



# 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

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March 13, 2023

**MOMENT OF SILENCE:** The Board observed a moment of silence in memory of **Evelyn Stevens**, a Teaching Assistant at Mamaroneck Avenue School for 23 years.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:** **Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Ricca** congratulated the **Girls Varsity Basketball Team** on their Section 1 Championship and semi-final win in the State competition. He also mentioned the spirited St. Patrick's Day Parade and the exciting appearance of the Harlem Wizards. He introduced **Sinclair Harris** and **Delia Rojas**, Student Liaisons, who reviewed activity over the last month.

**HONORS FOR FOOD PANTRY:** **Jeff Lewis**, Co-President of PTA Council, and **Jessica Buck**, former President of the Council, honored **Laura Mungin**, **Laura Reidy**, **Maki Itoh** and **Gina Norfleet** from George Washington School with the New York State Community Service Award for their development of a food pantry at the school. Recognizing the need prior to the pandemic, their activity eventually provided food for 600 families in White Plains. The Rotary Club, White Plains Teachers Association, the school district and the many other volunteers were thanked for their contributions to this effort.

**MAMARONECK AVENUE SCHOOL PRESENTATION:** **Principal Robert Janowitz** and **Assistant Principal Brendan McCarthy** provided an update on activity at the school to insure that students grow and succeed. Their "ingredients for success" include data-driven instruction, relationships, communication, collaboration, and equity. Upgrades in the facility help make it a warm, safe and special place. Mr. Janowitz was pleased to report that the school has recently opened a food pantry.

**2023-2024 BUDGET:** Dr. Ricca presented his 2023-24 Superintendent's Preliminary Budget of \$256,645,394, a tax levy percentage increase of 1.91% over last year. He said this budget provides for every program our children currently have and remains below the tax cap. He stressed the importance of planning and the need to look ahead and keep our eyes on the economy. He said the District is grateful for the additional State Aid. It has always maintained a fiscally conservative approach and have returned over \$120 million to the taxpayers over the last six years. Board Members thanked Dr. Ricca, **Assistant Superintendent for Business Ann Vaccaro-Teich** and the many people responsible for this budget. The Board will adopt it at its April 10<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**BOARD COMMENTS:** **Board President Rosemarie Eller** attended an interesting Black History Month celebration at Church Street School and **Board Member Charlie Norris** reported on the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Board Member Sheryl Brady attended various New York State School Boards Association Directors' Meetings and a BOCES visit to the Adult Literacy classes at Rochambeau School.



MAY 16<sup>TH</sup> BALLOT: The Board approved placement on the ballot in the May 16<sup>th</sup> Budget Vote and Board Election of a proposition to authorize an expenditure not to exceed \$13.5 million from the Capital Reserve Funds of 2019 and 2022 to provide additional funding for construction of ventilation, filtration and air conditioning improvements to various District buildings. The architects provided information on this in a construction update at the meeting.

There was also minor reconfiguration by Westchester County of some voting districts due to the census count. Voters may confirm their polls by going to the District's website – [www.whiteplainspublicschools.org](http://www.whiteplainspublicschools.org)

PERSONNEL: **Julie Cangro** was given a probationary appointment as Director of Human Resources at Education House. She had been serving in a provisional capacity.

Resignations for the purpose of retirement were accepted from **Luz Savarese**, Elementary Education Teacher at George Washington School, and **Mark Stanton**, Mathematics Teacher at the High School.

OTHER ACTION: The Board authorized two high school trips out of district – the Spring Track Team qualifying athletes will travel to the Penn Relays Carnival in April and the Varsity Girls Basketball Team went to the New York State Championship games in Troy, NY.

A total of more than \$1.8 million in school tax refunds to settle tax certiorari litigation with various property owners was authorized by the Board. These are paid from a reserve fund established for this purpose.

The Board approved a three-year contract with Southern Westchester BOCES for an installment purchase agreement for computer services at the rate of \$1.7 million. This is the seventh such agreement with BOCES and continues a longstanding arrangement to provide for the District's technology needs.

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

**The Friends of White Plains Public Schools** for two grants – one for \$7,500 for the High School Band trip to Boston and the other for \$5,000 for the Highlands 8<sup>th</sup> grade end of year activities

**Kevin and Anna Brown** for \$1,000 for the Brown Family Memorial Scholarship

**Michele Schoenfeld** for \$500 for the High School Band trip to Boston

**Beth and Gene Kava** for payment of the lunch debt for students at Mamaroneck Avenue School

UPCOMING MEETINGS:

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| April 6:  | Special Meeting, Education House, 5:30 P.M.<br>Human Resources Committee - Executive Session      |
| April 10: | Regular Meeting, High School B-1 Room, 7:30 P.M.<br>Scholar-Athletes<br>2023-2024 Budget Adoption |

Editor: Michele Schoenfeld