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WINTER

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# PLYMOUTH VOYAGER

## Meet the Coordinators

Understanding Curriculum

## Inspiration Award

Recipients

## CREATING TRADITION:

Finding Our Voice on Opening Day



# FIND YOUR VOICE LIVE YOUR PASSION

Plymouth Public Schools 2013-2014

FALL/WINTER 2013

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# Dr. Gary Maestas

Superintendent of Plymouth Public Schools



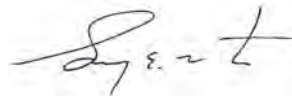
"The dynamic world of public education is grounded on the structures that guide our instructional practices."

Members of the Plymouth School Community,

This edition of the Voyager is dedicated to the backbone of education – curriculum. The dynamic world of public education is grounded on the structures that guide our instructional practices. Although school communities are faced with many accountability requirements, districts do have the ability to match standards to district resources and recommended practices. This, I believe, is the art of curriculum development. Within the pages of this edition, I hope you learn about the importance of our curriculum development model as well as the need for our education system to be dynamic in our approach to curriculum. There are great academic expectations of students of this generation. My hope is that you gain insight into those expectations and how the Plymouth schools are positioned to guide our students to success.

Thank you for taking the time to read this latest edition of the Voyager Magazine.

Sincerely,



Gary E. Maestas, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

## SPONSORS

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### Publication Information

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## Will DiGravio

Son of Dan and Kristen DiGravio, honor student Will DiGravio is President of his Junior class (2015) at Plymouth North High School. Will is currently enrolled in three AP classes, is a member of the Debate Club, and serves as Student Representative to the Plymouth School Committee. After school, he's busy filming all varsity basketball games, PCIS music events, School Committee meetings, and community events for EDTV. Most weekends in the fall you can find Will at Forges Field filming the home games for the Pop Warner Vikings. He is also a first baseman for the PNHS baseball team.

For the past two years, Will has participated in the Vocational Technical Marketing Program at Plymouth North. Through this program, he was given the opportunity to participate in DECA. Under the Entrepreneurship Innovation category, Will and his teammates, Ben Pieroni and Shawn Westcott, created their own cable television provider designed to deliver service through Wi-Fi. The team was tasked with identifying a target market, trends in the market place, and creating a business model. They placed first at the state conference in Boston, and finished in the top 10 at the international conference in April in Anaheim.

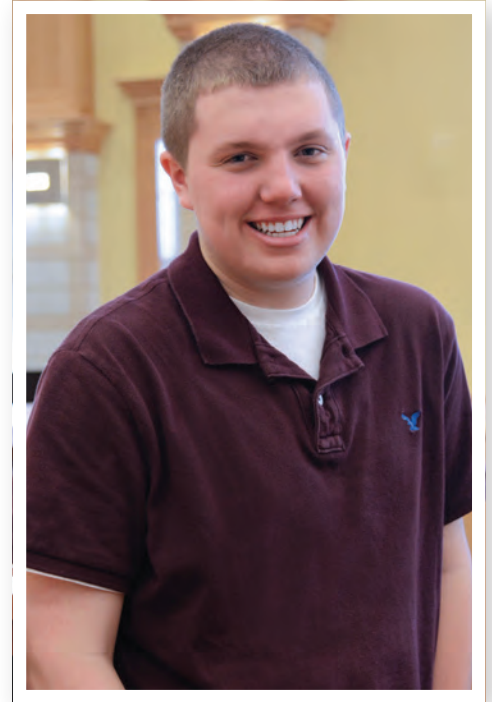
As a member of the PNHS School Council, Will attended a week-long Massachusetts Association of School Councils conference at Worcester State University last July, where he participated in workshops and seminars that promoted team building and unity, and taught members how to identify valuable skill sets of council members.

In March of 2013, Will traveled to New York City as a participant in the annual, 3-day Model United Nations conference. He was asked to serve on a special political and decolonization committee, which was charged with finding a resolution to end human trafficking in the Middle

East. Following the conference, Will applied, and was accepted to, a small Joint-Crisis Committee at Harvard Model United Nations this January in Boston.

Under a full scholarship, Will was the only student chosen from the New England region to attend the National PTA Youth Leadership Convention in Cincinnati this past June. Criteria for selection included academic excellence, leadership qualities, and extracurricular activities. In a task where students were to come up with a plan to combat bullying in schools, Will's group used TIP Text service, a system in which you can text a school administrator about any bullying incidents. Following the convention, Will was asked to serve on the Massachusetts Parent Teacher Association (PTA) State Board of Directors as Student Liaison.

Last spring, Will read a Tweet from Al Gore, encouraging anyone interested in climate change to apply to attend his 3-day Climate Reality Leadership Corps in July. Climate and environment are important issues to Will, so he applied, and was accepted. With approximately 1,000 people invited to attend from over 70 countries, Will found himself in the enviable position of being one of fewer than 10 high school students to receive an invitation. Al Gore, present during the entire conference, spent one full day with the group. Attendees were provided with the entire slide show and encouraged to create their own presentations to share at home in their own communities. The attendees come away with the expectation to take back what they learn and perform 10 acts of leadership relevant to climate, such as submitting letters to elected officials, presenting to communities, and creating public service announcements. To date, Will has spoken to over 200 Plymouth students about climate change.



Will was presented with another great leadership opportunity when he was invited to attend the Young Democrats of Massachusetts Convention in Worcester this past August. He was invited to join the membership, and will help reorganize their high school caucus, meeting with other students to discuss priorities – what they want or believe they can accomplish – with one being to get 18 year olds to understand the importance of voting.

Will is now spending a considerable amount of time thinking about what he wants to do beyond his Senior year. He will be applying to Harvard and Cornell Universities, but is also considering Georgetown, George Washington, Boston University, and Northeastern University. His future shines brightly as he continues to follow his dream of effecting change on a national level.

# Pamela Gould

Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources



**V: Please tell us about your role as Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources in the Plymouth Public School District.**

PG: My primary responsibilities include personnel management, labor relations administration, staff development and evaluation, budget and salary administration, and community involvement. The day-to-day functions include coordinating and supervising the operation of the personnel function in such a way as to enhance the morale of school personnel, promote the overall efficiency of the school system, and maximize the educational opportunities and benefits available to each individual child; to recruit and retain highly qualified certificated and classified personnel of a sufficient caliber of excellence as to insure consistently high educational benefits to each student in the public schools; to assist in negotiating with ten different bargaining units; and to comply with state and federal regulations.

**V: What are your professional credentials and experience?**

PG: I earned my BS in Accounting from New Hampshire College, Teaching Certificate from Bridgewater State, Master's Degree from Cambridge College, and CAGS Certification from Bridgewater State. Most recently, I earned my Doctoral Degree from Northeastern University in September of 2011.

My career in Education began in 1993 when I was hired as a Business/Computer Teacher at both Whitman Middle and Regional High Schools. In 2001, I was promoted to Assistant Principal of Whitman-Hanson Regional High School, and then Principal in 2003. In the summer of 2007, I became Principal of Franklin High School, and remained there until January of 2009, when I came to Plymouth in my current role. In addition to my teaching and administrative experience, I also served as Co-Chair of the NEASC Accreditation Steering Committee.

**V: What is the best part of the job?**

PG: For me, one of the best things about working in Benefits is the "people" aspect. I love the fact that I get to meet every teacher when they begin their employment in Plymouth. I thoroughly enjoy getting to know

all of our new teachers, and hearing about their backgrounds and passion for teaching.

I am very blessed to work with a fabulous Human Resources staff. Linda Primeau, my Administrative Assistant, is fantastic. Linda works with all of our new staff members to make sure their paperwork is in order. She also manages the one hundred-plus substitute teachers we have working for us.

Three years ago Theresa Sears came to the district as our Benefits Coordinator. She is extremely knowledgeable about all things regarding health insurance, and that knowledge helps our staff and puts them at ease. Cheryl Butts joined our department two years ago, and has since helped us transition to our new attendance program. Among other tasks, she is also responsible for lane changes when an employee takes graduate courses. Paulette Canevazzi rounds out our HR staff, and is the pleasant face you see as you enter Central Office. Paulette is also responsible for all of our job postings, making sure all of our administrators can fill the empty positions as quick as possible.

The Central Office administrative team that I work with could easily be called my "Dream Team." The three men I work with—Superintendent Dr. Gary Maestas, Assistant

*continued on page 4*



# Pamela Gould

*continued from page 3*

Superintendent of Administration and Instruction Chris Campbell and School Business Administrator Gary Costin – are truly fantastic. We each have our strengths that we bring to the table, and are a team in every sense of the word. Famous baseball player Casey Stengel once said: “Finding good players is easy. Getting them to play as a team is another story.” We have been together as a team for almost six years and any team that sticks together that long just gets better and better!

## **V: Talk about the challenges of the position.**

PG: The biggest challenge of my job is having to address staff who make an error in judgment, or don't live up to the high standards our district has in place. In my opinion, working with children is the most important job in the world. Regardless of your role in our district, you must model the behavior we expect students to emulate. It is very difficult when someone does not model that behavior, and disciplinary action is mandated. I do not enjoy that part of the job at all, but at the same time, our team will not tolerate it.

Another challenge for me is the size of our district. As I mentioned previously, I am a people person. I love getting to know our faculty, but with over one thousand staff members, this can be difficult. I make every effort to meet each employee, but it is very difficult. I will continue to work on this objective.

# Lisa White

English Language Arts Curriculum Coordinator



Coordinator of English Language Arts Lisa White is entering her 7th year in the Plymouth Public School District, having come from Westwood where she was an English Language Arts (ELA) teacher. Dr. White holds a B.S. in English, an M.Ed. in Reading, and a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction. She has served on the Commonwealth's DESE (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education) ELA Frameworks Committee, MCAS Assessment Committees, and the Reading Panel for NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) for 9 years.

Dr. White explains that our ELA curriculum focuses on student engagement across all four strands: reading, writing, listening and speaking. The elementary level uses a Balanced Literacy curriculum, providing direct instruction with opportunities to apply to authentic tasks. The English department promotes workshop models in both reading and writing, allowing for more choice within a unit. For example, when teaching elements of fiction, a mini lesson is presented about components of a fictional book such as character or problem. The students then apply what they have learned to their own component of choice. The concept of choice increases engagement, and allows teachers to differentiate, as students read at their own instructional level but apply the big ideas. The workshop models promote effective management of conferencing by permitting teachers to set up structures that allow time for meeting with students one-on-one or within small groups, and to take anecdotal notes. Mini lessons are important here because too many teaching points in one lesson will not leave time for reading, writing and sharing. As part of professional development, district Literacy Coaches model lessons in the classroom. The district has begun filming our own faculty presenting workshop models.



The middle and high school curriculums follow the same applications, only in a more sophisticated way. Past misconception has been that the teacher is teaching a particular “book” rather than teaching skills and strategies. The book is the vehicle. Anchor texts are introduced across the grade to build background knowledge for all. The topic is then opened up with supplemental choice books. Students will read, write, and share with a common purpose.

Common Core standards highlight speaking and listening standards. Students must be able to build upon the conversations of others. Therefore, it is important for students to talk conversationally in the classroom with the entire group – everyone needs to be active listening, sharing and participating – able to make a valid point. The high school curriculum features Socratic Circles – named after Socrates’ belief in the power of asking questions and discussion about a texts they have read. Students form two circles – one inside the other. The inner circle discusses and debates, while the outer circle observes and critiques the discussion and communication. The teacher steps back to assume the role of facilitator after teaching and modeling, allowing students to direct the conversation. During the discussion, the teacher tracks the conversation direction using arrows, and is able to determine patterns in communication and flow of participation – who contributed, who supported, what they said – with evidence from the text.

The district recognizes the importance of professional development. Sending teachers to professional conferences such as “Literacy for All,” and bringing literacy experts to the district for guided workshops gives teachers the opportunity to get out of their own district and experience new ideas from within the classrooms of other districts.



# Kathleen Babini

Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator



Kathleen Babini began teaching in Plymouth 30 years ago, and stepped into her current role of Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator in 1999. She holds a K-12 Coordinator/Director license, Social Studies license grades 7-12, English Language Arts grades 7-12, and Reading K-12 and is a trained Teacher Consultant by National Geographic. This past September, she earned her Doctorate in Curriculum Leadership.

Kathy is an advocate of her department's mission to inspire all students to make a positive contribution to society. Students are encouraged to be leaders, value community engagement, demonstrate civic responsibility, and develop core beliefs while being problem solvers. The mission is fostered through the many projects facilitated by social studies teachers at all levels that reach beyond their classrooms.

Under her leadership, the curriculum is designed to teach not only the core content knowledge focused on the Commonwealth's History and Social Science framework, but also emphasizes writing and oral presentations, which supports the Common Core Standards. Students begin in kindergarten learning what it means to be a citizen, and move on to basic geography

and national symbols in grade one. The second grade curriculum reveals a more global perspective in looking at other continents and viewing other continents as well as immigration and America as a melting pot. In grades 3 and 4, students study Local and Early US History, and United States regions, respectively. The 5th grade curriculum concentrates on the Early US, pre-Columbian era. Students in grade 6 learn about Ancient Civilization, seventh graders study World Geography, and the 8th grade curriculum focuses on Civics.

At the high school level, the 9th grade curriculum features World History, and students in 10th and 11th grades study US History 1 and 2, respectively. Students in their senior year are offered Psychology, Sociology, Conflicts in US History from 1940, International Relations, Economics, Criminal Law and Local History, as well as AP Psychology, AP European History, and AP US History. The department is currently piloting a Citizenship 2.0 class, which explores local and global citizenship addressing how government works, and the rights and responsibilities of citizens. Currently, this class is an elective, but this will be a graduation requirement for current freshmen.

The Social Studies Department places a special emphasis on making community connections with many of the local organizations. Some examples are the annual Pilgrim Hall Adopt-an-Artifact exhibit with students in grade 5, the Forefathers

Day essay contest for students in grades 10 through 12, the Antiquarian Society Corn Planting Play at Harlow House, and the Martin Luther King Jr. essay contest. This year, students at the middle and high schools sponsored a Red, White & Blue Day, collecting goods for troops in honor of 9/11. Programs honoring veterans were held in November at many of our schools, including *Step Up for Veterans*, an invitation to parade participants to further honor veterans by continuing to walk and pledge aid to our local vets. In addition, the Plymouth 400 Committee is working with current 6th graders – our graduating class of 2020 – to establish a 20/20 Club, whose members will serve as ambassadors for the various celebratory events. These 6th grade students have been compiling a 2020 Portfolio since first grade, which will be returned as part of their graduation.

Additionally, Kathy has worked with teachers from across the district to establish a Community Service Learning Committee meant to enhance community connections and assist students in thinking as global citizens. To name a few, Indian Brook students participated in the Mission to Liberia project, 7th graders read *A Long Walk to Water* while middle school student Joe Murphy organized a walk to raise money to build wells in Sudan, through the foundation created by the author. Under the direction of Deb Correa, students at West Elementary participate in the Birthday Wishes program, providing birthday parties for homeless children.

Students From France visit PNHS



# Linda Coffey

Math Curriculum Coordinator

This is Mathematics Coordinator Linda Coffey's fourth year in the district, coming from Westwood as Middle School Math Coordinator. Linda brings a vast educational background, having taught at both the middle and high school levels, and worked as a math textbook editor for five years. After earning her Administrator's License from Boston University, Linda came to the district because she "felt as if Plymouth had a vision, and was not just concerned with academics, but with the whole child."

The district's K-6 Everyday Mathematics program was adopted six years ago following a one-year pilot. This hands-on, manipulative-based program focuses on problem solving, incorporating Common Core standards at all levels. As a full round of elementary students have now progressed through this spiral curriculum, middle and high school teachers find that students arrive with strong problem solving skills. Supplementary to Everyday Math, the First Steps program is a diagnostic tool used by teachers to quickly identify weaknesses and provide differentiated or targeted instruction by filling "potholes" or gaps. These assessments are only used for support services, and are not factored into students' grades. Eventually, all elementary math teachers in the district will be trained in First Steps.

At the middle school level, grade 7 students take Pre-algebra, and students in grade 8 take Algebra – either at the honors level, or split into a two-year program through grade 9. Students in grade 8 must take two math courses every day. This additional, project-based course is called Problem Solving and Applications, providing emphasis as the title suggests on problem solving and the real world applications of math. Each Problem Solving and Applications teacher is paired with an Algebra teacher to collaborate and support each other's curriculum. Just as our high

school senior math course offerings help prepare Plymouth students for college and career readiness, the two periods of grade 8 math help prepare students for success in their high school mathematics courses.

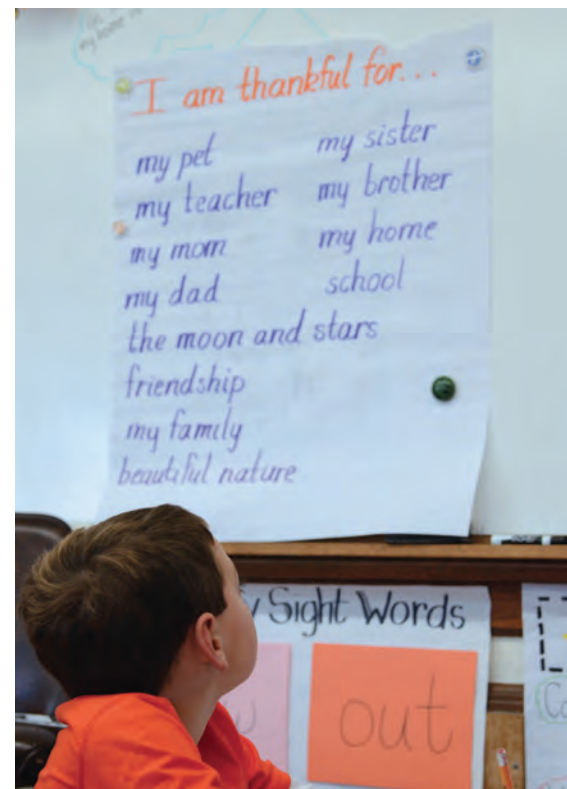
Common Core standards mandate that all high school students take Algebra 1, Geometry, and Algebra 2 prior to graduation. However, the class of 2014 will be the first to graduate under the recently adopted 4-years of Math requirement (previously a 3-year requirement). The senior year options include Pre-calculus, Advanced Math and Trigonometry, Topics of Advanced Mathematics (a mostly project-based review of Algebra 1 and 2, Geometry, Consumer Math, Personal Finance), Honors Calculus, AP Calculus, AP Statistics, and elective Personal Finances.

This year, two district-wide Math Coaches – Jenn Marchesiani and Jen Powers – were hired to support teachers in classroom instructional practices and curriculum. They are an important resource for increasing math achievement across the district through observation, coaching, modeling, collaborative lesson planning, and building professional development.

Our district has a laser-focused vision and strategic plan for math using the whole child approach: social, academics, emotional. Teachers and administrators are supported through incredible amounts of comprehensive professional development opportunities and collaboration through professional learning communities in the schools. Linda says, "The department goal is developing a standards-based math curriculum beginning with elementary through high school, using a variety of math textbooks and programs, as well as teacher-generated units that support the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. Currently, about 60% of students entering college need remedial math programs, which costs the



student money. Our goal is to minimize this number by raising the bar. When all students leave the Plymouth schools, they will have a solid foundation in math and be college and career ready."



# Alison Riordan

Science Curriculum Coordinator

Alison Riordan assumed her role in Plymouth as Science Curriculum Coordinator six years ago following her time as a high school teacher in Weymouth and middle school teacher in Boston. With a Bachelor of Science degree in Neuroscience from the University of Rochester, a Master's from Boston University in Secondary Science Education, and a M.Ed. from UMass Lowell in Education Administration, Alison came to the district abundantly qualified to oversee an aligned and rigorous science curriculum.

The district's K-8 spiraled science curriculum includes a 25 percent focus on each of the four strands of science: life, physical, earth and space, and technology/engineering. Each topic builds on itself. For example, life science begins in kindergarten with differentiating living/nonliving things, then moves into grade one, focusing on plants and animals. In second grade, the focus carries to the beginning of life cycles, and students in third grade learn the characteristics of plants and animals, as well as migration patterns. The fourth grade curriculum moves into survival and environmental response, leading to photosynthesis in grade 5. Students in grade 6 study a macroscopic view of the human body, followed by

microscopic human development (cells) in the seventh grade. Prior to moving on to high school, eighth graders study heredity, evolution and biodiversity.

At the high school level, students are required to take three years of science. The 2013-14 school year will be the last year of an integrated science requirement for ninth graders. Beginning next September, ninth graders will be required to take biology, which will raise the bar and give students two years of choice. Options for students in grades 10, 11, and 12 include Chemistry, Physics, and Earth Science, as well as Forensics, Anatomy and Physiology, Environmental Science, and Oceanography, as well as AP Physics, Chemistry, and Biology. These are all daily, lab-based sciences.

The district's science frameworks emphasize rigor and high expectations, and our students succeed as a result. One example of this success is Plymouth North graduate Jessica Morgan. Jessica was a four-year Science Fair award winner, achieving first and second place at both the district and regional levels. As a freshman in 2009, Jessica won a \$20,000 scholarship to UMass Amherst for Scientific Achievement, and was an alternate winner to a \$60,000 Wheaton College scholarship award.



"Looking ahead, Massachusetts is about to release a draft of their interpretation of the next generation science standards, which will be up for review through 2015. Final adoption is expected in 2016. In the meantime, Plymouth will be working towards integrating the new framework's science and engineering practices and realigning our curriculum as necessary. I am really looking forward to this change and towards putting the 'doing' back into science through the use of these practices," says Alison.

# Matt Mena-Landry

Coordinator of Media and Technology

In only his second year with Plymouth Public Schools, Matt has made quite an impact in the district. Matt joins the Plymouth Public Schools after working for a State Agency Technology company in Iowa that served public school districts. He brings his vast knowledge and expertise to the many departments that he oversees, some of which include Instructional Technology and Technology Integration, Library and Instructional Media, Educational TV, and Online course work/Virtual High School. Matt views technology as "opening up the doorways to learning" and his role as coordinator is to ensure that all departments do their jobs as effectively as possible and assure the tools are available to do so. As an educator, Matt's goal is to provide options and pathways for success in the 21st century classroom.



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# Matt Mena-Landry

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The current elementary school curriculum across the district focuses on creating projects and basic computer skills including keyboard, peripherals, and software. In conjunction, the library curriculum is designed to help students with project resources, developing good research techniques and mechanisms for taking advantage of on online resources. Matt has encouraged a new elementary school model which incorporates teaching students and staff alike. Specialists in the district are available to interact with teachers to collaborate, acquire new skills

and receive training and support. This partnership encourages students to use what they have learned in the computers lab in their day-to-day schoolwork, just another step in preparing students for the middle and high school experience.

We often hear about smaller districts across Massachusetts providing one-to-one device programs such as iPads for all sixth graders. Our district is focused on building infrastructure before buying bulk machines. Funded by the Town of Plymouth, we have redundant fiber connecting all school

buildings and the town hall. An initiative currently in progress is the creation of a wireless network across the district, with progress at 70% complete, and the goal to be fully wired by the end of next summer.

The new and improved Plymouth Public Schools website was successfully launched last spring. The goal was to provide better communication with parents. The new site features more calendars, individual and district wide, phone alerts and parent support portals. The response has been positive and user friendly.

Nathaniel Morton  
100th Anniversary



# Jim Hanna

Principal, Vocational Technical Education



The Vocational Studies Program at both North and South High Schools consists of 15 high-quality vocational programs that are blended into a comprehensive academic environment. Currently, total enrollment in the program is approximately 700 students district wide. Only Plymouth students are eligible, and the wait list generally exceeds 75 students per year, between both high schools. The list is revisited throughout the school year, as openings occur.

Vocational Technical Education Principal Jim Hanna oversees the entire program at both high schools. Jim has been a member of the faculty for 20 years, first as a science teacher at Plymouth South High School, followed by Housemaster. He explains that each curriculum follows the Massachusetts Career Vocational Technical Education (CVTE) frameworks specific to the program. Teachers spend a minimum of five years in the field prior to becoming an educator.

Plymouth South High School features 13 vocational and technical programs, including Automotive Technology, Carpentry, Computer Aided Drafting, Computer Science, Cosmetology, Culinary Arts, Early Education and Care, Electrical, Graphic Design and Visual Communication, Marine

Technology, Marketing Education, Metal Fabrication and Welding, and Plumbing. Different from traditional vocational or technical high schools, Plymouth South is a Comprehensive High School, providing students with the highest quality of hands-on instruction available, in addition to their academic programming. Students apply for the Exploratory Program going into the ninth grade, then matriculate the following year. They are integrated into academic classes with the school population, and are held to the same standards and rigor.

Plymouth North offers four vocational programs: Allied Health, Engineering Technology, Facilities Management, and Marketing Education. Freshmen must select their program of choice prior to beginning grade 9, and are also held to the same academic standards and rigor as the general population.

While enrolled, students are often invited to perform off-campus jobs within the carpentry, plumbing, and electrical fields. Residents of the community may call and request services. Staff oversees the projects, and there are no labor costs. In addition, Plymouth South offers in-house, full-service departments including graphic arts, printing, cosmetology and culinary services (Southside Fare Café).

About 30 students per year are given the opportunity to participate in Cooperative Education (paid) and Internships. High school seniors are offered employment opportunities through a Co-op Coordinator at each high school. Students must demonstrate a high level of proficiency in skills all three years prior, and receive an instructor's recommendation. An interview with the employer is also required.

Students enrolled in the Vocational Program are encouraged to participate in a number of club activities, including DECA, a national organization that prepares students for the marketing, finance, and

hospitality industries. DECA participants compete in their respective fields during the organization's annual regional competition in May, and top winners advance to the state competition in April. Students from Plymouth are consistently successful, and generally upwards of 20 students move on to participate in the national competition, which takes place in late May.

Vocational students are also encouraged to participate in Skills USA, the largest student organization in the country. Students participate in both written and hands-on competitions in all programs, with the exception of marketing. Last year, Plymouth South student Kayla O'Farrell (Electrical) was the organization's National Vice President. This year, Plymouth South student Aiden Mulligan (CAD) is serving as State President.

Plymouth's Vocational Program boasts a 97% positive placement rate. This means that upon graduation, 97% of students are either employed, enrolled in a 2- or 4-year college or technical institute, or enlist in the military. Of the 75% of students who enroll in 2- or 4-year colleges or universities, fully 40% of those students are at Honors or AP level. In addition, many programs offer students certifications and licensure upon graduation. Going forward, the goal of CVTE department administration is to continually adapt to the future job outlook and offer programs for emerging fields, which currently include Engineering, Allied Health, Electrical, Culinary, Early Education and Marketing.



# Michael Caple

Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator



This is Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator Mike Caple's third year with Plymouth Schools, coming from Franklin as Art Director. With previous experience as both a high school and middle school art teacher, he holds a BFA in Photography from Mass College of Art, a Post-Baccalaureate certificate in Art Education from Bridgewater State University, and a Master's in Educational Management from Endicott College.

Under his direction, the district's K-12 Visual and Performing Arts (VPA) program recognizes that kids learn in different ways. A large population of learners have greater success by "doing," and as such, benefit from project or performance based instruction. "Their work is so personal, encouraging students to work to their best ability," says Mike. Federal legislation considers the Arts part of the Core Curriculum, subject to Common Core Standards.

## Music

Elementary music curriculum begins at the full-day Kindergarten level through grade 5, and is designed to teach kids how to read music, sing and appreciate world cultures. Instrumental and strings instruction begins in grade 4. This program has recently

been restructured, with music lessons by highly qualified, certified educators are now free of charge to students in grades 4 and 5. The elementary curriculum also includes the Music Immersion Program- a partnership with the Plymouth Philharmonic Orchestra- which takes place every three years for third through fifth grade students.

Students in grade 6 receive general music instruction, and are offered concert band and chorus as in-school electives. Band and chorus students no longer miss out on Health, Art and Tech Ed rotations. A new, mandatory seventh grade Performing Arts course teaches students how to communicate through performance, and students in eighth grade are now eligible to march with the high school band. Other electives such as guitar, jazz and strings are now offered at the middle school level.

At the high school level, music courses are offered as electives during the school day, and include Concert Band, Chorus, Guitar, Piano, Music Theory, AP Music Theory, Behind the Music. Extra-curricular offerings include the annual musical production, marching band, Northern Lights (North High's A Cappella group), select choir groups, jazz band at each high school, and the indoor percussion group.

## Art

The district recognizes that creativity is a 21st century skill that every student needs, and hopes to establish a Fine Arts requirement for graduation. The arts teach creativity and problem solving, which directly connects to the Common Core. Students need to understand that in life there is no one correct answer, and that success is not solely based on skill or talent, but effort and strategy.

Elementary art instruction follows state standards and includes one hour of class time per week. It focuses on learning how to communicate by expressing thoughts and ideas using a different voice.

At the middle school level, students in grades 6-8 receive General Art instruction, including Computer Art and Communicating with Technology. The VPA department and the Communicating with Technology teachers collaborate to offer these students classes like Web2.0, Photoshop, and Illustrator.

The district provides a comprehensive high school art program that allows students to experiment in many mediums and helps them create a portfolio for admission to high-end schools. Classes offered include Intro to Art, Ceramics, Sculpture, Painting and Illustration, Photo/Graphic Design, AP Portfolio, and AP Studio. The art classes at both high schools are oversubscribed by hundreds of students.

Every school has end-of-the-year art showcases highlighting what students have learned. The K-12 Youth Arts Exhibit at the Plymouth Center for the Arts held in March typically displays some 600-700 pieces of student work.

## Theater

Manomet Elementary and Cold Spring Elementary schools present annual musicals, and many students of Indian Brook Elementary perform in their annual play production. Both middle schools present annual musicals to sold out audiences every year.

Both PNHS and PSHS offer Intro to Drama, and an afterschool drama club. Student members of the program participate in a tremendous amount of community outreach by performing at many of the special events that occur annually in Plymouth – demonstrating the value that the stakeholders of Plymouth enjoy from this enriched programming – such as a choral performance on the 10th anniversary of 9/11, many holiday events, and the A Cappella group Northern Lights singing the National Anthem as part of the opening ceremonies for one of the Plimoth Plantation's events.

# Scott Fry and Eric Foley

## Directors of Athletics

The Physical Education curriculum is designed to incorporate a strong focus on wellness. The philosophy is one which will provide students with the necessary tools to set a foundation for life-long health. New programs such as Fitness Fridays are initiatives designed to promote fitness at the high school level. Recognizing the value for students both physically and emotionally, there is a district-wide emphasis is on wellness, team building, individual sports, and fitness and team sports.

By the time students reach high school, they have been exposed to a structured physical education curriculum, which includes health, gross motor skills training, sportsmanship and teamwork skills. In ninth grade, students are mandated to take Health class each day for one semester, in conjunction with a Physical Education class. At the high school level, students are given more class choices and are encouraged to explore a variety of options throughout the semester. The district sees the value in health and fitness, requiring that all students have at least ten credits in physical education upon graduation. Partnering with the Literacy Leads the Way initiative, public speaking, writing assignments and online research are just some of the ways the Physical Education Department is incorporating literacy into their curriculum.

Recognizing the importance of developing athletics at the middle school level, both PCIS and PSMS offer fall, winter and spring sports programs. At the high school level, 26 sports are offered, girls hockey making its debut. Over 90 percent of the sports are "non-cut," which promotes a team atmosphere and a sense of connectedness with their school community. Athletics helps to develop confidence, leadership skills and strong work ethic. Athletes are expected to partake in at least one community service initiative per season. Some of the worthwhile causes that Plymouth athletes have contributed to recently include breast

cancer awareness, food pantries, as well as Read Across America and mentoring programs with elementary students.

Without high academic standards, athletics could not be possible. The district aligns with MIAA standards in the expectation that their student athletes will maintain their grades in order to remain eligible to participate. With fully a third of the student body involved in athletics, this emphasis on academics and athletics goes hand in hand where both high schools actually hold the students to standards beyond the minimum requirements of the MIAA for eligibility.

Under the leadership of both Athletics Directors, Principals and Administration, both high schools foster a genuine respect for one another, as well as a friendly rivalry. Events such as Captains' Lunches promote this spirit. Captains from both schools come together with administration to share a lunch provide by the culinary students at South. Student athletes are able to unite as one district for the day while enjoying a meal and listening to inspirational stories from former Plymouth athletes. Topics are always centered around leadership, sportsmanship and the importance of representing our district with pride and integrity.



### Scott Fry

As an 18-year veteran in Plymouth, Scott Fry has seen tremendous growth in athletics. A graduate of Springfield College, Scott earned his Bachelor's in Physical Education and continued at Springfield to earn his Master's in Sports Management. He began his career as a Physical Education teacher at Plymouth Community Intermediate School and has held the position of Director of Athletics at Plymouth South High School for the last eight years.



### Eric Foley

Beginning his second year as Director of Athletics at Plymouth North High School, Eric Foley took a similar path in his career. Eric received his Bachelor's in Physical Education from Keene State, a Master's in Physical Education from Fitchburg and a Master's in Athletic Administration from Endicott College. With fifteen years in the district, Foley has seen the positive impact that the new state-of-the-art Plymouth North High School has provided for our student athletes.



# Sean Halpin

Director of Student Support Services



Sean Halpin, wearing many hats in the district from overseeing counseling services at both the middle and high schools to managing various federal grants is dedicated to the well-being of all the students in the Plymouth Public Schools. Over the last few years, Halpin has been on the leadership team responsible for several grants awarded to the district. Some include academic support grants, which entitle students to support for MCAS testing. The SLC Grant promoted smaller learning communities within the school, which strive to improve student achievement in the larger public schools. The grant allowed the district to implement freshman academies, family

advocate systems and mentoring programs as well as free SAT testing for all seniors. One of the more positive benefits that this grant allowed is Student Advisory. Both high schools have set aside a twenty-five minute block each day known as Advisory dedicated to building student/advisor relationships. Students are able to make connections with their teachers, gain support & guidance, and share ideas about issues.

Sean has his sights set on a new endeavor called the STOP Act Grant (Sober Truth on Preventing Underage Drinking Act), an initiative that Halpin will spearhead within the district. The program is designed to prevent and reduce alcohol use among youth ages 12-20 in communities throughout the United States. Halpin sees this opportunity to collaborate with community members such as the District Attorney, BID-Plymouth Hospital, Plymouth Police and the Plymouth Public Schools as an important step in combating underage drinking. This grant enabled former Celtic and recovering addict Chris Herron spoke to the student body about his struggles with addiction.

Recognizing that the college application process can be a daunting task for both students and parents, the district has introduced a new college and career planning software program called Naviance. The program generates a career and

interest inventory through student surveys. The data collected helps direct students to schools and programs based on their interests and abilities. The surveys begin in grade 6 and continue through grade 12 and are adjusted for developmental appropriateness at each grade level.

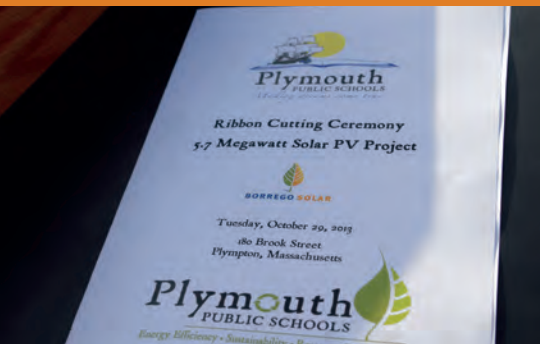
As Director of Student Support Services, Sean is constantly mindful of the well-being of all students in the district. Acknowledging the ever-changing needs of the students, this year has seen the addition of Adjustment Counselors at both Federal Furnace and Indian Brook, respectively, and funded through the reallocation of funds within the school budget. There is a variety of additional faculty who provide student support within the district to address all student needs. While Adjustment Counselors provide social and emotional support, the Guidance Counselors focus on academic and career/college readiness, as well as supplementing social and emotional help. School Psychologists also act as counselors, but their primary role is identifying and evaluating academic deficiencies through testing to determine special education eligibility. This team of well-trained and skilled individuals sees that all of the academic, social and emotional needs of each student in the Plymouth Public Schools are met.



# Solar Savings



Honored guests, students and residents celebrated the completion of the first of three solar projects for Plymouth. The Plympton site, located on 25 acres at the entrance to Plympton Sand and Gravel, is the largest solar farm in the state associated with a school department, and houses 23,500 panels. This innovative initiative will provide the school district with a set electric rate for the next twenty years, and yields a savings of nearly \$400,00 per year. Plymouth leads the nation in this green endeavor, and continues to adopt energy saving programs throughout the district.



# Opening Day

Opening day in Plymouth is a welcome back tradition for teachers, designed to inspire and excite faculty while highlighting district updates and goals for the new school year. Dr. Maestas' vision for this year's opening ceremonies was born late last winter, when he assembled a creative team that included Visual & Performing Arts Director Mike Caple, Federal Furnace music teacher Kathy McMinn, South High Choral Director Brandon Coon, North High Choral Director David Grossman, and Voyager's own Senior Editor Nicole Manfredi.

Mindful that music and song is very inspirational and always a part of opening day, Dr. Maestas quickly recognized that he no longer wanted our students to sing the words of someone else's dreams. He believed our district – students, faculty, community – needed "our own voice, our own words, to explain our own passion." Dr. Maestas turned to Steven Karidoyanes, Music Director of the Plymouth Philharmonic Orchestra, for guidance. The district has enjoyed a long-standing relationship with the Phil, and it was Steven who connected the Superintendent with professional colleague Neal Hampton. Mr. Hampton is the conductor of the Brandeis Wellesley Orchestra and a composer, primarily of musical theater. His musical adaptation of Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility* had its world premier at the Denver Center Theater Company this past April. Mr. Hampton has also written music for ballet and stage productions in the U.S. and Canada. He enthusiastically agreed to write a district "anthem" to be used for many years to come.

To begin the process, an online repository was created, for faculty, students, parents, and community members to drop ideas answering questions such as "What inspires you?", "What does it mean to inspire children?", "What are your hopes for Plymouth's students?" The team spent some time vetting the overwhelming



number of responses, which helped determine the theme of the song. From this exercise, the year's central theme, Find Your Voice, Live Your Passion emerged as the inspirational theme for the 2013-2014 school year. The shaping of the song had begun.

It was very important to Dr. Maestas to bring in someone inspirational – a performer to collaborate with our students who came up through the Plymouth Public Schools and who has made a life following his or her dreams. Dr. Maestas said early on in the process, "There is this amazing clarinetist named Michael Maccaferri who went through Plymouth schools. Google him." Doing just that, the team knew instantly that Michael was the very best fit. It was immediately evident that the stars were in alignment when the team learned Michael's schedule was clear for the performance week.

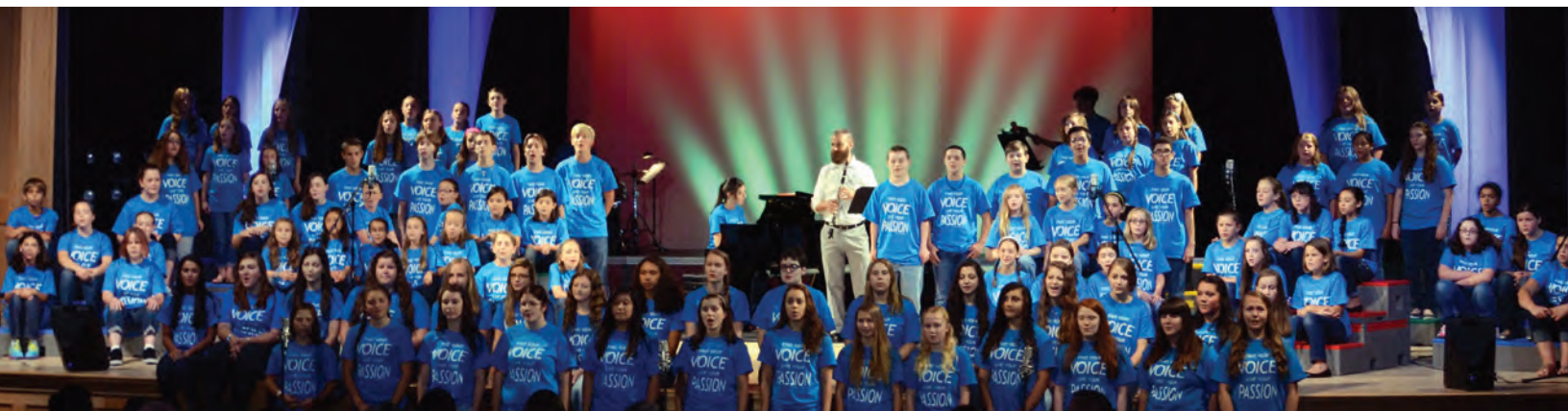
During the months that followed, Mr. Hampton composed, edited and finalized the song, with consideration for a variety of future performances. Once the song was in hand, Mike Caple and Kathy McMinn went straight to work teaching the piece to a group of over 100 Plymouth choral and music students. With musical and technical rehearsals in full sway during the week prior to opening day, it was soon time to introduce Michael Maccaferri into the mix. He flew in from Chicago just the day prior to the performance. That evening, the entire ensemble met for a full rehearsal –

enchanting in its entirety and a favorite for the parents of the choral students.

Following the opening day's warm and welcoming greetings by administration including Dr. Maestas, Dr. Gould, and Dr. Campbell, the faculty was addressed by Mr. Scichilone of the Administrator's Bargaining Unit, by Ms. Ramsay of the Education Association Bargaining Unit, and by the School Committee Chairman Mr. Begley, all offering encouraging words for the new school year. Next, the now annual presentation of the Inspiration Awards to the newest recipients – Summer Ivan, Becky Hoey, Kathleen McMinn, and Sarah Brown – helped further the remarkable opening day ceremonies. It was then time for the students to take the stage with Michael to premier the district's new anthem "Find Our Voice," newly composed by Mr. Neal Hampton. The touching and inspiring performance was met with resounding applause and a standing ovation.

The end result was a breathtaking collaboration that will forever be remembered by faculty, students, and the entire Plymouth community – a once-in-a-lifetime experience for all.

**For more information on Opening Day activities please visit**  
<https://vimeo.com/90147502>



# Inspiration Awards

The Inspiration Award was created to recognize and honor the extraordinary and inspiring commitment of educators within the Plymouth Public Schools. There are four recipients annually, nominated by faculty members, students or parents.. Awards are presented every August at Opening Day.

## In Memoriam: Rebecca Rhea Hoey

Becky Hoey was an extraordinary and inspirational grade 6 teacher of English Language Arts and Social Studies. She had National Board Certification which is a rigorous, advanced teaching credential. Like many NBC teachers, she frequently mentored new teachers entering the profession, a role she filled with great enthusiasm and commitment. She also participated in Massachusetts Department of Education sponsored training in classroom applications of technology. She shared those applications with colleagues and utilized them routinely to enrich her classroom and empower her students. Similarly, through her History Alive! training, she actively involved her students in their social studies learning.

Becky's classroom was student-centered and activity-based. Her writing workshops, reading workshops, literature circles, and history simulations engaged and challenged all students while providing scaffolding for those who needed additional support. She enabled students to find and share their voices within a community of learners who respected one another and were committed to success and achievement. Students never want to disappoint a teacher like Becky. Her faith in them, her gentle nurturing, her soft-spoken directives, her high expectations, her explicit modeling, and her obvious love for her subjects and her students motivated all of them. Hers was the kind of teaching we wish for all our students.

Outside of the classroom, Becky consistently participated in voluntary staff development opportunities and committee work dedicated to improving her school and the district. She belonged to both a writers' group and a readers' group that regularly included the reading and discussion of current adolescent literature.



She attended courses she could well have taught! She joined committees devoted to instructional best practices and spent multiple summers doing grade 6 curriculum work. She served on the initial district-wide committee to plan the formal mentoring program for the Plymouth Schools and continued in her own role as mentor until she could no longer work. For many years, she was one of the editors of the district-wide writing projects *Voices* and *Young Voices*. Being a member of the editorial teams of these publications was a voluntary, time-intensive, unpaid commitment – one that reflected Becky's dedication to nurturing writing across the district and not just in her own classroom. Her contributions to *Voices* over the years were inspirational - vivid images of the prairie and the seashore, portraits of beloved family and struggling students, and "shared snippets of life" as she and others described the voices of our community in one of their poems.

Becky sparkled with a love of life, of learning, of teaching, of sharing, of growing. We were blessed to have her in our schools and in our classrooms. I was blessed to call her a dear friend and colleague. She will live in my heart always.

*Jacqueline Winokur*  
Retired English Language  
Arts Coordinator, PPS  
March 2014

# Plymouth

## PUBLIC SCHOOLS

*Making dreams come true*

### Kathleen McMinn

Music is a necessary part of every school curriculum. Our district administrators ensure that all students have access to a comprehensive and balanced music program, and Federal Furnace Elementary School music teacher Kathy McMinn is a great asset to the program. This is Kathy's 31st year teaching in Plymouth. Seeing the best in every student, she passionately teaches young people to know, love, and respond to music.

She plays an incredible role nurturing children's love of music and performance. She shares her passion for music with the students she teaches and directs. A great promoter and motivator for these children, Kathy is also involved in sharing her enthusiasm for music with a wider audience. In addition to her role as music teacher, she is also the Director of the Federal Furnace Treble Chorus, Pure Treble (South Shore Conservatory's children's chorus), Pure Harmony (SSC's middle school chorus), and the Plymouth Children's Chorus. Once again, her school choruses performed with the Plymouth Philharmonic Orchestra at their holiday pops concert this winter.

Her tireless dedication to music has also taken Kathy to South Africa for four summers, through the Music for Life Program – the parent organization of the African Children's Choir. In February of 2014, the Choir came to Plymouth to sing with the Plymouth Children's Chorus, under Kathy's direction. She has found a way to share her passion for music with students throughout the world.



For more information on the Inspirarion Awards please visit <https://vimeo.com/90130946>

# Beau MacMillan

As Executive Chef of Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain and its signature restaurant, **elements**, Plymouth South High School graduate Beau MacMillan inspires his staff with his passion for fresh ingredients. His ingenuity in the kitchen is stimulated by his belief that food should not be overworked, but rather appreciated for its simplicity and natural perfection. This philosophy is evident in Beau's innovative seasonal menus that focus on fresh, local ingredients procured from a network of artisans and organic farmers.

Beau graduated from Plymouth South High School as part of the Culinary Arts program in 1989, and went on to graduate from Johnson and Wales University. His culinary career began at the age of 16 when he secured a position at Crane Brook Tea Room in Carver. Beau spent a year under the tutelage of Chef Francios Demueloge. Inspired by this experience, he joined the brigade at *La Vieille Maison* in Boca Raton Florida, rising through the ranks to the position of *Sous Chef*. Drawn to the culinary scene on the West Coast, Beau moved to Los Angeles where he held *Sous Chef* positions at the prestigious *Hotel Bel Air*, and later *Shutters on the Beach* in Santa Monica. He was recruited to Arizona in 1998 to develop the cuisine at The Ranch on Camelback, which later became Sanctuary on Camelback Mountain. Beau and former Executive Chef Charles Wiley opened **elements** restaurant in March of 2001.

Now as Executive Chef, Beau's innovation has brought **elements** national recognition and acclaim. In March 2006, he was invited to *The Food Network's* kitchen stadium to compete in an episode of the hit series, *Iron Chef America*. Chef MacMillan was pitted against Iron Chef Bobby Flay in "Battle American Kobe Beef." Ultimately, Beau's cuisine reigned supreme, letting him claim victory over Flay.



Photo courtesy Middleton & Gendron Agency

In addition to his appearance on *Iron Chef America*, Beau has cooked at The James Beard House and at *Bon Appetit Magazine* in New York, and regularly conducts cooking classes for the guests of Sanctuary. He is also the personal Chef for Wayne Gretzky and his family and has cooked for such personalities as President Bush, Britney Spears, U2, Michele Richard, Jacques Pepin and Michele Roux, Sr..

"One of the most inspirational teachers I had as a Plymouth student was Mr. Collins at Nathaniel Morton Elementary School. For some reason, I had this connection to American History and really enjoyed Mr. Collins' passion for it. He taught me a lot that year, and I'll never forget him for it. It was the only time in my school career that I had any success, until I started cooking.

Besides my Culinary instructors Frank Terranova, John Nadeau and Joseph Kamenetz, the most influential teachers I had at Plymouth South High School were Physical Education teachers Mr. Kasarjian and Mr. Braun. If I wasn't in Culinary, I was hanging out in the gym. They knew I loved to cook and encouraged me to stick with it, and always believed in me.

I feel like I've always known the most important ingredient in my life has been desire. I was lucky enough early in my life to find a passion for a trade, and now food has become my first language. I know sometimes it takes longer but life is about searching for things that bring ultimate happiness. Never stop believing in your own abilities. With the right attitude, desire and passion, it's only a matter of time before you achieve your dreams."

## DID YOU GRADUATE OR ATTEND THE PLYMOUTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

The Plymouth Public Schools Alumni Association is a subcommittee of the Plymouth Education Foundation. The newly formed organization is still shaping itself and growing with each meeting. The mission of the Plymouth Public Schools Alumni Association (MA) is to create a lifelong and global community of alumni through increased opportunities for meaningful engagement with each other and the students, teachers, staff, and administrators of the Plymouth Public Schools community. The association's activities are meant to increase awareness, pride, participation, volunteerism, networking, and philanthropic commitment to education in Plymouth.

As a member of the Alumni Association you will have access to news, upcoming events, activities, and other benefits. If you are someone who attends the Plymouth Public School system you are a member, but you need to register. To register please go to [www.plymouthalumni.net](http://www.plymouthalumni.net). Also, be sure to like us on Facebook or join our group on LinkedIn to stay connected with the Association and the Plymouth Public Schools. If you have questions you can also email [plymouthalumniassociation@gmail.com](mailto:plymouthalumniassociation@gmail.com).

### We Need Your Help

Are you interested in being a part of forming and shaping the Association, then make sure to come to our next meeting. We need board members, volunteers, people to help write the bi-laws, and plan events to name a few things. So make sure to register, find us on social media, or email us. We look forward to seeing you at the next meeting!

### What is the Plymouth Education Foundation?

The Plymouth Education Foundation, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization governed by a Board of Directors representing a cross-section of citizens who are dedicated to education and share a vision for excellence in the Plymouth Schools. The foundation was created primarily to support and enhance the education of all students in the Plymouth School District.



The Association needed a logo to use on our social media sites, website, and other publications and Plymouth South High School's principal Patty Fry told us about a very impressive young man named

Kyle Richards, a senior at South. Kyle has designed logos and for the Run for One and many other things at PSHS. When asked what it felt like to see his work all over town Kyle said, "I am still not over how weird it is to see my designs being worn or used by real people and real organizations." Kyle seems to have his hand in everything at school, he is President of the Student Council Executive Board, a member of the Executive Board of the Drama Club, and a member of NHS. Outside of School he works at G&G Silkscreen and Embroidery as a graphic designer and dances at Center Stage Dance Academy. He dreams of moving to New York and attending New York University in the fall and then working for a branding agency.

When we asked him how he got involved with graphic design he told us, "I used to hate graphic design! Going into shop at PSHS, I was more interested in studying photography, and was dead-set on that being my career path. Being exposed to graphic design as a prerequisite for photography changed my perspective on everything."

The Association would like to publicly thank Kyle Richards for creating the logo of the Plymouth Public Schools Alumni Association!

Photo courtesy Sally Bowen

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*World Language*

*Media & Technology*

*Visual and Performing Arts*

*Science & Technology/Engineering*

*English Language Arts*

# *Curriculum*

*Vocational Technical Education*

*Mathematics*

*Social Studies*

*Physical Education*