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# SETTING THE BAR

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## Congratulating the Class of 2016

In just under an hour, nearly 400 PHS students joined the ranks of PHS alumni, during the school's 116th Commencement last month.

As students entered the standing-room-only gymnasium, the PHS Wind Ensemble played the familiar Pomp & Circumstance. Smiles and a few tears could be seen from students and family members as the celebration began.

One tradition continues to bring a hush to the crowd, as History teachers (and brothers) Chris and Pat Cavanaugh present medallions to students who have chosen military service. This year, that group included 14 graduates.

Student speeches were offered by the co-Salutatorians and Valedictorian. Natalie Brejcha had this simple advice: don't be afraid, whether it means leaving your comfort zone, making new friends, or risking failure. From Abigail Waterfill came a reminder of the talent, passion and brilliance spread throughout her classmates, along with the promise that the Class of 2016 would make Plainfield's residents proud.

Valedictorian Sutton Felty encouraged his classmates to choose a life of integrity, paraphrasing author Jayce O'Neal when he ended with this: "Class of 2016, I urge you to be ordinary people who do ordinary things, with extraordinary integrity."



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# RETIREES: GRACE AND KINDNESS WILL BE MISSED

In the world of education, the season for graduations is also the season for retirements. The Plainfield Schools family is saying "see you soon" to two special women who used their grace and a gentle touch to guide students through some of their best, and some of their most challenging, moments.

**Justine Thompson** (RIGHT) came to Plainfield in 1989 as the At-Risk Counselor at the high school. In the Fall of 2002, her



role changed slightly to better reflect her work as the Student Assistance Counselor.

**Susan Nolan** (LEFT) began her career at Van Buren Elementary during the 1989-1990 school year. As an elementary teacher, Susie became a much sought-after teacher in grades 1-3 over the course of the last 25 years.

It would be impossible to simply replace the passion and commitment to excellence that Susie and Justine have demonstrated during their time working with our students. We wish them well in retirement, as they pursue long-neglected hobbies and a greater presence with their families.

# From the Superintendent



Scott Olinger  
Superintendent

## What is a Four Star School?

- Earn an "A" during the year of the award, and
- Combined passing percentage in English/Language Arts and Math ranks in the Top 25th percentile, and
- Percentage passing both English/Language Arts and Math, in each grade level, above the 25th percentile, and
- At least 95% of students enrolled in the district must participate in the testing

The end of a school year usually brings a mixture of emotions, and Commencement often represents some of the most intense feelings of all. Whether it's the graduation from pre-school, middle school or high school, students, teachers and families reminisce about wonderful moments, coupled with the bittersweet feelings that often accompany such a milestone.

The 2015-2016 school year was a year of mixed emotions for many people in Plainfield. We weathered some unsettling weeks this winter when cyber threats stole the attention our students and teachers so richly deserved, and looking back, we discovered strengths we'd never had to test in real-life scenarios.

We talk a lot (some would say entirely too much) about testing and test scores, and ratings and comparisons. We don't really enjoy these topics any more than the next person, but since it's the only way the state measures our performance, it's important that we pay attention.

And so when the Indiana Department of Education recently shared its list of Four Star Schools, we were pretty excited. Not only did we place well on the list of districts across the state, we are one of only six school districts in Indiana where every school earned the coveted Four Star status. To our students and teachers, we say "great job!"

Thank you, for your support and trust as we worked through some dark weeks this winter. For your support and trust as we educate the children of Plainfield. And for being such strong partners, as parents, community leaders, public safety officials and concerned citizens.



# SCHOOL BOARD REPORT

BY SCOTT FLOOD

One of the strongest indicators of a healthy community is growth. When a community has great things to offer, people want to move there. With beautiful parks and trails, a family- and faith-friendly atmosphere, convenient access, and schools we think are pretty darned good, it's no surprise that Plainfield is growing.

Growth does create challenges. Under Indiana law, we're required to educate all the young people who live within our boundaries, and having more students means we'll need more classrooms, teachers, buses, and other resources. Planning for growth is one of the School Board's most important responsibilities, because the choices we make have a long-term impact on our community's economic health.

That's why we closely monitor Plainfield's population. We work with the Town Council and local developers to gain insight into plans for new neighborhoods, so we can project the number of new students we'll receive. We also study factors such as birth rates and demographics to improve the accuracy of our projections.



The good news is that we still have room to grow in our schools, particularly at the high school and middle school levels. We should be able to accommodate most of the foreseeable growth by making minor modifications to our schools. At some point, we'll need to build a new elementary school, but we don't think that will happen until the mid-2020s. (Of course, if there's a sudden surge in home construction, it may happen more quickly.)

We haven't decided where that new school will be built, although we already own land just north of Plainfield High School and near the intersection of Moon and Hadley Roads. When it comes time to build, we'll work with town leaders to identify the site that makes the most sense based upon infrastructure needs and where students live, whether we choose one of those parcels or a site we haven't yet considered.

One issue we're watching closely is transfer students (those who live outside Guilford Township but choose to attend our schools). Each year, the School Board determines how many transfer students we can comfortably accommodate. We've been able to welcome between 300 and 400 transfer students each year, but as our local population grows in coming years, we will probably need to reduce those numbers. When that time comes, we'll do our best to create a smooth transition for everyone involved.

◀ Our elementary schools worked together again this spring to raise an incredible \$60,000 during their Walkathon.



# 8TH GRADE AWARDS

Plainfield students mark a key milestone with the end of middle school. The 431 8th graders were honored at this year's 8th Grade Breakfast and Awards, which included recognitions for academics, athletics and character.

The Academic teams had a successful year, winning first place in Science and Interdisciplinary, while the English, Math and Social Studies teams placed second, all at the state competition.

PCMS is home to two robotics teams. The Gear Grinders placed 1st in robot design, while Batteries Not Included earned a 1st in core values.

Directors' Awards are presented annually to outstanding students in the school's music programs; Braden Scott received the band award, while Isabelle Stead received the choral award.

The 8th grade class included 200 athletes who brought home the hardware for individual and team accomplishments in all sports. The 8th grade baseball team holds a two-year undefeated streak, and school records were broken by Jadin Jordan

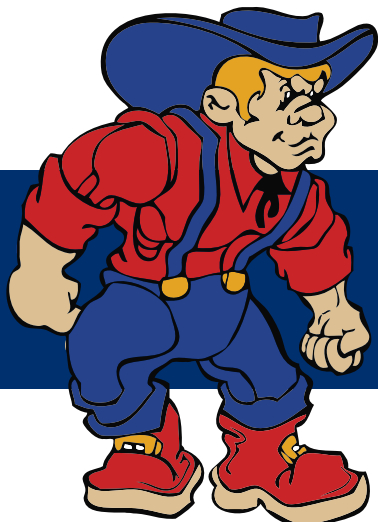


(Boys 200 Meter Low Hurdles), Anastasia Sanchez (Girls 2400 Meter Run) and Olivia Utterback (Girls 100 Meter Low Hurdles, Girls 200 Meter Hurdles).

Academic awards were presented to 96 students for achieving a GPA between 3.5 and 3.79. Another 85 students earned a GPA between 3.8 and 3.99, while 14 members of the Class of 2020 ended their middle school careers with a GPA of 4.0.

Six members of the class won the prestigious Starfish Award, as nominated by their teachers. Those students included Mitchell Baker, Lucy Blake, Rita Settle, Hannah Snider, Myka Williams and Ben Wilson.

The PHS Class of 2020 holds great promise, and we look forward to watching them over the next few years.



## DID YOU KNOW?

This summer, PCSC Food Services is partnering with USDA to provide free lunches to Plainfield youth 18 and under. The weekday lunches are served at Brentwood and the library.

# PHS TOP 20



For students and teachers alike, having the chance to participate in the Senior Top Twenty dinner is both an honor and a privilege. Once the Top Twenty students have been identified

each spring, they invite a teacher (from K-12) who had a significant impact on their school years to be their guest.

## **This year's Top Twenty students, their future plans and teacher guests:**

Natalie Brejcha, Purdue University, Veterinary Medicine .....	Mr. Chris Cavanaugh
Carolyn Copeland, Grace College, Exercise Science.....	Mr. Brian Planker
Alicia Craig, University of Indianapolis, Nursing.....	Mrs. Lisa Bush
Ellen Doss, Anderson University, Microbiology & Public Health .....	Mrs. Michelle Clark
Sutton Felty, Liberty University, Forensic Science.....	Mr. Jared Mackey
Kailey French, Indiana University, Human Biology.....	Mrs. Liza Payton
Natalie Heald, Indiana University .....	Mrs. Shelley Knapp
Caroline Heckman, Indiana University, Human Biology & Spanish .....	Mrs. Renae Whicker
McKenzie Marsh, Anderson University, Political Science & English .....	Mrs. Andrea Birke
Elena Mount, Purdue University, Management.....	Mrs. Stacy Sanford
Adam Pannel, Ball State University, Telecommunications & Journalism ...	Mr. David Mannell
Deepam Patel, Indiana University, Biology & Business .....	Mrs. Jamie Nichols
Marina Pfeil, Brigham Young University, Physical Sciences .....	Mrs. Lindsey Mackey
Olivia Roath, Indiana University, Biology & Genetics.....	Mrs. Heather Armstrong
Hunter Rulon, West Virginia University, International Studies.....	Mrs. Susan Ament
Rachel Schuld, Butler University, Pharmacy .....	Mr. Stacey Peters
Ivanna Stuart, Indiana University, English .....	Mrs. Michelle Burress
Abigail Taber, Liberty University, Mathematics & Piano Performance.....	Mrs. Jonelle Heaton
Abigail Waterfill, Purdue University, Biomedical Engineering .....	Mr. Evan White
Andrea Wright, Purdue University, Wildlife Biology .....	Mr. Scott Johnson



# TEACHER OF THE YEAR



PHS English and Publications teacher, Mrs. Michelle Burress was selected to represent PCSC as Teacher of the Year for 2017. Mrs. Burress has taught for 18 years, all of them at Plainfield High School. As a Freshman English teacher, she finds ways to bring English to life for her students. As the Publications teacher, yearbook and newsmagazine sponsor, and freshman class sponsor, Mrs. Burress, or Mama Burr, as most of her students know her, is an active, engaged teacher, mentor, role model and leader.

The Silhouettes yearbook and Quaker Shaker newsmagazine have won numerous awards at both the state and national levels. Students who work on publications spend many hours outside of class producing the high-quality periodicals that Plainfield is known for. Mrs. Burress works alongside them, as teacher, coach and supporter, during those long hours. But it's fair

to say that Mama Burr isn't "just" a teacher and sponsor.

According to the many letters written in support of her nomination, she provides a refuge, a safe place. She's reached students who thought no one "saw" them. She drew out the shy, introverted students and helped them find their voices. She equipped others with knowledge and skills that surpassed that of their classmates when they reported to their collegiate journalism courses.

It's also fair to say that Mrs. Burress isn't a pushover, as attested by several former students. She knows when to be firm, tough, to lay down the law. But it's done with a warmth and concern that her students, current and former, indicate reveals the depth of her passion for teaching, for education.

On behalf of the Plainfield Community School Corporation, we are proud to honor her as our 2017 Teacher of the Year.

## LQA GRADUATION



Little Quakers Academy (LQA) proudly celebrated the graduation of 90 students who move on to become Kindergarten students in August.



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## Legacy Foundation awards spring grants

The Plainfield Community Schools Legacy Foundation awards grants twice each school year to teachers for innovative projects and programs in the classroom. The foundation recently announced the grant recipients for Spring 2016, with dollars awarded topping \$5000 for the cycle.

### **BRENTWOOD ELEMENTARY**

- Danielle Shepherd: Autism Writing Stations
- Krissy Sullivan: Reading Counts for Readers Who Count

### **CENTRAL ELEMENTARY**

- Rhianda Szepski: Kore Wobble Chairs for Kindergarten

### **CLARKS CREEK ELEMENTARY**

- Andrea Black: Employing Cross-Curricular Activities Through the Use of I-Spy Books

- Cathy Ellis: Counseling and Character Education
- Bethany Bammann: You Want Me to Read? I Thought This was Math Class!

### **VAN BUREN ELEMENTARY**

- Stephanie Hensley: Learning About the Science and Motion of Machines with Chaos Towers
- Tanya Cox: More Math Time Guided Math Centers

### **PLAINFIELD COMMUNITY MIDDLE SCHOOL**

- Denise Williams: Language Arts Literacy Jenga
- Laurie Stark and Jessica Schwab: Math and Language Arts RTI – Learning in Motion

### **PLAINFIELD HIGH SCHOOL**

- Jamie Nichols: Spanish 3 and 4 Short Novels
- Stacey Peters and Michelle Clark: Calculus and Physics – The Motion Encoder