first time in 20 years. Additionally, I recently watched our PHS "We The People" classes compete in the Indiana Bar Foundation's state competition, where we were the only high school with two teams, finishing 3rd and 5th overall.

Our choir, bands, and orchestras held outstanding concerts, while performing arts students at PCMS and PHS brought "Shrek the Musical Jr." and "Mary Poppins" to the stage.

We also completed our first full year at Guilford Elementary. The first year of a school is not without its challenges, but the students and staff flourished and we couldn't be prouder of their tenacity. Besides the new construction of Guilford, almost all of our buildings have had renovations in some form over the last five years.

As we look toward the future, it is time to renovate Plainfield High School to better accommodate future needs, as well as adjusting the building to create learning spaces for how our students learn today. More information on "PHS 2.0 - The Innovation Renovation" can be found on page 5.

Our staff are always striving to "Bring Joy to Learning" for our students, and that is seen in classrooms throughout the district. From activities like Guilford's whole-school initiative called "DeSTEMber," 3rd graders at Clarks Creek creating a website and competing in NexTech's CSforGood State Competition, and the entire 7th grade at PCMS working with high school HOSA members on medical detectives, joy is everywhere.

Looking forward to a great rest of the school year, Quakers.



Jessica Elston
School Board
President

It appeared on the first chatter page Tuesday at 4:15 p.m., and by seven, there were over 200 comments that had broken into twelve threads. It was cross-posted to another chatter page six minutes later, and another an hour after

that. Over the next three days, there was a flurry of accusations, followed by arguments, followed by more accusations. Some demanded details. Others assumed silence meant the School Board members were afraid of the truth or engaged in spy-movie-style secrecy. “Why can’t they just be honest with us? #stoplying.”

Whether it’s an incident involving students or employees, Plainfield Schools is required to follow a long list of state and federal laws governing education and employment. Many of those rules identify exactly what can be discussed publicly and what can’t. For example, privacy laws mean a Board member can’t dig through your daughter’s grades or an employee’s personnel file. Details about how a student or an employee may have been disciplined, or why a teacher may have been absent from classroom, cannot legally be shared with the public.

You might believe you have a right to know what’s happening, but the opposite is true. State and federal laws specifically protect the privacy of those involved. That’s a good thing. If you or a family

member were involved in a difficult situation, you probably wouldn’t want the story splashed all over Facebook.

What might surprise you is how little information is shared with Board members.

You might believe you have a right to know what's happening ... Rest assured we're doing exactly what the law expects us to do.

For example, we’re not allowed to know about student disciplinary actions. That’s because there may come a time when a student petitions the Board for a legal proceeding known as an expulsion hearing, and the state wants to

ensure we enter that process without having already heard the details.

If your child or grandchild faces discipline in our schools, you can be confident their legal rights, personal privacy, and reputation will be protected at every step of the process, because that’s what state and federal laws call for. Those laws protect your child and family’s rights at times when that protection is needed most.

We can’t control or combat the rumors and falsehoods that spread like wildfire on social media and through gossip. All we can do is hope you’ll recognize you’re probably not getting the full story or receiving accurate information, and you’ll rest assured we’re doing exactly what the law expects us to do.

THE INNOVATION RENOVATION

If you haven't seen it on our social media pages, we are embarking on a renovation project at Plainfield High School, "PHS 2.0 - The Innovation Renovation".

What is PHS 2.0? An 18-to-24-month project to upgrade Plainfield High School, adding academic and arts-related space to accommodate a growing student body.

Why are you renovating the "new high school"? The doors of the "new" Plainfield High School building opened in 2008. Plainfield High School was designed back in 2004, before anyone could foresee the explosive growth in digital technology. PHS 2.0 will help create and renovate learning spaces for all the ways our students learn today and in the future.

What elements will PHS 2.0 include?

- Building a new Innovation Lab to provide flexible space for learning. Inspired by The Imagination Lab for elementary students and the Idea Lab at the middle school, the Innovation Lab will be available for use by teachers in all subject areas with a goal of increasing collaboration.
- Expanding the performing arts area to accommodate growing student participation and the popular orchestra program (which didn't exist when the current building was designed).
- Adding collaborative spaces and small-group rooms in all academic departments to support the increase in group and



project-based learning.

- Replacing multiple small science labs with a shared space capable of accommodating up to 190 students at one time. The former labs will be converted into space for classrooms and additional uses.
- Plus: increased number of bathrooms, adding pathways between hallway wings, and much more!

Why so many labs and collaboration spaces? Plainfield emphasizes STEM at all levels and in all subjects. Adding these dedicated spaces at PHS expands upon the learning styles students have used throughout elementary and middle school.

How will the performing arts area change? Our performing arts programs continue to grow, but they're growing beyond anyone's most optimistic projections, so we need to reconfigure those spaces.

How will PHS 2.0 affect my property taxes? We're confident we can accomplish PHS 2.0 while remaining tax-neutral for homeowners. Thanks to careful planning, we've been able to complete recent projects without increasing the school's portion of property tax rates.

This project will take time, so we'll continue to talk about it with our community. Keep your eyes on our social media pages and these newsletters for more information as we get closer.

ROBOTICS FOR ALL SCHOOLS

Robotics has become a major club activity in our schools over the last several years, and our club sizes continue to grow.

At the elementary level, Robotics Club is open to 4th and 5th graders, with some groups allowing 3rd

graders the opportunity to observe. "Our engineers are deep thinkers, collaborators, and problem solvers," said Mrs. Bammann, one of Guilford's coaches.

Students work through the VexIQ program, which creates a game every year where students have to design their robots to complete the game objectives. Students work on building, coding, and operating their robot in teams, while making sure to take copious notes that will be judged during competition.

For some, though, Robotics is "often the program where kids come to find others they fit in with," said Mr. Schmitt, coach of the HS team. Ms. Gibbs, one of Central's coaches, also said that "They are gaining confidence that carries over into other areas of their life, and persevering as they think critically and creatively to problem solve."

Several of our teams have had great successes over the last few years, with our high school



team qualifying for State Championships, and Brentwood having 4 out of 5 teams qualify for World Championships.

Looking towards the future of the Robotics programs, Mrs. Gray from Brentwood said, "I love seeing

our whole district together at our four league nights and to see the collaboration between the students and coaches."

The future is exciting for our Robotics teams, and we're so proud of how far they'll go!

NATIONAL MERIT SEMI-FINALIST

Alexa Magnus has been named a National Merit Semi-Finalist in the 68th annual National Merit Scholarship Program, an honor that places her in the top 1% of high school seniors nationwide. Join us in congratulating her as she represents Plainfield



among the nearly 15,000 high school seniors across the United States that have reached semi-finalist level.

TREES HONOR TEACHERS

The Plainfield Rotary Club and the Town of Plainfield have shown immense support of Plainfield Schools, and this year is no different. Trees were planted in Friendship Gardens for the 2023 Teachers of the Year, Nathan Ellis and Karisa Schwanekamp.

This tradition dates back more than 30 years, when local Rotarians established this lasting tribute to the role educators play in supporting a strong and healthy future through education.

The Rotary Club, pictured here with Karisa, Nathan, and Plainfield Schools administrators,



also installs a plaque recognizing each recipient. These trees serve as a long-lasting visual reminder of the legacy of outstanding educators in our community.

BOYS TRACK STATE CHAMPS

For the first time in Plainfield Athletics history, our Boys Track & Field Team won the IHSAA State Championship on June 4, 2022. This team, led by PHS winningest coach Brian Pelkey, overcame the odds and secured their slot as State Champions. In addition to the overall team

championship, several individual state event titles were also won. Track & Field is a non-classified sport in Indiana, meaning



schools of all sizes compete against one another, adding another level of difficulty to this fantastic feat! Congratulations to all involved!



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Join our team!

We have amazing students. We want to hire amazing adults.

If you're amazing and are serious about doing work that matters, we probably have a job you'd love!

From full-time and part-time, year-round positions to jobs that follow the school schedule, we have options! And many positions offer benefits and paid training.

Scan the QR code to link directly to the Plainfield Schools employment website, where you can discover which positions are available. We'd love to meet you!



SCAN ME

