



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

March 10, 2025

MOMENT OF SILENCE: Superintendent of Schools **Dr. Joseph L Ricca** asked for a moment of silence in memory of **Ann Edwards**, Board of Education Member from 1983 to 1987, former PTA President and participant in many community organizations.

BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS: Board Members commented on the variety of activities they attended this month, including the STEM Fair at George Washington, the Saint Patrick's Day Parade, the Post Road Family Math Night, and a School Law Webinar among others..

SUPERINTENDENT'S PRELIMINARY BUDGET 2025-2026: Dr. Ricca, accompanied by **Dr. Ann Vaccaro-Teich, Assistant Superintendent for Business**, presented a budget of \$277,965,500, with a tax levy percentage increase of 1.67% over last year. Dr. Ricca stressed the importance of planning in the process of preserving sound fiscal health while maintaining programs for students. He and Dr. Vaccaro-Teich reviewed major sources of revenues, the tax levy cap, the impact of the Governor's Budget Proposal and expenses.

Dr. Ricca thanked Dr. Vaccaro-Teich, the entire Business Office and all of the staff members who contributed to this proposed budget. He also expressed appreciation to the Finance & Audit Committee which spent a great deal of time on the budget. **Board President Rosemarie Eller** applauded the work and said this is a very thoughtful budget that supports the program while staying within the tax cap. Dr. Ricca invited the public to comment or ask questions, as they always do, and added that all budget information is posted on the website.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT: Dr. Ricca introduced **Student Board Member Liaisons Charis Choi and Afrozah Hossain** who reported on activity in the schools. He also noted that the next steps following from the Special Education review are progressing. Dr. Ricca thanked the Board of Regents for welcoming **Kara Lyons, President of the White Plains Teachers Association**, who provided an update to them on the Educator Pathway Program at WPHS.

PERSONNEL: The Board accepted the resignations for the purpose of retirement of **Patricia Benavidez**, Office Assistant I, Mamaroneck Avenue School; **Paula Christensen**, Office Assistant, Facilities & Operations; **Barbara Penasso**, Administrative Assistant, High School; and Teaching Assistants **Tineira Augborn**, Middle School-Eastview; and **Francesca Salvi**, Church Street School.

Two teachers were given probationary appointments: **Kristen Anderson**, Special Education, Church Street; and **Ediris Squitieri**, ENL, Post Road School.

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

Nancy Desplantes (\$50) and **Mr. & Mrs. Richard Crystal** (\$50) for the Philip Barnett Memorial Scholarship

The WPHS PTA for \$4,200 to support the Band and Orchestra admission to the Philadelphia Orchestra

Marcia Mondschein for 15 Spanish books for the elementary schools

The Friends of White Plains Public Schools for three newly approved grants:

\$4,000 for the High School Band/Orchestra trip to a music competition in New Jersey

\$3,500 tickets for 42 AVID program seniors to attend a Broadway show performance

\$750 for the Sing Sing Chronicles presentation and panel for 75-100 U.S. History students

OTHER ACTION: The Board approved a new policy on cell phones, "Students and Personal Electronic Devices," which will go into effect in the 2025-2026 school year. This restricts the use of cell phones Grades K-8 and during instructional time throughout the school day at the high school level.

The Board voted to lease space at Rochambeau School to Southern Westchester BOCES. The organization will lease five classrooms, one office and one all-purpose room at a charge of \$227,119 for summer and the academic year.

Editor: Michele Schoenfeld

