



# THE BOARD REPORTS

## *Highlights of the White Plains Board of Education Meeting*

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

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September 11, 2023

**MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Superintendent of Schools **Joseph L. Ricca** asked for a moment of silence in memory of **Roland Skinner**, Custodial Worker at White Plains High School for 18 years before retiring in 2007, and **the families and loved ones who were impacted by the terrorist attacks on 9/11/01**. At the Special Meeting of August 28<sup>th</sup> the passings of **Sue Adams**, Physical Education Teacher and Coach for 30 years, and **Evelyn Gravino**, Transportation Coordinator and Accountant for 19 years. were observed.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:** Dr. Ricca spoke about school opening which went very smoothly and spoke about the effort which goes into that. He thanked all of those who made it possible, particularly the Facilities & Operations staff. He also expressed appreciation to everyone for their patience in dealing with the extreme heat of the last few weeks. He recognized the PTAs who contribute greatly to the District and who are seeking 100% membership this year.

Dr. Ricca introduced the two High School Liaisons to the Board for the 2023-24 school year, **Delia Rojas** and **Frida Loehr**, who reported on activities in the schools.

**CAPITAL PROJECTS STATUS REPORT:** **John Hanson** of Triton Construction and **Bob Bee** of H2M Architects provided an update on summer projects. A tremendous amount of work took place in five buildings, including the installation of 300 air handlers/ventilators. Additional projects will be awarded in November (delayed pending grant funding). The goal is to complete the HVAC projects, with air conditioning in all classrooms by September of 2024. The High School addition project will also be moving forward with the reconvening of that committee to discuss preliminary design.

**HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER ACADEMY UPDATE:** **Athletic Director Matt Cameron** began this report, noting that the program has now been in existence for two years. Participation was up this year and various changes were made. Mr Cameron introduced **Mike Chappas, Assistant Athletic Director**, who provided details. The academic portion was moved to evenings, which caused a drop in attendance. Students benefit tremendously from the strength and speed training which again took place in the mornings, four days a week, on various surfaces. Mr. Chappas said the program was very successful and a very positive experience for the students. Improvements will be made for next year. **Board President Rosemarie Eller**, who participated in a session of the program, said it was wonderful to see every student completely engaged.

BOARD COMMENT: Mrs. Eller thanked everyone for a smooth opening of school. She said it was good to hear the High School Band which participated in the opening day for staff. She also thanked PTA leader **Jessica Buck** for her advocacy of the resolution on gun safety approved by the Board on this agenda. Mrs. Eller also noted the new policy on Equitable and Inclusive Practices on this agenda..

PERSONNEL: The Board accepted the resignations for the purpose of retirement of **Maria Spista**, Food Service Helper, Middle School-Highlands and **Donna Centone**, Math Teacher, Rochambeau School. At the August 28<sup>th</sup> meeting, four additional retirements were approved: **Michael Distefano**, Custodial Worker at Rochambeau, **Miguel Gamoneda**, Custodial Worker at Middle School-Highlands, **Jose Torres**, Security Assistant at the High School, and **Alexandre Klemstine**, English Teacher at the High School.

Five staff members were appointed to probationary positions on August 28<sup>th</sup>: **Jobeth Carrero-Figuero**, Elementary Education Teacher, Post Road; **Carmen Lopez**, Dual Language Elementary Education Teacher, Church Street; **Joey Pascale**, School Psychologist, Middle School-Eastview; **Sandiya Quackenbush**, Social Studies Teacher, High School; and **Tracey Wong**, Library Media Specialist, High School.

DONATIONS: Dr. Ricca thanked the following donors for their generous gifts: **Anthony D. Cascione and the Group C Company** for 500 bookbags, and at the August 28<sup>th</sup> meeting, **Rosemarie Eller** for a Nikon Camera for the High School Fine Arts Program,

Editor: Michele Schoenfeld