



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

February 10, 2025

MOMENT OF SILENCE: **Superintendent of Schools Dr. Joseph L Ricca** asked for a moment of silence in memory of **Therese Keating**, Elementary Education Teacher at Post Road and Battle Hill Schools, from 1969 until retiring in 1995.

BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS: Board Members attended a variety of events, including the High School production of *Pippin*, PTA Council Meetings, Church Street Reading Night, Eastview's International Dinner, Martin Luther King, Jr. celebrations, and various meetings of the Westchester-Putnam School Boards, New York State School Boards, and National School Boards Associations meetings.

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM REVIEW: **Assistant Superintendent for Special Education & Pupil Services Deborah Augarten** introduced this overview which will help provide an action plan to govern work for the next 3-5 years. **Drs. Mauria Uhlik** and **Jennifer Beribeau** from the Public Consulting Group presented a review of their research, which included parent and staff surveys, visits to schools, observations, and a collection of data and documents which they requested. They commented on the warm reception they received. They reviewed key accomplishments and takeaways and presented their recommendations, which are designed to improve student outcomes. Questions from Board Members followed and Dr. Ricca said this is ongoing work and the district is committed to an open and transparent process. All information will be available on the website.

INSTRUCTIONAL BUDGET 2025-2026: **Dr. Debbie Hand, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction**, presented this view of next year, which is dedicated to providing exceptional education. It focuses on continuous improvement while being fiscally prudent. It also provides flexibility for students. Dr. Ricca thanked Dr. Hand and **Dr. Kathy Barpoulis** who contributed to the presentation.

RETIREMENT INCENTIVE: The Board approved a retirement incentive in a Memorandum of Agreement with the White Plains Teachers Association. Terms include a payout of the lesser of 20% of base salary or \$30,000, for a minimum of 30 retirees in the next two years.

The following teachers will retire as of June 30, 2025: **Kelly Agar**, Elementary Education, George Washington; **Joan Behrends**, Physical Education, Church Street; **Shari Bierly**, Special Education, Mamaroneck Avenue; **Deborah Brunetto**, Elementary Education, Mamaroneck Avenue; **Kirsten Calkins**, LOTE, High School; **Michele Charriez**, Reading, Middle School-Highlands; **Betsy Cicchetti**, Elementary Education, George Washington; **Franklin Cromer II**, Elementary Education, Post Road; **Regina Dunn**, Reading, Church Street; **Vasendha Gangadharan Hrazanek**, Elementary Education, Church Street; **Donna Hodges**, ESOL, Post Road; **Gweneth Kaebnick**, Elementary Education, Mamaroneck Avenue; **Paula Knuckles**, Elementary Education, Mamaroneck Avenue; **Gloria Salerno**, Elementary Education, Church Street.

In addition, 24 teachers have committed to retire at the end of next year (6/30/26).

PERSONNEL: The Board approved the appointment to tenure of **Rosa Irizarry German**, Teaching Assistant at Post Road School.

Resignations for the purpose of retirement were accepted from the following classified staff members: **Kathleen Contrata**, Administrative Assistant, Education House; **Susan Repetti**, Registered Professional School Nurse, High School; **Ana Zamora**, Food Service Helper, Rochambeau; and **Darrel Kidd**, Senior Custodian, Church Street School.

Teaching Assistants who submitted retirement resignations were: **Maureen Fargo** and **Maria Felicia Lotito**, Mamaroneck Avenue School; **Adele Herzenberg**, George Washington; **Gloria Barrera**, High School; **Geri Alvarez**, Rochambeau; and **Ann Kelly** Church Street.

Administrator **Wilbert Dixon**, High School House Administrator also submitted his resignation for the purpose of retirement.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Ricca introduced **Student Board Member Liaison Afrozah Hossain** who reported on activity in the schools. He congratulated the retirees and person receiving tenure. He also spoke about the new cell phone policy.

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

Mrs. Ernestine M. Glenn for \$10,000 for the E. Glenn Creative Writing Scholarship and the E. Glenn HBCU Scholarships

The WPMS PTA Grant Committee for \$1,700 for a mural in the Eastview Cafeteria

Eric Ramos for a 65 Inch LG Smart LED TV and a 60 Inch Sharp LED Smart TV

Mr. & Mrs. Kevin Brown for \$1,000 for the Brown Family Memorial Scholarship

Bombas Company for 11-12,000 pairs of socks for Church Street, coordinated by **Jarlene Cabrera**

The NYBEST Agency for a \$1,000 Scholarship for a student in the Class of 2025

Friends of White Plains Public Schools for two grants: \$2,000 for Church Street 5th grade Trip and \$1,200 for Puzzle Parlor Escape Room for Rochambeau students

The following donations for the Philip Barnett Memorial Scholarship Fund: **Mr. & Mrs.**

Howard Englander for \$50, **Dr. Stanley Kerpel** for \$50, **Mr. & Mrs. John Stankunas** for \$100, **Mr. & Mrs. Fred Fox** for \$100, **Rima Raynes** for \$100, **Mr. & Mrs. Jerry Kramer** for \$100, **Ms. Antonia Martinez** for \$120, **Dr. H. I. Shahabian** for \$250.

OTHER ACTION: The Board approved the School District Calendar for 2025-2026, which is posted on the District's website..

The Board authorized **Michelle Melendez**, District Clerk, and **Michele Schoenfeld**, Special Projects, to make all necessary arrangements for the Annual Board of Education Budget Vote and Election on May 20, 2025.

A field trip was approved for the High School Track & Field Team to attend the Penn Relays at the University of Pennsylvania in April.

A new cell phone policy had its first reading and limits the use of cell phones in the schools by students.

Editor: Michele Schoenfeld