



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

August 6, 2025

MOMENT OF SILENCE: Superintendent of Schools **Dr. Joseph Ricca** asked for a moment of silence in memory of **Elizabeth (Betty) Barish**, a Teaching Assistant at Post Road School and Church Street School from 1987 until she **retired** in 1992; **Helen Gray**, a Kindergarten Teacher at Post Road School, Eastview Elementary, Ridgeway School and Mamaroneck Avenue School from 1967 until she retired in 2001; and **Kayeitha Smalls**, a Teacher at Rochambeau School from 1968 until she retired in 2008.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT: Dr. Ricca provided an update on summer activities including the progress of summer projects. Dr. Ricca also shared that the District’s administrative team met for an initial planning retreat in July and that the District’s Strategic Planning Committee will be meeting in August to set the plan for the 2025-2026 academic year. Dr. Ricca informed the Board of Education that the District’s transportation provider is preparing for the new year and will begin practice runs of all District bus routes prior to the opening of school. All of the new buses are equipped with Stop Arm cameras in partnership with the City of White Plains. Dr. Ricca thanked the White Plains Youth Bureau team for all of their hard work in preparing for the upcoming year including staffing for Before and After Care opportunities for our students at each of the elementary schools. Dr. Ricca thanked the community for all of their continued support for the District and our students and shared that the WPCSD community is looking forward to welcoming our students back in September.

SMART PHONES: The Board passed a new state-required policy regarding personal internet enabled devices (Smart phones) in the schools, prohibiting their use during the school day. The state law is in effect for all public-school students beginning in September 2025.

PERSONNEL: The Board made two administrative appointments. **Dr. Karen Tesik** will become Assistant Superintendent for Special Education and Pupil Services, replacing **Debbie Augarten**. She comes to White Plains from seven years in a similar position in South Orangetown School District. Dr. Tesik has a Bachelor’s Degree from Saint Thomas Aquinas College, Master’s Degrees from SUNY/New Paltz and New York Institute of Technology and an Ed.D from St. John Fisher University.

Dr. Noreen Urso was appointed Interim Co-Director of Special Education 6-12. She has been acting as CSE Chairperson for the District for the past two years, after serving as Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Services in Eastchester for 20 years. She has a Bachelor’s Degree from Mercy College, a Master’s from the College of New Rochelle and an Ed.D. from St. John Fisher University.

Two Teaching Assistants were granted tenure: **Sandra Vicuna** at Highlands Middle School and **Diana Vazquez Espinoza** at George Washington School.

The following teachers were granted probationary appointments to serve in September: **Sydney (Berkman) Manias**, teaching Special Education at Post Road School, **Kalyn Egan**, teaching Elementary Education at Post Road School; **Julie Heller**, Reading at Church Street; **Jason Douglas**, Special Education at the High School; **Amanda Falcone**, Art, Districtwide; **Stacy Gonzalez**, Elementary Education at Church Street; and **Geraldine Valente**, Music at Post Road.

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

Andrea Robinson for \$50 for the Dorothy Ann Peters Memorial Scholarship.

Jason Bayuk for \$500 for the Barbara O'Garro Memorial Scholarship.

Connect Kids for \$1,996.04 for Post Road School for the Parks Field Trip.

Cynthia Espada for a clarinet, case, music stand and music books for the Music Department

Reach Church (Mission Church) for labor and materials for the renovation of the High School Staff Lounge

Editor: Michele Schoenfeld