

The Devil's Pitch

Vaping Can Cause a Stroke, This Ain't No Joke

By: Sean Silvia

A few years ago vaping popped off in Plainville High. Now it has gone down. Here is what a few key teachers think. Vaping has been a thing now probably for 10 years. It got really big 4 years ago. Before juuls and puff bars the only way to vape Nicotine was with a box mod and e-liquid. You would have to order these online or go to a vape shop to get them. Now, I can go to a gas station to get a lemon puff bar or buy boxes of them on the internet. This availability makes some kids want to vape. One thing Johnson said is "vaping companies are definitely advertising to children with some of the flavors they offer. What adults do you know that would want Hawian punch?" He also told me, "I will tell students with vapes 'You know it's not healthy for you and you know it's not allowed here that's why you're in trouble.'" Ms. Centore had this to say about what

vaping can do to you." First of all Nicotine is a stimulant. When you consume Nicotine you have more of a chance of blood clots. Nicotine can make you infertile. Male or female, Nicotine will destroy your body." BB (Brandon Barrette) had this to say: "Vaping is bad and it should not be done." In conclusion, this article is not saying you shouldn't smoke or vape; it is just trying to open your eyes a little bit and show you that it's pretty dangerous.



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Thank you to Janeil Benson for being our Layout Editor!



Sports

Girls Basketball Team Demolished COVID 19

By: Jenna Adamic



Picture taken by: Alida Passaretti
The 5 seniors of the Girls Blue Devils basketball team

During the Girls Basketball Winter season in 2021 at Plainville High School, the team encountered some restrictions dealing with the COVID 19 pandemic. The girls on the team didn't let COVID ruin their season. They adapted to the COVID restrictions quickly. There were

some challenges they encountered: not having enough players made it difficult to have full 5 on 5 practices, or even subs for games, being able to be fully safe, and COVID being in the way. It was hard for some of the girls to play with the masks; it caused them to have a difficult time breathing. Jaida Vasquez, the captain of the team was asked if there were any type of mask breaks during the games, and she said, "Yes, there were mask breaks. At the 4 minute mark of every quarter the players would be separated, and the breaks would last about 30 seconds to a minute."

There weren't any difficulties with Coach Jessica Neuweiler getting the girls attention. She said, "The players were great. They really took the new precautions very well, and I think they did a great job with it. I didn't see any difference there." One of the biggest things that was difficult was

making sure that the girls were in playing shape, but they adjusted to it very quickly. Even with the COVID restrictions, they still played at a very high level, and worked harder more than ever. During the bus rides the girls followed the protocols of wearing masks and keeping a social distance from each other.

This year, the girls basketball team demolished their regular season with a 9 and 3 record. They ended up in the 10th seed of the CC tournament which is incredible with how many schools are in the conference. Overall the girls finished their whole season 10 and 4. Coach Jess said, "That's a really good season especially seeing what we were playing under during a global pandemic." The two captains on the team, Kori Jones and Jaida Vasquez both made all-conference this year which is amazing for them. Vasquez got her 1,000 points and finished off the season great. As a team, everybody played really well, and the girls basketball team finished the season with amazing growth. There are five graduating seniors this year on the team, so there will be some rebuilding for next year. Kori Jones will be attending Providence College and will be studying Biology, Tessa Susco will be going to the University of Hartford and has an undecided major, but will be in the Health Sciences program, Katie Gagon has committed to Northeastern University and will be studying cells and Molecular Biology, Elena Gorneault is thinking about going to Hofstra University or Central Community College; she wants to study Journalism and minor in Public Relations. Lastly, Jaida Vasquez will be going to Manchester University and will be studying Social Work.



Blue Devils Boys Basketball

Team

By: Aiden Payne

The Plainville boys varsity High School basketball team took on many challenges and started off on a losing streak this year, but the boys never gave up and in the end hoisted up the Division C plaque. Heading into the season, the boys basketball team and the boys new coach Scot Wenzel knew they needed to put in work right away. The team didn't lose really anything, just one senior, so things were heading into the right direction.

The starting line-up consisted of five seniors who have all been playing since freshman year. The team was discouraged last year as there was no tournament so they were out for revenge. The boys got right to work 2:30 to 6 Monday through Saturday. The boys were in it to win it. The boys and coach Scot Wenzel were working hard and getting ready for the first scrimmage but the boys' big man Aj Lestini went down with an ankle injury that sidelined him for the first 3 games of the year.

With Plainville already not being as big as other towns, they needed to adapt quickly while [there](#) Center Lestini was injured for the time being. When some of the members of the team were asked if it is hard knowing your team is always on the shorter side no matter who you go up against one answered with "no because we've always been used to it," and the second teammate answered with "us as a team have dealt with it for a while now so no, we are use to it." Plainville is a smaller town and it comes with challenges, smaller kids, fewer kids come to try out but they look past that and work harder day in and day out.

Plainville didn't start off too hot. When asked what their key was to turning it around, they answered with: "we began to work harder and got things clicking" and "not really sure we just started winning and becoming more of a team." When asked, who do you feel leads the team on and off the court and keeping the team focused the answer was "Tyshawn Johnson." Johnson is the boys' point guard. Johnson is an incredible athlete. He can do it all: pass, score and lock up any kid he's guarding, and he wants nothing more than success for the boys basketball program. He's not the only one who wants to win. Omarion Miller, who started off rough, turned it around and had multiple 20+ point games, lighting it up from three and many spectacular lay-ups. It's not all about offense. Senior Dylan Hall and senior Aj Lestini manned the paint, racking up many steals and blocks on the defensive end. Even though the boys started off slow, Alec Couture didn't. Couture got right to it averaging over 20+ points per game in the first 4 games.

Many teams were shocked when they found out they needed to wear masks during the game, and if your mask is off at any time the ref has the right to give you a technical foul. When asked if the boys' stamina or breathing was affected by the mask during the game they said. "The mask makes you get more tired much faster," and "Yes, it gets hard to breathe at times and the refs are lenient to letting you put it below your nose." Playing sports this year is much different than any year prior.

A few members of the team were asked how they get in the right mindset before the game. They answered with "we get loose, shoot around and get in the zone and have full



focus on the game ahead.” The basketball team or coach Wenzell doesn’t mess around on game day.

The boys were not too happy at the end of last year seeing as the tournament was canceled last year due to the pandemic and hearing that there’s no tournament again was a low blow, but they still got to play in regional tournaments. When asked if they would have liked to have had a normal tournament they quickly answered with “yes no doubt” and “yes, it would have been nice to see what it felt like to play in a state tourney game.”

The boys turned it around and made it all the way to the C division finals. When asked if they were happy with making it to the finals they said, “Yes we are. With all the close losses

we had this season it feels good to have gotten rewarded for our hard work and dedication.”

The boys were beyond ready for this finals game. Johnson was coming off an insane semifinals game; he was locked in and had his eye on the plaque. Johnson ended with 27 points 10 rebounds 8 assists and 5 steals: 2 assists shy of a rare highschool triple double. They were one game away; they could basically taste it but after a poor first half it didn’t look promising. They trailed 13 heading into the locker room but that didn’t stop them from making an impressive comeback led by Miller’s 27 points. Winning the finals was a good way for the five seniors to end the highschool basketball careers; they all had nothing to add when asked.



Plainville boys basketball team five starting seniors right before tip off



Significant Changes to the Golf Program

By: RJ Bradley

After the absence of the previous coach and the addition of many team members, Plainville High School is focused on changes and future advancements to the golf program. The team has faced many challenges in the past couple of years dealing with Covid-19 regulations, and personnel changes. The 2020 golf season was completely canceled, which took away a senior season from our previous number-two player. This year's team captain, Jacob Deschaine, displays great initiative and persistence to lead the team to victory. He practices before and after practice and even does research that he brings to the team. Deschaine stated, "This year's team has potential to be extremely successful, especially with a change in the coaching staff. I will do everything I can to better the team this year and have a great senior season." Jacob exemplified the new coaching staff.

The new head coach this year is Mark Fritz, who is a very experienced golfer who has a lot of knowledge that he brings to the team. Fritz stated, "This year's golf team is led by a group of seniors who exemplify what it means to be 'All In'. They are student athletes who are role models on and off the course and represent the best of what PHS has to offer. I look forward to working with them and seeing how much they develop this spring not only as golfers but also young men."

The future of the golf program is unknown. Following the 2021 golf season, four out of the five players in the starting lineup will be graduating. The other players currently on the team have the capability to form an extremely successful base, however, the future of the golf team depends on new team members in the coming years. The team has never been more equipped with proper coaching staff and

knowledge to be successful. Plainville High school should be extremely hopeful with the future success of the golf program starting in the 2021 season.



Jacob Deschaine, Teeing off the seventh hole at Plainville's home course



The Importance of Community Service

By: Eunice Coello-Sauceda



Zeyana Thigpen
(11th Grader)

Community work is an effective method that different schools have acquired, to guide students for future jobs, through community service, this serves as an internship for different jobs and also counts them as work experience, at the same time that they are

entering an adequate training on how to react to different actions that occur as life passes, is the case

of the student Zeyana Thigpen, who is a person very applied to her student work as well as community service, she shows us her opinion about This learning method Thigpen said "In my opinion, community service is a great way to help us grow as a community." As we can see, she is a young woman who considers this practice very successful in order to help the different communities. Thigpen said "I think it is more useful for the community than for the students." Her comment is very accurate, since many of the activities carried out benefit the community, as at the same time this creates memories and experience Thigpen said "Students can get a great work experience that will help them in their future." Since she does her work in total concentration and this tells us that she is an exemplary person who shows us that help is more beneficial if it is done with energy. Thigpen said."Maybe education clubs for students or others to learn about social consultations" She also

advises the authorities to create new learning workshops and methods used in social assistance. Thigpen said. "We could possibly branch out of the social justice club, we talk about a variety of issues that we see within ourselves and around the world." The idea of it is correct since in today's society a lack of awareness in the social environment is reflected, proposing a method used to improve our general behavior, thus creating fully socially trained people. Thigpen said. "I made cards for sick children in hospitals, handed out food to the homeless, babysat at Wheeler Elementary School, and moved books to the library." As we can see, her social service has been a success since she has encouraged doctors, nurses, and children with her charisma that characterize her as a great person who gives all her effort for social good, helping her community in good times and bad. Thigpen said. "Doing this service is not only important to our community, but you can also learn some things yourself from these experiences." His message for the generations that are close to carrying out their community service is very encouraging and motivational, since it shows how important it is to carry out this action, the totally necessary help for his community, and above all the experience, memories, smiles that he takes. Of each action carried out, all the good moments that happened will undoubtedly be unforgettable for her. Thigpen said. "It is not a specific organization, but I plan to do community service in the future" She will continue to do community service over time. Without a doubt, Zeyana Thigpen is a person who is passionate about helping the well-being of people and especially her desire to move forward with each of her projects, the virtues of this girl will lead her to a path of success, which is fully deserved.



Curriculum Changes

By: Derek Arduini



Mr. Vallera (PHS Counselor/Teacher)

The school curriculum and education system has remained heavily the same for many years. Have you ever wondered if the teachers, counselors, and the curriculum board who enforce the curriculum actually approve of it and what they are being told to teach? Not to say what is being taught to students is not good or of use because it is, especially skills like reading and writing which we use every day no matter what. However, with this being said, many students and teachers alike feel that there is much room for improvement. The biggest reason for this is the lack of everyday life skills being taught that students need to know to be successful. This includes saving money, paying bills, how to properly apply for a job, how to invest money, etc. Some business or personal finance classes may

touch on some of these topics but more so for the sake of making examples and math equations rather than teaching students how to do it themselves.

Counselor of Plainville High School Mr. Vallera shared what he thinks of this. He said “The current addition of Financial Literacy as a requirement of graduation is a very positive move in that direction.” Mr. Vallera then said what else he thinks could be added or changed to the curriculum, he said “I would try to incorporate current social relevance of the subject matter.” In doing this he also states the benefit of this would be that “It would create a link of relevancy between the student and the knowledge being presented.” This would bring excitement to kids learning about current topics going on in the world relating to that class, it actively encourages the kids to be more present and engaged in the subject matter. Not only that, but this would also help improve communication and learning between teachers and students due to students participating. One of the curriculum editors, Tawanna Graham-Douglas was reached out to but a response was never received on this topic.



The Changes in the PHS Music Department

By: Brandon Barrette

The changes in the music department affected both the students and teachers because it was different than past years and took a lot of adjustments to get used to the changes. Some of the changes include twelve-foot spacing. When asked about the changes, Kyle Baderok states: "Choir specifically has been much different than previous years. We've been able to sing in person a little bit, but we've needed 12 foot spacing." When it comes to band Baderok also states that "For band, it's very similar. We've had to play in the gym so we could fit everybody. We also have bell covers on our instruments with twelve foot spacing.". Plainville High School Music teacher Mr. Todd Helming gave his thoughts on the changes to the department. "

Helming states "Due to its aerosol nature, all wind instruments and singing have been heavily restricted. The result has been no choir work and limited band work. Mr. Talotta and I have had to retool how we teach and approach working with students to find ways



The PHS choir room setup for in person singing

to keep making music safely and meaningfully this year." When asked what made them want to do music in high school Nick Vazquez states "I had done choir all through elementary school and I was hesitant to do it in middle school until one day where Mr. Helming told me to come check it out and I basically haven't looked back since. Mr. Blanchette made the classes enjoyable in High School." When asked about their time in the music department Ben Royce states "I would describe my time in the music program as a time spent having a lot of fun but also it gave me a great sense of unity and accomplishment. It has been a time spent making great friends and memories." Choir has changed but it hasn't stopped us from doing what we love to do and that's making music.

Some of the changes in the music department included having to record the final product on our own. Vasquez says "It was not that hard for me. I feel that it caused many of the younger students in choir to become less self conscious about hearing their voices and it became easier as the year went on for them." Baderok says "Recording myself singing was very difficult for me because of how hard I was on myself the whole time. Every time I made a little mistake, I would delete it and restart and that took a lot of time."



A Slice of the Art Department

By: Jeremy Buckley



Mario Pires and Helena Pietri, two Plainville High School teachers that make up a big part of the Art Department.

As COVID continues its spread, the Plainville High school Art Department teachers are prepared with countermeasures to insure that the future of their classes stays intact, especially for artistic freshmen coming to a new school soon. Although many plans by art teachers were canceled due to the pandemic, the Art Department still aims to shape new students with methods of working around the strict schedule.

While interviewing both art teachers Mario Pires, and Helena Pietri, this reporter learned more about how they took their passion for art to find their career path from it. Mr. Pires claimed, "It was always a special interest of mine since I could remember, so I'm probably going to age four when I could clearly remember, just enjoying picking up a pencil, or crayon and enjoying what I could create." He explained that a future career passion can begin from something as simple as a basic hobby you enjoyed from your childhood such as art. For new students coming to highschool, there aren't very many options to

choose from besides foundations in art but the class itself begins to open up doors for beginners who maybe haven't found the path they want to take with art yet and need time to practice.

Learning and teaching art has advanced greatly since teachers of PHS started their jobs. This was very apparent when Ms. Pietri said, "This year due to covid, that's when things really changed in the studio, I did not rely on technology because it's very hands-on working with clay and metal. It's a lot of hands, and one-on-one instruction has changed, like having to have videos to demonstrate rather than a whole group demonstration."

However as COVID-19 came to PHS, the art department has taken a major hit to the progression of artwork. Teachers are constantly tracking down people by email to get artwork finished and less and less people are putting forth their best effort. However not everything is lost as teachers plan to continue motivating students back into love and passion by giving people more independence with their projects and assignments than before.

Throughout this pandemic overtaking the art department, the students have learned of how impactful it is to be in school as opposed to trying everything through remote learning. The art teachers themselves have also learned from the students from this experience. "I learned that I don't need to hold their hands as much as I think I do. Most of my students are very quick learners and adept at coming up with ideas on their own. I've learned a lot in terms of being able to trust them and allow them to problem solve and fail in order to improve," says Mr. Pires. In the near future as schools open up, Plainville High School teachers, Mr. Pires and Ms. Pietri, prepare more independently based projects for new students who are coming to school prepared and unprepared for a possible future in the fine arts.



Covid 19

How Students are Affected by the Pandemic

By: Janeil Benson

During the 2020-2021 school years, students at PHS were impacted by COVID in a variety of ways, including struggling to sustain their grades which led to stress, emotional feelings, and wondering if the surge of the pandemic would force us to move to completely hybrid learning.



Steven LePage
(superintendent)

Everyone had experienced elevated and very different emotions during the entire COVID-19 pandemic, and those emotions sometimes felt like a rollercoaster ride with many ups and downs, twists and turns. We were all required to shift how we lived, worked, learned, shopped, and importantly how we interact and socialize with others. The restrictions on our ability to gather and share in celebrations with others had a big impact on everyone, including Steven LePage (superintendent), who stated "I definitely felt more emotional during COVID-19. It also made my role as superintendent even more challenging but I did my best to keep everyone safe, while also continuing as much in-person learning as possible.

During COVID many people experienced much worse things such as death and financial struggles, also COVID-19 made many people temporarily unemployed which had affected their finances leading to stress and which



Kacey Stewart
(counselor)

affected their mental health. Kacey Stewart stated "I was fortunate enough, It definitely took a toll on my mental health for a while. My finances were affected as well. But again, I still feel like I was one of the lucky ones. I think there is still a long road ahead,

but I feel much more optimistic now than I did at this time last year. I even found ways to spend more time with my dog and my husband, I was doing projects I never got around to doing. I was going outside more. It's been a really tough year for a lot of people, but there are a few positive things that have come out of this whole thing."



Carl Johnson
(Principle)

If the increase in COVID cases skyrockets, it's imperative we move to remote learning which would be hard for some students because not everyone learns in the same method through computers; some people



need teacher supervision. Mr. Carl Johnson asserted “one of the things that would necessitate us moving to Remote Only as a school would be if we had so many teachers out that we could not safely operate the school. But many teachers are vaccinated, for now, we don’t have to worry about hybrid transitioning, but as a school we still have to follow the rules and regulations.”

The pandemic affected everything in ways of fellowship, communication, work, and study. PHS senior Eunice Coello Saucedo stated, “Everyone, I believe, did. There was a great deal of apprehension and concern about what was going on. Not being able to see friends and family was extremely frustrating, but I must admit that online learning was challenging and special for me. Throughout the pandemic, I learn a lot about myself that I would rather learn in person than on a computer.”

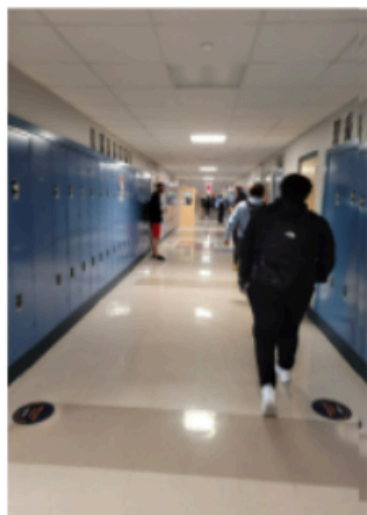


Eunice Coello-Sauceda
(PHS Senior)



COVID in School From 2020 to Now

By: Anthony Cardoso



The hallways of PHS

From the year 2020 to now PHS has made changes for covid to allow it to keep teaching the youth. These changes were needed to allow the school to teach in this new day and era. It also allowed for safe teaching and the ability to see people in person after the year of online at the end of the last school year. As the year started in 2020 the protocols were difficult to follow at first and very over the top. The staff were trying to get used to these changes as well and also trying to get used to the social distancing and the need to wash and get rid of a lot of things that would be normal in the classroom. Other things that changed were the ways to the classrooms and how we are in the classes. We have the distance in the rooms by the seats and with masks on at all times. Finally they had smaller changes to the building to allow for a better time with covid. These changes were not set in stone from the beginning as they were being made up before the time came to go back to school. As these changes were going in place a lot of them were being scrapped and some were staying to be made into what we see today. As time went on some changes stayed and some went away after

they weren't needed any more and became obsolete. There were two different people from the school asked about what had happened for these changes and what went into these changes to allow what is happening to happen. In the end I asked them what had changed and what was good or bad about what these changes were and their answers were different. When asked Mrs. Miller a science teacher at PHS and Mrs. Stewart, a counselor at PHS. When asked Mrs. Miller about what is good about these changes. She said "I am able to work with technology better now with the time I was given to learn and can use it better than before. I was also forced to be creative with my teaching and to try and make it workable for the year." Mrs. Stewart stated about this topic "I was able to slow down a little bit and be home more because of all the remote and google meetings." When asked about what was hard and bad about these changes Mrs. Miller stated "My whole teaching style changed because I was unable to walk around them and check on them and I don't want to get close to them because of the covid thing and the germs that could come as I don't know if there are clean about it in the sense that they don't want them." Mrs. Stewart stated "It became harder to work from the distance learning and that it just all around was hard to work for the educators of the school." These changes were for the best of the school and for the students but not all are good. In the end these changes are needed and will change as the year goes on and the world opens up more. Hopefully soon things will open up to the level of which we had before the covid came.



Senior Spotlight

Senior Cars Class of 2021

By: Xavier Estevez

Rj Bradley drives a 2001 jeep cherokee with a 6 ½ lift with 35 inch tires Bradley said he gets 6.2 miles to a gallon of gas and has to fill up once a week. Bradley paid 5500 for his jeep and put 3000 into it already. He wants to buy a new rear bumper. Bradley has a 4.0 straight 6 engine in his jeep. Bradley said if he didn't buy his jeep he would have bought a newer ford f150.

Gabe Aguilera drives a 2003 Toyota camry he did an engine swap from a 4 cylinder to a v6 he says his gas goes down depending on how fast he goes and how hard he hits his gas. Aguilera said if he can do anything to his car he would put in a roll cage, and just work on the body and looks of the vehicle. His friend gave him the car but he said if he didn't have the car he would have bought a Mazda rx7.



Spring 2021 Working Students

By: Gabe Aguilera

Spring of 2021 working students and how it affects their school work and finding time to do everything. Most students by senior year have a job and it ends up affecting their school work by finding time to do school work and time to relax. Two students I interviewed said work does affect school work and often find no time for themselves or to relax. Students often take time from when they should be doing school work to relax and stuff for their personal life. The students said that they have jobs so they can pay for phone, car, and other bills and get ready to go into the real world and live as adults. Students agreed that if you're a working student you should do a little less school work so you can balance out life because the end goal anyways is to work and be successful in life.



Senior Year at Plainville High School

By: Daniel Nanowski

Aiden Payne, Sean Silvia, and RJ Bradley are having a good senior year at Plainville High and have enjoyed their overall experience. Although this year is none like any other they still found ways to enjoy the year. The three men were interviewed and here is what they had to say about their time here at Plainville High.

When asked about how their time was at PHS the three had this to say. Silvia said, "The first 2 years sucked but after junior year it got fun." Payne said, "It was ok with many ups and downs but it was a good experience overall." Bradley said, "Pretty good, the time was definitely long and challenging but overall it was great." They were also asked about what their favorite memories are at PHS. Payne said some of his favorite memories were, "Breaking 2 school records for track, playing soccer, and hanging out with the boys." Bradley also said hanging out with his friends and Silvia said it was watching movies during class. They also got asked what their favorite classes and who their favorite teachers were. Payne said his favorites were, "Mrs. Witkowski's honors spanish, Ms. Wells math class, Mrs. Miller, and Mr. Chausse." Silvia said his favorites were Construction, Mr. Dunlap, and Ms. Martin. Bradley said his favorites were Mr. Bosley, Mr. Susco, and Mrs. Guaderrama. They were also asked what clubs or activities they were a part of during their time here at PHS. Silvia was not a part of any clubs. Bradley and Payne both played golf but Payne only played his freshman year. Payne also was a part of the

soccer and track team. Bradley was also a part of the interact club and honor society.

After those questions they were asked some wrap up questions. First they were asked if they would go back and do anything different or change anything. Payne and Silvia agreed they would go back to try harder and take it more seriously. Bradley said he would go back and take less classes to spread it out more over the four years. They were then asked if they could give any advice to any upcoming seniors what they would tell them. All of them mentioned having fun because it's your last year with all your friends. Silvia and Payne also added to take it seriously as well but it's the most fun. Lastly I asked them if they had any plans following graduation. Silvia is still undecided about what he will do next. Payne plans to go to Tunxis to focus on communications and then plans to transfer somewhere else. Bradley plans on going to CCSU for business and work.



Plainville High on a Spring afternoon after school is finished



