



THE BOARD REPORTS

Highlights of the White Plains Board of Education Meeting

BOARD MEMBERS: Rosemarie Eller, *President*; Cayne Letizia, *Vice President*; Sheryl Brady, James Hricay, Rose Lovitch, Charlie Norris, Randy Stein

October 11, 2022

MOMENT OF SILENCE: **Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Ricca** asked for a moment of silence for three retirees: **Dorothy Holloway** was a Guidance Counselor at the High School from 1967 to 2010, **Leann Santa Donato** was a Teaching Assistant at George Washington School from 2001 to 2018, and **Lorraine Weber** taught at Highlands Elementary School from 1963 to 1992. She was also the first Human Relations teacher in White Plains and in New York State.

RECOGNITION: Celebrating School Board Recognition Week, Dr. Ricca expressed appreciation to the Board for its decades of service and its unrivaled ability and experience. **Administrators & Supervisors Association President Raegan Figueroa** said, "We are fortunate to have Board Members who are physically present in our buildings. Administrators appreciate their unwavering support, advocacy, leadership and vision." **Teachers Association President Kara Lyons**, also representing the CSEA, thanked the Board for its 96 years of experience and for "steady and consistent leadership." **Jessica Buck**, presenting PTA Council, spoke about the Board's "constant guidance, willingness to listen, dedication and its shared vision for the future." **District Clerk Michelle Melendez** thanked the Board for the warm welcome she received and presented certificates of appreciation to each Board Member.

Dr. Ricca presented a special award to **Sheryl Brady** for her participation in New York State School Boards Association activities.

Dr. Ricca also noted other recent recognition events throughout the district, for Custodians' Day, Principals' Month, International Teachers Day, and Hispanic Heritage Month. He welcomed Rochambeau staff members who were present at the meeting.

BOARD COMMENT: Board Member **Cayne Letizia** reported on recent wins in soccer games and also reminded everyone of the Arts Westchester upcoming events, featuring one of our former students.

Sheryl Brady attended several Westchester Putnam School Boards Association meetings, plus PTA Council, and the Special Education Coffee Talk. She also spoke about the Parent University Session, sponsored by the Friends of White Plains Public Schools and hosted by the Andrus Mental Health Center, which was facilitated by **Assistant Superintendent Deb Augarten**.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Ricca introduced **Student Liaisons Sinclair Harris** and **Delia Rojas** who spoke about events across the district.

Dr. Ricca mentioned that he was honored to be invited as a keynote speaker at a conference held by Northern Westchester BOCES last week. He addressed Assistant Principals who are aspiring to move on to leadership positions.

ROCHAMBEAU UPDATE: **Director Paul Bratcher** provided an update on Rochambeau Alternative High School. Initially, a survey asked students how they view the school and the responses described it as a family, small in size, with understanding teachers and one-to-one relationships. A process to reimagine the school is being led by students and staff and involves four elements: creating a welcoming and affirming environment, an inclusive curriculum and assessment, high expectations and rigorous instruction, and professional development. Mr. Bratcher also discussed various practices in place which include weekly case conferences, positive behavior reinforcement, restorative practices and doing things for others.

Dr. Ricca thanked Mr. Bratcher for his presentation and said Rochambeau is a wonderful smaller learning community. We're very proud of the work being done there by our staff and students.

PERSONNEL: Two administrative appointments were made. **Ybelize Pilarte** was appointed Director of Secondary Special Education, Districtwide. She had been serving as a Chairperson of the Committee on Special Education and has been in the district since 1998, in various roles. **Yolanda Rodriguez** was appointed Director of World Languages/ENL Programs K-12. She has been with the district since 2008, most recently as a Dual Language Instructional Coach and Classroom Support/K-5.

In a Special Meeting on October 17th, **Eileen McGuire** was appointed Interim Assistant Principal at Ridgeway School. She replaces **Dr. Kimberly Crawford**, who is now acting as Interim Principal until a permanent replacement is appointed. Ms. McGuire had been Principal of Mamaroneck Avenue School for 8 years before she retired in 2020.

Tenure was granted to **Deborah Hickey**, Music Teacher, Districtwide.

DONATIONS: Dr. Ricca thanked the following for their generous donations:

Friends of White Plains Public Schools for \$18,000 for the 2022-23 "Beyond Broadway" Dance Program for all elementary schools

Linda and Stephen Ochser for a Schwinn Recumbent Exercise Bike

Marty Rotberg for an alto saxophone for Highlands School

Cathy Denise and the **Sabra Company** for art supplies for Rochambeau School

PepsiCo for 600 Book Kits ("Healthy Minds, Healthy Bodies") for K-2 students

Elks Lodge and **Robert Lent** for dictionaries for all third graders

Ernie Garcia (\$200), **Jorge Fitz-Gibbon** (\$200) and **Kathy Wallace & Gerald Gleeson** (\$100) for donations to the Richard Liebson Journalism Scholarship

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

November 10: Special Meeting, Education House, 5:30 P.M.

November 14: Regular Meeting, Education House, 7:30 P.M.

Editor: Michele Schoenfeld