



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

February 12, 2024

BOARD COMMENT: Board Members reported on recent events they attended. These included the High School production of "Fiddler on the Roof," the Guidance Advisory Committee, Highlands Curriculum Night, Church Street Reading Night, Eastview's International Dinner, PTA Council, and various legislative forums and meetings of the Westchester Putnam School Boards Association and New York State School Boards Association.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Superintendent Dr. Joseph Ricca congratulated the District's talented actors, musicians and athletes for their many achievements during the last month. He also noted that next year's school calendar is on tonight's agenda for approval and will be posted on the District website. He then introduced **High School Liaison Frida Loehr** who provided details on activities in the schools.

NEW STAFF LEADERS: The Board appointed **Monica Arismendez** to the position of Coordinator of STEM PreK-6. Ms. Arismendez has been a STEM Enrichment Teacher in the District since 2018. A graduate of White Plains High School, she began as a third-grade teacher in 2017. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Education from Seton Hall and a Master of Science in Education and Advanced Certificate in Gifted Education from CUNY Hunter College.

Noah Miller was appointed Chief Information Officer, replacing **Ron Velez** who retired. For the past ten years he has been Coordinator of Network Support and Network Administrator at Lower Hudson Regional Information Center of Southern Westchester BOCES. He has a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Wisconsin and has both technological and leadership skills.

Xavier Hernandez-Delgado was appointed Director of Facilities & Operations replacing **Frank Stefanelli** who retired. He had served as Assistant Director for the last three years and has over 19 years of experience in both educational and hospitality environments. He has a Bachelor of Science in Engineering from Instituto Tecnológico de San Luis Potosí in Mexico.

TENURE: Two administrators were granted tenure at the meeting: **Robert Janowitz**, Elementary School Principal at Mamaroneck Avenue School, and **Rocco Varuolo**, Coordinator of Instructional Technology. They both thanked the Board and Cabinet for their confidence and are looking forward to many years of service to the District.

PERSONNEL:

Resignations for the purpose of retirement were accepted from administrators **Paul Bratcher**, Director of Rochambeau School, and **Brent Brown**, Assistant Principal at the Middle School-Highlands. Board President Rosemarie Eller thanked them for their long and dedicated service to the District. Also retiring is **Adrienne Pollak**, Teaching Assistant at the Highlands.

FISCAL STRESS REPORT: **Dr. Vaccaro-Teich** explained this State Monitoring System for fiscal and environmental stress. The District has no designation in either category and remains in strong fiscal health.

BUILDING CONDITION SURVEY: **Robert Bee** and **Michael Lantier** of H2M Architects & Engineers made this presentation of the SED-required report, after walkthroughs of all facilities and discussions with District personnel. Work is broken down into interior, exterior, sitework and infrastructure. Comparisons are made to be sure all priorities from the last survey, in 2015, were completed. The architects were impressed to find that so much work was accomplished. They also said the district does a great job in maintaining its buildings. All facilities are rated satisfactory.

They reviewed building age, work since 2015, a summary of costs, and major identified needs at each building. Dr. Vaccaro-Teich summed up and said this is our updated long-range plan and we will break it down into operational budgeting and what will be considered for capital projects and public authorization for funding.

CONSTRUCTION UPDATE: **Chris Pearson, Senior Vice President of Triton Construction,** reported on delays in timeframes for various projects. SED Plan Review duration has been extended from 12 to 16 weeks to 24 to 26 weeks so that our plans for work to begin in the summer of 2024 will be delayed. We are now forecasting SED Plan Approval for the new addition near the beginning of November 2024 as opposed to August 2024. Dr. Ricca spoke about the impact of this and how we are lobbying with legislators to alleviate this problem.

2024-2025 INSTRUCTIONAL BUDGET: **Dr. Debbie Hand, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction,** began her presentation by thanking the Board, Dr. Ricca, and the many administrators who helped put all the information together and frame it in plans for next year – to continue to expand opportunities for our students. She then reviewed the various programs and subject areas. Dr. Ricca pointed out the background work that goes into this and said the key question remains: How can we continue to expand and offer more to engage our children to set them on a path to achieve their dreams?

DONATIONS: : Dr. Ricca thanked the following donors for their generous gifts:

The Friends of White Plains Public Schools for \$5,100 donation from for four grants:

\$600 for Wellness Week yoga at Rochambeau School

\$700 for the Animal Adaptions program for 4th grade students at Post Road School

\$800 for a visit to Philipsburg Manor by all 4th graders at Post Road School

\$3,000 for two assemblies for all students at Mamaroneck Avenue School

The following donors to the Philip Barnett Memorial Scholarship: **Mr. & Mrs. Stanley**

Kerpel (\$50), Mr. & Mrs. John Stankunas (\$100), Ms. Rima Raynes (\$100), Mr.

Gerald Kramer (\$100), Ms. Antonia Martinez (\$108), and Mr. & Mrs. Gregory

Matthews (\$200).

Stop & Shop for various food and paper goods for George Washington's Pancake Breakfast:

Mrs. Ernestine Glenn for \$6,000 for the E. Glenn Creative Writing Scholarship.

Mr. Ronald DeCicco for \$50 for the Richard Liebson Journalism Scholarship.

Editor: Michele Schoenfeld