



# THE BOARD REPORTS

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

**BOARD MEMBERS:** Rosemarie Eller, *President*; Cayne Letizia, *Vice President*; Sheryl Brady, Jessica Buck, Valerie Daniele, Craig Mondschein, Charlie Norris

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December 9, 2024

**MOMENT OF SILENCE:** Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph Ricca asked for a moment of silence in memory of Patricia Riley, High School Spanish Teacher from 1966 to 1985, and former student Lauren Ashley McCormack who graduated from White Plains High School in 2010.

**BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS:** Board President Rosemarie Eller, with Board Member Jessica Buck, attended the CSEA Holiday Celebration. Together with Board Member Sheryl Brady, they all attended the Friends of White Plains Public Schools Pre-Thanksgiving Reunion. Board members also attended the College Signing, the Ridgeway Fundraiser, the High School Fall Play and the 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Winter Concert, among other activities.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:** Dr. Ricca introduced Student Board Member Liaisons Charis Choi and Afrozah Hossain who provided information on activities in the schools. He also spoke about upcoming events, as well as the ongoing discussion about the cell phone policy.

**TRANSPORTATION AND CHURCH STREET SCHOOL:** Dr. Ricca discussed the challenge pertaining to the earlier start and end times at Church Street School. School bus transportation costs have increased dramatically, leaving a shortfall of \$2.8 million for next year. An audit was conducted last year, parents were surveyed this year, and the administration has continued to search for possible solutions to this fiscal problem. The outcome is the recommendation, endorsed by the Board of Education, to open and close all elementary schools on the same schedule. The District identified that there is no other fiscally responsible solution that does not require cutting programs, positions, services, or that exceeds the tax levy cap. The District will work to support families and there will be expanded before and after care services at the lowest possible cost. Both the Board and District have examined all options and believe this is the only fiscally sound solution at this time. They will continue to look for new answers.

**CAPITAL PROJECTS UPDATE:** Chris Pearson of Triton Construction and Robert Bee and Joseph Ciserano of H2M Architects presented a report on the various projects, with many in the punchlist stage of completion. This is the sixth year of the project, dating from 2018. Bidding and pre-construction is underway on Phase 2 and 3 Interior Alterations and projects have come in under budget. The schedule will be adjusted when approval from the SED is received. Dr. Ricca thanked the State for being very helpful with the planning of this work.

**ELECTION POLLING PLACE:** The Board approved the use of El Centro Hispano, at 295 Central Avenue, as the polling place for the Battle Hill area in the May 20<sup>th</sup> Election and Budget Vote. The former site, the Community Room in what was the Battle Hill School, is no longer available for use.

PERSONNEL: The Board approved a retirement incentive for members of the White Plains Teachers Association of 20% of base salary plus longevity entitlement. Terms specify that at least 30 unit members must participate.

The Board accepted the resignation for the purpose of retirement of **Akmeed Boouraca**, Security Assistant at the High School.

Tenure was granted to the following: **Sara Florez**, Teaching Assistant, High School; **Evelyn Berger**, School Psychologist, Ridgeway; **Jon Bivas**, Physical Education Teacher, Districtwide; **Yaritza Olmeda Cedeno**, Special Education Teacher, Middle-School-Eastview; **Danielle Metlitz**, Special Education Teacher, George Washington; and **William Vargas**, Reading Teacher, Post Road.

Probationary appointments were given to **Brittany Grahame** to teach Special Education at Ridgeway and **Heidi Camacho** to teach Art, Districtwide.

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

**Quatro Publishing** for \$1,500 for the High School Library Program

**The National Road Safety Foundation** for \$1,000 for the High School Youth to Youth (Y2Y) Club

**Donna Joseph** for \$500 donation for the Dr. Leonard G. Rhodes Memorial Fund

White Plains High School Key Club and Midnight Run have received donations from the following:

**The Pantanelli Family (Oakland Trading Corp.)** for \$2,500

**The Scarsdale Police Benevolent Association** for \$300

**The White Plains Professional Firefighters Association** for \$250

**The White Plains Police Benevolent Association** for \$200 (gift cards)

**1020 Post Restaurant** for \$150 (gift certificate)

**The WPHS Hockey Team** for \$150 (gift card)

**Free Bird Restaurant** for \$100 (gift card)

**Michele Schoenfeld** for \$100

**The Klein Family** for \$50 (gift card)

**Student Lila Tomlin** for \$50 (gift card)

**Maureen Nimphius** for \$25 (gift card)

**Student Belle Cepler** for \$25 (gift card)

**White Plains High School PTA** donated \$4,850 for the following:

\$1,200 for Orchestra Page Turners

\$1,000 for the SAIL Art Night

\$985 for Science Probes

\$895 for the Spanish Class Trip

\$500 for ENL Culturally Relevant Books

\$270 for Reusable Headphones

**The Friends of White Plains Public Schools** made the following grants:

\$18,000 for the *Beyond Broadway Dance* Program in all elementary schools

\$900 grant to the High School SAIL program for tickets for students to attend a performance of *Hairspray* at the WPPAC

Editor: Michele Schoenfeld