

“Forensics: Back and Better Than Ever at Plainville High School”

Thanks to a supportive administration and school board, Forensics has been revived at Plainville High School. While Forensics was offered at PHS in the past, it was only offered as an extracurricular activity, and it was difficult to recruit members for the former team because the school did not offer a Forensics class during the school day. The members, instead, would have practices in the evenings. Many of them were also trying to compete in sports that were in the same season. With competition from track, golf, baseball, and softball for students’ time, practices were not well attended. With that fact on top of the previous coach not having any



The results of three years of hard work

practical experience in Forensics and taking maternity leave during her final season as coach, the school district made the decision to discontinue the program after not being able to find anyone else willing or qualified to take over the program.

Ten long years later the program was reinstated with an accompanying Forensics

class offered by Elissa Ternes, PHS English teacher, who was newly hired that year. Ternes has an educational background in speech and was a state qualifier herself in high school Forensics. For information on what Forensics is all about, check out this student-made [video](#).

How It All Began...for the Second Time

In the spring of 2015, the first year of the re-instated program, 9 out of the school’s 130 enrolled students, none with any previous experience, participated in Forensics, even though they really had no idea what they were in for that first year. After a season of “trial by fire,” three of

the individuals qualified for state competition, an impressive task considering the lack of experience. Out of those participants, one brought home an individual sixth place medal.

Off to a Good Start

As the next year's Forensics season rolled around in the spring of 2016, enrollment in the Plainville High School Forensics class increased, and the team gained 10 additional members, bringing the new total up to 19. That year, in just the second year of participation in competition, the PHS Forensics squad qualified for state competition as a team, meaning that they had 16 state-qualified entries. This is the minimum number of entries required for the entire team to have a chance to medal at state competition. Unfortunately, none of the team members made it to the final round; thus, no one brought home a medal.

Slow and Steady Wins the Race

This last year, during the spring of 2017, the PHS Forensics program surged to a total of 27 members, up 18 members in just two short years. With the continued growth both in experience and numbers, this year was full of firsts for the expanded team. They once again qualified an entire team for state, but this year Ternes also implemented a Forensics Showcase before the state competition. At this showcase, students performed their state-qualified pieces for their parents and the patrons of USD 270, giving them a preview of the performance pieces and the students some extra practice



in front of an audience. At state competition, the team performed impressively and brought home a third place finish, a feat never performed before in the history of the school.

The Future of Forensics

This coming school year, with the taste of victory still on the students' palettes, Ternes is excited for what is to come. She expects the team to continue to grow in more ways than one.

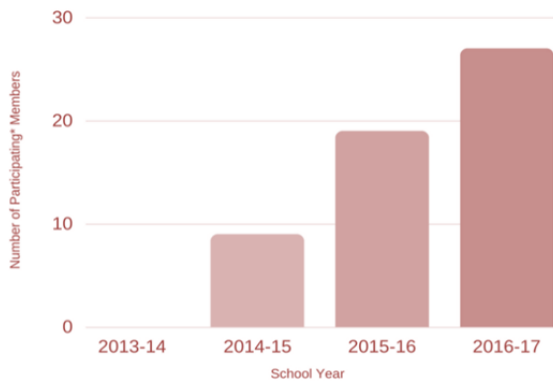
One example of that growth is the recent hiring of an assistant coach. "An assistant coach will be so beneficial, as it will give the students an additional person to watch/critique their performances, make suggestions for selections, and provide extra support at tournaments,"

Ternes stated. The support from the district to allow for this is not all that Ternes appreciates. "I am proud of the growth that I have seen in students due to Forensics. I have watched students come out of their shells and find a sense of belonging due to the program."

Would you or someone you know like to become part of this expanding program? If so, share this article with them, and for even more information on the benefits of students participating in high school forensics, read the following articles: [Why Compete?](#) and [Forensics and Test Scores](#).



Plainville High School **Forensics**



Join a growing team!

*Participating denotes at least 1 entry in a minimum of 3 tournaments.



Dear Forensics,

**YOU HAVE INTRODUCED ME
TO NEW PEOPLE AND IDEAS.**

**YOU HAVE AMPLIFIED MY VOICE
AND OPENED MY MIND.**

**YOU HAVE CHALLENGED ME.
YOU HAVE CHANGED ME.**

I LOVE YOU.

SG